

ERRC Human Rights Capacitation Workshops

TRAINING Roma rights activists is an essential component of the ERRC's mission to address the endemic discrimination faced by Romani communities in Europe. The ERRC trainings target Romani human rights activists and representatives of other sectors of society such as lawyers, journalists and judges.

At the beginning of 2009, the ERRC held two theme-specific training sessions with the support of United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) in Montenegro attended by participants mainly

from the Balkans region. Below is a brief account of both workshops.

Anti-discrimination law advocacy

In February 2009, the ERRC hosted a training initiative attended by 14 Romani participants from across the Balkan region (Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia) on anti-discrimination law advocacy. The workshop presented the main elements of regional and international anti-discrimination law as well



Romani participants of the Montenegro workshop on housing with ERRC trainers.

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as the fundamentals of conducting a coherent advocacy campaign for Roma in the respective countries of the project. The primary purpose of the workshop was to develop the capacity of young Romani human rights activists to use domestic, regional and international human rights instruments and mechanisms to advance the rights of Romani communities across the Balkans. The five-day workshop addressed the fundamental distinctions in approaches to Roma rights advocacy and activism. Since a major plank of the project was and is a prolonged period of grassroots advocacy in support of the adoption and implementation of anti-discrimination law, the ERRC staff members carefully analysed the advocacy plans prepared by the participants and their performance during the workshop. Since the workshop, the ERRC has engaged six participants from the four countries to implement anti-discrimination law advocacy campaigns.

Housing rights

At the end of April 2009, the ERRC hosted a second workshop to develop the capacity of young Romani human rights activists to utilise domestic, regional and international human rights mechanisms to advance the housing rights of Romani communities in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Romania and Slovakia. The workshop presented the main elements of housing rights law as well as the fundamentals of conducting a coherent monitoring and reporting campaign. The four-day workshop addressed fundamental distinctions in approaches to Roma rights advocacy and activism, focusing participants' attention on the major differences between the "rights-based" and the "needs-based" approaches to housing rights advocacy. After this workshop, the ERRC began working with selected workshop participants from each country to conduct research on the housing rights situation of local Romani communities.