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The past month has been quite the experience for me here in the Czech Republic. My mission from The Advocacy Project was to create a quilt with Roma women. This quilt is to display their culture, their feelings about being a Roma woman, experiences that reflect their life as a Roma woman in the Czech Republic, and other such themes. The quilt is to be displayed at the Council of Europe alongside two other quilts, both made by Advocacy Project Peace Fellows. One has already been completed with the assistance of Ms. Kerry McBroom, with Roma women in Strasbourg France. Another is being completed this summer across towns in Kosovo. Our hope is that these three quilts will display the culture of the Roma people and the specific struggles Roma women face in three very different countries. With these quilts we hope to influence pan European Policy regarding Roma rights.

My host organization, the Dženo Association, is in its last summer before the founder and sole employee, Mr. Ivan Veselý takes some much needed time off. He has been active in the Rome rights movement for over 20 years, and has been an essential contact point. He has assisted in my search for Roma women's groups and introduced me to our craftswoman, Ms. Emilie Horačková, of the small town of Mimoň in the North Bohemia area of the Czech Republic. My work for Dženo has been relatively sporadic, as most of my time has been spent on coordinating activities with the quilting project. However, I have been able to contribute some to Dženo's work, including the following:

- Researching recommendations concerning Roma rights. These documents included recommendations from the European Commission (*EU Framework Recommendations*), The Decade of Roma Inclusion (*Czech Republic Action Plan*), The Council of Europe (*The Strasbourg Declaration on the Roma*), and The European and Roma Travellers Forum (*Charter on the Rights of the Roma*)
- Comparing these recommendations to actions taken by the Czech Republic. I discovered that only the very minimum has been met through legislation in the Czech Republic. The other recommendations may have been acknowledged, but were not put into policy to be the catalyst for systematic change.
- Attending the 20<sup>th</sup> International Steering Committee Meeting at the close of the Czech Presidency of the Decade of Roma Inclusion. The meeting provided information on efforts taken in different Decade member countries and spoke on issues which still need to be met. I critically assessed the effectiveness of the Decade on my blog through The Advocacy Project. This particular blog was picked up by the Open Society Foundation and mentioned on their Facebook page.
- Researching potential funding opportunities for radio and other media sources to further the image of the Roma population. According to Mr. Veselý, information about the

Decade of Roma Inclusion is not enough, there needs to be propaganda throughout Europe in order to change popular stereotypes of the Roma.

In terms of the quilting process, I have met with women from the town of Mimoň twice, with a third visit scheduled for next week with the director of The Advocacy Project, Mr. Iain Guest. There will be 10 women working to create the quilt, and the planning and translating has been taken over by the wonderful Ms. Emilie Zigová, Ms. Horačková's daughter.

In addition to creating the quilt, I hope to gather quantitative information regarding the feelings Roma women have towards the effectiveness of the Decade of Roma Inclusion and what they believe needs to be done. This information will be gathered from the women in Mimoň and from the meeting of a summer school for Roma women, organized by the Roma women's advocacy group, Manushe.

The quilt and paper regarding the feelings of Roma women will be accompanied by detailed profiles of the women working on the quilt. I want to describe who they really are, what their struggles have been, and how they have worked through the endless stereotypes they face as a Roma woman. These profiles will be achieved by interviews with the women, video footage, and photography. The photos I have taken already are on The Advocacy Project's Flickr account. The videos I create will be on their YouTube site, and I will continue to utilize my blog to speak on issues facing the Roma population in the Czech Republic.