

CLIMATE CHANGE AND POVERTY: THE CASE OF DISADVANTAGED ROMA COMMUNITIES IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE



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Presentation Outline

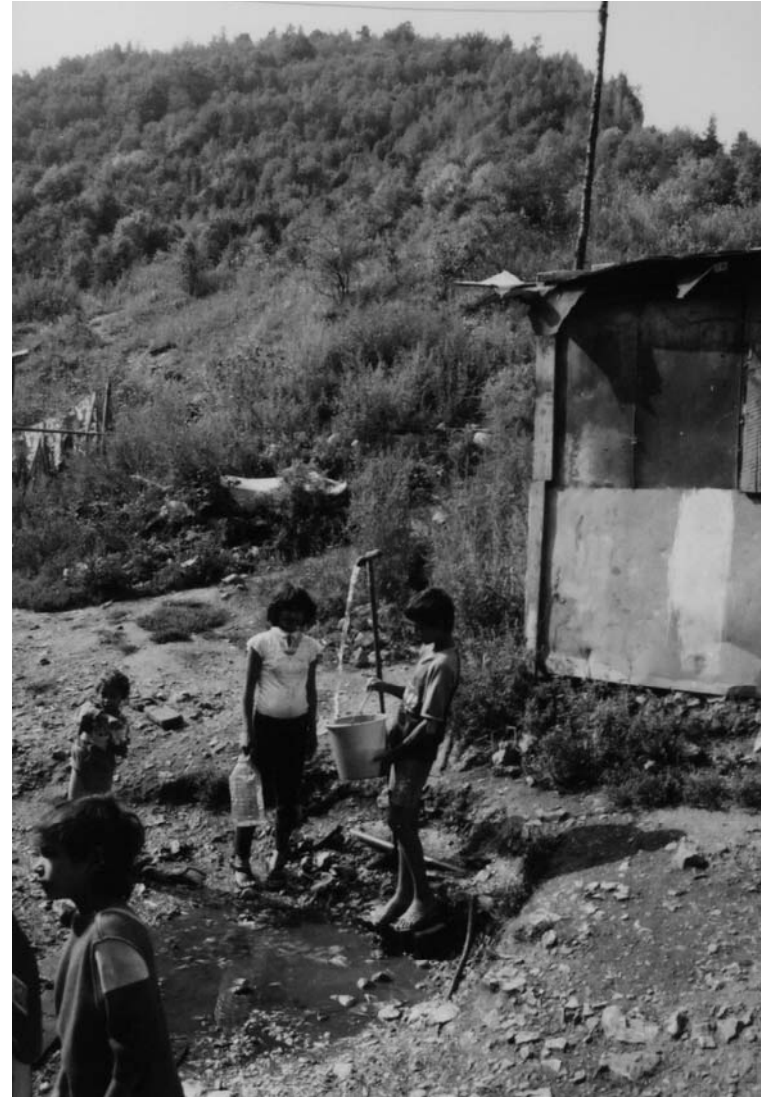
- Transition, local disparities and the marginalized Roma communities in Central and Eastern Europe
- Climate justice and the Roma – 2 cases:
 - ▶ *Jarovnice, The Slovak Rep.*
 - ▶ *Sredorek, Macedonia*
- Global climate change vs. local consequences



The Roma of Eastern Europe

- Poverty and race may play crucial factors in the climate change not only on the Global scale of North - South relations, but also at national and local levels;
- The transition of the CEE economies has led to further impoverishment of groups and individuals with low adaptability to the new conditions;
- The Roma – distinctive ethnic group, often living in areas with clear ethnic borders (shantytowns, ghettos);
- Roma shantytowns often are vulnerable to floods, which are increasing as a result of climate change.







Jarovnice, Slovakia

A small village in the Presov region, in the eastern part of the Slovak Republic.



Sredorek, Macedonia

A multiethnic municipality in Macedonia on the border with Serbia and Montenegro.



Jarovnice, Slovakia – The flood and the victims

- The Romani shantytown settlement at Jarovnice lies in the valley of the Mala Svinka river. Slovaks live in the village above the valley, which kept them from being as tragically affected by the floods as the Roma in the low-lying area.
- Heavy rains on June 20, 1998 brought about the worst floods in Slovak history;
- Most severely affected were the 47 people who died; 42 of these victims (or 89%) were Roma from the shantytown in Jarovnice



Sredorek, Macedonia – waiting for the water

- The settlement (of circa 3,500 Roma) is located on a low piece of ground between two forks of the river. The river has been heavily polluted for the past ten years and it floods every year, driving the approximately 2,000 Roma who live there out of the settlement;
- The Roma are forced (due to economic reasons) to buy land and make houses near the old settlement;
- The most recent flood occurred in January 2003.



Climate change and local disparities

- *Housing* - Roma rural housing exists in areas that are unattractive to the majority population
- *Investment in infrastructure* - The Roma's lack of political influence and effective know-how for participating in decisions limits allocation of resources for building infrastructure
- *Property rights over land and other natural resources* – Due to historical and other reasons Roma rarely own and/or manage productive land or natural resources.