

Search, use, share and broaden horizons with e-Roma Resource



Publication of the e-Roma Resource project and the international conference Broaden Horizons – Networks and Experiences for Successful Roma Inclusion



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e-Roma Resource

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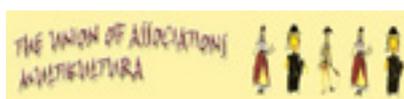


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The missing translations for the presentations will be available on e-Roma Resource Project web platform. Therefore, we would like to invite you to visit www.eromaresource.com.

We apologize for any unintentional errors or omissions.



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EDITOR'S NOTE

Marjeta Gašperšič, director, Development and Education Centre Novo Mesto

This collection of scientific papers, which we have put before you, contains practice-based contributions that were presented at the international conference *Broaden Horizons – Networks and Experiences for Successful Roma Inclusion*. It was produced at the initiative of the conference participants, who felt that the wealth of contributions is considered worth preserving, while connecting and networking are to be encouraged in particular. This was pointed out by the participants to the conference in their statements, which were collected in a [video recording](#).

We collected descriptions of most of the presented practices and arranged them according to the areas of EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, ROLE OF THE WIDER COMMUNITY, CULTURE AND HEALTH.

In order to facilitate the readers in exchanging experience below, all presentations which are available on the project platform eromaresource.com in section [Expanding Horizons – Networks and Experiences for Successful Roma Inclusion](#) have been translated into English and Slovenian.

The platform of the project will be maintained even after the end of the e-Roma Resource project, therefore you are kindly invited to submit your materials (by e-mail to ric@ric-nm.si) and [present your projects](#) on the platform.

PROLOGUE TO THE PROCEEDINGS

The importance of the e-Roma Resource project according to the Office for National Minorities

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In my own view and that of the Office for National Minorities, the e-Roma Resource Project is one of the best projects in recent years and above all the first comprehensive project that is intended for all who encounter or deal with members of the Roma community in their work in any way. Consequently, it contributes to a large extent to improving the situation of both male and female members of the Roma community and their better and faster integration into society, in the environments where they live. Since the project aims to encourage, disseminate and share the results, experiences and materials that were generated in various current or past projects and activities, this way it directly contributes to increased use and efficiency of already developed practices, approaches and concrete materials, which in Slovenia has not even tried to be done until now, let alone to make this practice come to life. Particularly, cohesive relevance and transparency of the existing practices and already developed possible solutions and tools for achieving progress in the work with Roma people in practice is according to the Office one of the main contributions of the project.

A special platform was set up within the project providing information on the Roma community in Europe, an overview of the situation of male and female members of the Roma community by country of origin of the project partners, and an overview of most of the major projects that have already established relevant actions, experience and materials, and will be available through this platform to all who come into contact with members of the Roma community in their work. The greatest importance of the project is seen particularly in the integration of different entities, institutions and individuals, who may – through networking, cooperation and exchange of experiences – improve both their work with Roma people in practice as well as enrich the work of other institutions and individuals.

Moreover, the utmost importance is to be attached to the fact that the platform, which was created in the project, not only represents a site providing access to a variety of information on the topic of Roma communities, but it also acts as an educational and informational tool and as a means of promoting the use of various materials, which directly contributes to a more effective implementation of measures for better and accelerated integration of members of the Roma community into society. It is essential that members of the Roma community need to be actively involved in this process, so we at the Office hope that the platform will be a live portal, which will be kept updated and which will actively involve the Roma people, who will endeavour to improve their situation. Even after the completion of the project, the Office will closely monitor the updating and functioning of the established platform and will do its best as well as within its competence to strive for its active contribution to measures to improve the situation of members of Roma communities and to promote their social inclusion.

Search, use, share and broaden horizons through the e-RR platform

Ana Granda Jakše, Development and Education Centre Novo Mesto, ric@ric-nm.si

Within the framework of the international e-RR project, which was run and coordinated by the Development and Education Centre Novo mesto, a platform <http://www.eromaresource.com/> has been publicly accessible since June 2015, aiming to support the process of integration of the Roma in different spheres of social life.

Thus, the platform provides current data and descriptions of the fields of policy and legislation, inclusion and equal opportunities, education, employment, health, and culture in Slovenia, Croatia, Slovakia, Poland, France and in the European Union. A special value is added to the platform with the creation of the library of materials and the library of projects, which aim to encourage the presentation of various national and international Roma projects in the European Union.

Eromaresource.com is a web, transnational, educational and information platform focused on education trainers, project providers, experts, policy makers, Roma activists and other users, taking their special needs into account.

Partner consortium created the platform on their own experience and existing good practice implemented by many organisations, institutions, decision and policy makers, and other stakeholders. The platform includes:

- overview of broader situation, policies, legislation and institutions;
- source of information, various materials and examples of good practice;
- dissemination of projects and project results.

All experts and practitioners are kindly invited to send us their materials (to the e-mail address: ric@ric-nm.si) and use it for the presentation of [your projects](#) and their results, examples of good practice as well as materials, which could help other experts from the field Roma integration.

e-RR Europe

If you are searching for a vast array of useful data, including diverse studies on Roma in EU, all the way from the cultural and up to the health-related and educational contexts, this is the place to start!

Country

Generously shared national research findings of all 5 partner countries are right here at your disposal. Explore Roma socio-economic circumstances, applied legal regulations, integration outcomes, the implementation of equal rights, various shortcomings and much more.

Library

Our e-RR Library allows experts in the field to be eager database searchers of study materials, publications, videos, blogs, etc. Retrieve relevant information in the blink of an eye and enjoy a user-friendly searching experience.

Projects

The e-RR partners have managed to gather a wide collection of exciting projects, project results and the examples of good practice for experts to browse through, with the purpose to be useful and disseminated in forthcoming work.



Roma in Europe

Jozek Horvat Muc, MSc, President of the European Roma Federation
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Roma communities in Europe continue to face discrimination, intolerance, racism and segregation. Following the enlargement of the European Union in 2004, Roma communities now represent one of the largest ethnic minorities in the EU: the estimated number is 12 to 15 million people. The spread of the wealth of the European Union is threatened by harmful stereotypes and prejudices, also in the form of economic, social and political discrimination.

The integration of Roma communities is a joint responsibility of the European Union and its Member States. After reviewing the situation in the individual countries, the European Union refers to positive examples of legal systems in some EU Member States in solving Roma issues. Great emphasis is mainly on the implementation of these provisions in practice. What lessons can be applied to the existing state-legal instruments and politics in order to effectively improve the situation of Roma communities? That also includes more effective political approach to non-discrimination against the Roma.

What concerns us most is a current situation which has occurred in Europe in connection with the Roma. The number of activities and events, both covert and public, that encourage intolerance, discrimination and segregation of Roma, is rising. They have recently been seen in Hungary, Czech Republic, Italy, France, Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia.

We are wondering what actions are or will be taken by the European countries, in particular the most powerful ones (Germany, England, France and Italy), and what the policy of the European Union is or will be in dealing with such topics concerning the Roma. Will it be enough to have various declarations, possible EU programme on Roma? And what are the Roma themselves willing to do and how to engage for the benefit of the Roma.

The situation of Roma communities is inadequate and discriminatory. Economic and social situation of the Roma is poor and is being additionally tightened by the global financial crisis.

In some European countries particularly worrying phenomenon of hate speech has lately been occurring, together with discrimination and intolerance against Roma. The laws apply to all citizens of the European countries, so the state authorities and local communities have to deal with the phenomena of intolerance and xenophobia more vigorously.

These negative trends are also pointed out by the institutions of the Council of Europe and the European Union, since the European Parliament adopted the "European programme for the Roma", and the legal basis for minorities and the Roma is the Treaty of Lisbon.

The situation of Roma community is inadequate and discriminatory. The European Roma Association also points to the gap between declarations and legal and judicial protection of members of the Roma community in some European countries on the one hand, and the practical efforts of countries and



local communities to improve the situation of the Roma on the other side. Our recommendation to all states was to exercise positive practices towards the Roma community seen at some European countries where the situation of the Roma is improving.

We reaffirm the known truth that the situation of minorities, therefore the Roma community, generally is the mirror of democracy and democratic standards of individual countries.

For these reasons we would like to stress and express our wish that all the European states and nations strived for the respect of human and minority rights, to be more tolerant and human.

Who in Europe shapes Roma policy, activism and development of the Roma community?

Should we, Roma, be concerned about the present state in some European countries due to increased discrimination and intolerance against the Roma?

Why such a great reluctance of some countries to the Roma and to solving Roma issues?

Although some Roma organizations are being set up and their number has been increasing fast, questions about their activities towards the development of the Roma community in all areas are being asked.

Why are we Roma not well organized in the European area, to be fair and good counterpart of European Union and the countries of Europe, to be able to be a good political entity that could, well and skilfully represent the interests of the Roma in the European region? And who would speak freely and have no fear of national and European institutions?

Some disadvantages might have contributed to this affect:

- Attitudes and impact of Roma organizations to the government authorities of European countries and the European institutions. More active functioning of the European governments and the EU in terms of protection of the Roma community.
- Activities of Roma organizations in Europe have not been successful because our activities are insufficiently connected and coordinated, the efforts of Roma organizations are not united enough in the European area, and are not to benefit of Roma members of the community.
- Obstacles to better results of Roma organizations in Europe are primarily in discord of Roma organizations, on a state as well as on international levels. Lack of confidence and the determination of some Roma activists and leaders.
- Large gaps between the legal protection of the Roma community and the guaranteed rights and practices in the realization of these rights in each country. Hardship, poverty, lack of education and discrimination.

Racism and intolerance against Roma / Obstacle for Roma inclusion

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In the last two decades the issue of Roma integration into wider society has become one of the priority development issues in the process of European integration, in the context of the new Europe, as a topic that is constantly present in science, among general public and the media, as well as in everyday life.

International documents stress the extraordinary importance of the projects to eliminate prejudices, as a precondition for the effectiveness of the commitments, since the results of surveys and studies show that prejudice to other ways of life and different forms of racism and xenophobia still hinder the integration of the Roma community in Europe. Mainly due to historical circumstances and prejudices, the Roma today are often the victims of collective hatred and stigmatization.

In this context, some content related to the history and perception of Roma as different from the rest of the population stands out, and is reflected in the wide range of detection of this difference - from direct condemnation and rejection of the Roma way of life as unacceptable in recent history, to modern interpretations of "cultural" characteristics of lifestyle differences and the particularities of the Roma. Highlighting these differences, either in the positive or negative generalizations, leads to the phenomenon of today's *anti-gypsyism*, which is reflected in a number of European countries through outbursts of hatred and intolerance against Roma.

In previous periods, the Roma were marked by their way of life on the margins of society and not ethnic or national origin. The stigmatization of the Roma as a group, which is engaged in illegal transactions and delinquency and involved in various crimes, has been continuing to this day in many European countries. Thus, for example, German – Slovenian dictionary from 1980 translates the word "gauner" as "cheater, thief, gypsy" (Tomšič 1980: 277).

In legal terms, their situation has changed in the last decades of the last century, but the perception of the Roma way of life as a danger to society has remained present until today. In the contemporary world the contradictory processes are held, based on the cultural diversity of the Roma. It should be pointed out that paternalism to the Roma community is still present in Europe, which leads to continuous segregation and ghettoization of the Roma community, despite its seemingly positive impact to the promotion of the development and conservation features of the Roma culture by the Roma rights advocates, with the construct of idealized, romantic image of the Roma culture in practice.

Nevertheless, the academic world agrees in the assessment that a qualitative change in the approach to deal with the situation of the Roma has occurred in the European context. For the first time in European history such a



comprehensive approach has been presented in the Recommendation of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe No. 1203 »Gypsies in Europe» (1993), which notes inter alia that Roma “largely contribute to the cultural diversity of Europe.”

Changes in the perception of the Roma identity, which emerged in Europe in the second half of the 20th century, are associated with shifts in the understanding of cultural diversity as richness and exercising the model of coexistence of the acceptance of diversity. Common European dimension covers the following areas in particular: the evaluation of the contribution of the Roma and Roma culture to the European cultural diversity, legal status and the possibility of political participation of Roma at European level, elimination of discrimination and social inclusion of vulnerable groups.

Programmes for the improvement of the situation of Roma in education, employment, health and housing situation are included in the activities of the Council of Europe and the European Union, as an obligation for all states, which they are required to implement within the adopted long-term national strategies. Projects aimed at improving the education and training models of the Roma, financed from European funds, take into account both integrative and protective function of these programmes and projects that enable the integration of Roma into mainstream society and reduce their dependence on social assistance, as well as socialization and promotional objectives in terms of conservation and the development of elements of ethnic identity of the Roma community and effective participation in the life of the whole society.



Between rights and responsibilities

Contribution to the international conference Broaden Horizons, on 26 and 27 November 2015, „Networks and Experiences for Successful Roma Inclusion“

**Vlasta Nussdorfer, lawyer, ombudswoman, Human Rights Ombudsman of the Republic of Slovenia, www.varuh-rs.si
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First, a few words on the Human Rights Ombudsman of the RS. On the basis of Article 159 of the Constitution of the RS, an ombudsman shall protect human rights and fundamental freedoms in relation to state authorities, local self-government and bearers of public authorities. So, the ombudsman controls the operation of power holders (eg. state authorities, municipalities), and never controls the individuals. When the ombudsman finds a violation of human rights, the ombudsman proposes a specific solution to the power holder, however, the ombudsman has no coercive mechanisms to enforce its proposals. The power of the ombudsman is entirely dependent on the will of the addressees, that is, from their voluntary respect for the proposals.

In 2011, the ombudsman began systematically to address the situations of alarming living conditions of the Roma population, who sometimes even have problems in accessing drinking water. On the other hand, we listened to the complaints made by the non-Roma population about their problems in harmony with the Roma community. There have been reports of thefts, shootings, unvaccinated dogs, threats to the environment, etc.

The ombudsman found that the violations of human rights of both the Roma and the non-Roma community the most commonly and to the greatest extent occur in areas where the Roma live in illegal settlements. These Roma live from day to day in insecurity and constant fear that they will have to fight for a roof over their head. They are faced with a lack of sense of security, acceptance in the environment and poverty. Simply by staying there, the residents of illegal settlements come into conflict with the laws and are already born into the initial conditions of illegality, while such a situation being natural to them. Their way of life is permanently characterised by their housing conditions, which are illegal and unregulated, in violation of the rights of Roma to personal dignity (Article 34 of the Constitution), the right to proper housing (Article 78 of the Constitution) and the special rights of the Roma community set out in Article 65 of the Constitution.

When considering initiatives of members of the Roma community, the ombudsman also gives the greatest importance to the establishment of legal and municipal regulation of Roma settlements, which in our opinion is a basic prerequisite to achieve the purpose of the law on the Roma community in Slovenia, i.e. the inclusion of the Roma community into Slovenian society. Even the National Programme of Measures for Roma, which ends this year, sets legal and municipal regulation of Roma settlements as a priority area number 1. Page



eight of this document reads: “Providing adequate habitable conditions is the basis for inclusion of the Roma in educational processes, in the labor market and in social integration”.

In compliance with the relevant regulations, legal and municipal arrangement of Roma settlements is primarily the task of the municipalities, which should in Roma settlements, regardless of their legal status, immediately provide basic necessities such as drinking water and sanitation, as well as electricity. In the medium-term, the municipalities should on the basis of their adopted action plans include Roma settlements in spatial plans and enable them their legalisation.

Sometimes, the ombudsman succeeds by putting forward proposals to the mayors of municipalities in order to provide drinking water in Roma settlements. As an example of good practice I can give you the former mayor of Novo mesto, Mr Muhič, who provided at my proposal in August 2013 the Roma settlement Žabjek with the supply of drinking water in a very short time.

In general, the Ombudsman notes in its work that the realisation of arrangement of housing conditions unfolds too slowly and to the detriment of the objective of integration of Roma into the Slovenian society. It turned out that the task of legal and urban regulation of Roma settlements in many ways exceeds the capacity of some municipalities. In some cases there is a lack of personnel, knowledge, in others a lack of money, but often also a lack of political will. In some Roma settlements are not even provided with drinking water, which is unacceptable from a humanitarian point of view, from the perspective of human rights protection and also in the light of the international commitments undertaken by the Republic of Slovenia.

Due to inactive municipalities, the ombudsman often turns to national authorities and requires them to take responsibility for the elimination of human rights violations. At the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia in May 2012, the ombudsman addressed a special report on the housing conditions of Roma in south-eastern Slovenia. Among other things, the ombudsman called for ensuring adequate access to drinking water in Roma settlements regardless of the legal status of the land on which they stand. The recommendations were repeated by the Ombudsman in its regular annual reports for the years 2012 and 2013, and were also adopted by the National Assembly at its reading of the



mentioned report. Nevertheless, they have still not been implemented yet.

Recently, in dealing with one of the Roma settlements in Dolenjska region, we have due to several years of inactivity of the municipality in regulating the Roma settlement proposed to the Government of the RS to adopt and implement all measures necessary to ensure access to drinking water and sanitation in the Roma settlement as soon as possible. We are still awaiting the response of the Government.

The ombudsman considers the regulation of Roma settlements is unfolding too slowly. Some municipalities have not adopted detailed action plans, some mayors do not even recognise the existence of the Roma community in their municipality, although it has been there for decades. Even the government often responds to the ombudsman's suggestions with the excuse that the regulation of Roma settlements is subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the municipalities and the government itself should not interfere with it, and that it takes time and close and constructive partnership of all stakeholders (municipality, Roma and state) to regulate the conditions. When the ombudsman's proposal is related to the provision of such basic human rights such as access to drinking water and sanitation, shifting of responsibility is not acceptable according to the ombudsman, especially because the alternate action of the Government of the RS to ensure that essential goods is not associated with high financial charges.

Despite the findings, proposals and recommendations of the ombudsman, the human rights of the members of the Roma community and people from the area surrounding the Roma settlements often continued to be violated. Affected in their dignity, personality rights, property rights, equality before the law and, ultimately, confidence in the rule of law. They continue to revolve



in a vicious circle of mutual incomprehension: the Roma have difficulties with integration into Slovenian society, schooling, education, employment - these are the ideals which they cannot come close to due to their intolerable living conditions. Uneducated and unemployed, they engage in conflicts with non-Roma, with the consequence that non-Roma consistently oppose legal and municipal regulation of their settlements, the argument being that the Roma do not deserve that!

The ombudsman believes that this vicious circle can be broken only by the Slovenian government, which should act whenever the municipality is inactive in the regulation of Roma settlements and this constitutes a violation of human rights. The ombudsman takes the view that the state is due to the ratified international treaties and Article 5 of the Constitution obliged to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms throughout its territory and to eliminate their violations.



Darko Rudaš
(Chairman of the Forum of Roma Councillors Slovenia)

I perceive today's international conference as an opportunity to exchange good as well as bad practices, and as an opportunity to network at the international level in order to jointly create good projects which will help include the Roma in the labour market. I have presented the project 'Roma craft cooperative in a Roma settlement' and it is also my final objective to be part of this conference, with the purpose to broaden my horizons on how to introduce social interpreneurship in Roma settlements.



Dr. Stanka Preskar
(Headmistress of the primary school OŠ Cerklje ob Krki)

The exchange of experiences on the work with Roma pupils, or teaching them, seems very important to me. Not only the experiences of our country but also international ones, since in the first part as well as right now we observe that the problems are very similar, however, the countries search for very various solutions and I believe that I myself will be able to try to integrate a few of them in our own school system.







ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

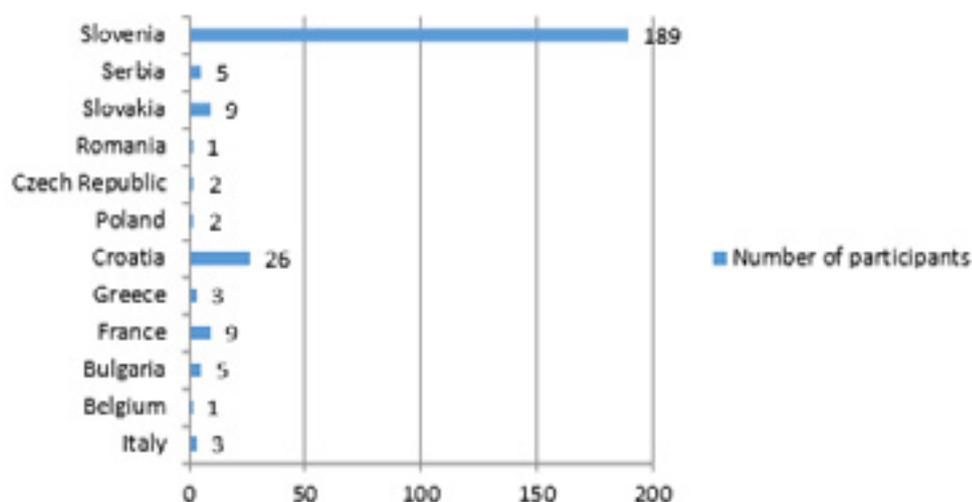
Broaden Horizons – Networks and Experiences for successful Roma Inclusion

On 26 and 27 November 2015, the Development and Education Centre Novo mesto and the e-Roma Resource and Finally project partners organized an international conference in Dolenjske Toplice entitled *Broaden Horizons – Networks and Experiences for successful Roma Inclusion*, which was supported by the Government Office for National Minorities. The honorary patron of the conference was the President of the Republic of Slovenia Mr Borut Pahor.

With the conference, we wanted to point out the meaning of networking of the stakeholders' dealing with the Roma inclusion, contribute to integration and cooperation between sectors and institutions, as well as stimulate the exchange of good practices and materials which were created during various European projects.

At the two-day conference, more than 90 experts and practitioners presented their experiences – 73 expert papers and 25 projects at the project market were presented, and there was support for contacts exchange and networking available all time during the conference.

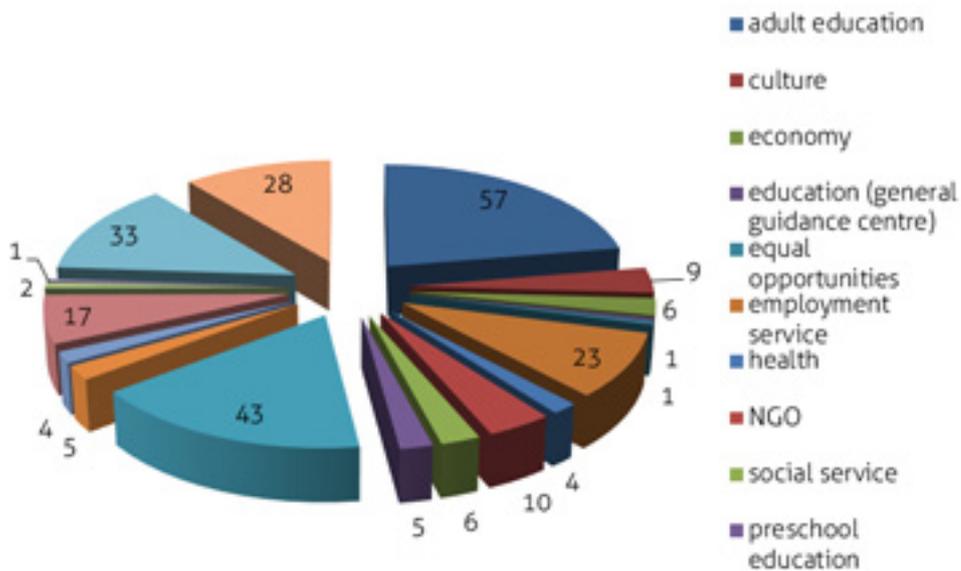
255 participants from 12 countries took part at the conference (211 on the first day, and 202 on the second day):



Participant overview according to countries

The participants are active in different fields – from policy makers, representatives of government and non-governmental organizations, from experts to practitioners in education, employment, culture, health sector, equal opportunities, civil society institutions, government sector, to volunteers and activists etc.





Participant overview according to their field of expertise

The conference was a good opportunity for everyone to connect in order to perform and cooperate better.

The evaluation questionnaires were submitted by 148 participants. The conference was evaluated with 4.43 out of 5 (organisation: 4.47; content: 4.39). 93% of respondents established contacts with other participants at the conference (30% with 1-3 participants, 28% with 3-6 participants, 21% with more than 6 participants, and 14% with more than 10). Therefore, we reached a conclusion that the main purpose of the conference – exchanging experience and networking – was achieved.

The conference materials were published on www.eromaresource.com, each in a language of its presentation. Gradually, all presentations will be translated into Slovenian and English.

Short descriptions of expert contributions at the conference will be edited in a collection, which will also be published on www.eromaresource.com and on the conference website. The e-RR project partners will maintain the website for another 3 years after the project is concluded and will provide the materials to everyone who will require them.





Conclusions of the conference

At the conference, organized presentations and a round table took place – the participants were able to exchange experiences, contacts and best practices, but also pointed out some necessary activities of the following years:

1. Prejudice und stereotypes – a challenge for all

Today, the European institutions are committed to right historical injustice against the Roma and stimulate their inclusion into society. In this regard, international documents and legal acts were adopted, condemning racism, intolerance, and hostility towards the Roma community. Cultural diversity and pluralism are part of a common vision of modern societies, which are based on respecting human rights, ethnic identity and personal dignity of each individual. Unfortunately, in reality we are facing intolerance, hostility and refusal of the different. Above all, such occurrences are enhanced in times of crisis, e.g. mass influx refugees into Europe. Intolerance is expressed in public discourse as well as privately, reflecting in hate speech, which is hidden in the anonymity of the Internet.

At the round table, we discussed prejudice and stereotypes about the Roma that in hidden or open form influence interpersonal relations among the Roma and other population, and still create conflicts and contradictions in almost all European countries. In everyday life, the Roma are still being discriminated and stigmatized due to their ethnic belonging. Despite progress in many areas of social life and in human rights protection, we are still witnessing the emergence and strengthening of anti-Gypsyism or romophobia.

There were representatives of the Roma community, representatives of the academia as well as providers of educational programmes and activities present at the round table. Such structure enabled us to shed light to this broad field from different aspects and stimulated the participants and the audience to thinking and opinion exchange. A special quality and new value to the discussion was added by the scientific approach of researching racism phenomena and intolerance in society with participants' personal experience.

By watching an introductory video of the e-Roma Resource project, a discussion was launched and the reflexion was enriched. The Roma representative pointed out that she does not see the video as discriminatory since it presents one of the activities of the Roma which is becoming an increasingly popular topic also in the majority population. Moreover, the majority population has been pushing the Roma out of this activity. Some of the participants said that the video motivated the viewers to further examine the project content. The participants thought that it would be necessary to find out the view of the Roma community in regard to the video, and respect their opinion.

Participants pointed out in the discussion that it is crucial to learn to live together, and both sides have to make this effort. Roma have to proactively integrate in combatting prejudice, and the public area has to respect the ethic codex, so that examples of good practice are not only subject of good will and

understanding of individual providers. Hate speech has to be recognised and designated as an offence, and sanctioned, especially if it takes place in a public institution.

2. How to create and utilise employment opportunities for the Roma?

Inclusion of the Roma is more than just an issue of social inclusion since it has a positive economic impact, especially in the EU member states with large Roma minorities. In many countries, the Roma represent an increasingly large share of school children and a future work force. Effective employment policies as well as individualized and accessible services for the Roma job seekers enable them to realise their human capital and actively and equally take part in the economic and social life.

The main obstacles for a higher Roma employability appear in the Roma population (i.e. providers on the labour market) but also for employers (customers on the labour market), and are a consequence of the non-systemic dealing with this issue.

Key obstacles on the side of providers (i.e. Roma):

- lack of main competences
- lack of technical skills
- employment is not a value, education/school is not a value
- lack of capital (social connections, financial capital etc.)

Key obstacles on the side of customers (i.e. employers):

- employment discrimination
- lack of workplaces (economic crisis)
- job offer does not match the characteristics of the target group





The speakers and the participating individuals from the audience indicated following priorities for the Roma employment:

- development and implementation of active employment policy, which will be adjusted to the needs of the Roma community, above all women,
- workplaces according to the characteristics of the target group,
- positive discrimination towards Roma regarding employment in the public sector,
- financial stimulation for companies which hire Roma people,
- promotion of social entrepreneurship among the Roma,
- support and education for self-employment,
- more investment into education programmes for knowledge improvement, key competences, which will increase employment possibilities for the Roma,
- development of individualised education programmes, which will increase employment possibilities for the Roma, especially Roma women,
- more investment into individualized counselling support and improvement of job seeking skills,
- workshops for career orientation of the Roma,
- occupational training for young Roma,
- acquiring knowledge in financial competences (finance management, increasing income, self-employment).

3. Inclusion of the Roma in education

Integration of the Roma into education is a complex issue and it is similar to a great extent in different countries. Everybody who works with preschool or primary school education programmes is searching for models and solutions for effective inclusion of Roma children into educational process. Seven speakers presented their experiences and pointed out that early integration of Roma children into educational process is one of the most important reasons for combatting their social exclusion, underprivileged position, inequality and poverty. Some speakers mentioned included children having better reading and literacy results. However, later educational achievements could not be proven by early inclusion into education.

Presentations, questions and discussions can be summed up into following findings:

- In the early inclusion of Roma children, their families, above all mothers, play an important role due to their Roma culture. Therefore, work with Roma families should be stimulated.

- Other important factors are Roma community, school with trained teachers, local community, public institutions and bodies as well as organisations dealing with wellbeing of society.
- A lot of effort is needed for good communication and trust between Roma parents and schools, but also building relationships, creating opportunities for cooperation, combatting demotivation and distrust by getting closer and providing systematic activities on all levels.
- For Roma pupils, Slovenian, Croatian, Romanian or any other language of the majority population is in fact their foreign language. Since language is the most important tool of expression and learning, Roma children have difficulties achieving results due to their lack of mastering a language. Therefore, strategies need to be developed to train teachers in preschool institutions and schools to teach language as a foreign language in order to achieve better literacy and opportunities.
- Numerous projects had a vast impact on understanding and developing certain fields of Roma inclusion into education. However, all projects are concluded when the project period expires, even the most successful ones. After the conclusion, things often go back into old tracks. We expect that due to good results good solutions and best practices will be exchanged, and that decision makers on the highest levels of society will enable their continuation but also integration in systemic solutions.
- Speakers who presented projects, good practices or results believed, that complex, consistent, and systematic actions of all players in Roma inclusion processes is necessary. Only in this way, sustainability of changes and achievements in Roma education is possible.

4.Support activities for Roma inclusion

Support activities that were presented in the group emphasize work with preschool children, young adults, parents, and above all girls and women.

The participants pointed out that work with the whole family and stimulating family literacy are very important in order to achieve cooperation between Roma and majority population.

The environment where Roma live has to be integrated into a learning process, getting closer to Roma people so that in their settlements various contents, programmes and support activities are provided – they have to be dynamic, diverse and adjusted to their needs and deficits. Communication needs to be stimulated, social skills developed, realistic aims set, in order to increase their life quality, spare time activities and contribute to their better self-image.



Also, the following issues were stressed:

- Raising awareness of the parents of school children that learning is crucial for a good social inclusion.
- Training and education for basic activities for Roma inclusion is necessary: hygiene, food, filling out forms, paying bills etc.
- Cooperation between parents, pupils/children and teachers is crucial – leading into lower decrease of Roma in schools.
- Work in multicultural (Roma) environment demands trained teachers, mentors and other participants.
- Great success has been shown in tandems of mentors where one is Roma and the other a member of majority population.
- Besides benefits for children, the benefits for parents need to be taken into consideration, including peer learning help etc.

Let us not forget: we should not divide ourselves into Roma and non-Roma, but cooperate and connect.

5. Policies and activities in Roma health

Health is the most important aspect of Roma integration. Without it there is no education and employment. Prevention is better than cure and it is much cheaper – those working in prevention programmes are fully aware of this fact. However, decision makers need to be convinced. We have learned to write strategies and policies, but still we lack implementation into practice.

Seven practices of research, policies and direct work with the Roma people were presented in the group. We need quality research to act further. Pilot projects show good results that can be integrated into regular activities, e.g. education about Roma culture could be integrated into regular education for medical staff. Understanding what is healthy and what is not, is culturally specific. Those who want to work with the Roma or write policies concerning them, have to know their perception of health.



6. Projects for the Roma – sustainability of project results

Exchange of experience on achieving sustainability of project results took place in the group, which is one of the most important parts of each project. The participants believe that there are many ways to cooperate for a long time, if partnerships create close and longterm bounds and develop networks with corresponding stakeholders, including policy makers on all levels - local, regional, national and/or EU.

Sustainability of project results (which cannot always be ensured) has to be provided by transferring them into regular activities of cooperating institutions, but also (as recommended) by attracting attention of institutions included in projects to implement some project results (e.g. implementation of trainings) – in this way utilisation of project results after the project is concluded can be ensured.

Project partners have to inform policy and decision makers in their countries about project results (which have to correspond to local and national aims), present their positive impact on a local, regional, national and/or EU level, and propose allocation of national financial means that could ensure implementation of best measures.









Basic skills - a precondition for success in life

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By clicking on the title, you can access the presentation.

The problem

Current reflections and various activities, which can be categorized as Financial Literacy Project for Roma and the e-RR, increasingly point to a growing gap between education and the needs of the real world and everyday life. Let us point to some of the most acute problems.

The process of globalization is no longer a theoretical concept; the effects of globalization are experienced by adults in all levels of social life, especially in the field of labour. Nowadays, workers from all over the world compete among themselves; local rules must sometimes be transformed overnight due to the invasion of global interests. From this perspective, it seems that education systems are becoming increasingly obsolete, outdated, and too colossal for changes and yet they still produce the social structure that does not know how to adjust the depth and dimension of historical changes that we are witnessing.

Thus, the ability to timely adaptation turns out as critical to viability. On the other hand, there are the originality and uniqueness, which represent an advantage in the race for the job. However, progress cannot be, without a doubt, measured by local or purely national standards. Globalization raises new requirement: the placement of individuals, not only in the national framework, but also to assess where and how one can successfully enter the global labour market.

Life success?

When thinking about life performance, the question of how to measure success is placed at the forefront. Over the last thirty years, education experts, as well as the experts from other areas have been dealing with the construct of competencies and core capabilities that, among other things, arose from the need to identify those basic ingredients of the success, to which we as educators can influence. These building blocks are particularly important for the successful functioning of the labour market, because it is about those fundamental knowledge, skills and attitudes that allow the individual rapid adaptation to different circumstances. A view of competence, which is understood as the ability to function in specific circumstances is being increasingly established, i.e. to be able to choose the very resources that will enable the achievement of one's goals from the plurality of sources. All this



takes place in an environment of everyday life, interwoven with relationships, expectations, needs and problems, as well as obstacles. Even more important is that the skills and constructs are defined as independent and transferable in different circumstances of operations, and are the basis for the management of professional competence at different levels of complexity.

The economies that want to create a vision of progress are greatly interested in how well their adults are trained, and where the investments in education are necessary. In fact, in times of social change in the developed world, frequently asked questions are: Have the adult residents acquired such competencies that will allow them the competitive advantage? What was the role of the educational system in this and what more it can do for adults? Many adults are several years or even decades away from the acquisition of formal education and school completion. Large surveys such as IALS, PISA, have scientifically demonstrated that there is a strong correlation between the performance in one's youth, so during school years, and later periods. Further findings are even more worrying: educational systems help poorly in developing the skills of adults after completing school. There is little information about what was going on with their knowledge and skills, i.e. competencies after completing training. Therefore, a decision prevailed among the experts that the longitudinal survey PIAAC will measure the competences in such a way, that they will be comparable between countries and also within each country. Slovenia has acceded to this study as well. So far competences have not yet been measured on a representative sample, not even on such a large sample (in PIAAC involving 33 countries and 166 thousand adults¹).

IALS survey (1994-1998) on adult literacy, for example, has reliably shown some time ago that a certain level of literacy (i.e. level 3) preconditions that the individual will truly meet the challenges of modern society. Adults who do not reach this level are in some way socially excluded and may be ranked among the so-called vulnerable groups. These are the groups of population who suffer from various disadvantages, are less flexible in responding to changes and therefore less competitive everywhere, where operating principles of competition are applied or resources are limited. This specifically means those adults who have trouble processing a wide range of texts - especially by reading, and have difficulties to learn new work skills, who do not have sufficient social skills for successfully constituting necessary social relationships, and whose knowledge was not sufficient enough for successful completion of secondary school. In-depth European researches (e.g. INCLUDED 2006 to 2011) have drawn attention to the particularly unfavourable legality, which complicates the success in life of vulnerable groups. It is expressed as a multiple exclusion, defined by the prolonged deprivation, the inability to find the information, to have poor "resourceful" skills, low social capital, low support of social networks and most often, to have adverse social situation in the form of high competition for available jobs, inefficient social system, high regional concentration of unemployment, difficult to afford or costly training.

¹ Preparations for the third round of the survey are being in progress, including six new countries.



PIAAC study (2013-2016) shows, after the first measurement in 2013, the following: at this very moment, there is up to three quarters of people who do not reach this level in less-developed countries, while in most developed countries there is still one third of such adults. It was also found that only one-third of adults in the world have sufficient competence to be able to communicate with people from other parts of the world, when they want and when they need to. Slightly more gratifying is the fact that the number is significant higher among young people, about a half. In this context, it is necessary to follow some general rules that have emerged from data on adult skills (OECD Skills Outlook 2013. First Results from the Survey of Adult Skills):

- The skills that are not used become outdated and weakened.
- Adults who often use skills are more literate and are better at counting and solving problems.
- Only one in two adults with low skills is employed.
- Dealing with relevant activities outside the workplace is very important for good training of adults, even more important than dealing with similar activities in the workplace.
- Differences remain also in terms of gender: women and men use their skills and competences in different ways, it is assumed, due to the different jobs. Women and men might have similar levels of skills and competences, but nevertheless different working status.

Challenges

Given the above, it seems logical that theorists as well as practitioners are returning back to the fundamental principles which need to be rethought. In this context, the fundamental abilities get a new meaning. It would be reasonable to reconsider whether the learning for success in life is the way of adaptation and acceptance of cultural change and identity formation and the acquisition and creation of knowledge throughout the whole life cycle. What role does the experience of an adult play in this, their point of view, especially their values? In this context, thinking about the fundamental capabilities through the new needs of society seems reasonable. Digital and information revolution leads to changing of needs and new social relations. An increase in the proportion of people who are among the vulnerable groups is of concern. Therefore, we must not only pay attention to the needs of society in general and the development of capacity for work, but also the needs of individuals. An increasing of an inequality of social groups also commits the educators to the empowerment of the most vulnerable and thus to an increased focus on equity. In this context, the partnership between mainstream culture and the individual (e.g. Romani) community is possible only through an equal participation from both sides.



Literacy of Roma Children: Analysis of Oral and Reading Competences

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By clicking on the title, you can access the presentation.

The current research has exposed social and cultural deprivation as well as the fact that Roma children are in fact speakers of another language as the main reasons for such meagre results. However, the actual linguistic competences of the Roma children remained a black box as there was no empirical research in this field. With this survey, we intended to demonstrate that the proper early literacy development process is indeed crucial for the successful integration of Roma into the education system. Therefore, we wanted to determine the level of reading competences of the Roma pupils at the end of the third year of primary school, when the literacy process is supposed to be already completed. In addition, we explored their oral skills; in particular, children's storytelling has a significant prognostic value in the development of their literacy. The results of the quantitative research (and the statistical analysis) offer fresh insights on the increasingly large knowledge gap between Roma and non-Roma children – especially in the light of the contemporary findings about “emergent literacy”. In the conclusion, the opportunities to develop new, more appropriate system solutions for literacy development within the school practice are being discussed.



Successful integration of Roma in Education II

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By clicking on the link, you can access the project presentation on the e-RR project platform.

Consortium partners:

- PEOPLE'S UNIVERSITY OF KOČEVJE, the managing partner of the consortium
- ROMA ASSOCIATION SLOVENIA
- UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA, FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
- DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION CENTRE NOVO MESTO
- Consortium partners – 31 primary and nursery schools (15 primary schools and 1 nursery school in SE Slovenia; 14 primary schools and 1 nursery school in NE Slovenia)

The project, which lasted from 1 September 2011 to 31 August 2014 was to examine the consequences of exclusion from the education process for members of the Roma minority in Slovenia, to enable more effective integration of the Roma in preschool and primary education, where we focused mainly on the time in one's life when they should be actively learning and acquiring vocational education. In doing so, we considered solutions that are assumed by the Strategy for Education of Roma in RS.

One of the important measures for successful integration of Roma children and pupils in the educational system was also the functioning of Roma assistants in residential areas and schools. In the previous period (2008 to 2010) the integration of a Roma assistant in schools, which had a large number of Roma pupils, significantly contributed to the increased presence of Roma children in education and to the increased contact of Roma pupils' parents with the school. In addition, 31 members of the Roma community acquired knowledge to achieve the standards for a Roma assistant, prescribed by the national vocational qualification.

The aim of this project was to upgrade the work done so far, so we raised the quality of the work of Roma assistants, as the aim of school attendance only was no longer satisfactory. In the three-year period of the project, the role of a Roma assistant was upgraded, both in the light of the required higher level of education of Roma assistants as well as in the light of integration of a Roma assistant in the register of duties and tasks of nursery schools and schools.



Roma Early Childhood Inclusion (RECI+) Croatia report: Research findings

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A brief description of the research and methodology used for the Roma Early Childhood Inclusion (RECI+) Croatia report as well as the key research findings related to the access and quality of preschool/school education for Roma children in Croatia. Major challenges that Roma families face will be presented.

These include:

- Living conditions and multiple poverty factors;
- Home and community environments;
- Role of Roma women, mothers and caregivers;
- School success and integration; and
- Implementation gaps.



Literacy Cubed – Focus on Roma Families (LIT3)

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Literacy Cubed – Focus on Roma Families (LIT3), implemented in December 2013 to November 2015, is a transnational cooperation project promoting lifelong learning measures for Roma integration, which aimed to develop and advocate for effective family literacy (reading and health literacy) policies and practices for and in disadvantaged Roma communities with a view to raising Roma children's attainment level in general education and improving Roma adults' literacy skills. The project (a) developed and field-tested a family literacy programme targeting three generations within the broader family; (b) produced an evidence-based European family literacy policy for disadvantaged Roma communities; (c) engaged stakeholders in developing local strategies for implementing family literacy policies and programmes in three cities (Cluj-Napoca, Romania; Podgorica, Montenegro; Dolny Kubin, Slovakia).

As a result of the project, Roma children and parents have positive attitudes to literacy learning; Roma children have better reading skills; Roma parents have become more confident in supporting their children's learning; family literacy has been placed on the agenda of local public authorities and educational institutions; family literacy and Roma integration promoters in Europe have gained a new advocacy tool; as a result of the dissemination efforts, there is increased awareness of the importance of family literacy as an effective measure for Roma integration. Challenges facing the project implementers in their efforts to make the project results sustainable pertain to recruiting Roma families, training family literacy facilitators and – in general – securing institutional commitment from public authorities to implement the local strategies developed during the project.

LIT3 (www.lit3-project.eu) was funded with support from the European Commission, within the framework of LLP, project no. 543068-LLP-1-2013-1-RO-KA1-KA1MPR.

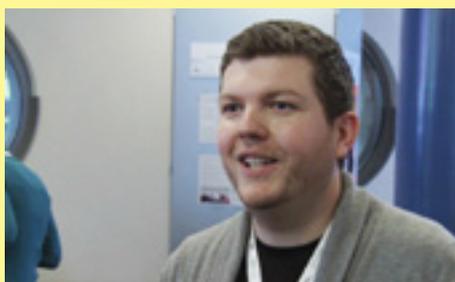


Together for successful integration of Roma children into education

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The presentation shortly presents the strategic goals of the UNICEF Croatia in the field of fostering early child education, as the prerequisite condition for equally accessible and quality education for Roma children in Croatia. In achieving its goals, UNICEF has built its partnership with the Open academy Step by Step and developed a programme “Ready together”, implementing it in Sisak and Slavonski Brod – two cities with substantive percentage of Roma children population. The aims, target groups and the activities of the program, as well as strategies for the replication of this model at the local and national level are presented. Presentation includes short documentary (film) on the programme development. In the next 6 months period the external evaluation and results of the programme will be available as well.



Sandi Horvat
(Roma Academic Club, Slovenia)

The kind of project markets, as this one here today, are very important, since also us, the Roma, can discover many novelties which are already hapenning abroad but not yet in Slovenia.



Challenges in the process of education of Roma children in a special programme

Helena Prosen Zupančič, remedial teacher, Dragotin Kette Primary School, Novo mesto, Slovenia

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The article points to the caution in guidance of Roma children, relying on the Strategy for Education of Roma in Slovenia which states, that “Roma pupils as an ethnic group cannot be students with special needs.” 12% of Roma children from the Novo mesto area are educated in the adapted programme at Dragotin Kette Primary School, where they represent one half of the students. School data shows: the number of Roma children in the adjusted programme in the last decade has increased; the majority is directed to the programme in the middle of the school year, most of them in the last triad, mostly due to behavioural issues. Those pupils are absent without permission, do not attend school, drop out prior to completed primary school obligation and successfully complete only 7 classes. The school has developed effective mechanisms to motivate students to attend school, to outreach to parents and to stop the violence and unwanted behaviour. For greater effect of VI process students who are actually in need, should be redirected to the corresponding programmes in the early years of schooling. We would like more support from other institutions, when in certain cases the school exhausts all the options to find solutions and is left alone and helpless. Roma pupils should not to be expected to only adjust to VI system, but it should be possible, within the frameworks to draw nearer to Roma cultural environment and to enable an individual approach. It would take an involvement of a Roma mentor and the lowering of standards. Working with Roma pupils covers a wide range of challenges, while the overall picture is wider than presented here. Experience in the school show that the key for success is positive attitude, openness to cooperation, teamwork, mutual assistance among employees, involved collaboration with students and parents, focus on finding solutions and effective problem solving, tolerance and acceptance of differences, clearly set boundaries and all-round consistency in following the rules and agreements.



Roma children also need organized informal activities in their environment - a day centre for Roma children and young people

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Among the Roma in Dolenjska, Posavje and Bela Krajina, there is a distinctly low educational level and a relatively high number of members of the Roma community, who are illiterate or did not complete primary school. Lack of education represents an obstacle in seeking and obtaining employment, in creation of a healthy lifestyle and in active involvement in society. It is for these reasons that education is seen as the biggest concern in relation to the Roma.

The Roma are excluded in all areas of life but certainly nowhere with such harmful consequences than in the field of education, therefore an improved approach to knowledge and skills is essential for the advancement of the Roma community. That is why a Day centre for Roma children and young people was created, organized by the Association for the Development of Voluntary Work Novo mesto, implemented in two of the biggest Roma settlements in Novo mesto: in the Roma settlements of Brezje and Šmihel.

The purpose of the programme is to empower children and young Roma through informal learning and quality leisure time, thus contributing to their greater social inclusion, greater involvement in the school system and higher levels of quality of life. To this end, in addition to support for learning and learning Slovenian, we organize numerous group and individual activities to develop social skills, assertiveness, social capital, creativity, and activities for the promotion of mental health and healthy lifestyles. The programme takes place every weekday from 12 to 5 o'clock and continuously involves over 130 children.

In addition to formal education, informal learning can be recognized as an important tool to achieve the objectives, as it has been highlighted as the most effective, positive and engaging way to acquire knowledge, skills and experience. The advantage of non-formal learning is its voluntary nature, flexibility, cooperation opportunities, a stronger link with the interests and aspirations of users and, as such, can significantly contribute to the prevention of social exclusion of children and young Roma.



Mobile Support Service for Roma - on the path to empowerment of Roma

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By clicking on the title, you can access the presentation.

By clicking on the [link](#), you can access the project presentation on the e-RR project platform.

At the Advisory centre of Novo mesto, which is one of the 14 counselling centres in Slovenia aimed at all adults in the region, Roma adults have been ever since its creation, identified as a target group that needs special attention at informing and giving advice. In daily encounters with Roma in RIC-in Novo mesto we have learned about their needs, interests and prejudices, weak and strong areas, and have established that they need a different, less institutionalized assistance and support in the context of advisory activities. In response to these findings, the model of mobile counselling service for Roma was created in 2007, because we could not adequately respond to their needs in established ways.

The model of mobile advisory service is based on the “outreach” approach and thus mobile consultant works with Roma adults directly in the field, in Roma settlements. The consultant carries out personal counselling in settlements, together with workshops for discovery and development of professional interests, motivational visits in order to prompt the inclusion in education, talks to parents about education, learning and the importance of knowledge, and helps them with problems they encounter because of their low literacy, etc. The consultant also motivates the adult Roma to find a job, helps them with writing applications, information seeking, in short, responses to all their needs ... This is how we ensure the organization and implementation of activities in a way that inspires confidence among the Roma people and attracts them to participate. In this form of fieldwork, we included our network of partners of advisory centre (educational organizations, CSD, Institute for Employment) and colleagues in the JD socialization and integration of the Roma. We also got a lot of assistance in establishing good contacts and confidence by individual Roma from the village, Roma councillors or purely ordinary Roma. During the operation of a mobile counselling service for Roma as specific activity under the project LLCs Dolenjska (2008 - 2010), 250 participants were included; we conducted more than 520 advisory services and 850 hours of counselling. In the context of the activities of the advisory centre, there are at least 8% of hearings (approximately 150 advisory hearings) for the target group of Roma every year. Unfortunately, limited resources do not cover all the needs that are identified in the field. Because we believe that good practice should be maintained, the model is being upgraded in other projects and programmes, and we strive to empower the Roma and help them on their path of discovery where their knowledge becomes a value to them.



MS4ROW - Mentoring system for educational and vocational guidance of Roma girls and women

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Roma girls are daily faced with multiple discrimination and exclusion in different areas. Low literacy and education reduces employment opportunities, hampers progress and stamp them in a vicious cycle of poverty and economic dependence. Education and employment are values which can contribute significantly to improving the situation of the Roma women. Despite the fact that the situation in this area is improving, we cannot be satisfied that only a handful of Roma women are highly educated and employed. It is therefore necessary to raise awareness and to inform Roma girls, the Roma community and the general public about the importance of education and employment of Roma women.

A woman is still the main bearer of the education of children and the guardian of their social development and inclusion. Consequently, her adequate capacity to implement the parental role - to be a promoter and a role model for children in education and employment, is crucial.

As demonstrated by the MS4ROW project, Roma girls are ready for learning, eager to have knowledge, occupations and employment, and wish to actively contribute to improving their situation. Opportunity, encouragement and support is all they need. MS4ROW offers just that. With the help of carefully planned activities, open communication and trust, it encourages and supports Roma girls in the formulation and implementation of their education and careers. Individual meetings with their mentor allow a systematic and in-depth planning and monitoring of educational and employment opportunities, and objectives of the participants. Group workshops are designed for reflection, exchanging of experiences and effective solutions between participants and mentors, as well as providing space for learning about best practice - stories of success. With the help of specially designed educational activities (training, courses ...) the participants acquire knowledge and skills, general and professional, with the support of web applications and e-learning. The efficiency of MS4ROW is therefore in its sensibility and integrity. More on www.ms4row.eu.



Roma wheel on the way of education

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Project objectives

Overall objective: Creation and promotion of equal chances in access to education for disadvantaged groups

Specific objectives: To improve school success, knowledge of Croatian language, the inclusion of Roma pupils in extracurricular activities, social inclusion, to promote the development of a multicultural atmosphere in the school and in Orehovica, to introduce education on ecology, to improve social and communication skills and increase motivation of Roma children for inclusion in secondary education.

Activities and managers

1. After-school care for pupils from the 1st to the 4th grade. The following activities were implemented: studying and doing homework, required reading and reading children's magazines, games, creative workshops (art, music, literature, drama, design, handiwork), recreation on the sports courts and in the gym. Activities were implemented for 5 days in a week, lasting for 4 hours and pupils were given lunch every day.
2. Extra lessons of Croatian as a foreign language were aimed to pupils from the 1st to the 8th grade in order to enable them for successful participation in everyday conversational situations, improve communication, raise awareness of the need for language skills, combat the fear of language and gradual acquisition of the Croatian language standard. Activities were implemented for 90 minutes a week.
3. Cooperative learning was aimed to pupils from the 5th to the 8th grade. It was informal but organised form of education. Activities were implemented for 90 minutes a week. Pupil volunteers got volunteers' cards and they attended volunteer supervisions as well. Pupils have developed the skills and abilities for planning and organising studying, learned to study regularly and actively, improved communication skills, formed positive "me-concept", developed empathy and collaborative relationships.



4. Inclusion workshops (work with parents) were implemented twice a month in pre-arranged terms. Workshops lasted for 90 minutes and there participated up to 20 parents. Workshop topics were: "Family and school", "Parental responsibility", "I like my job," "We are not all the same, but we are all equal". There were sports games of teachers and parents (team building), "Chestnut party" and a movie evening.
5. Maintaining the school garden and orchard, construction of a pavilion - the activities were implemented by pupils, the staff of Orehovica Primary School and inhabitants of Orehovica. We planted an orchard, established a school garden, made composting. There is also built the summer classroom, an area of 8x8 metres where are implemented lessons and other various activities.
6. Summer camp for scout group was designed for pupils from the 5th to the 8th grade, participants of scout group. Accompanied by four teachers, it was realized the 8th days-holiday on the destination on the Adriatic Sea. Pupils had structured time during the day and joint activities. We purchased complete camping equipment and uniforms for scouts (50 pupils).
7. Little school of housekeeping and home economics was intended for the pupils of 7th and 8th grade, their parents, and other interested parents. Topics that have been implemented at the workshops were: managing the household budget, creating the environmental awareness, the principles of proper nutrition, mastering skills needed for housekeeping, cooking, making cakes and winter stores, sewing and mending clothes, handicrafts, home hygiene and flower arranging.
8. Presentation of Roma customs and culture had the task to present the Roma customs and culture to the wider public, to affirm the Roma customs and culture, to improve conditions for their preservation and development, to break stereotypes and prejudice and social marginalisation of the Roma.

More information about the project: www.os-orehovica.hr (Projekti → Romski kotač)



Basic Competencies of financial literacy in terms of PISA

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The Programme for International Student Assessment OECD PISA is an international survey, by means of which mathematical, reading and scientific literacy is established in Slovenia, and it includes the 15-year-old pupils. In 2012 we decided, due to an increasing individual accountability and risk-taking for the financial future, to also assess the financial literacy. It is the case of understanding financial concepts in everyday situations, as the ones Slovenian adolescents are encountered by daily. In the overall study 5,703 pupils were involved, and the sample also included 12 Roma pupils from different educational programmes. Slovenian pupils reached lower results (485 points against 500 points) in the field of financial literacy in comparison with the OECD average, where 82% of students (OECD, 2014) reach the basic level of financial literacy (Level 2). Roma pupil on average achieved the lowest performance both in the field of mathematics and financial literacy, compared to the other participants in the survey. Vonta and Jager (2013) point out that more than half of Roma children do not complete primary education, while the number of students with decisions increases significantly in the second cycle. The reason for this is probably also the fact that most of them do not adopt the basic competencies that enable further learning (e.g. reading, numeracy, learning attitude) in the first cycle.

These basic competencies are the basis for the subsequent understanding of financial concepts. Important challenges in strengthening the competencies of financial literacy among Roma children are therefore seen in the following areas: strengthening the basic skills of reading and numeracy in the earliest years, where the continuous inclusion of Roma children in classes with peers is a precondition, and later transfer of these skills into actual financial situations, teaching the basic elements of the financial world (e.g. what a bank account is, favourable purchase), and in particular strengthening the motivation to search for information and advice, and the self-confidence in the financial sector (Šterman Ivančič, 2013).

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Early marriage - culture or abuse

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The members of the international partnership project “Early marriage - culture or abuse?” are Kočevje Adult Education, Development and Training Centre Novo mesto (Slovenia), Amalipe Center for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance (Bulgaria) and FormAzione Co & So Network - Consorzio SCS. (Italy). Our project activities have in the period from 1/10/2014 to 9/30/2016 focused on an early detection and preventive measures related to the prevention of early marriages among the Roma.

Using guided questionnaires among the Roma population, we will form the basis for the creation of views among the respondents on the decisions of the early formation of the family, and indicate the links or the reasons for such decisions.

The implementation of education in the field of mediation in multicultural communities, aimed at professionals in the field of education, social work, counselling and medical care, representatives of local community and the police, and to representatives of the Roma community will be of great support to all those involved in daily contact with Roma. The employment of so called “Roma mediator”, who carries out “door to door” visits in Roma settlements, is a very important and a new approach. The mediator’s job is to raise awareness, provide a variety of information and identify potential cases of early marriages and various conflict situations. The “inter-institutional” group will be created within the project, which will be regularly informed of the work of Roma mediator and will thus actively participate and seek for solutions, propose preventive measures in the field of prevention of early marriages. The important part of the fieldwork of Roma mediator will also be encouraging the Roma population to actively participate in broader social developments, including the integration of Roma women in the planned project workshops and discussions.

The project also includes primary school youth, in the implementation of short-preventive educational programme covering the following topics: reproductive health, sex education, family planning, values, forms of violence, peaceful conflict resolution and raising awareness of the cultural diversity of different cultural traditions.

Raising awareness of the general public on the progress of the project and initiatives will be implemented in the form of various workshops, roundtables and conferences, where the representatives of local communities and institutions will be present.

More about current news, results, materials generated and other impressions can be found on the project website (www.early-marriage.eu).



Roma pupils in the first days of school

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My name is Zlata Vranešič and I am a teacher. For the last 30 years I have been teaching at the Miran Jarc Primary School in Črnomelj.

I teach 1st grade of primary school. Working with pupils at this age level is very varied, sometimes exhausting, and above all very nice. To the teachers, it offers many opportunities for creative work. Children are relaxed, and are looking forward to something new, different and exciting.

I decided to have this presentation because I meet Roma pupils every year and they still are an exciting challenge for me.

Even so, I have attended the training on working with the Roma. Those have only been theoretical lectures and had little in common with the practical work. I had to rely particularly on my own resourcefulness and experience I had acquired and on advice of other teachers, combined with a lot of work, effort, willingness and lots of patience.

In the school year 2015/16, 74 Roma pupils attend the Miran Jarc Primary School Črnomelj, representing 21% of all primary school population. There are 60 pupils in the first classes in this school year, 20 of them are the Roma. The number is about the same every year.

When starting school, Roma pupils bring their own culture, education and language with them.

Pupils find it very difficult to be separated from their parents during the first days. To a Roma child a nursery or a school is often the first or even the only direct contact with the outside world, and at the same time the first separation from their parents. Children cry, they flee and cannot be easily separated from their parents. Most of them are not ready for school. For them, the school is a new environment which they are not used to. They get easily confused by a huge number of new faces, unfamiliar people, closed space etc. In order to make Roma children feel good and to make it easier for them to learn, it is necessary to establish good communication and ensure safety, trust and acceptance.

There are not as many problems on the first day, because of everything that is happening around them: performance, entertainment, small courtesies, gifts (a toy). Their expectations are met. The problem arises on the following day. I have a feeling that parents intimidate them and try to discipline them by using a school.

I ask them, among other things, where and who with they would like to sit. Communication is quite difficult, at least at the beginning, because they do not know the language, they are too silent, reserved, uncommunicative and frightened.

They spend the first days of school viewing the classroom, looking for a place where they feel safe.



In addition, they do not like closed space and cannot wait to go home.

Even the temperature in the classroom often does not suit them and they must get used to it.

It so happens that the children do not want to stay in school when their parents bring them. In such cases, a Roma assistant helps. I also allow one of the parents to stay with a child until they adjust.

However, it has to be noted that there are Roma children who are completely ready for school.

Bršljin Primary School– we all make progress

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Pupils in Bršljin Primary School differ as the result of different ethnic origin, as well as the result of social factors. Those factors are not related to the child's own choices, which they could have an impact on, but it is the circumstances which the child was born in and which essentially characterize their future path in life. It would be totally unacceptable if this was not taken into account in the classroom.

The richness of Bršljin Primary School regarding the ethical and cultural diversity lies in its ability to take care of the individual needs of pupils, while at the same time taking cultural and linguistic differences into account. I believe that we are among the schools which follow the principle of equal opportunities and ideas of multiculturalism, because we enable lessons, which provide bridging differences, and at the same time enable the preservation of the pupils' mother tongue, culture and the formation of their identity. The largest percentage of Roma pupils are in the first educational period, which is also crucial for the acquisition of basic skills and normal integration in educational work.

Other European countries are also introducing Roma's teaching contents in the national curriculum among the other measures of good practice. The purpose of integration of Roma culture in the classroom is not only learning about this culture, but above all awareness of Slovenian cultural idiosyncrasies, because a man is more intensely aware of their own identity when facing other identities.

So, are we any different? Of course, each of us is a story for themselves. I hope that in the future I, as a teacher, will always manage to steer diversity into unity, which will endeavour to maximize the knowledge, skills and achievement of learning goals for all the children in the classroom.



Bršljin Primary School– we all work together

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Teaching Roma pupils requires a specific, comprehensive approach. Emphasis is placed on didactic and methodical adjustments for bridging social and cultural differences and lack of understanding of the Slovenian language, and collaboration with the environment.

We proceed from the standpoint that a successful participation in society and the average level of knowledge are accessible only on condition of coexistence of different ethnic groups in the environment, where good teaching conditions are assured.

Work with Roma children is intense; therefore we must establish conditions that will ensure the quality teaching of Roma children in the future, regardless to the increase in population. This means that the effective models of teaching of Roma children must be maintained in schools, for example: the individual, group and additional professional support (ISDP), which is carried out in Bršljin Primary School.

Successful work in Bršljin Primary School is based on promoting a continuous professional development of teachers, on developing personal growth, on quality individualisation and differentiation of lessons, and on the integration of evaluation and reflection. In our work, we are professional and consistent, we follow the law and we try to cooperate with parents. There is a cooperative dialogue between the school and the environment, and in the environment itself. Open forms of learning and cooperation and positive experience of single and joint learning with children and parents enable successful adaptation of Roma families to the obligation of primary education.

Bridging the socio cultural differences is a lengthy and never completed process. Its strategy must be clear and must derive from the needs of all parties. Coexistence implies a constructive dialogue between the school and the Roma community.

We anticipate the change of the ethnic composition of the society that has to establish mechanisms for the integration of any ethnic group migrating to the territory of a country. It is essential to create long-term sensible policy of desegregation by constructive cooperation of experts on Roma issues and the current situation in Bršljin Primary School. Bršljin Primary School is already a model of society in miniature, and due to the situation in its closer and broader environment may be an example of good solutions.



Bršljin Primary School - we are all successful

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Bilingual children have better cognitive skills. Bilingualism affects the concentration and mental abilities. It also represents a great challenge to a pupil, since they must maintain attention and not apply the wrong words, and not to confuse the two different language codes. When entering the first grade, the six-year old Roma pupils begin to learn English as a second language, along with Slovenian, which is their first foreign language. That can create additional stress and strain with some individuals. Learning English as a second foreign language should be motivational oriented and utmost comforting. The contents are adopted to the age of the pupils as well as to their experiences of everyday life.

Many pupils do not understand the distress of a Roma child who does not comprehend what is happening in the classroom itself, therefore it is necessary to deal with similar situations. Fairy tales in different languages (English, German, Romani, Italian) are presented to all the pupils. Pupils then share their feelings and try to get into the daily lives of Roma children.

Other problems in teaching Roma children are also their weak vocabulary, the lack of education of their parents, poor basic vocabulary in their mother tongue, discouraging environment. A teacher must be aware that Slovenian is not the mother tongue of Roma pupils. Romani language is not a standardized language with established grammar and orthography, so the knowledge of Romani does not contribute in teaching English.

Lessons must be personalized and must contain immediate feedback. The pupil must be offered the effective learning strategies. Language learning should include physical response method, a lot of dance activity, as many motion games as possible. Activities in the classroom should be changed as soon as the concentration slackens. This increases the motivation to learn languages because children love to play and are eager to participate. When they are successful and get the teacher's praise for progress they learn and make progress more easily.



Roma pupils in primary schools with a special curriculum - the emergence and resolution of violence

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At the Dragotin Kette Primary School we note that in the last 10 years, the enrolment of Roma pupils in special educational programme with lower educational standards has increased dramatically. Roma students currently account for 48.3% of all pupils enrolled in this program. The reasons for the increasing involvement of Roma pupils to the primary schools with special curriculum can be found in many areas, but school performance and behavioural problems certainly affect the diversion. The real causes of failure have not been established. A behavioural problem of Roma pupils at our school is becoming a growing problem. In a school year 2014/15 the frequency of violence against peers increased to such an extent that it was necessary to include the outer institutions, especially the police and centre for social work, since a longer-lasting bullying was established in many cases.

The Roma pupils were the main actors in all the cases. The measures that were able to be taken by the school on the basis of its educational plan and with those of the outer institutions, the phenomenon of peer violence has been limited and remains under control. A problem still remains a current and the top issue as violence continues to be a part of everyday school life. Due to the increased detection and treatment of violence in recent years, we have adopted a decision on zero tolerance of it. In resolving the problems teachers can lean on the educational plan of the school and the measures that are provided therein. The pupils - victims of violence are particularly vulnerable due to their specific needs, and are mainly powerless in resolving problems. They therefore need even more guidance and support by teachers and parents. Staying in an environment with such incidence of violence is not stimulating for them and their specific needs. Therefore, the role of schools continues to be the prevention of violence, recognition of forms of violence and raising awareness of it. Our intention is not to generalize but to highlight the problem of violence in connection to an increase in the number of Roma pupils and thereby inform the general public.



The stones in the mosaic of tolerance- creative work with Roma pupils

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When planning work with Roma pupils, the school provides activities for building confidence in school, for eliminating of stereotypes and prejudices, and activities for learning and reinforcing pupils' strong areas, developing social skills and other competencies that empower Roma pupils and parents as active collaborators of working relationship and process.

An individual approach in achieving the learning goals takes place in the context of providing an additional professional assistance. In this way, we improve learning achievements of pupils, eliminate deficits in learning, social and behavioural field, and gain the pupils' trust. Most Roma students have been given an additional professional assistance by teachers. Each teacher prepares an individualized programme of work for an individual subject for each student and keeps adapting methods and forms of work suited to their learning abilities. In order to raise the literacy, Roma pupils who cannot follow the regular programme of reading badges, due to specific deficits, are included in the adjusted reading badge competition with a selection of literary works of Slovenian and Romani writers. A successful instrument for improving cooperation between the school and Roma parents are home visits, which helps to improve school attendance and increases motivation for learning and school work.

The little stones that help us build a mosaic of tolerance are diverse school activities, including the annual commemoration of Roma holiday, various workshops (literary, creative, culinary ...) and implementation of the national UNESCO project Get Closer to Roma Culture, which in an innovative way presented to schools in Slovenia and the wider society the specificities and richness of a Roma culture in terms of preserving cultural heritage, appreciation of the Roma way of life and living conditions, and also the strengthening of co-existence of cultures and intercultural dialogue.

The challenges we face in working with the Roma population are related primarily to a search for the new incentive-based approaches for a more regular school attendance and the continuance of education, the preservation of trust of Roma parents and the improvement of cooperation between all participants in the educational process, as well as to raise awareness about the importance of education and employment for more quality life and active participation in society.



Let's look forward to the countryside

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Project of NGO Úsmev ako dar/ Smile as a Gift – Center MAK/ Poppy seed Trnava – Slovakia

The paper is focused on the activities of the project “Let's look forward to the countryside”, which was implemented in 2014 at the Centre MAK - Smile as a gift. The center participates in the long life of the local Roma community in Trnava on Coburg Street. . MAK Center is dedicated to Roma children from Coburg street workers they try them through a variety of leisure activities, but also in cooperation with parents to integrate into mainstream society. The project was aimed among other things to teach children to appreciate nature and their surroundings, but also enhance the consciousness that its own participation and efforts can affect their surroundings. The MAK Center has been a long tradition to spend the summer months together with Roma children on different trips, swimming pool, day camps and the like. Workers also therefore decided in 2014 to participate in this project, thus enabling children to attend several interesting trips full of adventures and exploring the landscape. Through activities that were implemented in the project the children had the opportunity to spend their free time outside their community who have a full understanding, but also deepen mutual relations, and to get to know your surroundings and learn many new things about nature. During the project, workers have the opportunity to better get to know the children and their mutual relations, strengthen and improve bilateral communication. Based on the positive feedback that workers receive in the course of the project, but after its completion MAK Center also continues the implementation of trips on a similar basis. Roma children are often times just trips, visits to theaters, going to the cinema, participation in various cultural events and weekend trips to motivate them to good behavior and support the idea that to belong, that they too are an integral part of this of how each one of us.



The usefulness of platform e-RR - example from practice

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A number of factors affect the learning and the achievement of pupils, but a teacher is undoubtedly still the most important factor in this process. Teachers' expectations, their enthusiasm for the subject of teaching and teaching approaches are critical for achieving success. Requirements for differentiation, individualisation and personalization of the teaching process require continuous education and exploration of new teaching methods, which are among other things brought by the materials of platform e-RR. When teaching Roma pupils, it is very important to be familiar with their living environment, lifestyle, culture, etc. The platform provides materials that empower teachers with knowledge about the Roma and is therefore more than welcome as a source of new solutions to the teacher in order to provide better quality of teaching.

The Roma pupils at Bršljin Primary School and elsewhere are in their school environment faced with the problem of learning in a foreign language, which is not based on learning in their mother tongue; so their weak knowledge in the field of reading and writing is expected. Through learning different texts in Slovene they learn to read and write and to understand the Slovenian language as a foreign language. Due to the effective achievement of the objectives, at Bršljin Primary School didactic methods are continually being adapted, modified and supplemented. The platform e-RR has provided an insight into previously created projects, where teachers have used strong points of Roma children and were able to literate them more adequately in this way.

Mainly based on "Art4ROM Methodology Handbook", I have applied the art to the lesson. Roma pupils listened to the stories while watching the artistic illustrations. The aesthetics of illustrations and colour scheme of warm tones had a motivational effect and additionally reinforced the phase of listening. Summarising the content and the design took the form of illustrations, created by the students themselves. The text was written in the form of comics.



Examples of good practice

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My first experience with the Roma population dates back to the beginning of my studies. Until then I had, regardless to their living in our town, encountered them only when they rang at our door, and here and there on the street. My image of the Roma had also developed primarily on the basis of films and books. For me, these were dark skinned people who dealt with a variety of craftsmanship. They were eternal travellers, who lived in tents and caravans, and danced around the fire in the evenings. That was the image I had when encountering them. When I first met a blue-eyed boy while visiting his home next to a junkyard, the romantic image of the Roma vanished. While working with them as a volunteer, I gained valuable experience, but above all, I developed relationships that are proving to be invaluable in the work that I do now. I have been working as a provider of the additional professional assistance for Roma pupils for more than ten years. In the meantime, we have achieved a significant progress in various areas, but we are still faced with certain difficulties. The areas that got a lot of attention and our energy in the past are today taken for granted.

Teaching aid was then focused on developing a sense of security, because pupils often wept and tried to escape from the school. We trained them to the use of toilets as well as taking care of personal hygiene. The emphasis was on acquiring the basic vocabulary in the Slovenian language. Their attendance was often only a day or two a week. In the days of presence they were not actively involved in the learning process, but took over the role of an observer. In this article I want to present examples of good practice in the area of school integration of Roma children in the educational system.

Pupils aged 10 were sometimes enrolled in classes. There were families in the village that had no permanent residence in our school district and we did not know about them.

Very often the lists of school freshmen from the central registry still do not match the actual number of school-age children who live in our school district. In the last few years we have been successful in entering school freshmen thanks to our cooperation with an outer professional worker who knows Roma families in our town well. She helps us with establishing a contact with their parents or grandparents, who often take care of one of their grandchildren and do not live in our school district, despite the fact that they have permanent residence here. We inform the parents that their child is of school age, and guide them to the nearest primary school. We offer support to the family in the process of school enrolment. This is how the possibility of school-age children dropping out of the school system is avoided.

When enrolling freshmen, parents often express a desire for delayed education.



Roma parents have difficulties with separating from their child, and face the first experience of separation from the child at the enrolment, and therefore wish to defer entry to school. By the means of conversation we want to encourage them to think about credibility of the reasons they have stated, and if the child would really benefit from this in the long term. Experience show that children with a delay of one year do not progress or progress to a lesser extent compared to children who attend school with their peers, and have subsequently more difficulties in achieving learning goals later on.

Regular school attendance is closely linked to the progress of a pupil to the next grade. Frequent absence quickly leads to forgetting of the learning material, as it is not entrenched, the learning deficit is widening. In an effort to try to ensure regular presence of pupils, the municipality organized a special transport for Roma pupils. A van transports children from settlements to school every morning and brings them back after school. Pupils attend classes more regularly, but still have not attended pre-lessons, which have, due to the increasing number of pupils at the school and in order to simplify the teaching process, became more frequent. The solution was seen in the additional service that would allow Roma pupils coming to pre-lessons. So this year Roma also have the opportunity to attend classes in full. We still cannot speak about great progress, because it takes time for both pupils and their parents to include the changes into their daily lives.

In recent years, we have had at least one student attending the camp, lessons in nature or a swimming course. Initially we negotiated with each parent individually, trying to convince them to allow their children to participate in the activities that took place away from home. Parents said that they were afraid that something would happen (car accident, drowning). Initially, pupils were accompanied by the person whom parents trusted. By establishing a relationship based on trust nowadays pupils more regularly participate in these activities. Parent meetings, which are organized for the parents of Roma children in the village, have proved very successful and an example of good practice. I find it very important that parents are faced with new challenges, such as the participation of their children in the few days of the camp, in an environment where they feel safe. We inform them about the activities that will take place in each school year. Camps and lessons in nature are introduced with the help of Roma children who have already attended them and their experience. In this way, parents are given the necessary time for consideration and the decision to allow the child to attend the camp or lessons in nature.

Past experience shows that the parents' confidence towards the school is of the utmost importance. It is necessary to build the trust on the level of the whole school and not just in a relation to individual teachers. A greater involvement of Roma families in activities that take place at school proves that we have succeeded to some extent. More and more parents, in addition to traditional forms of cooperation (office hours, parental meetings), also attend other informal forms of cooperation, such as a solemn reception of school freshmen, junior prom and other meetings.

In the last two years, we have noticed an increase in pupils who are educated at home. The problem is that children who decide for this type of education are mostly older pupils who have previously attended classes irregularly. I believe this



is their solution on how to avoid going to school and learning. Roma pupils who are currently educated at home are often seen around the school in the morning, and they more quickly fall back on delinquent behaviour. To ensure that those children were offered at least one form of education, we have teamed up with the CIK Trebnje, which organizes a Roma adult school in our town. Students can attend school, provided that they are accompanied by a person who has reached an age of 18 and has not finished primary school. The aim of the cooperation is mainly to include the pupils who are educated at home, as well as their parents, who usually have not completed the ninth grade.

Roma children grow up in a Romani-speaking environment; they usually meet Slovenian only when starting schooling. Despite the same terms of education, they do not really have equal opportunities to acquire the knowledge at school. Non-Roma children already know how to read upon entering school, while some of the Roma children do not know how to hold a pencil in their hands. Thus they cannot compete with their Slovenian peers according to previous experiences and prior knowledge. For this reason it is important that Roma children receive as much encouragement as possible from the environment in their preschool environment. The following experience suggests how important this is for later work in school.

Children from the village, where the Roma incubator has now been operating for some years, faced major difficulties in the acquisition of learning materials prior to its activation than Roma children, who come from a more regulated Roma settlements. Today, however, we note that this is no longer the case. Children who are involved in various activities which take place within the incubator come to school with more developed grapho-motoric, better knowledge of the Slovenian language and greater spectrum of experience that later helps them in faster acquisition of knowledge as well as in better academic achievement. This reflects the fact that early childhood education is very important and has a significant impact on the progression of pupils in school.

Parents cannot and do not know how to deal with school-age children at home. In the context of the Roma incubator a learning aid for school children is also carried out. The positive effect of such aid is reflected in learning and doing homework. Pupils have the space at their disposal and regular assistance in learning and doing homework.

The majority of students, however, still progress on the basis of their overall progress, especially older pupils who have already repeated a year. This means that the adjustment in the assessment is still common, consequently, also the advance to higher grades. Pupils from the 4th and 5th grade usually advance to the next grade with negative marks in English. In order to draw English closer to Roma pupils and to equip them with basic knowledge of English, we have offered an extracurricular activity this year, where they can learn in a playful and relaxed way.

If we want Roma pupils to be successful in the educational process, the problem solving at school level will not be sufficient. It is necessary to design and develop new approaches and systems that will include the integration and participation of all parties who have to deal with the Roma population, especially in the provision of regular school attendance, which is the foundation for successful engagement of Roma children in school.



Challenges brought by solutions

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By clicking on the title, you can access the presentation.

In this article I will present the challenges encountered in working with Roma pupils in the following areas: the enrolment of school-age children, school attendance and the advance of pupils in higher grades.

When entering school freshmen in our school, I meet with the parents of Roma children who do not respond to the invitation to enter. The problem is solved with the help of an outer professional worker, who helps to establish a contact with the family. There is a safety mechanism missing at the national level that would prevent the deficit of Roma children in the education system, due to relocation and the characteristics of their culture.

I have noted that the school attendance of Roma students differs. Existing solutions were short-termed, so I persistently strive to find long-term solutions to ensure regular school attendance of Roma children. The challenges that we work on are: adequate social inclusion of Roma children in school, increased engagement at daily activities, involvement in extracurricular activities and participation in events.

Irregular school attendance is being solved with the cooperation of parents, who are often powerless. Educational measures are usually imposed for unjustified absence. Transferring pupils to another school, an action that follows the third educational measure, offers no solution to the problem. Teachers therefore feel helpless because we do not have other levers for action and for the improvement of the situation.

In addition to irregular school attendance, their academic achievement is also affected by an unequal position to their peers at the entrance to school, which could be levelled with the involvement of Roma children in preschool education.

There is an increasing number of Roma children who are being educated at home because of the negative attitude to school. The challenge should be addressed systematically and we should look for solutions at the national level. It is necessary to specify the conditions for the exercising of the right of home schooling.

Successful integration of Roma pupils in the educational system depends on the active involvement of students, teachers, parents and institutions, which have a significant impact on all parties. At the moment it is not important who has contributed what in the advancement of the Roma, but how we are going to deal with the challenges that daily work with them brings.



The importance of teamwork at the lower secondary level of education in the work with Roma pupils

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The transition to the lower secondary level can be an interesting, pleasant and sometimes a bit intimidating. Change in the level of learning is unnoticeable with some pupils, while others have difficulties in doing so. Roma pupils do have problems, almost without exception.

A new environment, in particular at the central unit of the Louis Adamič Primary School Grosuplje, which is the largest primary school in Slovenia by the number of pupils, is distinctly different and more complex. The sixth grade requires a certain degree of autonomy, organizational skills, social maturity and least but not last, the knowledge and well-developed learning habits.

Roma pupils are usually older than their peers on arrival in 6th grade, most of them have advanced to the next grade with negative marks, they are less socially adept and have problems with appropriate conflict resolution, they have learning deficiencies and difficulties in a number of areas. On the upper level they are no longer in the safe haven of their class, teacher or classroom.

The requirements of the new environment are (too) high, the feeling of powerlessness is huge, anxiety and stress are present. Roma children are despite their specificities faced with the same conditions and requirements as other pupils. The same teaching material, the same goals and requirements.

So the question arises about the relevance of learning content and objectives, which is inextricably linked with the problem of the successful achievement of these objectives. Success is only possible with high-quality cooperation of all parties.

When working with Roma pupils these relations must necessarily be different and quality. The classic triangle between pupils, parents and the school is not sufficient enough. Cooperation with other organizations outside the school is of course very valuable, but good teamwork of all professional workers at schools is essential.



My experience in teaching Roma pupils

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Teaching of Roma pupils in Grm Primary School in Novo mesto does not have a long tradition. However, the school employs a good team of teachers and professionals who care about the progress of these pupils. Individualized plans, individualization, differentiation of classes and the pursuance of objectives in connection with the advance are the ways in which we try to achieve ever new, higher goals in education of the Roma. Equal emphasis is given to the social inclusion of these pupils in the life and work of the school community. We prepare Romani dance performances, reading hours for Roma pupils, they equally participate in tenders and competitions. We want to qualify them to be able to integrated into society with certain skills and become its equal members.



Tajana Posavec
(Croatian Employment Service, Croatia)

We have responded to an invitation of the partner on the project e-Roma Resource, the Croatian Employment Service, branch office Karlovac, because we wanted to present the project which was implemented by the Croatian Employment Service, branch office Zagreb, four years ago, and we wanted to demonstrate the situation of Roma women in the labour market, which means we tackled the issues related to the integration and employment of Roma women.



Meeting with storytelling

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Roma pupils at Šentjernej Primary School were involved in the project Playground for Theatre in the school year 2014/15, under the organization of Bunker Institute, which intention was to introduce the young people to a modern theatre. Within the project, a special attention was paid to vulnerable groups of young people, which additionally encouraged us to include the Roma pupils to the project. Among the offered segments of the performing arts we chose the storytelling because it is simple to use and to understand, and can be powerful at the same time.

The activities within the project took place in such a way that the artist storytellers Ana Duša and Špela Frlic took turns in coming to school. At each meeting, the students were told a story, which was followed by a discussion on the understanding of the story. While listening and narrating, the pupils were given the opportunity to experience the aesthetic and emotional reliving, while strengthening many other skills. They were enriching vocabulary and practicing communication skills, and were raising awareness of their own experiences in relation to the content, and developing their perception of the world, life, culture and themselves. The artists also encouraged students to test themselves as storytellers. At the same time students were developing imaginative and creative use of language and adopting storytelling strategies. Last but not least important was the final part of the project at the Castle of Sevnica. There, our students performed a Romani song and a story, which had jointly been drawn up in Slovenian and Romani language. With their performance they drew attention among those present to their presence in the country in a positive way.

We believe that the project will contribute significantly to the integration of Roma pupils and we welcome similar projects in the future.



An individual programme (for a Rom pupil)

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An individual programme (for a Roma pupil) is one of the tools to work effectively with a pupil.

It consists of:

- basic information (subject, school year, the pupil's full name, a year of schooling, date of birth)
- a brief description of the situation (behavioural characteristics of the pupil, the environment they live in, learning conditions at home, the pupil's activities in previous years, the strong and weak areas of the pupil, successful and unsuccessful methods in the past, the pupil's knowledge)
- the aid proposal (proposed methods and forms of work with the pupil, methods of motivation, cooperation with other teaching staff at school) and primary criterion of an advance (at least two thirds of the minimum standards of knowledge adopted for an advance to a higher grade)
- monitoring (brief description of the particularities in adopting the standard of knowledge, devices and methods used...) and the evaluation of the achievement of standards of knowledge on particular subject (1 ... objective adopted in full, D ... partly adopted (over 50%) 0 ... standard has not been adopted (less than 50%)),
- recommendations and guidelines for the next school year.

An individual programme is suitable for pupils who have the decision on the placement of children with special needs (DSP) and for pupils who have similar problems, but no decisions.



Providing access to quality preschool programmes for Roma children and their parents

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The effects of high-quality preschool programmes have demonstrated as positive for all children, but mostly for those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds, among which the Roma children are definitely included (Grunewald and Rožnička, 2007, Vonta, 2009). Within the framework of the project “Providing access to quality preschool programmes for Roma children and their parents” (2014-2016), which is funded by the Open Society Foundations, three models of access to quality preschool programmes are being developed together with six nursery schools:

- model 1 focuses on the expansion of the range of high quality preschool programmes for Roma children who are not enrolled in nursery schools, and on their parents;
- model 2 focuses on raising the quality of direct educational work in sections of the first (0-3) and the second (3-6) age group, comprised of Roma children;
- model 3 is directed to the simultaneous functioning of the nursery schools in the direction of expanding services for Roma children who are not enrolled in nursery schools and their parents, and raising the quality of direct educational work in groups, in which Roma children are included.

In order to provide affordable, high-quality preschool programmes for Roma children and their parents, we conduct training for the professional development of qualified workers, attendance at lectures with reflection and designing individual plans of professional development, monitoring and other forms of professional support. Only highly trained professional staff is capable of providing high-quality preschool programmes. Special attention is given to the integration of nursery school with the Roma and the wider local community, and the creation of an inclusive and multi-lingual learning environment. We established the REYN Slovenia - network for quality education of Roma children, which connects practitioners and activists of the Roma as well as other nationalities, who are faced with Roma families in the field of early development. The network is to become an inclusive, a professional and a learning community where members deepen knowledge and skills of different fields, exchange experiences, promote best practices, establish effective partnerships and take care of professional development.



Working with Roma pupils at the Milka Šobar - Nataša Primary School Črnomelj: the success of Roma pupils

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Milka Šobar - Nataša Primary School is intended to the education of children and adolescents with intellectual disabilities. School conducts two programmes: a nine-year customized learning programme with lower educational standards and a special education program. In addition to its regular programmes, the school also offers an additional professional assistance to primary schools in Bela Krajina.

At our school, Roma children represent a significant proportion of the school population. The everlasting problem of all schools is a non-attendance of Roma pupils. Not even our school is attended by all the enrolled Roma pupils. The pupils who regularly attend school are praise worthy and are a large majority as such.

All of our students participate in various competitions, contests, games at the local, regional and national level. In doing so, our Roma pupils are also very successful. They are involved in many projects; they participate in excursions through which they gain an important and positive experience.

Roma children attend lessons in nature and are away from home for several days.

We are highly successful in sports competitions at the municipal, regional and national level.

In the field of technology, our Roma pupils won a few gold awards.

They also like to show their artistic talents. So they regularly participate in various contests, art events and sculpture colonies.

After overcoming the initial stage fright they also appear at various public events with the assistance of their teachers.

So, what contributes to the success and the activities of our Roma students? We are a small school where a safe and trustworthy environment is created, we have a regular contact with their parents, we work closely with the Centre for Social Work, potential conflict situations are resolved immediately, we provide assistance to parents in all areas etc.

Despite the success, we come upon difficulties as well. A lot of energy and work is invested in building trust, finding common solutions and right decisions. Unfortunately, despite their success on our school, Roma children do not have the habit of continuing schooling. The path of their education is therefore completed with us.

We wish for closer cooperation with the families of these children in order to continue our work at home, to upgrade the achieved; that the performance of these pupils would not be completed after finishing the 9th grade.

We will follow our beliefs that everybody can be successful, and the vision of our school: use a positive energy, professional work and a respect for breaking the barriers and difficulties on the way to the "sunny" goal - comprehensive development in all areas of the child's functioning.



A support for a Rom participant from inclusion in education to an employment

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The RIC Novo mesto carries out various activities and programmes, and provides support to various target groups, among which the Roma play an important part. The Project Learning for Young Adults (PUM), which is an informal state-approved training program, plays an important role in this context.

This is a motivation and a support programme that includes counselling and training of the participants. One of its features is an open curriculum with a project method of work, while mentors and external collaborators have a collective and an individual approach to participants. The networking of the Programme PUM is crucial in the local environment in terms of the identification of educational goals and finding employment opportunities of participants.

One of the characteristics of RIC, an adult education organization in the Municipality of Novo mesto is an overall support for participants in the context of PUM, Primary school for adults, New Advisory centre of the town, different Roma projects and training programmes, and public works employment. This article summarizes the full path of the Roma participant, from her integration in education to an employment.

The cooperation between the programme PUM and the Employment Service of Slovenia has enabled the candidate to be referred to the process of integration in an informal program. In collaboration with mentors of PUM she has developed an individual plan of objectives and recognized her needs. She has participated in the project activities of PUM. We offered her a safe social and supportive learning environment, which she needed after dropping from the system of formal education.

She has received information and counselling at the centre and, at the initiative of the centre's consultant joined the training for a Roma coordinator. During her training and at the end we guided her in collecting the necessary references and we provided support with creating her portfolio, which is a mandatory part of the validation of national vocational qualification (NVQ).

Successful completion of the training and the obtained national vocational qualification (NVQ) for a Roma coordinator enabled her to be invited to an interview and a public work placement in the area of Assistance to Roma in the socialisation at the RIC Novo mesto.



Roma T&T- Roma Teaching and Training/ SEDRIN- School Education for Roma Integration: Transnational Initiatives in order to support the improvement of the educational performance of the Roma children

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By clicking on the [link](#), you can access the project presentation on the e-RR project platform.

The improvement of the educational performance of the Roma children is a key factor for the effective social inclusion of Roma communities. This contribution aims to present the results of two European transnational projects (co-funded by the Lifelong Learning Programme) coordinated by Action Synergy which tackled the issue of the integration of Roma children in preschool and primary education. The first project, called Roma Teaching & Training (Roma T&T), had as a main goal to develop and test a model for the organisation of preschool centers for Roma children of a preschool age that will prepare them to be better prepared to integrate in the school environment. The model described many issues related to the best possible organization of the preschool centres including general organization (procedures and infrastructures), qualifications and role of the teacher and intercultural mediator, pedagogic Framework, preschool Syllabus Principles, teaching Areas, ideas and suggestions for activities in each topic etc. On the basis of this model, it was organized a training of teachers and intercultural intermediators and an e-learning courses for the continuous training of teachers. In the meantime, the preschool centres were implemented in a pilot way in 4 countries (Greece, Spain, Italy and Hungary) with 20 children in each country. The second project called SEDRIN- School Education for Roma Integration had as a main aim to empower the Roma women to prepare their children in order to go to school. In the framework of SEDRIN, a methodology was developed regarding the training of Roma women on how to support their children in school, training workshops were organized for Roma women in 7 different countries and also trainings were organized for Roma children with the support of Roma women inside and outside the school. More information about Roma T&T can be found at www.romateaching.eu while more information related to SEDRIN can be found at www.sedrin.eu.



Background

Characteristics of the Roma community

- The family is the basic element of social structure - strong patriarchal relationships
- Multi-member households (of 3-4 members) - mostly unregistered, without a fixed income, receiving social benefits, most live in inadequate housing spaces
- Low level of education - inactive in the labor market, large number of children leave primary school
- Special one often marginalized and focused on the care of children and families

... social mobility technology

... are also growing even and

... can be (over)...

... children, who developed

... in connection with

... their growing needs

aktivnosti projekta

- Kot socialno podjeto vključujemo pretežno nezaposlene skupino ljudi
- Razvijemo možnosti vključevanja na trg dela na podlagi njihovih in obstoječih veščin
- Hkrati z integracijo ohranjamo rasko kulturo
- Svoje družbe predstavljamo novim, do sedaj neznanim in kulturno drugačnim okoljem



Kaj lahko Slovenci iz svojih izkušenj izpeljemo?

- Socialna vključitev je proces, ki ne pomeni avtomatskega vključevanja v trg dela
- Socialna vključitev je proces, ki pomeni vključevanje v trg dela in hkrati tudi v družbeno okolje
- Socialna vključitev je proces, ki pomeni vključevanje v trg dela in hkrati tudi v družbeno okolje





Enhancing competencies of Slovenian youth to enter labour market: PISA perspective

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We live in a society that is based on constant changes, development, economic growth and knowledge. A society, that needs youth which is able to adapt, think and use school based knowledge in everyday problem-solving situations in order to successfully enter the labour market. This means, among others, they have to be competent in basic fields such as reading, mathematics, science and finance. Success in PISA assessment is one of the indicators used to identify basic levels of achievement in those fields. Results show that in terms of lowering the rate of students that achieve the basic second level of mathematics, reading and science literacy, Slovenia achieves the EU benchmark (15 %) only in science (13 %), but not in reading (18 %) and mathematics (16,5 %). In 2012 Slovenia also decided to participate in assessing financial literacy. There were 5703 students participating in the whole assessment (and 1312 in financial literacy) of which there were 12 Roma students. When compared to OECD average, Slovenian students achieved lower (485 vs. 500 points), and again, 18 % of students did not reach the basic second level of financial literacy (OECD, 2014). So, what skills do Slovenian youth need in order to be more competent in the labour market? In our opinion, our 15-year olds lack basic higher order reading competencies such as integration, interpretation and evaluation of different kinds of texts, and mathematics competencies such as using mathematical knowledge in everyday situations. In case of Roma students this means we need to strengthen their basic skills of mathematics and reading already in younger years and transfer those skills to concrete situations in later years, for example teaching them the fundamentals of financial world (e.g. what is a bank account, what is a best buy). And, last but not least, we need to strengthen their self-confidence and willingness to seek advice and information when making financial decisions (Šterman Ivančič, 2013).

Literature:

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Is a move from activation as social policy measure to employment possible? Insights from UNDP's research and practice

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Data from 2011 regional survey on socio-economic position of Roma in 12 countries of Central and South Eastern Europe by UNDP, the World Bank and the European Commission in partnership with EU's Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) show that gaps in employment between Roma and non-Roma have not been narrowed during a decade in which employment was one of priority areas for intervention. Even jobless rates of Roma exceed the rates of non-Roma communities by 30% to 250%. Attempts to increase employment rates of Roma are often confined to activation and active labour market policies with little flexibility to include diverse and much needed types of support on a wider continuum of integrated social protection and employment policy programmes. In the absence of net evaluation of active labour market programmes, projects and individual user experience seem to suggest that they are often one off, limited duration participation experiences, and at best recurring engagement activity. There may be a case to examine how to move away from activation as a social policy measure which is hoped to increase employability to actual employment programmes.



Financial literacy and self-employability

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In the presentation we are attempting to address links between the concept of financial literacy and chances of someone to get self-employed. Financial literacy (in a narrow sense of the word) is about financial services and concepts. Namely, being financially literate means possessing adequate knowledge and skills, while there is a broader concept that includes also some more domains (Atkinson, McKay, Kempson, & Collard, 2006). The concept known as financial capability assembles also ability of managing money (having little problems dealing with financial obligations), or keeping track (having an overview of expenses), planning ahead (being future oriented), choosing products (deciding reasonably in financial matters), and staying informed.

Financial education is a way to increase financial literacy. It is important to everyone, but especially for youth, pensioners, and people without permanent employment or with low personal income. Roma people come into the third group. They are mostly invisible for financial institutions, need encouragement and education for responsible exploring their own financial opportunities (Illiteracy level higher than average, possible discrimination, no asset no income no job formula, etc.).

In the presentation we also explore differences in approaches of different stakeholders that take responsibility in society's undertakings to increase the level of financial literacy among the population (financial service providers, their regulators and various educators). It is underline that only joint efforts may provide an honest and un-biased (balanced) approach.

In this paper we investigate if financial literacy and a person's wellbeing are interconnected, and if so, how. According to some empirical findings (summarized in Kirchler, 2013) higher level of financial literacy drives demand for variety of financial services, higher level of financial literacy is positively correlated with planning for retirement, savings and wealth accumulation, and low levels of financial literacy is associated with bad credit records (debt accumulation/debt overhang). Whether financially literate people have greater a chance to get self-employed is not clearly documented in theory. It is found that a chance to successfully start its own business increases if someone knows more about business ambience, competitors' strategy, undertakings and offer, its strength, opportunities, market niche, etc.



Some skills will help someone to sustain in business environment, e.g. keeping track (of your activities, expenses etc.), being oriented toward future, or acting reasonably in (various) matters. Those are exactly the same things that make you financially capable. A good business planer should have good overview of its activities, and a plan of investments, expenses, sales, prices etc. Moreover, the same principles apply in both personal/family budgeting and business budgeting, while better understanding of business ambience benefits both.

There are some more direct links between personal and business success, e.g. personal/family consumption is not clearly separated from business-purpose consumption, personal savings are used for business purposes, and business income is used for personal/family consumption. Money for starting a business may come from personal savings, or a person ability/capacity to borrow. Vice versa, the business success also benefits a family wellbeing because business income boosts family consumption, and increases personal self-esteem and social recognition.



Katarina Črtalič
(Primary school OŠ Bršljin, Novo Mesto, Slovenia)

At the conference I have presented an example of good practice. I resorted to the materials on the e-RR platform, namely, I used the material ART4ROM, by which I realized just how important art is for the Roma. Later I used it as a lesson material when reading a text.



Better perspective of Roma women in the labour market

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Abstract:

The Project was focused at the development of new forms of support and methods of empowering assistance, professional development and job search for marginalised and discriminated groups of women, one out of which are unemployed Roma women. This Project provided opportunity and support to overcome the existing barriers with regards to the inclusion into labour market which was targeted at personality strengthening, raising awareness of the needs for personal and professional development, acquiring qualifications-occupation, knowledge and skills for job search. Unemployed Roma women were empowered and trained via the activities and work methods to be able to take over more active roles in labour market and society. We also included promotional activities for employers, local community and Roma associations with the aim to transfer acquired knowledge and experience, and the examples of best practise in individual approach and support to job search. The project was implemented in city of Zagreb, from November 2010 to November 2011, together with the following partners: City of Zagreb, Centre for Education, Counselling and Research (CESI) and Association of Roma Women in Croatia 'Better Future'.

Implemented activities:

- analysis of the target group
- establishing and functioning of the 'CASI Romani': infrastructure, promotion, training of 6 job coaches, forming of a group of 30 beneficiaries, holding workshops, individual and support group meetings, assistance in job search
- development of the skills and competences: 1. IT courses for basic computer usage (10 beneficiaries); 2. Training in acquiring occupation (10 hotel maids, 10 assistant cooks); 3. Assistance to beneficiaries during and after the trainings
- promoting employment of Roma women: 1. Presentation of active labour market policy programmes to employers; 2. Organization of the individual meetings of project beneficiaries and employers
- project promotion: conference, web site, project leaflet, information guide, booklet, DVD, jumbo poster, etc.



Activities of Hrvatski zavod za zapošljavanje aimed at Roma inclusion in the labour market

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Croatian Employment Service has been implementing activities and measures aimed particularly at Roma inclusion in the labor market since the adoption of the National Programme for Roma and the Action plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005 – 2015 in 2003. Increasing the participation rate of socially most vulnerable persons is one of the priorities of the Guidelines for the Development and Implementation of Active Labor Market Policy 2015 – 2017.

HZZ is implementing activities aimed at the preparation for employment and measures of active employment policy aimed at the activation and motivation for employment. Activities aimed at the preparation for employment are informing, counseling, consultation, as well as various job-search workshops, professional informing and counseling, assessment of remaining work capability, targeted visits to the employers, meetings, group informing on self-employment.

There is specific package of ALMP measures targeting Roma implemented by Hrvatski zavod za zapošljavanje. It consists of training and occupational training without commencing employment, public works, employment/self-employment subsidies.

Over the period of last four years, the number of Roma included in ALPMs has been increasing. The total number of participants in the period from 2010 – 2014 was 3033 (1005 women). Most widely used measure is public works – 2842 participants (950 women), followed by training, employment subsidies, self-employment subsidies and occupational training without commencing employment. In the first half of 2015, 637 persons were included in ALMPs (39.7% of them were women).



Roma craft cooperative in the Roma settlement

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The project idea for Roma craft cooperative in the Roma settlement arose from the need for Roma communities to rely more strongly on their own resources, to be able to benefit from the opportunities offered by European and national development documents and actions identified in the financial perspective 2014 - 2020

It is not a time limited project, but the systematic formation of development of Roma entrepreneurship with the objective to regulate the modern area in the Roma settlement, where the Roma craftsmen, who have their own small businesses, would operate.

If we want to reach demarginalisation of often ghettoised area, it is necessary to aim towards social and spatial opening of Roma settlements, to encourage existing tendencies and help the Roma community to strengthen its receptive capacity and to promote coexistence of social, economic, spatial and cultural development of the Roma settlements.

Depreciation of social problems and the integration of socially excluded in the field of paid work and in society at large through cooperative social entrepreneurship.



The integration of the Roma minority through a culinary adventure

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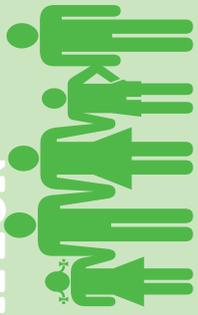
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The roots of the project “Romani Kafenava” date back to the time before the activities were planned, and have emerged by a richly laden table of the Roma cuisine. Through various forms of integration and cooperation with the representatives of vulnerable Roma minority, we at group EPEKA decided, with the help of the European funding and support from national institutions, to seize new employment opportunities, and after some turbulent beginnings on International Roma Day on 10th April 2014 we opened the first Romani restaurant following the principle of social entrepreneurship in Europe.

Our activities are primarily focused to the offering of culinary adventures to the inhabitants of the city of Maribor and beyond. Through cuisine we want to take the first step to breaking stereotypes and prejudices regarded in our society. The process of integration of vulnerable Roma minority is seen as a two-way process; therefore we connect the members of Roma minority and other cultures present in our society through a variety of activities. Music, dancing, art and history are just some of the cultural elements belonging to our culinary adventure. In addition to preserving Romani culture, we also strive for education, integration into the labour market and the overall engagement of Roma culture in the project activities. We believe that leads to the rise of self-esteem of the local Roma minority, which the majority population sees more as an advantage and enrichment rather than a threat. All of this is achieved through innovations such as the operation of the principle of social entrepreneurship associated with perception of social responsibility. We do not change the skills of our employees, we upgrade them. Like every company, we are faced with the challenges prevailing on the market. We are aware that the sustainability of the existence of a catering business requires continual training, achieving consensus and the much-needed breaking of prejudices of society at large. Our long-term success undoubtedly depends on the local support of the Roma and non-Roma population and the institutions at local, national and European level, and we would wish for more of it.







Successful home improvement and community support practices -partnership model for improvement of the housing conditions of vulnerable families and providing additional community support

Boryana Parvanova, Habitat for Humanity Bulgaria, Sofia, Bulgaria
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By clicking on the title, you can access the presentation.

Following its mission to work towards elimination of inadequate housing in Bulgaria, Habitat for Humanity Bulgaria since 2008 develops and implements a Partnership model for improvement of the housing conditions of vulnerable families and providing additional community support. This model allows low-income families, living in poor housing conditions, to improve their homes and to receive additional manifold social support. For the period 2014 – 2019 this programme has been funded by the VELUX Foundations.

Habitat Bulgaria provides this support by establishing partnerships with local non-governmental organizations, which are actively working with vulnerable groups and communities at risk of poverty. Habitat Bulgaria capitalizes revolving home improvement funds to local partners, which then disburse small amounts as interest-free loans to families that meet the programme criteria. The small amounts can cover the costs of some urgent home repairs and are re-paid in small monthly instalments for up to a one year period. All monthly instalments, collected from the clients accumulate back to the local Home Improvement Fund and are disbursed to the next families in need. The eligible families are usually beneficiaries of the partner NGOs and their various social services such as family counseling, adult education courses, trainings, health care and many others.

In addition to this microfinance opportunity, Habitat Bulgaria provides numerous trainings, designed to build capacity and improve the client's abilities to deal with real life crisis situations, such as: Family Budgeting Training, Home Maintenance Training, Energy Efficiency Training etc.

This programme provides an additional opportunity to support the local community and the work of the local partners. At the end of each project year, up to 25% of the amount of the Home Improvement Fund is redirected to social and community services offered by each local organization. The services, subsidized by the programme are focused on improving the lives and



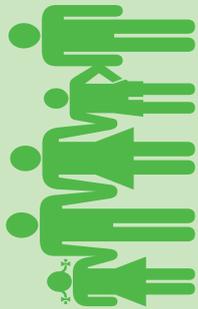
development of the children in the community. This subgranting opportunity maximizes the overall impact of the program.

Thanks to the joint efforts of Habitat Bulgaria and partners, the families receive a complex, holistic solution for at least some of their multiply problems. The partnership with Habitat Bulgaria complements and adds value to the social support, provided by the local NGOs.



Dr. Trajko Petrovski
(Centre for Education, Research and Social Care Romani
Emancipacija, Belgrade, Serbia)

Tomorrow I will speak about the project Anthropological, linguistic and dialectological research of the Roma. The partners who are in this network can make an agreement on who will be the lead partner of the project.



Centre for support of Roma people of the Municipality of Megara (good practices)

Ioanna Renieri, Iroodoros- Municipality of Megara, Greece
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By clicking on the title, you can access the presentation.

NPDD “Iroodoros” is a Public Entity of Social Solidarity and Sport, which is established in 2011 and supervises 4 nursery schools, 3 Centers for the Open Care for the Elderly (KAPI), 3 units of “Help At Home” for the elderly, municipal sport places and 1 center for the social and medical support of Roma people.

Roma people (also known in English as “Gypsies”) in Greece are around 250.000 and often live 2-3 kilometers outside of a village in camps of settlements with only a few dirty houses without facilities, in cellars. Roma people in Megara are about 1323 inhabitants. Many efforts are made from the Municipality for the improvement of the situation (first level health services, supporting Roma people to deal with bureaucratic requirements, support them to find employment etc).

Our mission is to promote an active participation and equal access to the development processes and resources with a priority focus on access to quality education and healthcare and social services.

In the center, are working six people (1 Sociologist, 1 Health Visitor, 1 mediator, 1 Employment Expert, 1 psychologist and 1 expert for the educational support of the Roma children). We try for the direct involvement and activation of the target group (Methodology of implementation, networking with other socio-medical centers and other services and promotion of the results of the project to the mass media and the general public etc).

Our good practices about child protection and poverty are: Provision for services of support, Effective work with schools, teachers, children and their families, Counseling and guidance to parents belonging to poor households on the basis of their needs and on the needs of their family members ,Promotion to employment,Family counseling, Information about hygiene. Also, we provide training and information to Roma women regarding (Hygiene, children care, food, hygiene rules, hygiene management in the community and money management, bills, how to cover basic needs, cooking, household care etc). Finally about employment, we have cooperation with the University of Athens for educational Programmes for adults and children and our objective is to decrease the dropout rate of the Roma population, introduce intercultural education, promote life-long learning in the Roma community and raise the educational status of Roma.

Our Long-Term Goal is to publish a book about Roma culture. By knowing their own history and culture it increases the self-esteem of the communities.



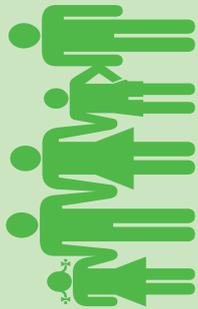
Good ideas and bad practices? An Italian Sinti political participation experience

Greta Persico, PhD, Milano - Bicocca University, Italy
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By clicking on the title, you can access the presentation.

The presentation is part of a broader research carried out in Italy, Romania and Brasil. General aim of the research was to describe the relations among Roma, Sinti and Calò group and gage society through the analysis of the interplay with local public body such as schools, public administrations, local police and Ngos.

This presentation focuses on the analyses of the policies addressed to the authorized Sinti settlement by a right-wing and later on a left-wing local administrations in a small town in the North of Italy. The research started in 2010 and is still going on. The methodology is a deep ethnographic fieldwork in the Sinti settlement and depth interviews realized with key witness such as social workers (of “Figli del vento” project), educators, policeman, officials, teachers, Sinti individuals and public administrators etc. This case is interesting because, following the proposal of a local NGO running social programme in the settlements, policy maker decided to establish an inter-institutional round table named “Sinti round table” to run the settlement in a more participatory way. All the actors working with Sinti were invited both from public bodies and private sector. Two representatives of the Sinti were also called to join the meetings and, quoting the slogans used by politician and public officers, to participate actively in the decision making process. Through this case study we analyze how the two different administrations have managed and are managing this process, how they cope in the past and in present with Sinti requests and proposals, which approach they choose to deal with the Sinti group and the consequences of it in the relationship between Sinti and gage.



Project SKUPA-J - successful implementation of preventive activities in the Roma community

Manuel Vesel, senior police inspector, Police Academy, General Police Directorate, Ljubljana, Slovenia
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By clicking on the title, you can access the presentation.

The coexistence of different ethnic and national groups is one of the conditions for the development and progress of any society. We the police also contribute to the successful building of a positive relationship between the members of different groups, and we are trying to build a modern, liberated organization free from prejudices, that strives for respect and realization of human rights and freedoms, and namely for all the inhabitants equally. Through education, which is also the basis for successful social integration, we can prevent and overcome many conflicts that often arise from ignorance, misunderstanding and fear of the unknown. As a result of successful conflict resolution we witness the improvement of the level of safety in the country. For many years, preventive activities and programmes for working in a multicultural society have been carried out by the police, together with other relevant institutions, NGOs and representatives of Romani communities. In 2013, we also joined the project SKUPA-J. Project's name derives from the Romani word 'skupa', which means together. The letter "j" is added to the Romani word, which clearly joins the Romani word and the Slovenian (skupaj) word of the same meaning. Joining the words symbolizes the cooperation of Roma and Slovenian communities. The purpose of the project was to overcome social misunderstanding and differences arising from national or ethnic origin, and to raise the quality of coexistence between the majority population and the Roma communities.

Project SKUPA-J has been divided into two main parts: the first is designed for public servants (primarily from the centres for social work and other public servants) who are in contact with the Roma population, while the second part is intended for members of the Roma community. The members of the project group have organized 15 workshops attended by 279 civil servants working with the Roma. They carried out five courses of learning the Romani language, which were attended by 69 participants. With a view to exchanging information, knowledge and good practices, a meeting with 14 Roma coordinators who participated in the project was carried out. In order to operate directly at the Roma community, a mobile classroom and infrastructure for uninterrupted work was set up by the police in the Roma settlement at Dobruška vas 35, in the municipality of Škocjan. Every working day between 09:00 and 13:00, activities for Roma preschool children, drawn up by the program, were carried out by two employees in the mobile classroom.

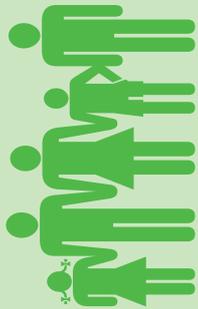


The Centre for school and extracurricular activities MZIŠ joined the project later on, by giving a teaching assistance to children who came from school, between 13:00 and 15:00 pm. At the invitation of the police, the employees of the Association for Developing Voluntary Work Novo mesto and Health Centre Novo mesto were also carrying out activities in a mobile classroom, and organized 11 workshops in the field of health education. Within the project, the police was continuously cooperating with the representatives of the municipality of Škocjan, which arose as a partner in the project, and with the Agrarian community of Škocjan, Fran Metelko Primary School Škocjan and Roma organizations. The cooperation with the representative of an international organization GAIN of the Netherlands should be pointed out, who has on two occasions organized aid in the form of school supplies, toys and clothing for the residents of Roma settlements Dobruška vas. The implementation of all activities under the project SKUPA-J has definitely exceeded all the expectations and goals. The most visible positive effect was seen in children entering the first grade of primary school, who had been attending a mobile classroom in the village of Dobruška 35 for almost three months before coming to school, because they understood Slovenian, they were not afraid and were able to participate in classes. The implementation of the project SKUPA-J had a positive response with the representatives of a local community, representatives of the Roma community, as well as with individual institutions in the area of PU Novo mesto. The police completed the activities of the project SKUPA-J on 30th June 2015. In order to continue with good practices and the effects of the project, the police transferred the entire infrastructure to the municipality of Škocjan, while the activities with children in the mobile classroom are continued by two employees within the framework of the programme of the Centre for school and extracurricular activities MZIŠ.



Darja Brezovar
(Headmistress of the primary school OŠ Bršljin, Novo Mesto, Slovenia)

We have decided to participate at this conference because we are the school with the most numerous Roma population in the Dolenjska region and broader, perhaps even in Slovenia; because we have worked a lot and for a long time in this field, because we want to present what we do and how we do it and because we would like to gain new knowledge at this conference.



Consumption patterns of Roma – setting the priorities

Ana Popović, MSc, teaching assistant, Faculty of Economics, University of Niš, Serbia

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By clicking on the [link](#), you can access the project presentation on the e-RR project platform.

Ways of planning and organizing consumption represent the manifestation of both financial and economic literacy. Therefore, in this presentation, the author depicts the consumption patterns of Roma in all countries involved in the Finally project (Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia) based on findings of realized field researches. The author's research is focused on the question of setting priorities. The aim is to investigate if there are similar consumption patterns and general priorities among Roma in all mentioned countries. Some general conclusions and implications are presented and directions for future research defined.



The consequences of poor monitoring of the impact of social transfers and deliberations on proposals to improve the effectiveness of “social state”

Janez Doltar, Municipality of Novo mesto, Novo Mesto, Slovenia
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Slovenia is an EU member and as such a democratic and a social state, what is, in terms of humanism and, historically speaking, a great asset. Like any system innovation in the development of civilizations, this one too brings certain weaknesses with it and raises new challenges in upgrading the existing social system.

SOCIAL TRANSFERS and other fringe benefits

- a) Child allowance
- b) Social welfare (financial aid)
- c) Parental allowance
- d) Subsidies for rent
- e) Subsidies for nursery school
- f) School meals
- g) Legal aid
- h) RTV subscription
- i) Non-payment of penalties

NEGATIVE EFFECTS of social transfers

1. The lack of motivation for finding a job
2. The lack of motivation for education
3. The lack of motivation for the obedience of law (non-payment of fines)
4. An increase in the non-productive part of the population

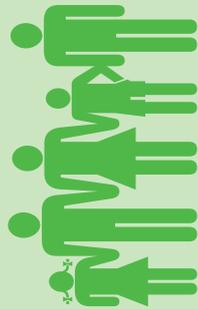


TABLE 1: an increase in the number of the Roma from 1984 to 2015

How to overcome the “Gordian knot” of negative effects of the welfare state? The whole EU is asking this question nowadays and trying to adapt to the current situation. Above all, it is necessary to realize that there is no unilateral answer that would eliminate anomalies for ever. The complexity of social relations requires constant change and the search of suitable, time consistent solutions. Those could only be reached by a lot of good will, which is however not present in Slovenian politics right now. That is why I dared to bring up a problem at such an important conference, which also affects the Roma community in Slovenia.

SETTLEMENT/ YEAR	1984	1995	1997	2003	2008	2011	2014	2015	Index/N
Brezje/ Žabjak	214	309	373	446	535	598	646	657	3,07
Šmihel	50	72	87	99	114	107	133	125	2,50
Poganci	42	55	73	70	67	52	57	66	1,57
Ruperč vrh	42	58	66	65	46	65	71	88	2,09
Otočec	21	24	58	17	17	23	25	27	1,29
Ukrat	18	19	24	31	31	38	35	49	2,7
Novo mesto	0	0	19	18	18	12	23	15	15
Graben	10	11	11	14	8	0		0	0
SKUPAJ	397	548	674	760	836	895	990	1027	1027

PROPOSALS (personal reflection)

1. Social entrepreneurship
2. The responsibility of recipients of social transfers to the government (taxpayers)
3. Setting criteria of contribution of the beneficiaries in the amount of social transfers
4. Personnel reinforcement at Centres for Social Work in areas where larger Roma communities are settled
5. Motivation of the beneficiaries of the ST to find solutions

I am concluding my contribution to the conference with the famous Chinese proverb that says that when you want to help somebody in need, rather than giving him a fish help him by teaching him to fish, so tomorrow he will be able to take care for himself and his family.



Financial Literacy for a better quality of life

Gabi Ogulin Počrvina, MSc, Development and Education Centre Novo Mesto, Novo Mesto, Slovenia

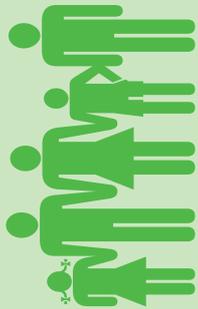
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The Roma minority faces a high risk of poverty and unemployment, as it is in times of economic crisis faced with bad economic situation, high illiteracy, poor knowledge about money management and implementation of financial transactions and the search for reliable information and receiving long-term decisions. There is therefore a clear need for the implementation of financial education that addresses the specific circumstances of the Roma community. The main objective of the project FINALLY is to raise the level of financial literacy among the adult Roma. During a three-year project (funded by the European Union through the Lifelong Learning Programme) which is coming to an end, we thoughtfully devised every step in the creation and development of a programme for financial literacy of the Roma. First, we conducted a study on the needs of the Roma population for financial literacy in all six partner countries (Italy, Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, Slovenia and Slovakia) using common methodology. Based on these findings, we have developed a 56-hour training program, which is aimed at participants and has the following goals:

- to raise awareness about their everyday expenses and analyse the good and bad practices used (an overview of cash flows in household and actual consumption habits) and to provide assistance in monitoring the family expenses;
- to improve the ability of planning and setting priorities using tools for short and long-term planning; to investigate their sources of income (formal and informal), to improve their ability to make sound financial decisions, to achieve understanding of the concept of value for money and consumption;
- to develop approaches for saving and investing money; the objective is to evaluate and allow initiatives that are already carried out by the Roma, and ensure their dissemination, as well as to find new approaches that encourage saving and investment;
- to develop the capacity to assess risk on loans and debts; the research has shown that the indebtedness is, among other things, the result of the lack of planning, high interest rates and borrowing money from informal lenders; training is therefore necessary for the evaluation of the risks that arise in personal loans or borrowing;
- to encourage them to seek employment or self-employment opportunities.



The educational programme FINALLY consists of four modules:

1. The budget of households - advance planning and smart spending of money
2. Saving for the future
3. Reasonable borrowing
4. Increase of income

The programme and all the resulting materials are designed for young adult Roma, who often have higher levels of education than their relatives, and are more receptive to learning. They are becoming more independent in managing their finances and are the key actors of social change.

Knowledge is becoming the weapon of development, so it is important that the Roma benefit from it to the greatest extent possible to improve their quality of life.



MSc. Branko Soćanac
(Director, Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities, Republic of Croatia)

What we have seen in these two days, are very interesting ideas with possible networking. Among other things, we can see that the issue you put forward is very important, namely, networking between the stakeholders, because we really need to have a complete insight into the situation when we talk about the Roma.

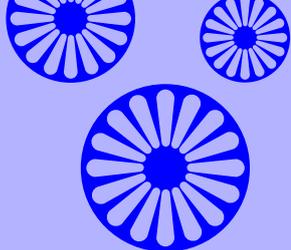


Luc Monnin
(CATHS, France)

Having this conference impresses me because we can explain what we do and see what others do, we can exchange knowledge, take and give. We can clarify your work and help someone who can benefit from our experience. We can also meet people with their own various experience.







Folkloristic, ethnographic and dialectological research of Roms and Sinti in North Rhine-Westphalia (Köln, Düsseldorf, Duisburg, Essen, Gelsenkirchen, Wupertal)

Dr. Trajko Petrovski, Institut za folklor "Marko Cepenkov", Skopje, Macedonia
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By clicking on the title, you can access the presentation.

The strategy and description of the research activities in the project

The focus of this project is on folkloristic, ethnographic and dialectological research of Roms and Sinti in North Rhine-Westphalia. The research will be realized in the cities of Köln, Düsseldorf, Duisburg, Essen, Gelsenkirchen, Wuppertal, and it will take two years.

The oral lore is the mother of literature. By folklore we are meaning the verbal creations of wide masses that reflect their lives in its various manifestations. The word Folklore is created by Folk= people, and Lore= meaning. In literary translation it means: peoples knowledge, peoples wisdom.

Folklore is a complex subject and has many aspects. We meet folklore in the cities, the villages, in the families. The Romani folklore contains songs, stories, legends, anecdotes, musical instruments, dances, customs, children games, nicknames, traditional holidays, Romani traditional food, traditional clothes, and certain crafts, such as the blacksmiths from India to Europe.

The programme activities will start with a collection of the empirical material for ethnocultural identity. We will register the Romani folklore (songs, stories, legends, anecdotes, etc). And ethnographically, the emphasis will be on the observation and study of wedding customs, religious customs, and the structure of the families. From the field of dialectology we will register Romani dialects in North Rhine-Westphalia, that is, the Gurbetian, the Arlian, Kalderian, Lovarian, and the Sinti dialects.

Our field research will register the actual condition of the ethnocultural tradition and the dialects of the Roms. We will make audio and video records that will be documents and sources of research. This folkloristical, ethnographical and dialectological material will be analyzed in the context of the subject of the research, classified and systematized.



We point out that this is pioneer scientific research of the Roms in North Rhine- Westphalia. We are expecting that realization of this project will give us significant results, and knowledge of many aspects of Romani traditional cultural heritage in North Rhine-Westphalia. We are also hoping that the results of this project will be significant for further comparative scientific studies. From the field of Romani ethnology we will study the weddings, religion, rituals, the celebration of the holiday Erdelezy (St.George' Day), within Romani families in North Rhine-Westphalia.

The third segment of the research project will pay attention to the Romani dialects in Düsseldorf, Köln, Essen and Duisburg. The approach to dialectology as a part of the linguistic science of language, are the dialects, and speech patterns. The term dialect is commonly understood as a part of a wider linguistic whole and serves as communication amongst people of a certain collectivity, territorially or socially limited.

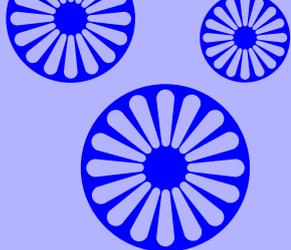
Romani language originates from the ancient Indian languages and is manifesting typological closeness with Middle Indian and New Indian languages. Romani language, which is represented by various dialects, is usually separated between Vlachs and the Non-Vlachs group. In the Vlachs group belong Gurbetian, Lejahian, Kalderian and Lovarian dialects, while in Non-Vlachian dialects belong the dialects of Greek-Turkish Romani as Arlian and the dialect of the Sinti, which are dialects of the Roms in Germany.

The goal of our dialectological field research of Roms in North Rhine- Westphalia is to collect characteristics of the Romani language and dialects, by their folklore (songs, stories, anecdotes, and legends. The results of this will be of great significance in preparing the study of the Romani dialectology that contains various texts in dialects of Roms in North Rhine-Westphalia. They will be useful to the needs of the linguistic institutes and faculties, and for further comparative linguistic and ethnological scientific studies.

The research of Romani dialects will contribute in providing information about their placement and existence. In the framework of the research project, for the students of ethnology at the Institute of Ethnology, Universität zu Köln together with Professor Michael Bollig, I will organize seminars and scientific workshops of traditional culture of Roms (History of the Romani peoples, The culture of the Roms) in Köln, Düsseldorf, Duisburg, Essen, and Wupertal, to promote the Romani traditional culture and language.

Goals of the research

The goal of the project is to conduct research and analysis of the folklore, ethnographic data and the language of Romani immigrant communities in North Rhine- Westphalia. The most expressive and vital element in Romani folklore is the music and poetry, as traditional symbols that are special and significant. The idea of studying their cultural heritage in multicultural society might contribute to overcoming mutual differences and bringing closer communities that are living in North Rhine-Westphalia. That is possible by



knowing each other's culture, representing one's own culture, which will have positive influence on the surroundings they are living in. Representative results of the research will be united in studies that we hope will be a base for continuing research, in the direction of finding scientific explanations of social phenomenons of Roms in North Rhine-Westphalia. The users of the texts will get a clearer picture of the actual social moment of the Roms. These studies will be one kind of guide in studying this segment of multicultural Germany. This project will attempt to illuminate the Romani perspective on migration through a comparative investigation that will be based in Romani communities and in Romani homes.

Project activities

The research will be conducted in North Rhine-Westphalia (Köln, Düsseldorf, Duisburg, Essen, Wuppertal) at the following levels:

- The field research will be handled by myself (Prof. Dr. Trajko Petrovski), and an assistant. We will collect and document Romani stories, legends, anecdotes, and customs.
- Decoding and selecting folkloristic and dialectological material.
- Explanation of the material as a result of the data from the fieldwork.

*Organizing seminars or workshops during the period of the project in Germany.

We expect significant results from this project, because collecting of Romani folklore, ethnographic and dialectological materials will provide empirical material (wedding customs, religious songs and rituals, Romani dialects of the Arli, Džambazi, Kovači, Gurbeti) that will contribute to preserving Romani cultural heritage, tradition and language, and will help Romani integration into German society.

Plan, dynamics and organization of the research

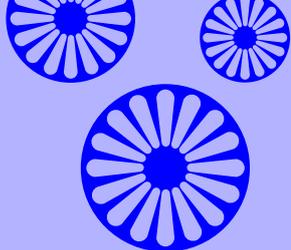
Phases of the research

The objective of the research is analysis and identification of Romani folklore, wedding customs and rituals, religion with special accent on customs of Muslim Roms in Düsseldorf, the structure of Romani families and research of dialects of the Romani language found in North Rhine-Westphalia.

The first phase of the project consists of a careful calendar plan in observing events and to organizing contacts for the data collection in the fieldwork.

The second phase is the decoding and analysis of the collected folklore, observed family and social events, and language materials of the Roms in North Rhine-Westphalia.





Rencont'roms nous: A cultural project to include Roma populations

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Rencont'roms nous is a cultural organisation founded in 2014 with its head office in Toulouse, France. It promotes Roma culture by organising various activities in order to sensitise the general public, to promote relations between the Roma and the general public, to meet the Roma in another contexts, as well as to involve Roma people into the cultural life of Toulouse.

To launch these objectives, we have three areas of intervention:

- organising various cultural pluridisciplinary events (concerts, exhibitions, conferences, Carnival in Toulouse, etc.);
- intervening at schools with the programme "Rencont'roms nous at school" in order to sensitise schoolchildren about discrimination;
- proposing artistic and cultural workshops to promote the development of artistic and cultural practices (circus, theater, music, dance, puppets, etc.).

Thus, since 2014 we have organised 20 cultural events and 7 artistic workshops. To involve Roma population, we work with 3 settlements in Toulouse (La Flambère, Rupé and Grynfoegel), where 400 Roma people live. So, Rencont'roms nous is a project with Roma people and just about them: they are involved in each action.

Finally, Rencont'roms nous is a project bringing together many different partners from different fields (Roma population, cultural organisations, organisations working with them, public institutions, the EDF Foundation, etc.).

For example, the project Rencont'roms has for 2 years already been a part of the Carnival of Toulouse and Roma people are very involved in this project: they choose the theme of the carnical float and are involved in its construction for 2 months, they practise for the day of the carnival and they are in charge of the musical animation. In 2015, the theme was "Dracula" with around 100 Roma people and 52 volunteers present at the event. In 2016, the themes will be football and circus.

More information: www.rencontromsnous.com

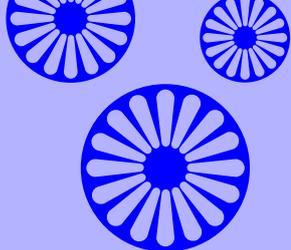


Roma Culture in Slovakia

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There is an absence of a work in the Slovak romological literature that would complexly deals with the traditional Romani culture of Podtatranský and Eastern Slovak Region. An exception is the work of Samuel Augustini ab Hortis „Von demheutigen Zustande, sonderbaren Sittenund Lebensart, wieauch von denen übrigen Eigenschaften und Umständen der Zigeuner in Ungarn“. The aim of the contriubution is a content analysis of the mentioned work (written in 1775) and to update the class of cultural phenomenon settled in present times in context of helping professions. The contribution thematically consists of three parts. In the introduction the author describes the Institute of Romani Studies in Slovakia. Then he analyses basic terminological outgoings about Romani culture from anthropological point of view. Presentation and comparison of socio-cultural regulatives, artefacts and ideas gained by ab Hortis and by the author himself is the content of the final part. Interpretation and understanding by the author are not based on knowledge obtained from “outside” but they reflect the ideas and conclusions of the author resulting from his direct stay in the settlement. It is possible to find traditionality of Romani culture in a form of surviving “fossils” in the environment of settlements which stand on the border of culture of poverty concept and axiological perceived terminological definition of cultural phenomenon.



Le Collectif Roms CHAKARAKA

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In our association we wanted to prove that it is possible to make substantial progress in understanding the Roma if we pay attention to their culture.

It is the culture which unites us, especially music.

Our work in this area remains modest, however, we are proud to have succeeded since 2011 in bringing together the Roma and the French, particularly thanks to music, in order for them to get to know each other, to socialise, dance, have something to eat together and with all this to spread a different view of Roma from that of policy or media which they are fiercely prosecuted by and which reinforces racist and xenophobic ideas.

To set up an orchestra is quite a simple matter, but with the Roma it is not so easy because of their hard life. However, to have been running it for four years is much more difficult.

In addition to the orchestra, we are proud to present our first photo exhibition, a theater play and a documentary, but above all we are proud of our growing presence in Roma settlements.

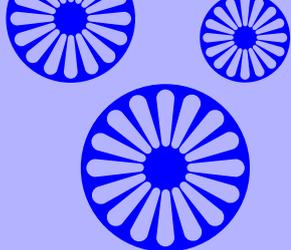
And this is that true payment for all volunteers of our association.



International and Civic Opportunities for People Facing Discrimination

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Presentation: Founded in 1999, ADICE is a non-profit organization which is purposely located in the poorest city of France so as to bring new options for people with fewer opportunities. Indeed, the North of France is the area where the highest rate of youth unemployment is recorded along with the highest rate of people from migrant origins. Our priority is to favor equal opportunities and to facilitate the social inclusion of people-especially youngsters-who are discriminated against. The common approach we adopted is to have young people take part in European and international mobility programmes – it could either be in the framework of an internship or a volunteering project-in order to define or enrich their career paths. Mobility is an efficient tool towards gaining new professional and personal skills. It is also a means to facilitate the insertion into the labor market and encourage the participation of young people to decision-making processes. Accompanying young people, we are really dedicated to their mentorship. It is important to guide them and assess what they intend to achieve in the future thanks to this experience abroad so as to maximize its positive impact. Those options we are able to offer them result from the wide network of partners we have been expanding for over 15 years. For instance, we organize several awareness-raising and information meetings with the close cooperation of other local stakeholders. Moreover, we have been developing new tools and methods in order to facilitate the insertion of marginalized communities such as Roma people thanks to our collaboration in the eRoma Resource Project. As we continuously advocate for practices and activities towards equal opportunities, we are always seeking new projects that might favor new approaches. Thus, we are currently involved in a European project working towards the establishment of a pilot programme for the economic and social integration of women from migrant origins.



Association of Roma Culture in Poland

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Association of Roma Culture in Poland is a non-governmental organization working for the Roma community in the field of professional activation of Roma people, counteracting intolerance and xenophobia against Roma. We are also work with the others groups at risk of exclusion in every sphere of social and economic exclusion. Previous activities We realize thanks to ability to use funds for this purpose from the European Social Fund. In recent years we have completed research project under I.W. EQUAL for Poland 2004-2008 and other projects about professional activation of Roma under the Roma component within the Human Capital Operational Program. Both research projects as well as those aimed at professional activation of the Roma were to stimulate the economic activity of the Roma ethnic minority, increase public awareness of the Roma in their social environment, and increase Roma ability to work. We organized trainings and opportunity to gain work experience. An important thing for the Roma community is to promote the culture and traditions of the Roma. Learning about the culture and traditions of different minority communities eliminates prejudices and makes easier social acceptance, the barrier is mostly fear of the unknown. Despite the fact that working with Roma is hard it can bring a lot of satisfaction especially if you work with children and young people who have a real chance to change their social status and be full citizens in their local communities. Our goal is to build cohesion based on respect and tolerance, where Roma will be participants in local labor markets and social economic relations.

Association of Roma Culture in Poland is open for all actions and initiatives both in the country and others European countries.



The band "Mišo Kontrec & Company"

A special enrichment of the introductory part of the programme of the international conference was provided by the members of the band "Mišo Kontrec & Company".

The ensemble consists of father Mišo, his son Dominik and friend Jože all coming from a Roma village called Pušča in Murska Sobota.



***Ariana Stanca Vacaretu
(Mednarodni konzorcij Branje in pisanje za kritično
mišljenje (LSDGC), Romania)***

I was very pleased to be invited to this conference where I had an opportunity to share the results of our projects on the one hand, and to have a fruitful discussion with people who are interested in the same issue on the other, as well as to learn about the other initiatives that can be implemented in our community.







Training packages for health professionals to facilitate the access and improve the quality of health services for migrant and ethnic minorities including the Roma MEM – TP project

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The MEM-TP project (Training packages for health professionals to improve access and quality of health services for migrants and ethnic minorities, including the Roma) aims to improve access and quality of health services for migrants and ethnic minorities in the EU countries by reviewing, developing, testing and evaluating training of front-line health professionals in migrant and ethnic minority health. The first review (Work Package 1) examined the migrant and ethnic minorities' situation in the EU, and identified common challenges and best practices to address these challenges. The second review (Work Package 2) reviewed existing training materials, which have been developed at national and European levels. These materials aim to increase cultural awareness and sensitivity of the health professionals, develop their managerial and administrative competence in regard to the target populations' health needs and rights, improve professional competence in relevant health conditions, and increase the professionals' awareness of barriers to access.

The reports of the two reviews provided valuable input to the next step, the development of a model training package (Work Package 3). This training package was piloted in six countries (Denmark, Italy, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Spain). Prior to piloting, three selected trainers from each country were trained in the application of the package in a three-day Training of Trainers workshop in Granada, Spain. Next, the trained trainers adapted the training package to their own countries. The country-level pilots take place in April/May 2015 in each country (Work Package 4). They were evaluated and the model training package was revised accordingly (Work Package 5).

We have found that our participants agreed that the topic is very important, and becoming more and more necessary also in Slovakia. We have found that among health professionals there are stereotypes, and less sensitive to diversity.



Cooperation for the Health of Roma – SORO

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The project responds to long-standing unsolved challenges in the field of integration of the Roma population in the health care system. Activities contribute to reduction of inequalities between user groups by increasing awareness of Roma about the importance of health, improving communication of public workers, inter-institutional cooperation and sustainable funding of Roma coordinator and mobile health services.

There will be 5 pilot prevention programmes developed:

- Presentation of health system and health insurance system
- Beneficial food for health
- Health care of Roma preschool children
- Promotion of a healthy lifestyle to prevent addictions
- Training for medical staff and experts

A plan for health care in the field will be designed and implemented. The programmes will be designed for Roma communities in SE Slovenia and experts who work with them.



Marjeta Gašperšič

**(Director, Development and Education Centre Novo Mesto/
Razvojno izobraževalni center Novo mesto, Slovenia)**

On the platform of the e-RR project, we have gathered different projects and materials from the field of Roma inclusion. The modern, virtual world is the best manner of communication nowadays and it is practically accessible to everyone, however, we have assessed that, to make people connect and cooperate, it is much better to provide the opportunity for a more personal contact in the beginning. This was the main reason for our decision to organize the conference Broaden Horizons.



Research and Project Activities focused on Migrant and Roma Health at the Public Health Department

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The Department of Public Health at Trnava University participated in several projects in improving access to health care services for Roma and other minority members in Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia. All Roma projects we have been involved were focused on developing specific aspects of multicultural approach. The project in Romania tackled policy development advice for the Romanian Ministry of Public Health in reducing barriers for Roma and other minorities to health care services. The project in Bulgaria was entitled Educational and Medical Integration of Vulnerable Minority Groups with the Special Focus on Roma. The project funded by the Ministry of Education in the Slovak Republic was focused on assessing effectiveness of health mediators in Slovakia. Based on our previous activities focused on Roma health we have been involved in COST Action IS1103: “Adapting European health systems to diversity” (ADAPT). This Action aims to promote the adoption and implementation of policies responding to this increased diversity. It builds on the achievements of COST Action IS0603 (Health and Social Care for Migrants and Ethnic Minorities – HOME) which reviewed health inequalities among migrants and ethnic minorities as well as the measures designed to remedy them. The International Organization for Migration, the Migration Policy Group and the research network ADAPT have agreed to work together to enrich the next edition of the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) with a new strand on health. Results are now presented on the interactive MIPEX 2015 website (mipex.eu). The lessons learned from our project activities and experiences are shaping in three scopes: We found out that knowledge transfer from science to decision making at different levels (needs of policy makers, stakeholders, community leaders are different) is very complicated. Utility of learned knowledge and its real impact on the quality and accessibility of health services for migrants and ethnic minorities in practice is very minimal often and the transition from describing the Roma health status and their living conditions to the actions/ interventions which works should be our next goal.



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The objective indicators and subjective perceptions of obesity and overweight among the Roma minority in the region of South Bohemia

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The article is related to the research grant project number COST-LD14114, implemented under financial support of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports within COST (Cooperation on Scientific and Technical Research), named “Obesity and overweight in Romani minority in the Region of South Bohemia”.

This article presents only partial areas where the nurse can act in the field of lifestyle modifications in Roma population. They are, specifically, the issues of overweight and obesity in Roma population.

A questionnaire focused on lifestyle mapping was used to acquire the necessary data; the questionnaire included case history data - anthropometric measurements - eating habits - eating behaviours - self management of slimming / health care / body image.

302 Roma respondents took part in the study. As for gender, the set consisted of 152 men (50%) and 150 women (50%). The data were processed in the SASD statistical program.

The results show that the Roma population has fields in which the nurse can act in the area of prevention of overweight and obesity. We have demonstrably observed that the members of the Roma minority admit less the risks related to overweight and obesity. Further, we ascertain the areas on which preventive interventions are to be focused.

They include particularly interventions towards motivation to go to preventive examinations at general practitioner’s and education concerning eating habits, as well as education focused on risk factors leading to obesity and overweight and the related complications of health condition.



The influence of selected aspects of lifestyle on obesity and overweight among the Roma minority in the region of South Bohemia

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Introduction

A number of Czech studies summarize the behaviour of Roma population, however, none of them focuses on the problem of obesity and overweight of this community. The issue of obesity and overweight prevention is treated in an important grant project named „Obesity and overweight of the Roma minority in the South Bohemian Region“ reg. No. LD14114, implemented with the financial support of COST (Cooperation on Scientific and Technical Research) of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, in the scope of which also this essay was prepared. The target of the paper is definition of the influence of selected aspects of lifestyle on obesity and overweight among the Roma minority in the Region of South Bohemia.

Methodology

The quantitative research was realized in the form of controlled semi-structured discussion that concerned the eating behaviour of respondents, their mental condition, stress, reflection and self-reflection, physical activity, smoking, alcohol consumption, socio-economic conditions, primary prevention and the approach of medical staff. The selected research file included 600 respondents (302 from the Roma minority and 298 from the majority population). The selected file of the Roma minority (designed through the method of Snowball Sampling) as well as the majority population (quota



selection) can be considered representative in terms of sex. The data was collected in 2014 and 2015 in the South Bohemian region, and processed by the statistical application SASD on the significance level $p < 0.05$.

From the research results, a SWOT analysis was used to choose the areas that form solutions for making the strategy for preventive impact on members of the Roma minority that lead to the reduction of obesity and excessive weight.



Dr. Vera Klopčič
(Institute for Ethnic Studies, Slovenia)

We all possess prejudices and stereotypes, but the question remains: how are these prejudices and stereotypes preserved on the individual and collective level; do the prejudices also exist within the Roma community itself? For me, it was a great challenge that the Roma representatives participated in our roundtable: Jožek Horvat Muc and Janja Rošer from the academic sphere and two representatives from practice. In this manner, I believe we can shed light, at least partially, on how the prejudices influence our way of thinking and our coexistence with others.



Results

Statistically significant differences among the respondents, from the minority and the majority societies, connected lifestyle of the members of the Roma minority which can cause obesity and excessive weight and consequently influence health of the individuals have been established. The prevalence of smoking, as compared with majority society, is significantly higher in the Roma minority; the daily number of smoked cigarettes is higher too. Consumption of alcohol, i.e. beer, wine and spirits, is significantly lower in the Roma minority, as well as its one-off daily consumption. The amount spent for food for an adult family member per month suggests ambivalent attitudes of the Roma minority, while the members of the majority society report significantly more often amounts ranging from 2001 to 4000 CZK. According to these solutions, the results gleaned from this representative experimental inquiry which belonged in the SWOT analysis to the weak points of the lifestyle of the Roma minority a strategy for preventive incidence in the Roma minority will be created whose aim will be reduction of the risk factors influencing obesity and excessive weight of the members of the Roma minority living on the territory of the South Bohemian region.

Conclusion

The research results confirm the already known socio-economic problems of the Roma minority. Comparing the results gained from the respondents, many statistically significant differences among those from the minority and majority societies were established, which belong in the SWOT analysis to weak points of the lifestyle of the Roma minority. These dissimilarities also represent solutions for the creation of a preventive strategy focusing on the reduction of obesity and excessive weight. The most significant opportunities with positive effect on reduction of obesity and overweight in the Region of South Bohemia include preventive programmes and educational activities aimed at obesity prevention, eating habits, healthy life style and at motivation to preventive health checks implemented particularly in the community centres.



Promotion of health among Roma

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Abstract

Numerous studies indicate that there is poorer health status between Roma people in comparison to the general population. They have shorter life expectancy in average of 10 – 15 years and most often suffer from infections and diseases that are resulting from poor housing and economic conditions. Frequent pregnancies and abortions are common between females, and chronic respiratory diseases among young children. There are a lot of smokers among Roma people, alcohol and drugs are also present among the younger population. It has also been observed, that young children already drink great amounts of coffee.

Community Health Centre Novo mesto is from February 2015 an associate partner of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009 – 2014 for the implementation of the project SORO (Cooperation for the health of Roma). By developing and testing programmes in the project, we wish to contribute to reducing disparities in health status between Roma and the general population.

So far we have noticed that not all Roma have the same living conditions which would enable them to live in a healthy environment. Due to their bad conditions, some of them have poor personal hygiene and also their lifestyle is worse.

In order to improve the health of the Roma population and to reduce the disparities in health status, professional and continuous, long-term actions, are necessary to be prepared and implemented by interdisciplinary teams of experts.

KEY WORDS: health education, Roma, health promotion, project SORO

Community Health Centre Novo mesto

Community Health Centre Novo mesto has existed since 1936. Primary health care services are performed at the central location in Novo mesto and health centres in Šentjernej and Žužemberk. We provide care for 65,000 inhabitants in the area of eight founding municipalities: the municipality of Novo mesto, the



municipality of Straža, the municipality of Šmarješke Toplice, the municipality of Šentjernej, the municipality of Žužemberk, the municipality of Dolenjske Toplice, the Municipality of Škocjan and the municipality of Mirna Peč. Individual specialist services are performed also for the insured from the entire area of health regions (Dolenjska, Bela Krajina, Posavje, Kočevje, Trebnje) with 140,000 inhabitants. As the fifth largest medical centre in Slovenia we employ approx. 290 employees and we are the most successful medical centre in Slovenia in relation to business operations.

Employees in our institute are in their daily work often faced with the Roma population. Being aware of the specificities of the Roma population, we carry out numerous activities to improve the health status of the Roma. The main principle of our work is that we treat all citizens equally, irrespective of nationality, religion, gender and diversity. For many years we have been actively involved in projects to improve the health status of the Roma population.

In collaboration with the RIC (Education Development Centre) Novo mesto and the association *Romano veseli* we have been carrying out activities for health awareness and education of the Roma for many years. The aim of the actions carried out is the reduction of risk behaviours and health inequalities of the Roma. Together we have carried out programmes to raise awareness of healthy lifestyles, emphasizing the cooperation of individuals to improve their own health.

Roma in the Dolenjska region

Bojanc (2014) states that there are between 7,000 and 10,000 Roma in Slovenia. Most of them live in Prekmurje and the Dolenjska region.

The Roma from Dolenjska are settled in Bela Krajina, Kočevje area, Krško valley and other places in Dolenjska, particularly in the area of Novo mesto. Only limited data is known about the beginning of the settlement of those families. First known birth registration of a Roma child in the vicinity of Novo mesto was on 22 October 1812. In Šmihel near Novo mesto there is a big leap from the first birth registration of a Roma child in 1812 to the second one, which was in 1846.

Allegedly they were scattered to other places, but later came back again in Šmihel and Stopiče where the main groups of the family Brajdič lived. The Roma again appeared in the records in 1869. Since then the births have been frequent, mostly around Šmihel in Novo mesto. They were mostly registered under the name of Brajdič, the name Hudorovič was less frequent (Pust, 2013).

Bojanc (2014) states that the most numerous Roma community, which numbers about 1,050 people live in the area of Novo mesto and municipalities of Šentjernej and Škocjan. They live in 12 settlements where living conditions are very different. As a rule, not even the most basic existential conditions are provided. The majority of the adult population is illiterate; they depend on occasional work and social welfare. It is impossible to obtain the precise information because some of their residencies are registered at the Centre for Social Work Novo mesto.



The health of the Roma

The Health Care and Health Insurance Act states that the Roma have the same rights as other citizens, they are treated under the same conditions. Their health protection is regulated as the uninsured citizens. Due to the specificity of the Roma population, their health depends solely on public health system.

Along with the specifics of Roma culture and traditions, which are sometimes obliged to ancient traditions of natural and magical healing, their health also depends on improving of housing and living conditions, sanitation, employment and greater social cohesion, as well as on education and training (Bojanc, 2014).

Urh (2013) notes that the health situation of the Roma in Europe is worse compared to the health of the non Roma population. The Roma have a shorter lifespan (10 years less than the majority of the population in average, they suffer from diseases and infections resulting poor housing and economic conditions. Young Roma women are often pregnant shortly after the age of 14, chronic respiratory diseases of young children are frequent and they have a significantly higher level of physical and intellectual handicaps.

The results of the research "Risk factors for non-contagious diseases in adult Roma community" (Institute of Public Health Murska Sobota, 2007) have confirmed predictions about some of the characteristics of the Roma community: a low education level, high unemployment, poor socio-economic status, insufficient participation in prevention programmes and the presence of chronic diseases contribute to inequalities in health of the Roma (the National Programme for Roma Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the period 2010-2015).

In addition to poor living conditions the Roma also have a poorer lifestyle. Lolić (2003) conducted a survey on the opinion of Roma on smoking and found out that cigarette smoking is a part of their culture and their characteristics. They start to smoke very early, often before the age of ten; therefore, we observe the increase of developing signs of chronic bronchitis and pulmonary asthma. Bojanc (2014) as well states that her survey shows that one third of the respondents started smoking before the age of ten, 59.3% already consumed alcohol, and 35.2% of respondents consumed alcohol and drugs.

Preventive activities of the Health Centre Novo mesto for improving the health status of the Roma

Health promotion is a process where we want to train and educate individuals and communities for managing the determinants of health in order to strengthen the skills for achieving positive health changes.

The Health Centre Novo mesto has for many years been carrying out a number of activities for improving the health status of the Roma. In collaboration with RIC and the association *Romano veseli* we conducted numerous lectures both in the premises of a RIC as well as in all the settlements in Novo Mesto, Šentjernej and Škocjan municipality.

Priority areas in health promotion were: healthy lifestyle, healthy diet, reduction of smoking and consumption of illegal drugs and alcohol, injury



prevention, promotion of physical activity, basic hygiene, the importance of vaccination of children for the preservation of health, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, prevention of infectious diseases, dental health, the importance of participation in Svit program, self-examination of breasts, contraception and risk factors.

Health education contents were carried out in the forms of lectures, workshops and individual counselling, where we measured their blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol and did body composition analysis. We also participated in a Roma camp.

For a better understanding of the specified health facilities, leaflets in the Romani language were also prepared. We enter the Roma settlements with the help of the association *Romano veseli* and Roma coordinators. Activities were implemented by nurses and a paediatrician.

We were well welcomed in Roma settlements, workshops and individual counsellings were most visited.

The project SORO - Working together for the health of the Roma

Health Centre Novo mesto has been since February 2015 an associate partner of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009-2014 for the implementation of the project *Cooperation for the health of the Roma*. By developing and testing the programmes of the project we strive to reduce disparities in health between the Roma and general population. The objectives of the project are:

- to improve communication skills of public employees who work with Roma.
- to increase the amount of information and awareness among the Roma population in the field of health (prevention, hygiene, diet, exercise).
- to enhance participation in the programmes of preventive health care among the Roma including increased vaccination of Roma children.
- to increase the number of the Roma with a chosen general practitioner, dentist, gynaecologist and paediatrician, and to reduce the queues at duty clinic.
- to coordinate and enhance the inter-institutional cooperation and cooperation with NGOs.
- to induct the funding of a mobile health service in Roma settlements and a permanent work of a Roma coordinator.

At the beginning of the project we developed a detailed plan of medical care in the field, on the basis of which we made a monthly plan - from March until the end of April, when the project was to be finished. We also put together a strategic group within the Health Centre, which will carry out its tasks within the project, and the internal evaluation of the work done. At the beginning of May 2015, we began the implementation of field visits carried out by a doctor and a nurse. The Romani association *Romano veseli* also provides assistance in carrying out the visits. They settle the date of our visit at their homes.



A field visit

A visit itself is arranged in advance, and we visit the family at their home. Some families take us into their homes, others are ashamed of their living quarters and do not want us to enter, while some do not even have a place large enough or suitable to see us at their home. We have found out that the Roma are a very distrustful population, so they need to be given a sense of security early on in order to open up.

Throughout the conversation we fill in a questionnaire, where we first want to know something in general about the living conditions of families: how many members there are in the family, whether they have their personal doctors / dentists / gynaecologists / paediatricians, what their living conditions are, which basic material goods they possess. We are also interested what health measures are taken when children get sick - are they immediately taken to the doctor or do they make an appointment? Do they go to a duty clinic?

Then we focus on each member of the family individually. In adults, we are primarily interested in whether they have a chronic disease, are taking any medication, how often they visit the doctor and if they follow his instructions. We are also interested in whether they were vaccinated at a young age and if they have been invited to make a preventive medical check-up. Women over the age of 45 and men over the age of 35 are usually invited, every five years thereafter. We also ask women about their visits to the gynaecologist, how many pregnancies they have had so far, whether they have attended parental school and if they use contraception.

The last part of the questionnaire is designed to recognize individual bad habits - smoking, drinking alcohol and coffee, as well as the relationships inside the family; we also ask them about their opinion on the attitudes of medical professionals towards the Roma. In children, we are particularly interested in the presence of chronic diseases, medication, the frequency and the reasons for visiting the doctor, and the data on vaccination and medical check-ups.

At the end, various measurements are performed on every single person. We measure their weight, height, waist girth, blood pressure, saturation, blood sugar and cholesterol. In children, in addition to weight and height, we also measure head and chest size, blood pressure and saturation, and we assess the condition of their skin. In the field, we also carry out health education in the form of individual or group counselling in relation to hygiene, risk factors, disease identifying, use and storage of medicines, and other issues in relation to the needs of the family or an individual.

Sometimes, especially if we meet with a family away from their home, we have to adapt to the surroundings and to work with what we have. Sometimes it is necessary to find a place where we can sit down. Most of the families are very hospitable and we are often offered a drink during the visit. In most cases we have been invited to come again and we feel welcomed in general. This can also be attributed to the fact that the president of the Romani association *Romano veseli* accompanies us. Additionally, the doctor who works on the project has already worked a lot with the Roma population in the past and the Roma mostly know her.



On the return to the Health Centre it is necessary to verify the information received in the field: whether a person is really assigned to their doctor and if the visits are regular, and similar. Important information is also whether a child is in reality fully vaccinated or not. It happened many times before that a mother believed that the child had been vaccinated, but when we later checked with their personal doctor that was not the case. In the case of deviation– the lack of a personal doctor, missing vaccinations and the like, we contact the family, either by phone or in person, and inform them about deviations. We make an appointment at the Health Centre where they can sort out the problems.

We have found out that the Roma are seemingly very willing to cooperate, but later quite the opposite turns out. They have in fact high expectations from the society but a low level of responsibility at the same time. This is evident by their lack of responsibility when it comes to meeting agreements. Example 1: person X did not have transportation to the health centre, so we agreed that we would pick them up at their home, stop at school where children would be picked up, take them to the Community Health Centre to vaccinate and drive them back home. On the agreed date, we went to person X's home. The person said that they would not go. We rearranged the appointment for the following week, but again they were not present.

Example 2: We called the family and invited them to have vaccination in two days' time. The father assured us that they would certainly come, but nobody showed up at the Health Centre. Their apparent only cooperation is also shown when it comes to choosing personal doctors / dentists / gynaecologists / paediatricians. They agree that they will choose their personal doctor; we have even compiled a list of doctors who accepts new patients, and the schedules of their office hours. They seem very interested and willing to what they have promised in the field, but it later turns out that this is not the case.

The results so far of the project SORO

By the end of the project, at least 100 preventive inspections on in the field should have been carried out. By 6th November 2015, we had already done 103 and dealt with 20 families from the settlements of Brezje, Šmihel, Poganjci, Otočec, Stranska vas in Ob Potoku. Here are some findings so far:

- We have dealt with 29 women and 22 men older than 16 years of age, and 30 boys and 22 girls, hereof 5 preschool boys and 7 preschool girls.
- In total, nine persons have not had a chosen personal doctor, hereof four men, one woman, two girls and two boys (one preschool girl, one preschool boy, one school-age girl and one school-age boy). Since the beginning of the project one male and one school –age boy have chosen a personal doctor so far.
- A total of 30 people had their personal dentist at the beginning of the project – hereof 7 men, 14 women and 9 children (6 school-age boys and 3 school-age girls). During the project one woman has so far chosen a dentist, while 14 people remained undecided.



- 27 out of 29 women had a personal gynaecologist at the beginning of the project. Five of them were assigned to the gynaecologists who no longer work at the Health Centre. Two of them do not have their personal gynaecologist and no new decisions have been made during the project.
- A total of 16 people have completed the primary school among adults - five men and eleven women. Seven people - three men and four women continued the education, hereof two women dropped out of school later on.
- There are five men and one woman currently enrolled at RIC, where they are attending primary school.
- Only one out of 20 families is currently not receiving a social financial aid and lives exclusively by means of employment. 17 families also receive other forms of aid - the child allowance is the most common; there is also the case of scholarship at RIC, disability pension and pension after one's husband. So no family is completely without an income.
- There are 14 families who live in a nice home with water and electricity; four families have no water in their home or near it, two families live completely without basic infrastructure and thus have neither water nor electricity.
- As many as 10 families do not have bathrooms and toilets, and are therefore forced to perform their bodily needs outside. Some do it in the woods, while others even go behind their campers.
- 30% of the examined families think that they live in very poor conditions, 35% believe that their living conditions are poor, 20% think that they have good living conditions, while only 15% believe that their living conditions are good.
- As many as 45% of families state that they daily smoke indoors, 35% do so occasionally and only 20% of families do not smoke or always smoke outside.
- Only five families own a thermometer, while as many as 18 always have some syrup or medicine in stock to help children if they fall ill.
- The answers to the question of how they would assess their state of health on the scale of 1 to 5 (1 being very poor, 5 being excellent), the vast majority (70%) has chosen 5 when rating their health status. 20% of people picked 3 and lower, with the majority of females older than 16 years of age. Children are generally very healthy, with the exception of one school-age girl and one preschool girl.
- 23 children were fully vaccinated at the beginning of the project, or 44% of the total. According to gender, 55% of all girls and only 37% of boys were fully vaccinated. According to age, about 61% of all preschool children and only 39% of all school-age children under the age of 16 were vaccinated.



- As part of the project, 26 children have been invited to be vaccinated to Health Centre Novo mesto up until now. Nine children have responded to invitation. The number of fully vaccinated children has so far been increased to 29, which means that 56% of all children are now fully vaccinated. Some have been invited on two occasions, but there has been no response so far.
- One fifth of all treated Roma is chronically ill. As many as half of them are females older than 16 years of age. 33% of ill are males aged 16 years or more, 17% of all cases are children. The most common diseases among adult women as well as adult men are increased blood pressure and arterial hypertension; among women a type 2 diabetes is present in 30% of cases. Among other diseases there are high cholesterol and triglycerides cases, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma, bronchitis, chronic kidney disease, psoriasis, as well as hyper and hypothyroidism among women, and one case of a breast carcinoma. Children often suffer from bronchitis at young age and there are various allergies present. Serious illnesses among children have not been so far detected, except for one child who has a chronic degenerative disease.
- 16% of the adult population believe that they are overweight, 18% think that that they should lose a bit of weight, 35% are satisfied with their weight and believe that it is just right, 23% of adults are slightly underweight and 8% are of opinion that they are considerable underweight. A half of all men are just the right weight, slightly more than a quarter are overweight, and slightly less than two quarters are underweight. Among women, only a quarter has normal weight, a good third has low body weight and one third is overweight.
- As many as 57% of treated adults smoke more than 11 cigarettes per day, 21% or 11 out of 51 adults do not smoke. The percentage of women non-smokers is higher, and there are several men who smoke only up to 10 cigarettes per day.
- None of preschool children smoke, but there is one fifth of smokers among school-age children up to 16 years of age. Among girls there are 29% of smokers and among boys 20%. Most of them are occasional smokers; one girl and one boy already smoke regularly, up to 10 cigarettes per day.
- 35 adults do not consume alcohol, which is a bit more than 68%. There are more men than women among those who drink. There are three women between ages 18 and 21, who drink every week. Among males, there are five who drink only once a month, four who drink several times a week, three weekly drinkers, and one person who drinks four or more times per week.
- Among school-age children only one boy admitted to drinking alcohol. He supposedly drinks at least once a week.



- A lot of coffee is drunk among the Roma. Among the adults, there are 70% of those who drink coffee regularly every day, several times a day in larger quantities. There are only three people who never drink coffee. There are no coffee drinkers among preschool children, but as many as 54% among school-age children. 36% of those drink coffee in small quantities, 18% drink coffee several times a day in larger quantities.
- The Roma agree in the vast majority that they are treated the same as non-Roma. They also tend to agree that the attitude of health workers towards the Roma is good.

In order to see shorter lines at the duty clinic in Novo Mesto Community Health Centre, we have been recording the visits of the Roma. Recording is being carried out from the beginning of April and will run until the end of February. The final evaluation will be carried out in March 2016. In addition, the number of visits it is also recorded, whether the doctor has been visited by an individual or so the whole family, whether it has been the case of a preventive visit, an illness or an injury. It is also recorded whether the visit was necessary or not, whether the patient had an appointment, and whether they are assigned to the personal doctor.

The programme: Healthcare of Roma children

During the summer, in July and August, two repetitions of the programme Healthcare of Roma children were performed in the field for families, as a part of the project SORO. The first week was dedicated to getting to know each other and gaining mutual trust. At the beginning of the programme we measured their blood pressure and saturation. Participants were then acquainted with the peculiarities of a newborn baby, how to properly feed the baby and how to take care of proper hygiene of children. We explained how important an adequate rest is for children and when and how to handle a toilet training. In the second week we motivated the participants by using the scales Tanito for analysing their body composition. Participants were asked if they knew what vaccination actually was, why children needed to be vaccinated and what the timing of vaccinations was. They were presented contagious childhood diseases (mumps, chicken pox, measles, whooping cough, rubella and scarlet fever). What their symptoms are, how to treat them and what action it is necessary to take when there is a suspicion that a child is sick. In the third week we spoke about how to act upon the appearance of symptoms and what the fundamental medical accessories are, which they should all have at home. We also talked about the use of drugs that are most commonly used in the home environment and their appropriate storage and dosing. The participants were educated about the diseases of the oral cavity and proper ways of brushing their teeth. The fourth week was characterized by first aid. Participants were acquainted with methods and procedures of providing first aid in a case of an accident. We showed how to stop bleeding, how to



place an unconscious person in a stable recovery position and how to act when a child is suffocating. We discussed how to identify signs of diseases of the oral cavity, visual impairment and deafness in children, and how to act properly. The last meeting was dedicated to the identification of other health problems in children. For example, what the differences between flu and a cold are, how to act, what to do if a child vomits or coughs, how to get rid of lice, how to help a child when they have diarrhoea or constipation, and what to do if a child has a stomach ache. Participants were presented a memory game that was created in the context of the project SORO and we left them a copy. We believe that the participants showed a lot of interest and desire to learn. In our opinion the response of the participants is positive.

Observations during the programme were as follows:

- The vast majority of Roma women gave birth to at least one child before the full age.
- They did not have any major problems giving birth, nor taking care of babies.
- Some do not have the ability to carry out child care according to the instructions of the standards, but nevertheless the hygiene is mostly satisfactory.
- Most mothers breastfeed their children, special food for babies is generally not bought or used.
- Children are full of energy; the excess is probably conditioned by the fact that some parents offer coffee to young children.
- The toilets in some homes are not properly regulated. Especially young children are therefore not adequately accustomed to using the toilet.
- According to the participants, their children are vaccinated appropriately in most cases.
- Some of the participants were slightly familiar with the diseases against which children need to be vaccinated. Above all, pertussis was a well-known disease.
- Very few families have medical accessories at home, such as a thermometer, plasters or bandages.
- Parents are very protective of their children, and therefore they immediately take them to the doctor, at a slightest suspicion of a disease. According to the parents' statements, all children have a chosen personal doctor, to whom they should be taken at the appearance of the disease.
- Participants were mostly familiar with the use and storage of medicines. According to their statements, the medicines are kept out of children's reach.



- Participants are generally pretty well acquainted with basic first-aid procedures. Some out-of-date knowledge was noted (e.g. to lean the head backwards for the bleeding from the nose, that the tick is removed by oil and rotating, and similar).
- More than half of Roma children suffer from asthma or bronchitis. Probable cause of this is indoor smoking when small children are present.
- Roma value an alternative medicine and treatment with natural herbs, following tradition of the elderly Roma.
- Participants should be familiar with the fact that it is necessary to see the personal physician, and not to go to duty clinic. According to their statements, they do just so, and visit duty clinic on the exceptions, when their doctor is not working.
- Participants said they would like to go to the dentist when they have problems, but they are afraid of the dentist.
- Most of the Roma does not have a toothbrush at home.
- If they do have a toothbrush, they do not wash their teeth regularly.
- Very few or almost none of them have their personal dentist.

Additional activities

As a part of the project we also attended activities organized by the Development Education Centre Novo mesto (RIC): vegetarian picnic, hiking in nature, and the SORO market. Mojca Šenica, education and healthcare management at RIC presented to the Roma how the health system and health insurance function. She presented the Health Centre and General Hospital Novo mesto, the National Institute and the Health Insurance Institute in Novo mesto, and their activities.

In cooperation with the management of the Health centre Novo mesto we presented all departments of Health Centre Novo mesto to regional Roma coordinators, inform them of most common problems faced by when visiting the Roma and by them. Together we talked about possible solutions for successful cooperation.

We have also produced a leaflet to inform Roma about personal doctors, duty clinic and reference clinic, which was translated into Romani by the association of *Romano veseli*.

A regional council was also established, with members: doc. dr. Milena Kramar Zupan, director of the Community Health Centre Novo mesto, and Alenka Piškur, assistant director for health care. Proposals for systemic changes in the area of reducing the differences in health between groups of users are being prepared as a part of the council's work.



Closure

Factors that positively or negatively affect health depend on socio-economic factors, health-related lifestyle factors and factors of the physical environment, and health promotion and health services (Gabrijelčič, 2009).

In our field work, we have often noticed that not all the Roma have the same basic living conditions, enabling them to healthier living environment. Some live in shacks or containers with no running water, electricity and they also neglect their living environment. Poor sanitation and related poor personal hygiene contribute to poor health condition of the Roma.

The vast majority of Roma are smokers, among them are children – which certainly increases the number of people suffering from chronic lung disease.

Eating habits of the Roma are poor; they often have only two meals a day, consuming large amounts of meat and carbohydrates.

Roma women avoid counselling on contraception and healthy sex life, they rarely visit a gynaecologist. They give births at very young age, some of them already at the age of 14, they usually have more than one child. During the pregnancy, the vast majority does not visit a gynaecologist; they do not attend maternity classes. All that leads to negative health consequences. Regardless to invitations to check-ups, the majority of the Roma does not respond, despite the promises made.

The national resolution for healthcare states that the primary objective of every society in the field of health and health care is to improve the health of population and reduce the burden of disease, reduce health inequalities, and to provide a system in which an individual is in case of an illness provided with equitable, quality and timely medical care.

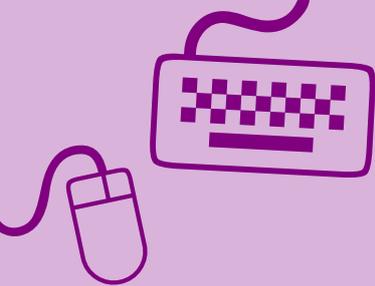
In order to improve the health of the Roma population and reduce health inequalities, a long-term, continuous and an expert action is necessary, which should be prepared and implemented by interdisciplinary expert teams.

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The European Roma live in different conditions, therefore, it is of crucial importance to develop transnational communication and cooperation by taking into account their specific socio-economic conditions and cultural differences. Social exclusion and discrimination severely affect the access of Roma to employment opportunities, education and public services.

The main objective of the e-RR project is the promotion, dissemination and exchange of outcomes and materials in the field of integration of Roma into different spheres of social life. The consortium of partners will build a project platform based on its own experience and the already existing good practices which have been developed by different organisations across Europe. This international online educational and informational platform will make information available to educators, teachers, adult educators, social workers, health care workers, project planners, experts in individual fields, adult Roma, Roma pupils. The ERR platform will serve as an educational and informational tool and also as a means to promote the use of various materials.

Likewise, the setup of the portal will contribute to a more effective implementation of measures in the field of education of adult Roma. At the same time, it will contribute to avoiding duplication of projects and investments by publishing the outcomes of the projects.



Project Partners

Development and Education Centre Novo Mesto/Razvojno izobraževalni center Novo mesto, Slovenia

(leading project partner, coleader of work package Implementation of Web Platform)

The Development and Education Centre Novo mesto (RIC Novo mesto) is a leading public institution in adult education in Slovenia. The centre, founded by the City Municipality of Novo mesto, strives for education which is available and accessible to all adults in the local environment and region in all periods of life. Advantages of RIC Novo mesto is the offer of different innovative formal and informal education programmes for general public as well as vulnerable groups – people from the countryside, people with special needs, young adults who left education and face other problems, unemployed, the elderly, Roma people, immigrants, workers searching for new trainings and education, etc.

RIC Novo mesto started to provide educational opportunities for Roma systematically twenty years ago; most of the supporting activities focus on successful inclusion of Roma in a primary school for Roma adults, public project for helping the Roma in socializing and integration, learning help for Roma adults who attend primary school programmes, active citizenship programmes for people with special needs and the Roma – these programmes encompass: language and computer programmes, communication and life skills trainings, healthy food, healthy lifestyle, Romani culture and costumes, etc.

RIC Novo mesto implemented and cooperated in many projects connected to Roma issues: EAHC – financed by European project SRAP, which is dealing with prevention and decrease of the use/misuse of legal/illegal substances among young Roma; national project Development of Guidance Models for Vulnerable Groups, where innovative models for providing guidance to elderly citizens, Roma population and people with special needs were designed, as well as the Centre for Independent Learning. There, the Roma can access computers free of charge and use e-materials and tools developed in the Finally project (Financial Literacy for the Roma).



Trnava University in Trnava/ Trnavská univerzita v Trnave – TRUNI, Slovakia

(project partner, leader of work package Research of Current Condition and Needs Analysis)

Trnava University (Trnavská univerzita v Trnave - TRUNI) is one of the oldest universities in Central Europe; it was founded in the second half of the 17th century. The Faculty of Health Sciences and Social Work (Trnava University) was established in 1994. Its aim is to educate professionals for public health, social care, laboratory medicine and nursing.

Besides teaching, the faculty conducts research in all fields of public health, social work, nursing, including tropical public health, health ecology, health promotion, minorities' health, health systems research, social work, trauma, injury research and others. At the moment, the faculty collaborates in many international projects financed by the EU or other agencies (e.g. from the USA) – as a project leader/coordinator and as a project partner. The faculty has experience in project implementation, and an ability to provide conditions for a successful project management and effective use of sources.

The faculty owns a comprehensive evidence of scientific publications and has published a lot of textbooks and monographies in the field of public health, social work and nursing.



The Union of Associations MULTIKULTURA/Związek Stowarzyszeń MULTIKULTURA, Poland

(project partner, colead manager of work package: Online Platform Implementation)

The Union of Associations Multikultura has good experience in coordinating projects and as a project partner in working with children, youth and their parents. In addition, they are a local coordinator for a large number of schools. Since 1999, Multikultura has been working as an educational provider on different projects in the field of cooperative learning in classes well as in the international contexts, where partners explore the methods to stimulate the cooperation among the participants through open, challenging and complex tasks. They mainly explore the cooperative learning method, developed by Elizabeth Cohen (Stanford University), and the Dalton Plan.

In 2004, Multikultura was nominated for the Evens Prize for Intercultural Education and Coordination of the COMENIUS multilateral project entitled: "Others are also us." The objective of the project was the education for children of the minority groups and their parents (Roma, Jewish, Ukrainian, German). After that, Multikultura participated as a project partner in two multilateral projects: "CLIM" Cooperative Education Project, coordinated by the University of Ghent, and the project "DIMPLE" - European help-desk for intercultural education, coordinated by the University of Utrecht.

Last year Multikultura coordinated a multilateral project on the theme of collective poetry writing and translating. The web portal: www.eMultipoetry.eu is designed to offer an opportunity to explore the art of collective poetry writing simultaneously in an online chat. For the last five years, Multikultura has been conducting weekly online classes for collective poetry writing and translating.

Multikultura is working in collaboration with many educational institutions such as schools, universities, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Multikultura is also a member of the Polish National Digital Library.

It cooperates with the following institutions: Central Council of Roma, Association of Roma in Poland, President Roman Kwiatkowski, Cultural Centre of the Roma in Poland.



ADICE – Association for the Development of European and Civic Initiatives/ ADICE – Association pour le développement des initiatives, France

(project partner, leader of work package: Dissemination)

Since its creation in 1999, ADICE has grown. Since the beginning, ADICE has been fighting against discrimination and promoting people with fewer opportunities (youth, job-seekers, immigrants, etc.) at the social and professional level. Their work is to provide these people the opportunities to gain experience that would reinforce and enrich their personal and professional development. The aim is to coach them in defining their projects, identifying the competencies they want to develop, facilitating their access to the labor market and encouraging their participation in democratic projects. ADICE talks about “promotion”, which means starting from the individual to implement a customised projects, as opposed to “integration” implying that the individual has to adapt to the project.

ADICE understands international mobility as a way to integrate, mix and promote people, enabling them to develop social (open-mindedness, autonomy, critical thinking, solidarity, self-confidence), professional (teamwork, technical and linguistic competences) and intercultural competences (the discovery of a new country, a new environment, tolerance, overcoming stereotypes). It is a way of breaking from one’s own everyday environment, encouraging autonomy, acquiring a sense of responsibility, but mostly of identifying, reinforcing and building skills.



People's University of Kočevje/ Ljudska univerza Kočevje, Slovenia

(project partner, leader of work package: Exploitation)

People's University of Kočevje is a public institute for adult education in Slovenia. Their key priority is to spread and raise the educational level of the inhabitants in southeastern Slovenia, and thus to promote the concept and ideas of lifelong learning.

Over the years, People's University of Kočevje has outgrown into a centre for adult education offering a diverse range of training programmes and development activities.

The formal and non-formal educational programmes as well as all forms of lifelong learning provide a wide range of possibilities of acquiring knowledge at different education levels (from primary school for adults to higher education), support and learning assistance (consultancy centre, centre for self-directed learning) as well as various courses on leisure activities, better quality of life, mostly focusing on vulnerable groups, ethnic minorities – the Roma, the disabled, the unemployed. In the past four years, the institute has gained a lot of experience in project work, being a partner in local, regional and transnational project partnership.

People's University of Kočevje has also been providing education for the Roma for many years, in forms of: primary school for Roma adults (including learning help, if needed), a special public project to help the Roma with their socialisation and integration, programmes for active citizenship, programmes for people with disabilities and Roma population, comprising language and computer courses, courses in communication and life skills, better quality of life, etc.

Projects that address the issue of the Roma:

- "Development of Counselling Models for Vulnerable Groups" (national project) with the main output: innovative models for providing counselling to senior citizens, Roma community and people with disabilities;
- "Center for Self-Directed Learning" where the Roma have free access to computers and can use e-learning resources and tools developed in other projects.



Croatian Employment Service, Regional Office Karlovac/Hrvatski zavod za zapošljavanje, Područni ured Karlovac, Croatia

(project partner, leader of work package: Quality Assurance and Evaluation)

The Croatian Employment Service is a public institute, owned by the Republic of Croatia, constituted under the Law on mediation in employment and entitlements during unemployment, aimed at resolving employment and unemployment related issues in their broadest sense. Main CES activities are:

- Job mediation – CES refers the unemployed people and people who seek employment to the employers who seek workers. It mediates between the largest data base of unemployed people and other people who seek employment and the largest data base of workplace vacancies (in the Republic of Croatia). Both data bases exist in the electronic format, which makes them accessible to the entire Croatia.
- Vocational guidance – vocational guidance is conducted by advisors from the field of vocational education. Vocational guidance includes vocational informing – the process by which important information regarding the choices of occupation, profession and the area of work is given; and vocational counselling – the process of counselling about the vocational path.
- Provision of financial support to unemployed – rights of unemployed people are determined by the Law on mediation of employment and entitlements during unemployment and its purpose is to facilitate the effective functioning of the labour market and to create the essential legal grounds for ensuring the adequate level of social security of unemployed people.
- Employment training – CES participates in the employment training activities aimed at increasing the balance between the abilities of unemployed people and the current and anticipated labour market needs. Along with implementing the Active Employment Policy Measures, i.e. financing and co-financing employment and training (administering training programmes), the CES also participates in various projects, initiatives, and activities aimed at unemployed persons' training, and administered through cooperation with the local and regional units of self-government and through various EU projects and other activities and initiatives which include training.



- Employment preparation – expert assistance which affects the level of employability of a person who seeks employment, and is preventive in balancing the supply and demand in the labour market.
- Roma people are one of the groups that CES RO Karlovac is working actively with in order to improve their employment opportunities and social inclusion in general. The activities that CES RO Karlovac has performed in the last 5 years are the following:
- Including the unemployed Roma people in the programme “Decade of Literacy”. The goal was to provide the elderly unemployed Roma people primary education.
- 6 unemployed Roma persons have acquired a high school diploma and their first vocation through the CES activity that was funded through the National Plan of Active Employment Policy Measures.
- 7 unemployed Roma persons were employed by providing co-financing through the National Plan of Active Employment Policy Measures.



