

Create Chances, overcome Discrimination Shared Experiences in Education Projects for Young Roma

Seminar, Brussels, 11 – 13th of December 2009

**Rosa Luxemburg Foundation
Brussels Office**

Introduction

Roma are the biggest ethnic minority living in Europe. Their situation is characterized by persistent discrimination and far-reaching social exclusion. These conditions make Roma one of the most vulnerable social group within European societies.

Exclusion fosters social marginalization. Marginalization means poverty, lack of opportunities in the educational and occupational fields and segregation. The attempt to integrate Roma into mainstream society often clashes with deeply rooted social prejudices and stereotypes. At the same time a manipulated political debate on Roma people fosters populist attitudes, especially from extreme right wing parties.

The constant denial of social and civil rights represents the most relevant problem to overcome. Inadequate national governments' responses and lack of long term strategies prevented the setting up of integrated and comprehensive approaches. In order to identify a set of effective policies to face the Roma communities' inclusion, policy-makers have to consider regional and local socio-economic conditions and recognize the experiences made on the regional and local level.

The Seminar

Bringing together local and regional experts from all over Europe, the seminar will focus on **projects on the education of young Roma**. Through presentations of selected projects the seminar would like to explore the following phases of education:

- ▶ Access to **kindergarden and pre-schools**, access to primary school
- ▶ Integration in **primary** and **secondary** school's cycles;
- ▶ Shaping and inclusion into **vocational training programs** and **access to the labor market**; projects on **confidence-building** and the development of an individual personality

Create Chances, overcome Discrimination Shared Experiences in Education Projects for Young Roma

Seminar, Brussels, 11 – 13th of December 2009

While discussing these topics, we would like to highlight the following factors that we regard as essential for the success of education projects:

- ▶ Constant **involvement of parents** in the educational path, especially in the early stages;
- ▶ Fight against segregation of Roma in non-Roma schools, strengthening the idea of **“mixed classes”** as a means of intercultural exchange and reciprocal understanding;
- ▶ Need of a **comprehensive strategy** – an action for social inclusion must be multi-dimensional, otherwise it would be ineffective.

Within Europe, Roma communities are established in different countries whose socio-economic background can be different. In spite of these differences an overall goal of the seminar will be to promote a wide range discussion among NGOs, local authorities and operators from different realities and corners of Europe.

Along with the presentation of good practices it will be important, too, to investigate the identification of mistakes, unsuccessful experiences and ineffective approaches.

Efforts to improve the education of Roma children and teenagers are currently widely discussed in EU circles and in Pan-European institutions such as the OSCE and the Council of Europe. Education projects will become a crucial issue both on the **Education, Culture, Youth Best Practices Conference** of the DG Education and Culture in March 2010 and on the **2nd EU Roma Summit** in April 2010. The results of the seminar will be published and shall become a practitioners' contribution to the discussion surrounding these upcoming events.

Methodological approach

We are going to compare different projects to underline best practices and identify recurrent mistakes in all phases from conception to designation and implementation.

Three panels will be set up, in each of them 3-5 projects will be presented. A conclusive session will take place for assessing and discussing the outcomes of each workshop.

The three panels will be:

- Panel 1: Pre schooling projects and access to primary school
- Panel 2: Primary and secondary school
- Panel 3: Vocational training, other youth projects

Create Chances, overcome Discrimination Shared Experiences in Education Projects for Young Roma

Seminar, Brussels, 11 – 13th of December 2009

Technical Information

Dates: Friday, December 11, 12:00 - Sunday, December 13, 15:00

Venue: Caritas, Rue de Pascale 4, 1040 Brussels

Accommodation: Crowne Plaza Europe, Rue de la Loi 107, 1040 Brussels

Seminar Languages: English, Romani, Russian

The **Rosa Luxemburg Foundation** will cover all registered participants' costs for transport and accommodation.

If you would like to participate, please contact Anna Striethorst (striethorst@rosalux-europa.eu) or Edoardo Boggio Marzet (project@rosalux-europa.info). Please then register **by November 23** by stating your **personal contact details and function** in your organization.

Further, we would ask you to fill in the **attached questionnaire**. This will help to provide the organizers and other participants with an overview on your project and facilitate the exchange of relevant information. The questionnaire is submitted to all participants.

For any questions please contact:

Anna Striethorst striethorst@rosalux-europa.info

Edoardo Boggio Marzet project@rosalux-europa.info

Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, Brussels Office
11, Ave. Michel Ange | 1000 Brussels | Belgium

Phone +32 (0) 27 38 76 65 | Fax +32 (0) 27 38 76 69
info@rosalux-europa.info | www.rosalux-europa.info