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Roma Resource Center
Ромски Ресурсен Центар
Romano Resursno Centro

RESTORE

PROVIDE SOCIAL PATHWAYS FOR ROMA PEOPLE

Project No. 2021-1-DE02-KA220-ADU-000029489

NATIONAL REPORT

North Macedonia

PR1: IDENTIFICATION OF CIVIC EDUCATIONAL MODELS FOR DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION OF ROMA ADULTS

D1 THE DEVELOPMENT OF A RESEARCH PROTOCOL

DATE: 21/02/2022 | VERSION 1

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Introduction

The 'RESTORE - Provide Social Pathways for Roma People' is a 9-month (1/11/2021 to 31/10/2023) project co-funded by the 'ERASMUS+ KA220 ADU - Cooperation partnership in adult education' programme of the European Union (*Project no.: 2021-1-DE02-KA220-ADU-000029489*). RESTORE focuses on the need of fostering civic engagement of Roma adults in their local communities, bringing them closer to EU values and ideas of union and diversity on the formulation of a holistic training methodology, from the identification of civic educational models already existed in the EU to the delivery of policy recommendations and proper enhancements of them. The project is going to be implemented in 5 countries with dense Roma populations (Romania, Germany, Greece, North Macedonia and Hungary) and involve few groups of participants:

- Roma adults including those coming from a disadvantaged background;
- Local communities and social partners;
- Policy organizations;
- Adult education providers;
- Other stakeholders related to civic engagement.
-

The activities of this project include:

- a) Identification of civic educational models for democratic participation of Roma adults;
- b) Designing and delivery of an OER capacity building program tailored to the civic skill gaps of Roma adults: "Social Pathways for civic engagement of Roma adults in the EU";
- c) Delivery of policy suggestions regarding civic engagement of Roma adults at EU level;
- d) Transnational Meetings and Multiplier Events.

In this context, the research at national level on behalf of every implementing partner for identifying the specific country context and the actual needs of Roma adults is of paramount importance. Thus, the report

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in question is focusing on the North Macedonia framework collecting information both from the desktop research and the field research resulting to national level conclusions and recommendations that will be linked with the capacity building programme of the RESTORE project.

1. The North Macedonian context and state of the act civic engagement of Roma adults in the country

1.1 Statistics and Population

According to the latest official results from the National Census 2022, North Macedonia has a total of 2,097,319 citizens, from which a total of 2,43% or 49,147 are of Roma ethnic background¹ and in the past over 20 years according the last statistical data, the Roma population in North Macedonia is being decreased for 0.22%. The majority of the Roma people living in North Macedonia are Muslim but in the southern part of the country there are Roma people who declare themselves as Orthodox.

The vast majority of Roma are North Macedonian citizens who speak the Macedonian language and over 0.20% of the total number of 2.43% Roma also speak their mother tongue or Romani language.²

Other sources such as estimations made by the World Bank claim the number of Roma in North Macedonia to be between 80,000 and 260,000 or approximately 4 to 12% of the total population.

The municipality of Shuto Orizari is the only municipality in the world with majority of Roma people and at the same time the only municipality where Romani is an official language alongside the Macedonian language.

Since the independence of North Macedonia in 1991, the Roma people are being recognized, defined and mentioned in the country's Constitution under Article 78³. In 2009, the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia took measures to enlarge inclusion of Romani in the education process.

North Macedonia is the region's leader in respecting the rights of the Romani people. It is the first country in the region with a minister of Romani ethnicity and also has many Romani in high government

¹ <https://popis2021.stat.gov.mk/>

² <https://www.stat.gov.mk/PrikaziSoopstenie.aspx?rbtxt=146>

³ <https://www.sobranie.mk/content/Odluki%20USTAV/UstavSRSM.pdf>

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positions. However, there is still a lot to be done concerning the education and integration of the Roma in North Macedonia.

1.2 Legal Framework

The Strategy for Roma Inclusion 2022 - 2030 has been adopted in accordance with the priorities of the Government program 2020-2024 which relate to ensuring accelerated and sustainable economic growth, higher living standards and quality of life of citizens; quality education accessible to all and full implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement. These strategic priorities are directly related to the inclusion of Roma in terms of promoting the position of ethnic communities and ensuring equal treatment and respect for the fundamental rights of all citizens, and in the direction of the Roma community the support is aimed at expanding access and improving quality of education, employment, health, housing and other social services. Policy instruments to achieve these goals include measures for general measures and targeted measures, including affirmative action to prevent or bridge the gap between different communities or a combination of both, with a particular focus on a gender perspective.

The Roma Strategy is prepared in accordance with the EU Strategic Framework for Roma Integration for the period 2021-2030, which promotes equality and socio-economic inclusion of the Roma population at the level of the European Union. The new EU Strategic Framework relates to the Commission's work in other areas, including the recently adopted EU Action Plan⁹ against Racism 2020-2025, the EU Victims' Rights Strategy 2021-2025¹⁰ and the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025.⁴

In July 2019, the Berlin Process adopted the Declaration of the Western Balkan Partners on Roma Integration in the framework of the EU enlargement process. With the adoption of the Declaration, governments pledged to continue to further strengthen efforts to achieve Roma equality and full integration as part of regional co-operation and the European Union accession process. The Declaration

⁴ Gender equality strategy: https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en

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envisages achieving specifically defined goals in the areas of employment, education, housing, health care, documentation and the fight against discrimination.⁵

The strategic approach to Roma inclusion, as stated in the new ten-year strategic framework for Roma inclusion, becomes part of the EU enlargement process and part of the *acquis*, hence the achievements in the implementation of the activities of the national plans are subject to regular screening. In essence, it is the responsibility of the Government to abide by the rules and procedures relating, *inter alia*, to the inclusion of Roma in respect of fundamental human rights, the protection of minorities, discrimination and the inclusion of Roma, which are included in Chapter 23 - The Judiciary and human rights from the Stabilization and Association Agreement.⁶

The Law on Adult Education regulates the organization, structure, financing and management of the adult education system. Adult education is part of the education system that provides education, training, retraining and learning for adults. Adult education includes formal, non-formal and formal learning. Formal adult education includes: adult primary education, adult secondary education, vocational training, vocational education, technical education and post-secondary adult education, as well as retraining and additional training and adult higher education. Non-formal adult education means organized learning processes aimed at training adults for work, various social activities or personal development. The purpose of adult education is to provide an opportunity to acquire an appropriate level of education for everyone and for all age groups and to enable them to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes that will be in line with the demands of society and the labor market.

More precisely regarding the above stated Law, Republic of North Macedonia currently collects statistical data on adults who have not been able to terminate or complete their education and according the first information given by the Agency for Employment of North Macedonia, 80% of the job seekers from Roma ethnic background have not completed their whether primary or secondary education. The relevant statistical data is not available currently as most of the job seekers during the submission of the application did not declare to which ethnic community they belong.

⁵ <https://www.rcc.int/docs/464/declaration-of-western-balkans-partners-on-roma-integration-within-the-eu-enlargement-process>

⁶ Commission Communication "Enhancing the accession process - A credible EU perspective for the Western Balkans": https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/system/files/2020-02/enlargement-methodology_en.pdf

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In the field of employment, the Macedonian legislation envisages the Law on Employment and Insurance in Case of Unemployment, the Law on Labor Relations which envisage the principle of equal treatment, and explicitly prohibit discrimination between the candidate for employment and the employee. The Labor Law specifically emphasizes the obligation to ensure equal treatment and equal opportunities for women and men. The Law on Protection from Harassment at Work regulates the procedural and material aspects related to harassment at the workplace, as well as protection against discrimination of a worker on the grounds of pregnancy, childbirth and parenthood.

Although unemployment rate in North Macedonia has dropped significantly over the past years, reaching 15.9% in the third quarter of 2021, the Roma unemployment rate has remained unchanged. According to the 2018 social mapping data, the employment rate of Roma is 23%, almost twice lower than the national average, while the unemployment rate of Roma is at a record high of 67%. Among Romani women, the employment rate is 8%. The regional survey "Breaking the cycle of Roma exclusion in the Western Balkans" for 2017 conducted by UNDP and the World Bank shows lower results in terms of employment of Roma versus non-Roma. Approximately one in five Roma aged 15 to 64 was employed in 2017, while among young people, a large number of Roma were not included in employment, qualifications or training in 2017. Although there has been a slight improvement compared to 2011, the gap between Roma and non-Roma is widening.⁷

North Macedonia is in lack of capacity building programs targeted to Roma adults and, exceptions are the National Strategy Action Plans for involvement of Roma women and Capacity building training for self-advocacy for Roma-girls and women and feminist activists, a training organized in recent days by the OSCE, ODIHR Office.

1.3. Best Practices

BEST PRACTICE 1: Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level

Name of Best Practice:	Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level
Country:	North Macedonia

⁷ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/eca/publication/breaking-cycle-of-roma-exclusion-in-western-balkans>

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<p>Short Description: (300 words max)</p>	<p>The European Union/Council of Europe Romacted Program II in the Western Balkans and Turkey is a consolidated and expend effort program to improve the integration of Roma population in local communities through enhanced participation in local policymaking and implementation of local actions. The ROMACTED program assists the local authorities to integrate Roma specific measures into the mainstream local policies, action plans, budgets and public service delivery, thereby enhancing democratic participation and empowerment of local Roma communities.</p>
<p>Trends and Potential Benefits from this Best Practice (250 words max)</p>	<p>This project pursues improvement of local democracy, accountability, inclusiveness and responsiveness towards Roma citizens and thereby improved delivery of services. The program is designed to build up political will and sustained policy engagement of local authorities, to enhance democratic and local governance and t build up capacity and stimulate the empowerment of local Roma communities to contribute to the design, implementation and monitoring of plans and projects concerning them through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Empowering Roma on the individual level (assisting people to practice their basic rights and to expand their capacity and skills), as well as on the community level (assisting people to get organized to voice out their interests around community problem solving, and - Improving and expanding the institutions' commitment, capacities knowledge and skills in working for Roma inclusion, putting in practice the concepts of good governance; - Contributing to preparation of the local development actions that aim to improve the quality of life for Roma and to reduce the gap between Roma and non-Roma, including in relation to mitigating the effects of the Covid 19 pandemic.
<p>How this Best Practice could be used/ transferred (250 words max)</p>	<p>This best practice can be used and transferred on any local level as it is designed for the exact purpose to provide help to the local authorities not only the Roma community within the inclusion on local level. By partnering and through good mapping and research the best practice can be easily transferred after assessing the needs of the local Roma community in any of the partnering countries, as this is a EU/Council of Europe suggested program. R=The program adapts its actions and activities to each beneficiary and to each selected location from the beneficiaries, in order to fit in the policy cycle and to the dynamic and reality of each municipality, thus bringing an additional input to existing policies and practices for an effective and more inclusive functioning.</p>
<p>Website link:</p>	<p>https://www.coe.int/en/web/skopje/promoting-good-governance-and-roma-empowerment-at-local-level-romacted-ii-1</p>
<p>More Info:</p>	<p>n/a</p>

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BEST PRACTICE 2: National Strategy for Roma in the Republic of North Macedonia

Name of Best Practice:	National Strategy for Roma in the Republic of North Macedonia
Country:	North Macedonia
Short Description: (300 words max)	Due to the challenges in everyday life faced by the Roma population as the most marginalized in society, the Republic of North Macedonia in accordance with the Strategic Framework of the European Union for Roma Support and Inclusion creates the second National Strategy for Roma 2022-2030. When defining the list of priorities for strategic action, the basic cornerstone are the experiences of the state institutions that in their everyday work meet with the current problems of the Roma population. Significant contribution in this regard have had: the experiences and research conducted by citizens' organizations and individuals: comparative experiences and already promoted Roma strategies in the countries of the region; as well as the areas that the Roma Decade participants chose as the most acute.
Trends and Potential Benefits from this Best Practice (250 words max)	Promotion and development of the socio-economic, legal position, cultural and linguistic rights of the Roma in the Republic of North Macedonia by ensuring adequate and equitable access to public goods and services, where the Roma community participates equally in building an inclusive society based on elimination against all forms of discrimination, anti-Roma sentiment and poverty. Starting from the vision, the national strategic framework for Roma presented in this strategy provides guidelines for addressing the challenges faced by Roma in social inclusion and in the realization of human rights. Hence, the general objectives are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to reduce and eliminate the socio-economic gap between the Roma and the rest of the non-Roma population in the Macedonian society, - to reduce poverty and unemployment among the Roma population, - to conduct an effective fight against discrimination and anti-Gypsyism by promoting equality and ensuring the full participation of Roma in society.
How this Best Practice could be used/ transferred (250 words max)	As all of the partners are engaged and have its National strategy for Roma as EU members, the usage and transfer of the key measures and objectives of the NS for Roma from North Macedonia can be easily repainted in other countries official documents. Therefore, a prior assessment and statistical operations are need to be done for more observant image of the general living of the Roma community in partnership countries. Also CSO and NVO engagement in the processes is more than emphatic.

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Website link:	https://www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/pdf/2022/Strategija%20za%20inkluzija%20na%20Romite%202022-2030%2003-02-2022%20finalna%20verzija.pdf
More Info:	n/a

BEST PRACTICE 3: Roma Inclusion Activity

Name of Best Practice:	Roma Inclusion Activity
Country:	North Macedonia
Short Description: (300 words max)	The aim of the Roma Inclusion Activity is Roma community members and civil society organizations (CSOs) take leadership roles in the development and implementation of national policies and strategies to empower Roma inclusion, and to hold government institutions accountable for addressing Roma and needs. Through a partnership between the USAID and the Institute of Research and Policy Analysis Romalitico, promotion of actions to address the human rights issues that Roma communities, themselves, have identified as priorities. The Roma Inclusion Activity supports public education activities that empower Roma to use mechanisms for protection and addressing violations of their human rights. The activity will empower the community to participate in local decision-making processes and include their priorities in the local agenda.
Trends and Potential Benefits from this Best Practice (250 words max)	The Activity aims to diminish stereotypes and prejudices against Roma people by reducing their vulnerability to economic destitution and lessening their dependence on public assistance. By support of activities to increase the general public's awareness of Roma needs and the Roma community's potential to contribute to society.
How this Best Practice could be used/ transferred (250 words max)	This best practice could be used or transferred with the help of the CSOs by engaging themselves in inclusion and empowerment processes of Roma community on local or national level through clear state of the goals of the National Strategies for Roma in all partnering countries, how are they being implemented and how is this civic engagement of Roma being stated in these Strategies. Through public education activities could be provided much easier usage or transferring of this best practice.
Website link:	https://www.euro.who.int/en/countries/north-macedonia/news/news/2021/11/roma-communities-build-resilience-to-emergencies-in-north-macedonia

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**More Info:**

n/a

BEST PRACTICE 4: Move Your Finger Initiative

Name of Best Practice:	Move Your Finger - "Mrdni so prst"
Country:	North Macedonia
Short Description: (300 words max)	The "Move Your Finger" initiative aims to raise public awareness of the various opportunities for social change that are in the domain of each individual, as well as to offer ideas and opportunities to contribute to specific activities within the community in which citizens can involve, individually but also collectively.
Trends and Potential Benefits from this Best Practice (250 words max)	By encouraging civic actions and initiatives for increased involvement of each individual or collective through ideas and individual responsibility to make a certain social change in the any region.
How this Best Practice could be used/ transferred (250 words max)	Through a publishing call for actions in which interested citizens in cooperation with institutions will have the opportunity to propose and initiate ideas through creative access and internet activism, as well as through advocacy that will contribute to change in their local community.
Website link:	https://khamdelcevo.org.mk/%D0%B3%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%93%D0%B0%D0%BD%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B0-%D0%B2%D0%BA%D0%BB%D1%83%D1%87%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82/
More Info:	n/a

BEST PRACTICE 5: Civil Society - Citizen Participation

Name of Best Practice:	Civil Society - Citizen Participation
Country:	North Macedonia

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Short Description: (300 words max)	Civic participation as a concept is an essential component of a healthy democratic society. Engaged citizenship, ie. citizens who are actively involved in the betterment of their communities and their country are of great benefit to civil society and a key indicator of healthy communities, a democratic state and satisfied citizens.
Trends and Potential Benefits from this Best Practice (250 words max)	The Potential benefits of the project are invigorate citizen engagement in political and social life, simulate civil society to press for democratic reforms, especially relating to contentious issues and improved synergies and alliances to strengthen civic responsibility.
How this Best Practice could be used/ transferred (250 words max)	Through civic Activism and Participation is designed to empower citizens and young people to recognize the ways they can engage in their communities and to provide different novel mechanisms for their participation, oversight and advocacy will stimulate genuine civil society organizations to address contentious issues and press the government to undertake democratic reforms and cooperation and mobilization will promote greater CSO mobilization, cooperation and solidarity. It will support actions jointly developed through CSO partnerships and networks, forums for exchange of experiences, and discussions of mutual problems, possible solutions and future activities.
Website link:	https://reactor.org.mk/en/usaid-civil-society-project/
More Info:	n/a

2. Summary of the results from organized focus groups/interviews with professionals

The organized focus group/interviews with professionals, based on the discussions with the 4 professionals, profiled few different types of findings as the interviewed professionals come and have different background on working or training Roma. All of them have over 5 years of experience working as trainers and with the community.

From the focus group with professionals it can be concluded that the focus of their work is the formal participation of Roma adults in several sectors such as employment and education, and the awareness of targeting the level of individual involvement of Roma adults in the processes of action in society is developing flow. From the discussion it was ascertained that most of the Roma community is informed and at the same time interested when engaging in any activities if they have some benefit from them.

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The professionals stated that despite the experience they have gained during the period of work as professionals or trainers, most of them have experience in educational or capacity building and communication skills training, which are also helpers in social processes to understand the concept of civic participation.

Professionals categorically stated that they do not have adequate guidelines, resources as manuals for appropriate retraining on the topic of civic engagement, and the terminology itself raises the dilemma of its meaning and what is included in the term civic engagement or involvement.

According to the discussion, it can be concluded that the Roma are not yet active actors in some processes and at the same time they are not part of certain decision-making processes, at local or national level.

The answers offered include the passivity of the Roma, self-interest, the need for proactivity of the community and the understanding of the concept of civic engagement, but at the same time the guilt can be foreseen in the system, the stigmatization towards Roma, the discouraging non-Roma narratives in decision-making institutions towards Roma.

All professionals involved in the discussion saw a common finding that Roma inclusion is only enhanced when there is a project or program intended or binding on the Roma community.

It was also concluded and is relevant to be stated as a key finding the need or lack of certain skills among professionals in order to improve the quality of training and encourage the civic engagement of Roma and increase their interest. Professionals possess skills suitable for civic engagement training, but consider it really necessary to have appropriate training with several modules on various key topics such as:

- lobbying and advocacy skills;
- learning policies and advocating for them;
- setting factor positions with the possibility of influencing the creation of policies.

As a conclusion from the focus group with professionals, it was stressed the inevitable need for appropriate methodology or preparation of training to differentiate the terminology and also to ensure adequate civic engagement of the Roma population in North Macedonia, despite the implementation of certain projects in the past.

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In order to increase the trust in the system, to reduce the passivity of the community for various reasons and to increase the awareness at every level, trainings are needed that will contribute to increasing the importance of civic engagement and will also increase the community awareness regarding general trends and non-formal education which has many times proved to be more important than formal.

3. Summary of results from Organized focus groups/interviews with Roma adults

During the interviews held with the focus group with Roma adults, primarily it was discussed the definition and the meaning of the civic engagement context as all of the participants had a different point of view of the context.

All participants were unanimous that the terminology is not sufficiently known and that no measures are taken for it by a number of non-governmental organizations or institutions, both locally and nationally.

All respondents consider that the need to develop an association (their terminology) or appropriate training, workshops that will represent the problems of the Roma community is inevitable and believe that such advocacy is and is a model of civic participation.

At the same time, there is a deficit of solidarity, because solidarity action is one of the links of civic participation. This did not include self-advocacy, but solidarity action for the greater good of the community.

The respondents confirm the fact that the Roma population in the municipalities in the Republic of Northern Macedonia face many obstacles and problems in the processes of civic participation, and as one of them they single out:

- access to institutions; and
- cooperation with institutions at local and national level.

After the focus group, the respondents concluded that the cooperation with the local self-government or the institutions exists only when Roma are included in certain job positions.

At the same time, the community is insufficiently informed about the concept of civic participation, and one of the reasons is poverty, illiteracy and social status.

As a conclusion and recommendations, it was concluded that the need for a series of trainings for adults for civic participation is inevitable, in order to increase information, involvement and offer appropriate tools that would be available for the community to know where to find the solution and how to reap the benefits of civic participation in every sphere. There is a unanimous need for trained people who will initiate activities and changes and increase proactivity in civic engagement.

All this leads to solving the everyday problems faced by the Roma community such as:

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- Discrimination;
- Stigmatization;
- Non-acceptance and lack of support at the institutional level;
- Non-representation in the processes and policy making at local and national level;
- Deficit of employees;
- Appropriate definition of the criteria for employment of Roma (they should apply not only to Roma but also to non-Roma).

4. Summary results from Online questionnaires for professionals

10 professionals have taken the online questionnaires, 50% of them at the age of 25 to 39 and 50% of them at the age of 40 to 60 years. Regarding the educational background of the professionals, most of them or 75% of the respondents have completed tertiary/higher education, and 25% have completed postgraduate studies. When it comes to gender balance, 5 of the participants were or declared themselves as women and 5 of the participants declared themselves as men. From the total number of respondents, 75% belong to the Roma community and 25% are Macedonians.

In terms of how all respondents declare themselves and what their employment status is, one of them have stated that he/she worked as an educator of Roma adults, 5 are professionals who worked with Roma adults, one is staff with experience in working with Roma adults, and 1 declared themselves as education advisors, 1 executive director and 2 project coordinators.

When it comes to previous experience, training or support of Roma people, 12.5% of them have experience with general education training, 25% have knowledge and experience with finance education training, and most of them have declared that have experience with skills training or in total 62.5% from the respondents. There are also those type of professionals who have taken part in social and cultural support training or a total of 25% (2 participants), and 50% of the total number of the professionals have been directly involved in democratic and inclusion support trainings. Therefore, it can be concluded that 3 of the professional respondents were involved in several thematic trainings in support of Roma.

5 of the participants are involved and engaged in such trainings for support from 3 to 5 years now, and 5 of them have an experience and have been engaged over 7 years.

Most of the respondents or 62.5% according the results of the questionnaire are not aware of any civic training programs in the community, where the other 37.5% are very well aware, though consider and state the lack of such civic training programs. All the professional respondents agree with the need for civic training programs for the Roma people, 87.5% of them stating the fact that the programs for civic training in enhancing civic education outcomes are very valuable, where 12.5% of them think that this trainings are of some value.

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When it comes to their professional relevance and training to support Roma with education, information or citizen support programs, a total of 62.5% from the professional respondents are experienced. The other 37.5% consider that they are adequately trained to support Roma on the subject education, information or citizen support programs, while 37.5% believe that they are also trained, but partly, because they need to supplement their skills and abilities upgrading of knowledge and methods of work.

Half of the professionals have access to training resources for Roma, the other half does not. Those who answered that they have access to resources or a total of 37.5%, consider that educational resources are very useful for their work as civic engagement educators or Roma facilitators, 25% think that they are partially useful, and 37.5% can not give an appropriate answer.

62.5% have not previously used technology-based civic engagement instructions, and 37.5% have experience with using such instructions and they are based on technology engagement during a pandemic, database addition and/or summarizing needs of the target group.

More than half think that the use of training technology gives value to the level of training for Roma civic engagement, 12.5% of them think that there is no impact, and 25% can not answer this question.

Regarding the language barrier in training or supporting Roma, 90% answered that it is non-existent because they are Roma who speak Romani, while 10% or one of the respondents rarely faces any language barrier.

In the area of information and accessibility for Roma of information of social, cultural character or services for diversity, 75% of the professionals are directly involved and are providers of such information, 25% of them sometimes use these services during trainings.

75% of them are less informed about the training modules for civic education in the EU, 25% can not answer this question. The majority of respondents professionals or a total of 75% are familiar with training organizations aimed at reintegration of Roma and improving their engagement. As mentioned several times by the respondents are: RRC, Sonce, USAID, UNDP, Romalítico.

A total of 25% of them are not familiar with this type of training. 90% or a total of 9 of the respondents professionals assess the civic engagement of the Roma as low, while the remaining 10% or one respondent thinks that they can not answer this question. However, 75% of them act directly in creating awareness of democratic participation among Roma.

The main obstacle for the participation of the Roma population in civic engagement activities are the low rate of education, discriminatory policies by the institutions, lack of information, lack of motivation, low self-confidence of the Roma and of course poverty. 34% additionally believe that activities and assistance are needed for Roma citizens and emphasize the need for activities for the benefit of the community in completing education and soft skills training.

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5. Summary of results from online questionnaires for Roma adults

From the total number of participants all 7 have declared themselves are Roma. 70% are in the age range from 25 to 39 years and 30% are in the range age from 40 to 60 years. 4 of them have declared as women and 3 are men.

According to the online questionnaires taken and responded by the Roma adults, most of them are knowledgeable and are familiar with community civic training programs and about 20% of respondents are not aware of the existence of such trainings. 80%, who have neglected the fact, have all participated in civic training programs. Most of them have participated in community-related trainings, where on various topics for working with children from primary and secondary education. Also in cooperation with their parents, as well as their involvement in a series of workshops for raising awareness of their children's education or trainings organized by NGOs, they were mostly: training for teamwork, self-advocacy, expression of own opinion, freedom of speech, trainings for acquiring communications and communication skills, human rights, health care, parenting skills - good parenting, education, healthy food, immunization, etc.

All respondents in the Roma adult group agree to participate in civic training programs. By any means that this group of adult Roma respondents shows an absolute interest in participating in programs to overcome stereotypes towards Roma. 60% of them have stated that they are also interested in getting involved on local level, 30% are interested in expanding their perspective and worldview, 20% are interested in programs to introduce their rights and European culture and get employment opportunities, one of the respondents proposes a program for raising community awareness.

In general, all seven agree that there is a need for civic training programs and believe at the same time and decisively that the participation in such trainings will increase the involvement of Roma in democratic and cultural and community activities.

40% of the respondents participated in online trainings or courses on communication platforms such as Zoom knowledge, children's rights, and 60% did not participate in online trainings or courses.

80% believe that the use of training technology will contribute to improving the level of training for civic engagement of Roma, and 20% of respondents cannot assess. Respondents who agree that online training is useful in keeping pace with modern technology and especially important for new generations as a facilitating learning environment.

80% of the respondents agree that civic engagement is very useful in life in general, 20% think that it has some benefit.

Regarding the contribution of civic engagement programs, according to their participation, five said that it is very useful, and two that it is of some benefit.

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Most of the Roma adult respondents are familiar with training organizations that aim to reintegrate Roma and improve civic engagement, 20% of them have no knowledge of the topic. Organizations that are most often mentioned by the respondents who work for in achieving these goals are: RRC, Sonce, DROM, KHAM, Romalitico, Romano Avazi and Romaversitas.

All 7 respondents believe that the civic engagement of the Roma is low, and as the main obstacle for participation and engagement of the Roma in civic activities is often mentioned insufficient capacity, inactivity, lack of interest, and at the same time the language and distrust are not absent.

60% of the respondents are adult Roma with completed secondary education, 40% are Roma highly educated Roma. 60% of them are currently employed or work engaged, 40% stated that they are unemployed.

Of the total number of employees, 50% are engaged at the municipal level, and 10% are engaged in the non-governmental sector. Regarding the work experience, 66.7% are employed with experience from 1 to 5 years, and 33.3% are employed with experience from 5 to 10 years. The same numbers of respondents have lived in the country since birth or 66.7%, while 33.3% said they live in North Macedonia for more than 10 years.

6. Conclusions and recommendations: Skill gaps and need identification

Civic participation as a concept is an essential component of a healthy democratic society. Engaged citizenship, ie. citizens who are actively involved in the betterment of their communities and their country are of great benefit to civil society and a key indicator of healthy communities, a democratic state and satisfied citizens.

Active and engaged citizens are those who are connected to their community, feel responsible for the betterment of their community, participate in civic initiatives and volunteer and above all believe that they can change something.

The Roma population is in deficit of adequate staff for training on civic engagement, and it follows that the more people are satisfied with their community, the stronger and stronger the sense of belonging. The great need for raising awareness of the concept of civic participation at a higher level and the interest and training of individuals who will act in spreading the concept is passed as a need.

It comes to the conclusion that more educated Roma are more aware of the importance of civic participation and the benefit of it. Hence the need to increase their own satisfaction through the impact in every sphere of society, which can only be offset by appropriate workshops and trainings from the NGO sector.

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With proper training, it is concluded that the belief in the influence at the local and national level can change, and hence the accessibility to the assessment of the factual situation and the involvement of the Roma community.

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