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RESTORE

PROVIDE SOCIAL PATHWAYS FOR ROMA PEOPLE

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

NATIONAL REPORT – GREECE

Erasmus+ Programme

KA220-ADU - Cooperation partnerships in adult education

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1. Desk Research

1.1 General data on the population and the situation of the Roma in Greece

The Council of Europe estimates that there are approximately 265,000 Roma living in Greece, that's about 2.47% of the population (**Council of Europe, 2020**) living in 371 communities scattered all over the country (**Centre for Policy Studies- Central European University, 2020**). The majority of Greek Roma, although they are considered equal citizens and have rights and obligations under the Greek constitution and legislation (**Ibidem**), live in a higher degree of poverty and social exclusion than non-Roma, with the main challenges being housing, employment, education, health, access to public services and participation in public life (**Roma Civil Monitor, 2019**).

Roma in Greece are not considered a minority by the official state and deny themselves the "minority" status. No ethnic or linguistic minorities are recognized in Greece except for the Greek Muslim minority in Western Thrace, recognized by the Greek state with the Treaty of Lausanne. In this light, Roma people are not considered a Minority in Greece. Moreover, politically active Greek Roma, based on a Pan-Hellenic, unanimous decision made in the spring of 2001 in Thessaloniki, have self-identified as "just Greeks"¹. As a matter of fact, most Greek Roma representative organizations do not perceive themselves to be a 'minority' group, while they consider their Greek identity a 'non-negotiable' issue. This unanimous voting decision on self-identification was done in response to the self-identification decision of Roma representatives from many different countries at a conference in Prague in 2000 where they self-identified as ethnic minorities (**Centre for Policy Studies- Central European University, 2020**). As a result of this situation, the Greek state refrains from recognizing antigypsyism as a specific form of racism against Roma (**Ibidem**). Although the fight against anti-Gypsyism and discrimination has become a key part of the pillars of the new National Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Roma (**National Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Roma, 2021**).

¹ The Panhellenic Unanimous Decision of Greek Roma: "We, the Greek Gypsies, declare categorically and in every direction that we are an inextricably linked part of Hellenism everywhere. Any other view from wherever it is expressed and/or emanates, will find us not only disagreeing, but also confronting each other. And if ever even hypothetically the question of the deletion of one of the two constituent terms of our Identity of which we declare ourselves proud, namely: a) "Greeks" - b) "Gypsies", we declare unequivocally, catechetically and unanimously, that we choose the deletion of the term "Gypsies" and the preservation of the term "Greeks" alone".



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Since the Roma do not have a special minority status in Greece, therefore they are generally included in the statistics of state institutions as Greek citizens and not as Roma, and because even today there is a lack of personal and financial identification papers, especially in the underprivileged settlements, there is a lack of specialized data on the political education and training of Roma in civic engagement and active citizenship. However, there are some specialized surveys on issues concerning the social integration and living standards of the Greek Roma either by the General Secretariat for the Social Integration of Roma in the past or the General Secretariat for Social Solidarity and Poverty Alleviation today, but also by European institutions, international observatories and NGOs.

1.2 Key findings and barriers regarding Roma civic engagement, education, and training on political participation from the Desk research

The initial search of sources, scientific publications and reports of state and European institutions and non-governmental organizations on the living conditions, the involvement of Roma in public life, as well as in education and training for political participation resulted in the following findings:

- The Greek Roma are still today a group of citizens who face difficulties and challenges in exercising their electoral rights to some extent., either because they are not registered in municipal registration catalogs and electoral registers or because they face difficulties in registering in the civil and electoral registers (**Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, 2019**).
- The Greek Roma are underrepresented in the country's political scene, they have no elected representatives in the Greek Parliament and have never elected representatives in it (**Centre for Policy Studies- Central European University, 2020**) nor is there a political party that specifically defends their rights (**OSCE, 2019**). At the same time, there are no Greek Roma elected to the European Parliament.
- In municipal elections, Roma city councilors are elected in municipalities where there are significant Roma populations and where there is traditionally a long-



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standing presence and effort to participate in the public sphere of organized Roma interest groups and cultural or political associations and organizations.².

- It is considered extremely difficult for Roma to be elected as MPs in national elections due to educational limitations and the limited political sensitivity and awareness of Roma as voters, combined with social exclusion, marginalization and negative stereotypes and prejudices about Roma in the wider society and the electorate (**Centre for Policy Studies - Central European University, 2020**).
- Roma in Greece face serious obstacles in completing even compulsory education with high school dropout rates and young people who are neither trained nor employed³ which has an impact both on their awareness of their human and political rights and their knowledge on issues of political organization, as they lack comprehensive and objective education on issues of political participation (**FRA, 2016**).
- According to 2019 Eurobarometer discrimination against the Roma people is the most prevalent form of discrimination in Greece. About 82% of Greek respondents considered this phenomenon very widespread (**Eurobarometer-Discrimination in the EU, 2019**). Παράλληλα ένα research του Pew Research Center showed that 72% of the Greek population viewed the Roma people unfavourably (**Pew Research Center, 2019**). Roma in Greece continue to experience significant governmental and societal discrimination, social exclusion, and harassment, including ethnic profiling by police, allegations of brutality while in police custody, employment discrimination, limited access to education, and segregated schooling (**US Government-Greece Human Rights Report, 2021**).

² For example, in Agia Varvara, in Attiki region, Athens, Greece, Roma have been elected to the municipal council since 1975 and have more than five associations (about culture, sports, youth, women's issues, trading, etc.), the oldest of which was established in 1939.

³ It is characteristic according to the latest FRA survey that although 72% of Roma children in Greece are enrolled in Primary [ISCED 1] and Lower Secondary Education [ISCED 2], the percentage that graduate is much lower (**FRA, 2016**) while Greece has one of the lowest rates of participation of Roma adolescents and youth in Upper Secondary Education [ISCED 3] in Europe at 9%, compared to 88% of the general population in Greece (**Civil Society Monitor, 2019**). There is also a low participation of Roma youth in post-secondary non-tertiary education [ISCED 4]. At the same time, segregation in education in classes where 58% of children are exclusively Roma or majority Roma does not help to improve the performance and better educational conditions of Roma in both literacy and civic education (**FRA, 2016**). At the same time, high rates (92%) of Roma early drop-outs from education and training at the ages of 18-24 years and high rates of young people who do not participate in either training or education reveal the lack of information, training and education for Roma both in basic education and in issues of political action, representation and active participation in society (**FRA, 2016**).



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- The majority of Roma remain socially excluded and live in Type 1 & 2 settlements⁴ in highly deprived areas, on the outskirts of residential areas with significant infrastructure deficiencies such as electricity, water and sanitation (**Special Secretariat for Roma Integration, 2017**) where they do not have frequent contact with non-Roma residents, and in conditions of extreme poverty and unemployment (**FRA, 2016**).
- At the level of awareness of rights and state legislation on discrimination against minorities and vulnerable groups in Greece, a high percentage of Roma 68% either do not know [38%] or believe that there is no [28%] relevant legislation protecting Roma from discrimination based on race, skin color, ethnic origin or religion (**FRA, 2016**). At the same time, the majority of Roma in Greece [91%] either do not know [3%] or have no knowledge or information [88%] about organizations offering support, empowerment, and advice to victims of racial discrimination in the country (**FRA, 2016**).
- Finally, the majority [94%] of Roma in Greece do not seem to be aware of and have not been informed about any anti-discrimination campaign on the basis of skin color, ethnic origin or religion in the last 12 months in the country and do not know [61%] of any equality protection body in the country (**FRA, 2017**).

These data give us a picture of a vulnerable population group that is not aware of many of their basic rights in many areas of everyday life (political rights, human rights, labor rights, etc.), does not know organizations and services where they can seek support, empowerment or advice in case of violation of their rights, but also does not trust the competent institutions or does not believe that their voice will be heard if they report an incident of racism, violence or discrimination.

1.3 Policies targeting Roma in Greece

In Greece, the policies concerning Roma and their social inclusion are included in the National Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Roma (2012-2020) and the National Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Roma (2021-2030). In the strategy for the period 2012-2020 four priority axes and policy intervention were defined (**Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare, 2011**):

⁴ Type 1: "Extremely degraded areas" - Unacceptable living conditions with shacks, shanty towns and lack of basic infrastructure. Type 2: "Mixed Settlements"-Unauthorized and on the outskirts of cities with urban planning problems and substandard infrastructure (**Hellenic Ministry of Labor, 2018**).



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- Priority Axis 1 Housing and Basic Infrastructure
- Priority Axis 2 Promotion in Employment and Vocational Training
- Priority Axis 3 Education
- Priority Axis 4 Health - Social care

In the 1st axis, the general objective was to ensure safe and decent housing for the Roma through a series of measures such as: a) Interventions in the settlements that are in unsuitable or dangerous places and lack any water supply, electricity or sewage infrastructure, while the accommodation does not ensure even the basic conditions of hygienic living. b) Improvement of water supply, electricity, etc. in the existing settlements. (c) Redevelopment of existing settlements and improvement of settlements by rehabilitation/renovation of existing buildings; (d) Rental subsidy; and (e) Organizing camping infrastructure for transit settlements (Ibidem).

In the 2nd axis, the general objective was the multi-level intervention for the quantitative and qualitative improvement of the employment of Roma, through a series of interventions that included measures: (a) to combat undeclared work and legalize existing Roma occupations; (b) to modernize existing Roma occupations; (c) to develop small-scale entrepreneurship; (d) to support and establish new enterprises; (e) to familiarize Roma with paid employment, (f) to develop vocational skills and enhance work safety conditions (Ibidem).

In the 3rd axis, the general objective was the integration of children into school life, aiming at the reduction of school dropout and failure, and the diffusion of their education in all levels of education, as well as the improvement of Roma literacy, through a series of interventions that included measures such as: a) the strengthening and support of the attendance of Roma children in pre-school education through empowerment programs, and the creation of appropriate educational material. (b) monitoring the enrolment and attendance of Roma children in compulsory education through the creation of a mechanism to monitor the attendance and progress of Roma pupils. c) actions of support, empowerment, and social integration of Roma pupils. d) actions of support, empowerment, and training of compulsory education teachers. e) the strengthening of Adult Education and Training through Second Chance Schools, continuous awareness-raising, training, and support seminars. f) the provision of incentives (graduation awards) and g) community awareness-raising actions (Ibidem).



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In the 4th axis, the general objective was a) to improve the access of Roma to primary health services and b) preventive medicine and health education interventions in Roma settlements through information sessions, awareness-raising workshops, mobile vaccination units, primary health care and mental health care, etc. Interventions in the social services sector focused on providing services to meet basic needs through the Roma and Vulnerable Population Support Centers and Family and Child Support Centers - as well as developing actions for the empowerment of Roma women (**ibidem**).

As one can observe, the promotion of the active participation of Roma in political and social life in Greece was not a priority of the national Roma integration policy of the last decade, and there were no specific measures in this direction, but it is nevertheless a key pillar of the new national strategy launched in 2021. The new National Strategy for Roma Social Inclusion (2021-2030) is structured in four (4) pillars, which reflect national priorities and strategic objectives, policy measures and institutional interventions for Roma equality, inclusion and participation at national, local and regional levels (**e-Platform of the Special Secretariat for Roma Social Inclusion, 2022**):

- PILLAR I "Preventing and combating poverty and social exclusion of Roma"
- PILLAR II. "Strengthening Roma's equal access to basic services and goods (education, employment, health, social care and housing)"
- PILLAR III. "Preventing and combating stereotypes and discrimination against Roma"
- PILLAR IV. "Promoting the active participation of Roma in social, economic and political life".

The 4th pillar of the RESTORE project, on the active participation of Roma in social and political life, promotes a model of empowerment and capacity building of the Roma community, public authorities and civil society. This axis includes measures/actions (e-Platform of the Special Secretariat for Roma Social Inclusion, 2021) : a) to strengthen the empowerment of Roma, especially young Roma and Roma women, in order for them to be actively involved in social events, b) to promote Roma participation and the development of trust and cooperation relations with the local community and services. The aim is to strengthen the self-management and social empowerment of the Roma with regard to their rights and obligations in personal, professional and social life; c) to further develop and improve conditions for social dialogue, consultation and consensus for the smooth social



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coexistence of Roma and non-Roma in the local community. In this context, indicative task forces in 4 large districts with significant Roma populations, empowerment and information actions for Roma women and young people, mapping of Roma institutions to enable systematic participation and consultation on Roma issues and peer support models have been envisaged.

2. Brief summary of the key findings reached through the online survey with Roma

The online survey was conducted using an online questionnaire with the contribution of the Roma intercultural mediators of the Roma Community Centre of Halandri in the period May-June 2022, in an area where the Roma population is more socially integrated and reside in Type 3 settlements. A total of seven (7) Roma participants who stated from the beginning that they are interested in the community responded to the questionnaire.

2.1 Demographic characteristics of the participants:

- 100% (7/7) of the participants were Roma adults.
- Of the seven (7) participants, four (4) were female, and three (3) were male.
- Out of the seven (7) participants, five (5) participants belonged to the age group 25-39 and two (2) participants belonged to the age group 18-24.
- All participants (7/7) had Greek citizenship.
- All participants (7/7) have been living in Greece since birth.
- Of the seven (7) participants six (6) persons have attended or completed lower secondary education (Gymnasium) and one (1) person upper secondary education (Lyceum).
- Out of the seven (7) participants five (5) persons are employed while two (2) are unemployed and the job titles of the participants were: mediator, courier, salesperson, saleswoman.



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2.2 Key findings of the online survey with Roma citizens

All Roma participants were aware of civic education programmes. 57.41% of the participants (4 out of 7) had never participated in a civic education programme in their community while 42.9% (3 out of 7) had participated in one, in their area reporting at least 2-3 different trainings. 85.7% of the participants (6 out of 7) are interested in participating in civic training programmes and agree that there is a need for civic education programmes targeting Roma. The main reasons for participation seem to be:

- breaking the stereotypical image of Roma (85.7%),
- social integration (57.1%),
- finding better employment opportunities (57.1%)
- learning about their rights and European culture (42.9%)

At the same time, 85.7% of the participants (6 out of 7) believe that participation in citizenship and civic participation training programmes will increase the participation of Roma in democratic, cultural and community activities. Only 42.9% of the participants (4 out of 7) have attended online training courses in the past, mainly from the The Greek National Employment Agency (OAED) and the Municipal Adult Education Centers, but 85.7% (6 out of 7) believe that the use of new technologies in training for Roma civic participation will improve the level of training of the population, mainly due to the generation of greater interest thanks to audiovisual media and easier group access outside classrooms. All participants consider participation in the community to be very valuable and all consider that civic education programmes contribute to making them feel part of the local community.

Almost all participants (85.7%) are aware of training organisations for the reintegration and involvement of Roma in the community, mentioning 3-4 examples with the most frequent references to the Association of Greek Roma Mediators and Partners, Ellan Passe and local Roma cultural associations. At the same time, all participants (100%) consider the participation of Roma in public life to be low. The main barriers identified by participants to Roma participation in the community are:

- The low level of education and lack of quality education of the population
- The lack of quality information about the public sphere and civic engagement
- The limited access to employment,



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- Poor living standards (poverty, deprivation)
- social racism, prejudices and stereotypical perceptions of non-Roma and of the institutions and public services involved in serving the Greek Roma, leading to a lack of trust and expectations of Roma in state institutions and local society.

3. Brief summary of the key findings reached through the online survey with Professionals

The online questionnaire survey was administered online to 9 professionals working with the Roma population in Greece, during the period May-June 2022.

3.1 Demographic-professional characteristics of the participants:

- All participants were Greek.
- Six (6) participants were female and three (3) were male.
- Eight (8) participants belonged to the age category 25-39 years old, while one (1) participant belonged to the age category 40-60 years old.
- Eight (8) out of nine (9) participants are currently working.
- Five (5) participants have completed postgraduate studies and four (4) have completed higher education.
- The participants' job titles were adult educators/trainers, career counsellors, project managers.
- The majority of the participants have supported Roma in matters of: general education, social and cultural support, and skills training.
- The majority of participants have worked 1-2 years in Roma education/support (5 out of 9), while two(2) persons have worked 3-5 years in this field, one (1) person less than 1 year and one (1) person more than 7 years.

3.2 Key findings of the online survey with professionals working with Roma

The majority of the participants (7 out of 9) are aware of civic education programmes in their community, while they also consider civic education programmes to be very important



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in improving an individual's civic participation. Most participants (6 out of 9) are not sure that they are sufficiently trained to support Roma with civic education, information or assistance programmes. A slim majority (5 out of 9) stated that they had access to specialised resources of educational materials for Roma while the remaining (4 out of 9) answered negatively. Most participants (8 out of 9) considered educational materials and specialised resources important to very important for their work. Most of the participants have not used e-learning. However, they agree that the use of technology improves the level of training for Roma civic engagement. At the same time, the majority of participants (7 out of 9) stated that they often encounter language barriers when training or supporting the Roma population, while participants did not seem to be aware of training organisations for Roma. A slight majority (5 out of 9) stated that they are rarely informed about civic education models in the EU. All participants consider Roma participation in public life to be low. Finally, most participants do not often raise awareness among Roma populations about their democratic participation and have never evaluated a civic education programme for Roma.

4. Brief summary of the key findings reached through the organised focus group / interviews in each country with Roma adults.

The meeting/interview with the Roma adults in the context of the focus group, was conducted through face-to-face meetings in September 2022, with the contribution of the Association of Greek Roma Mediators and Partners and with the participation of three (3) adult Greek Roma men, who have completed at least secondary higher education (Lyceum), some of them with post-secondary education, and who were interested to participate. The following findings emerged from the discussion:

- ✓ All participants have previously participated in education and training programs to enhance community participation in their communities. In addition, they have been politically active and actively involved Whether in Roma cultural associations, as municipal counsellors, members of political organizations or as Roma mediators
- ✓ Regarding the barriers faced by Roma to participate in public life and education and the focus group identified the following barriers:
 - Lack of education/training and the lack of basic knowledge of Roma about their participation in public and political action, as well as the lack of information of the population about their rights and the importance of participation in politics.

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- lack of education and training opportunities, segregation in education (mono-cultural classes or schools), school drop-out for reasons of poverty and livelihood.
- the reluctance of political parties at local government level to mobilize the Roma and include them in political processes, the exploitation of the Roma by political organizations and candidates in elections who are remembered only for electoral reasons.
- social racism that Roma are subjected to not only by political organisations and their representatives but also by their fellow citizens.
- ✓ **All participants underlined that the majority of Greek Roma have not completed compulsory education, live on the edge of social exclusion and poverty in less socially integrated areas:**
 - **They are not aware of their rights as EU citizens,**
 - **they do not perceive themselves as part of European culture and cannot understand the importance of European culture**
 - **they are not aware of European values**
- ✓ **All participants stated that there is no violation of rights officially by the Greek state but that there is discrimination at local or regional level by residents/citizens, by officials of institutions and local authorities:**
 - In the field of education, segregated schooling
 - In the field of housing, with the refusal of houses or apartments to Roma tenants by landlords
 - In the workplace by refusing to employ Roma people even though they meet the criteria for employment
 - In the service sector with the racist behavior of employees in public services or local government services.
- ✓ **There are some positive role models in some areas, usually in the more socially integrated areas, these role models are usually Greek Roma men and women who are educated, who are socially integrated, who help Roma children and young people to complete their education and empower them, who belong to Roma**



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organisations and associations, who have stable employment, who are active citizens or who are successful entrepreneurs.

- ✓ **The challenges in the trainings** attended are summarised below:
- **The lack of tools and methods for the social and political integration of Roma**
- **The adaptation of educational material to the needs of Roma**
- **Convincing young Roma to engage and participate in the training**
- **To raise awareness and inform in a proper way the Roma communities, especially those that are not very socially integrated.**

5. Brief summary of the key findings reached through the focus group / interviews in each country with educators, professionals, and volunteers working with adult Roma adults.

The key findings during the implementation of the discussion activities, provided us with important results concerning the status of Roma populations. The experts participated in this activity provided different aspects and approaches to the level of civic engagement of Roma populations in Greece. Their significant experience in the field of education, and their encounter with minorities, aided towards the creation of a framework around the social status of Roma population in the country.

Challenges such us:

- a) **Gender Inequality**
- b) **Violation of Children's rights**
- c) **Exclusion of Education**
- d) **Isolation**
- e) **States Educational Incompetence**

are some of the basic key findings that were produced and highlighted from the experts. **The level of Greek Roma civic engagement unfortunately shows low results.** In that sense and taking into consideration the extensive importance of promoting those values, the key findings produced, provide the showcase of civic engagement of Roma population in the

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society. By implementing the interviews with trainers/educators specialized in Roma populations, we were able to exclude valuable information about the social struggling that they are facing. In that sense, the promotion of actions and activities aim towards civic engagement of Roma population is a matter of high importance.

The discussions were made with professionals from experienced institutions concerning Education/Integration of Roma. Firstly, with ELPIDA⁵, an NGO from Drosero, **there is an extensive need to develop the necessary policies and activities to promote the values of civic engagement of Greek Roma population, their rights, and their participation in general to social events.** In addition, the discussions continued with professionals, working in the community center of the Municipality of Larisa⁶. Finally, the last interview was taken by a Social Anthropologist who works for Arsis⁷ NGO and has an extensive experience in the field of education of ROMA populations.

More specifically, the **key findings** that were excluded were the following:

- There are several language barriers for Roma children
- Difficulty of blending two different cultural paths, for instance Roma to understand their responsibilities
- COVID-19 exacerbation in 2021 imposed a massive drop-out of Roma from education.
- The majority of kids of 9-10 years old are stopping school in view of work or support their families.
- Roma people are excluded in their own area in various places in Greece such as Drosero⁸.
- Do not have general touch with the Greek community.
- Cultural issues of the gypsies with the exploitation of mothers in the general sense of gender inequalities.

⁵ ELPIDA actively promotes, in all areas and at all levels of public administration, the interests and integration of Roma in Greece, and particularly the well-being of Roma women and children. Over the years, ELPIDA's activities have attracted the interest and support of many organizations and institutions, national and international. ELPIDA has also represented the Greek Roma at numerous international conferences, seminars and meetings.

⁶ Community Centers are structures designed by the Ministry of Labor, Social Security and Social Solidarity, established in municipalities and funded by the European Social Fund under the Regional Operational Programmes of the NSRF 2014-2020. The Roma branch of the Community Centre serves primarily the needs of the population living in Nea Smyrni the main objective of the Centre is to improve the standard of living and social integration of the population, always respecting their culture and specificity, focusing on the areas of health, education and employment.

⁷ Arsis Social Organization of Youth Supporters and in particular works on the Integration of immigrants/refugees/vulnerable social groups. ARSIS is an NGO whose main goal and vision is the support and protection of minors who are in need or at risk and has a purely social content.

⁸ For instance, in the case of Drosero the interviewee mentioned a situation where Greek Roma muslim populations have been subjected to propaganda from Representatives of the state of Turkey for decades about their cultural and national identity.



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- Challenges of the Roma community, among them widespread illiteracy and poverty, act as barriers to school success for the children.
- Roma people live in a very closed social system which does not allow them to have contact with the outside world
- Roma people cannot grasp the benefit of their participation in society and very often do not try to pursue it (e.g., the fact that children drop out of school).
- Serious bureaucratic issue of the Greek state that particularly displeases Roma foreigners, inaccessible barriers (Albanians, Bulgarians, North Macedonians)
- Serious racist undertones

In terms of Education, Roma populations face the following challenges:

- Language Barrier, issue with communication with the rest of the community
- They find it difficult to function within the framework of a fixed program, it is difficult to be typical at a certain timetable
- Difficulty finding the benefit of the training, otherwise they won't get into the process, they don't care because it's impractical according to them
- Training is not attractive as it is not served also in Greek and Roma language and does not incorporate pictures and nice drawings
- The people that do the training have not been trained sufficiently or face Roma in a derogatory manner
- The people that do the training are mostly Greeks, which is not good for cultural mediation as they do not understand always how to respond to challenges
- Another problem is that no programme of civic competence exists at national level. Only through EU programmes.

Despite the “internal” issues that the Roma communities are facing, there are **external factors that influence the levels of civic engagement of Roma population**. More specifically, the Greek state and the country's educational system in general, does not have the ability or the necessary political courage and will to strengthen and promote the social cohesion of underprivileged and excluded groups such as the Roma.

6. List of Best Practices-Greece

No1.

Name of Best Practice:

ROMED 1



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Country:	Greece
Short Description: (300 words max)	<p>The ROMED1 Programme was initiated in 2011 aiming for the training of mediators around Europe. Indeed, mediation is one of the tools recommended by most instances at European level for reducing the gap between Roma communities and public institutions, such as schools, health facilities, but also local and regional administrations</p> <p>Period of implementation: 2011 - 2016</p> <p>Main objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to promote effective intercultural mediation to improve the communication and co-operation between Roma and public institutions; 2. to ensure the integration of a rights-based approach in the mediation between Roma communities and public institutions; 3. to support the work of mediators by providing tools for planning and implementation of their activities which encourage democratic participation while generating empowerment of Roma communities and increased accountability of public institutions. <p>In Greece during 2011-2016, 108 mediators were trained (of which 101 certified mediators) in the following 43 municipalities/regions: Agia Sofia, Agrinio, Ahaia, Amfissa, Ano Liosia, Argos, Aspropyrgos, Athens, Attiki, Chalkida, Chios, Crete, Drosero Xanthis, Etoliko, Farsala, Illion, Imathia, Karditsa, Kavala, Kommotini, Korinthos, Kos, Lamia, Larisa, Menidi, Mesologi, Mytilini, Nea Alikarnassos, Nea Ionia Volou, Orestiada, Evros, Pyrgos, Pirri, Thiva, Rodos, Sapes, Serres, Sofades, Thessaloniki, Trikala, Volos, Xanthi, Zefiri.</p>
Trends and Potential Benefits from this Best Practice (250 words max)	<p>The implementation of the ROMED1 project has opened up the debate on the promotion of intercultural mediation for Roma, as a necessary process in programs that are related to the social inclusion of Roma. This laid the foundations for an informal (at the time) norm, which has since then now become accepted that any program for Roma should include the community itself, both in terms of consultation and in terms of implementation, as it knows best what its needs are and therefore how to can be met.</p>
How this Best Practice could be used/ transferred (250 words max)	<p>The intellectual outputs of this project can be used to train, strengthen and empower Roma mediators in the participating countries who in turn can give impetus and help Roma populations to become aware of, attend and connect with a new programme of civic education for their social inclusion.</p>
Website link:	https://coe-romed.org/tags/romed1
More Info:	NA



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No 2.

Name of Best Practice:	ROMED2 - Democratic governance and community participation through mediation
Country:	Greece
Short Description: (300 words max)	<p>ROMED2 program provides support to both local administration and Roma communities, enabling both sides to engage with each other and co-operate for concrete positive changes.</p> <p>Period of implementation: April 2013 - February 2017</p> <p>Main objectives: ROMED2 aimed to strengthen Roma participation in local decision-making by investing in local processes with Roma participation. The project aimed to stimulate and self-organise Roma communities into community action groups.</p> <p>The established community action groups engaged in structured processes of dialogue and cooperation with local authorities, promoting the needs and priorities of local Roma communities and proposing initiatives to address them.</p> <p>The expected outcomes of ROMED2 are as follows. ► Roma are aware of the current power relations, of their rights and of the opportunities for change through education in democratic citizenship and civic participation. ► Opportunities for developing competencies of members of the Roma community to engage in contribution to the development and implementation of local public policies. ► Mutual respect and trust between members of the Roma communities, the majority population and authorities, leading to concrete common action at local activities with the purpose of influencing public policies and improving the situation. ► Effective mechanisms and procedures ensuring consultations with Roma on local policies, used in a systematic way for stimulating co-responsibility and co-decision making. ► Decisions, budget implications and projects formally approved (including projects to be submitted for EU funding) resulting from consultations with members of the Roma community.</p>
Trends and Potential Benefits from this Best Practice (250 words max)	<p>In Greece, the implementation of ROMED2 focused on communities where there was a political will of local authorities to cooperate with Roma, but also a history of political and social inclusion and a level of education and living conditions of Roma communities that could support the objectives of the program. In total five (5) municipalities/regions participated in the program namely Ampelokipoi Menemeni, Halandri, Ilida, Karditsa, and Mesologi.</p>
How this Best Practice could be used/ transferred	<p>The project enhanced the active participation of Roma citizens who participated and co-operated with the Local Action Groups and increased their human rights-related knowledge, within the Roma community as well as their responsibilities as active citizens</p>



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(250 words max)	<p>at the local level, further strengthening the capacity of the Local Action Groups to consult with Local Authorities and the ability to prioritize the problems and challenges of the Roma communities. Lessons learned from the LAGs can help us develop or adjust learning objectives and educational needs in our capacity building training and our OER, and use types of material as well as the preferences and experiences described by the participants.</p> <p>The participation of all relevant stakeholders at the local level, brought about significant added value. These stakeholders can be used in the implementation of new projects on Roma civic engagement</p> <p>The implementation of ROMED2 has resulted in a valuable methodology and valuable material, a National Support Team as well as trained and trained and certified mediators; all of the above could be part of smaller or larger civil society initiatives. Methodology could be of use in creating new deliverables and educational activities to strengthen Roma political education for civic engagement and active citizenship.</p>
Website link:	https://coe-romed.org/romed2/about
More Info:	NA

No3.

Name of Best Practice:	RomPLAT 2019 Development of the National Contact Point for Social Inclusion of Roma
Country:	Greece
Short Description: (300 words max)	<p>The project RomPLAT2019- Development of the National Contact Point for Social Inclusion of Roma was implemented for 12 months from 30/06/2020 to 30/06/2021 by the General Secretariat for Social Solidarity and Combating Poverty, as the European Commission's National Contact Point for Social Inclusion of Roma, funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020). The scope of the project is: to conduct three (3) two-day consultations/trainings in Athens, Patras and Thessaloniki with the participation of Roma, staff of the Roma Branches of the Community Centres and other stakeholders and individuals in four (4) thematic areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowerment



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coexistence-Living with others • Under aged Marriages • School Dropout <p>In particular, the “Coexistence-Living with others” module was concerned with the cooperation of Roma communities with local authorities (municipalities, services, and local government bodies), peaceful coexistence with non-Roma, active participation of communities in highlighting the problems and challenges they face, and active participation of Roma in the community.</p> <p>The main objective of the project was to develop and nurture a culture of dialogue between Roma and non-Roma communities and to work together to build capacity, synergies and cooperation in local communities in line with the National Strategy for Roma Social Inclusion.</p> <p>The result was holding of three (3) webinars and consultations with the participation of representatives of institutions, Roma ombudsmen and staff of the Roma branches of the Community Centres from the Regions of Central Macedonia, Attica and Western Greece.</p>
Trends and Potential Benefits from this Best Practice (250 words max)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness raising for Roma, local communities, and local authorities. • Exploring opportunities for cooperation and peaceful coexistence. • Facilitating Roma participation in the local community. • Developing a method of recording the problems and challenges faced by Roma in their daily life and in their political participation.
How this Best Practice could be used/ transferred (250 words max)	<p>This methodology as well as the themes developed could be used for the empowerment of both Roma communities/populations and the strengthening of relations between Roma local authorities and local society for awareness raising, better information and the creation of a bridge of communication and cooperation between members of the Roma communities of the non-Roma local community and local authorities with the assistance and facilitation of Roma mediators.</p>
Website link:	https://coe-romed.org/romed2/about
More Info:	NA

No 4.

Name of Best Practice:	<i>Experiential Workshop as a good practice in Thessaloniki: "Diversity diversity as a source of knowledge"</i>
Country:	Greece



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<p>Short Description: (300 words max)</p>	<p>The experiential seminar in Thessaloniki was attended by executives and professionals from the regions of Thessaly, Central, Eastern and Western Thessaly and the Macedonia-Thrace, Municipalities (Menemenis-Abelokipon, Kordelios), representatives of NGOs, NGOs, NGOs, Cultural and Educational Associations of Roma, Protection Centres Roma Youth Protection Centres and Roma mediators.</p> <p>The aim was to create an experiential workshop of interactive type, through an open meeting of all actors involved in issues Roma issues, with the aim of wider publicity of the respective actors involved and organisations involved at local and regional level. The workshop aimed to create new conditions for establishing a mutually beneficial relationship with the Roma mutual recognition and trust between the parties involved; and then to explore jointly exploring feasible solutions to issues Roma.</p>
<p>Trends and Potential Benefits from this Best Practice (250 words max)</p>	<p>In the experiential workshop the participants showed interest in the procedures, although for many of them it was the first time they had to to communicate and discuss the specific methods. In the groups Roma, Administrators, NGO working groups needed to be given more time because there was a strong need, especially in the Administrators group, in addition to to record suggestions or questions about any problems they considered important, to discuss, exchange experiences and propose good practices.</p> <p>It was interesting that most of the questions/suggestions from all groups were related to education and training. The experiential meeting was a very useful exchange of ideas and reflections. Through the experiential the participants had the opportunity to to get to know and interact with each other, perhaps even to understand each side more. The very important thing was that the participants from different cities in Greece and it was an opportunity to see what problems in the different regions and to network with each other.</p>
<p>How this Best Practice could be used/ transferred (250 words max)</p>	<p>This practice can be a policy recommendation which is considered as an output in our project. Moreover, the best practice could be transferred to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The aim of the experiences, in addition to developing tools and a code a communication code and code of practice for better management of common problems, is also to focus the belief that the problem is not the Roma, but anti-Gypsyism itself identified through the practices and examples of various actions institutions and associations. - The aim of creating a network will be the answer to every obstacle dialogue in the future. The existence of subgroups maintains and reinforces stereotypes.
<p>Website link:</p>	<p>-</p>
<p>More info:</p>	<p>NA</p>

No5.



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Name of Best Practice:	<i>Experiential Workshop as a good practice in Halandri: "Getting to know and coexistence of Roma groups and competent services of the Municipalities dealing with the issue Roma issues".</i>
Country:	Greece
Short Description: (300 words max)	<p>The experiential workshop of Halandri was attended by the Vice-Regional Governor of Eastern Attica, the Mayor of Halandri, the Deputy Mayors of Technical Services of Technical Services and Education, as well as Municipal Councillors of the Municipality of Halandri, the Mayor of Halandri Palini and two Deputy Mayors, executives of the Attica Region and Municipalities, mainly from the fields of education and social protection, and ombudsmen, members of the Association of Greek Roma Ombudsmen. Furthermore, members of the Roma Association of Halandri "Elpida", the Association "Agios Dimitrios" of Kifias and the Social Welfare Organization SKYTALI. The following approach was chosen as far as the exercises are concerned:</p> <p>1. Name and ball game Participants stand in a circle. The facilitator says his/her name out loud and The moderator calls out a name and throws the ball to someone in the circle. The next person, respectively, says the name. and throws the ball to someone else in the group. The ball must be passed once by each participant so that everyone can say their names. After this first round of names is over, the last person to hold the ball is given the ball. must remember the name of the person who threw the ball, say it out loud and return the ball to him. If mistakes are made, the process is repeated until it is completed correctly.</p> <p>2. Name game "I like it, I don't like it". Participants stand in a circle. Each person in turn says his or her name and something they like or dislike - they can say anything they like to do, eating, can mention an object he likes, etc. So, it becomes a first introduction to the facilitator and the participants get to know about the other people things that they have never been able to do through the the other people through their everyday life. The aim of the facilitators was to instill in the group three of the most basic values, cooperation and dialogue between people, regardless of their identity and life circumstances, empathy and honesty, as well as respect for others and for themselves.</p>
Trends and Potential Benefits from this Best Practice (250 words max)	<p>Using the information from the research it would be easier to create the practical activities of the training material under IO2. Moreover, the following benefits were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Acceptance and respect, either of their identity or of the institution that or the entity they represented, - Understanding of the problems they face either from a position - or in their everyday life
How this Best Practice could be used/ transferred (250 words max)	<p>The best way to use this practice is to integrate it into the training programme, which we are going to build under IO2. By integrating the strategy and methodology into the IO2 case studies and assessment of civic competencies of Roma people, we offer a better and experiential learning experience.</p>



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Website link:	-
More Info:	The aim was for the participants to experience a new, different and unique experience. experience of participation and dialogue with each other. In order to achieve the above objectives and in order to to gradually activate a group with the Roma as a common theme, in order to work to work for them, but also to go through a complete cycle of experience and contact.



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