



**REGIONAL REPORT ON
THE PERCEPTIONS AND
VIEWPOINTS OF YOUNG ROMA
AS REGARDS GENDER (IN)
EQUALITY, DISCRIMINATION
AND ANTYGYPSYISM** with
particular focus on the
Republic of North Macedonia
and the Republic of Serbia

Author: Kjetil Amet
Co-author: Ana Sacipovic
Editors: Fikrija Tair, Ines Djemail
Graphic design: Robert Rustem
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(IN)EQUALITY, DISCRIMINATION AND ANTYGYPSYISM**

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Macedonia and the Republic of Serbia

Skopje, 2023

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Introduction

The objective of this Report was to gain an insight into the perceptions, viewpoints and level of familiarisation among the young Roma as regards issues from the fields of gender (in)equality, discrimination and Antigypsyism, identification of their challenges and needs, as well as definition of recommendations that would contribute to improving the factual state of the young, and of the society at large. This document was drafted within the framework of the project entitled Roma Youth Workers for a Vibrant Civil Society.

About the Project

The project Roma Youth Workers for a Vibrant Civil Society is a one-year project the implementation of which commenced in January 2023. The focus of the project was to strengthen the capacities of the youth workers with the aim of promoting gender equality, antidiscrimination and fight against antigypsyism by strengthening their capacities and encouraging their active engagement and creating a platform for cooperation among civil society organizations and building an inclusive, vibrant, democratic and equitable society where any anti-discriminatory and gender sensitive issues shall be jointly raised.

The general objective of the Project is to strengthen the capacities of the youth workers in the women's Roma organization for the purpose of increasing and enhancing the engagement of the young Roma in the democratic processes. The specific objectives of the Project are as follow: **1) Strengthened capacities of Roma youth workers on the topics dwelling on gender equality, discrimination, Antigypsyism** , and **) Increased engagement of young Roma in promoting local response to gender inequality, discrimination and antigypsyism.**

The project Roma Youth Workers for a Vibrant Civil Society, registration number 2022-3-MK01-KA210-YOU-000100744, was implemented by the Roma Women and Youth Association LULUDI from Skopje, the Republic of North Macedonia, as a project holder, in partnership with the Association of Roma Women OSVIT from Nish, Serbia, within the Erasmus+ Program of the European Union and financially supported by the National Agency for European Educational Programs and Mobility in Macedonia.

Project

Activities and results



1. Training for capacity building aimed at Roma youth workers

A five-day-training was conducted for 12 Roma youth workers from the Republic of North Macedonia and the Republic of Serbia for the purpose of strengthening their capacities and covering the following topics: Gender equality – the essence and relevance of gender equality for society; Discrimination - what is discrimination and ways of acting against it; Antigypsyism – studying the concept of antigypsyism; Digital Tools – use of IT tools when working with the young, in particular in the organizing and conducting campaigns and education; Focus Groups – conducting focus groups as a tool for data collection.



2. NEWS FLASH meetings

Upon the training held, the young had follow-up meetings serving as a platform for exchange of information, sharing of opinions, experiences and challenges encountered in the course of implementing the activities and assigned tasks.

Project

Activities and results



3. Conducting focus groups with the young Roma population

12 Roma youth workers conducted 8 focus groups involving 51 young Roma people from the local community. They were assisted by the engaged mentors that led them in the preparation and organization of the focus group, and monitor the implementation process. The very goal of the focus groups with the local community was creating opportunities for the young to implement the acquired knowledge in practice and identify any current needs and issues, as well as draft recommendations for prevention and resolution of the existing issues.



4. Reporting on the collected data from the implemented focus groups

Two national reports on the conducted focus groups were created by the partnering countries, as well as one regional report depicting the level of familiarization and knowledge, perceptions and needs of the local youth community, i.e. the young Roma community regarding gender equality, gender stereotypes, discrimination and antigypsyism.

Project

Activities and results



5. Awareness raising campaign

The young supported by the project team and the mentor created 4 educational and informative videos within the framework of the Awareness Raising Campaign. The campaign was distributed in Macedonian, Romani, Serbian and English language and was disseminated via different digital tools, social and traditional media, both in Macedonia and in Serbia

<https://shorturl.at/dtuJ7>



6. Final event – Conference for presenting the results and outcomes

Regional conference was held in Skopje where around 50 participants from the local community, representatives from different institutions, civil society organizations and the media attended. In the course of the final event, the project partners and the group of youngsters presented the project and the outcomes of the implemented activities, in addition presentation of the drafted reports and report derived recommendations, shared personal experiences, good practices and initiatives instigated by the young people.

Brief overview of the relevant legal and institutional framework

The Republic of North Macedonia

The Roma have been recognized as a community in the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia since 1991. In the past period, the Republic of North Macedonia adopted two National Strategies for Roma¹, the former covering the period between 2005 and 2015, and the latter covering the period between 2016 and 2020. Additionally, National Action Plans (NAPs) were adopted for all priority areas². Despite the implementation of the two national strategies, the European Commission Reports, the civil society organizations and the community highlight the necessity of accelerated implementation of public policies and implementation of activities directly aimed at supporting and improving the position of the Roma community within the society. In the year 2022 the third 2022-2030 Strategy for Roma Inclusion³ was adopted accompanied by the National Action Plans in seven areas marking the initial adoption of the Antigypsyism NAP⁴.

The Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination⁵ adopted in 2020 provided for expansion of the fundamentals and updated glossary, as well as improved definition of discrimination. The new Law also foresees due changes as regards judicial protection. The Law introduces pressing charges for protection against discrimination of public interest thus enabling the civil society organizations or informal groups to press charges in the event of a justified reason for the protection of the interests of a given group. This resulted in revoking the required consent in writing by the parties in the case of a group and granting rights to the associations to file lawsuits if they could prove their interest as opposed to the previous Law when they participated only as co-litigants in the proceedings. With the new law, the burden of proof shifts to the defendant, who has to prove that there is no discrimination either in the court proceedings or in the proceedings before the Commission.

New evidence was introduced in the discrimination procedure: statistical data and situational testing. The law exempts from court costs the persons who instigate court proceedings for protection against discrimination.

1 2014-2020 Strategy for the Roma in the Republic of Macedonia. Downloadable from: <https://bit.ly/3RG6rrR>;

2 2005-2015 Strategy for the Roma in the Republic of Macedonia. Downloadable from: <https://bit.ly/41Ne6t5>

3 2022 – 2030 Strategy for Roma Inclusion. Downloadable from: <https://bit.ly/3NlnjMV>

4 2022 – 2030 Strategy for Roma Inclusion. Downloadable from: <https://bit.ly/3TPdEsa>

5 National Antigypsyism Action Plan. Downloadable from: <https://bit.ly/47gzaZg>

5 Official Gazette of the Republic of north Macedonia, no. 258. Law on Protection against Discrimination. Downloadable from: <https://bit.ly/3tplAos>

The new Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination provides better mechanisms, measures and activities for legal protection, and meets the country's obligation in terms of harmonizing the national legislation with the European one, which is a prerogative for commencement of the EU negotiation process.

Additionally, in April 2022, the new 2022-2026 National Strategy for Equality and Discrimination⁶ was adopted in addition to the previous 2016-2020 Strategy hence duly continuing to implement the obligations imposed by the ratification and accession to international conventions and agreements in the areas of human rights and freedoms on the basis of the non-discrimination principle.

For the purpose of improving the states of equality, equity and inclusivity, equality between men and women, involvement and engagement of different cultural, ethnic, vulnerable or marginalized groups in society, at its 162nd session, the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia adopted the National Strategy for Development of a Single Society and Interculturalism⁷. The Strategy covers seven areas which are of pivotal importance for interculturalism, i.e. legal framework, education, media, culture, social cohesion, the young and local self-government accompanied by defined respective action plans.

The Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men⁸ promoting the legal framework pertaining to equal opportunities rounds up the national legislation harmonization with Directives 2000/78/E3, 2002/73/E3 and 2004/113/E3. The Law fully regulates the issues referring to creating and establishing equal opportunities and equal treatment to women and men, the fundamental and specific measures pertaining to establishment of equal opportunities, rights and obligations on the part of the competent bodies for securing equal opportunities, and the procedure for determining unequal treatment to women and men. Pursuant to Article 9 paragraph (3) from the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia adopted the 2022-2027 Strategy for Gender Equality⁹ as a comprehensive framework consisting of activities for promotion of gender equality and promotion of the status of women. The Strategy is valid for a period of six years and is the fourth strategic document in this area.

6 2022-2026 National Strategy for Equality and Discrimination. Downloadable from: <https://shorturl.at/gFLOU>

7 Strategy for Development of a Single Society and Interculturalism Concept. Downloadable from: <https://bit.ly/3REK9H8>

8 Strategy for Development of a Single Society and Interculturalism Concept. Downloadable from: <https://bit.ly/3REK9H8>

9 2022-2027 Strategy for Gender Equality . Downloadable from: <https://shorturl.at/blvk7>

The Republic of Serbia

The Roma community in the Republic of Serbia has the status of national minority whereby they have their collective and individual rights and freedoms guaranteed as enshrined in the Constitution of Serbia, in national laws and international human rights agreements and treaties.

In addition to the general documents, like the Law on Antidiscrimination, the relevant laws and policies (such as in education or employment), Serbia has developed specific policies tailored at the Roma community, such as the 2022-2030 Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma¹⁰. The Strategy tackles several priority areas – fight against Antigypsyism and discrimination, reduction of poverty and social exclusion, promotion of engagement by empowerment, cooperation and trust, inclusive education, quality and sustainable employment, quality healthcare and social services and adequate desegregated housing. The Law on National Councils of National Minorities¹¹ enables the declared minorities to elect their National Council that would be involved in the decision-making processes related to their respective rights to education, culture, information and official use of the language and alphabet. Roma, just like the Egyptians and Ashkali, have their respective National Council. With the amendments of December 2012 to the Criminal Code, the motive of hatred was introduced as a special aggravating circumstance for passing a sentence when the crime was committed with a biased motive¹². Apart from this, the Criminal Code already contains criminal acts that include a biased element: inciting national, ethnic or religious hatred and intolerance (Article 317), racial and other discrimination (Article 387), harming the reputation of a nation, national or ethnic group (Article 174). Nevertheless, some criticisms have been made about the gaps in the Criminal Code¹³. The Law on Prohibition of Discrimination¹⁴ was adopted in 2009 and is harmonized with the European standards. Nonetheless, minor changes are needed so as to be fully compliant with the *acquis*. The Office of the Ombudsman was established as an independent body in charge of implementing the provisions from the Law on Antidiscrimination as regards equality rights.

The Law on Prohibition of Discrimination stipulates the forms and cases of discrimination as well as the methods of protection against them.

10 Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, 30/18. Downloadable from: <https://bit.ly/47j0VkX>

11 Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, no. 72/09, 20/14 and 55/14. Downloadable from: <https://bit.ly/3NKvWHp>

12 Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, no. 121/12.

13 Report on Serbia by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (fifth monitoring cycle), 2017. Accessed on June 14th 2017. Downloadable from: <https://bit.ly/3TEusCb>

14 Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, no. 22/09. Downloadable from: <https://bit.ly/48d7QNz>

Moreover, it recognizes two types of discrimination – direct discrimination and discriminatory influence or effect, and introduced a reverse burden of proof, which means that the defendant is responsible to provide evidence of non-violation of the principle of equality¹⁵. The Law on Public Information prohibits the broadcasting of ideas, information and opinions that incite hatred, discrimination or violence against a person or a group based on their racial, ethnic, religious affiliation, gender or sexual orientation, regardless of whether a criminal offense has been committed (Article 37)¹⁶. However, it will not be considered hate speech if such information is published without the intention of inciting discrimination, hatred or violence, and especially if such information is part of an objective media report (Article 40, paragraph 1). In 2009, the Republic of Serbia ratified the Additional Protocol to the Convention on Computer Crime, regarding the criminalization of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems¹⁷.

The Law on Gender Equality¹⁸ was adopted in May 2021 and it superseded the previous Law on Gender Equality. Despite being progressive at the time of its adoption in 2009 and praised by experts as one of the better anti-discrimination laws in Serbia¹⁹, the Law on Gender Equality was criticized by the civil society, independent state human rights institutions and international stakeholders as not being aligned with EU acquis²⁰ as well as with the international standards applicable to gender equality. Additionally, in practice, it had little effect on improving gender equality.

Over the years, several drafts of the Law were drawn up, and the Government was heavily criticized for delaying its adoption²¹. In 2021, the National Assembly finally adopted a new draft law that became effective on June 1st, 2021, which eliminated the shortcomings of the previous law and which is significantly more comprehensive²². All provisions that referred to judicial protection in case of gender discrimination were removed from this law, considering that the Anti-Discrimination Law as an umbrella law, especially with the latest amendments, provides holistic judicial protection against discrimination.

15 Equal Rights Trust, National Antidiscrimination Laws of Serbia. Downloadable from: <https://bit.ly/3RHm1U9>

16 Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, no. 43/03, 61/05, 71/09, 89/10. Downloadable from: <https://bit.ly/4aFOF0h>

17 Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, no. 19/09. Downloadable from: <https://bit.ly/486n1Hb>

18 Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, no. 52/2021. Downloadable from: <https://bit.ly/41MNusk>

19 Equal Rights Trust, Equality in Practice, Implementation of the Laws in Serbia, London, 2019. Pages 69-71. Downloadable from: <https://bit.ly/3TJYB3i>

20 Ibid. page 69

21 European Commission, 2020 Progress Report on Serbia. Downloadable from: <https://bit.ly/3vjZ6qz>

22 The Law on Gender Equality consists of 77 articles, which is 20 articles more compared to the previous Law on Gender Equality.

Methodology

In September 2023, the Roma Women and Youth Association LULUDI and the the Association of Roma Women OSVIT, together with the group of Roma youth workers, conducted studies by applying qualitative methodology. The two organizations conducted four focus groups in their respective countries, i.e. a total of eight focus groups.

The four focus groups in the Republic of North Macedonia were implemented with a total of 26 participants from different municipalities from Skopje, such as: Shuto Orizari, Cair, Centar, Kisela Voda, Gazi Baba and Gjorche Petrov. Each focus group session lasted from 90 to 120 minutes with the participation of 6 to 7 participants proportionally segregated in terms of sex, age and recent experience as civil activists in the civil sector. The total number of participants was 26 aged between 16 and 32 years of age, out of whom 16 were female, whereas 10 were male. As regards ethnicity, all of the participants were Romani.

In the Republic of Serbia four focus groups were implemented, out of which two focus groups in Nish, one in Aleksinac and one in Zhitkovac. The composition of the focus groups was based on whether the participants were involved in such research for the first time or whether they had previously been involved in

any activism projects. The total number of participants was 25 aged between 15 and 30, out of whom 17 were female, whereas 8 were male.

The focus groups were led by youth workers, alternating the roles of a facilitator and a co-facilitator. The overall process was under the mentorship and oversight of the mentors engaged. Additionally, the focus groups were guided in conformity with the previously compiled Guidelines for organization and implementation of focus groups drafted by the mentor. As part of the preparatory activities for the implementation of the focus groups, the mentor drafted a survey questionnaire consisting of 13 open-ended and close-ended questions. The questions were divided into three sections with reference to the topics covered: gender equality, discrimination and Antigypsyism. Participants had the opportunity to answer the questions either orally or in writing, and each question was followed by a discussion.

Findings

Involvement of the young Roma

As for the focus groups in the Republic of North Macedonia, the discussion dwelled on a topic related to youth involvement.

The general attitude of the participants is that the majority of young people are passive in undertaking activities for involvement in the society with reference to various topics that affect them or the majority of citizens.

A very small number of young people take the initiative to join civil society organizations, initiatives, youth clubs, alliances, etc., or initiate resolution of certain issues, instigate activities, youth actions and movements to drive youth activism and positive changes with the aim of improving the situation and opportunities for the young people. Out of the total number of participants, 19 of the participants are either not active or are not members of any nongovernmental organizations, youth clubs or the like.

As the potential reasons for the inertness and insufficient youth activism on the part of the young Roma, the focus group participants indicated the following: absence of Roma youth organizations, absence of youth organizations and clubs that will be active, sustainable and transparent and absence of organizations

characterized by innovativeness and availability of finances as an incentive for the young.

Recognition of Discrimination, Experiences, Discriminatory Practices and their Prevention

The young Roma from the Republic of North Macedonia declared to have been victims of discrimination and highlighted that the most common areas of discrimination were education, employment and health. Additionally, they were of the opinion that the Roma more frequently encountered discrimination compared to the other ethnic groups and that mostly are facing multiple discrimination.

The participants from the focus groups in Nish and Zhitkovac in the Republic of Serbia stated that they had experienced some form of discrimination as opposed to the participants from Aleksinac where the majority of the participants stated that they had not experienced any discrimination personally, but, nonetheless, they were aware of the existence of discrimination.

In general, and with reference to all focus group discussions held in both countries, it could be inferred that the vast majority of the young know what discrimination is, but, nonetheless, their knowledge remains superficial and they are faced

with the challenge of recognizing the types of discrimination, the existing protective mechanisms and bodies within the state, as well as the protection and reporting steps and mechanisms. A significant part of the young recognize discrimination as a concept and identify it with something unpleasant, with harassment and mistreatment (towards the person subject to discrimination), violation of certain rights and limited access to a given right or limitation to other people on the ground of their collective identities (sex/gender, class, ethnicity).

"On a number of occasions I have experienced discrimination. I would like to share something that happened to me when I was enrolling at university. I enrolled in the first year at the Faculty of Law and it took me 3 months to get acclimated to my group. I would enter the auditorium and sit alone in the second row to the left. There would be no students sitting behind me. On rare occasions would there be one to two students sitting in front of me. They would never interact with me, would avoid me just because of being Romani and was labeled as the bad guy that they did not want to talk to."

Statement by participant from R.North Macedonia

The majority of the young Roma from North Macedonia are aware of the existence of given mechanisms and ways of reporting discrimination but they do not fully

recognize the types of discrimination, such as sexual one, harassment, etc. They recognize only the nongovernmental organizations, Roma activists and some of the Roma media as a platform for reporting discrimination cases. As to the question about the existence of any specific institutions and laws, the young people are not familiar with the institutions or mechanisms that they are to refer to in the event of discrimination.

Less than half of the participants declared that they have heard about the Law on Protection against Discrimination, and only 7 of the participants stated that complaints may be lodged to certain national bodies such as the Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination of the Republic of North Macedonia and to the Office of the Ombudsman. Two of the participants brought up the Ministry of Justice as an institution where a case of discrimination may be reported.

The focus group participants from Aleksinac, the Republic of Serbia, put forward several means of reporting discrimination, among which informing their parents, discussing the issue with their teachers at school as well as informing the professional services. However, they declared that by the holding of this debate, they had never heard of the existence of a Commissioner for the Protection of Equality. One of the Nish based participants stated that mistrust in the institutions prevailed,

including the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality. Furthermore, highlighted that discrimination was obviously becoming nationalistic in nature that may consequently result in major issues. Another Nish based participant shared his positive experience of reporting discrimination.

Antigypsyism

Only few of the focus group participants from the Republic of Serbia and from the Republic of North Macedonia have ever heard of the term 'Antigypsyism', but, yet, they are not fully acquainted with its meaning. The vast majority of the participants had never heard of this term before. On a number of occasions the concept of 'Antigypsyism' was considered synonymous with the concept of discrimination. Such a misconception is evident in both countries.

"I believe that people are afraid to report discrimination. I think they know that certain rights of theirs have been violated, but due to the circumstances that they live in, their salary or their belonging to a political party, they are afraid of being deprived of any entitlements, such as welfare benefits, minimum guaranteed monetary aid or other benefits. They think that if they stood up and rebelled against a case involving them or their children, then they would be deprived of those rights or they would be fired."

Statement by participant from R.North Macedonia

The participants from the Republic of North Macedonia are of the opinion that Antigypsyism is to be legally regulated, such as the legal regulation of hate speech. They see this legal solution as a system of protection and prevention, as well as due sanctioning in the event of any inadequate behavior. Spain was brought to the attention as a good example and positive practices where Antigypsyism has been regulated within the country's legal system.

The conclusion inferred as regards this issue is that the participants are partially familiar with the mechanisms and manners of reporting discrimination and with the legal regulations. Furthermore, they are of the opinion that the implementation of the laws failed despite the several successful cases shared of reporting discrimination to the relevant institutions, the trust of young people in the institutions is at a very low level.

„A few years ago, we had a situation in Belgrade Mahalla where taxis refused to pick us up. On one occasion, my partner (who is not of Romani nationality) and I hailed a taxi in the city with the intention of traveling to my village. However, upon hearing the address, the driver refused to drive us. I immediately reported the incident to the police department and, the next day, to the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality and the media. Thankfully, other Roma activists joined in, leading to additional complaints about the taxi association in Niš. After a short period, the situation normalized. The case eventually went to court, and my friend who was with me testified in court as well. Fortunately, the case had a successful outcome. I had to fight in court to prove that it was indeed discrimination, as the judge initially hesitated to categorize it as such.”

Statement by participant from R.Serbia

between men and women in valuing labor emerged from the discussions held in both countries, as well as the division of the so-called „male and female professions“. In this direction, the majority of young people in both countries believe that the employment criteria should be based on the job candidate's skills and qualifications with reference to the job position requirements and by excluding the sex or gender aspect.

In general, the focus group participants from both countries have heard of the terms gender equality and gender equity. Nevertheless, the perception dwells on the comparison of girls' and women's progress in surpassing certain traditional gender roles and practices, such as holding a driver's license, early marriage, parental role, economic independence and the traditional norm applicable to division of household chores, without elaborating the role and awareness of boys and men.

The topic of the necessity for gender equality in society provoked discussion where the participants stated that it was necessary to act proactively to achieve it, underlining the need for greater self-confidence among young people, intergenerational communication and support, as well as suppression of traditional patriarchal practices within families. In addition, it was highlighted that the misperception and insufficient education about the relevance of gender equality and equity leads to the creation of groups that are against the feminist

Gender Equality

The vast number of the focus group participants from the two countries claimed that men and women differed in terms of their biological characteristics and stamina and physical strength. Additionally, they stated that some of the differences were society imposed, such as the division of household chores and the differences existing between men and women concerning their careers. The topic of employment discrimination and inequality

"We (men and women) have the same rights before the law, but, yet, as women we do not enjoy the same rights. Women are often discriminated against. For instance, as regards employment, there is that division of work or workplaces. Namely, certain positions are associated with men only, whereas other positions are associated with women only. This is why discrimination exists because there is this prejudice that certain works can only be performed by men and not by women, and the other way round. As for family, men enjoy more rights than women, whereas women are oftentimes discriminated against just because they are women. Some of the prevailing stereotypes are that they are to stay at home, cook, do the laundry, raise the children, be stay-at-home moms, etc."

Statement by participant from R.North Macedonia.

movements that propagate it and present views about the role of women in the family and parenting, i.e. their role as mothers, wives and daughters-in-law in the family.

The participants from Serbia elaborated on the support that is to be given to the young Roma girls in their fight for gender equality, having the family as a starting point. The young population is to be continuously educated on this topic, and the adults are to be engaged in the discussions as well. It is heartening that the young are aware that any changes leading to societal changes are to start at an individual level.

Recommendations

Engagement and participation of the young Roma

- Education of the young people on the topics of discrimination, antigypsyism and gender equality between men and women and setting up a group of young educators that would continue to educate other young people and adults from different ethnic communities and ages;
- Implementation of tailored activities involving the young Roma directed at increasing their self-confidence, critical thinking and conflict situation management, as well as youth engagement;
- Taking into account the young people's experiences and collecting desegregated data about hate speech and hate crimes committed with anti-Roma motives, including cross-sectoral data for the purpose of enabling a trend analysis and prevention of discrimination, antigypsyism and gender inequality;
- Engagement and participation of young Roma in youth bodies at the local and national level with the aim of initiating debates related to their perspective on gender (in)equality, discrimination and antigypsyism.

Recognition of discrimination, experiences, discriminatory practices and their prevention

- Greater information and awareness on the part of the Roma community about the Commission on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination (CPPD), its operation and education about the ways of realizing their rights and existing mechanisms of reporting discrimination cases;
- Cooperation with the CPPD and the nongovernmental sector in the promotion of human rights and laws on human rights protection;

Antigypsyism

- Operationalization of the definition of antigypsyism at all levels of public institutions for the purpose of its recognition, prevention and sanctioning;
- Education on the concept of antigypsyism among the public and administrative servants, teachers, judiciary personnel, social workers and other officials working with children and youngsters for the purpose of its recognition and suppression;
- Modification and promotion of the legal regulations in the direction of recognizing Antigypsyism as a criminal offence;
- Allocation of a designated budget for awareness raising campaigns as to the Antigypsyism derived consequences, its recognition and suppression.

Gender equality

- Further education on gender equality between men and women, among the young and among the adults as well for the purpose of breaking and overcoming the existing 'traditional' gender stereotypes;
- Supporting school activities aimed at promoting gender equality among men and women and prevention of gender-based violence and unequal treatment of men and women;
- Youth education on gender terminology by compiling a guidebook featuring definitions intended to inform about the essence of gender (in)equality.

Conclusions

Engagement and Participation of Young Roma People

Even though the vast majority of the focus group young people stated that they were not affiliated with any organized form or group representing the young, they still show proactiveness in monitoring their work and activities. Furthermore, they highlighted the necessity of greater visibility, transparency and openness of the youth organizations, councils, clubs, initiatives, unions and political parties. The passivism and inactivism of the young with reference to self-initiative, research and engagement in such organized forms was justified by the absence of youth organization and financial incentives for their engagement as well as by the insufficient activity and sustainability of these organized forms. It is worth underlining that the young that partake or are engaged in organized forms or youth representing groups demonstrate greater proactivity and familiarization with the topics discussed in the focus groups, such as antigypsyism and discrimination, gender equality and youth engagement.

Antigypsyism and Discrimination

With reference to the attitudes presented by the focus group participants it could be deduced that the young are not familiar with the term antigypsyism. The participants that tried to define the concept of antigypsyism considered it synonymous with prejudices, stereotypes and discrimination against the Roma community. This is a clear indicator of the necessity of education regarding the concept of antigypsyism in the educational process, as well as differentiation of the two terms, i.e. discrimination and antigypsyism. The examples put forward by the focus group participants of both countries indicate encounters with discrimination primarily in the educational process on the part of the classmates and teachers. Further examples of discriminatory practices were brought to everybody's attention as regards the healthcare system and employment profiling. Even though more than a half of the focus group participants are not acquainted with the antigypsyism as a concept, they stress out the necessity of education and relevant legal regulation as a guarantee for protection of their rights. In this context, the young indicated that they could recognize occurrence of discrimination and were aware of the ways of reporting. Positive examples encourage them to report discrimination cases to the competent authorities, but, yet, there are young people that mistrust the efficiency on the part of the institutions in eradication of discrimination in society due to the non-

implementation of the legal regulation in practice. Additionally, they pointed out some examples from other countries, such as the example from Spain where antigypsyism is embedded in the legal regulation on the initiative led by the Romani Member of Parliament, and hence the necessity of involvement of Roma in creating policies and legal regulations.

Gender Equality

The young people from the focus groups in Serbia and North Macedonia claimed that men and women differed in terms of their biological characteristics and stamina and physical strength. Additionally, they stated that some of the differences were society imposed, such as the division of household chores and the differences existing between men and women concerning their careers. Such responses pinpoint the family imposed values based on patriarchal upbringing, as well as advances from the traditional gender rights evident in the fact that women have 'more rights' at present. Additionally, the young people in Serbia touched upon a topic that is discussed to a lesser extent in the Balkans, and even lesser among the Roma community. They elaborated on the discrepancy in men's and women's rights in property division when the property is predominantly inherited by the sons. It is rather alarming that the young have either never heard or are not familiar with the institutions and their stance as regards equality preservation. Yet, it is rather heartening that the young see gender equality as a prerogative for advancement of the Roma community. Further discussion and education among the young Roma and their families are required as regards the role of the woman in the family and the involvement and support by the man in terms of parenthood as significant factors for gender equality.

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Roma Women and Youth Association “LULUDI”

www.luludi.mk

Roma Women and Youth Association LULUDI was established in the year 2001 as a response to changes needed and as support to the challenges that the Roma women in Macedonia encounter, including the ones experienced by the young Roma. Strives to achieve gender equality and protection of women's rights with a focus on Roma women, improve the status of Roma women in society and the family, and raise the level of education of the young Roma population through intensive cooperation with other NGOs and institutions in the Republic of North Macedonia.

RWYA „Luludi“ is a recognizable non-governmental organization in its community, as well as on national and international level. The recognition is due to the successful implementation of variety projects and initiatives in various fields such as: human rights, access to justice, health care, domestic violence, elections, voting rights, promoting participation and activism of young Roma at the local level, women's rights and promotion of equality, conducting educational workshops, trainings and awareness-raising campaigns for prevention of domestic and gender-based violence, education of young people and prevention of trafficking in children and girls, promotion of gender equality between men and women, active political involvement and education, economic empowerment of Romani women and young girls, conducting fieldwork, research, monitoring, reporting and advocating of international conventions and local policies.

Association of Roma Women “OSVIT”

<https://osvit.rs/>

The Roma Women Association OSVIT is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation registered in 2005 in the Register of associations, social and political organizations, of the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights as Association of Roma Women OSVIT. Furthermore, in 2011 it is also registered in the business register APR. OSVIT comprises female citizens with educational backgrounds ranging from the fourth to the seventh degree of expertise, boasting extensive experience in Roma activism. Holds membership status in several influential networks, namely “Women Against Violence,” “1325 - Women, Peace, Security”, the European Women's Lobby Network, the Balkan Network of Roma Women, Network for Promoting the Rights of Children with Disabilities in Serbia, Network of Organizations for Children in Serbia and in Keeping Children Safe International Network. Actively cooperate with various institutions, based on signed cooperation protocols, and actively contribute to the work of various working groups dedicated to developing national and local strategies and documents aimed at improving the position of Roma and women with a history of violence.

For the past 18 years, Osvit has offered an SOS phone service in Roma and Serbian languages to women victims of violence. Notably, Osvit pioneered the first SOS telephone service in the Romani language in Europe.