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White Rose
university consortium
Universities of Leeds, Sheffield & York

eprints@whiterose.ac.uk
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Rights, responsibilities and redress?

Research on policy and practices for Roma inclusion in ten Member States

Summary report

Philip Brown
Peter Dwyer
Philip Martin
Lisa Scullion
Hilary Turley

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University of
Salford
MANCHESTER

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

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About Roma MATRIX

Roma MATRIX (Mutual Action Targeting Racism, Intolerance and Xenophobia) was a two year project (2013-2015) co-funded by the European Union's Fundamental Rights and Citizenship Programme. The project involved ten European Member States (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, and United Kingdom - hereafter referred to as the partner states). A total of 20 organisations were partners on the project representing a diverse range of agencies including non-government organisations (NGOs), Roma-led organisations, local government, universities and two private sector companies. A diverse programme of activities was undertaken which included network development, mentoring of people from Roma communities, conferences and workshops, capturing positive images and developing a public media campaign, etc. This work focused on four core areas which underpinned the Roma MATRIX project:

■ Reporting and redress mechanisms for tackling anti-Gypsyism

■ Roma children in the care system

■ Employment

■ Cross-community relations and mediation.

The Universities of Salford and York had a research role within the Roma MATRIX project. The overall objective of the research element was to investigate how the national strategies for Roma integration were being operationalised and delivered within the partner states in respect of combating 'anti-Gypsyism'. Under this broad remit the research was guided by four specific objectives:

1. To map and explore existing policies and practice for combating anti-Gypsyism and promoting social inclusion in relation to the four core areas outlined above;

2. To consider the effectiveness of existing policies and procedures in combating anti-Gypsyism;

3. To investigate how existing policy and procedural frameworks are operationalised in practice on the ground; and

4. To explore how policies are experienced by organisations supporting and/or representing the interests of Roma.

Policy landscape, method and sample

Current policy landscape

Although acknowledged as an issue for decades the entrenched exclusion faced by many in Europe's diverse Roma communities has been placed firmly on the agenda of international policy actors in recent years. Initiatives such as the *EU Roma Strategy 2008* and the *Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015* alongside other policy documents and plans produced by organisations such as the European Commission, Council of Europe, World Bank, World Health Organisation and the Open Society Foundation are illustrative of such attention. Similarly, the *Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies,* endorsed by all Member States in 2011, represented a significant attempt by the European Commission to ensure that Member States put in place policies to monitor and reduce the inequalities between Roma and non Roma populations in the four key areas of education, employment, health and housing. EU bodies have therefore been significant in shaping recent national and regional policy development on Roma related issues across all ten Roma MATRIX partner states. However, it is clear that despite considerable policy activity at European, national, regional and local levels, there has been limited progress in addressing the inequalities that exist between Roma and non Roma populations across Europe. Specific commentaries on of the varied policy landscapes within the ten partner states are detailed within the Roma MATRIX interim research report and country reports.[1]

Method and sample

The findings presented are based on analysis of data generated in fieldwork which comprised 112 semi-structured qualitative interviews with national (n=60), regional (n=3) and local level (n=49) policy actors, including elected politicians, civil servants, NGO employees, Roma community organisation members and policy practitioners. Thirty nine respondents identified themselves as being of Roma heritage and sixty three non Roma with the reminder unassigned. Typically the fieldwork took place in two locations in the ten Roma MATRIX partner states. The first was generally the nation's capital as this was the location where national policy was designed and developed. In order to consider how policy played out on the ground, choice of a second site for fieldwork centred on the identification of a 'local' area that met a number of inclusion criteria such as being home to a sizeable population of people from a Roma background. Respondents were recruited via purposive non random sampling with the assistance of individual country researchers. Each interview lasted approximately one hour. Interpreters were present as necessary and interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. Transcripts were analysed using thematic code and retrieve techniques with QSR NVivo 10 software used to assist this process. Fieldwork took place between October 2013 and January 2015.

We use the terms Roma and non Roma throughout the report. We appreciate that these terms may be disputed and appear homogenising but we have taken a pragmatic view. In terms of Roma these include individuals self-identifying as such in the countries within which the research took place. Such individuals often belonged to different sections of the Roma umbrella. It should be noted that the Roma respondents who took part in the research included policy actors involved in the development and implementation of policy in varied organisations at local and national level alongside end users in receipt of services. Quotes are used from respondents to illustrate points being made, respondents have been given identifiers to protect their anonymity although a brief description of their role is provided.

This summary, together with the full report,[2] provides insights from new empirical research into the effectiveness and limitations of current 'Roma inclusion' policy grounded in the perceptions, experiences and expectations of policy actors that are central to its implementation.

[1] These are available from https://romamatrix.eu/research/interim-research-findings.

[2] Available from https://romamatrix.eu/research/

Cross-community relations

Evidence presented in the Roma MATRIX Interim Research Report highlighted relations between Roma and non Roma communities across the partner states typically played out across a spectrum that ranged from indifferent ambivalence to overt hostility and violence. Whilst a small number of partner states reported surveys that evidenced diminishing hostility toward Roma this was against a continuing backdrop of broad negativity on the part of majority populations towards members of Roma communities. Spatial and cultural separation often provides the canvas upon which strained relationships are played out and the Interim Research Report detailed pessimism about the ability of current initiatives to promote inter-cultural understanding and improve relations between Roma and non Roma communities.

Across the partner states respondents routinely reported the presence of ineffective policy and practice in relation to the promotion of cross-community relations. Although a minority of policies were seen as successful, for the most part these involved delivering small scale events such as, specific cultural festivals and/or local level grassroots work through sport and arts projects. Only one respondent asserted that their state's National Roma Integration Strategy (NRIS) was a positive force in addressing community relations, with the majority of others asserting that the NRIS in their country, and similar policy documents, were largely ineffective in promoting better Roma - non Roma community relations. Stated reasons for this included limited support for such policies (e.g. *'No policy. No plans. No idea' (UK5, local elected politician, non Roma, UK)*), on the part of key policymakers. With politicians often similarly providing little support instead, on occasion, openly espousing overt anti-Roma hostility for political gain.

> *He systematically fuelled the prejudice and he was having a lot of votes in return…The present administration is not going down the same road but it's not even denying it or turning back or doing anything to change the situation.(IT6, director of a local NGO, non Roma, Italy)*

Roma populations were often used as a convenient scapegoat in locations where the Far Right were dominant and, more worryingly, were noted as influential in embedding indifference to anti-Roma attitudes in wider politics.

A common mechanism used across all the Roma MATRIX partner states to attempt to enhance community relations were Roma culture and/or arts based events (for example Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Poland). Whilst cultural activities/festivals which sought to enhance a wider awareness of Roma culture, were often cautiously welcomed by local level actors, they were also typically criticised for not improving community relations in any meaningful way,

> *The past ten years many activities were funded by the EU. There were many activities within small communities where you have Roma festivals, some kinds of workshops, shows, exhibitions and so on. Of course, in these small communities you had all these cultural activities that were aimed at empowering these people and enforcing their integration. On the other hand when all these very, very small issues arise everything is forgotten, and we realise that actually the non Roma community still lives with the same stereotypes as they used to live with before. (PL1, employee within a national NGO, non Roma, Poland)*

Such activities were rarely believed to lead to tangible improvements in community relations. As an alternative approach local level respondents in Slovakia and the Czech Republic asserted that significant attention should be paid to working intensively with members of majority communities in order to directly tackle their prejudices. The funding of open meetings to promote dialogue across communities, organisations and individuals to discuss local issues, although challenging, was reported as being far more effective in reducing tensions and ultimately promoting mutual understanding.

> *It was open to the public and people who were either Roma or non Roma, so non Roma who are not involved in any of these institutions or agencies, ordinary people, could come and then what was going on was that they would have a specific problem…that they wanted to solve by this organised facilitated and supervised discussion…Although initially these series of discussions were focused on reducing tension between communities and understanding the reasons for these tensions, once these tensions were reduced then they could focus on the concrete issues of how to improve that city itself for everyone who lives in it, and then they could move on to maybe something more specific (CZ8, lawyer within a local NGO, non Roma, Czech Republic)*

Where positive outcomes had been achieved in improving cross-community relations the role of particular committed individuals within key local or municipal organisations was identified by respondents as central. The relationships with such individuals were often described by Roma and frontline workers as meaningful, respectful and constructive. That said, such relationships were frequently precarious as they were often built on specific time-limited projects or rested upon the attention and drive of specific influential or

engaged individuals. Respondents in Italy, Poland and Slovakia noted that any progress rapidly eroded as variously, time contingent funding ended, influential individuals left organisations, a new political party took power, and/or policy changed track.

A minority of respondents spoke of the implementation of positive programmes within educational settings that facilitated a reduction in discriminatory practices in schools and improved relations. For example, a Bulgarian respondent noted a decrease in segregated or 'special' Roma schools. Similarly, in Poland a respondent noted how policy that had increased Roma children's attendance at school had positively altered non Roma parent's perception of Roma. However, the potential for positive educational policy to stimulate wider improvements in cross-community relations should not be exaggerated. Widespread prejudice and the ongoing marginalisation of Roma were regularly reported as a significant feature of wider society.

> *Nobody wants to give them work, and nobody wants to communicate with them. Nobody wants to interact with them. Unfortunately, numerous polls show that almost no one wants to have Roma as their neighbour. For example, a lady from [location], out of her eight children two of her sons went to school and they got this apprenticeship, degree and they still couldn't find a job, so she asked me, 'What is our motivation to educate our children when they will still be denied jobs because they are Roma? (CZ1, senior manager in a national NGO, non Roma, Czech Republic)*

Employment

Across all ten Roma MATRIX partner states, respondents consistently reported that entrenched anti-Roma sentiments and endemic discriminatory practices among majority populations seriously undermined the effectiveness of policies and programmes intended to promote Roma inclusion in the workplace.

> *No one says, 'I'm not employing you because you are a Gypsy'…There have been some court cases and nobody would take a risk now to do that directly…especially when they can tell by your appearance that you are a Roma. As the joke in Russia says: if you are a Negro you will be identified as such immediately. So this joke goes for the Roma (BG8, national, civil servant, non Roma, Bulgaria)*

> *I have heard myself that, 'What a 'decent' woman [I am], what a pity she's Gypsy' [laughs]. So you aren't alright even if you have studied and have great training, and then if you are poor and have fallen, you are really not right at all (HG9, employee of a national NGO, Roma, Hungary)*
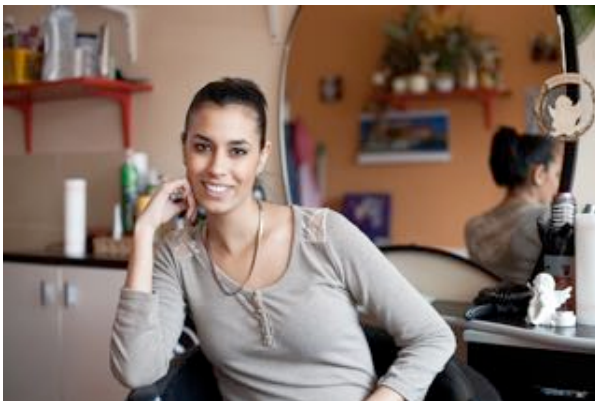
Respondents highlighted early school exit and limited educational attainment as central to disproportionately high levels of unemployment among Roma communities. However, whilst such factors act as significant barriers to Roma employment, as HG9 notes above, policies that singularly promote education and training will remain ineffective where widespread anti-Gypsyism prevails.

Responsibility for delivering Roma focused employment and training programmes was routinely devolved to NGOs or local municipal actors in line with the prevailing national policy frameworks. Examples of good practice were noted, e.g. NGO and municipality placements/internships in the UK and Italy, media training in the Czech Republic and a police scholarship scheme in Hungary. The positive potential of training Roma to become mediators to enhance engagement of the wider community in the employment, health and education sectors was also highlighted by respondents in several partner states. This was viewed as important 'niche employment' for those individuals identified as potential community leaders and, simultaneously, seen as a tool for enhancing collective awareness of rights and Roma engagement with services. That said, the limitations of such work were powerfully expressed,

> *The training, and about rights, things missing from my own basic education, I learnt through ROMED [an EU mediator training initiative]…I'm still in the process of learning…It's not that we don't have support from the Roma. [But] Roma mediators, or any mediators, are not recognised, it has no consequence when we're going outside of the camp…As a Roma mediator, it means nothing to them (GR14, mediator in a local NGO, Roma, Greece)*

Respondents in two countries (Greece and Spain), also noted that non Roma people were increasingly likely to be employed as mediators, a development they saw as further undermining this programme's potential as a route to employment for Roma.

A range of programmes and policies for delivering training and support to unemployed Roma were evident. However, many were viewed as ineffective and subject to wide ranging criticisms. These included, unambitious programmes with training limited to manual work and/or relatively low skilled tasks stereotypically associated with Roma employment such as agricultural work, cleaning, waste management/recycling, basket weaving. As SK2 noted, '*We need masons, but we need higher education. We need doctors… teachers' (Local church member, Roma, Slovakia).* Elsewhere, ingrained prejudicial practices by employment office administrators were noted. For example, '*They see a Roma, a Gypsy person and then there is no job' (PL12, mother, Roma, Poland).* Additionally, available training was criticised for serving providers' interests rather than enhancing the employment opportunities of trainees '*[What] was being offered to people continuously. Useless pieces of paper that cannot move you onto the labour market' (UK12, national NGO, non Roma, UK).*

The use of 'public works' that link receipt of social assistance benefit to work activity in local communities was a significant feature in Hungary and Slovakia. Given the lack of wider employment opportunities, some respondents viewed such schemes positively. Others viewed these locally implemented schemes, which regularly employed an overwhelmingly Roma workforce, as further maintaining the status quo by cementing both Roma's dependency on public welfare and the ability of Mayors to exercise control over them.

> *It's a great tool to political power…Some of them are using that as a tool for disciplining some for the better. They say that, if you don't send your children to the school you don't get activation work (SK6, national NGO, non Roma, Slovakia)*

> *I don't really see any initiatives that would lead the Roma back to the primary job market, because obviously the public works is just a dead end (HG12, national NGO, non Roma, Hungary)*

Criticisms of the effectiveness of existing policies and programmes designed to improve the participation and experiences of Roma in the paid labour market need to acknowledge the often challenging contemporary social and economic situations in which they are operationalised. Whilst some examples of good policy and practice are evident, many programmes designed to overcome Roma's social exclusion in the workplace are limited in their reach, ambition and success.

Reporting and redress mechanisms in respect of anti-Gypsyism

Roma typically experience persistent and often severe prejudice and discrimination in a range of areas of socio-economic life. Respondents from across the Roma MATRIX partner states generally believed that, on the whole, Roma community members tended to have more awareness about their rights when compared to previous decades. However, across all partner states respondents reported that that significant under-reporting of discrimination was the norm among Roma populations. Analysis of the interviews identified a number of key reasons, common across all partner states, that combined to subdue seeking redress and / or the reporting of discriminatory acts by Roma. These included the absence of formal rights and /or a continuing lack of awareness among certain sections of the Roma community (e.g. migrant Roma and others lacking official papers and language capabilities) about their rights to redress. More broadly respondents also reported a general lack of trust by Roma in the organisations involved in systems of reporting, particularly municipal authorities and the police. Other factors identified as barriers to Roma reporting discrimination were a fear of reprisals from non Roma populations if claims of discrimination were lodged, a lack of options in respect of the locations and organisations Roma could report to, the often complex and bureaucratic processes involved in making a complaint and, on occasions, the latent hostility displayed by workers in organisations receiving complaints. Additionally, respondents noted that a reluctance to seek redress was in part the result of Roma growing accustomed to experiencing systematic and persistent discrimination across wider society as a whole.

A pervasively hostile environment among wider society of anti-Roma prejudice and a lack of will among political elites to tackle it head on were also seen as significant. Indeed, one respondent from Italy asserted that this wider acceptance of anti-Gypsyism was the key reason why such discrimination continued unabated.

> *It's not a question of economic inability or political inability to carry out effective anti-discriminatory policies, but instead it's a political choice (IT5, national human rights lawyer, non Roma, Italy)*

Many respondents, particularly those working at a local level, pointed to the presence of deficient legal mechanisms within partner states to allow for anti-discriminatory cases to be brought. In contrast, those in national or regional government departments tended to view the existing processes as adequate. Many local level respondents reported that where legal processes existed these tended to be ineffective in changing accepted discriminatory practices and were not routinely enforced.

> *There are legal procedures, but if you go to the newspaper shop you can buy a local paper, in the housing…ads they have like, not appropriate for Gypsies (CZ7, worker in a national NGO, non Roma, Czech Republic)*

Respondents reported a minority of occasions where a complaint of discrimination had led to the successful prosecution of cases. When this occurred the financial compensation awarded was generally at a very low level which acted as a further disincentive for reporting. Additionally, a lack of adequate funding to support victims of discrimination in bringing cases, alongside the risk of losing a case and having to pay costs, was also seen as a deterrent to individuals considering making a complaint. Respondents working for certain NGOs stressed that whilst they were keen to actively support Roma the burden of proof placed upon a plaintiff to successfully pursue a complaint of discrimination was often seen as unachievable even in cases where a

discriminatory practice was apparent (e.g. a baseball bat marked 'For Gypsies' in a bar as reported in the Czech Republic). Unsurprisingly, respondents reported that the establishment of case law in relation to discrimination against Roma has been slow to build. In compensating for this, a number of NGOs across the partner states had adopted the approach of taking on particular strategic and emblematic cases to establish case law as their preferred strategy. Although necessary and appropriate, such tactics may have limited immediate effect on the everyday lives of Roma.

Respondents cited Spain and the UK as positive examples of policy in the area of reporting and redress. Spain, for the establishment of a network of reporting centres, and the UK, for encouraging people to systematically report experiences of discrimination and hate crime. Respondents in Spain noted that having specialist lawyers, where possible drawn from the Roma community, was particularly important, as was having people working in reporting centres who had themselves experienced discrimination and could build empathy and trust with Roma.

> *We have not just a Roma person but a migrant, like a Peruvian person, for example, who has been an object of discrimination…[Also] we have a team of lawyers who are specialised in ethnic discrimination and part of our team is made up of Roma lawyers, women Roma lawyers. But whether they are Gitano themselves or not, what's important is that we have a team of lawyers who are specialised in discrimination crimes or discrimination incidents (ES3, senior officer in a national NGO, unassigned, Spain)*

Nonetheless, it should be noted that a minority of respondents, usually civil servants operating at the national policy level, asserted that they doubted that specialised provision was necessary as the cases were often 'not complex'. Indeed, such actors usually failed to problematise the reporting structures in place instead attributing any lack of reporting to the apathetic disposition of Roma.

Across the partner states the national equality bodies were regularly described by respondents as variously, lacking independence, resources, influence, and often marginalised from other important policy actors, and that this had a detrimental effect on the implementation and effectiveness of anti-discrimination policy.

> *First, the main issue is that we don't do enough to raise awareness about one's legal rights and the places where one can go to fight and get protection. The other one is actual effectiveness of the legal judgements, that it's not as effective and it's not really conducive to helping and protecting people who are being discriminated against. To give you an example, last year all the anti-discrimination rulings, including race and gender, the compensation given to the victims was 300 euros.(PL4, national human rights worker, non Roma, Poland)*
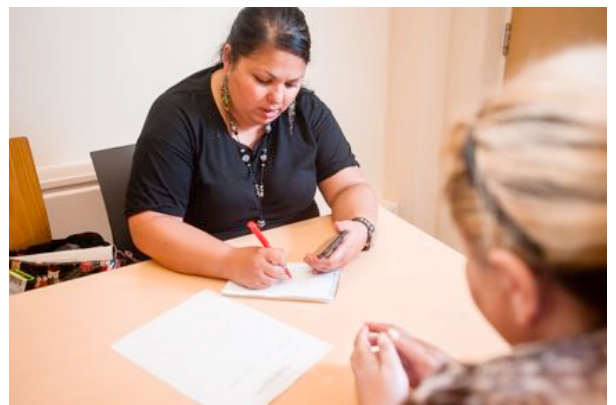
Where the equality body was reported as having a positive impact and performing effectively this was either attributed to strength of personality and the leadership qualities of the main officer or that the organisation was independent of the Government in some way. In terms of this latter point, the UK's Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) was seen as an ideal example of an effective equality body by a number of respondents across other partner states.

Children in public care

As noted in the Roma MATRIX Interim Research Report, the general absence of ethnically sensitive data on publicly cared for children across Europe make definitive statements about the numbers of Roma children in public care difficult. Nonetheless, the limited available evidence suggests that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children are significantly over-represented within public care systems across Europe. In many of the ten partner states relatively recent policy developments have sought to end the removal of children from their families for reasons of material deprivation. However, respondents clearly associated the high numbers of Roma children removed from their families directly with the poverty many Roma face.

The prevailing number is related to no income or low income…If you have no income at all, the place where you live will be in a terrible condition (BG1, director of a local NGO, Roma, Bulgaria)

If it is a choice between institutional care and the ghetto, institutional care is better (CZ1, senior manager national NGO, non Roma, Czech Republic)

It must be recognised that it is sometimes appropriate to place children, both Roma and non Roma, in public care in cases where children face serious abuse or neglect. For example, one young Roma care leaver (RO2) spoke positively of the support she had received after being removed from her mother who had serious alcohol dependency issues. However, particularly in situations where anti-Roma sentiment are prevalent, concerns about systemic poverty can become translated into pathological, professional discourses that universally identify impoverished Roma 'culture' with mistreatment and neglect of their children. Indeed, in line with certain other critics, certain respondents were highly critical of policy and spoke of state sponsored *'child abduction'* and cultural *'genocide'* where,

Prejudice is not only on the streets… but it's also in the heads of judges and social system and the courts. So, the kids, the Roma kids must be saved from the camps. We are the ones who put them in the camps. So, again, the same circle (IT10, president of a national NGO, unassigned, Italy)

More positively, a preference for the deinstitutionalisation of public care systems and an accompanying nascent shift towards preventative family focused support and foster care, where appropriate, was a common feature of respondents' discussions e.g. in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Italy, Spain. Examples of good practice identified included, the building of smaller accommodation schemes, an NGO established by both Roma and non Roma adults who had previously experienced public care in childhood

which undertook workshops with cared for children and was becoming involved in policy development at the national level. Nonetheless, the implementation of such programmes was recognised as inconsistent. For example, available foster care provision was often seen as inadequate and the possibility of placing Roma children with Roma foster parents was, at best, a distant ideal and at worse not even part of recognised practice. Others noted positive policy development in certain regions being inhibited by a lack of resources, including trained '*professionals to work in such services*' (HG9, activist in a national NGO, Roma, Hungary). The absence of systems to systematically monitor and evaluate standards also meant that good practice was often dependent on the individual leadership and ethos within particular homes.

Policies aimed at offering transitional support to care leavers were evident in several partner states. However, whilst it was clear that relatively recent developments such as halfway houses, training in life skills and extended support for those who remain in education post 18 were broadly welcomed by respondents, they also noted their geographical availability was subject to national and indeed, regional or local variation. Significantly, where such policies were in place, they routinely lacked any culturally specific components to meet the particular needs of young Roma adults leaving care. Given that significant numbers of Roma children grow up in public care settings and often face multiple disadvantage brought about by the loss of their own identity and culture and wider societal discrimination on leaving public care, the omission of this element is surprising and a cause for concern,

They usually don't know what…They're going to be discriminated against, and there is an absence of work, with their identity…questions that will arise once they leave the care…They have real problems with their identity because they don't know [have] a clue like who they are…They have one more problem, that they are Roma, but the children, in general, just don't know who they are or what they should do (CZ3 worker within a national NGO, unassigned, Czech Republic)

Establishing appropriate and culturally sensitive policies for all publicly cared for children is clearly work in progress in many Roma MATRIX partner states. Its full and effective implementation will ultimately be reliant on the allocation of appropriate resources and the political will to ensure that new and potentially transformative legislation and policy becomes firmly embedded in practice.

There are many formal rules which are written in the code of Social and Legal Protection, but it is, in many cases, only formal activity with little benefit for these children. I can find some good practices, but mainly I think that it is only formal activity without any real benefit for these children (SK11, national sociologist, non Roma, Slovakia)

Key findings

The key findings arising from this research are as follows:

- In spite of multi-level policy developments in recent years, many people within Roma communities remain systematically excluded and oppressed within Europe.

- Current policy goals and statements aimed at increasing the social inclusion of Roma are a necessary prerequisite to stimulating positive change, all too often the implementation of existing policy is weak and ineffectual.

- Both Roma and non Roma respondents highlighted the presence of persistent and pervasive anti-Roma discrimination and racism as a common facet of everyday life. This inhibits the effective implementation of policy at national, regional and local levels.

- Entrenched poverty that continues to be a routine feature of everyday life for many severely limits the ability of people from Roma communities to mobilise and effectively influence policy. This problem is particularly acute for the most disadvantaged and marginalised Roma communities' i.e. 'migrant' Roma populations who routinely lead segregated lives often in deprived living conditions and who all too often lack official residency and citizenship papers.

- Certain policymakers and NGOs at European and national level have been effective in putting the issues faced by Roma on the agenda and advocating for the advancement of rights for Roma. However, issues about the effective and meaningful representation of Roma as policy actors with equal status remain. Roma respondents who had become active in the implementation and provision of policy often spoke of their continued marginalisation within policy processes.

- Whilst formal policies and procedures for the reporting and redress of anti-Roma discrimination routinely exist as part of wider equality legislation and rules within the Roma MATRIX partner states their effectiveness is variable and implementation is inadequate.

Taken together the above noted factors combine to seriously, limit the effectiveness of Roma inclusion policy and the extent to which Roma are able to effectively exercise their rights and responsibilities as full and equal European citizens.

Recommendations for policy development and implementation

Recommendations are targeted at the macro level of policy making and implementation:

- When working with Roma communities directly, precedence should be given to policies and programmes that attempt to rapidly reduce the deep seated poverty that continues to blight the lives of many Roma.

- For the social inclusion of Roma to become a future reality, policymakers at all levels will need to focus more attention on combatting the enduring anti-Roma discrimination and racism that remains prevalent within wider society.

- In order to avoid National Roma Integration Strategies becoming redundant, more work is needed to reconcile the direction of national policy priorities with national, regional and local level initiatives.

- Publicly funded Roma inclusion programmes and initiatives should be subject to mandatory independent process and impact evaluations.

- Awareness raising initiatives should be compulsory for those involved in Roma inclusion policy at the level of strategic decision-making within statutory and commissioning agencies. These should be delivered, where possible, by appropriately qualified Roma facilitators.

- Although cultural festivals are important components in highlighting and celebrating Roma culture, on their own they are not sufficient to underpin sustainable improvements in community relations. In order to more effectively overcome prejudice and enhance more sustainable social relations and inter-cultural dialogue, policy makers are advised to also invest in initiatives that bring together policy makers and Roma and non Roma people around common concerns and issues.

- Whilst it is important to recognise that limited educational attainment remains a significant factor in limiting the types of work available for some Roma, future employment and training programmes need to expand their scope and ambition in recognition of the existing talents, skills and potential of members of Roma communities.

- The implementation of existing reporting and redress mechanisms in respect of anti-Gypsyism need to be reinvigorated if they are to have a meaningful and wide reaching effect. The financial compensation awarded to those individuals who successfully proving discrimination should be increased significantly in order to deter such discriminatory practices in the future.

- Given the over-representation of Roma children in public care systems in Europe, the development of culturally sensitive policies to meet the particular needs of Roma children living in care, and young Roma adults when leaving public care should be prioritised.

For more information about this study please see the Roma MATRIX website
https://romamatrix.eu