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## National Gathering Report

**Organization in charge of co-implementing the activity:** Amalipe Center

**Date of the Gathering:** 21st October 2021

**Place:** Bulgaria , Veliko Turnovo

**Hosting institution:** Hotel “Meridian Bolyarski” - Conference room/ We chose this place for the meeting so that we could provide enough distance between the participants, given the measures regarding Covid-19.

**The day before the event, the Amalipe Center held a National Meeting of Educational Mediators at the same Hotel.**

### 1- PREPARATION PHASE BEFORE THE GATHERING

**Dates of meetings with NCC pre Gathering:**

Prior to the event, we held 2 consultative meetings with the NSS, during which we discussed relevant topics and organizational issues.

**Staff Member(s) involved:** Tanya Hristova and Teodora Krumova

**NCC Member(s) involved:** Silvia Stancheva, Irena Mihaylova, Zlatina Pamukova

**Locations:** Online Zoom meeting

**Action Points:**

1. Presentation of the project
2. Presentation of the participants
3. NCC structure
4. Objectives and main activities
5. Planning for future events



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## Notes:

- During these meetings we discussed the following topics:

- **Appropriate target groups - Who to include - parents, students, young people?**
- **Topics suitable for training, discussions and information meetings**
- **Size of local groups and opportunities to organize meetings**
- **Suitable role models for the first meeting**
- **Organizational questions about the event**

## **2- ACTIVITY IMPLEMENTATION: THE GATHERING**

The meeting was held in the conference hall of Meridian Bolyarski Hotel in Veliko Tarnovo. We decided to choose an informal environment, outside the community, to give Roma women the freedom to communicate and meet new interesting people.

The meeting was attended by 16 Roma women, aged 20 to 50, representatives of 6 regions of different regions in Bulgaria. Each of these women has a role to play in their community and has built a reputation as a local leader. This was our motive to invite them to join our project as local agents.

The main topic of this meeting was "The role of Roma women" - what are her responsibilities, how they perceive her and how she perceives herself.

We talked about education and how it allows for professional realization, how it builds a person's personality and changes not only the individual but also his environment.

The women shared their personal stories, some of them having survived the brunt of early marriage and others currently students.

The meeting lasted all day.

They had the opportunity to discuss issues related to violence against women in the Roma community and stereotypes regarding gender discrimination.

In the second stage of the meeting, the women had the opportunity to get acquainted with the personal story of Radostina Chaprazova, who took on the role of role model.



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Radostina (Radost) Chaprazova is a Roma woman, mother of 2 wonderful children and executive director of the Arete Youth Foundation. She graduated in Political Science and Mass Communication from the American University in Blagoevgrad in 2003. He is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Public Management and Policy at the Faculty of Philosophy at Sofia University "Kliment Ohridski".

In 2005 is an intern at the European Commission, Directorate General for Employment and Social Affairs. Until the end of 2010 he was an expert in the Project Management Department of the European Competitiveness Funds Directorate at the Ministry of Economy and Energy and then returned to the non-governmental sector as part of the Roma program team of the Open Society Institute - Sofia. .

For more than 15 years Radost has been an informal leader in his community and holds various positions in civil society organizations where he mobilizes resources and supports capacity building among Roma youth, participates in policies and advocacy for equal opportunities and integration of the Roma community in Bulgaria.

### **3- IMPACT OF THE GATHERING**

All participants in the meeting - 16 Roma women, are representatives of their local communities. Some of them work as educational mediators and others as social workers in schools. They are people who have authority in their community based on their support for children to gain access to education.

Each of these ladies is a leader and motivator in their locality.

Motivated, ambitious and extremely active during the discussions, the ladies offered to create their own groups in places to implement activities on prevention of early marriages, health issues, education, socialization and prevention of domestic violence.

Unfortunately, most of the ladies share that this is a common problem in the community.

As a result of this meeting, 10 of the participants expressed a desire and motivation to get involved in the role of local agents and to mobilize their communities in future activities.

At the end of the meeting, activities were planned and planned in places to organize a week to combat domestic violence. In support of local agents, the Amalipe Center team is committed to holding an



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informational online meeting to upgrade the knowledge of Roma women on the subject, as well as to conduct an online campaign on social networks.

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#### **Conclusions of the Gathering:**

The main focus and conclusion of the meeting was the problem of early marriages and the urgent need to work in this direction.

Participants share:

"Some girls have no choice, they like to go to school, they have good grades, but there is a tradition and it is stronger."

Another participant said that "in her locality, the majority of Roma youth, including girls, are completing secondary education and this is a factor that prevents early marriages because education and its role increases through the generations."

The focus points of our future activities are in the field of:

- Prevention of early marriages
- Support for continuing education
- Support for Roma women victims of domestic violence (awareness raising)
- Motivation for personal development