



## National Gathering Report

**Organization in charge of co-implementing the activity:** Care for Young People's Future CIC

**Date of the Gathering:** 03/12/2022

**Place:** Sheffield UK

**Hosting institution:** Firvale Secondary School

Sheffield- Page Hall - Firvale There is estimation of 8k Roma living in Sheffield , mainly in Page Hall, Tinsley and Darnall

### [Fir Vale School](#)

The Roma Women have specifically chosen to do the Gathering in their neighbourhood at Firvale School , which is situated in the heart of the community. This school has nearly 1 thousand of students, from which at least half percentage are Roma.

Firvale Secondary school is situated in Page Hall- a multicultural secondary school predominantly accessed by Roma and Asian communities as well as other ethnicities.

To be able to raise the aspirations of the Roma Women and girls the NCC and the Roma Women thought that compared to previous year's Gathering which was held at the Hallam University, this year we should also be in the community , exactly where the roots of the education for the Roma girls and women is happening, to increase the expose to role models and positive choices at our host school - Firvale School.

### 1- PREPARATION PHASE BEFORE THE GATHERING

In 2022 our Roma women and Care for young people's future did a lot of work around 3 main needed themes which emerged from previous gathering and the women's needs and from Rtransform main aims.

- Strengthen Roma Women Movement
  - Improve educational expectations
  - Make the voice of Roma Women heard
- Through the following 3 main topics: Education, Arts and Heritage, Health and Wellbeing.

In 2022 we have focused on organizing sessions around

We have held the following face to face and virtual meetings and workshops to prepare the topics for the Gathering .

September and November - meeting with NCC and Role model in Manchester Ramona Constantin .

2 workshops specific with women and young girls on raising aspirations and talk about dreams- led by CYPF – Sheffield Park Academy and Endeavour Youth club

8 ongoing weekly sessions – October- November- Women talking about their needs- health, wellbeing and mental health as well as employment and educational aspirations.

Role models- met with each of them – prepared for Gathering speech and presentation.

2 Art workshops in October to express our dreams – dance, arts and Roma heritage.

Throughout these sessions we have explored ways of achieving our dreams, followed up action plans in partnership with 3 main secondary schools at local level Astrea Academy, Sheffield Park Academy and Firvale Secondary school.

We have ongoing mentoring through dance, Roma language and history at Sheffield Park

Collaborated with Firvale Secondary school on supporting the Roma girls to produce educational videos in the health system.

Attended 6 sessions at Astrea – Getting to know your roots and my history – promoting pride in our heritage and culture .

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

Title of the main conference: Roma Women Transforming the educational systems in the UK and political mobilization.

Reimagining social/educational/ health inequalities

Why did the conference

Because this is a very powerful educational opportunity which involve preparations, dedication and discussion about the real needs of our Roma Women and the Gatherings has proven to contribute in improving the education for Roma Women and the community.

Agenda with our role models and topics chosen by our women and girls.

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The dream of 3 generations: Lucia, Hany and Blajena sharing video from our 1<sup>st</sup> Gathering and outcomes.

11:00-12:00 Roma women role models :

- Ramona Constantin- Roma Rights activist and Roma Women expert/consultant Empowering the Roma community and Women to have a voice (NCC member too)
- Ivana Gombarova – Student at Leeds Campus University -Business and Tourism Management, qualified playworker and own business founder
- Emilia Mizigarova – BSL Sign Language trained – aspiring to become a Sign Language teacher

12:00-12:30 Lunch break

12:30-13:30 Working Groups – dialogical conversations and critical reflections on learning and views on topics.

Group 1. Reimagining Social Health and Health Inequalities. Led by Olga Fuseini – Roma Health inequalities research associate

Group 2 . Education inequalities and Identifying solutions towards a more inclusive approach in education. Led by Terezia Rostas – Educational consultant/teacher

Group 3. Inclusion through Arts and Dance

Exploring ways of using Arts, Dance and traditions to raise aspirations in our community and how to promote the Inclusion through Arts and Dance. Led by Rosa Cisneros – Arts and Dance historian teacher , researcher

Feedback from working groups

13:30- 14:00 Terezia Rostas - Exploring the invisibility in Education of Roma and for Roma. What leads to success and ways of transforming the educational system. How to create a culture of inclusion. Gender discrimination

14:00-14:30 Olga Fuseini – Reimagining Social Health and Health Inequalities Research report -University of Sheffield

14:30-15:00 Rosa Cisneros – Inclusion through Arts

15:00-15:30 Feedback and conclusions

End

## Our current NCC- National Committee Members

### Blazena Horvathova



Blazena Horvathova has been our NCC member and community grassroots expert involved from the beginning of the project. Blazena is a mother of 9 children , an amazing role model who continue to support her children in attending education and having higher aspirations for them and for the Roma community.

Blazena broke the cycle of poverty and illiteracy , by coming abroad in the UK over 10 years ago ,to follow her dream with her husband of offering a better life to her family. Having children with hearing impairment, speech and language needs, determined Blazena to fight for inequalities and learn in different ways how to support her children's needs.



Hany Mohamad – our aspiring NCC member and active role model

Hany is always passionate about learning and sharing her knowledge and skills with other. Hany one day, will become a doctor and help changing people's lives. What she doesn't know, is that she is already doing it 😊.



Ramona Constantin

Roma Rights activist and Roma Women expert/consultant Empowering the Roma community and Women to have a voice. NCC member too.

Ramona has been involved at local, national and international level in women empowerment activities and training. Supporting the Roma Women to have a voice and empower them through her own example of overcoming barriers in life when we do not have an educational background at a minimum- to superior level.

## Our role models



Ivana Gombarova is from Slovakia and has moved to Sheffield 17 years ago. Last year she followed her dreams and started to study at Leeds campus university ( Canterbury Church ) studying Business and tourism management.

Ivana also has her established business from home where she is selling chocolate soap flower boxes with personalized balloons

Ivana is also currently working as a playworker at Pistmoor adventure playground where she started as an apprenticeship in 2016 and worked her way up to workplaces where she has continued to work as a playworker.



Emilia is a proud mother of 2 amazing children.

Xiona, Emilia's daughter was born with hearing impairment which led Emilia to be interested and passionate about BSL - sign language .

Emilia's dream is to become a sign language teacher for the Roma children with hearing impairment in Slovakia and in the UK.

Emilia Mizigarova – BSL Sign Language trained – aspiring to become a Sign Language teacher

## Our speakers

### Dr Rosa Cisneros



Rosa is a professional dancer, Dance Historian and Critic, a Romani studies Scholar, a Flamenco historian, sociologist, curator and peace activist.

[www.rosasencis.org](http://www.rosasencis.org)

Twitter: @RosaSenCis



Olga Fuseini – is a Roma advocate, freelance consultant and a Research associate. In 2021, I have graduated from politics and sociology at University of Sheffield. Olga, Olina has years of experience in family support and community development work and I have worked on various projects focused on Roma population, specifically, their migration and integration in the UK.



**Lucia Mohamad has been a strong link and supporter within RTransform project and an amazing Roma Role model. Lucia was part of the National Committee, prior to become the Coordinator in the RTransform project .**

**Lucia is a mother of 5 amazing children, runs various successful businesses and her dream is to become an engineer. Lucia is an amazing Roma Women ,always going beyond any barriers to support a Roma family in achieving their best in life or in accessing essential services.**



**Terezia Rostas – Founder of Care for Young People’s Future CIC.**

**Romanian Roma from the Gabor community. Mother of two amazing boys and grew up in a family of 6 sibling – 2 boys and 4 girls. This shaped a lot the way she thinks and views things in life from different perspectives. Always ensuring and learn not to forget about anyone being included .**

**Passionate about empowering women, young people and communities to achieve their best in life and their true potential. Advocates against inequalities and loves all about heritage, arts and culture. Peace activist.**

Reimagining health inequalities

Why? Because change needs to happen , and it needs to happen now.

Roma have the lowest outcomes in all areas such as , health, education, housing, employment and integration.

What does the community think and feel about it?

1. Corrupted government.
  - a) Some local authorities, institutions and services put on paper /policies that they include Roma, when actually they are “ashamed of having us , even on paper , don’t event mention in person, around them or in the same room with them” – Participant at Gathering.
  - b) Denying access to Roma
  - c) They don’t bother to help
  - d) No one cares about Roma, and it suits them that Roma have low education or not education at all.
2. Privileged backgrounds
3. Denied access to basic human rights and misused funding allocated for Roma Integration.
  - a) No access to water ( education, employment, training, gas , electricity)

- b) Roma being described as having poor health hygiene( some area Roma don't even have access to a fountain , don't even dream about having access to running water).
- c) Roma have not been supported when complained about their rights being violated.
- d) How can we expect from Roma families that live in poor conditions without acceding education, to ensure that their rights are not violated.

How ? How can this be changed?

We need HELP!

Policies need to include us.




Racism needs to be taken serious.

Institutions, policy makers, governments need to be accountable.

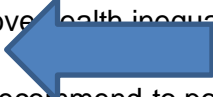
Roma representation from the Roma community to ensure Roma rights are not violated.

Representation of Health and Social Inequalities.

What does it mean ?

Roma are not integrated disadvantaged  Roma have no access to services  Roma are 

Roma are racially discriminated and mistreated. Read it backwards now.

Role of the research, strategies and policies to improve health inequalities. 

Is this is done wrong, it will cause more harm.

We need research to show the real challenges and recommend to policy makers what is really needed to be done in order to integrate the most marginalised communities.

"Roma disadvantage " is a result of "their " lack of integration into social, educational , cultural and economic structures of a just and civilised society.

Through policy process Roma are racially discriminated, this results in Roma not having access to the service.

How can Roma integrate into a system that was set up to exclude them ???

We live in a society where Roma are largely invisible unless there is a "problem" , Olina says, there's a saying about us, Roma : " Where Roma step, there's no green grass".

Life expectancy up to 20 years less, more likely to get into care system, criminal system, excluded from school and the data in Sheffield shows that Roma have the highest DNA( did not attend appointments in NHS ) ,however it doesn't look at the factors.

Reasons for DNA:

High grade of illiteracy

Language barriers

Financial and digital poverty

Assuming everyone has a phone or is able to understand a written letter.

Lack of education

Mobility issues

Historic mistrust

What needs to be done

Look at the roots of the problem , there is a long history of exploitation, exclusions and assumptions.

Terezia says” We often think, we have time, the truth is that we don’t know how long we have left, so we need to act now”.

STOP all of them and allow little opportunities for meaningful participation or change(Kocze 2009).

Ask yourself what can you do so that these existing systems don’t keep failing?

Create “Real Partnership” with the community , us as Roma we are partners not a problem.

We should remember that Roma are not a problem, rather a solution.

You are not the problem, but part of the solution!

Use your own voice!

Prepare the net generation by using the most beneficial toolkit for us and for the society “ Education” as no one can take this away.

As a service, institution instead of focusing on the DNA number, perhaps we should look at the factors causing this to happen and focus on overcoming those barriers by putting the right support to people who access the service.

What do our Roma Women want?

Better visual and in person representation in educational settings, cultural and health sectors  
Attend , visit and collaborate with local colleges, universities, museums, arts and educational settings and health system.

To be recognised , encouraged and welcomed in higher education, colleges and museums also health institutions.

To receive mentoring, needed support for us as Roma in accessing and finding our belonging in educational, cultural spaces.

Financial help when enrolled into a higher education programme, Roma Education Fund or bursaries to enable us to tackle the existing inequalities and gaps.

To commit into existing pledges that support Roma in education, health and arts.

To create a partnership with lived experience communities where we can celebrate through a community calendar our heritage, arts and values that we bring into the society or specific sectors.

Remove barriers such a requirements for Diploma, Certificates and recognise lived experience as an alternative or help Roma community to build on the requested certificates( foundation courses)

Create in partnership with us a Cultural Roma Studies course which can be studied by Roma and Non Roma to tackle inequalities, lack of representation empowering Roma community to find more educational resources about their own history.



Create educational resources , incorporate Roma history and Roma language into your existing courses and make it available to our Roma and non Roma students.

Train Roma academic mentors- so that we increase aspirations for attending academic courses or vocational as well as Phd opportunities

Train and create Roma health champions, doctors , nurses from the Roma community to support those with language barriers, illiteracy and who need support for their wellbeing.

Train Roma to become interpreters, teachers, business, sports, doctors, artists and be visually , physically in different sectors where our young people are constantly exposed to through school and in life.