



National Gathering Report

Organization in charge of co-implementing the activity: CYPF

Date of the Gathering: 27 11 2021

Place **England Sheffield – Hallam University** in person

Hosting institution: Sheffield Hallam University – Institute of Education

We felt that it was crucial to get a space within a university since our aspiration, dream is to transform the educational systems around the UK and Europe. One of the biggest dreams of the Roma women to be in a university space and make it feel like we belong in these spaces.

Meeting which we had with NCC members have been done on the following dates

14.08.2021- ONLINE Introducing information about the project , raising awareness, online and telephone. Discuss about the opportunity to become an NCC member with Lucia M, Mariana Dinca, Maria Palmi , and other grassroots Roma women from Sheffield and DONCASTER.

Lucia and Mariana have confirmed that they are happy to be part of the NCC.

20.09.2021 ONLINE Discussed updates about the project and discussed with Mariana ways of Luton roma trust to become a potential partner at the Roma Women Gathering.

Mariana had indicated that the Roma women from Luton might only want to attend a local Roma women gathering, which we have agreed to consider for the future , but as a small educational and cultural workshop.

We have discussed about the NCC Role, Mariana and Lucy shared their consent and provided me with the photo and biography to be updated on the website.
Info about the R transform has been updated now on the website.

We have discussed about the venue:

Lucy has recommended a venue which they use when they plan events or weddings, which costs £500 close to city centre.

Terezia- agreed to look into other options with the University – perhaps we could hire the venue for free.

We have discussed the food- Lucy recommended to use the catering from a Kurdish restaurant, which we all agreed – apparently for up to 100 people the catering food would cost us around £500 – with vegetarian option too.

Music , band- The Roma community from Sheffield love a local musician band – and it's relative with Lucia- Lucia has contacted them and they are available and happy to join the Gathering.

Interpreters:

Lucia, Olina, Vladimira and other potential Roma community members are happy to support with translation .

02/09/2021 – Home visit at Lucy's house- agreed to have a zoom with everyone and discuss the topics which came up from the Roma women from previous outreach and discussions and decide on the topics for the Roma women gathering, on the role models.

Lucia- indicated that we could restart our dancing sessions and use the opportunity to support the roma girls to prepare with dancing for the gathering.

Lucia- discussed with Roma women and the preferred location for the Roma women meetings, workshops, to be in Page hall.

Terezia discussed with Grimesthorpe centre and booked for 3 weeks , once a week the venue where we could design the flyers, prepare the topics and rehearse with the dancing group.

Terezia approached various potential speakers- Roma Women – on the topics of Women in Education and the importance of the Roma women in education.

Olina F- Graduated in Politics- ways of transforming the Roma women inclusion in politics and education and Aluna- pomoc PROJECT- Introducing Roma women in politics

One of the sensitive topics which came out for the gathering is the Looked after children and SEN- Terezia has discussed with Law for Life – DADA- where she agreed to support and to come and talk about the policies in Child Protection Updates, where Terezia and Erika has produced a video in English and Romanes to educate the Roma families on the updates, legislation on safeguarding, child protection, parenting and being a good role model by engaging with services.

SEN and Roma – Terezia to look into potential Roma mums to be part of the SEN – Workshop and for a professional to facilitate it.

Final agenda and topics, role models- to be confirmed by the 12th of November.
Poster and leaflet to be out by then.

21/10/zoom meeting.

Mariana- unable to attend due to COVID
Lucia- unable to attend zoom –
Met with ERIKA-

Materials purchased from Scrap dragon- provided Erika with half of the materials – to run preparations with families in Tinsley or in Peterborough.

Materials- from Scrap Dragon- promoting the values of recycling.
Next meeting in person with NCC- roma women and children will be on the 10th of November at Grimesthorpe family centre where we will be looking into putting a final agenda together and design the leaflet- prepare for the Gathering.

18/10/21 - Erika discussed with 7 Roma girls from Parkwood Academy about Rtransform project and invitation to trovada = venue to be confirmed. Post it notes re importance of education.

21/10/21 - Erika had Zoom meeting with Tereza; materials collection, discussion about workshops. Video call with Barbora from Parkwood academy, she suggested collage art about education. Erika also suggested some statement art - subject -Roma educated woman. Erika confirmed that will get materials tomorrow and will drop it off to hers. Erika agreed that it would be nice to have some nice art at Trovada (with the relevant subject) which could catch the eye of many.

22/10/21 - Erika shopped for additional materials (2 canvases, acrylic colours and brushes). Erika met with Barbora and discussed about 'where she sees her in the future'. Barbora advised that she wants to study but career adviser in school gave her a very broad advice and she is not sure what to do. She said that she will go to the college (she has good marks) but she is not sure whether she will go to the University. She said that parents said she can work and earn money and teachers also said that you can work somewhere as apprentice and work your way up. Erika advised that there is a possibility of studying, applying for a student loan and working at the same time - this way she would be self-developing and making her future easier - eg. working less for better salary. Erika advised that many Roma women have managed to study and look after their children at the same time. Barbora was very happy with the advice. She noted that in school she would never get this advice, she will say this to her mum. Barbora said that she would want to study a psychology. Erika suggested to invite her mum to Trovada and she agreed and said that her mum would be very happy to see educated Roma women as she does

not know any. Erika has written down on the post-it notes the main reason 'why education is important' which were suggested by Barbora and her 3 cousins.

Erika to follow-up Barbora's work.

25/10/21 - Erika organised workshop in Tinsley with 5 Roma women. They were very happy that they could take part in one big painting with 'education' subject while discussing the differences in school system in Slovakia and the UK. Katarina has finished college in Slovakia - it was not easy - especially difficult commuting from the village to a different city. She was able work as a school assistant after she has finished her studies. Her daughter, Patricia, got placement at the City collage in Sheffield this year but had decided to go to CTs Training instead as non of her friend had marks good enough to get place at the collage. EO spoke about change, self development, meeting new friends. Patricia decided to apply for transfer and asked Erika for help in relation to this. Erika agreed.

26/10/21 Erika met with All woman from the above group -2 new paintings, discussion re what could help them here in the UK to access education. Most of the older women think that they would need to improve their English first and have a stable job - with fixed hours so they could do some course. Difficulties combine all this and family. Younger women think that it is better if they go to work straight after they finish the school. They say that they do not need to be educated to earn money here in the UK. Discussion about differences between manual labour and different types of work. Most of them agreed that it would be very difficult to work all life in the factory or warehouse. Post-it notes re education importance.

31/10/21 - Erika -perusal of notes + report writing

Staff Member(s) involved:

Terezia and Erika

NCC Member(s) involved:

Lucia Mohamad Mariana DINCA- see website for their bio

1- PREPARATION PHASE BEFORE THE GATHERING

Dates of meetings with NCC pre Gathering:

Home visits: 4 done by TR and 2 done by Erika- TBC

Online 6

Outreach - TR- 2 , Erika TBC - 2

In person workshops to prepare for the gathering : 6 workshops

2 – Pitsmoor adventure playground

3 – Grimesthorpe family centre

1- Erika O- delivering workshop at home in person any other workshops delivered by Erika TBC

Staff Member(s) involved: Yes – Coordinator and technician

NCC Member(s) involved: Yes

Locations (e.g city, house, office, etc...): Sheffield - TR – delivered 2 workshops at Pitsmoor Adventure playground and 3 workshops preparing for the gathering at Grimesthorpe Family centre

Erika O- delivered 1 workshop at family's house , other workshops TBC

Evidences [(e.g picture or screengrab): Please make sure you gain consent prior to image taken.]

See folders in drive – gathering folder CYPF with all 6 workshops

Action Points:

TR- All workshops have had the same theme- Education, aspirations, challenges, creative , daring to dream and discussing positive role models.

For the two workshops delivered at Pitsmoor Adventure playground in partnership with Sara - playworker and Ivana- Roma mum playworker we have explored together ideas about the importance of being educated but at the same time the importance of education and play for children in life.

Having Ivana as a Roma mum at the playground made a huge difference and we have managed to learn more from Ivana about how being a playworker has changed her life in a positive way.

Ivana shared with us that she is now able to take better decisions for herself and for her family.

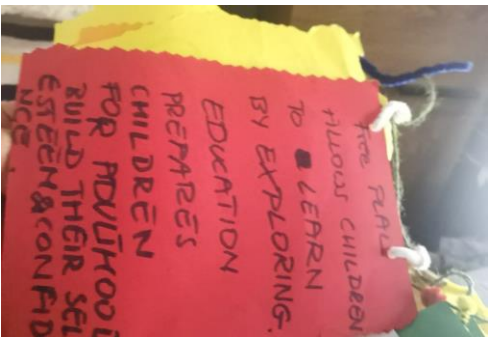
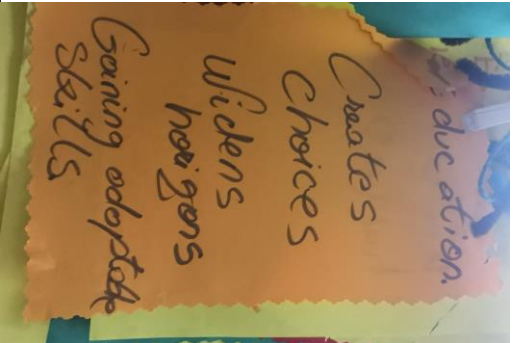
She is able to use play as a tool to empowerment, confidence building and she says” **Education got me more openwise. I can now direct my children for a better life”**

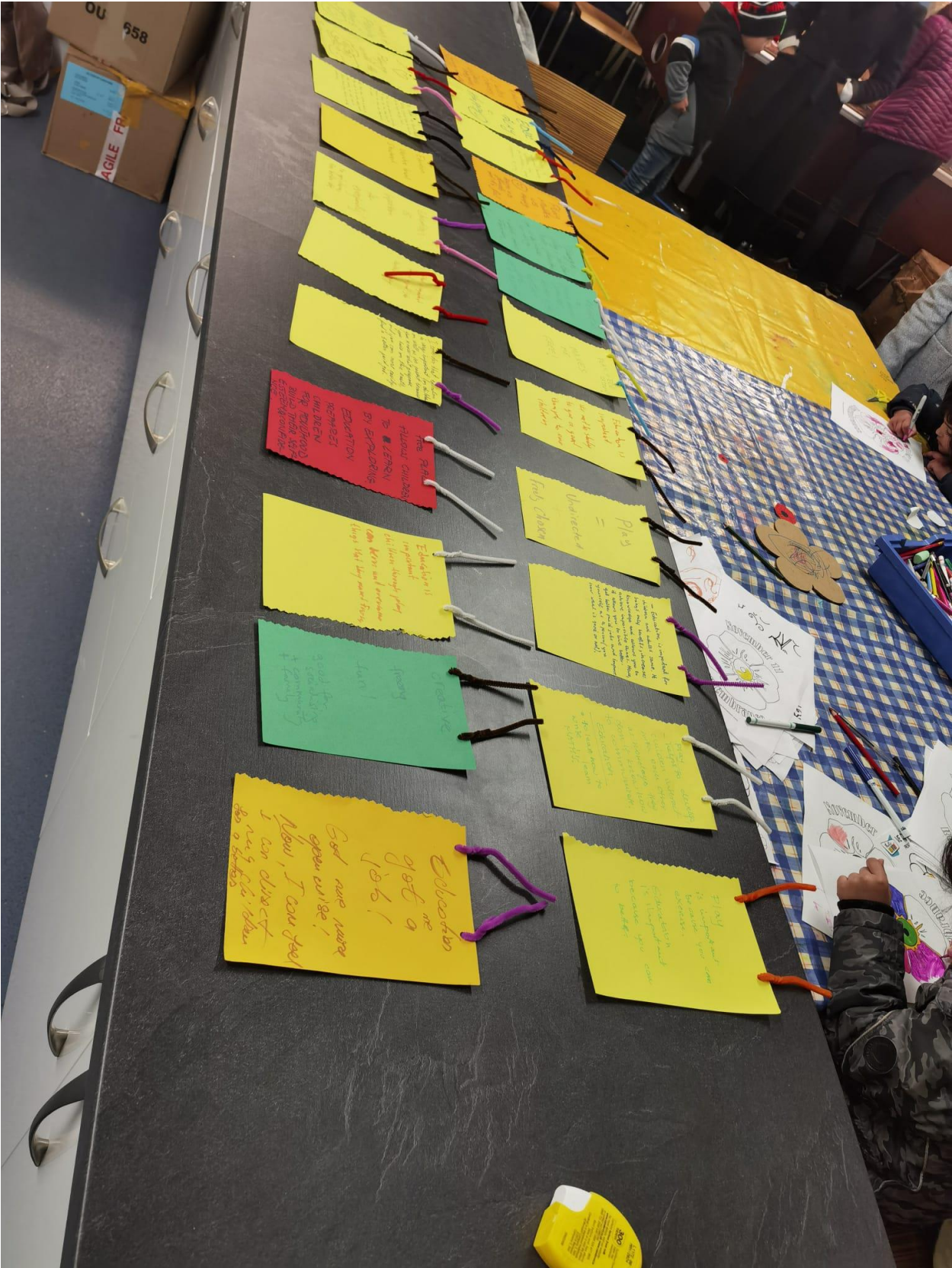
Sarah says” **Education creates choices, widens horizon and it makes you gain adaptable skills “**

Children and young people at Pitsmoor adventure playground combine play with education and learning. It is amazing how much the relationships have developed and there is a huge confidence as the Roma and non Roma children feel part of the space, they feel they belong to the place and enjoy being with each other and learning from each other.

Zack advised us to not pressure children from a young age and ask them what they would like them to become, instead to allow them free play and to learn through play who is it that they are and what it is that they truly enjoy doing.

See more photos in the folder with the workshop



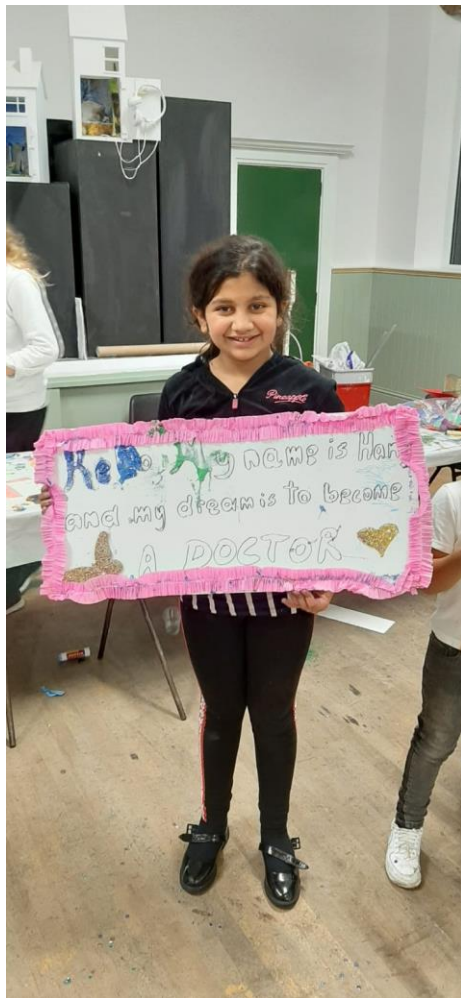


At the Grimesthorpe family centre - we have met for the past 4 weeks and delivered 3 workshops , where we have prepared materials, dance, speech, for the gathering.

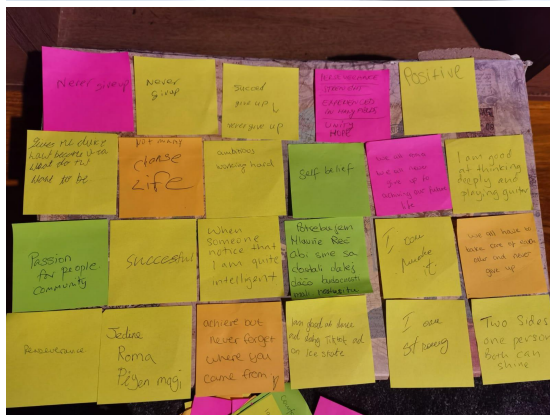
The amount of energy, enthusiasm , hard work from mums , girls and the community was amazing.

The dream to be in an academic space, sharing their voice, listening to the role models experience , preparing , creating materials with positive quotes , designing the logo for the gathering and every single step, was entirely done together with the Roma mums and girls.









2- ACTIVITY IMPLEMENTATION: THE GATHERING

1st Roma Women Gathering – Sheffield - A dream to education for our community!

“On Nov 27th, 2021 for the first time , over 50 Roma families gathered in Sheffield, UK at the Dorothy Fleming Theatre Hall from Hallam University ,to discuss education, evidenced-based examples and to dream together for a brighter future.

The day opened with the “3 Generations Dream Table”, then we had evidenced-based examples from experts in the field of education, law, human rights and feminism.

The grassroots Roma women gathered to discuss and explore the importance of education, social care, feminism and offering solutions to the problems they face.

The space for this event from Hallam University was absolutely crucial for us in order to empower and build their confidence dream and belonging in an academic space.

I cannot stress enough how grateful we are to Hallam University for believing in us and giving us the space for our Gathering.

Massive thanks to Hallam University senior staff and Jean Harris -Evans, who kindly approved and understood how important it is for the Gathering to happen and in this space.

Julia Sexton has been absolutely amazing and helped us at each step. Organising, preparing and delivering the workshops on the day, with Julia's help and guidance enabled us to achieve the goals of our event. Despite the weather conditions and heavy snow, Julia was there really early and throughout the day to support us, on her free day.

Hallam University has given our Roma Youth and Roma women from grassroot level the opportunity to feel that they belong to this world, this space and that they are not invisible, that our voice and our dreams matter too for the society.

Title of the main conference: Roma women gathering

Why did the gathering: The gathering was one of the targets when project was initially written.

Topics that emerged or were asked by participants after the conference

- **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**
- **Dialogic conversations and critical reflections on learning and views on topics (role model's journey, life experience, challenges, support ambition and work**
- **Educating the parents and discuss ways of building positive relationships with services and awareness of legislation expectations in a child protection context**
- **Roma women empowerment through arts, music and dance**
- **Identity, culture, heritage – Breaking the stereotypes, unconscious bias**
- **The need of change / personal change**
- **Doing better in life**
- **Inspiring others**

Provide detail about the composition of the table of role models

Who joined the table of role models: demographics and profile

The event opened with the dream of 3 generations- Grandmother, mother and daughter- all 3 describing their dream to succeed and to do better in life.

See individual video with each speaker for more info.

We learnt from Grandmother took a big decision by coming and moving abroad which impacted on her daughter and niece life hugely. The 3 generation dream table reflected how much we are fighting against

prejudice and at the same time it showed that it is possible to succeed and our children can have a better education and a better future if the change will start from us.

The role models have been carefully selected taking in consideration their background and achievement in education but also how well they were known in the community too.

Olga Fuseini- single mum - czech roma- Politics graduate described her journey into education , challenges and support that she had to come across.

TerezaB - Head of Dance at a secondary school , describing her dreams , ambitions and family background.

Yasmina S- Slovak Roma - muslim roma women- qualified interpreter

Questions that were tackled

Discussing our dreams, experiences and challenges was challenging ,however it was in a constructive way.

We have used dialogic conversations to discuss our role in the society , community and family and ways to transform the role of the Roma women and the educational systems around Europe.

Questions such as” Where do we belong” and” What is our duty” , “Blaming and victimisation “ Having an open and safe space” and ways of challenging the stereotypes against Roma have been tackled and solutions for this matters were brought in as part of the action plan as a follow up of the gathering.

3- IMPACT OF THE GATHERING

As described at above points

The impact of the gathering was very powerful as we have achieved the following:

- Roma women felt more confident in attending education
- challenging conversations and their rights
- continuing weekly activity sessions with the Roma girls and women
- organise further events where roma women can meet role models and explore opportunities
- organise University and college visits
- find a space where we can do educational activities
- support the dancing group
- raise aspirations
- follow up education advocacy training with dada - train roma mums to become champions
- look into educational formal qualifications for roma mums - such as TA .

I can not express the joy and happiness that the Roma women and teenager girls had to be in this space. The excitement in the way that they have prepared for the event knowing that it's their first attending or even organising a Roma Women Gathering event in an academic space.

Being able to hold the event in this space, it made our dreams more real, it showed the Roma Women that this can be the beginning of their journey if they should wish so and their children too.

It made us feel that we belong to these spaces and we should start feel and be more visible.

I believe that universities should continue to work together and closer with hard or difficult to reach communities and we should help each other in achieving their, our dreams; to live in a society where we feel we belong too and we value everyone's heritage, background.

I truly believe that it was a powerful experience for the community and for the University too.

If educational institutions want to play part of social change, they should come to people more and the inspiration to change will happen.

Roma women and girls' engagement in the activity as participants and role models.

As described above in the opening of the Gathering report document , CYPF staff, NEC committee and Coventry University has worked together in partnership with the Roma grassroots women to select the role models and facilitators. We have decided together that it was extremely important to bring different generations together, therefore we have decided that it is a great opportunity to open the gathering with the three generations table so that we have a mixed group of Roma women and Roma young girls sharing their dream together .

Roma women - grassroots level.

Our speakers

Dragica (Dada) Felja

Dada started her career working with refugees and asylum seekers at the Refugee Council. For fourteen years, she worked with the Roma refugee and migrant communities in the UK at the London-based charity Roma Support Group. She also supported statutory and non-statutory organisations working with the Roma communities across the UK through training, consultancy and capacity building support. Dada currently works at the Law for Life: the Foundation for Public Legal Education as Head of Education and Training. This role includes delivering training and workshops on a range of legal topics to community groups and grassroots initiatives.

Lolo Jones

Lolo is a Romany activist based in West Midlands and North West. Lolo is a co-founder of Traveller Pride representing LGBT+ Romani and Traveller voices, and a co-founder of The Dikhlo Collective providing free packages to Romani people worldwide.

Dr. Nicoleta Bitu

Romani feminist – human rights activist for Roma and Romani women.

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

Dr Rosa Cisneros

Phd - Sociology - Feminism, Roma women empowerment

Roma Artist, researcher, filmmaker and peace activist (Coventry University)

Olga Fuseini

Olga Fuseini – Roma activist graduated in Politics at University of Sheffield. BA graduate, Freelance Roma Consultant & Interpreter. Olga have 6 years experience in community development in in most deprived area of Rotherham and she worked on many projects that involved engagement with Roma integration policies.

Lucia, Hany and Blajena

Dreams of three generations table- Slovak Roma family - Lucy is a successful business Roma women in Sheffield who has helped thousands of Roma families since 2008 to attend education and find employment. Lucy is part of our NCC, Lucy has support R Transform massively and attended Roma Women Conference in Barcelona 4 years ago, which inspired her to continue to do Roma Women Empowerment.

Blajena is a mum of 9 and some of the children have disabilities. Despite the challenges Blajena never gave up and encouraged her family to attend education, and fight for a better live.

Hany is a 9 years old Roma girl, with big ambitions and already a role model in her school. Hany wants to become a doctor, she thinks big and she is big.

Tereza Bugosova

Firvale School student – positive role model , head of dancing in secondary school ,
dancing role model and singer

Number of organisations and social agents forming part of the local network:

Care for young people's future, Coventry University, Sheffield Hallam University , NHS, Sheffield Council, Voluntary action service, Pitsmoor Adventure playground .

Leadership capacity of the organisation in charge of co-implementing the activity:

Engagement of key stakeholders:

Dissemination in the local/regional/national media:

Conclusions of the Gathering:

As the title of our project says" Transforming the educational systems through social and political mobilisation" was the main need and conclusion of our Gathering. The Roma Women felt that it is crucial to raise our Roma Women profile in educational settings in order to challenge the stereotypes, raise aspirations for the community and schools but also to be a role model for our Roma young people.

Continuing to create events, opportunities for Roma and non Roma to come together in Roma and non Roma spaces was one of the key element of our discussions for transformation to happen.

The need to change and to transform educational institutions.

The need of educating ourselves on our rights

Challenge, be present to represent our community in academic, public, official spaces.

Continuing to do educational, mentoring inspiring activities with the Roma mums and girls

Educational visits to colleges, universities

support Roma women in applying for educational places at college, university

empower Roma Women through role model and dialogical conversations

Educate and promote our history culture and heritage , language (Roma and non Roma .

Working on preparing the Gathering, workshops and activities with the Roma mums and young girls , has enabled us to develop our organisational skills, get a better understanding of the work behind a Roma women gathering or an even, finding alternative ways of creating opportunities without a financial budget to cover the required aspects. We have found solutions from our community members who have volunteered to make the Gathering happen.

It was a real challenge for CYPF and the Roma women to do such a great event, despite having the allocated budget quite tight and only covering specific costs such as : food , venue ,printing and video.

We felt that compared to other countries the Roma families in the UK required interpreters to work in groups and the budget didn't cover this aspect.

The budget also didn't cover any fee for any of our workshop facilitators.

We were expected to have Roma women to volunteer to facilitate ,however, our Roma Women are still , unfortunately not at this level.

Of Course we are ambitious and we are hoping that our Roma women can help with the interpreting, facilitating fully and they have helped, however our Roma women are still not at that point where they are fully capable of translating accurately or to fully facilitate a workshop.

As Director for CYPF , I would say we shouldn't underestimate the need to allocate a proper budget for interpreting, facilitating workshops, preparing materials and admin for the workshops and Gathering and a higher budget for translating the final reports in home languages.

We also have learnt for our 2 nd Roma Women Gathering to try and find sponsorships and support from external agencies/organisations.

We have been extremely lucky to receive support in accessing the venue for the Gathering for free.

