



**ROMED**  
Médiation  
pour les Roms      Mediation  
for Roma



DDCP-YD/ETD (2017) 25

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***National training seminar on Roma youth participation  
with the focus on youth policies***

**REPORT**

3-7 November 2016  
Odessa, Ukraine

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# SUMMARY

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## **Background of the activity**

This training-seminar for the group of Roma and non-Roma young people who can act as multipliers in their communities and/or their regions was initiated by the Youth Department of the Council of Europe, in co-operation with the Ministry of Youth and Sport of Ukraine and Roma non-governmental partners.

In 2015, a first seminar was organized with Roma young people in Kiev. The meeting put the basis of a process of mobilization of Roma young people and for youth policies to become more aware of specific Roma youth issues. This training seminar was designed as the next step for support the participation and mobilization of young multipliers to work for combating antigypsyism and for supporting Roma young people's participation on the local level and in youth policy processes. The training seminar was held in Odessa, Ukraine, in November 2016 from 3 to 7. 25 young people participated in this event.

## **Aim and objectives of the Activity**

The seminar was aimed to support the mobilization of Roma youth and youth organizations from Ukraine for their involvement in mainstreaming Roma in the Ukrainian youth policy at national and local levels.

The objectives of the training seminar were to:

- consolidate and extend the process initiated in 2015 on mainstreaming Roma youth issues in the process of making the Ukrainian youth policy;
- strengthen Roma youth participation and cooperation between Roma and non-Roma youth organizations in Ukraine;
- identify and incorporate a Roma youth component as part of the current national and local youth policy structures and processes;
- encourage the participation of young Roma women in the processes of creating youth policy;
- develop personal and social competences of the participants and strengthen their self-organization;
- identify opportunities and processes at national and local level that are of importance for social and economic development for Roma youth;
- develop ideas and draft activities that will have the intention of securing the participation of Ukrainian Roma youth at national and local level processes and programmes, with the support of the Council of Europe's ROMED and Roma youth action plan.

## Organizers

**Organisers of the Activity.** The activity was co-organised by the Council of Europe Youth Department in cooperation with ROMED and Roma Women Fund “Chiricli”.

**Trainers:** Zola Kondur, Nikolai Burlutskii, Yaryna Borenko.

**Experts:** Mara Gergescu, Marius Jitea (Council of Europe), Iryna Beliyeva, Olesia Kravchenko (Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine), Olga Zhmurko (International Renaissance Foundation, Roma Programme).

## Participants

It was expected to bring together up to 30 participants, young multipliers from organization or community groups, for example from Roma youth organisations or youth organisations working with young Roma, from Ukraine, who can also act as multipliers, motivated to work in the field of participation of young Roma and for combating antigypsism, in position to multiply what they have learnt in the training course, e.g. by carrying out activities with young Roma.

### Profile of the group

24 participants took part in the training-course. Most of them were participants of the project activities on “Ternipe” NGO, which provides internships of young Roma in local self-governments and state administrations. 10 of participants came just after human rights training on discrimination organized within Ukrainian educational programme of Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union “Understanding Human Rights”. 5 participants were not affiliated to any organization.

Gender balance: 14 men and 10 women participated in the training.

## The Programme

The training-seminar created opportunities for participants to gain comprehensive understanding of new developments of youth policy reform in Ukraine, the concept of participation and inclusion in relevance to the situation of young Roma, to analyse realities of Roma participation and situation of young Roma from the perspective of international organization, and to improve they skills in developing Roma youth initiatives.

The issue of **youth policy** has been explored on the European and national level and included expert input on reform of youth policy in Ukraine in relevance to the Council of Europe and European Union standards. This topic also included analysing and reflecting on selected articles of Draft Law on Youth. The issue of **youth participation** was explored though the Hart’s Ladder of Participation and reflections on realities of young Roma, also from the perspective of **inclusion**. The training-seminar provided space for developing personal competences in the skills’ workshops, run together with the participants from regional “Mirrors” training, presentation of “No Hate Speech Movement”, as well as common work on follow-up activities.

# DAILY PROGRAMME

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## November 3

20:00-22:00

### Welcome evening

On the arrival day, the team of trainers suggested several ice breaking activities and getting-to-know-each-other activities, run together with the participants of regional training course on combating antigypsism.

## November 4

Session 1-2, 9:30 – 11:00, 11:30-13:00

### Official opening, expectations, introduction to the programme and team-building activities.

The programme of the TC started with short presentations of participants and guests and official opening. This part was organized together with the trainers and participants of regional TC on combating antigypsism. The participants were welcomed by Iryna Beliaeva, Head of the Youth Department of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, Olha Zhmurko, coordinator of Roma programme of International Renaissance Foundation, Marius Jitea from Council of Europe and Yaroslava Riznykova from Odessa Regional State Administration.

Afterwards the official opening continued with presenting the objectives of the course, exploring expectations of the participants and presentation of the programme. The participants shared their expectations against the course objectives. They expected: cooperation, new contacts and new partnerships, to elaborate realistic action plan for youth policy, to get information how to improve the life of Roma, to get inspiration for new projects, to elaborate common projects, new knowledge, practical skills, understanding of current situation, new topics to work with, to know more about human rights, skills to improve cooperation of Roma youth with local administration, new idea about youth activities, to get plan or road-map.

After discussing and exploring different expectations the participants were invited to see the programme of in relations to their expectations.

Session 3, 14:30 – 16:00

### Introduction to the youth policy reform in Ukraine

The aim of this session was to familiarize the participants with the newest developments in the youth policy reform in the country and to give the understanding on how young Roma can participate in this process. In the first part

of the session Iryna Bielayeva from the Ministry of Youth and Sports presented the Youth Policy Road Map and achievements, incl. Draft Law on Youth, Priorities of Youth Policy till 2020, State Programmes and planned measures. In the second part of the sessions the participants analysed the selected articles of Draft Law on Youth on national, regional and local youth councils, youth work, youth centres, and support structures for youth. Main insides of the session:

- the reform provides possibilities for organized Roma youth to participate in decision making process;
- the idea of youth centres and youth workers training programme have created conditions for participation of young Roma, as it is very important inclusion group;
- the informal youth groups are also recognized as youth policy actors, it also related to non-affiliated Roma groups;
- there is a need to have better organized Roma youth movement and good leadership.

Session 4, 16:30 – 18:00

### **Roma youth from the perspective of international organizations.**

This session was dedicated to the activities of Council of Europe and Roma Programme of International Renaissance Foundation.

Mara Georgescu from Youth Department of Council of Europe explained the role of Council of Europe, incl. support for youth work, training and educational support for young people, European Youth Foundation and the concept of Roma Youth Action Plan.

Olha Zhmurko from International Renaissance Foundation presented the main priorities of Roma Programme, small grants for Roma, Roma youth support tools and educational support for organizations.

## **November 5**

Session 1-2, 9:30 – 11:00, 11:30-13:00

### **Participation and citizenship. Participants realities and perspectives.**

Two morning sessions were aimed at exploring different levels of participation, sharing personal experience, analysing examples against different ranks of the "ladder of participation".

The session was dedicated to the levels of participation based on the **Ladder of Participation**. After short presentation of the concept of participation the participants were asked to remember one initiative/project they had participated and to explain the level of participation. They should discuss their experiences in small group and then to present conclusions in the plenary.

During discussions in the small groups some participants started to remember different situations in their life and those, when they were manipulated or played rather decorative role, e.g. involving in elections, used only for performance etc. In the plenary, they rather spoke about positive experiences, like organizing cultural events, participated in internships, organizing school and extracurricular activities for children etc. Main insides of the session:

- If there is a "young" Roma organization without big influence from "traditional" or "old" NGOs, then the young people take decision and cooperate among them;
- The individual small grants for Roma youth give possibilities to initiate and cooperate independently;
- There is a big hierarchy in Roma community, so the decision is taken following the "traditional" rules;
- There are some obstacles on the level of family and community.

In the second part of the session the participants the participants were asked to reflect on the challenges for participation of young Roma on the level of family, Roma community, Ukrainian society and NGOs.

The main insides:

- Roma families are more traditional and have negative attitude to the participation in general, often also to education. Traditionally the priority is to earn money, to have earlier marriage, to create family and to work for family (no space for doing something for society). The strictest rules are applied to girls.
- The same rules are often applying within the Roma NGO, but there are those, who support participation of young people. Sometimes young Roma organize their own organization or informal group. The requests of young Roma are often ignored.
- As a lot of Roma live in ghetto, it makes their life independent from other developments, so there are no preconditions for participation.
- There are a lot of hate speech in Ukrainian media and it's impossible to overcome this, as Roma people have no space for expression their opinion.
- Roma youth initiatives have no support from public budget, there is a lot of negative attitudes.

Session 3-4, 14:30 – 16:00, 16:30 – 18:00

## **Building partnership**

During these two sessions, the participants continued the discussion on how to cooperate and to resolve existed obstacles for participation of young Roma. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> session the participants debated on the participation of girls and women. By the end the big part male participants recognized, that they as family heads would never allow their women to go alone somewhere for training or conference. In general, the meaning of "participation" was replaced by "participation in some events". There was no clear conclusion in this part of session.

In the evening session, there was the need to calm down and to switch the topic again the participation in youth policy and the measures, which should be done.

Insides of the session:

- The young Roma, who decided for education, but not for early marriage, need more support, because they can be excluded from the community;
- When the Roma people get their ID and all documents for prove the property, they'll feel more secure in the society;
- There is the need to work on gender equality in education and employment;
- The cooperation with local authorities should be more efficient.

## November 6

Session 1, 9:30 – 11:00

### Presentation of No Hate Speech Movement

The session was aimed to present the NHSM as a tool for participation of young Roma. The participants got the "Bookmarks" Manual in Ukrainian and short introduction, how they can be involved into Campaign.

Session 2, 11:30 – 13:00

### Participation and inclusion of young Roma.

This session was redesigned, taking in account the atmosphere in the group. The participants were asked to think in small group and to create the list of any fields, they can act as Roma youth activists. In the second step, they should name the concrete idea they are able to implement in this field. Afterwards, all the participants were asked to confirm their ability to join the ideas of other.

The most popular ideas were:

1. To increase presence in social media (Facebook open group, which could be interested for non-Roma),
2. To elaborate questionnaire and conduct review on stereotypes
3. To organize sport activities for Roma children and youth
4. To have study visits within Ukraine
5. To organize neighbourhoods' meetings and discuss there "hot" topics
6. To have charity and cultural events
7. To establish phone hotline for Roma
8. To support participation of Roma in political life.

This session ends with the conclusion, that the ideas could be developed during follow-up sessions.



Sessions 3-4 14:30 – 16:00, 16:30 – 18:00

## Workshops.

These sessions were organized together with the team of the regional training. The participants participated in the workshops on human rights education, CoE educational tools, competence development, working with media, advocacy, motivation and planning.

## September 9

Session 1-2, 9:30 – 11:00, 11:30-13:00

## Follow up – Planning Initiatives.

The space for planning follow-up activities should allowed participants to work in small working groups according to their interest. Nevertheless, only 16 participants participated in this session, and only 12 of them stayed till the end.

There were 2 working groups.

*Group 1* wanted to work with the topic “sport and leisure”. There was a big discussion, of sport activities within the Roma community does refer to integration of Roma. Finally, the group agreed that to have systematic sport activity with media coverage can break stereotypes about Roma style of life. Till the end there was no clear idea and shared responsibilities. Some members of the groups left home in the middle of the session.

**Group 2** raised the idea to organize travelling exhibition about Roma titled “Roma are Ukrainians”. The aim of the initiative was to show the Roma personalities, which can provide alternative understanding about Roma communities, as it appears usual in the media. The group developed provisional action plan and shared responsibilities. Finally, it was agreed to have online-meeting till the end of November and share responsibilities.

After 2 weeks, the group of 10 participants, working on the project of photo-exhibition, organized the skype-conference and decided to develop the project. In the focus of the project there will be photo-stories of Roma people. The exhibition will be supported by short texts and facts, gained from online survey. There is planned to travel with the exhibition in different cities and to disseminate information via social media. The group has shared some responsibilities and is in the process of preparation. There is the understanding that the exhibition should be interesting for non-Roma visitors. The group is in the process of designing of the project.

# Evaluation (questionnaire)

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15 evaluation forms filled in

**1/ How far were your expectations met during the study session? (1 not at all – 10 fully)**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
				1	1		5	2	3

12 answers. Average rate: **8,25**

**Comments:**

1. in general, the expectations are fulfilled
2. a lot of information, which can be used in the projects
3. I haven't got responds to some questions (e.g. time management)

**2/ How much were the objectives of the study session achieved (1 not at all – 5 fully)**

<i>objectives</i>	<i>No of answers</i>	<i>average</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consolidate and extend the process initiated in 2015 on mainstreaming Roma youth issues in the process of making the Ukrainian youth policy;</li> </ul>	15	3,5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strengthen Roma youth participation and cooperation between Roma and non-Roma youth organisations in Ukraine;</li> </ul>	15	3,7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify and incorporate a Roma youth component as part of the current national and local youth policy structures and processes;</li> </ul>	13	3,9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• encourage the participation of young Roma women in the processes of creating youth policy;</li> </ul>	14	3,3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop personal and social competences of the participants and strengthen their self-organisation;</li> </ul>	14	4,1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify opportunities and processes at national and local level that are of importance for social and economic development for Roma youth;</li> </ul>	14	4,1

**Comments:**

- 1/ in reality Roma youth is in focus of youth policy
- 2/ I didn't get examples on cooperation of Roma and non-Roma organizations
- 3/ it was not enough, but very important

**3/What are the main things you take with you back home from this seminar (learning, ideas, partners...)? Please specify.**

10 answers:

- 1/ skills development workshop was helpful for understanding how to plan the project;
- 2/ my personal project idea;
- 3/ workshop on motivation and session “participation of young Roma in society”;
- 4/ practical knowledge and cooperation with Roma leaders;
- 5/ development of the project;
- 6/ a lot of interesting people, if you have a wish, you can do everything you want;
- 7/ experience in communication with Roma people with various social backgrounds, information about legal provision;
- 8/ workshops were interesting;
- 9/ new knowledge and ideas;
- 10/ I’m inspired about new ideas, knowledge and perspectives.

**4/ How satisfied are you about the following aspects (1 not at all – 5 fully satisfied)**

Programme and flow of the study session		4,5
Learning		4,2
Group atmosphere		4,4
The logistics (meeting rooms, meals, rooms)		4,8
Overall organisation of the event		4,7

Please explain your choice:

3 answers:

- 1/ participants were not organized, there were stupid discussions without any result or solution
- 2/everything, you can do, can be done better
- 3/I liked everything

**- What sessions were the most useful for you? Why?**

6 answers:

- 1/ everyone;
- 2/ workshop;
- 3/ youth policy development;
- 4/ how to cooperate with authorities (about the Ministry), discussion about values, workshops, small groups’ work;
- 5/ it was interesting to realize the meaning of “participation”;
- 6/ workshop.

- **What sessions were the least useful for you? Why?**

7 answers:

- 1/ everything was useful;
- 2/ - ;
- 3/ advocacy workshop;
- 4/ everything was good;
- 5/ youth participation;
- 6/ session on partnership, because I'm not experienced in this;
- 7/ planning was very important.

- **What are you going to do with what you take back home? What are you going to do to follow up on this seminar?**

7 answers:

- 1/ I will speak with the Roma in my city;
- 2/ we will work on our follow up idea;
- 3/ I will work on the project of our follow up group;
- 4/ support for Roma youth and cooperation with NGO;
- 5/ I will learn;
- 6/ I will participate in project we have developed here;
- 7/ how to motivate young people, but it was without good examples;
- 8/ I want to participate in project, which was created during this training;
- 9/ I will write the project on Roma youth activation in my city;
- 10/ I will apply new skills in my project.

**Anything else that you would like to add**

5 answers:

- 1/ more trainings like this for Roma youth
- 2/ it was very good, I wish that we conduct things like this alone with your supervision!
- 3/ I will support Roma rights and peace keeping activities
- 4/ I'm satisfied
- 5/ It was very important for Roma youth

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FOLLOW UP

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## Conclusions on perception of the training

1/ About 15 participants of the training are participating together in various events and have very strong vision, how the training should do. Mostly there are simplified project management trainings based on 20-years old methodology. A lot of them understand training a training on project management.

2/ As result they are not ready to accept some "trendy" things as youth activism, inclusion measures, working with social media and with opinion makers like bloggers, activists, journalists etc.

3/ The participants are aware on project management as exercise during training, but not as design of their own activity, which they are doing chaotically or under supervision of "older" leaders.

## Competence development area recommended

1/ **Team work and leadership** – there are a lot of interesting individual activities carried out by young Roma, but, as some of them recognized, they are often alone and don't feel support of others. There is the lack of skills for collaborative work and designing common activities. It also refers to the cooperation with non-Roma.

2/ **Policy making and cross-sectorial dimension** – the participants expressed the interest to the participation in policy making in general, but there was no space to go deeper in this topic. As usual they understand policy making as participation in various councils and committees, accessible for more experienced people.

3/ **Creative thinking, tools&kits** – as most of participants possess knowledge and basic skills of project management, there is a lack of ability to combine various tools, to find own independent solution, to make simple things attractive and to gain knowledge from alternative sources. There is the need to improve skill of sharing experience and exchange of best practices.

4/ **Working with the media and opinion makers** - it's the lack of knowledge on how the policy is functioning, but from other way there is the need to develop ability to have better orientation in media landscape and cooperation with opinion makers. Nevertheless, the participants could refer to hate speech and other cases of discrimination, but it is difficult for them to map stakeholders, who express positive or/and neutral attitude to the Roma.

5/ As so far there is the need to improve competences in **intercultural communication and cultural awareness** in the meaning of: how to present own culture and community in intercultural environment; how to switch from the neglect to positive perception; how establish dialogue in "non-friendly" environment etc.

## Recommendations for Roma youth work

Roma youth groups, who want to develop their initiatives, need coaching for elaborating ideas, using various tools and finding common solutions. On the other hand, Roma organizations and groups should identify strategic points to clarify their vision on working with young people.

The general developments of youth work and youth activism may be conflicted with the expectation and methodology of Roma NGO's work with young people. Therefore, there is the need to train young Roma as facilitators of youth initiatives and to open community for new tools and methods.

In case if the Roma NGOs, who are the main actors for working with Roma in Ukraine, do not accept any participation from the side of non-Roma structures or individuals, there is the need to discuss the issue of cooperation and communication with different stakeholders and to reach the common understanding on the needs and perspectives. Nevertheless, the interests and aspirations of young Roma should be not damaged in this process.

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