

# Roma Women Research



- **Coordination:** KAMIRA Federation
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# Roma Women Research

- *Critical Communicative Methodology*
- Qualitative research
- Research instruments: semi- structured interviews and focus groups
- *Ukraine, Poland, Finland, “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” & Spain*
- topics: education, employment, health, generational changes, expectations, gender-based violence, discrimination
- Women belonged to three segments of population by ages (17-30; 31-45; 45 and older)

# Roma Women Research

## General objectives

- To get an inside of the Roma Women situation segregated per three age generations
- To propose future actions for the key national stakeholders based on the urgent needs found
- To elaborate on the prior diagnosis of the work on the design of a strategy in accordance with the Phenjalipe's objectives

# Findings: Ukraine

## Education

- Roma girls are usually ignored by teachers and classmates
- Bullying and fights
- Segregation: directors do not accept Roma girls in good schools
- Many Roma girls cannot go to school due to lack of ID and medical documents

# Findings: Ukraine

## Health

- Lack of passports
- Low income
- Rude attitude of doctors to Roma women and girls
- Lack of medical cards
- Lack of children injection cards
- Lack of children birth certificates
- Roma families live in very poor conditions, their houses are slums without neither water nor electricity

# Findings: Ukraine

## Gender Violence

- They have got married at early age
- Might suffer violence at home
- It is forbidden to complain about it
- Roma women normalise violence

# Findings: Ukraine

## Discrimination

- Roma women faced discrimination in schools, in hospitals, social departments and administrations
- First year age group 17-30 years old cannot give birth to children in hospitals
- Hospitals mostly refuse to provide health services to Roma due to lack of passports or discrimination
- Mostly doctors are afraid of Roma's curses

# Findings: Poland

## Education

- Segregation: middle schools and specific Roma classes
- Teachers humiliate Roma students, they treat them "from above"
- A low percentage of Roma children benefiting from early childhood education
- Early school leaving, mainly by Roma girls



# Findings: Poland

## Health

- They don't have health insurance, so there is no possibility of free treatment
- Medicines are really expensive
- It's difficult for them to get medical specialists
- Poverty: poor housing conditions where Roma are exposed to overcrowding & infections
- Early parenthood

# Findings: Poland

## Gender Violence

- Roma culture imposes many restrictions on women
- They have no freedom, their life oscillates mainly around family and home
- It's not unusual to find domestic violence within Roma community. It's socially acceptable
- Appeal to a public service of prevention is also limited due to cultural taboos
- Roma traditional groups cannot report their GV cases to public services non-Roma

# Findings: Poland

## Discrimination

- Roma in Poland are exposed to discrimination at every stage of life by the majority of society, from the place of residence, from public institutions, i.e. health care, education or employment

# Findings: “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”

## Education

- If a girl becomes pregnant, she has to dedicate her life to the family and raising the children, which implies ending the education process

## Employment

- For Roma women it is almost impossible to find a job : low education and discrimination as main reasons.

# Findings: “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”

## Health

- High prices of medicines
- Roma children and women whose birth is not registered do not have legal identity, so do not have the right of health insurance
- Roma people are treated unequally and discriminated on financial grounds

# Findings: “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”

## Gender Violence

- Situation has improved though still cases of domestic violence
- Roma women are more independent in decision making
- Roma women face financial obstacles and family difficulties due to the stigma
- Patriarchal family in which the woman “has to” listen her husband and endure violence

# Findings: Finland

## Education

- Remains racism and prejudices towards Roma

## Health

- Even though health services are available to all citizens, access to healthcare and seeking treatment is not always easy for Roma
- It is not unusual that Roma people face discrimination or underrating their problems when seeking for healthcare

## Discrimination

- It is almost everywhere

# Findings: Finland

## Gender Violence

- The honor of the family and kin are to be respected and protected: hiding gender-based violence
- In the Finnish Roma community, sensitive private problems are not considered as appropriate discussion topics
- A woman who chooses to talk about violence, puts her kin in a challenging situation, in which the problem extends to touch not only her and her spouse, but the whole kinship network



# Findings: Spain

## Education

- Existence of “ghetto” schools, whose students are mostly Roma and immigrants

## Health

- Very early pregnancy and births

## Discrimination

- Most women interviewed recognize having been victims of discrimination
- They consider themselves victims of a type of mistreatment that influences their social exclusion, personal identity and self-esteem

# Findings: Spain

## Gender Violence

- Aspects such as submission to male authority or prominent sexual division of work are important in the constitution of their identity
- Gender-based violence is a common problem in Spain: Normalisation of the violence
- Roma women face a specific situation:
  - Fear of the family's reaction (Family pressure and community pressure)
  - The burden of tradition falls mainly on Roma women
- The situation of the Roma people who lives under social exclusion is getting worse: raising of early marriages

# Conclusions

Shared issues in all the participating countries:

- Roma people live in unequal social situations, it's common to find social exclusion
- Lack of education
- Difficulties to be employed: due to discrimination and lack of education
- Worse health
- Early marriages, early parenthood
- Women more vulnerable (family/community pressure + strong gender roles)
- Remains discrimination and prejudices in all social spheres
- GV taboo topic + their decisions involve their family
- Within Roma communities, strong patriarchal system
- GV largely invisible phenomenon; sensitive issues like Roma identity and gender roles get mixed