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ROMA YOUTH ACADEMY

FEASIBILITY STUDY OF THE DRAFT CONCEPT

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April 2017

Feasibility study of the draft concept of the Roma Youth Academy project of the Council of Europe's Youth Department

Final study report, April 2017, by Yael Ohana, consultant

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The idea of a Roma Youth Academy (RYA) emerged from discussions in the context of the Council of Europe Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers (2016-2019)[1] and has been further developed under the new Roma Youth Action Plan being implemented by the Youth Department.[2] Specifically, RYA has been proposed as an intervention to strengthen the self-organisation of young Roma and Travellers and their participation in society, which is a priority for the Council of Europe's work on Roma and youth.

RYA is proposed as a consolidated response to the challenges faced by Roma youth organisations and youth workers attempting to promote the participation and empowerment of young Roma. It is expected that an effective intervention in this direction will have positive effects on the capacity of young Roma, their organisations and initiatives to combat and overcome the consequences of antigypsysim and to contribute constructively to the social inclusion of young Roma.

Envisaged as a long term education and support programme, the idea is that RYA will empower Roma youth organisations, activists and youth workers in mobilising other Roma youth in their communities around their own issues and concerns. In an effort to bridge persistent gaps between institutional interventions supporting Roma youth participation and the realities of those working for and with youth at the front lines in Roma communities, it is proposed that RYA focus on enhancing competence for community leadership, self-organisation of youth initiatives and organisations, and pride in Roma culture, language and history.

The concept for the Roma Youth Academy states that its aim is to:

> *'… enhance the role of Roma youth leaders in democratic leadership processes, self-organisation of communities and to support the next generation of youth leaders to be more confident and in tune with their cultural, linguistic and historical backgrounds.'*[3]

Four interrelated objectives are associated with this aim:

- strengthen the role and sustainability of Roma youth organisations by training and supporting Roma youth leaders and multipliers;
- strengthen the role of Roma youth leaders and youth workers as agents of community and social change at the local and national levels;
- support anti-discrimination work with a particular focus on combating antigypsyism;
- enhance the visibility of Roma youth issues in national youth policies and structures, especially in countries where Roma youth is less present.

This study presents three proposals or scenarios for the structure, programme elements and priorities for a Roma Youth Academy considering the above aim and objectives. The three scenarios are:

- Scenario 1: A maximalist scenario with direct outreach to 300 participant;
- Scenario 2: An optimal scenario with direct outreach to 200 participants and
- Scenario 3: A minimalist scenario with direct outreach to 100 participants and restricted budgetary options.

As a basis for the presentation of these scenarios, the feasibility study combines a critical analysis of the initial concept for the Roma Youth Academy, against research and evaluation evidence about the effectiveness of previous interventions to enhance Roma youth participation conducted by both the Council of Europe and other institutions and evidence of the needs of Roma youth organisations and activists in the development of their grassroots strategies. Furthermore, it considers the policy context

[1] https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805c5a1d

[2] http://www.coe.int/en/web/youth-roma/home

[3] Youth Department Secretariat, Draft Concept Paper on the Roma Youth Academy: Supporting the emergence of a new generation of Roma youth leaders and for strengthening Roma youth participation and the sustainability of Roma youth organisations, October 2016, online at: http://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016806b95f6.

within which Roma rights and Roma youth issues are beginning to be taken more seriously, at the national and European levels. This evidence points to the remaining structural barriers to participation faced by Roma youth and the challenges Roma youth and community NGOs face in attempting to address these sustainably, concluding that any new Roma Youth Academy must be a more complex and long term intervention combining measures for organisational and personal professional development, and must go beyond the specific non-formal education training frameworks that the Youth Department of the Council of Europe has until now favoured.

Overall, in terms of outcomes and impacts, we expect that these three scenarios can deliver traction on and progress on the different components of the Roma Youth Academy's aims and objectives, although necessarily to different extents. The maximalist scenario will necessarily guarantee a certain depth and scale of impact that the minimalist scenario cannot in the same time period, just by virtue of the numbers of young people foreseen to participate. All the same, all the components of the aim are covered by each of the scenarios, from leadership competence to organisational development, from Roma youth participation to community development, from generic approaches to addressing structural barriers to participation to specific Roma cultural approaches, and so on.

Specifically we can expect the following outcomes irrespective of what:
- improved organisational and resource capacity of a considerable number of Roma youth and community organisations;
- training of a new generation of Roma youth activists;
- the development and implementation of a considerable number of youth projects and community youth participation strategies;
- improved visibility for specific Roma youth issues in policy and advocacy frameworks;
- in the long run, more quality opportunities for young Roma to actively participate in initiatives relevant to the betterment of their and the whole community and to take their own initiatives as well.

The programmes implied by the scenarios presented will, however, require significant resources, capacity and probably most important of all, political will among and partnership with a wide range of organisations and institutions concerned with Roma rights, and even beyond those already nominally engaged in the Roma Youth Action Plan. There are some make or break conditions for a Roma Youth Academy so conceived, irrespective of the scenario chosen for further development, to succeed. These are:
- an extended time frame for impact to emerge and for the dynamics of how that impact is achieved to be studied and understood;
- the local embedding of the action to ensure local impact;
- a core programme that extends beyond training, to ensure wider social impacts are accrued, especially regarding social and community development;
- sufficient and adequate financial and human resources - fast and cheap is rarely good, even if the demand tends to be for the former. These programmes all require a lot of resources;
- the involvement of a wide range of supporting stakeholders from local through European level, including national authorities responsible for youth and Roma integration.

Background to the Roma Youth Academy

The idea of a Roma Youth Academy (RYA) emerged from discussions in the context of the Council of Europe Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers (2016-2019)[4] and has been further developed under the new Roma Youth Action Plan being implemented by the Youth Department.[5] Specifically, RYA has been proposed as an intervention to strengthen the self-organisation of young Roma and Travellers and their participation in society, which is a priority for the Council of Europe's work on Roma and youth.

RYA is proposed as a consolidated response to the challenges faced by Roma youth organisations and youth workers attempting to promote the participation and empowerment of young Roma. It is expected that an effective intervention in this direction will have positive effects on the capacity of young Roma, their organisations and initiatives to combat and overcome the consequences of antigypsysim and to contribute constructively to the social inclusion of young Roma.

Envisaged as a long term education and support programme, the idea is that RYA will empower Roma youth organisations, activists and youth workers in mobilising other Roma youth in their communities around their own issues and concerns. In an effort to bridge persistent gaps between institutional interventions supporting Roma youth participation and the realities of those working for and with youth at the front lines in Roma communities, it is proposed that RYA focus on enhancing competence for community leadership, self-organisation of youth initiatives and organisations, and pride in Roma culture, language and history.

Rationale for and remit of the feasibility study

The Youth Department is aware that many interventions to support the emergence of Roma civic (youth) leadership and to improve Roma youth participation have been undertaken over the approx. 20 years since the emergence of a discrete field of work in the area of Roma rights promotion in Europe. While a specific youth agenda in the Roma rights field has emerged more recently with the elaboration of RYAP, capacity building, especially of symbolic elites (journalists, civic activists, lawyers, other qualified professionals) have more often than not focused on young people during their studies and in their transitions to full careers. Not all these initiatives have been evaluated to the same extent, and there has to date been no comprehensive mapping of what has been done by the different institutions active in this field, and with which effects and impacts on Roma youth participation and empowerment for civic leadership or community activism.

In view of its ambitions to establish a Roma Youth Academy as a long term intervention to support Roma youth participation more effectively than until now has been possible, the Youth Department believes the time has come to develop an in depth understanding of the current capacity development and support offer, the impact of relevant offers of its own and other institutions and actors active in the field, and the current needs of Roma youth for support and leadership development in the area of youth participation and empowerment.

In so doing, the Youth Department wishes to establish an evidence-informed understanding of:

- the need for a Roma Youth Academy;
- the potential added value of such an initiative (for beneficiary groups and communities, especially);
- the desired and feasible impacts of a Roma Youth Academy in the area of Roma youth participation and empowerment;

[4] https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805c5a1d

[5] http://www.coe.int/en/web/youth-roma/home

- necessary and desired amendments or improvements to the concept of the Roma Youth Academy that was initially presented and is currently under discussion and further development inside the Council of Europe.

Against this backdrop, the feasibility study has been initiated to:
- document needs identified in the field for capacity development and support to Roma youth participation;
- 'map' existing offers and study some key examples of good practice in more detail with a view to understanding their key features that delivered positive impacts for Roma youth participation;
- and to sketch out several scenarios for what a Roma Youth Academy could look like in practice.

The information contained in this feasibility study has been collected using several information gathering activities, as follows:

Which activity was done?		Who was involved?
Document review	A wide range of documentation including programme presentations, evaluations and impact studies about a variety of Council of Europe and other institutional programmes were reviewed. Specifically, - Council of Europe interventions - for example RYAP, ROMED, Enter!, Schools of Political Studies; - Other institutional interventions - OSF, OSCE/ODIHR, REF, NDI, CEU; - Civil society interventions - especially the work of the Roma Youth Networks.	The choice of documentation was discussed with the Secretariat of RYAP. The review was conducted by the consultant.
Consultative Meeting	The Consultative Meeting was held in the European Youth Centre Budapest to review the opportunity, the need and the modalities of for implementation of the Roma Youth Academy and to associate other stakeholders, namely Roma youth organisations and other supporting institutions in the Roma rights field, to this process. Its specific objectives were the following: - To consult partners and stakeholders about the relevance and role of the Roma Youth Academy to support Roma youth participation and inclusion, and specifically the sustainability of Roma youth organisations - To review and adjust the concept of the Roma Youth Academy and to collect ideas regarding its future development and implementation - To identify processes, resources and partners interested in cooperating to the setting up of the Roma Youth Academy, especially its pilot phase (2017-2018).	22 people who represented various international, national and local institutions, organisations and networks, Roma youth activists, youth workers and trainers, and representatives of the statutory bodies in the Youth Department of the Council of Europe.
'Conversations'	Conversations were held with the staff of different institutions to find out more about their initiatives and impacts, and in view of the preparation of the case studies.	Roma Education Fund re: Romaversitas, Roma Initiatives Office of OSF re: Barvalipe, NDI, re: Roma Regional Support Initiative
Discussions with the Council of Europe	Several briefing and clarification discussions	Denis Durmish Rui Gomes

secretariat		

The majority of the work for the study was carried out in November and December 2016, with drafting, consultations and revisions taking place in January - March 2017. This feasibility study makes no claim to being a scientific research document, even if it has been conducted in respect of basic principles of academic research. This report is a synthesis of the information collected and studied. It has been developed with a strategic focus and with the practicality of recommendations in mind.

CHAPTER 1: THE ROMA YOUTH ACADEMY INITIATIVE: CONTEXT, RATIONALE, CONCEPT

The Roma Youth Academy - Context

A lot of time, resources, energy and increasingly political will on the part of not only development and philanthropic actors, but of mainstream political stakeholders, have been invested in individual and organisational capacity building for Roma youth and community leadership. When I began researching the feasibility study I was worried that I would not have enough information at my disposal to make any solidly grounded recommendations about what works and does not work in Roma youth participation and empowerment. Yet, contrary to this initial and somewhat stereotypical belief, it would appear that the years of institutional investment have paid off, at least in one respect. There is a surprisingly impressive paper trail about what has been done. And the community of practice working in the field, a large part of which is now Roma itself, knows very well what makes the best impact at the community level. So, even though it cannot claim to be comprehensive, the feasibility study has attempted to bring together relevant perspectives on this complex of objectives, paying particular attention to any that have had positive impacts for Roma youth participation and the effectiveness and sustainable community development action of Roma youth organisations.

a) Capacity development for Roma youth empowerment and participation?

Table 1: Overview of Programmes, which is to be found in **Appendix 1** to this report, provides an overview of the features of the programmes of a variety of institutions that support Roma young people in different ways, with specific reference to components relevant to young people's empowerment and participation.

These programmes are diverse and take a variety of approaches. Certainly the table is not exhaustive. Nevertheless, it covers the programmes of the main actors that acknowledge the need for specific investment in Roma youth and several others whose beneficiary groups are to a large extent made up of young people.

Based on the information available and included in this table we can observe several categories of offer:

- Roma youth-specific offers aiming to strengthen youth leaders, youth organisations and the youth movement on youth participation and empowerment, but not exclusively;
- Offers with a focus on social inclusion, with target groups from marginalised communities including Roma young people but not exclusively;
- Offers focusing on capacity building with the aim of creating leadership cadres for communities, political parties and NGOs, focusing primarily on individual leadership qualities and potential as a vehicle for strengthening organisational structures;
- Capacity building for personal and academic development of individuals including formal education support programmes, fellowships, scholarships and programmes to support for educational attainment and graduation;
- Professional development and employability related programmes, including especially internship programmes.

Scale

We do not dispose of comprehensive figures for the number of young Roma that have benefited from each of the discrete programmes that have been implemented, and we cannot assess the geographical and time multiplication effect in space and over time, we do have some clues as to the scale of intervention. For example, Phase 1 of RYAP (approx. 5 years), which focused extensively on strengthening the Roma youth movement and on promoting Roma youth participation has reached approx. 4,500 direct participants across all member states of the Council of Europe, most of which took part in some kind of educational intervention, and the majority of which self-identify as Roma.[6] Barvalipe, the Roma pride component of OSF's work to support Roma[7], focuses on Roma graduates and supports the development of these to engage in public leadership through locally embedded Barvalipe Schools and a variety of international activities and fellowships. To date, Barvalipe Schools have contributed to the development of approximately 150 Roma public leaders.[8]
Through its Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) engages in activities to counter the discrimination and exclusion that young people from Roma and Sinti communities face in many OSCE countries. It has organised several training activities and a specialised conference on Roma youth activism, participation and security issues, and it has published reports authored by young Roma scholars themselves, involving altogether several hundred young Roma. The OSCE has also organised regular calls for grant applications, which have attracted significant attention from Roma youth initiatives in eligible countries.[9] The National Democratic Institute (NDI), with financial support from the National Endowment for Democracy, considers Roma youth to be a transversal issue for its Regional Roma Programme, which supports the emergence of a new generation of Roma political leaders and has reached over 3000 Roma leaders since its inception, many of which are young.[10]

If we consider the academic support and scholarship programmes, whose focus is certainly not primarily Roma youth participation, but which do necessarily contribute to the social capital and mobility of young Roma, and therefore to their empowerment and capacity for engaging in civic or community related goals, the scale of investment is even more significant. To provide an indication of scale, in 2015 alone, REF grantees worked in 369 municipalities, across 13 countries, serving 32,466 Roma children and students and 43,279 parents. Of these 4,383 students from eight countries received secondary school scholarships and school-based mentoring, and 2,868 students in tertiary education programs received grant support, mentoring and skills training. A further 1,777 beneficiaries were in-service teaching professionals.[11] Romaversitas, also supported by REF, helps Roma students to enter, remain in and graduate higher education. It is now operating in 8 countries through 15 academic support centres with (at the time of writing in December 2016) approx. 600 students enrolled for academic year 2016/2017. Furthermore, a total of approx. 1900 students have benefited from the work of the Romaversitas programme since its inception in Hungary in 2001.

Taken together the number of interventions, the number of years of engagement, the growth in interest from national and local political stakeholders in this theme over time, the number of institutions and donors involved, the scale of resources brought to bear (even just in monetary terms) have by no means been insignificant, and neither has the number of young Roma individuals, initiatives and even youth organisations that have been supported and that have improved the scale of their action, the reach and quality of their work with young Roma.

Approach

In terms of approach, I can observe two main directions in the literature I have consulted.

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[6] https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016805a9ad7

[7] https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/barvalipe-building-roma-pride

[8] Source: Conversation with Barvalipe Staff at the Roma Initiatives Office of the Open Society Foundations, 8 February 2017.

[9] http://www.osce.org/odihr/roma-and-sinti

[10] https://www.ndi.org/regional-roma-initiative

[11] https://www.romaeducationfund.hu/sites/default/files/publications/ref_strategy_2015-2020_web.pdf.

The first is a more **'personal development' oriented approach**, which rightly assumes that the social condition of the individual, their family and their community has a direct impact on their participation competence and capacity, and on their ability to participate. Gaps in social capital as concerns especially education are seen as holding both individuals and communities back. Hence, investment is made in the individual's capacity to overcome such gaps, and to lead other members of the community in rectifying their common situation by acting as role models and by changing systems from the inside (education, political parties, governance institutions, etc). The assumption is that the greater the number of such individuals marching through the establishment, the greater the likelihood of achieving community development and the eradication of the inequalities and discrimination experienced by a great number of Roma. It would appear from the materials consulted, that at least historically, this has been the approach that received greatest priority.

The **second approach is more 'collective'** in nature. It proposes that while indeed individuals are key and require social capital to change their situations and the situations of others, the assumption that individuals can/will multiply and act on what they learned or have gained in terms of social capital for the benefit of their communities is not realistic. This approach proposes that investments in individuals will not achieve significant impact on community development if the individual is not grounded and embedded in a collective or constituency of some kind, and if relevant measures are not in place to support the motivation of the individual and its collective to act. This approach has, therefore, tended to prioritise investment in initiatives and organisations, assuming that infrastructure and organisational development will ensure the support measures leading individuals need to act, and the democratic reproduction of leadership.

It should be noted that neither of these approaches has been developed specifically in view of the situation of Roma or of Roma youth for that matter. Rather, they are common in all parts of the development and democratisation community of practice globally. In my opinion, this is a significant factor of the challenge to make a Roma Youth Academy relevant and impactful. It would appear that in isolation, neither of these approaches has managed to deliver the level and scale of change in the Roma community that would satisfy the institutional partners engaged in this field and the leadership of the broader Roma community, irrespective of the level of investment that has been made in each.

Quality

Non-formal education appears to cut across the two approaches discussed, and is used in many of the initiatives listed in the table. Nevertheless, it appears to me that it is more common in the 'collective' approach, with formal educational interventions such as Scholarships being more common in the first, individual approach. As can be observed from the list of measures outlined in the table, a significant number of the explicit capacity building measures consider themselves to be 'non-formal education' programmes, even if they do not always use this specific terminology. Over many years, the community of practice around non-formal education has been developing its own understanding of what it does.[12]

Key characteristics of non-formal education and non-formal learning have been identified, as follows:

- *Value-driven:* Non-formal education serves the 'higher' purposes of value development;

[12] One generic definition current in the Youth Department of the Council of Europe understands non-formal education as a process in which learning is '… purposive, but voluntary, learning that takes place in a diverse range of environments and situations for which teaching/training and learning is not necessarily their sole or main activity. These environments and situations may be intermittent or transitory, and the activities or courses that take place may be staffed by professional learning facilitators or by volunteers. The activities and courses are planned, but are seldom structured by conventional rhythms or curriculum subjects. Non-formal learning/education is often structured, based on learning objectives, learning time and specific learning support and it is intentional. It typically does not lead to certification, but in an increasing number of cases, certificates are delivered, leading to a better recognition of the individual learning outcome.' Source: Chisholm, L. (2005): Bridges for Recognition Cheat Sheet: Proceedings of the SALTO Bridges for Recognition: Promoting Recognition of Youth Work across Europe, Leuven-Louvain and Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the Field of Youth (2011): Pathways 2.0 towards recognition of non-formal learning/education and of youth work in Europe, Strasbourg.

- *Learner-centred:* Non-formal education tries to serve key needs and aspirations of its learners, as identified by the learners themselves;
- *Voluntary:* Non-formal education is never obligatory, and relies on the voluntary participation of the learner (not so much in the sense of attendance, but in the sense of motivation);
- *Self-reflective and critical:* Non-formal education does its best to live up to its mission and reflects on how it is doing that regularly;
- *Relational:* Non-formal education seeks authentic communication with and between learners, and to contribute to developing and sustaining relationships;
- *Developmental:* Non-formal education aims at the personal, social and ethical development of the learner.

We have quite some information at our disposal about the impacts of non-formal education, especially on individuals. There are also some evaluations of Roma and youth specific non-formal education interventions, including Enter!, RoMed and some other interventions under RYAP. These show that because of the developmental ethos inherent to non-formal education, especially its self-reflective, critical and relational character, that it can be a vehicle for change - especially change in individual persons and the immediate organisational context over which they themselves have an influence. In relation to Roma young people, it is especially these characteristics of the experience of learning that non-formal education offers which are important. More often than not, their experience in non-formal education is diametrically opposed to the experiences they have had in formal education, a truly emancipating and empowering experiences in comparison to one of imposed segregation, discrimination and failure.

It is also common for the quality of non-formal educational offers to be judged based on their impacts beyond the individual learner. This can be to some extent justified, because the developmental ethos of non-formal education is supposed to motivate and capacitate action on the part of the learner. Indeed, the table above testifies to the extent this is the case for Roma youth specific initiatives in capacity building and support for organisational development. Changes in the community and in the wider society regarding specific social and cultural development indicators like, for example, improved employment results, lower poverty rates, and less discrimination are explicitly mentioned expected outcomes of several of the initiatives included. That the bar has not been moved more visibly on such development indicators as a result of the investment made so far appears to be a factor of some disappointment for some key stakeholders of the Roma rights sector. This feasibility study takes a different view and will attempt to show that the question of realistic and unrealistic expectations is playing a significant role in this relation. The planning for a Roma Youth Academy needs to explicitly confront such expectations.

b) Situation of Roma youth and Roma youth participation in Europe

This feasibility study is not the place for an exhaustive analysis of the situation of Roma youth or even of the situation of Roma youth participation. Indeed, it has to be admitted that we know significantly more about the former than about the latter. Nevertheless, an accurate assessment of both are essential for pitching a proposal for a Roma Youth Academy that is timely, relevant to real needs and that can meet its chosen objectives. Hence, in this section we will try to lay out some considerations that appear in the literature at our disposal, limited as it is. Certainly, a point for further consideration in the development of the Roma Youth Academy would be how to establish and maintain an adequate evidence base regarding Roma youth participation and empowerment, on the basis of which RYA's long term impact can be assessed. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

Situation of Roma Youth

It is obvious that the situation of Roma young people is worse than that of their non-Roma peers in several key respects, which is saying a lot when one considers the youth employment and livelihoods situation of many countries across Europe with a significant Roma population, including those already in the European Union. The OSCE Contact Point on Roma and Sinti[13] has developed an infographic

[13] http://www.osce.org/odihr/roma-and-sinti

that clearly visualises the disproportionate disadvantage experienced by Roma youth in comparison to their non-Roma peers when it comes to education, employment and discrimination.

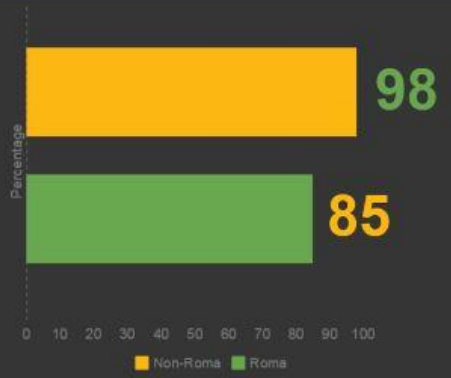
CLOSING THE GAP

ROMA & SINTI YOUTH

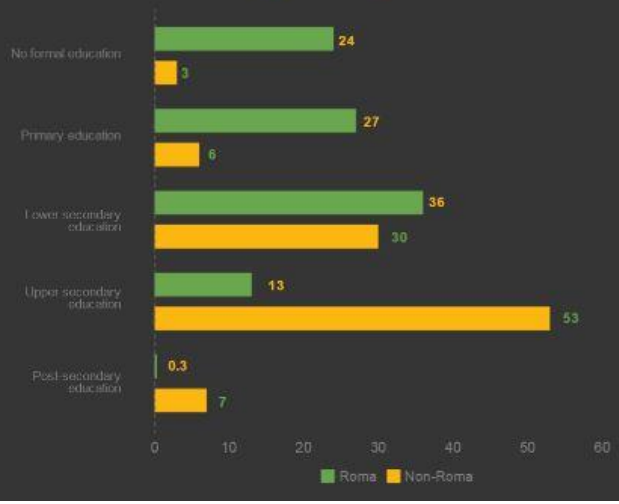
Compared to their peers, Roma and Sinti youth are disproportionately disadvantaged. OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) published a report on the status of Roma and Sinti youth to illustrate the discrepancy between Roma and non-Roma.

EDUCATION

Literacy rates among Roma and non-Roma youth (%)

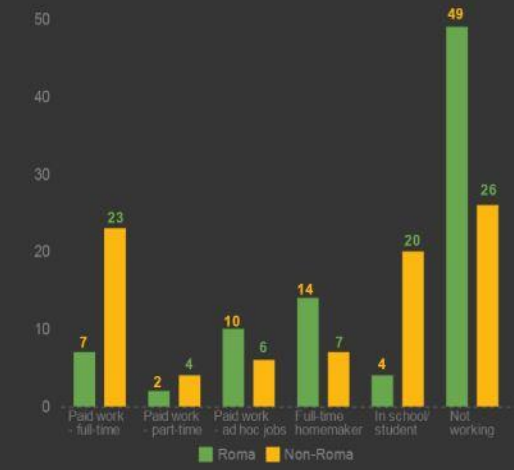


Highest levels of education among Roma and non-Roma youth (%)

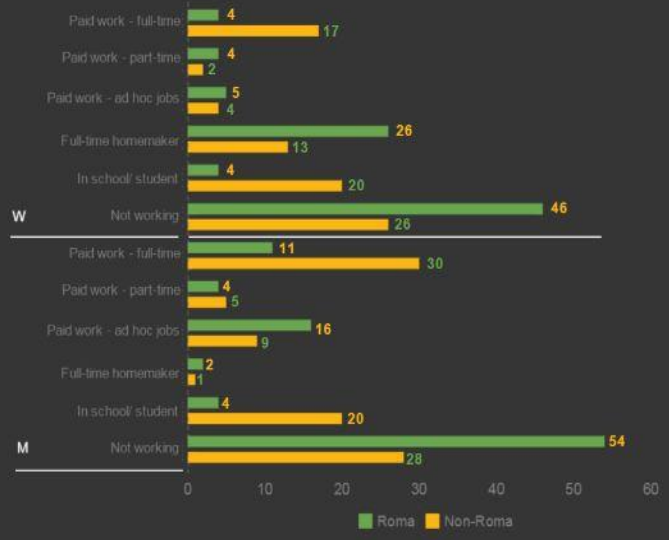


EMPLOYMENT

Activity status of Roma and non-Roma youth (%)



Activity status of Roma and non-Roma youth by sex (%)



The graphs presented in this visual are from the ODIHR report "Activism, Participation and Security among Roma and Sinti Youth". The Roma youth data is based on the dataset of the UNDP/WB/EC Regional Roma Survey 2011, covering 12 countries in Central and South-Eastern Europe. For more information, please visit http://www.osce.org/odihr/187861.

Source: https://www.osce.org/odihr/195516?download=true

The Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey (EU-MIDIS II) on Roma published by the Fundamental Rights Agency underscore these data. The Selected findings point to significant disadvantages of Roma in Europe, including some specific data on the situation of Roma children and youth in regard of their social conditions, labour market integration and educational chances. From these data it is clear that Roma youth are more likely to face significant barriers in their transitions to full adult autonomy and active working life as a result of socio-economic disadvantage and discrimination in comparison to their non-Roma peers.14 Beyond the development and inclusion dilemmas these data pose to the community of practice working on Roma rights, they also highlight the extent to which any long term educational initiative to promote Roma youth participation will have to grapple with structural barriers to participation15 among its target audience. Young people experiencing socio-economic and educational disadvantage have less time, resources and social capital to participate in community or civic leadership activities, especially in anything offered at the international level (irrespective of their motivation to do so). [16]

Furthermore, and although there has been a visible improvement in the seriousness with which Roma youth issues are being addressed in the last several years as a result of RYAP and other frameworks and programmes that have tried to mainstream youth issues, it is still common to hear complaints in the international context about all benefits of training and support initiatives accruing to the 'usual suspects' or 'the Roma international conference elite'. These are also often voiced with the expectation that Roma young people should be more obviously engaged in the achievement of social and community change. These **stigmatising labels are problematic**, most especially when they come from respected leaders in the Roma community, and efforts should be made to avoid using them. There are some objective reasons for why there is a perception of a lack of leadership turnover in the Roma youth sector, particularly at the international level, not least of which is that many Roma youth that would be motivated to be more engaged in youth organising and participation initiatives are a. either attending university or are graduates (oftentimes thanks to Scholarship programmes promoted by the international donor community) or b. do not speak the level of English or any other foreign language that would allow them to participate meaningfully in the activities. Furthermore, those at the front lines of community development work, including youth workers, are less likely to be aware of, or in the position to take up, long term training and competence development initiatives, and even when they do, they are less likely to be able to stick with their work in the community for long periods of time if a job or study offer comes their way.

To be sure these considerations are not posed as an excuse for any perceived lack of activism on the part of Roma young people. **They are posed to question the assumption that the same demands and expectations can be placed on youth in such circumstances as on youth in more advantaged circumstances. They are posed to remind us that any Roma Youth Academy will have to take into account those specific and very deep rooted structural problems of youth participation faced by Roma young people in comparison to their non-Roma peers, if it is indeed to be able to promote Roma youth participation.**

[14] Fundamental Rights Agency, Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey | Roma – Selected findings. Available online: http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2016/eumidis-ii-roma-selected-findings.

[15] Alexandra Raykova, Miguel Angel Garcia Lopez, Nik Paddison, Brian Belton fpr the Council of Europe, Roma Youth Participation in Action: Roma youth participation: good practices, from the local to the European level, 2016. Available online a: https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168046d02b

[16] Social and community participation rates of young people are hard to estimate, and there are no reliable statistics available regarding the numbers of young Europeans that are members of youth organisations or who are actively engaged in some kind of movement. It is, however, generally accepted that only a minority of young people are engaged in some kind of movement. According to a recent Europe-wide survey of youth opinion conducted by the European Broadcasting Union called 'Generation What?' only approx. 20% of the respondents had already been involved in the work of an NGO or charitable organisation. The same research shows that these the young people who make up these 20% are better educated and come from more advantaged social backgrounds than the young people who have not been engaged yet. These results are consistent with a wide range of research projects on conditions for youth participation and volunteering. The percentage of young people experiencing exclusion (as do many Roma youth) that participate in the work of an NGO or charitable organisation, or that volunteer regularly, tends to be significantly lower than that of their more privileged peers. For more on 'Generation What?' see: generation-what.eu.

Situation of Roma youth participation

Another and also crucial point in this regard considers the knowledge we do possess about youth organising and civic engagement among Roma young people. The recent Council of Europe publication entitled 'Roma Youth Participation in Action - Roma youth participation: good practices from the local to the European level' is a timely contribution to understanding the nature of Roma youth participation and recent trends in its development. If the primary objective of a Roma Youth Academy is to promote such participation and empowerment, then a solid understanding of the current state of the art, characteristics and specificities of Roma youth participation is essential.

Compass, the Manual on Human Rights Education, discusses youth participation on the basis of its definition in the Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life, which stresses that

> *'… to participate means having influence on and responsibility for decisions and actions that affect the lives of young people or are simply important to them. In practice, therefore, this could mean voting in local elections as well as setting up a youth organisation or an Internet forum to exchange information about hobbies and interests or other creative ways of spending free time. The charter's definition of participation also shows a shift in the approach to young people and youth involvement. Young people are not treated as victims or as a vulnerable group that needs protection and help (the so-called "problem-based approach"). They are not treated as objects of adults' intervention, with the adults assuming that they know what is best for young people. Young people are now seen as active players in organisations or in community life; they are seen as partners with lots of potential, talents and strengths. They should have the opportunity to express their needs and to find ways of satisfying them'.*[17]

Chapter Seven of this publication deals with main trends and ideas in participation, addressing these from a general, youth and Roma perspective, drawing its conclusions from the study of examples of participation practice undertaken by Roma youth organisations and initiatives around Europe. On the basis of these examples, the following 'trends' have been observed in relation to Roma youth participation:

- young Roma are becoming more active and visible in youth work of all kinds, including peer education projects, projects focusing on the development of independence and autonomy, Roma specific related youth work;
- there is increasing interest in the role of Roma youth advocacy especially regarding youth policy;
- Roma culture and identity are strong mobilisational and motivational forces for the active participation of young Roma;
- training is a mainstay of participation interventions;
- the nature of youth participation has changed in the Internet age, even among Roma youth who are negatively affected by the digital divide; and
- the effectiveness of participation interventions is much influenced by partnership and networking both inside and outside the Roma rights sector for sustainable action and better visibility.

Continuing challenges to Roma youth participation and empowerment

In addition to the publication cited above, two further studies delve into the question of the challenges and barriers that exist for Roma youth participation in more depth. The first, published by the OSCE in 2015, provides perspectives on Roma youth participation, activism and security. The second, published by the Council of Europe in 2016, focuses the good practices of youth Roma organisations in relation to youth organising and youth participation. And the third is the evaluation of the 1st phase of the Roma Youth Action plan.

While these studies all deal in very different ways with their subject matter, they draw some similar conclusions about the continuing challenges for Roma youth organisations and their activists to support

[17] http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Resources/Publications/HAVE_YOUR_SAY_MANUAL_ENG.pdf

Roma youth participation effectively, including the following[18]:

Space and resources: young Roma and their organisations / initiatives lack space and resources for taking more active initiatives in favour of their own participation and concerns;

Long term perspective: sustained individual and organisational empowerment initiatives are essential, because the barriers experienced by Roma youth to participation are structural in nature, affecting not only the individual's capacity for participation but the potential of Roma youth associative life. Without sustained support early gains in participation quickly evaporate. Long term interventions are required;

Diversity of approaches: multi-disciplinary approaches to engagement and activism, which include a variety of creative and innovative ways of working, appear to work most effectively;

Localisation: the local dimension of youth participation is essential, as it meets young people and their initiatives where they are and in the circumstances the experience day-to-day, making participation and associative life relevant and attractive rather than abstract and unattainable;

Access: young Roma men, but especially women, lack access to knowledge and skills for active participation and citizenship, facing as they do disproportionate disadvantages and experiencing as they do a variety of especially structural barriers to participation;

Peer learning: Roma young people are often feel their collective voice as Roma youth with particular issues is not strongly enough heard inside and outside the community. Peer to peer approaches appear to be quite effective in raising their confidence to advocate on their own behalf, as does intergenerational dialogue between elder/younger activists and community leaders;

Pride: pride in Roma heritage and the achievements of the Roma community is a strong motivator of participation and sustained engagement of Roma youth;

Intersectionality: an intersectional approach can help to empower young Roma with non-conformist approaches to their Roma identity who not only experience discrimination from outside their communities for being Roma, but sometimes also within their communities for being 'different', to work with and for other Roma (especially around the issues they commonly face);

Non-paternalistic inclusion: a paternalistic approach to Roma youth participation is common, and contrary to the stated objectives of the institutions promoting participation interventions, is inhibiting youth empowerment and participation;

Diversity of participation approaches: Roma youth initiatives and organisations of all kinds exist and are actively pursuing participation strategies in local communities and the wider public space internationally. This diversity is of immense added-value, although it is neither sufficiently visible nor adequately recognised in the broader youth and Roma rights sectors;

Impact takes time: the results and impacts of youth participation are often unfairly judged by that community as inadequate because they do not necessarily deliver visible gains in human development, such as improvements in literacy or the eradication of poverty;

Research: longer terms effects and impacts of youth participation and empowerment are not sufficiently well understood or studied by the institutions promoting participation, and youth initiatives and organisations lack the research skills and resources to conduct relevant evaluations;

Conditions of work: Roma youth activists, initiatives and organisations are often working in adverse conditions. First, the 'enabling environment' for civil society (meaning legislation, policies, processes and

[18] ODIHR, OSCE, Activism, Participation and Security among Roma and Sinti Youth, Conference Report, 2015. Available online at: http://www.osce.org/odihr/187861?download=true; Alexandra Raykova, Miguel Angel Garcia Lopez, Nik Paddison, Brian Belton for the Council of Europe, Roma Youth Participation in Action: Roma youth participation: good practices, from the local to the European level, 2016. Available online at: http://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016806438da.

support programmes) in the countries and communities where they are active is often missing. Second, the activism of Roma is often viewed with suspicion because of social prejudice and state discrimination. And third, the activism of Roma young people is often not valued as a result of collective prejudices towards Roma communities.

Discrimination: high levels of discrimination and antigyspyism against Roma youth and their families has deep and negative impact on young people's self-esteem and self-confidence. Working to counter the effects of such practices should complement and accompany the efforts on empowerment and participation in order to secure long lasting effects.

Furthermore, the literature available about the different interventions listed above, as well as recent programme evaluations and the Consultative Meeting on the Roma Youth Academy, all point to several crucial issues that should be considered in the programme design for an eventual Roma Youth Academy.

It is becoming increasingly clear that such interventions:

- make **unrealistic assumptions about the relationship between building the capacity of individuals and building the capacity of organisations**. Often the capacity of individuals to influence the capacity of their organisations to function sustainably is limited even after participation in training;
- are **often run on a shoestring budget**, and not adequately resourced in some crucial respects (for example, human resources commensurate with the communication and support needs of the participants);
- provide **too little support for post-training action** to change something in the community;
- **do not consider adequately the special conditions of Roma youth organisations** in terms of being able to access resources for doing projects, etc.;
- **do not sufficiently consider the socio-economic challenges faced by participants**, including the challenge of earning a living and supporting oneself and / one's (sometimes) extended family at the same time as taking on leadership roles in the community and participating in training or further education;[19]
- **make demands for impacts based on a multiplication and sustainability model that is not particularly realistic,** i.e. that does not take into account the fact that few if any non-governmental organisation today can achieve sustainability because the only funding / support available is for projects;
- are run once or sometimes twice but **do not take a long term investment approach**;
- **do not focus sufficiently on the support required to ensure sustainability of organisations**.

The point here is that **it is both unfair and unrealistic to expect Roma young people's organisations/initiatives, which are relatively new and work in extremely adverse conditions, to do what older, more experienced, better resourced and less discriminated social and youth organisations are also not able to do.** Among others, this consideration should be taken into account when establishing what can be considered a realistic impact expectation and demand for the Roma Youth Academy to deliver, and what kind of support measures should be included, in addition to training opportunities.

c) Political context of Roma youth participation and empowerment initiatives

There is growing recognition of the importance of young Roma for the securing of Roma rights in the political, institutional and philanthropic community concerned with Roma rights, in Europe and beyond. A variety of institutions of different kinds active in the promotion of Roma rights now have youth-specific agendas, the majority of which place special emphasis on the empowerment of young Roma to participate actively in the defence of their human rights, combatting discrimination and improving their communities. Furthermore, Member States of both the Council of Europe and the European Union are beginning to see the added-value of engaging with Roma youth mainstreaming. This institutional landscape form the political

[19] This was raised again and again during the Consultative Meeting on the Roma Youth Academy especially in relation to the profile of participants and criteria for selection. It has also been reiterated in the tracer studies conducted regarding the Roma Education Fund scholarship programmes as concerns effects and impacts of participation in the scholarship programme for community engagement of students. See for example, A Tracer Study – The academic and professional trajectory of REF's Law and Humanities Scholarship Program Student-Beneficiaries: https://www.romaeducationfund.hu/sites/default/files/publications/a_tracer_study___ref__2014_0.pdf; The Role of the Roma Health Scholarship Program (RHSP) in The Academic and Professional Trajectory of its Beneficiaries: https://www.romaeducationfund.hu/sites/default/files/publications/rhsp_tracer_study_2015.pdf.

context in which any future Roma Youth Academy will operate, and they influence its orientation and emphasis to quite a degree.

Council of Europe

A major objective for the Council of Europe has been to contribute to the full inclusion of Roma and Travellers in their local communities. The genuine and effective participation of fellow Europeans of Roma and Traveller origin is a precondition for a democratic and just Europe. In 2010, the Council of Europe strengthened its political commitment to the inclusion of Roma and Travellers by adopting the 'Strasbourg Declaration on Roma'.[20]

The Council of Europe's action in this area now focuses on **three major priorities**:
- tackling anti-Roma and anti-Traveller prejudice, discrimination and crimes more effectively;
- demonstrating innovative models for inclusive policies for the most vulnerable;
- and promoting local-level solutions.

A new Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers (2016 – 2019) [21] focuses energy on enhancing the impact of projects undertaken, through targeted support to member States on inclusion. The plan is being implemented by the Support Team of the Special Representative to the Secretary General for Roma Issues, through key projects. Most relevant for the elaboration of the Roma Youth Academy are the experiences of ROMED[22] and ROMACT,[23] both of which have educational, development and participation dimensions.

The Council of Europe has also developed a specific Roma Youth Action Plan (RYAP). RYAP was initiated in 2011 as a response to the challenges faced by Roma young people in Europe, in particular inclusion, participation in decision making processes and rampant discrimination and antigypsyism. RYAP was developed as a complementary approach to the implementation of the Strasbourg Declaration on Roma. Since it was initiated, RYAP has reached out to over 4500 participants through a series of activities organised and developed with and for Roma and other youth organisations, with the support of a variety of youth, development and philanthropic partners. In March 2016, the Joint Council on Youth confirmed the continuation of RYAP and adopted Guidelines for its implementation for the period of 2016-2020.

RYAP 2016 - 2020 focuses on the following priorities:
- strengthening Roma youth identity;
- developing Roma youth participation and building a stronger Roma youth movement;
- human rights and human rights education;
- combating structural discrimination and antigypsyism;
- supporting Roma young people's access to social rights and their transition to autonomy and work life;
- addressing multiple discrimination and fostering gender equality among young Roma.

The plan is implemented in close cooperation with Roma youth organisations and networks, in line with the co-management principles of the Council of Europe youth sector, so that both governmental and non-governmental youth sector stakeholders are actively engaged in its shaping and implementation.[24] An Informal Contact Group involving a variety of stakeholders from the Roma rights field, but primarily Roma youth organisations, acts as a co-ordination body and promotes communication and synergy in support of RYAP and the Roma youth movement in general.

RYAP takes an explicit **'*double mainstreaming*'** approach to ensure that youth issues are considered in Roma policies and programmes and that the issues of Roma youth are considered in general youth policies.

[20] https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805ce1de

[21] https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680684b5e

[22] http://coe-romed.org/romed2/about

[23] http://coe-romact.org/

[24] For a definition of co-management, and information about both the Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ) and on the European Steering Group on Youth (CDEJ), see: http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Coe_youth/co_management_en.asp.

The aim is to ensure that Roma-youth-specific issues are effectively considered in the Roma rights and youth policy sectors. By way of example, this approach has been instrumental in the creation of a thematic group on youth in the Council of Europe Ad hoc Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (CAHROM), and in ensuring that national authorities running recent youth policy activities in Portugal and Ukraine addressed Roma youth issues as part of their policy development activities.

CAHROM, which answers directly to the Committee of Ministers, is responsible for the analysis and evaluation of the implementation of national Roma relevant policies and conducts thematic exchanges of experience and good practice between national experts in Roma related issues.[25] International organisations, the Forum of European Roma Young People (FERYP), the European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF)[26] and other relevant (Roma and Traveller) organisations are associated as observers to CAHROM. While Roma youth issues are considered a transversal topic for the work of the committee,[27] CAHROM has also engaged in very practical ways with the question of Roma youth empowerment, by appointing a Rapporteur on Roma youth, organising thematic expert discussions and facilitating exchange of experience among member states in addressing Roma youth issues, etc. CAHROM also works with other thematic committees of the Council of Europe, namely with the Joint Council of Youth in securing a better coordination and complementarity in supporting and addressing Roma issues. CAHROM elaborated a series of conclusions, lessons learnt and good practices on the basis of the thematic visit to Slovenia in June 2015, and the Rapporteur on Youth is now responsible for following Member State progress towards the approximation of such good practices in each context. Most notable among these in view of a Roma Youth Academy are:

- inclusion of a specific youth chapter in National Roma Integration Strategies;
- mainstreaming of Roma youth through other chapters of the National Roma Integration Strategies;
- inclusion of the representative of Roma youth and their organisations in National Roma Integration Strategy monitoring commissions; and
- developing specific approaches and implementing activities to promote and motivate Roma youth participation.

At the time of writing (early 2017), CAHROM was preparing an overview based on committee members' replies to a questionnaire on Roma and Travellers participation in advisory, decision-making bodies and in political life. Questions requesting information about the specific participation of youth and women have been included in this enquiry. The draft results of this enquiry and analysis will be available during 2017.

The European Union

The European Union is increasingly engaging with the promotion of Roma youth participation with a strong political message and activities to encourage member states to address this through policy. In 2011 the European Commission adopted an EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies focussing on four key areas: education, employment, healthcare and housing. The Directorate General Justice at the European Commission is actively pursuing the implementation of this framework, and has undertaken several large scale programmes, including joint programmes with the Council of Europe, to pursue the aims of this framework. As recently as December 2016, the European Council issued conclusions[28] which specifically mention the importance of Roma youth empowerment, and encourages member states to

- support Roma youth employability;
- take steps to empower young Roma through participatory policy making;
- ensure that the situation of young Roma is addressed in mainstream policies and targeted measures.[29]

[25] http://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/cahrom

[26] https://www.ertf.org/

[27] http://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/cahrom

[28] The EU has a Roma Framework. Find out more at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/eu-framework/index_en.htm; and at http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/index_en.htm. The most recent European Council Conclusions relevant for Roma youth are available online here: http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15406-2016-INIT/en/pdf

[29] http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15406-2016-INIT/en/pdf

This demonstration of political will on the part of the European Union is an important opportunity and vehicle for youth advocacy, and will be important for the further elaboration of the Roma Youth Academy. Roma youth participation in both the further development and monitoring of the National Roma Integration Strategies can be important centrepieces for specific policy changes a Roma Youth Academy could pursue, and this for three reasons. First the majority do not yet include a specific youth chapter. Second, the majority do not yet mainstream a youth perspective. And third, the majority do not yet include youth or youth organisations in decision-making and monitoring processes. As such, the strategies do not adequately consider the specific needs and concerns of young Roma that are different from those of elder generations and children, nor are they in a position to adequately promote youth participation as a value and as a practice. For these three dimensions of youth empowerment to become a reality, however, young Roma and their organisations require more developed competence and support for advocating on their own behalf and for active leadership. This question will be revisited in depth when discussing needs for and possible objectives of a Roma Youth Academy.

Of course, the same gaps in participation in decision making can also be observed in countries which are not members of the European Union, and which, therefore, do not have National Roma Integration Strategies, but which are members of the Council of Europe. These countries do nevertheless often have relevant national plans and policies addressing Roma integration. The Roma Youth Academy could certainly also address these.

Other stakeholders of the Roma rights community

A wide variety of institutions are engaged in Roma rights related work. This is not the place to exhaustively lay out the landscape of agendas and interventions. At the same time, some institutions that are implementing specific initiatives of more relevance to the elaboration of a Roma Youth Academy. These include multilateral such as the OSCE[30], donors and members of the philanthropic community, such as the Open Society Foundations through its Roma Initiatives Office[31], members of the international democracy assistance community, such as the National Democratic Institute and specifically education focused institutions such as the Roma Education Fund. In Chapter 2 we will present three case studies of models of good practice supported by these institutions relevant to designing the programme of the Roma Youth Academy.

The Roma Youth Academy Initiative - Initial Rational & Concept

The idea of a Roma Youth Academy (RYA) emerged from discussions in the context of the Council of Europe Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers (2016-2019)[32] and has been further developed under the current phase Roma Youth Action Plan being implemented by the Youth Department.[33] Specifically, RYA has been proposed as an intervention to ***strengthen the self-organisation of young Roma and Travellers and their participation in society***, which is a priority for the Council of Europe's work on Roma and youth.

The Roma Youth Academy is proposed as ***a consolidated response to the challenges faced by Roma youth organisations and youth workers attempting to promote the participation and empowerment of young Roma***. Furthermore, it is expected that an effective intervention in this direction will have positive effects on the capacity of young Roma, their organisations and initiatives to combat and overcome the consequences of antigypsysim and to contribute constructively to the social inclusion of young Roma.

[30] In 2003, the OSCE pledged to address the vulnerable position of the Roma and Sinti with the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area. In 2013, the OSCE participating States underlined the importance of focusing on empowering Roma and Sinti youth in addressing this communities' challenges. More information at: http://www.osce.org/roma-and-sinti.

[31] https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/about/programs/roma-initiatives-office

[32] https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805c5a1d

[33] http://www.coe.int/en/web/youth-roma/home

The rationale for exploring and developing this initiative is simple. If until now there has been extensive investment in capacity building and training for Roma youth leadership and organisational development, it has become obvious that several overlap, several are not being used to full capacity and several seem not to be all that interesting to those they target or cannot find suitably qualified candidates to fit the profile.[34] There is a sense in the community of practice, and especially among key institutional stakeholders, that while a lot is going on, 'not enough is coming out' of what is being done.

As has been developed upon above, key donors are keen to see more visible impacts on the strength and capacity of the Roma youth movement, Roma youth organisations and individual activists to make change happen in their communities, including and especially as regards the elimination of discrimination, improving social relations with non-Roma and improving the life chances of young Roma.

It is unfair to demand that Roma youth organisations and Roma young people take responsibility for the fact that Roma poverty and educational segregation have not been eradicated until now, irrespective of the level of investment that may have been made in them. Nevertheless, evaluations of recent initiatives, especially of the Roma Youth Action Plan (RYAP), and the recent Consultative Meeting on the Roma Youth Academy do point in the direction of there being dissatisfaction over the lack of coordination and synchronisation of interventions, and to the fact that a more consolidated, long-term and multi-disciplinary approach to capacity development for Roma youth activists and organisation might have more impact for the effectiveness and sustainability of the Roma youth movement in its efforts to develop Roma youth participation and empowerment overall.[35]
Envisaged as a **long term education and support programme**, the idea is that RYA will empower Roma youth organisations, activists and youth workers in mobilising other Roma youth in their communities around their own issues and concerns, and foster broader youth participation. In an effort to bridge persistent gaps between institutional interventions supporting Roma youth participation and the realities of those working with and on youth issues at the front lines in Roma communities, it is ***proposed that RYA focus on enhancing competence for community leadership, self-organisation of youth initiatives and organisations, and pride in Roma culture, language and history***.

The concept for the Roma Youth Academy states that its aim is to:

> *'… enhance the role of Roma youth leaders in democratic leadership processes, self-organisation of communities and to support the next generation of youth leaders to be more confident and in tune with their cultural, linguistic and historical backgrounds.'*[36]

Four interrelated objectives are associated with this aim:
- strengthen the role and sustainability of Roma youth organisations by training and supporting Roma youth leaders and multipliers;
- strengthen the role of Roma youth leaders and youth workers as agents of community and social change at the local and national levels;
- support anti-discrimination work with a particular focus on combating antigypsyism;
- enhance the visibility of Roma youth issues in national youth policies and structures, especially in countries where Roma youth is less present.

These can also be understood in terms of desired impacts of the initiative in the long run.

[34] For example, the Roma internships of the EC and CoE can rarely find sufficient applicants to fill places without several rounds of advertising over months; the OSCE and several other organisations engaged in the RYAP Informal Contact Group are all offering their own training activities, often on similar topics to those being run by the YD; international youth policy and research activities on broader themes relevant to marginalised and vulnerable young people (even those run by the Partnership on Youth) are still not including sufficient participation and representation of Roma youth issues, scholars and youth organisations; the European Youth Foundation is not receiving as high a number of applications for projects or for institutional operating grants from Roma youth organisations as might be expected considering the concerns of the community of practice about missing resources.

[35] http://www.coe.int/en/web/youth-roma/home

[36] Youth Department Secretariat, Draft Concept Paper on the Roma Youth Academy: Supporting the emergence of a new generation of Roma youth leaders and for strengthening Roma youth participation and the sustainability of Roma youth organisations, October 2016, online at: https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016806b95f6.

The potential academy participants should:

- be young Roma with a proven record and capacity for community leadership and activism and with the potential to access university level education
- possess a clear vision of an anticipated social change they want to see or achieve
- practice social and political activism
- have language competencies at least on operational level of English
- have an organisational background or some formal support structure at the local level
- possess relevant skill and experience as activists and informal/formal leaders with Roma youth
- be very motivated to take part in the learning process and make use of the full set of features of the academy
- be fully available for all the seminars and be able to dedicate at least 75% of their time for the full duration of the academy (between 16 and 18 months).

From a methodological point of view, the Academy is foreseen to be a multidisciplinary training and support measures programme that covers Roma youth, democratic participation and leadership, human rights, organisational management and development, project management and community work. Educational approaches such as experiential learning, the practice of non-formal education, participant centredness, learning from the diverse experiences represented in the group, and from the personal commitment of the learners are favoured.

In principle, the original concept paper on the Roma Youth Academy proposed to structure a new initiative taking on the basis of the Long-Term Training Course model with which the Youth Department has a long track record of success. This model of training involves several residential seminars and a project phase, and focuses on the development not only of individual participants competencies, but also of their capacity to multiply their learning for community impact. These components can be strengthened by other modules and possibly a broader set of support mechanisms that take into account more individual learning or competence development needs. The practice phase in a Long Term Training Course always involves the implementation of a project in participants' communities, and can also be enriched by other hands-on learning opportunities. The elaboration of personal learning plans and extensive mentoring are usually also components. While formal certification is not foreseen, participants can expect to receive a certificate of their participation that will reflect their actual achievements, experiences and learning progress. Alumni activities are often a dimension of LTTCs, whose participants are often motivated to stay in touch and Network on an informal and non-facilitated basis.

The initial concept paper stated that is the ambition of the Youth Department and its partners in the Roma youth sector that the Roma Youth Academy becomes the ***go-to incubator of ideas and actions that address specific realities of youth participation and empowerment of Roma youth*** in all their diversity. Evaluation and monitoring, therefore, have to be an important component of the Academy's approach. Its success should be measured against their results in the local communities from which participants come.

In the process of elaborating the concept for the Roma Youth Academy, it became clear that more than 'another training course' is needed. The needs of Roma youth organisations in their efforts to support Roma youth participation and empowerment extend well beyond what can be delivered through training inputs. As a result, the experiences of national activities conducted under RYAP, of ROMED and ROMACT, and of several other programmes initiated by other institutions, are being considered as inspiration for the design of a Roma Youth Academy that may still take an educational approach, but which also focuses on support measures to address the broader needs of youth organisations and the Roma youth movement, including access to more regular resourcing to sustain the operations of youth initiatives and organisations or of longer term plans. In the next chapter, we will look at those needs in more detail to try to understand what could specifically inform the programme design of the Roma Youth Academy.

CHAPTER 2 - EVIDENCE FROM THE FIELD OF ROMA YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT - NEEDS, ASPIRATIONS, EXPERIENCES

The Need for a Roma Youth Academy

In the previous chapter we looked at the framing context that makes a Roma Youth Academy a potentially interesting and timely intervention in support of Roma youth participation and empowerment. We looked especially at some of the structural barriers to participation experienced by young Roma. In and of themselves these constitute a solid statement of need to justify an intervention in support of youth participation. At the same time, they will need to be taken into account when thinking about the programme design of a Roma Youth Academy, because the potential participants of such initiative are likely also to be affected by these same structural barriers to participation.

This chapter will try to understand better the needs and aspirations of the Roma youth sector that should be informing the further development of the concept of the Roma Youth Academy. The Consultative Meeting on the Roma Youth Academy pointed out once again just how important it is to focus on real needs of real people working in real situations, and not overly on what the supporting institutions and partners want to achieve. Evaluations of other relevant experiences, for example and especially, RYAP and the Enter! process, have also underlined this premise.[37] Making the distinction between real needs and what the sector, including potential beneficiaries want, has been an important selection criteria while writing this section of the feasibility study.

Up to the minute information about needs and motivations of prospective participants is difficult to gather, and the one traditional approach to making sure capacity building initiatives' curricula are on the mark has been to survey 'training needs' during the application process, and to use the evaluations of previous editions of same or similar activities to corroborate those. As a new initiative, the Roma Youth Academy does not have that kind of information its disposal yet. This should certainly be one of the key steps in its further development and the preparation of the curriculum. Another which has proved useful in at least one of the projects we have looked at in more depth is to conduct a baseline study on the needs of a wider group of people who could fit the profile (i.e. not only applicants). Of course the limitation is always that there is no control group, but any in depth self-assessment process will at least allow for evaluation of what needs were before the intervention began and if, how and to which extent they have been addressed during and by the end of the intervention.

For this chapter, we have collected information from a series of different sources that can provide insights into the needs that a Roma Youth Academy could address (see bibliography).

The original concept outlined a series of needs to which the Roma Youth Academy should respond, as follows:

- the challenges that Roma youth organisations experience in developing and sustaining their action in favour of Roma youth empowerment;
- the structural and other barriers to participation that young Roma experience, including exclusion and discrimination;
- the challenges of developing and promoting Roma relevant youth work opportunities in local communities;
- the gaps in capacity of Roma youth organisations, leaders and youth workers to advocate for better youth or other policies that affect the situation and participation of Roma youth;
- the renewal of leadership of Roma youth networks, and the creation of transmission belts for leadership reproduction;
- the challenges of improving the impact of Roma youth organisations' work, especially local actions, to promote youth participation and empowerment;
- the challenge of partnership creation across community lines, between Roma and non-Roma youth and community organisations;

[37] Yael Ohana & Marija Bulat, Evaluation of the Roma Youth Action Plan, 2016: https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016805a9ad7 and Yael Ohana, Evaluation of Enter! A Long Term Training Course on Access to Social Rights of Young People, November 2011; https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168069cfc9.

- the lack of opportunities for Roma young people to learn about Roma culture, history and language and to identify with pride with positively with their cultural heritage.

Summed up as follows, these could also be understood as aims of or as pillars of action on the basis of which the Roma Youth Academy should be established. They could also be understood as the boundaries of a framework within which the capacity development concept of the initiative could be further developed:

- integrating efforts for improving Roma youth participation from local through European levels;
- developing Roma youth mobilisation;
- 'double mainstreaming', which refers to the transversal consideration of young Roma agendas and of young Roma in youth agendas;[38]
- deepening impact and improving the effectiveness of Roma youth leaders' and organisations' local actions;
- providing space and support for Roma youth leaders to develop their knowledge and pride in their culture, history and language;

The literature about different programmes we have consulted also points to the fact that there are some specific training needs that may not have been covered in significant depth in previous initiatives, but which are identified as significant and much needed for better effectiveness and impact of their work by Roma youth organisations, youth leaders and workers.

These include:

- explicit and formal 'leadership training' including political advocacy, lobbying, fundraising, participatory processes of leadership, project development and management, concepts of participation;
- real opportunities to 'learn participation and empowerment by doing', in other words, opportunities to engage in real decision making in real situations, rather than simulative ones;
- opportunities (including resources) for developing social impact actions using the good practice learned during the training experience;
- approaches to involving and engaging non-Roma partners and developing 'whole-community' relevant initiatives.

Movements and organisations have often been likened to human organisms. Maslow's hierarchy of human needs can help us to classify the different needs that movements and organisations, likened to human organisms, need to develop and grow. There are three categories: physiological and safety needs, love / belonging and self-esteem needs and self-actualisation needs. At the bottom of the pyramid, are physiological and safety needs, because without these survival is impossible. Then come love/belonging and self-esteem and the pinnacle, which is impossible to fulfil without the other two are self-actualisation needs. The needs for support of Roma youth and youth organisations to be able to support Roma youth participation raised to in the literature and indeed in the discussion at the Consultative Meeting can also be usefully classified in this way.

Category	Particulars

[38] "Double mainstreaming" ensures, on the one hand, the inclusion of youth issues in Roma policies and programmes and, on the other, that of Roma youth issues in youth policies. This process is indispensable in order to make sure that Roma-youth specific issues are effectively considered by all actors concerned.

Self-actualisation needs	- explicit and classical 'leadership' training - opportunities to 'learn by doing' - not simulative, but real decision making in real contexts - access to resources for independently developing social impact actions using good practice learned - best theory and practice of youth work (with Roma) - empowerment, mobilisation, values and attitudes of civic engagement - political literacy and competence for political action / advocacy etc. - competences relevant to professional development - language competence
Love / belonging & esteem needs	- developing Roma identity and pride - developing the competence of the movement to be a movement - political and class identity - how to work among ourselves and with other youth - role models and mentors, peer to peer support and learning mechanisms
Physiological and safety needs	- all the resource-related support that is essentially missing for Roma youth organisations / youth initiatives to act, do their own thing and to defend / promote Roma (youth) rights - capacity and competence for organisational survival and development in adverse conditions - everything that organisations and movements need to learn to defend yourself from discrimination and the like

Especially, the Consultative Meeting revealed that Roma youth leaders and organisations have high hopes and aspirations for what such a new initiative could bring to their efforts to develop Roma youth participation and empowerment. In particular, they placed emphasis on the potential of the Roma Youth Academy to:

- form a new generation of activists with new ideas and approaches and a higher level of competence for quality youth participation and empowerment work;
- strengthen the credibility and visibility of Roma youth on national and local levels by demonstrating competence, confidence and effectiveness of action for the whole community, not only Roma youth;
- support the sustainability of Roma youth organisations through lasting mentoring and support relationships beyond the training period;
- create new opportunities for cross-community cooperation and partnership;
- address the gaps in advocacy competence among Roma youth leaders and organisations;
- promote an explicit and targeted practice orientation;
- engage a wide variety partners (authorities, organisations and institutions) in support of the participants' projects and initiatives.

It should be noted with some humility that this list is extremely ambitious, and it may not be fully realistic to expect the Roma Youth Academy to deliver all these potential results, and especially if we are looking at an initiative that does not continue beyond its pilot edition.

What can we learn from other educational programmes promoting youth participation and empowerment

The Council of Europe's Youth Department has a lot of experience with developing pilot programmes in non-formal education, and in so doing has had quite some success. It is, however, aware that this can sometimes blind it to other possibilities with which it has not had the opportunity to experiment. With this in mind, it was decided that the feasibility study should include case studies about the educational or capacity building programmes of some other institutions that have served similar aims in the past or which still do.

Three programmes were identified as most interesting and potentially most relevant for informing the development of the Roma Youth Academy. These are:

The National Democratic Institute: Regional Roma Initiative was launched in 2004 and operates in seven countries of Central and South Eastern Europe. The Institute has worked with more than 3,000 Roma activists, in capital cities as well as at the village-level, providing training and guidance in civic education, political activism and election campaigning. The programme helps Roma to enter politics by joining mainstream political parties; to undertake grassroots and national advocacy campaigns to secure their human rights and to change public attitudes; and to influence public policy toward pro-Roma outcomes.

The Romaversitas Programme, was initiated in Hungary in 2001, and has been rolled out to 7 further countries with the support of the Roma Education Fund since 2006, and which aims at improving retention and graduation outcomes of Roma students; and

The Barvalipe Programme promoted by the Roma Initiatives Office of the Open Society Foundations since 2011, which supports the transition of young Roma scholars and graduates to public leadership, emphasising pride in Roma identity and culture as a key activating commitment to Roma rights.

The full case studies can be found in Appendix 2. Here we synthesise and summarise the relevance all three programmes for the concept of the new Roma Youth Academy, as we see it.

Lessons learned from other programmes, based on the three case studies:

- Emphasis on cultural identity and pride have proven useful for developing the sense of collective purpose as a pre-requisite for public leadership;
- Engaging young leaders over longer periods of time in more regular activities in their local environment helps them to stick with the intervention for the duration and to maintain the connection to the community on whose behalf they are advocating;
- The national anchoring of a programme in Roma NGOs that act as implementers has a positive impact on the strength and sustainability of those NGOs;
- An Alumni component encourages former participants to continue with their engagement beyond their participation in the programme, and helps to push the public leadership and advocacy agenda forward;
- A broader programme of support measures and opportunities for personal development can incentivise participants to stay involved and active;
- Local circumstances require the tailoring of educational / support programmes to be relevant;
- Consultation and active ownership of the programme by the target group is important, and motivates more lasting engagement;
- Rigorous selection procedures including structural embedding of the individual participants in organisations can ensure longer term impacts of the support measures and longer term engagement of participants;
- International activities can be used to incentivise participation if offered as a kind of ‘reward’
- Active engagement of locally embedded support persons / organisations to help ensure the selection procedure reaches beyond the narrow circle of already active Roma engaged in European / international activities has been successful in engaging young Roma that would not usually be reachable with methods of dissemination typical for international organisations and programmes;
- Partnership with other institutions is effective for the sustainability of measures beyond their initial life expectancy;
- Participants of student support programmes have increased social and cultural capital and are well equipped to participate in international training activities;
- It is frustrating and de-motivating for Roma graduates who worked hard to get a degree when they cannot find a job. Some might be more inclined to get involved in Roma related work, also on a voluntary basis, if they have a chance to develop their employment prospects;
- Many Roma young people, especially those who are involved in student support programmes, do not have significant time and energy resources for extra-curricular activities with a heavy study load and sometimes part time jobs to earn money;

- Community building works best in the face-to-face setting; it is more motivating and engaging for the young people concerned, but social media is immensely helpful in maintaining contact and keeping each other informed
- There is demand on the part of young Roma involved in the programmes studied for more opportunities to meet and network, and to do something 'good' together, including doing community building projects during their time together, and for training on the civic engagement, community and employability themes.

Critical insights for the further development of the Roma Youth Academy concept and programme design

We can infer some clues as to what key priorities for the Roma Youth Academy should be from a close reading of the literature and information about other programmes, including the three we have looked at in more depth. In this section, we will attempt to sum these up in the form of conclusions regarding the 'needs' of the Roma youth sector if it is to become more effective in supporting Roma youth participation and empowerment. We have identified eleven critical insights into the needs of the sector. In the end, these boil down to conditions for Roma youth participation and empowerment. With a programme design that takes these into consideration, the Roma Youth Academy could have a fighting chance at making a lasting contribution to Roma youth participation and empowerment.

1. ***Organisational learning/development and the training of activists***

Everything we have read points in the direction of the added value of organisational development efforts for strengthening the embedding of participation initiatives in the community and for the sustainable action of youth initiatives. Initiatives that claim to combine individual learning/capacity development with organisational learning and development measures are quite common. However, the past experience of the Youth Department and other initiatives shows that the traditional form this has taken may not be working to best effect, because the major emphasis is on the side of the equation that inputs into the learning of one active member of a given organisation. The model has often been as follows: individuals receive training and are expected to multiply their learning to their organisations. The organisations are expected to 'support' the candidacy of the individual for joining a training course or fellowship, but this implies no ownership, no direct involvement and no later responsibility to work together with the trained individual to improve the organisation's impact in this relation. The institutions offering the training have no way of a. engaging more commitment from the organisation and b. checking the extent to which the assumed effect of having better trained board or staff members (paid or voluntary) has been borne out. So while training is certainly an important contribution to the ability of the member of that organisation to do their work well and even to initiate great projects, beyond that which the individual concerned can influence directly themselves, during the time they remain with the organisation, it does not necessarily have the desired effect on organisations strength and sustainability over time.

In our assessment, the Roma Youth Academy needs to make sure that both the organisational and individual learning and development aspects rank as high priorities in the programme design and attendant support measures.

Doing this could take a variety of forms including but not limited to:
- offering organisations the opportunity to participate in the Roma Youth Academy with 'teams' (project teams or the team running the organisation) rather than individual participants;
- offering both individual participants and the participants' organisations mentoring support together and separately at different moments of the Academy;
- making one of the criteria for acceptance of projects under eventual grant-funding schemes a strong organisational development dimension;
- making the Roma Youth Academy an organisational support programme that without training being the core activity, so that training is offered on a needs basis or relevant training offers available are used to address specific needs.

Certainly, more in depth consideration of how to translate this into curriculum for any training component in the Academy and into a broader set of measures aimed at improving the effectiveness of youth organisations to foster Roma youth participation and empowerment is needed, and should be linked to a broader theory of change discussion.

2. ***Support people behind the organisations with relevant incentives to be able to commit to the duration of the RYA***

The above issues around individual vs. organisational learning notwithstanding, individuals do make up organisations, and especially when we speak about voluntary organisations, the personal situations of those individuals can have an important impact on what they are able to do for / with their organisations. It is absolutely obvious that the majority of the young Roma in the Roma Youth Academy's pool of potential candidates face significant challenges in engaging in any long term voluntary capacity building initiative, irrespective of whether it is primarily aimed at their organisation. This is especially the case if the ambition of the Roma Youth Academy is to address candidates embedded in local, oftentimes impoverished, communities. From gaps in English or other foreign language skills to the lack of time and income to be able devote a longer period of time to such an endeavour, Roma youth face structural barriers to their participation even in those initiatives that are designed to promote their participation and empowerment. A variety of double binds are associated with these challenges. Active young Roma who have a sustained source of income either through a job or a scholarship for tertiary education would not necessarily have the time or freedom to voluntary commit to a multiyear-year programme that provides only a certificate of participation. Many of those who would fit the profile of participants as outlined in the original concept have already moved out of their communities to study or pursue a career elsewhere, and however engaged they might be they are no longer embedded in the community context they wish to change or improve, with knock on effects for the potential impact of any empowerment initiative they could undertake. Roma youth and community workers on the front lines of the empowerment struggle in communities in need often do not dispose of the language competence to engage in international capacity building. Youth leaders searching for a job or wishing to study will necessarily be more vulnerable to dropping out of this kind of voluntary undertaking if and when they finally find regular employment or are accepted to university. Taken together with the knowledge that many young Roma with potential simply do not have the economic means and time alongside full time studies and part-time work to engage in extensive extra-curricular activities, for their own and for others' benefit, these considerations mean the Roma Youth Academy would be well advised to consider specific measures for supporting and incentivising young Roma with potential to apply and those selected to stay the whole duration of the Roma Youth Academy. While a certain number of drop-outs is unavoidable, the programme design should consider ways to avoid that applicants selected cannot take up their place and participants facing challenges have no choice but to drop out. Any number of options are possible here, but they frankly depend on the resources brought to bear for the implementation of the Roma Youth Academy. Stipends for participants, a preparatory English language course, face to face and virtual mentoring by trainers or mentors of participants' choice, peer support mechanisms like regular meetings of participants living within easy reach of each other, opportunities for self-actualisation and professional development in the localities and communities within which participants and their organisations are active, and some form of accredited certification could all be considered.

3. ***Longer-term perspectives for the participation and empowerment work of the organisations participating***

One of the primary conclusions of the evaluation of the Roma Youth Action Plan, and of the 2nd Roma Youth Conference, underscored by the discussions at the Consultative Meeting on the Roma Youth Academy, institutional programmes have been generous in offering specific funding schemes for Roma youth projects conducted by Roma youth organisations, they rarely offer the perspective of developing longer term strategies on Roma youth participation and empowerment. In the end, excellent projects can be run once or maybe twice, for a year or maybe two, but do not receive follow-up funding to continue or innovate. If it is to support the improvement of the quality of the work of Roma youth organisations in relation to participation and empowerment of Roma youth, then, one of the key challenges it needs to address is the 'long term ambitions' and 'short term interventions' problem facing so many Roma rights and civic engagement initiatives. In the case of the Roma Youth Academy, doing so could involve the negotiation of special funding schemes to promote Roma youth participation and empowerment with key partners like the European Youth Foundation, the European Commission and / or the National Agencies of the Erasmus+ programme, the OSCE or OSF, who all have objectives in the field of Roma rights. Alternatively, or in addition, a member state of the Council of Europe could be convinced to provide a voluntary contribution to facilitate this. Furthermore, such schemes could prioritise longer-term strategy development and multi-year projects, and training could be provided to individual participants and their organisations for developing proposals. Even if these projects are not to be implemented within the duration of the Academy, participants and their organisations could plan them, and there may be mileage in implementing 'micro-pilots' within the time frame

of the Academy. Another option could be to make 'model' projects that focus on longer-term strategies, approaches and innovation, key criteria for the selection of organisations / participants.

4. ***Close relationships between RYA participants and communities/constituencies of Roma youth***

While this has come to be something of a mantra in youth work, it really does seem to be a key to success in working on empowerment of young people experiencing structural barriers to participation and other disadvantages, not least Roma young people. All the evidence points to the fact that the more embedded an organisation and its youth leaders / youth workers are in a community of which they themselves and others consider them an integral part, the more effective their work on empowerment and participation will be. One of the key criticisms of the rest of the Roma rights sector regarding the work of Roma youth organisations is that too many of the leaders have moved on to 'greater things' and are therefore no longer really embedded in their communities, and therefore are not able to mobilise young people in community development. This is often cited as a reason why the community level of impact of youth participation is not visible enough, and why youth organisations continue to have issues with the reproduction and democratic turnover of leadership. This reality is the perennial challenge of any international capacity development initiative - how to access applicants at the front lines of youth and community empowerment work that can work in foreign languages, can commit to the duration, who are embedded in different ways in their youth and local Roma communities and who are likely to stay there for the foreseeable future. Some options have been outlined above for how to support individuals participating to stay the course, and for how to embed their participation in organisational participation. More targeted and direct recruitment approaches, involving outreach through other programmes that have staff working in the communities (for example, ROMED mediators, Romaversitas Centres, REF Focal Points, etc.) could be foreseen. What is sure, is that usual dissemination approaches through social media and more 'academic' access routes (via students and graduates) or those that favour identified youth leaders will not necessarily yield the kind of embedded participation desired.

5. ***Intercultural learning within the Roma community and with non-Roma***

A lot of the literature about existing programmes points in the direction of the crucial role of an intercultural approach, and of intercultural learning, for the effective empowerment of young Roma. A good part of the literature points out how difficult it is for young Roma to assert themselves positively in a hostile majority society, and in relation to their non-Roma peers. Prejudice and discrimination remain a terrible burden for Roma young people to bear, impeding them in identifying positively with their cultural heritage as Roma and they stand in the way of them taking up leadership roles. Helping young people to overcome fear, suspicion and develop trust in youth allies from the other side of the ethnic divide can be a strong contribution to the creation of alliances for change in divided communities. On the other hand, Roma communities themselves are anything but homogenous, and there are number of ways to be Roma. Many young Roma experience difficulties in sitting comfortably not only in their Roma identity, but also in their other identities and senses of belonging, because some of them are not culturally accepted within the Roma community. Furthermore, Roma in different countries around Europe have very different histories, traditions, experiences and even current realities, and they do not necessarily all know a lot about or identify with each other. A recent article in the ERRC journal rightly points out that there is absolutely no basis for assuming that all young Roma should be the same and identify as Roma in similar ways. Doing so just reproduces paternalistic and assimilationist approaches to Roma inclusion.[39] If this is all true, then developing the Roma youth movement is necessarily also about embracing the pluralism of what it is to be Roma and young, and how being Roma and young intersects with normalised power not only in majority society, but also within the Roma community. In recent years, an emphasis on multiple discrimination and intersectionality has been relevant to addressing the latter. Furthermore, the Consultative Meeting, and some of the literature, points to the fact that Roma engaging across community boundaries with non-Roma in alliances to roll out projects that benefit the whole community can have an impact on reducing prejudice and inter-ethnic tensions in impoverished communities. For the Roma Youth Academy, a strong intercultural dimension, that takes into account these two considerations, could be expressed in its approach to recruitment of participants, in its

[39] Iulius Rostaș, Márton Rövid, Marek Szilvási, On Roma Civil Society, Roma Inclusion, and Roma Participation, Roma Rights 2 2015: Nothing About Us Without Us? Roma Participation in Policy Making and Knowledge Production, http://www.errc.org/article/roma-rights-2-2015-nothing-about-us-without-us-roma-participation-in-policy-making-and-knowledge-production/4433.

curriculum and in its choices about which kinds of projects to prioritise. While clearly Roma participants and organisations should have priority, it remains a fact that some non-Roma organisations are doing sterling work in promoting Roma rights, can be allies, and can bring expertise, resources and access to bear to the Roma Youth Academy.

6. Emphasis on building pride in Roma culture and identity

Developing on previous considerations, and taking the lead from the experience of several programmes reviewed, it would appear that an explicit focus on pride in Roma culture and identity, and the opportunity to learn about one's history, heritage and the achievements of the Roma community, is a strong motivator for young Roma to commit to a more active role in the promotion of Roma rights, including Roma youth participation and empowerment. On this point, it is important to take into account that other programmes are already doing quite a lot of work on this specific dimension, even if the scale of intervention they are bringing to bear may not be huge. So, it is important to consider how the Roma Youth Academy could add value to those efforts. One approach could be to mainstream this dimension across the Academy concept, including questions / discussions about it in recruitment and selection procedures, making it a criterion for the selection of projects or organisations, considering it one of the aims to which grant-funding could be put, and including programme elements that address it in any training component. If we speak about empowerment and participation of young people and the capacity of youth organisations to work effectively towards that goal as being raison d'être of the Roma Youth Academy, then we think it should provide concrete and practical support for organisations to be able to do that effectively and in ways that are at one and the same time suitable for the communities and impactful for the purpose. In the first place this means practical support for developing relevant pride projects, and in the second place resources for running them with some scale.

7. Capacity for formal policy advocacy in favour of Roma rights and youth participation

Recent evaluations, notably that of the first phase of RYAP, and the discussions that took place at the 2nd Roma Youth Conference, point to the fact that Roma youth organisations do not feel strong in advocating on their own behalf and for Roma youth empowerment, especially when it comes to formal policy contexts (at whatever level, from local though national). Furthermore, they do not feel confident in their interactions with 'authorities' of all kinds, including Roma community leaders, potential non-Roma allies or partners, public authorities, and even the donor community that has been supporting them consistently. In this relation, there does seem to be an important role for a training component in the Roma Youth Academy. Explicit and in depth work on aspects such as policy advocacy, lobbying, working with different kinds of public authorities cooperatively, negotiation, strategic partnership building and fundraising and formulating policies, and opportunities to practice around these issues all appear to be important, especially for the youth organisations and the youth leaders running them. Any work on a RYA theory of change and curriculum development for any training component will have to take these items on board. Considering the organisational learning priority, hands on experience with processes that support organisations to develop strategies in these areas, preferably in cooperation with public authorities, could be an interesting approach. Mentors could eventually be used to achieve this effect, and engage them to conduct face to face activities with organisations in their communities, as well as with institutions of the Council of Europe (CAHROM, CDEJ, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities), as those of other institutions relevant to national and local Roma youth policy making. Furthermore, and in view of its increasing legitimacy in the policy context (Council of Europe and EU) some explicit work on how to address policy and decision-makers with advocacy messages around 'double mainstreaming' could be foreseen. This could culminate in the elaboration and implementation of specific policy advocacy projects in favour of Roma youth participation at local and/or national level - preferably working towards the improvement of existing frameworks such as the National Roma Integration Strategies in the EU Member States and other such strategies in Council of Europe member states that are not in the EU.

8. Engagement of a wider stakeholder base in the local context (municipal authorities, schools, families, community leaders, active mediators, etc.) surrounding participants and their organisations

Other projects demonstrate that in the local context, the engagement of a wider stakeholder base can be the make or break factor in the success of community development projects. As an initiative of an international institution, however, this is something that the Roma Youth Academy may find difficult to influence. One approach could be to make the development of community alliances around participating organisations and individuals a strong aspect of the curriculum. Another, and much less traditional approach for the Youth

Department, could envisage the successive rolling out of the Roma Youth Academy in chosen communities, one after another, grounding it in the needs of specific local constituencies of young people and working with all community actors willing to support Roma youth participation and empowerment. The Council of Europe does have experience of working in this way through other Roma benefit programmes, notably ROMED which has had a lot of success in embedding its work in the local communities. It also has experience with some programmes of assistance to Member States organised by the Youth Department with a focus on cooperation between municipal authorities and youth organisations. However, this will again be a matter of resources. To roll out an Academy style programme in local communities in several countries, even successively, will demand a very large financial and human resource commitment on the part of an institution that is notorious for running their programmes on a shoestring and which, at the time of writing, does not have a clear budgetary allocation even for the proposed pilot. Another option to ensure this would be to include a 'requirement' for every participating organisation to develop some kind of wider community engagement strategy or to organise an event that informs the community and relevant authorities, and brings it closer to the work it is trying to do in pursuit of youth participation. This aspect of the Roma Youth Academy could also be linked to work on and around the policy dimension.

9. ***Competence for using existing resources for (Roma) youth participation and empowerment more effectively***

It came to the attention of the RYAP evaluation that Roma youth organisations are not using the funds available under the European Youth Foundation to extent that might be expected considering the resource penury that many Roma youth organisations are faced with. This is apparently not the only resource pool that Roma youth organisations are not using to the full for their projects. They themselves testify to the challenges they experience in preparing and pushing through applications for funding. Furthermore, many are also not able to take advantage of other resources, such as EVS volunteers and institutional funding for the operations of youth organisations, due to the administrative demands or because of the costs these would entail for the organisations. This lack of capacity condemns many organisations to a hand to mouth existence, surviving on a minimum of projects. Clearly, Roma youth leaders and organisations need more competence development in the practical work of using the different resources available to them. The Roma Youth Academy should focus in any curriculum for its training component. However, additional options could be foreseen, including internship placements in philanthropic organisations conducting grant-making for Roma and youth related work, to get an understanding of the 'other side of the table', or masterclass / mentoring activities for participating organisations with fundraising and resource development experts. Furthermore, providing information about sources of funding, and other resource options and access to staff representing the bodies that provide such funding, will add value to what the RYA can provide as training. To ensure this, the Roma Youth Academy will have to bring to bear high level strategic partnerships and relationships, that previous Youth Department initiative have not always managed successfully. Furthermore, it should be explored how technology could be used for supporting this dimension. A knowledge collection platform could bring together all relevant information in an easy to access and use fashion, and be supplemented by the participants of the RYA themselves.

10. ***In depth knowledge about and the opportunity to practice latest and most effective youth participation and empowerment approaches***

Youth participation is something of a moving target - its character, nuances and specifics change with each new generation of young people, their youth culture and the technologies they grow up with. This is no different for Roma youth. With each new generation, young Roma's participation preferences and needs, and the barriers they face to effective participation and empowerment, change, or at least they take on other nuances. It is essential for Roma youth organisations, specifically for youth leaders and youth workers, to understand the changing nature youth participation among the young people they work with. Hence, an absolutely key element of the curriculum of the Roma Youth Academy will be state of the art knowledge and practices in youth participation, and approaches to youth empowerment, with specific emphasis on the specificity of Roma youth. Further options for making this dimension more practical could include 'peer' internships or job shadowing of participants in other organisations and projects, to learn on the ground from the experiences being developed through the Roma Youth Academy and other similar organisations/projects. Mentoring and tutoring by activists and project managers with more extensive experience in projects promoting youth participation and empowerment could also be foreseen.

11. ***Strong emphasis on outreach, mobilisation and participatory leadership***

A key challenge in the field of Roma youth participation and empowerment continues to be the weakness of Roma youth organisations in mobilising constituencies and communities of young people, as well as leadership cultivation and turnover. As a result, their recognition as democratically legitimate and as representing the needs and concerns of real youth constituencies are often put in question, not least by older generations of Roma community leaders. This is an unhealthy situation for Roma youth organisations to be in. The Roma Youth Academy could be an important opportunity for Roma youth organisations to work strategically on developing their internal democracy, and specifically on what leadership cultivation involves for them. New approaches to youth outreach, mobilisation and participatory leadership will be important. Options for how to go about this could include specific curriculum elements in any training component, but it will also be important to bring to bear the long standing experience of the Youth Department with a co-managed system of governance, and the expertise of the Advisory Council on Youth and the European Youth Forum, as regards practices of participation through formal youth organisations at various levels.

CHAPTER 3 - THREE SCENARIOS FOR THE ROMA YOUTH ACADEMY

It has been clear for some time that the stakeholders of the Roma youth sector need and want a programme that encompasses more than individual competence development and training and that extends learning to organisational development and sustainability.

The RYA has been proposed as a multidisciplinary educational and support measures programme, but the original concept nevertheless proposes a model where the training component is the primary vehicle for organisational development. While this is a core competence of the Youth Department, and a tried and tested approach, there is a clear desire that the RYA should somehow be 'different' and we see many opportunities for innovating beyond existing experiences - in terms of Academy components, geography, organisational participation rather than individual, a strong policy dimension, etc. At the same time, for the RYA to be relevant, it must avoid the duplication of existing measures promoted by other institutions. The ideal scenario would be to integrate existing support measures under one roof, filling gaps in relation to the needs outlined previously, and trying to bring the current offer to scale.

In this chapter, we develop three complete scenarios for the new Roma Youth Academy. These are informed by the previous considerations and in particular Appendix 3: Critical comparative review of the original Roma Youth Academy concept with proposals for further development and feasibility implications.

The three scenarios are:

- Scenario 1: A maximalist scenario with direct outreach of 300 participants
- Scenario 2: An optimal scenario with direct outreach of 200 participants
- Scenario 3: A minimal scenario with direct outreach of 100 participants and restricted budgetary options

All the scenarios have been developed with the original aim in mind, in other words the Roma Youth Academy is being developed to:

> '… enhance the role of Roma youth leaders in democratic leadership processes, self-organisation of communities and to support the next generation of youth leaders to be more confident and in tune with their cultural, linguistic and historical backgrounds.'[40]

Overall, in terms of outcomes and impacts, we expect that each of these programmes can achieve the aim of the Roma Youth Academy, albeit to differing extents. The maximalist scenario will necessarily guarantee a certain depth and scale of impact that minimalist scenario cannot in the same time. All the same, all the components of the aim are covered by each of the scenarios, from leadership competence to organisational development, from Roma youth participation to community development, from generic approaches to addressing structural barriers to participation to specific Roma cultural approaches.

Specifically we can expect the following outcomes:

- improved organisational and resource capacity of a considerable number of Roma youth and community organisations
- training of a new generation of Roma youth activists (up to 300 individuals over a 5 year period)
- the development and implementation of a large number of youth projects and community youth participation strategies
- improved visibility for specific Roma youth issues in policy and advocacy frameworks
- in the long run, more opportunities for young Roma to actively participate in initiatives relevant to the betterment of their and the whole community.

As regards to expected changes for Roma youth organisations and their activists / leaders and for Roma youth participation, it is important to highlight that these scenarios are based on at least one assumption. This assumption is that more effective and active Roma youth organisations and community activism, in the

[40] Youth Department Secretariat, Draft Concept Paper on the Roma Youth Academy: Supporting the emergence of a new generation of Roma youth leaders and for strengthening Roma youth participation and the sustainability of Roma youth organisations, October 2016, online at: https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016806b95f6.

long run it will lead to sustainable development of Roma youth participation. Even if this assumption has been borne out by the evaluation of previous practice in the youth sector, there is never a guarantee that the intervention will have its foreseen impacts, especially in the long run. That is why it is more realistic to specifically think in terms of change in the two main direct beneficiaries of the programmes proposed (youth organisations and youth activists), and to focus on the initiatives and projects these can develop as a result of their participation in these programmes. All of these scenarios, emphasise, organisational combined with individual development, and foresee extensive learning by doing that could have social impact dimensions, whether through projects or the development of youth participation strategies. In this sense, it is realistic to expect that a wide variety of Roma youth initiatives and organisations will gain in capacity and develop the portfolio of approaches and the quality of the projects they are rolling out to support Roma youth participation.

All of the scenarios, even if to differing degrees, foresee a grassroots dimension. On the one hand, the programmes foreseen are to be developed in ways that communicate more directly with those young Roma activists, volunteers and professionals working at the front line of community development initiatives, especially those aiming to develop the participation of Roma youth, whether through national and local coordination efforts or by embedding mentoring and support measures locally. On the other hand, the more rigorous recruitment and selection procedures foreseen by these programmes should ensure that the participants are well embedded in communities with needs that they hope to address through their participation in the Roma Youth Academy.

In terms of the possible policy dimension of these scenarios we can see a number of possibilities, although many are intimately bound up with the different contents that would be transmitted during training and mentoring inputs within each programme. As mentioned in a previous chapter, one of the key needs of Roma youth organisations is to develop more practical capacity in policy related competences and practices, including advocacy. Hence, whichever of scenarios eventually becomes the Roma Youth Academy, its preparatory phase including especially the development of its theory of change and its curriculum will have to consider this issue in depth. Furthermore, a policy dimension can take many forms, and be developed at different levels. For example, there is ample room for projects of participants and participating organisations to choose to develop a policy related project. Equally, organisational development mentoring could focus on policy development or the development of policy related strategies. Finally, in terms of double mainstreaming, the extent to which this is a priority depends largely on the Youth Department and how it articulates the role of the Roma Youth Academy within its wider Roma youth and Roma rights strategies and partnerships.

Finally, it must also be remembered that at least the first cycle of the Roma Youth Academy shall be a pilot. Many outcomes and impacts will not be apparent until such time as both the theory of change and the curriculum have been developed, and furthermore, until the Academy has been rolled out and is being evaluated on an ongoing basis. Included in each of the scenarios are 'programme elements' that are not absolutely essential to the concept (such as internships and additional modules) but which can add value if the resources can be found to include them. Their inclusion will change the potential dynamics of impact significantly, however.

Scenario 1: a maximalist scenario with direct outreach to 300 participants

In this scenario, we combine measures to strengthen the Roma youth movement through targeted organisational development activities with extensive support for the emergence of a new generation of youth leaders and workers developing Roma youth participation and empowerment all over Europe. This scenario foresees emphasis on both organisational development and the implementation of social impact projects. This scenario foresees a combination of in-country phases and international activities, some of which are conceptualised to involve all participants, and others for just some, and even individuals. In this scenario, the number of direct participants that can be reached depends on the number of countries in which the programme can be rolled out, where once cycle could be among 14 - 16 months. It is foreseen that up to 30 participants from each participating country should be involved. With a first pilot cycle involving minimum 4 countries and each subsequent cycle involving those countries and an additional 2 - 3, the critical mass of 300 participants can be reached within 5 - 6 years. However, this scenario is highly resource and time intensive, and is only realistic at this scale as a joint programme with a strategically placed partner that can bring to bear significant financial resources to cover in-country logistics and coordination, as well as a range of additional in-country and international support measures, as well as project and / or organisational development funding.

The main elements of the structure are outlined in the following table, along with information about the possible cost implications.

Step	Details	Cost implications
Formation of the planning and implementation team	The planning and implementation team will be responsible for preparing and implementing the overall framework of the Roma Youth Academy on behalf of the Youth Department and its partners. It is made up of Youth Department Staff and external consultants to support the educational concept development in view of the theory of change and to conduct the pilot evaluation	1 YD admin staff member (50%) 1 YD Educational Advisor (30%) 1 external educational consultant (50 days over 18 months) 1 external evaluator to accompany the pilot (50 days over 18 months)
Development of the RYA theory of change	A rigorous process of planning through which the change that the RYA should achieve is gamed out among stakeholders of the Roma youth sector and relevant partners, taking into account the chosen scenario	1 planning meeting of 3 days involving 12 - 15 key partners, especially the Roma Youth Organisations, at one of the EYCs 1 facilitator 1 rapporteur The prospective members of the planning and implementation team should participate This meeting could be prepared by that team; it will require a 1.5 day planning meeting to plan the theory of change meeting
Establishment of the catalogue of support measures	This catalogue will include all components mentioned in the original concept - internships and job shadowing - targeted project funding - special grants for organisational development - mentoring, etc.	Direct negotiations with relevant partners to secure a variety of commitments for funding projects, providing internship placements, etc.

Step	Details	Cost implications
Establishment of the evaluation framework, assessment method, and certification options	Based on the theory of change, the pilot evaluation process, assessment method and certification options should be developed and relevant plans put in place to put them into practice once the RYA begins	3-day meeting of the planning and implementation team Resources for conducting an 18 month pilot evaluation process focusing mostly on the in-country processes
Recruitment of the in-country focal points	In-country focal points are the eyes and ears of the Roma Youth Academy. They are responsible for: - disseminating of the call for participants - managing the recruitment of participants based on their knowledge of the Roma communities in the countries - organising and logistical preparation of the in country programmes - liaison with the planning and implementation team - supporting the in-country training teams and mentors - assistance to participants to acquire a professional development placement (preferably including a mobility dimension) using available support and opportunities at the international level with the support of the RYA framework (for privileged access TBC) - any other tasks that arise in support of the in-country groups, or those involved in delivering the RYA in country and internationally In-country focal points are required for every participating country that takes part. They need to speak English, local language/s, preferably Romanes and have extensive knowledge and familiarity with the Roma communities living in the country.	Approx. 18 months honorarium for 100% for project and administrative support services and for 'accompaniment' of participants and their organisations through the process
Call for participation	In country dissemination of the call for individual participants (youth leaders and youth workers) supported by organisations / authorities or any other structure through a variety of means; organised and managed by the in-country focal point	1 in-country focal point, supported by the planning and implementation team and key partners and stakeholders in-country / internationally

Step	Details	Cost implications
Participant selection procedure	Depending on the size of the Roma community / country and number of quality applications, up to 30 participants in each participating country shall be selected to participate in the 'in-country' programme. A smaller number may go forward to the international part of the programme, or for the individual professional leadership development measures. The profile and specific criteria for selecting participants shall be formalised during the development of the RYA theory of change. These shall be revised in view of the local circumstances of the participating countries based on a survey of needs through the application procedure.	Several steps could include - in depth review and summation of applications to analyse needs and sum-up potential specificities of the RYA in each country - consultation between the planning and implementation teams - interviews with applicants - assessment centre To the extent possible these tasks can be organised using technology. However, some face to face meetings might require travel. Some organisational and logistical costs might be implied for such meetings.
In-country mentor selection procedure	A group of 5 in-country mentors are selected to support the max. 30 participants. These mentors will interact with participants throughout the RYA in country programme, and provide individual, group and organisational mentoring and counselling on a range of issues, themes, challenges, related to the learning objectives of the RYA. A mix of Roma and non-Roma mentors should be sought	Honorarium for max. 50 days of mentoring work online or face to face for 5 mentors per participating country during a period of 14-16 months. A small travel budget should be allocated to each mentor to cover travel expenses for meeting mentees. A small communications budget should be allocated to each mentor for telephone and internet charges.
In-country training team selection	A training team of 3 - 5 locally embedded Roma and non-Rom trainers should be formed to plan and run the in-country training component	Honorarium for approx. 30 days work under the training component - 3 seminars x 5 days = 15 days - 3 prep meetings x 2 days = 6 days - 9 days for home and online preparation, e-learning input, and work in cooperation with the in-country focal point Some members of the in-country training teams might also be invited to join the international components of the RYA.

Step	Details	Cost implications
Initiation of international online communication and facilitation platform	To facilitate peer learning across the RYA system and network, one international online communication and facilitation platform shall be developed. It shall provide space for international interaction between the different stakeholder groups in the RYA to interact within countries and across countries: focal points, mentors, training teams, participants, planning and implementation team, steering group and political stakeholders. There will be a dedicated space for each stakeholder group (international) and a dedicated space for each country (all stakeholders). This will also be used for international 'webinar' style inputs on curriculum elements that are relevant to all participants irrespective of where they are working (international standards in Roma rights, human rights protection mechanisms, access to social rights, youth participation and empowerment, theoretical inputs on organisational development and social impact leadership). The clear limitation is that those without English language skills shall not be able to use it.	Costs for developing the platform and bringing it online Considering the constraints of developing such technology within the Council of Europe system, it may be relevant to foresee this as a separate project or to contact it to an external service provider.
RYA launch and first national seminar	First national meetings of the RYA in-country groups focusing on - RYA orientation - key training inputs in line with the learning objectives - identification of organisational development and social impact needs - initial planning for organisational development or social impact project - individual professional development needs assessment and planning for use of the catalogue of support measures	5 day seminar organised locally by the in-country focal point; programme is prepared and run by the in-country training team
Initiation of mentoring	Mentoring runs in parallel to other RYA activities through the whole period; some mentoring activities may take place face to face, with individuals or in groups	See above under selection of in-country mentors

Step	Details	Cost implications
1st project / organisational development phase	Participants to work on the development of their organisations or on their social impact project using the learning from the 1st seminar	Funds for social impact projects and organisational development measures are made available on a challenge grant funding basis by the European Youth Foundation or another grant-making donor (Erasmus+ NAs in participating countries, SALTO SEE, OSF, etc)
2nd national seminar	Interim seminar during which participants assess progress and receive new inputs	5 day seminar organised locally by the in-country focal point; programme is prepared and run by the in-country training team
2nd project / organisational development phase Acquisition of the professional development placement	Participants continue to work on the development of their organisations or on their social impact project using the learning from the 2nd seminar During this time participants also apply for their preferred professional development placement with the support of their mentor and the in-country focal point. They can choose from the previously established catalogue and will be encouraged to take up a placement which involves international mobility. Those whose English or other foreign language skills are not good enough for a mobility placement can apply for and begin a language preparation course, possibly online (Rosetta Stone, Babbel, etc.)	Placement stipends and costs for mobility for up to max. 30 participants in each participating country. Costs of English / foreign language preparation for those who need it. Some online courses can be used for free. Fee paying online courses are also very effective.
3rd national seminar	Seminar to evaluate the participants' organisational development process or social impact project and to receive further input relevant to the transition to the professional development phase and ongoing work outside the RYA context, including the policy dimension.	5 day seminar organised locally by the in-country focal point; programme is prepared and run by the in-country training team
Individual professional development phase	Individual participants take up their professional development placement (internship, job shadowing, English language or other foreign language course, other) Mentoring and online connection to the RYA continues during this	See above under acquisition of the professional development placement for costs associated with this step

Step	Details	Cost implications
	phase.	
Additional international activities depending on needs of select participants	Further training on international dimensions could be foreseen for a select group of up to 50 participants from different countries. The need for such can be assessed by the in-country focal points, mentors and training teams in consultation. Such inputs could take a variety of forms including the following or a combination thereof: - international training course of 1-week - several international peer learning seminars - an activity focusing on international approaches to evidence based policy development - a conference on relevant youth participation and empowerment issues arising from the experience of the RYA - hearings with European parliamentarians or other political decision makers	Cost implications depend on the (combination of) activity format(s) but a lump sum of 50,000 euros would provide adequate coverage for between 1 and 3 activities involving - international travel - accommodation at one of the EYCs - the hiring of a preparatory team to develop and run the programme - engaging international experts to conduct inputs
International culmination event	All participants, trainers and mentors, as well as all international stakeholders (e.g. evaluator, political steering stakeholders, etc.) are invited to a Roma Youth Academy culmination event at the end of the first cycle to discuss learnings from the experience about supporting the development of sustainable Roma youth organisations and social impact leadership among Roma young people, and to identify best practices in supporting the participation and empowerment of Roma Youth.	Large scale 3-day event involving approx. 250 participants hosted by the Council of Europe in Strasbourg or Budapest using the facilities of the European Youth Centres but requiring additional financing for board and lodging outside the EYCs. Travel costs for a large number of participants from all over Europe. This event can be prepared and run by the project planning and implementation team but will require the recruitment of external experts, workshop leaders and facilitators because of its scale. Interpretation into several languages should be foreseen

Step	Details	Cost implications
Preparation and publication of the Evaluation Report	The evaluation of the pilot will be ongoing through the whole process and involve field work focusing on the RYA in-country programmes specifically	Costs of publication and dissemination

Scenario 2: an optimal scenario with direct outreach to 200 participants

In this scenario, we take the objective of strengthening the Roma youth movement to its logical conclusion and structure the Roma Youth Academy around concrete and targeted measures to develop the organisational capacity of Roma youth led - organisations and initiatives. 20 youth led Roma organisations in 10 - 12 countries will be supported and strengthened in each of 3, 14 - 16 month cycles. While in this scenario the number of direct participants cannot be calculated exactly, by explicitly developing the capacity of 20 organisations in each cycle the reach of the RYA will be higher. We would expect that between 3 and 5 active members of the organisations' boards, voluntary or paid staff would participate. With 20 organisations in each of 3 cycles over up to 6 years this can bring the RYA to the desired scale of 200 participants.

The main elements of the structure, are outlined in the following table, along with information about the possible cost implications.

Step	Details	Cost implications
Development of the RYA theory of change	A rigorous process of planning through which the change that the RYA should achieve is gamed out among stakeholders of the Roma youth sector and relevant partners, taking into account the chosen scenario	1 x medium scale planning event involving 12 - 15 people at one of the EYCs 1 facilitator 1 rapporteur
Establishment of the catalogue of support measures	This catalogue will include all components mentioned in the original concept - internships and job shadowing - targeted project funding - special grants for organisational development - mentoring - etc.	Direct negotiations with relevant partners to secure a variety of commitments for funding projects, providing internship placements, etc.
Formation of the planning and implementation team	The planning and implementation team will be responsible for preparing and implementing the overall framework of the Roma Youth Academy on behalf of the Youth Department and its partners. It is made up of Youth Department Staff and external consultants to support the educational concept development in view of the theory of change and to conduct the pilot evaluation	1 YD admin staff member (50%) 1 YD Educational Advisor (30%) 1 external educational consultant (50 days over 18 months) 1 external evaluator to accompany the pilot (50 days over 18 months)
Establishment of the evaluation framework, assessment method, and certification options	Based on the theory of change, the pilot evaluation process, assessment method and certification options should be developed and relevant plans put in place to put them into practice once the RYA begins	3-day meeting of the planning and implementation team Resources for conducting an 18 month pilot evaluation process
Call for participation	Wide and targeted recruitment procedures based on an explicit mapping of the sector to identify potentially interesting organisational participants in target countries	1 YD admin staff member (50%) Supported by key partners and stakeholders
Participant selection procedure	20 Roma youth-led organisations (preferably) are selected to participate in the RYA, based on a list of criteria for selection developed on the basis of the RYA theory of change, the quality of their application materials	Several steps including - in depth review and summation of applications - 3-day meeting of the

Step	Details	Cost implications
Organisational mentor selection procedure	Assignment of organisational mentor with relevant profile in training, organisational development, Roma rights, youth participation, etc., to support each of these organisations	planning and implementation team - interviews with applicant organisations and mentors - planning the RYA launch meeting
RYA launch	First international meeting of RYA participating organisations and mentors - to get oriented in the RYA concept, process, components, instruments for support, etc. - to receive some input of the international coordination team of the RYA - to initiate planning for the organisational development strategy development process	3-day international meeting at one of the EYCs for up to 50 people with interpretation for several languages 2-day preparatory meeting of the planning and implementation team
Organisational development strategy planning and implementation	The organisational development mentor works with the organisation to plan a process of organisational and strategy development that is rolled out and implemented with the support of the RYA over the following 12-14 months - participating organisations have access to catalogue of support offers including access to specific training, project funding, job shadowing opportunities, etc.; - these offers are made available according to a calendar to ensure that organisations follow a similar set of milestones in time - at least one project with social benefit should result from the process and have been planned / initiated during the RYA - organisations and individual activists have access to a pool of mentors for specific themes - organisations and individual activists have access to an online knowledge platform through which they can access information on a needs basis and participate in 'webinar style' inputs	Cost implications depend on the choice of support measures. This said, project funding needs to be made available. This could be done on the challenge-grant principle to incentivise real fundraising attempts. A fund of 100,000 euros would allow 20 organisations to receive max. 5,000 euros each to cover the costs of implementing their organisational development strategy and at least one social impact project during the RYA
RYA culmination meeting	The whole process culminates in an international meeting / training / seminar / evaluation to bring together the experiences and gather best practices, and to extrapolate learnings how to strengthen Roma youth organisations and develop Roma youth participation and empower Roma young people	3-5 day international meeting at one of the EYCs for up to 50 people with interpretation for several languages 2-day preparatory meeting of the planning and implementation team
Team evaluation meeting	Evaluation of the whole experience by planning and implementation team, facilitated by the evaluator, and focusing on relevant information they can bring to the table	2-day preparatory meeting of the planning and implementation team
Preparation and publication of the Evaluation Report	The evaluation of the pilot will be ongoing through the whole process	Costs of publication and dissemination

Scenario 3: a minimalist scenario with direct outreach to 100 participants and restricted budgetary options

The third and minimal scenario involves a traditional Long Term Training Course, enhanced with components that are already being implemented by other programmes, to be run out of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe, in cooperation with other institutions. In this scenario, would be looking at an international cohort of max. 35 participants per cycle, and with three cycles over 6 years can reach the desired scale of 100 participants. Given that this scenario should involve restricted budgetary implications, we are not proposing an external pilot evaluation. Rather, a final educational evaluation can be organised and run alongside the training course, relying heavily on evaluator presence at the training seminars and interaction with the training team. Additional components (such as internships or job shadowing) and project funding will be provided through negotiations with partners who have existing programmes that can offer added value to the RYA. Follow-up projects could focus on cascading the training to additional participants or on the policy dimension.

The main elements of the structure are outlined in the following table, along with information about the possible cost implications.

Step	Details	Cost implications
Formation of the internal YD team	The planning and implementation team will be responsible for preparing and implementing the overall framework of the Roma Youth Academy on behalf of the Youth Department and its partners. It is made up of Youth Department Staff. They are responsible for developing an explicit theory of change for the RYA based on existing material, including and especially the feasibility study.	1 YD admin / programme staff member (50%) 1 YD Educational Advisor (30%)
Establishment of the catalogue of support measures that participants will have access to from other institutions and programmes	This catalogue will include all components mentioned in the original concept - internships and job shadowing - targeted project funding - special grants for organisational development - mentoring - etc.	Direct negotiations with relevant partners to secure a variety of commitments for funding projects, providing internship placements, mentoring, etc.
Recruitment of the evaluator and the training team	Open call to recruit trainers and evaluator to be working as a team	Fees and relevant travel expenses for the evaluator (full participation in the LTTC seminars to the extent feasible) Fees and relevant travel expenses for the training team (4 or 5 persons) for - 2 x 7 - 10 day seminars - Preparatory work in between seminars - Work on the online platform - Communication and support to participants in the project phase - Limited number of regional meetings with participants - 2 x prep meetings of 3 days - 1 x evaluation meeting of 3 days

Step	Details	Cost implications
Call for participation and selection	Targeted dissemination and recruitment procedure involving several steps organised centrally from the YD. Selection of max. 35 participants from any member state of the Council of Europe English or another foreign language is a requirement; LTTC is organised with interpretation into 3 languages (chosen based on majority of applicants'/participants' abilities)	Conducted by the YD staff team Several steps including - in depth review and summation of applications - interviews with applicant organisations - online assessment centre - language assessment
Curriculum development process, informed by a pre-formulated theory of change	A rigorous process LTTC curriculum development conducted by the internal YD team and through which the change that the RYA should achieve is gamed out among stakeholders of the Roma youth sector and relevant partners, taking into account the chosen scenario. Identification of the training needs based on information gathered from the application process Adaptation of the CoE Portfolio for Youth Workers to the needs of the LTTC to ensure a certification process is in place	1 planning meeting of 3-4 days at the one of the EYCs, involving the YD internal team, the selected training team and the evaluator, to develop the course framework in line with the theory of change, to plan the first seminar, and participant preparation, and to develop the evaluation methodology so that it does not interfere with the course
Initiation the online communication and facilitation platform and initial preparation and orientation of participants	Using existing infrastructure, initiating participants into the use of the platform, primarily for communication, mentoring and maybe some facilitated e-learning activities (depending on identified added value)	Establishment of relevant online infrastructure within existing platforms for the mentoring component
Identification of mentors	Recruitment through partner organisations of high profile volunteer mentors with relevant language and thematic knowledge to work with between 1 - 5 mentees from the course depending on the time they can devote and on the needs of participants (in terms of expertise)	Direct negotiations with relevant partners to secure commitment to the whole duration of the programme on the part of mentors. Mentors could be prominent Roma activists (but not only) and professional who could serve as role models to mentees. Some funds to facilitate face to face meetings of mentors and mentees (individual or in small groups)
Initiation of mentoring	Mentoring runs in parallel to other RYA activities through the whole period; some mentoring activities may take place face to face, with individuals or in groups, depending on the availability of volunteer mentors	See identification of mentors and initiation of online communication for costs associated with this step

Step	Details	Cost implications
Implementation of the LTTC	3 phases comprising - introduction training course - project implementation phase including regional meetings of participants on a needs basis or 'study visit' to another participants' project - mid-term training seminar - evaluation phase The desired focus of the projects within the RYA would be organisational development, youth empowerment/participation or specific social impact in the community.	Funds for social impact projects are made available on a challenge grant funding basis by the European Youth Foundation or another grant-making donor Team have the opportunity to meet before each seminar and possibly during the project phase
Identification, acquisition and conducting an individual professional development placement	Participants are supported to apply for their preferred professional development placement with the support of their mentor and the YD team. They can choose from the previously established catalogue and will be encouraged to take up a placement which involves international mobility if this is financially feasible for them.	Placement stipends and costs for mobility for up to max. 35 participants. These can be covered by the YD or by hosting institutions, depending on the result of negotiations between the YD and its partners. Participants can also be supported to use Erasmus+ opportunities like EVS and Leonardo
Follow-up projects initiated by participants	The desired focus of these projects could be cascading the training received to other youth leaders in the community or organisations represented by participants, or on policy issues / change	Funds for social impact projects are made available on a challenge grant funding basis by the European Youth Foundation or another grant-making donor
Evaluation meeting	Team and evaluator meet with YD to evaluate the whole experience	3 day meeting in one of the EYCs
Evaluation report	Preparation and publication of the report	Costs for publication and dissemination

Fundamental conditions for a Roma Youth Academy to deliver

Having gamed out recommendations for the further elaboration of the Roma Youth Academy we would like to conclude the feasibility study with some observations and ideas about conditions for allowing a Roma Youth Academy to deliver its desired impact. These refer back to considerations in previous chapters, and to the discussions during the Consultative Meeting on the Roma Youth Academy, but also and especially to the evaluation of RYAP and to the 2nd Roma Youth Conference.

They are more general in nature. Nevertheless, they are important for articulating the real and very large level of political and financial commitment that is required from the Council of Europe and its partners to ensure that this ambitious and worthy initiative does not end up suffering the same fate as so many previous such initiatives, i.e. that when it comes to actually implementing it, it ends up being done on a shoestring budget, with almost no human resources to ensure its proper implementation and without the full backing of all the relevant political powers and support.

They take into account the fact that to bring any of the three scenarios to fruition at scale requires a variety of partnership negotiations about inter-institutional cooperation and the sharing of implementation responsibility and of funding contributions among partners beyond the Council of Europe. This implies that there needs to be political will on the part of other institutions to engage in a joint venture. This might also imply that the Youth Department of the Council of Europe share relinquish control over the implementation of the Roma Youth Academy, should it emerge that that would be more effective and impactful.

The experience of RYAP is that none of these conditions is easy to fulfil. The Consultative Meeting on the Roma Youth Academy, and subsequent discussions with other institutions running relevant programmes, show that there is interest in cooperation but that until there is a concrete proposal about what the RYA should be, and a clear ask from the other institutions, other programmes will not consider any form of participation beyond the most basic (dissemination of information to their grantees and participants of their programmes).

In our opinion, the following will be ‘make or break’ factors for this initiative.

1. *The long haul …*

The Roma Youth Academy will not have visible impacts beyond those that can be seen in participating organisations and individuals in the immediate term, and this should not be expected. Starting this must mean sticking with it for the long haul. In our opinion, this means the pilot and at least two further editions of up to 18 months each will be necessary to be able to ascertain the deeper impacts on community change, the strength of youth organisations, leadership reproduction and other desired impacts. This means there needs to be commitment to approx. 6 years of intervention, as well as ongoing monitoring and evaluation of at least the pilot. Stakeholders need to be aware of this when which of the scenarios to pilot.

2. *If the impact should be local, then so should the action …*

Extensive impact on the local level, even over the long haul, will not be possible without the action taking place at the local level. It is clear that a purely centralised initiative, such as the traditional LTTC approach suggests will not deliver the level of community and local impact that is desired. We have made several proposals for how to combine international and local dimensions, but this represents something of a new departure for the Youth Department. Partnership with those with more experience in rolling out large scale programmes with both local and international geographies, including those inside the Council of Europe (ROMED and ROMACT), and at least in the phase of programme design, will be essential to underpinning the feasibility of the RYA as a mixed geography initiative.

3. *Training is not enough …*

As discussed extensively, it is clear that a ‘pure’ training initiative is no longer enough to achieve the objective of strengthening Roma youth organisations. This has several reasons, including that individuals often need more support for the whole duration of such initiative, that they are not always so good at multiplying what they learn, that training often does not pay enough attention to supporting the transition from training context to action in the home/local reality, and because the environments in which the participants work are anything but enabling. This implies that a broader programme of support measures should of course include a training dimension, but that it should be considered part of a multidisciplinary programme that is conceptualised as an integrated intervention. This will require extensive partnership with other institutions to ensure that existing infrastructure and programmes can be brought to bear in pursuit of mutually agreed objectives.

4. *Do not do this if the resources required to do it properly can't be brought to bear …*

Everyone reading this study will have heard the saying 'Good, fast and cheap - pick two, because you can't have all three!'. This applies to this new Roma Youth Academy even more than it would to a training initiative and other less complex concepts and programmes. The evaluation of Enter! and RYAP point to the counter-productivity and long term negative impacts of doing things by half measures and on a shoestring. The Youth Department has always risen well to the challenge of doing more with less, but quality is necessarily put at risk. If the minimum resources (human and financial and time) are not available, then it is recommended that the institution and the stakeholders limit their ambitions extensively, start small and with limited impact expectations and rather grow the programme slowly.

5. *The Roma Youth Academy will fail without extensive partnerships and a large measure of political support, including from national authorities responsible for youth and Roma integration*

Further to the above, one resource which the Roma Youth Academy requires in extra-large measure is partnership and cooperation with other institutions that can bring their expertise, established programmes and other resources to bear. Practically every aspect of organising, rolling out and running the different components of even the original concept for the RYA requires contributions from other departments, programmes and activities of the Council of Europe, other institutions, national and even local authorities. The question is how these contributions can be secured, considering the pitfalls of previous experiences such as RYAP and Enter! The institutions that attended the Consultative Meeting on the Roma Youth Academy demonstrated interest, but not a lot of commitment beyond those representing the potential beneficiaries. The Youth Department would be well advised to begin an explicit and transparent partnership building process immediately, first within the Council of Europe and then with external partners. The question is whether something like an institutional steering group for the Roma Youth Academy could be established to support this partnership building process, and engage representatives of all relevant stakeholders and partners, such that decisions about commitments can be expedited.

Feasibility and financial implications of the proposals made

Theory of change development process

It is crucial that this reflection and planning step takes place as the first, at the very beginning of the development of this new initiative. It can be an expensive undertaking, in that it requires the involvement of relatively large number of stakeholders and, likely, several meetings, in addition to the traditional team programme development process. However, with the right partnership approach, different stakeholders could be convinced to host different steps in the process or to cover the cost of their own participation. Several of the institutions most concerned are based in Budapest, which could facilitate the process. Furthermore, with the infrastructure represented by the EYCB, organising meetings is not a major challenge for the Youth Department. The risk, in our opinion, is that there will be pressure to 'get going' and to skip this step, or at least not to invest the necessary time in it, that it really requires. ***This is a high feasibility and medium cost proposal.***

'Organisations' as participants rather than individual activists supported by organisations

The traditional approach of the Youth Department has been to recruit individual participants representing and supported by organisational structures to its training measures, because the assumption has always been that strengthening the competence of the former strengthens the competence of the latter. We propose that the RYA considers changing the approach. Accepting that the field needs an intervention to support the organisational development of Roma youth organisations and initiatives, in general, and specifically to make them more effective in promoting youth participation and empowerment, implies the reconsideration of 'who' or rather 'what' should be participating in the Roma Youth Academy. In our opinion, including organisations as participants, rather than individuals representing and supported by organisations, would be a good starting point for the Roma Youth Academy. Of course, certain components of the Roma Youth Academy would involve individual one or several representatives of participating organisations, especially the training components. However, the ownership for change and improvement would be with the organisation as a whole, and specific aspects of the organisations' needs could be addressed by different components of the Roma Youth Academy. Furthermore, giving priority to organisations embedded in communities, working to address community needs, would give the Roma Youth Academy more of a chance to effect visible change in terms of Roma youth participation.

More targeted recruitment and rigorous recruitment procedure

The above approach has knock on effects for the described options for a more targeted and rigorous recruitment procedure, in whichever mix they might be undertaken. As they are, all are within the experience

and competence of the Youth Department to organise or even to outsource to an implementing partner with presence in the field in the communities that the RYA wishes to target. All the same, and whether recruiting organisations or individual participants, the logistics and therefore the costs that could associated with this are dependent on decisions that are still to be made, including how intensive and extensive the selection process is going to be - in other words which specific mix of methods will be used. If sticking with the approach of working with individual participants representing and supported by organisations, the one major challenge in this regard will, in our opinion, will be the time and human resource investment it will take to actually conduct the selection (reviewing initial applications, preselecting, inviting for full applications, reading, self-assessment / interviews, means-testing / reviewing financial support requests, etc). Even with the use of technology, these are time consuming and require the involvement of several persons including team members that may not be YD staff. If recruiting organisations, there will be fewer discrete applications, but more steps may be necessary (initial application and recruitment of the organisation, relevant screening procedures for different individuals to take part in specific components of the RYA, etc). However, overall, there will be gains to be made for the effectiveness of the RYA and its impact for communities if more attention is paid to recruitment and selection than is currently the practice. ***This is a medium feasibility and medium cost proposal.***

Acknowledging that individuals in organisations might struggle to commit to the Roma Youth Academy

At the risk of contradicting statements made previously, we also have to acknowledge that any initiative to strengthen organisations in the context of even a multidisciplinary support measures programme also depends on the ability of individuals in very different circumstances to commit to the process, whatever that will look like. Youth organisations are made up of young people, usually volunteers, and even recruiting organisations to the RYA will mean working with young people in different settings. Any initiative that foresees multiple residential phases, voluntary work on projects, a variety of events, a mobility phase or an internship potentially away from home, could be difficult for young people living in difficult economic and social circumstances to engage with if they do not receive additional financial support to ensure their livelihood. For the Youth Department this would be very new territory, as it is not mandated to support individuals in that way. There are precedents, however, in the 'compensation for loss earnings' system that the Youth Department operated in the 1990s and early 2000s for young unemployed persons and young workers that lost benefits or wages to attend an event organised in the EYCs. Furthermore, and in the meantime, the European institutions have more than 20 years of experience with long and short term voluntary service, during which young people receive living stipends and support for covering accommodation and other costs. Finally, if taking the organisational participation approach, participating organisations could be provided with grants to ensure that components of the RYA requiring a more intensive and long term commitment (time, voluntary workload, travel abroad) can be undertaken even by those who do not have a regular livelihood or by those whose study and work commitments would normally not allow for such. The precedents mentioned above, and the grant making infrastructure provided by the European Youth Foundation should be sufficient to inform how the Youth Department could go about supporting organisations and their representatives with a lot of potential but who without financial support would not be able to participate. ***This is a medium feasibility and medium cost proposal.***

International through local geography

The programme design is not yet clear. Some of the proposals made about are, indeed, mutually exclusive, so some decisions will have to be made as regards the extent to which the local dimension is supposed to be prioritised. The more local the geography of the initiative, the more managerial capacity and logistical challenges it represents for the Council of Europe, even it has experience of several programmes supporting Roma communities have been rolled out at the local level. Other departments with national and local assistance programmes are often supported by a Council of Europe presence in the capital or by paid project focal points in different communities and localities. The Youth Department also has some experience in outsourcing the national and local implementation of training programmes (HREYP) and has a functional infrastructure of partners with whom it could work to implement a more localised concept for this initiative too. The costs of doing so in several countries in parallel may, however, be beyond the financial capacity of the Youth Department. The question here is whether Member States could be interested in volunteering to host pilot experiences, and to cover the local costs of doing so, or whether a larger actor of the European Roma rights sector, for example, the European Commission, would be willing to weigh in with significant resources in a joint programme. A more localised geographical approach, combined with international components, would also go a long way to bringing the Roma Youth Academy to scale. ***This is a medium feasibility and high cost proposal.***

Foreign language (English) requirement dilemma

It is clear that making English or other foreign languages a requirement of participation, whether individual or organisational, will limit the scope of potential candidates for the Roma Youth Academy. By including local and international components, other initiatives have gotten around this dilemma. Participants are recruited without reference to their language skills for a first phase of activities in country using national language. Participants that show great potential and who can communicate in English or another lingua franca are then given preference for international activities and opportunities. This could also be an approach relevant for the Roma Youth Academy, although it requires a form of 'assessment' of participants that usually would not be considered appropriate in a non-formal education approach. Another alternative is not to conduct international activities, but this would be a missed opportunity for the RYA in our opinion, and it is a key competence of the Youth Department. We made two other proposals in this regard: English preparatory course vs. interpretation for international activities. To a great extent these two are proposed as alternatives to each other. On the one hand, the Youth Department has long standing experience with foreign language training for your workers, leaders and trainers, having run a specialised language training programme in the EYCs and with partners in a variety of countries, for some 20 years. It would be perfectly within its power to organise an intensive English language preparatory course for selected participating organisation representatives whose English is not up to the required working level for international activities. Of course, such an activity still assumes that the participants concerned are 'advanced beginners' in English. Doing so, would in our opinion, also contribute something very concrete to the employability of said participants, and for the profile of the organisations (giving them access to information otherwise not available in their language), and therefore represents added value over interpretation. This option would add an additional component to the RYA and it would involve costs and a work investment equivalent to that needed to organise a study session. Also, we would still suggest that it makes sense to offer English / Romanes interpretation for any residential seminars that are part of any training component or other meetings, as in addition to facilitating participation, the RYA can make a contribution to the promotion of Romanes language and culture. On the other hand, there is the option of interpretation. For any international seminar we would propose the use of 3 - 4 languages to enhance participation, depending on the actual needs and composition of the group. With that kind of coverage, the costs for interpretation are enormous, as there would be several meetings to consider. However, this is the less work intensive to organise for the Youth Department. In the end, the costs for these two options might be quite similar, but the work load for the an English preparatory course is certainly greater. ***This is a high feasibility and high cost proposal.***

Mentoring

Again it is unclear how many mentors and for which aspects and for how much time would be needed at this point. For any training component, we proposed to engage thematic and personal mentors in addition to trainers, and that they participate in at least one residential seminar to meet each other, the team and the participants. This does not mean we need one personal mentor for each participant, but there is a dimension of geography to be considered. Ideal circumstances would be that the personal mentor is located close enough to meet the participants face to face in their organisations. Even with organisations as participants, the total number of mentors needed would be something in the region of 15 for any RYA cohort (7-8 mentors for the participating organisations / individuals and 7-8 thematic mentors), and these would need to be involved over the entire duration of the RYA. These mentors would also need some orientation, some technology infrastructure for communication with each other, the team and the participants, sufficient time resources to provide their mentees with quality support. Furthermore, not all will be in a position to do mentoring on a voluntary basis. This said, the Youth Department has developed quite a lot of experience through the Enter! process with mentoring systems and has resources it can fall back on for the development of this one. It can be hoped, that once it is set up and running, the mentoring system should not require extensive management. ***This is a high feasibility and medium cost proposal.***

Job-shadowing and internships

Our proposal is to use existing the infrastructure and programmes of the Council of Europe and other institutions to facilitate this component of the RYA, which represents added value for the participants and is potentially a key incentive to stick with the RYA for the duration. The major challenge here will be the logistics of organising placements (in the same time period) and financing the costs involved for the participants (especially if there is mobility involved, which would be of great added value to participants and their organisations). This said the European institutions now have 30 years of Erasmus student mobility and 20 years of European Voluntary Service under its belt. So, we believe this should not be the make or break factor. Furthermore, Roma specialised internship programmes are in place in the Council of Europe and were until recently in the European Commission, and other institutions also have formalised internship programmes that could be put to the service of the RYA. Making sufficient placements in any given year cannot be such an enormous challenge if the political will is there among the partners, even if living stipends for a mobility component might be. If a mobility component proves impossible, then local internship

opportunities should be sought. If organisations are to be participants, 'participant swap' internships or job shadowing could be organised, whereby participants of the RYA from one organisation in one locality swap places with participants from another in the same locality to see how they do their work. Our proposal is that the participants are responsible for organising a placement themselves with support from the RYA and its partners - information, help making applications, help researching funding, etc. This will reduce the amount of work this would represent for the YD. However, its feasibility does depend on the cooperation of other institutions and their willingness to also provide financial support for internship and job-shadowing stipends, in addition to that which the Youth Department can bring to bear. ***This is a high feasibility and medium cost proposal.***

Projects

The project dimension is something that the Youth Department has extensive experience of managing over 30 years of Long Term Training Courses. Irrespective of whether the training component of the RYA takes the form of an LTTC, and of irrespective of whether the projects are coupled to training, the question here will be how to ensure that participant projects have a fighting chance of happening in a less than advantageous funding situation. Our proposal is to make the effort to develop a specific funding line under the European Youth Foundation (all be it with a competitive process; projects would need to meet the criteria and compete with each other and maybe even other, non-RYA project proposals) and to piggy back existing funding mechanisms, such as OSF grant making, by developing strategic partnerships with other institutions. This will require a lot of time for negotiation and partnership building on the part of Youth Department staff and the political stakeholders, and will require decisions to be made in the Statutory Bodies governing the European Youth Foundation. However, it should not require the acquisition of new cash funds, even if the ideal scenario would be that a Member State makes a large voluntary contribution for this purpose or that another actor of the sector weighs in with additional cash resources to make the fund available over a longer period of time (say 5 years). ***This is a high feasibility and low cost proposal.***

Developing an alumni component

Alumni affairs is a time consuming and expensive business to get going. The key to it, in the case of new initiatives, however, is to develop the concept for Alumni affairs within the programme design and to take some steps to facilitate later Alumni affairs already in the preparation and roll out of the initiative. In the case of the RYA, this refers to some formal preconditions, such as ensuring that participants are in agreement with the longer term storage of their contact information as well as putting in place the necessary technology for ensuring that digital networking is possible (database of contact and other information, online form for updating contact and other information, communication technology, etc). However, it also means some social aspects, like working on the idea of Alumni affairs with participants in the pilot phase to game out what they might be interested in and why, and how this might be achieved together, etc. Later in the process this might require more facilitation and time, but at this point ***this is a high feasibility and low cost proposal.***

APPENDIX 1 - Overview of Programmes in Support of Roma young people

Programme & Institution	Key features of the programme relevant for Roma youth participation and empowerment	Reference material

Roma Youth Action Plan, Council of Europe	- Multi-year and multi-action, European level programme with training, capacity development, grant-making, policy and advocacy components
	- Specific support programme to strengthen Roma youth participation:
	  - fostering Roma youth empowerment
	  - participation of young people in policy and decision-making processes and structures from European through local levels
	  - strengthening the Roma youth movement
	- Informed by an intersectional social analysis that considers multiple realities of Roma youth, including the fact that they are often confronted with multiple discrimination
	- Takes a 'double mainstreaming approach', i.e. mainstreaming youth in Roma agendas and mainstreaming Roma in youth agendas
	- Key partners are the Roma youth led organisations
		RYAP Evaluation Report link
		Roma youth conference report, October 2015 link
		Roma youth conference documentation link
		Roma Youth Participation Study link

Enter! Access to Social Rights for Young People, Council of Europe	- Multi-year European level training programme to support the development of youth policy and youth work responses to situations of exclusion, discrimination and violence affecting young people, particularly in multicultural disadvantage neighbourhoods - Not a specific support programme to strengthen Roma youth participation, but works on inclusion of young people experiencing different kinds of disadvantage (many Roma youth have this experience) - Informed by an intersectional social analysis that considers multiple realities of exclusion, violence and discrimination experienced by young people - Considers the physical and geographical disadvantage created by segregation, distance to the cultural and political centre, etc - Uses social benefit projects as a vehicle for changing access to social rights of young people, thereby learning about access to social rights - Works from the premise that social rights are human rights - Assumes the necessity of working with local policy actors to effect change	Enter web site link Enter project report link

Programme & Institution	Key features of the programme relevant for Roma youth participation and empowerment	Reference material
ROMED1 "European Training Programme in Intercultural mediation for Roma Communities", Joint Programme, Council of Europe and European Union	- Multi-year joint programme between the Council of Europe and the European Commission (2011 - 2013) - Aimed to improve the capacity of the intercultural mediators working in the Roma communities by addressing the quality and effectiveness of their work - Supported better communication and cooperation between Roma individuals/families/communities and public institutions such as schools, healthcare providers, employment offices and municipal social services - Worked through intensive interaction with local communities to assess needs and train mediators in relevant skills for supporting communities - Developed mediation support infrastructure in the communities that is having lasting effect - Most of the mediators trained are quite young, even if the programme does not have youth participation / empowerment as a primary objective - Mediators are also working with young people, for example, young Roma families which contributes to empowerment in the community and to positive social impacts - Project contributed positively to the employability of young Roma mediators, even if employment was not always the result - The work done by the mediators and their new skills strengthened community structures (some being NGOs) although not specifically youth NGOs or the youth movement - In some local contexts where the mediators have been active, public authorities and Roma communities begun to overcome deep mutual prejudice and suspicion - Worked on a large scale across participating countries and its regions of engagement (22 countries, 1500 trained mediators, of which 1258 received certification, curriculum translated into 20 languages, 700 representatives of local and national institutions reached / involved, a Europe-wide pool of trainers in mediation created, more than half of which are Roma themselves, developed infrastructure for peer networking, etc) - Brought significant financial and logistical resources to bear through institutional partnership and decentralised implementation	ROMED external evaluation report link

Programme & Institution	Key features of the programme relevant for Roma youth participation and empowerment	Reference material

ROMED2 "Democratic Governance and Community Participation through Mediation", Joint Programme, Council of Europe and European Union	- The second phase of ROMED developed upon the achievements and learnings from the first:
	  - investing in local processes to enhance the participation of Roma in local decision making;
	  - stimulating the self-organisation of Roma communities into community action groups (CAGs)
	- It developed structured processes of dialogue and cooperation between local authorities and CAGs to identify community priorities and suggested initiatives for addressing them
	- Young people, youth leaders and the previously training young mediators were actively involved in the development and actions of the community action groups, although their objective was not to promote youth participation
	- Works on a large scale across participating countries and its regions of engagement
		ROMED external evaluation report link

Ad Hoc Committee of Expert for Roma and Travellers Issues (CAHROM), Council of Europe	CAHROM is the Council of Europe's intergovernmental body focusing on Roma and Travellers' issues. Its programme of activities focuses on the analysis and evaluation of the implementation of national policies of Member States and thematic exchanges of experience and good practices among members: - Increasingly engaged with the 'double mainstreaming' agenda promoted through RYAP - Developed a Thematic Report on the Roma Women and Young People among other issues - Nominated a 'rapporteur' on Roma youth, although that governmental expert is neither Roma nor young - Encourages governments to engage with youth leaders in the further development, implementation and evaluation of national strategies on Roma inclusion or integration - Has improved practice of some national decision making bodies involved in the promotion of Roma inclusion as regards taking young Roma's issues into account, even though its advice and expertise is not binding for any government	Thematic reports link

Programme & Institution	Key features of the programme relevant for Roma youth participation and empowerment	Reference material
Roma Education Fund, Scholarship Programmes and support for the Romaversitas Foundations	The Roma Education Fund was established to close the gap in educational outcomes between Roma and non-Roma by supporting policies and programmes which ensure quality education for Roma, including the desegregation of education systems. Five main lines of action to improve Roma young people's educational access and attainment including - a project support; - a reimbursable grant scheme to help Roma NGOs and local governments access EU funds for the purpose of Roma education; - a policy development and capacity building programme which supports activities that help create a framework for dialogue with governments and civil society on education reform and Roma inclusion; - and a communication and cross country learning programme which includes activities to promote the exchange of knowledge on education reforms and Roma inclusion. The Scholarships programme is the most important from the perspective of empowering Roma young people. Through a merit based competition Roma students pursuing Bachelor, Master, or Doctorate degrees at state-accredited universities in 16 countries in Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe, as well as Turkey receive funding to cover costs associated with tertiary education. REF operates 4 scholarship programmes including one general scholarship programme and three specialised ones for studies in law and the humanities, health, and abroad. REF works with Romaversitas Foundations to improve the retention, performance and graduation levels of Roma full-time tertiary education students by providing them with academic tutoring and mentoring and to help strengthen their Romani identity and community participation.	Roma Education Funds website link Strategy paper of the Roma Education Fund link Five Models Shaping REF Grants and Policy link A Tracer Study – The academic and professional trajectory of REF's Law and Humanities Scholarship Program Student-Beneficiaries link The Role of the Roma Health Scholarship Program (RHSP) in The Academic and Professional Trajectory of its Beneficiaries link

Programme & Institution	Key features of the programme relevant for Roma youth participation and empowerment	Reference material
Roma OSCE/ODIHR Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues	The Roma and Sinti Youth Initiative was launched in 2013 with the aim of stimulating Roma and Sinti young people, groups and organisations to be agents of change in their communities through volunteerism at the grassroots level. It engages in activities to counter the discrimination and exclusion that young people from Roma and Sinti communities face in many OSCE countries. So far the programme has: - organised several training activities; - convened a specialised conference on Roma youth activism, participation and security issues; - published reports authored by young Roma scholars themselves; - and issued calls for grant applications, which have attracted significant attention from Roma youth initiatives in eligible countries.	OSCE/ODIHR website link Conference report – Activism, Participation and Security among Roma and Sinti Youth link
Best Practices for Roma Integration project, Joint Programme, EU-OSCE	Best Practices for Roma Integration (BPRI) was a regional project for the Western Balkans from 2012 - 2014. The BPRI project facilitated co-operation between local and national governments, independent institutions and civil society to make progress on commitments made by OSCE participating States that are also interested in joining the EU to Roma integration and inclusion. - Participation in political and public life and decision-making - Combating discrimination and promoting visibility for Roma communities - Access to legal aid - Legalization of housing and settlements - Combating discrimination and promoting visibility for Roma communities - Regional co-operation. The project did not have a specific youth dimension or objective but promoted general aims of participation and empowerment.	Project website link Council recommendation on Roma women and youth Project documentation and report link

Programme & Institution	Key features of the programme relevant for Roma youth participation and empowerment	Reference material
Roma Access Programme of the Central European University	The Roma Access Programme (RAP) helps promising Roma students to realise their full academic and professional potential. RAP has two components: the Roma Graduate Preparatory Programme (RGPP), which prepares graduates to go on to further studies, especially at CEU, and the Roma English Language Programme (RELP), which prepares prospective Roma post-graduate students for their studies in English. The long term goal of RAP is to prepare outstanding Roma students to serve as role models for the Roma community overall.	Programme website link Roma Graduate Preparation Programme link Roma English Language Programme link Roma in European Societies programme
Roma Initiatives Office, Open Society Foundations	The Roma Initiatives Office invests in building the capacity of an emerging generation of young men and women to take a leadership role by involving them in voter education and community mobilisation campaigns, and providing training that gives Roma activists the skills and confidence to be a force for social change. In partnership with the Roma Education Fund and other donors, it provides opportunities for postgraduate study in the Roma Access Programmes run by Central European University in Budapest. The work of RIO is organised into three portfolios: - Paruvipe portfolio (“change”), which supports advocacy aimed at influencing public decision making, service delivery, and state responses to acts of hate and violence. - Zoralipe portfolio (“strength”), which provides grants for start-up organizations, including young Roma graduates who wish to to establish formal organizations in order to engage in public life for the collective interests of Roma communities; - Barvalipe portfolio (“pride”), which supports Roma graduates to learn about their identity and heritage as Roma as a vehicle for developing their public leadership commitment and capacity (see detailed case study) Young Roma and their initiatives/organisations are a primary beneficiary group of RIO’s investments	RIO Website link

APPENDIX 2 - Case Studies of Educational Programmes promoting youth participation and empowerment

	Open Society Foundations - Roma Initiatives Office (RIO): Barvalipe Component
What is the project?	The Barvalipe component of OSF RIOs overall programme promotes Roma identity and pride among Roma graduates who wish to commit to the service of Roma rights and community development, through a series of interventions to foster public leadership. The project format has evolved over the years since its establishment, from an international summer camp where Roma graduates learned Roma culture, to express their identity and developed ideas about how to work together, to the organisation of nationally anchored Barvalipe Schools, through which Roma NGOs receive funding to develop the confidence, competence, self-reliance and pride of Roma university graduates between the ages of 25 and 35 through a diversity of regular and punctual educational and project oriented activities.
What is the project for?	The aim of Barvalipe is to promote identity building, pride and commitment among young Roma graduates who wish to progress from scholarship to public leadership. It is a contribution to the achievement of the overall aim of the Roma Initiatives Office of OSF, which invests in building the capacity of an emerging generation of young Roma men and women to take up roles as advocates of Roma rights. The programme has three main objectives (four are presented below) to which different activities contribute: - articulate a collective narrative of the historical achievements of Roma intellectuals and leaders; building pride in belonging to Roma communities that are rich in diversity but share much and are able to resist oppression; nurturing self-worth, self-definition, and self-respect; and finding strength to imagine a better future and deepen their own desire to search for dignity and fulfilment; - build a sense of collective purpose among various communities, local cultures, and political orientations: the schools should help with critical reflection about the key collective challenge of the Roma in each country, and promote courage, a sense of urgency, and a shared commitment to engaging throughout the school; the groups should transform the brilliance of individuals into the brilliance of the collective; - promote young Roma's leadership confidence: the schools should not define leadership as people in positions of formal authority; they should promote leadership as readiness to take the risk and responsibility of working with others to act upon a collective purpose and accumulate the collective power of knowledge, skills, time, connections, and material resources; - build a community of mutual support through Alumni and other networking activities to ensure that impact of these investments young graduates become self-sustaining and have lasting effect for the Roma community at large. Main activities (have) included: - Barvalipe Summer Camp: From 2011 - 2016, OSF RIO organised 3 biennial Barvalipe Roma Pride Summer Camps. Young Roma from all over Europe came together for ten days to learn together about their culture, history, and achievements; - Barvalipe Schools: Since 2011, and in a two year cycle, Roma NGOs in 9 countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans were invited to propose projects for funding to organise Barvalipe Schools, which are focused on offering Roma graduates the opportunity to develop their public leadership skills with other Roma graduates aged 25 - 35 through regular activities over a period of 12 months, in addition to opportunities to participate in punctual training, internships, research, etc. Since 2016, Barvalipe Schools are being organised in cooperation with Romaversitas Foundations in a number of countries on a pilot basis to foster the integration of OSF and REF efforts to promote the educational and social empowerment of young Roma leaders. The focus of the Schools is to foster advocacy and exercising leadership in real situations. RIO is also trying to foster peer networking among Barvalipe Schools and supports some international activities to that effect; - Individual fellowships: Approx. 8 young Roma scholars are offered funding to conduct research or further scholarship on issues of their choice each year.

	Open Society Foundations - Roma Initiatives Office (RIO): Barvalipe Component
What has the project achieved?	- Approx. 150 Roma graduates have had the opportunity to participate in Bravalipe Summer Camps and Barvalipe Schools to date; - The strength and confidence of these young Roma public leaders has been increased; - A sense of collective purpose is emerging among this generation of Roma public leaders; - Demand for support of specific public benefit projects is increasing from this emergent community of practice.
What worked?	- In building the pride of young Roma in their identity as Roma, the programme has contributed to decreasing stigma, promoting confidence, motivating the participation of young Roma leaders; - Young Roma are becoming role models for their younger peers; - Young people understand that Roma can have many different identities, and still work together to develop and promote the rights of the Roma community; - Young Roma graduates involved in this programme as more likely to engage in public benefit activities on / around Roma issues; - Young Roma public leaders and advocates are being taking more seriously both inside and outside the Roma community; - The local embedding of the nationally anchored Barvalipe Schools helps to ensure the link and connection of Roma public leaders to the communities they claim on whose behalf they wish to advocate.
What did not work?	- The international only approach of the Summer Camps and other initiatives was not making the best of the resources it used up - the impact in terms of grass roots organising was not satisfactory; - Scaling this programme up, despite the availability of considerable resources, has been a challenging process - since 2011, 150 young people engaged in the active Barvalipe community of support; - Keeping participants engaged with community and public leadership - the transition from scholarship to leadership remains very challenging.
What could be relevant for the Roma Youth Academy?	- The strong emphasis on cultural identity and pride as a pre-requisite for developing the sense of collective purpose as a pre-requisite for public leadership; - The School rather than punctual training approach - engaging young leaders over longer periods of time in more regular activities in their local environment helps them to stick with the intervention for the duration and to maintain the connection to the community on whose behalf they are advocating; - The national anchoring of the programme in Roma NGOs that act as implementers is having a positive impact on the strength and sustainability of those NGOs; - The community of support also receives support for its own initiatives. Access to additional resources for their projects once they are no longer directly involved in a Barvalipe School, i.e. for Alumni, is pushing the public leadership and advocacy agenda forward; - The programme is leveraging other international opportunities for personal, professional, academic and leadership development and making them available / known to Alumni of Barvalipe - these are an incentive to stay involved and active.
Which a direction is the project expected to take in the future?	Bravalipe is expanding its support for the development of identity, pride and commitment of young Roma leaders through strategic in-country - currently it is providing project funds to RomaVersitas centres in three countries to extend their community building dimension.

	National Democratic Institute - Regional Roma Initiative
What is the project?	NDI's regional Roma initiative launched in 2004. Its main premise is that if Roma gain political influence, government responsiveness to Roma-related issues will follow. NDI's initiative operates in Bulgaria, Hungary, Kosovo, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Slovakia. NDI has worked with more than 3,000 Roma activists, in capital cities as well as at the village-level, providing training and guidance in civic education, political activism and election campaigning. The project equips Roma for entering politics by joining mainstream political parties; undertaking grassroots and national advocacy campaigns to secure their human rights and change public attitudes; and for the tasks involved in public office, including steering public policy toward pro-Roma outcomes.
What is the project for?	The programme has three main objectives: - to enhance and advance the leadership and political advocacy skills of Roma community leaders - to strengthen Roma political representation of Roma in relevant decision making bodies nationally and locally - to channel Roma civic engagement in the direction of mainstream inclusion The programme operates across a wide region and the Roma communities in each country have specific needs. The programme, therefore, operates with different activities in pursuit of these objectives in these. The specific needs and country strategy are developed based on baseline assessments of the political representation and inclusion challenges in each context. Nevertheless, the methods of work are similar across all countries. These include: - Knowledge transfer: through a complex training offer involving several phases and tasks over 6 months, and a variety of additional activities - Technical assistance: to improve access to the political sphere - Financial support: to ensure action Some international activities are organised to engage participants from all countries. These include peer exchange and bi/multilateral activities. This initiative is not specifically focused on young Roma, but most of its participants are young people.
What has the project achieved?	This programme has: - equipped its participants with skills for civic and political engagement and representation - engaged more than 3000 Roma, the majority of whom were young at the time of their involvement - enhanced the political and civic participation of these Roma and other members of the Roma communities in which they are active - although this was not a specific objective, as a result of the political representation delivered by participants, the programme has contributed to solving social rights related problems of Roma communities - pursued and promoted the approach of 'Nothing About Us, Without Us!' - encouraged and supported Roma to lead and run activities by themselves - encouraged the replication of good practice from other experiences and groups pursuing similar objectives - transferred knowledge to members of the Roma communities - developed and strengthened the capacity of Roma political parties - created the platforms and conditions for Roma to be elected to office (as local councillors, MPs, etc)

	- established connections between local and national support institutions / donors and Roma community political / civic engagement actors - equipped Roma political / civic engagement with skills to autonomously pursue their strategies through fundraising and organisational development
What worked?	- This programme emphasises taking into account local circumstances of the young people and how they differ between the various communities in different countries in the programme design and in the development of the interventions. This made them more relevant and attractive to the young people and more effective in addressing the objectives of the project; - The approach of supporting structures rather than individuals, even if individuals benefit from participation, has been effective in strengthening conditions for longer term impact and sustainability of political representation, participation and change; - The programme also has policy impact even if this is not the primary objective of change, because being involved in mainstream politics means Roma can influence policies they are not satisfied with; - The programme has been attractive enough to keep Alumni engaged and active. They are an asset to the programme and it is trying to use them actively, because we offer them motivating incentives that they consider relevant; - Even if the organisations go through better and worse times, the programme tries to continue to support them, as this has an impact on the strength and capacity of the community broadly; - The local embedding of the programme in communities and in issues relevant to those has been really important for the ability of participants to maintain legitimacy inside and outside the community; - The bias in favour of practical activities and hands on learning opportunities has been evaluated positively, as is the opportunity to do something concrete.
What did not work?	- The expectation of long term commitment to civic and political advocacy on the part of young people is often not met. Students and youth are in a phase of transition and it is probably not realistic to expect them to commit long term on a voluntary basis in the face of competing priorities; - How to keep current participants active once the programme is over is a challenge, but their continued involvement and activism is important for the organisations and communities they represented during the programme; - The resources available to maintain an attractive offer of incentives for Alumni and former participants are limited - the programme could be doing much more in the way of follow-up activities to keep Alums involved in socially and political relevant projects even if they are not in office, for example
What could be relevant for the Roma Youth Academy?	- Concrete opportunities and support motivate engagement and active participation - Local circumstances require the tailoring of educational / support programmes. This programme takes this as its starting point and as a result has achieved a high level of relevance and wider impact than expected - Consultation and active ownership of the programme by the target group is also important and motivating and a marker for lasting engagement - Rigorous selection procedures including structural embedding of the individual participants in organisations - International activities can be used to incentivise participation and action but should be offered as a kind of ‘reward’ - Active engagement of locally embedded support persons / organisations to help ensure the selection procedure reaches beyond the narrow circle of already active Roma engaged in European / international activities - Partnership with other institutions is most effective

	Roma Education Fund - Romaversitas Programme
What is the project?	RomaVersitas is an academic services and support programme for Roma university students. It provides a combination of after-school tutoring, mentoring, extracurricular activities, and other opportunities for personal and educational growth. The aim is to help Roma students to enter, remain in and graduate from tertiary education. For participating Roma students, RomaVersitas is an important bridge between university and the labor market, as well as an opportunity to develop and express their Roma culture, identity and pride. The first Romaversitas (RV) Foundation was registered in Hungary in 2001, with the objective of providing soft skills for Roma students studying at tertiary and secondary education levels to successfully graduate. Further Romaversitas foundations emerged in Albania (2016), Bulgaria (2014 and 2016), Kosovo (2013), Macedonia (2007), Moldova (2013), Romania (2016) and Serbia (2011 & 2016). Today, there are 15 active Romaversitas Centers in 8 countries. At the time of writing some, 740 active students are using the services of the RomaVersitas network, with more in the process of selection. Concretely, the programme has 3 main components. These are services and support for academic achievement (mentoring, tutoring); services and support for the transition to the labour market (soft skills development, foreign language/English, digital literacy, skills for getting a job) and community building / networking between current students and Alumni.
What is the project for?	RomaVersitas helps Roma university students to enter, remain in and graduate from tertiary education by providing them with academic tutoring and mentoring and professional development services (e.g. English, digital literacy, and career advice and support); facilitating student initiatives (by providing small grants for projects and organising common events); and/or building-up their identity by establishing networks of active Roma students' communities (by creating communication platforms and engaging them in common events).
What has the project achieved?	- Since 2006, around 1,900 students have benefited directly from the services of the RomaVersitas network - The majority of these students have completed tertiary education - Some have gone on to further studies at MA and PhD level - Participating students improved their English language and digital literacy skills - Some have become more active in their communities or in other initiatives beneficial to Roma - Some students are active in NGOs, or set up their own. The programme has helped them to improve the work of their NGOs through the soft-skills they acquired and access to resources for projects - The network has been extended to 8 countries with 15 fully operational RomaVersitas centres, and there is demand for more to be opened - Other stakeholders of the Roma rights sector have expressed the desire to partner with RomaVersitas to promote active Roma youth participation (c.f. recent partnership between RomaVersitas and the Barvalipe programme of the OSF Roma Initiatives Office) - Some students have used the micro-grant opportunity to develop a community relevant project, to participate in conferences or other relevant activities - RomaVersitas students and Alumni are education role models for everyone in their communities

	Roma Education Fund - Romaversitas Programme
What worked?	- Mentoring and tutoring has been essential for the achievement of this programme's results - they not only improve the students' academic results, but help them develop key soft skills associated with better employability - Networking of students has helped them feel as member of a community and more secured in their identity - Career counselling has helped some students / Alumni in their transition from education to the labour market and is much in demand - Students' pride in their Roma identity has been influenced positively by participation in networking activities - More young Roma are better able to take advantage of international opportunities open to young people (for example, Erasmus+)
What did not work?	- Even if many students/Alumni have benefitted from activities aimed at helping them to enter the labour market after their studies, there is no guarantee of finding a job for Roma graduates even with excellent academic results. Factors beyond the control of the programme and of the students play a key role here. For example, a general lack of employment opportunities for graduates in the country and discrimination against Roma. - The desired level of community engagement of students in Roma beneficial initiatives has not been achieved. RV students are usually overburdened by their studies, plus the different extra-curricular activities they participate under the RV program
What could be relevant for the Roma Youth Academy?	- Students involved in this kind of programme have increased social and cultural capital and are well equipped to participate in international training activities; - It is frustrating and de-motivating for Roma graduates who worked hard to get a degree when they cannot find a job. Some might be more inclined to get involved in Roma related work, also on a voluntary basis, if they have a chance to - Roma students appear to be more likely to be active when they can identify with pride with being Roma - in the RomaVersitas context the chance to meet other Roma students and to do something interesting, challenging and useful for the community has contributed positively to their sense of pride and community belonging - Roma students involved using RomaVersitas do not have significant time and energy resources for extra-curricular activities with a heavy study load and sometimes part time jobs to earn money; - Community building works best in the face-to-face setting; it is more motivating and engaging for the young people concerned, but social media is immensely helpful in maintaining contact and keeping each other informed, and almost all the students are using it - There is demand on the part of students for more opportunities to meet and network, and to do something 'good' together, including doing community building projects during their time together, and for training on the civic engagement, community and employability themes.
Which directions is the project expected to take in the future?	In the future, RomaVersitas will put more emphasis on - successful transition of Roma graduates from education to the labour market; - strengthening networking among students and promoting the launch of joint and even cross-border projects; - cultivating student involvement in community relevant projects by providing more opportunities for them to develop a student initiative (with peers in the network, for example). This is also seen as an additional means of fostering their employability because they learn soft skills demanded on the labour market.

APPENDIX 3 - Critical comparative review of the draft Roma Youth Academy concept with proposals for further development and feasibility implications

The previous discussions provide a lot of framework considerations for how to adapt and amend the contents of the current proposal for a Roma Youth Academy. This chapter will try to draw these different aspects together into specific recommendations for amended, different or new features the Roma Youth Academy, in line with the various chapters of the current proposal. On the one hand, these proposals are grounded in the critical insights outlined above. On the other, they are also grounded in the critical review of the current features of the proposed Roma Youth Academy that was briefly presented at the Consultative Meeting on the Roma Youth Academy, along with the proposals that were prototyped by the participants of the Consultative Meeting.

Given the volume of information and for sake of clarity, we have chosen to present this chapter in table format. This provides us with the opportunity to place the existing proposal alongside the new recommendations, as well as to log the critical review points and insights that each new recommendation addresses. It, furthermore, allows us to make additional comments on the feasibility of each of the recommendations. Finally, this allows us to mention possible curriculum contents and activities that could be associated with each recommendation, and to provide at least an indication of what kind of financial investment might be required (cash, human resource, in kind, low, high, etc.).

In so doing, this table provides a fully gamed out basis for programme design, and can be later used in both the strategic and educational planning phases, and can be used to piece together different scenarios for the pilot and full roll out of the Roma Youth Academy.

The table includes sections similar to those presented in the original concept for ease of reading.

It is followed and complemented by a series of reflections on the feasibility and financial implications of the proposals made.

	Original concept	Critical review and assessment	Proposals
Objectives	**General**	Programme design foresees a traditional 'training at the centre' approach, with an LTTC currently proposed - the community of practice needs and wants something more elaborate and comprehensive that can help youth organisations to grow and become stronger Aspects that are within the YD's core competence are not strongly articulated in the original concept, specifically: - developing skills for classical youth work to support youth participation, activism, citizenship - activities engaging young people in positive and non-paternalistic ways - skills for developing the autonomy of young people experiencing exclusion	Develop a comprehensive theory of change for the Roma Youth Academy Consider a programme design that adds value to existing provision of other institutions, and even attempts to integrate them under one roof Consider training as just one pillar of a more complex support measures programme Engage in a rigorous curriculum development process for any training component that anchors ongoing evaluation and monitoring indicators and activities in the programme design from the very outset. Build the RYA educational concept and especially curriculum for any training component from the core competencies of the YD, on the basis of a wide range of evaluative material focusing on relevant educational approaches, in particular - RYAP evaluation - Enter! evaluation - RoMed evaluation - Human rights education youth programme - CoE/EU Partnership work on supporting young people living disadvantage Make extensive use of 'older' training formats run by YD, in to recent learning from the specialised LTTCs including - TC Organisational development and management; - TC Charter - the 50/ 50 training approach Involve experts with experience of other key educational programmes developed within the Roma rights community and that are of interest, in particular NDI, Romaversitas, and OSF Barvalipe.

	Original concept	Critical review and assessment	Proposals
	Develop democratic leadership, self-organisation competence, confidence, pride, community development	The YD has strong competence in training for these objectives OSF can bring extensive resources and expertise to bear through its grant making and Barvalipe Schools approach for the identity, pride and community engagement dimensions of the Roma Youth Academy (i.e. especially participants' projects) Engage with the institutions running other programmes with similar objectives to ensure that unnecessary duplication is avoided	- Articulate building identity and pride strongly in the curriculum and focus activities such as mentoring on developing self-awareness, identity and senses of community belonging among participants and organisations involved in the RYA. - Seek synergies and actively avoid duplication with the Barvalipe Schools programme (participants / themes / priorities). - Develop strategic partnership with OSF to secure a project funding scheme relevant to RYA participants' projects and follow-up actions on themes/challenges close to Barvalipe objectives - Criteria for assessing applicants projects in the selection process could focus on objectives related building cultural pride and identity among youth as pre-requisites for empowerment - Consider new concepts emerging in citizen activism in Europe and globally to underpin the approach to developing democratic leadership of youth organisations and community development (new vs. old power, etc)

	Original concept	Critical review and assessment	Proposals
	Sustainability of Roma youth organisations	The original concept does not define what it means by sustainability of youth organisations. This will lead to misunderstandings about the expected results of this initiative. Sustainability of non-governmental organisations is an unrealistic objective given the state of the 'enabling environment' for civil society in Europe. Financial sustainability of Roma youth organisations (actually any youth organisation) is a myth.	The definition of the term sustainability of Roma youth organisations should be extensively debated and defined explicitly in the process of developing the RYA theory of change. Clear indicators for what aspects of sustainability should be achieved with this intervention must be set at the outset. Improved quality of the work of Roma youth organisations is a reasonable demand. Stronger emphasis on organisational development could be an approach, addition to individual competence and capacity development of youth leaders, workers and activists. This could be achieved by understanding organisations as participants rather than individuals. Benchmarks for what improved quality of the work of Roma youth organisations and for impact on Roma youth participation and empowerment need to be set as part of the conceptualisation of the theory of change, and applied on an ongoing process through the pilot edition of the RYA.

	Original concept	Critical review and assessment	Proposals
	Community and social change on the local and national level	The RYA is proposed as a programme of requiring 16 - 18 months of direct participation. Even in the context of the traditional LTTCs that would usually be used to ensure project based learning and community outcomes, the project is usually initiated but rarely not completed and ongoing evaluation of impact over time, including after the completion of the training, are usually not included. The objective of 'change' may be too ambitious.	Ensure that the conceptualisation of the RYA makes explicit what the expectation on participant/organisation and their projects regarding social change is, and make it realistic. Incremental change, improving the life circumstances of young people in communities 'a little bit', offering them opportunities for participation they would normally not have, addressing localised but pressing needs, starting dialogue with authorities, making efforts to anchor these changes within broader strategies or policies and reassessing organisational strategies for addressing social change in the community is quite ambitious enough. Require that participant/organisations are embedded in some kind of community of young people, that they themselves are 'members of that community', and that they articulate specific needs of those young people they to address through the RYA projects. Require some form of link / engagement with public authorities whose work is impacting on the lives of the communities concerned (joint projects, tandem participation, etc).
		The YD project based training approach (typically the LTTCS) is excellent in developing projects grounded in a solid social analysis and at training skills for doing needs based project development. They are less effective in supporting the transition from training to action in communities.	Additional support will be necessary to ensure participant/organisation projects actually get off the ground. It is always a fine line to walk between 'hand holding' and effective support for action, and this should be conceptualised in the programme design, especially when it comes to defining the profile and tasks of mentors and how they are supposed to interact with participants/organisations. Any project development and implementation component should include more explicit and strategic analysis of the chances for implementation, and possible challenges faced by both participants/organisations, should be gamed out explicitly. The development of strategies for mitigating such challenges should be prioritised as part of any training input.

	Original concept	Critical review and assessment	Proposals
		As a multi-lateral and intergovernmental organisation, the Council of Europe is constrained in working within countries, especially at the local level. Several evaluations show that in the case of Roma participation and empowerment this is an important pre-requisite for impact. Furthermore, multi-stakeholder approaches, including the widest possible range of stakeholders and especially local authorities, are also essential. This has never been easy for projects organised directly from the European level by the secretariat of the YD, although there are other experiences (notably ROMED). Participants are usually required to have the support of their organisation and / or a local authority, but this does not ensure those institutions effectively in support participants and their projects.	It will be important to structurally anchor a local and multi-stakeholder approach in the programme design. This can be done in a number of ways: - favour organisational participation, rather than individuals supported by organisations - recruit participants in pairs on the 50/50 principle - representative of a Roma youth NGO paired with a representative of the local authority in the municipality where they are active; - make a key criteria for project assessment in the application process engagement of a variety of stakeholders in the project (i.e. a convincing demonstration of the commitment of several stakeholders relevant to the local community); - recruit several participants from each of several organisation in select and targeted municipalities and invite local authority representatives to take part in select parts of the training with the participants from their municipalities (project development and evaluation phases); - include a phase in the programme design that takes the RYA into the municipalities, for example, through visits to municipalities to conduct activities including municipal authorities and other community stakeholders (confidence building measures, for example); - roll out the programme simultaneously in several countries, bringing together several stakeholders from several communities for initial face to face activities with national Roma trainers / mentors / activists, and culminate with an international activity; - run the RYA on the upward or downward cascade principal, initiating the RYA at either the European level then cascading activities down to the local or in the other direction.

	Original concept	Critical review and assessment	Proposals
	Support anti-discrimination work, especially work against antigypsyism	This has always been a mainstay of the Council of Europe and Youth Department approach, but in general the 'local reach' of its campaigning and advocacy work has not been as effective as its mobilisation efforts on the European level, and increasingly in the virtual public sphere	This will require the structural anchoring of a campaigning and advocacy dimension in the RYA concept and training curriculum. This could take a variety of forms: - engaging the European level No Hate Speech campaign to address the antigypsyism agenda explicitly - facilitating relationships between the Roma youth organisations and communities involved in the RYA and the No Hate Speech movements in the countries where they are based - making one of the criteria for the assessment of projects a grassroots campaigning / advocacy / combating antigypsyism dimension - providing funds for projects focusing on antigypsyism resulting from the RYA - focusing contents of any training component on approaches to inter-community confidence building measures, breaking down prejudices and intercultural learning across communities in the localities where participant/organisations are embedded -

	Original concept	Critical review and assessment	Proposals
	Enhance the visibility of Roma youth issues in policies and structures	Negative and even racist reporting in mainstream European media have created a negative public image of young Roma as poorly educated, lazy, and criminal. National and local policies towards Roma tend to reflect this approach, seeking to fix the problems of Roma youth if they are mentioned at all. Unfortunately, the Roma rights sector is not effectively addressing this negative public image of young people. It is even being reproduced by well-meaning but paternalistic approaches to the 'inclusion' of young Roma. That Roma young people are treated in practice as the objects of interventions rather than as actors of change is problem at every level of governance Europe wide and even at the European level. The Council of Europe has been at the forefront of supporting young people in raising their voices, and with the 'double mainstreaming' agenda is making a very strong statement about the continued need for the institution to constantly be vigilant about how it addresses Roma young people - in paternalistic or empowering ways. A lot more work is required to ensure that this agenda is adopted even internally within the CoE. Acceptance on the part of the Council of Europe, the YD, and its key partners in the informal contact group that their own track records regarding 'nothing about, without us' have not always been exemplary when it comes to Roma youth is still not widespread (c.f. the CAHROM Youth Rapporteur continues to be neither young nor Roma).	The RYA can be a vehicle for addressing this issue in a more visible manner: - including a strong and more explicit focus of any training component on skills for political and policy advocacy, for public messaging and for strategic engagement with political and policy makers actors, especially at the local level (using latest concepts and knowledge about power dynamics, activism, etc) - deliberately targeting and involve local and national authorities and other stakeholders with the power and mandates to change policies towards local Roma communities, using existing infrastructure (e.g. ROMED and ROMACT) - the stronger and more committed engagement of relevant CoE political stakeholders (CAHROM, DG Justice, CDEJ, SRSG, CLRAE and PA) in the RYA such that they facilitate relationships between RYA participants and the governmental authorities responsible for the elaboration of relevant policy strategies (for example, National Roma Integration Strategies) - Explicit and practical support of CoE political stakeholders for the promotion of the RYA participants projects in their home countries - Direct engagement of CoE political stakeholders with RYA participants in the training context to strategise around how to improve the visibility of Roma youth and their issues in European, national and local policy frameworks beyond those directly targeting Roma (education, health, housing, employment, etc) - More regular and more positive statements by the SRSG concerning the role and importance of Roma youth participation and empowerment and the role youth are playing in fostering it towards the public sphere.

	Original concept	Critical review and assessment	Proposals
Target group/participants	**General** The original concept of the RYA refers to: - **Roma youth leaders** - **Roma youth multipliers** - **Roma youth organisations** - **Roma youth workers** It also refers to the target group as **agents of change in the community** and **agents of social change**	A much more clearly articulated understanding of who these broad groups of Roma youth are is needed to be able to work with them effectively. Many candidates would be young, they work with others, they do youth work, but they don't see themselves as youth workers or youth leaders. Roma youth who have had the opportunity to broaden their horizons are sometimes no longer in a position to work directly in the communities. With the skills they could gain through participation in a RYA, they will have other career path opportunities which no one cannot expect them to overlook. But, this does not necessarily mean they cannot be active. How does this influence the concept of leadership and organisational development the RYA wants to deliver? With the traditional training approach of the YD, there would usually be a limited international intake of approx. 35 participants every two years. Even assuming multiplication through projects, this cannot move the bar on social and community change, and even the leadership transmission belt cannot be guaranteed. So there remains the question of critical mass and the scale of the RYA. Other formats including prioritising organisational participation, localising the concept and roll-out would potentially allow for greater critical mass. Social change is political change. Wishing to engage with social change and equipping Roma youth led organisations for that means they need to be equipped for engaging with power, politics and policy.	Options for the development of the profile of participants and organisations include - working with the idea of the 'sliding personal profile'. At times such candidates are more directly engaged in grass-roots community work, at times less directly, yet they are young, motivated and have the social capital to change something where they are for Roma more broadly, for example through policy advocacy or even research - working with the idea of the classical 'volunteer youth workers'. They have both the functions of both youth leader and youth worker. The new CoE youth work portfolio could be very relevant for defining this profile; - accepting team applications from include 2/3 participants from one organisation, one locality or one community that work on one project. They could be people with different responsibilities and profiles. Even local authorities could be involved. It fosters support of a wider group of stakeholders, spread ownership for the project and support critical mass; - study the needs of the applicant organisations carefully by engaging in a more rigorous and demanding application process (see below) and by asking pertinent questions: who are they? what are their characteristics and needs? how are issues of representation and legitimacy being addressed in the work they do? what is their understanding of participation and empowerment? what kind of multiplication are they able to do? what would they need to do it better / wider / to the scale we are concerned about? what is their personal and organisational agency? what challenges do they face?

	Original concept	Critical review and assessment	Proposals
Recruitment/selection	**Profile of participants** The original concept outlines the following: - proven record of community leadership - experience with Roma youth and skills for working with them - clear vision of desired social change - practicing social and political activism - organisational background or formal support structure at the local level - motivation - available for residential seminars - ready to dedicate 75% of their time for duration of the course (16 - 18 months)	The initial concept assumes individual participation with the support of an organisation. The most pressing question that arises about the criteria for the recruitment and selection of RYA participants is the 'grassroots' vs. 'elite' dilemma. There is a clear need and desire to extend opportunities to a much wider group of young people working for change in their Roma communities. Many stakeholders of the sector feel that young Roma working at the front lines in Roma local communities can meet the demands of this profile in terms of - level of English language competence sufficient to participate in an international training; - amount of time available to dedicate 75% of their time for the duration of the course on a voluntary basis; - enjoying life circumstances that would allow them the perspective of participation without risks of dropout over such a long course duration. Those that would meet this profile would not usually be in a position to undertake time intensive extra-curricular activities (for example, students in university, REF Scholarship recipients, Romaversitas participants, CEU students and graduates, current leaders in youth organisations, etc) due to study, work and family pressures. Further, despite the pressing need and demand for support for the professional transition of graduate Roma, the CoE Youth Department does not have the mandate to work on that, even if it can legitimately be a side effect of the RYA.	Considering the discussion of needs and of the aims and objectives, we propose that **hard criteria** for selection of participants/organisations should be: - embedding in a local community of young Roma whom applicants can claim to represent (as a peer); - proven track record of working on Roma youth participation and empowerment directly with other young people using non-formal education or other approaches; - Working level competence in spoken English, French, Spanish, Russian and / or Romanes. The final participant group composition should determine which languages will be used for 3-way simultaneous interpretation during face to face meetings of the complete international group or commitment to participate in a specialised 2 week English language preparatory course for advanced beginners, prior to the beginning of the RYA; - availability and commitment to 100% participation in all residential meetings for the duration of the RYA. Other **'softer' criteria** could be organisational needs analysis, motivation, clear vision of the desired social change, practicing social and political activism, and self-identification as Roma. While the majority of participants should themselves self-identify as Roma some non-Roma allies are required to ensure the intercultural dynamic. 'Team' or 'organisational' applicants should be considered, instead of 'individual' ones that are the norm for LTTCs. If individuals, then they must come with the full backing of some kind of organisational structure with whose support the project will be developed and implemented (youth initiative, organisation, community, school, local authority, youth centre.

	Original concept	Critical review and assessment	Proposals
	Recruitment and selection procedure The original concept does not say anything about how recruitment and selection will be done	Previous experiences with recruitment procedures for LTTCs show that with certain target groups, especially those living in difficult circumstances, traditional approaches do not work very well for accessing wide and diverse applicant pools which are embedded in real communities	The recruitment procedure will be essential. We propose that this procedure includes - wide dissemination of the call for participants using a wide variety of means (online, using other institutions presences in local communities, etc) focusing on contacting organisations; - the selection of several hard exclusion criteria and a more intensive screening of short listed applications, including interviews and relevant organisational capacity assessments (could be online, using a Portfolio approach, individual and organisational); - requirement to present an initial youth participation and empowerment project idea or strategy , that has been developed in consultation with young people and with other stakeholders (authorities for example); - alternative/creative approaches to making applications (video message, face to face talks / meetings in the communities, for example) A recruitment process in several steps could also be considered, for example, - pre-selection: short online form and request for a video message of not more than 3 - 5 mins to explain embedding in the community, motivation, organisational capacity and need for RYA and project idea; - request for a full application: this could request more developed application materials (short written project proposal and more detailed application form) from a select group of applicant organisations; - assessment and interview: of these 20% could be invited to the language assessment/online interview or online assessment centre; - final group composition that respects the necessary balances and fosters an intercultural dynamic.

	Original concept	Critical review and assessment	Proposals
	Geographical approach The original concept does not develop upon the geographical approach of the RYA in any detail	Reading the original concept, it can be assumed that the geographical approach of the RYA will involve an international activity at the EYCs of some kind, because this is the traditional approach of the YD. The feasibility study points to the need for more localised and decentralised intervention and management. Geography also impacts on the language of the RYA. Should it be first rolled out locally, then the activities could be run without the need for interpretation. International meetings and components could then be run with interpretation. Nevertheless, any further professional development component focusing on mobility will require a certain level of foreign language skill.	There are several options that could be considered, not all of them mutually exclusive: - recruitment of organisations as participants - recruitment of multi-stakeholder teams of participants from several local communities from a limited number of CoE member states; - running the RYA pilot in a limited number of countries in parallel, with a final phase bringing participants from the different countries together, before rolling it out to all member states; - recruitment of 'local pairs' representing youth organisations and local authorities in line with the 50/50 principle from up to as many as 20 municipalities around Europe; - taking part of the RYA to the local level (i.e. running activities in the localities where participant/organisations are based and involving relevant stakeholders); - or bringing the local level to part to the European level (for example, participants/organisations have to recruit a community stakeholder to attend one residential meeting with them, for example, the evaluation seminar, or a regional meeting of participants and trainers).

	Original concept	Critical review and assessment	Proposals
	Criteria for projects An extensive list of criteria for projects within the RYA are not outlined in the current concept. Currently only sustainability and reproducibility are mentioned in the concept.	It is assumed that the RYA is going to have a project component. It would be the usual practice to develop criteria for project assessment to aid the selection procedure. This means applications are judged on the merits of participants/organisations but also on the merits of their project ideas and proposals. This has been an effective approach for, among others: - calibrating a balanced cohort of projects that can result in social change in the community - an interesting mix of approaches that can favour peer learning during training components - fostering peer support among participants with more and less experience in projects during a project development phase	Beyond the usual and the obvious, the feasibility study points in the direction of several project criteria that could be worth considering. Among others, projects in the RYA could be expected to: - be locally embedded in the needs of a Roma youth community, identified by those young people themselves - foster whole community impact, by seeing Roma issues as part of a wider social and policy context; - involve a strong focus Roma pride, identity and culture - involve a strong focus on participation and empowerment of participants of the projects through learning by doing - involve a strong organisational development dimension - focus on antigypsyism and discrimination - focus on improving intercultural relations and / or community confidence building measures - involve policy stakeholders or a policy dimension

	Original concept	Critical review and assessment	Proposals
Methodology	**General** In relation to methodology, the original concept says that the Roma Youth Academy is: - a multi-disciplinary training programme - and an incubator of ideas and actions with positive results for the local communities that participants come from - double mainstreaming	The Roma Youth Academy aspires to taking a more holistic approach to capacity development in the Roma youth sector. This is a move in the right direction, as all the evidence points to the potential for impact of more integration and coordination between established interventions especially as several of them are promoted by the Council of Europe and other institutions with which it has specific partnerships. Bringing several existing activities under one roof would also serve the purpose of ensuring that best use is being made of existing resources and would give the Roma Youth Academy the opportunity to act as a wider support programme for Roma youth participation and empowerment. It is clear from the discussions at the CM on the Roma Youth Academy that the stakeholders have their doubts that 'just another training programme' programme can improve on current results and impact	We recommend the following in general: - develop a RYA concept that includes training but is not limited to it - engage in a rigorous curriculum development process for any training dimension that includes a wider range of Roma and Roma supporting stakeholders, including those with established programmes, rather than just the selected training team - develop an extensive theory of change for the entire Roma Youth Academy, that can guide the educational approach, evaluation and monitoring (see below) - base the theory of change on ideas about fostering Roma youth participation and empowerment, rather than Roma youth leadership, and embed it in latest knowledge about civil society and social / political change - to the extent possible work from the core competencies of the Youth Department, and rely on other institutions and partners to bring in new or additional components - learn from the pitfalls of previous YD experiences. In particular the Enter! LTTC can be informative for understanding what to avoid in the programme design of the training component - consider ways to use the training offers of other institutions in the youth sector that may not be Roma specific, but nonetheless relevant (for example, SALTO, Erasmus+ / Youth in Action) to provide complementary modules adapted to needs of participants/organisations - foreign language competence is a major hurdle for Roma youth. Consider the development of an English language preparation dimension to precede participation in any international face to face meetings / mobility component for those who need it to ensure equality of access - conduct an extensive mapping of innovative practices in (Roma) youth participation and empowerment in and beyond the youth sector to inform the development of training curriculum

	Original concept	Critical review and assessment	Proposals
	Educational approach The original concept focuses attention on - experiential learning - the practices of non-formal education - participant-centred learning	These are the standard methodological approaches of the Youth Department, and are useful. The original concept does not mention aspects educational innovation, but this should be explored.	Work with more experienced partners to ensure the required focus on Roma pride, identity and culture, for the local dimension and the Alumni dimension (for example, Barvalipe, RoMed and CoE Schools of Political studies respectively) Adaptations to the RYA concept should be considered (local roll out, 50/50 dimension, cascade method, etc) An intercultural dimension should be transversal Intersectionality should be a key principle Organisational development/learning should be a priority Improving social impact of the work of the participant/organisations should be emphasised.
	Certification and recognition The original concept foresees that the participants will receive a certificate of their participation that will reflect their actual achievements, experiences and learning progress.	Considering the reality of Roma youth unemployment, the fact that this programme is likely not to have any form of relevant and widely recognised certification may make it less attractive than other programmes offering diplomas that could contribute to their chances in gaining employment.	In the preparatory phase, seriously game out options for certification using existing frameworks as the basis for innovation: - the new Council of Europe Portfolio - an association with another institution that can accredit certificates in meaningful way (for example, CEU or another university / institute of higher education might be in a position to offer a non-credit certificate) - Youth Pass through partnership with relevant European Commission interlocutors - ISO certification for providers of learning services - Approach of the Quality Label for Youth Centres (i.e. based on the social and political recognition, and critical mass of the consortium partners) This can be integrated into the rigorous curriculum development process proposed above.

	Original concept	Critical review and assessment	Proposals
	Evaluation and monitoring The original concept focuses on the following parameters for the development of the evaluation and monitoring of the RYA - individual learning - organisational development - impact at the community level - sustainability and reproducibility of participants' projects - impact on and of "double mainstreaming"	More than what is to be evaluated and monitored, experience of large scale educational initiatives taking the LTTC format (especially Enter!) show that the development of the evaluation and monitoring process often happens as an after-thought rather than as an integral part of the programme design. The RYA is an opportunity to do it differently.	The theory of change developed to inform the curriculum should inform the development of a matrix of indicators for measuring impact of the RYA. A baseline study developed using information collect through the application process could be useful. The evaluation system and activities should be planned in an integrated manner with the programme of RYA activities. A rigorous collection of statistics about RYA, as well as about qualitative aspects should be ensured. A longitudinal dimension could be foreseen. The pilot should be independently evaluated using the planned system and this should then be adapted based on the experience of its use and applied to future editions. The new evaluation and monitoring system should make good use of existing educational assessment tools developed for and by the youth sector including: - the new Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio - Youth Pass In addition to the items listed in the original proposal, some other key aspects to evaluate could be - extent of integration and synergy between different established programmes of the CoE and other institutions under the RYA umbrella - impact on the leadership transmission belt for Roma youth organisations - the extent to which knowledge about how and why Roma youth participate has been developed - impact on policies and on youth participation in their making / evaluation - change in the nature of the visibility of Roma youth (improved / not improved)

	Original concept	Critical review and assessment	Proposals
Features	**In general**	The RYA, even considering only the originally proposed features, is an extremely ambitious and intensive initiative, and will require a significant degree of coordination and cooperation from other departments of the Council of Europe and several other partners promoting other programmes. Some of the features of the RYA as proposed are not currently under the responsibility of the Youth Department, being implemented by other departments (notably the office of the SRSG). This poses opportunities and risks for implementation. Previous experiences of inter-departmental cooperation within the Council of Europe (not necessarily in the Roma rights field) have been evaluated by all concerned with mixed feelings.	Synergies with other relevant CoE departments and other institutions need to be developed from the outset of the planning of process. They must be involved in programme design, and take ownership for their part of the implementation. With so many different this initiative it may be worth consider a narrow set of learning outcomes to avoid overload, for example: - developing capacity for Roma youth participation and empowerment - strengthening youth organisations to conduct impactful work - forming skills for effective direct youth work - capacity to act in a leadership role
	Personal self-assessment of competence and learning needs	The Youth Department has a proven track record working with methods of self-assessment, and can bring to bear several specialised tools for this purpose. These tend to be individual and focus on youth worker/trainer competence, however. It would be equally important for the participant/organisations to conduct self-assessments of their organisational capacity and competence as a contribution to the overall learning needs assessment for the RYA, and its specific training component. To date none of the Council of Europe self-assessment models (e.g. the new youth work Portfolio) is associated with any process of recognised certification.	Use both the personal and the organisational needs assessments of participants to identify priorities for learning objectives within the curriculum development process. Explore options for participants/organisations to engage in certification of their learning using during the RYA using the CoE frameworks already available or other relevant frameworks. This would incentivise participants/organisations to stay the course and participate to the maximum.

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	E-learning	Previous experiences of e-learning in courses run by the YD have been evaluated with mixed results. Mostly, it was felt that it overloads participants without adding specific value. The question here is whether e-learning per se is what is needed. Should the technology be used for further input or for the facilitation of communication, mentoring, mutual support, and the cohesion of the group?	Technology has to be integral to the RYA, because it is both a relevant working tool for the educational work to be done, but it is also a key vehicle for mobilising and empowering young people. Roma youth organisations and activists need to develop their capacity for using it to best effect in combating antigypsyism, etc. There are various options, but our proposal would be: - consider technology's primary role in the RYA as one of facilitating communication, mentoring, mutual support, and the cohesion of the group - to reduce the distance learning dimension to the absolute minimum (i.e. using it for input and assignments) so as not to overload participant/organisations - use a relevant and easy to use/visually attractive internet platform for knowledge management and archiving, so that all relevant RYA materials are located in an easy to access place that helps to manage communication and notification among the participants - work on how to use it technology more deliberately as a tool for campaigning, participation, collective decision making and advocacy - to think about how to integrate dimensions such as the use of the Portfolio and online mentoring into the platform chosen, so that participants do not have to manage participation in several different platforms simultaneously; - do not forget that many young Roma do not have regular access to high speed internet, and many do not have access to relevant hardware to take part in distance learning. Alternative arrangements may need to be made for such participants, including access to hardware in organisations' / partners offices, etc.

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	Residential seminars	The face to face residential seminars at the European Youth Centres that are integral to most education and training programmes promoted by the YD are among the most relevant and impactful for participants and are evaluated as having major added value in terms of personal learning and development. They also have a couple of key weaknesses if thinking about the objective of strengthening youth organisations in their impact for participation and empowerment of Roma youth - residential seminars have a limited capacity of approx. 35 participants at any time, which has its implications for the critical mass that the RYA can achieve with its traditional approach - residential seminars are per se experiential and 'simulative' in that they create 'artificial' learning environments and communities. This is a marvellous experience for the people who participate but sometimes difficult from the perspective of the transfer of the learning to real life once participants are back in their home contexts A lot of the decisions around how to adapt and improve the traditional residential seminars to the purposes of this special initiative are highly interdependent. For example, the decision making about the geographical approach of the RYA will determine if all, any or just one or other of the residential seminars are organised as 'international seminars' in one of the EYCs. Another example, the decision-making about the profile of participants will determine whether residential seminars will have to be run in one or several languages with interpretation and whether there needs to be a	Consider the following proposals in the decision making about how to structure the RYA's residential training components - ensuring momentum and a high level of participation and activity of participants between the residential seminars is challenging. Technology only helps so much. Special attention should be payed to the pacing of residential phases, and the question of whether more short seminars is more effective for this target group than the traditional two long ones needs to be asked. This has important financial and logistical implications - if the aim is to localise the action and the impact, and to bring the project to scale, it may be relevant to organise one or more residential seminar outside the EYCs at the invitation of a member state or in some local communities where participants are working - there may be need for an English language training component. There is no shortage of expertise in the YD for organising youth work specialised language training. It would have to precede the formal beginning of the training. It would not have to involve every participant, although group coherence might be affected if some participants live and work together before others; - the job-shadowing and internship components of the RYA could take place between residential seminars, if three were planned. For example, participants could run a project after a 1st seminar. After the 2nd, they could attend an internship or a job-shadowing. The entire RYA could be closed off with a final seminar. Ensuring that participants get a placement in the right time frame will be a great challenge - even using a cascade up or down method, some residential training elements / seminars will be necessary. Thought should be given to how to bring these to scale and increase the number of participants beyond the relatively small number that can usually be included

	Original concept	Critical review and assessment	Proposals
		special preparatory phase to develop the core English language skills of participants.	

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	Project development	Project development is one of the mainstays of the YD approach to training especially in the context of the LTTCs. However, the methodology for project development in use has hardly been reconsidered since these courses were first implemented in the early 1990s. This is not to say it is not effective. However, there have been interesting developments in approach that could be considered within any curriculum development process. Furthermore, recent experiences of the YD with training for those working with young people experiencing challenges to their participation have shown the extent to which participatory approaches to project development that involve the target group actively are especially relevant. It will be important to consider how this dimension can be worked into the programme design, if the project development takes place during a residential seminar at one of the EYCs as is traditionally the case.	Options for innovation could be considered as follows: - develop the project part of the RYA using a 'design thinking approach' which favours empathising with the user of the project, action or service, rather than analysing their needs as the first step in the process of developing a relevant intervention - consider how to support participants in engaging in more participatory approaches to project development. This might require more residential inputs of shorter duration so that participants can receive training, go back home to implement what they've learned and come back together to make the next step having their target group behind them all the way. Localised training inputs might be more effective for this.

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	Project implementation	Roma youth empowerment and participation projects developed in the RYA might not happen if there is not specialised funding available for them. One learning from the Enter! process was that it was not worth the while of the participants to make an application to an international fund such as the European Youth Foundation for such localised projects. The investment in making the application was too onerous for the possible outcome. And many of the projects simply would not have been eligible given the criteria in place at the time.	Considering the specificity of the RYA and the kind of projects it would like to see developed by participants, options to consider in this regard include: - a special funding line for Roma empowerment and participation projects under the EYF, albeit under competitive conditions - this could involve a micro-challenge grant making approach - developing strategic partnerships with other grant-making organisations with similar objectives so that RYA projects get special consideration if they meet the eligibility criteria (for example, OSF Zoralipe portfolio) - including modules in the curriculum that provide in depth training in how to make good use of funding schemes available for youth in general for the purposes of Roma youth empowerment - engaging mentors that are close by to support participants and their organisations face to face through the project implementation phase

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	Mentoring	Other experiences show that mentoring has high added value for the learning impact of educational initiatives. It helps participants to remain confident and optimistic and supports them not only with knowledge and practical inputs but with confirmation and empathy. It also challenges them to think harder about their own responsibility when things do not go according to plan and how to mitigate barriers to achieving their goals. Until now the YDs most important experiences with mentoring have been based on individual mentoring. Adaptation to the needs of organisational development will be necessary. This said, mentoring is time consuming, challenging to organise, involves a lot of moving pieces and mentors and can be expensive.	Various options have been mentioned, but several seem most relevant: - Engage mentors in addition to the training team. Previous experiences show that team members find it difficult to manage the time involved in mentoring participants between residential phases. This can lead to self-exploitation and unforeseen costs for additional team work days for the YD - Develop the profile of mentors in the curriculum planning process and game out which specific aspects they should be responsible for - It might be relevant for the course to have a series of thematic mentors (participation, empowerment, organisational development, Roma cultural and history, etc) that participants can consult on a needs basis about their special area of competence and a personal mentor that accompanies them through the entire process - Enrol Roma professionals and established activists as mentors to ensure networking and motivation at community level - Consider asking senior managers and activists in Roma institutions to provide mentoring (REF, SRSG, RIO/OSF, etc), even on a voluntary basis - Make sure a good number of the mentor are young Roma with experience in Roma youth related work (previous activists in the movement) - Provide mentors with the opportunity to join at least one residential seminar to meet their mentees and to provide them with orientation on their tasks and approaches - Provide online infrastructure for mentors to meet and exchange about the challenges they may face while supporting participants - Pay mentors appropriately to their level of work investment - Make sure mentors do not have too many mentees to be able to address the needs of each equally - Provide mentors with a point person in the team and/secretariat with whom they can discuss issues

	Original concept	Critical review and assessment	Proposals
	Internships and Job shadowing	This component could be of extreme added value for individual participants, and with the right kind of facilitation, also for strengthening their organisations. This said, it will require significant facilitation by the YD or another implementing partner, especially if this component is supposed to happen during the RYA (i.e. as an integral component with the 12 - 18 month time frame) and not in follow-up to it. Questions regarding this feature include: - should this component take place in the Roma rights sector, the youth sector, or altogether in another sector, to ensure significant learning and the challenging of the personal and organisational boundaries of participants? - should this component be conducted at the international, national or local level? - who can facilitate the organisation of placements - for the YD the placements at the international level might be easier to organise, but the local level might be more relevant for participants? - how will the financial and economic needs of participants during this phase be addressed?	Some of the following proposals could be considered: - develop some synergies with existing internship and job-shadowing schemes that are funded by the CoE and other institutions (c.f. the possibilities available under EVS, Leonardo, EC/CoE internship programmes, - make it a requirement for participants/organisations to be involved in the organisation of the placement, providing support without doing it on their behalf (for example, making applications, logistics, organising mobility) - make public benefit, Roma and youth participation /empowerment compulsory fields within which participants/organisations can choose to conduct this component, but do not make conducting it in a Roma specific organisation or institution compulsory. Participant/organisations might not have the opportunity to get that kind of exposure to the 'outside world' otherwise - ensure adequate preparation and support measures (including financial ones) are in place to help participants/organisations make it through this component successfully, especially if a mobility component is foreseen - ensure there is some form of process to assess learning and competence development associated with the internship or job-shadowing. This could be integrated into the mentoring concept - make sure some form of certification is available for those who complete this component, and who have completed the required self-assessment - certification could be offered to both individuals and organisations

	Original concept	Critical review and assessment	Proposals

	Complementary modules	Little is said in the original concept about what the complementary modules might consist of, but the initial idea is to offer participants the chance to engage in more individualised competence development opportunities	The following options could be considered
			
			- provision of regular information to participants about
			  - other training or distance learning offers that could be useful for them
			  - funding opportunities and information days about
			  - relevant newsletters they should consider subscribing to
			  - networking events that might be relevant to them

	Alumni dimension	This is a major added value of any such initiative. However, as other institutions have experienced (REF, for example) developing an effective Alumni dimension can be associated with significant challenges and requires investment from the beginning 'creating Alumni in training'. Furthermore, having an alumni dimension does not guarantee that they will take up leadership and active positions in youth organisations Alumni affairs is extremely facilitation intensive in the first years.	The development of this dimension and its facilitation should be integrated into the curriculum development / theory of change and into the RYA pilot.

	Original concept	Critical review and assessment	Proposals
	Individual support measures	Even if the RYA shall focus on organisational development, participant/organisations may still face challenges associated with the economic and social conditions of the individuals involved Some individuals will face challenges to stay the duration of the RYA because of their economic circumstances. Some will drop out because they receive a scholarship, or because they get a job which pays. Others will migrate in order to study or work. Some may get married or have children. Other, more individual support measures, may be needed to ensure participants end up dropping out for reasons beyond the control of the RYA and even the participants themselves. With other target groups it might not be so important to consider these issues, but with young people experience chronic disadvantage, attention must be paid to the fact that many young people with potential will simply not be able to take up the opportunity of such an initiative because they have the responsibility for earning their keep or that of their families.	Consider offering participants in most need the opportunity to do the RYA as a full time activity, a hybrid between a long term volunteer position and employment in their organisation - a limited number of stipends could be made available with every RYA cycle - access to such a support measure could be means tested - it could be based on the good practice of EVS and other organisations which offer the possibility of long term voluntary service (in which young people receive a living stipend which is not a salary, but covers their expenses) - it would have the added value of being close enough to employment to be considered real work experience especially if the person does some form international mobility for the job-shadowing/internship component - This could be tied to English or other foreign language competence development - such a scheme (like the earlier YD 'compensation for loss of earnings' scheme for young workers and unemployed persons) would go a long way to meeting the ambition of providing the those with the least opportunity the chance of participation

	Original concept	Critical review and assessment	Proposals
Priority contents	The original concept does not address a specific section to the possible priority contents of any training concept	Several sources have provided clues about what could be important: - advocacy for social and political change - lobbying, funding and fundraising - evidence-based policy approaches - evidence-based project development - community organising - engagement with power holders, political actors and processes - running and management of organisations, developing their capacity - confident public speaking and English language skills - policy / strategy development / drafting - latest good practices in 'community sensitive' budgeting, participatory leadership, representation and mediation of diverse interests - intercultural confidence building between communities - youth and Roma participation and empowerment - Roma culture, identity and pride - Strategies for anti-discrimination, and combating antigypsyism - Social and organisational analysis - Partnership development	The choice of priority contents should be part of the theory of change discussion and part of the rigorous curriculum development process As per previous proposals above, care should be taken not to overload participant/organisations with contents beyond the essential for the learning objectives identified, and which are substantial enough.