



ROMA WOMEN = EMPOWERED WOMEN

Report of the study session held by
Forum of European Roma Young People – FERYP

in co-operation with the
European Youth Centre of the Council of Europe

European Youth Centre Strasbourg
8 – 15 June 2014



This report gives an account of various aspects of the study session. It has been produced by and is the responsibility of the educational team of the study session. It does not represent the official point of view of the Council of Europe.

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**Roma Women
Empowered Women!**

Study Session

**JUNE 8 - 15, 2014
Strasbourg, France**

An activity of FERYP organized in cooperation with the Youth Department of the Council of Europe

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Executive Summary

From 8 to 15 June 2014, the study session “Roma Women = Empowered Women!” took place in the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg with the support of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe. FERYP initiated this study session and organised it together with its members, as part of their requests reflected in the FERYP Strategy 2012-2015.

FERYP believes that active policies and specific programmes for young Roma women should have a strong focus on empowerment, leadership and participation training. In addition, the lack of visibility and participation is reinforcing the social exclusion of Roma women and is associated with low levels of social wellbeing within Roma communities. Roma youth and Roma women can play an important role in breaking stereotypes and the situations of disadvantage. This approach can get Roma youth involved in the community organisation and beyond, as well as improving their opportunities.

The study session received inputs to the activity from Ms. Isabela Mihalache, project manager at the Support Team of the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe for Roma Issues, by presenting the Phenjalipe strategy on Roma women; Ms. Siobhan Montgomery, from the Department of Democratic Institutions and Governance, introducing the Transversal Programme on Gender Equality of the Council of Europe; Ms. Mara Georgescu, Educational Adviser at the Youth Department, presenting the Roma Youth Action Plan and the funding opportunities for young people available through the European Youth Foundation; Mr. Nadir Redzeqi, Project manager at MtM - Open Society Foundations, presenting the current opportunities on EU Fund; Mr. Suad Skenderi, MA Student of Political Science at Central European University and executive at Romalitico, the first Roma policy analysis portal, giving inputs on community organising; Ms. Sebijan Fejzula, MA Student of Critical Gender Studies at Central European University and executive at Romalitico, the first Roma policy analysis portal, giving inputs on the Visual representation of Romani women vs creating an ideology among Romani women.

It is also important to point out that within the framework of the previous study session organised by FERYP "*Strategies for inclusion of young Roma*" in 2012, the FERYP strategy was set out for the period 2012-2015 and one of the main points is Roma identity and gender issues.

The participants set different working groups to work at local level as a part of the follow-up for establishing co-operation and networking among them by using FERYP as a platform and to run projects on gender equality and youth empowerment until 2015.

Through the official Facebook page of FERYP participants are receiving relevant information for their work at local level.

Many participants requested membership in FERYP as individuals or with their organisations.

The conclusions are going to be used by the participants in their local activity.

Additionally, in their final evaluation, many participants mentioned that their motivation to work or continue working on the issues of the study session at local level has increased. Furthermore, FERYP has already received information from several participants who are developing concepts to realise empowerment activities/trainings for women in their communities.

FERYP is planning to promote projects ideas from the study session in the future activities.

Introduction

About FERYP

The Forum of European Roma Young People (FERYP) is the first European Roma Youth Network established as a non-formal network in 1997 and registered as a European Roma Youth Association in 2002.

FERYP's vision is to capacitate Roma youth actively involved in decision making processes on local, national and international level in Europe.

FERYP is representing its members and associates on European level and co-coordinating and implementing activities with European and national dimensions - with, for and by young Roma. FERYP constituency currently covers 18 European countries, 20 youth NGOs and more than 50 individuals.



Our work supports, encourages and enhances active Roma youth participation in decision-making processes with the aim to mainstream Roma issues in youth policies and youth issues in Roma policies and programmes.

Our bureau is elected and includes experienced young Roma professionals who are ready to address Roma youth challenges and strongly support Roma youth initiatives in Europe. FERYP is currently the only Roma organisation, representing the Roma youth in the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe and

one of the founding members of the European Roma Travellers Forum.

Our mission is to empower young Roma through:

- Supporting their personal and organisational capacity building
- Promoting the Roma identity
- Advocating for increased participation of Roma youth on local, regional, national and international level
- Fighting discrimination and anti-gypsyism
- Addressing the challenges of diversity and equality within Roma communities.

FERYP has significantly contributed to increase the capacities of Roma young people from all over Europe to be able to advocate for their own and the rights of their community. More than 300 Roma youth went through the trainings, seminars and conferences organised by FERYP in the last 10 years. About 10% of them are holding vital leadership positions in different Roma and non-Roma formal entities in Europe.

Background of the activity

A follow-up activity of the study session "*Strategies for Inclusion of Roma Youth*" organised from 15 to 22 April 2012 in the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg was identified by participants as crucial for substantial continuation of the efforts with a structured and comprehensive approach. Following this, the FERYP bureau developed a two years strategy of the organisation. Within this strategy, one of the priorities is a Roma women's empowerment program by developing leadership, strengthening Roma women's organizations at local level and ensuring their personal development, creating new political and social opportunities for Roma women across Europe.

Young Roma women face challenges every single day. Apart from sharing their communities' struggles, young Roma women systematically face multiple discrimination simply by the virtue of

being female and Roma. This includes not only discrimination from non-Roma but also within the Roma communities.

Understanding that investing in young Roma women's leadership is essential for social change, for the development of Roma communities and ensuring the rights of Roma women, FERYP developed this study session with, for and by young Roma women and men and in collaboration with the Youth Department of the Council of Europe.

The study session provided the participants a tangible view on current European funding opportunities. At the same time, the meeting created a space for discussions on the connection between the current Roma youth challenges faced by women and funding possibilities for addressing them.

Also, the study session contributed to networking among participants from different countries in reaching the common objectives through their international, national and local work.

This activity brought to light the issues faced by the (young) Roma women in Roma communities and in society in general. The study session provided the space for the participants to develop a strategy on empowerment of young Roma women at national and international level, planning a concrete action plan implemented by FERYP and its members/partners.

The study session will have as well a follow-up activity in participants' communities based on the priorities of the Roma Youth Action Plan and the FERYP Strategy 2012-2015, with the purpose to emphasise the empowerment of young Roma women in Europe.

This activity is also having a very important role in FERYP's long-term programme as it is defining strategies for the inclusion of young Roma women and mainstreaming Gender issues, which can be used both at policy making level as well as for planning of concrete activities which will be implemented by FERYP as well as suggested to other organisations and institutions.

It was hoped that through this study session, a more concrete plan and direction for FERYP's strategy can be identified within the framework of gender equality, not just at the European level, but also on the regional and national levels, considering that FERYP covers both EU and non-EU countries.

Aims and objectives

The aim of the study session was to enhance the capacities and to empower the young Roma women, promoting equality and their equal participation in Roma communities and organisations.

The specific objectives:

- To reflect on and analyse the obstacles, needs, and current challenges young Roma women face today in their communities
- To address gender-based discrimination in Roma communities
- To foster young Roma women's capacities and leadership to be equally involved in public life and decision making processes
- To explore the practices, approaches and opportunities existing in the Council of Europe (human rights education approaches, resources against gender based violence, the campaign No Hate Speech Movement, the Roma youth Action Plan) to work with Roma youth on gender issues
- To define the strategies in mainstreaming Roma gender equality within Roma communities and civil society
- To enable and support participants to develop follow up plans, initiatives, actions, activities and programmes empowering young Roma women's full and meaningful participation in their communities and beyond.

Participants

The participants were selected by the preparatory team on the basis of an application form that was circulated with the call for participants. Additionally, the applicants were asked to write briefly how they would tackle the issues of gender inequality in the Roma communities and what are the solutions for empowering the young Roma women. They were also asked to write their experience on Roma women issues. All these have been taken into consideration when selecting the participants.

The general profile of participants was defined as follows:

- Roma and non-Roma young people who are actively working/volunteering in organisations on Roma issues;
- Young gender activists (both female and male), working or interested to work on the problems of young Roma women across Europe;
- Motivated and willing to initiate follow-up activities in their home/local communities and organizations;
- Aged between 18 and 30 years old;
- Able to attend the session for its full duration;
- Able to work in one of the working languages of the session (English, Romanes, Spanish).

Methodology used

The setting, the content and the methodology of the study session were focused on participation, active involvement, sharing of thoughts and feelings and learning by doing. We used methods specific to non-formal education and learning, both individual and group methods, taking into consideration participants' learning needs, such as group building activities, working groups, debates and discussions, open space methodology, reflections, presentations including discussions, etc.

Programme flow and main contents

During the first two days, the study session focused on getting to know each other (since participants had to share one week working together) and the conceptual framework for gender equality by exploring related concepts, such as culture, stereotypes and external representations. When an understanding of 'Gender and gender equality' was shared, the study session focused more explicitly on the practical aspects of the different ways of empowerment.

Participants looked at challenges within the community and the current situation.

They discovered through inputs the resources of the Council of Europe and other bodies for working on women's empowerment.

Next, participants analysed participation and the importance of Roma women representation in the institutions and public life. Participants defined empowerment and the approaches to it.

Finally, participants planned their follow-up work and also discovered some of the resources they could use in their follow-up.

Inputs and discussions

The main aim of the study session, besides strengthening and broadening the network based on the priorities set in this study session, was to elaborate on what is women's empowerment and clarify what is the role of Roma youth in it. One of our main objectives was to focus our efforts on the practical implementations of the contents discussed in order to ensure a long-term impact at local level with the support of the network.

The programme was built around the different steps it takes to build a clear understanding of a sensitive topic in order to better understand the steps that should be taken to empower Roma communities with a gender-based approach.

To maintain the appropriate flow of the study session, as mentioned above, we agreed to divide the study session into several programme blocks described in the next chapters.

The specific situation of Roma women: questions of gender

The basic gender related concepts were introduced and participants familiarised with concepts such as gender inequality, its forms and intersectionality as a tool for working on gender issues.

Differences between sex and gender, masculinities, femininities, patriarchy, intersex, queer, transgender, were explained in order to provide a standard knowledge on the basic concepts of the related topic.

Participants identified the following challenges in the Roma communities when it comes to gender and women discrimination by taking into account the differences and diversities among Roma communities across Europe and particularities in the living countries:

- Education was identified as the most common challenge when talking about Romani women discrimination. Early marriages, cultural obligations, and lack of role models are among the root causes of the lack of continuation of higher studies. Participants agreed that education is a powerful catalyst for reducing poverty and inequality, but at the grassroots level is difficult to reach those objectives due to the economic and family obligations.
- As a result of the low educational level, many Romani women do not have proper access to formal employment.
- At the same time, the role that both gender and ethnic stereotypes play in Roma communities and the external influence from mainstream society, create a dysfunctional environment where Romani women face double discrimination, by the fact of being Roma and the fact of being woman.
- On the other hand, there are no many Romani women holding a leadership position in the political systems with continuation, and to date there are no programs/projects which address specifically the situation of young Romani women in Europe, only named as a crosscutting issue in national and international policy recommendations, but without emphasis in young women.

It was briefly exposed the current framework for gender equality at international level, such as the Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015 of the European Commission and how the countries have adopted, followed and implemented specific strategies from international institutions in order to contributing of gender equality to economic growth and sustainable development, and support the implementation of the gender equality dimension in the European framework.

Therefore, the following session had also a specific focus in the role of the Council of Europe in mainstreaming gender equality and tools for empowerment of Romani women in Europe

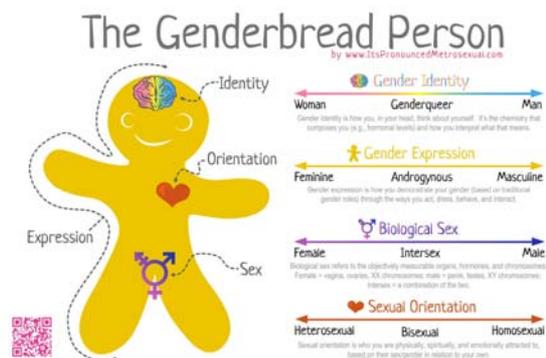
During a panel discussion with Isabela Mihalache and Siobhan Montgomery, participants learnt about the work of the Council of Europe and Roma women's empowerment, as well as women's empowerment in general. For example, Ms Mihalache introduced the Phenjalipe project, which is aiming to achieve the advancement and empowerment of Romani women and girls in Europe and the strengthening of gender equality and non-discrimination thereof in countries of residence through the realisation of five strategic objectives which integrate the issue of multiple discrimination and take into account the specific needs and priorities of Romani women and girls.



Ms Montgomery explained how the Council of Europe can influence national and local institutions in order to adopt a concretely participation and socialisation of Roma women in each field of life.

Participants also analysed gender-based discrimination, with the support of the input of Sebijan Fejzula, a young Roma activist and FERYP member, doing her research at CEU in Hungary, concentrating on how visual misrepresentation of Roma women creates an ideology based on stereotypes. The session aimed to show how Romani women are represented in social media and how these images create certain standards for what is a “real Roma woman”.

The first exercise aimed to present how labelling works in a social context. Secondly, the lecturer showed how Romani women are presented in the media, using examples of films that misrepresent Romani women such as: over-sexualized tempresses (the opera “Carmen”), cartoons (where Roma are presented as thieves), or other that focus on early marriages.



Thirdly, the lecturer showed examples of how Roma (women) attempt to create counter discourse by showing another image - the educated Roma women (Roma women campaign).

The debriefing stressed on the importance of counter discourse that Roma (women) are creating, by being role models.

Participants also looked at the topic of local participation of young Roma women in their communities, and they discussed and learnt about:

- The legal framework and approaches to participation of young people and public in own communities
- The role of and the need of equal participation of everyone in the society and specifically of participation of young Roma women
- The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to participation

Participants were introduced to the theoretical, legal bases and framework of the Council of Europe’s approach to youth participation, understanding of the concept of participation, opening a debate focused on the fact that sometimes the policy frameworks and international institutions are so far from realities, especially within Roma communities and daily lives of Romani women. Some questions were raised such as how Romani women from grassroots can have access to those tools, given the lack of access to information. For those reasons, participants highlighted the importance to empower Romani women and enable them to participate, due to it is necessary to extend the scope of Romani women’s participation at the grassroots level as well.

Participants also realised an individual SWOT on participation in their own communities and how one understands its position in regard to his/her personal strengths, weaknesses as well as those of the community one belongs to. The exercise identified 4 key areas: family, friends, society and institutions.

The debriefing focused on what are the social and participants expectation for Roma women and Roma men, what are the gender roles and inequalities that these requirements suggests for both genders. At the end of the session, theoretical input was given on the



gender inequalities and gender roles.

By defining the social expectations and demands, the specific outcomes were that gender plays an often hidden role in Romani women's perceptions, because under some perceptions, men have to learn "appropriate" gender roles in accordance to the masculine expectations of their given society and Roma traditions.

This session was also connected to the previous one on external and visual representations, and a question/reflection to participants was raised: How these images create certain standards for what is a real Romani woman, but adding how Romani women label themselves according to the externals, and also how they label the "real" Romani men.

Some participants declared that for women it is difficult sometimes to accept the "new masculinities" among Roma communities, because traditionally, men have played a specific behaviour. When talking about interactions with mainstream society, media and fashion also play an important role in defining new identities.



Questions such as

- How is possible for a woman to accept that her boyfriend looks more stylish than her?
- Do we accept the new men model imposed by society in Roma communities?

were raised in the debriefing; concluding that if Romani men do not meet the expectations of what is currently seen as "being a man", they are often called homophobic or gender-based slurs.

With this reflection we were trying to encourage the participants to re-think on their own concepts of gender-based discrimination, and how this issue affects Romani women, but also the men.

At this time, all the theoretical inputs were delivered, participants had the knowledge on general concept of gender based discrimination, what gender is; social roles assigned, and how this kind of discrimination is affecting directly Romani women.

How to support empowerment in participants' realities?

The first practical session was connected with other realities that Romani women can use as good practices from women belonging to other minority groups. A presentation on the definition of Empowerment was the starting point.

A brief definition on empowerment was delivered as:

Empowerment is about using a range of tools to strengthen capacities of all people to exercise their rights, as individuals or members of a community, and to participate in and hold accountable public institutions. Is having decision-making power of its own.

The session was dedicated to give a definition of empowerment and ways to empower a community in general. The participants were asked to identify types of empowerment by speaking out their understanding of the notion. After, they were given the theoretical knowledge of types of empowerment; discussion on each of them was followed and namely focusing on social, economic, political, legal types of empowerment. At the same time, the participants were introduced with the necessary tools or steps for women's empowerment and their inter-linkages.

Despite the wide range of types of empowerment, we wanted to focus this definition in 4 areas:

- Social empowerment
- Economic empowerment
- Legal empowerment
- Educational empowerment

Some of the basic ways to empowerment were defined as:

- Create a safe space
- Support independence and mobility
- Increase savings and income
- Teach job skills and seed businesses
- Build self-esteem and confidence



By defining this, we wanted to show the result of investing in Romani women, such as:

- Acquiring and using skills,
- Being able to challenge the authorities,
- Having financial independence,
- Making a contribution to family and community,
- Self-organising and voicing out demands,
- Having access to opportunities,
- Exercising rights,
- Having decision-making power,
- Benefitting from an improved quality of life,
- Having self-confidence and pride

By the end of the day, participants were invited to a Movie Debate, where was screened the documentary "Solar Mamas: Why poverty?". The screening of this movie provided participants a good example of women's empowerment. This film tells the story of Rafea, a Jordanian Bedouin mother who is given the opportunity to study in the Barefoot College in India and becomes a solar engineer, capable of bringing power to the remotest places. She attends the college's programme, which brings together 27 women from all over the world.

Some of the participants, who were doing empowering activities involving Romani women in their communities, were invited to share their experience, examples, and provide information about the

successes of their activities but also the challenges. For example, Spanish participants shared their experience in participating in a Roma NGO led by Romani women, and, by running trainings and workshops on participation in decision-making, provided a good example on Romani women's involvement in social cohesion and a clear example on active citizenship. Afterwards, it was discussed the impact of women's empowerment and more specifically, how it can positively affect not just individuals but the community per se.

The participants discussed how such models can be applied into the Roma communities to empower the Roma women and girls. Participants raised the importance of considering the differences of Roma communities in the different countries where they live, since there is still existing a wall between some approaches when talking about Romani women from Eastern or Western Europe, but the diversity of Roma communities/families/traditions also plays an important role in mainstreaming the importance of empowering young Romani women as advantage in reaching social cohesion and the wellbeing of Roma communities in Europe. Participants also highlighted the need of taking common steps in order to face common challenges as they previously discussed, such as define ways to empowerment for young Romani women in continuing their studies and to define a strategy to include young women in decision-making.

The next step was to link the general empowerment of women to the Romani women. For this purpose, was presented existing initiatives of Romani Women in Europe, such as the "I am a Roma Woman" Campaign, or several mothers centres in Hungary, as good examples on women participation, to expand participant's vision and to build links with some current initiatives led by women, networks and organizations in order to learn from each other.

For example, the "I am a Roma women" campaign aims to build a movement powered by Romani women to shape their own image and empower themselves and their communities as they share their experiences, their view on current issues and their vision of the future and discuss what skills are the Romani women missing in order to achieve their rights and get empowered.

Another example: in Hungary, there are some Mother Centres, which are self-managed public spaces in the neighbourhood, where women and their children meet on a daily basis. Childcare is offered on a drop-in basis for all ages throughout the opening hours of the centre. Mother Centres are based on participation. Their motto is that "everybody is good at least one thing – that they can contribute".

After looking at all these examples and practices, participants had to develop their own ideas on how to work on women's empowerment. Below are some of the proposals:

- *Spain* – Research project on women participation with Roma researchers;
- *Romania, Moldova* – Access to the job market (issues addressed - employment, illiteracy, economic and social autonomy)
- "*former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*"– towards European standards of management (training women in European programme management, having training strategies for this)
- *United Kingdom* – traineeships on the local level, intensive courses for women who want to become advocacy workers and support workers;
- *Greece* – training on soft skills to help access the labour market (how to look for a job, CV writing, interviews, etc.); web radio made by young Roma and non-Roma;
- *Albania* – work on the issue of gender-based violence in the Roma communities;
- *Central and South-Eastern Europe* – tackling unemployment in the cities, by supporting young Roma mothers, teaching them manual skills, providing long term contracting opportunities in public institutions, factories or small businesses.

Participants also learnt more about using social media for fighting gender-based discrimination. Lecturer Sebijan Fejzula introduced some social media campaign examples such as:

- petitions, articles and petitions on Konik camp in Montenegro. These actions were organised by the participants of the Barvalipe Summer Camp, impressed by the situation of the Konik camp in Podgorica, Montenegro. Barvalipe participants decided to raise the awareness by writing an article, denouncing the “forgotten Europeans”
- student reactions on the Roma genocide denial. This action is developed and run by Roma activists. Roma students and activists from different countries raised their voices by signing a common letter addressed to the Secretary-General of United Nations for the lack of visibility of the Roma Genocide during the most recent official Holocaust commemoration, where the UN failed to invite any Roma speakers at all!

Participants then worked towards creating a social media product to tackle the issues of empowerment or young Romani women, addressing stereotypes and creating a positive narrative, such as an article on a success example of Roma women empowerment, a script for a video and a social media campaign.

The group working on the article decided to use the story of one of the participants, to show a personal story of a woman's empowerment. The proposed working title for the article “Look at me and we can do it” or “Empowered women will change generation”. This group depicted the story of one of the participants (Shejla Fidani), showing the challenges the participant had to pass through as a young Romani woman and generally referring to the situation of all Roma women around the world and the need to address the issues of gender inequality of Romani women.



The group working on a video script came with an idea of a short video to motivate and empower young Romani women.

The video would start with an opening slogan, and women are recorded, who should continue the phrase “you are the change, because...” afterwards there are short interviews “I want..., I will... I can...” and later closing slogan “We, Romani women are the change”. The group felt that this slogan needed to be changed a little, as it was somehow limiting the whole responsibility and power only to women, and this could create a contra-reaction in the communities, putting the only responsibility for the change on women. It was also recommended to include males in the videos.

The group on campaigning came up with the idea to challenge the stereotypes existing about the young Romani women in 4 areas – education, employment, political involvement, and romance. The campaign was based on the use of the playing cards as a background to create photo images of women: in the same card one in the bottom and an antagonist image on the top. 3 statements were created to back up the images: Being Roma does not prevent me from participating in political life (political participation); I do not have special needs. I have the same skills as you do (education); I want to work, do not prevent me from working (employment).



Next, participants ran peer workshops regarding the theme, to share their tools, instruments, projects, research, programmes, and experiences in the field of:

- Domestic violence and multi-agency support

This topic was presented as a cross cutting issue that needs to be tackled through a broad range of responses and on many levels. It was mentioned that agencies addressing this issue are aware that they cannot achieve success alone, but can target resources efficiently and effectively when working in a collective manner.

- Strategic advocacy

The aim of this workshop was to identify different steps of an advocacy strategy, by designing a follow-up advocacy action of a chosen type and to get acquainted with factors which strengthen our advocacy processes, especially the partnership building and the participation in different decision making bodies.

- Talent management programme, Hungary

During this workshop there was a presentation of a good practices project. This is the Talent Centre in Budapest aimed to provide talent support in the everyday practice of respect for excellence in the widest sense; i.e. the culture of talent support, making a decisive difference in the life of the individuals in society and in the preservation of human values in general.

- Social entrepreneurship

This workshop aimed to inform participants about the characteristics, benefits, values and factors for success of social entrepreneurship by introducing social business models that can be taken as a good example for social entrepreneurship by engaging young people

During the last part of the programme, participants learnt more about community organising, with the support of the input of Mr. Suad Skenderi, MA Student of Political Science at Central European University and executive at Romalitico, the first Roma policy analyses portal, giving inputs on community organizing, namely supporting Roma leaders in developing and organising projects that engage local Roma on their communities in learning organizing through practice-based work.

During this session, participants also learnt more skills on public speaking, story building and moving from the individual story to the community story. Participants concluded on the need to encourage the young Roma to act upon the political system.

The second part of this activity was focused on a brief introduction to community organising, leadership types and organisation types. With the intervention of Mr Skenderi on the community organising session, we were trying to support future Roma leaders in developing organising projects that engage local Roma on their communities in learning through practice-based work.

When talking about leadership and organisations types, the purpose was to learn how to organise Roma communities, to mobilise the people and to create the power they need to make a change.

Participants learnt why this approach is effective in addressing problems of leadership and power, mainly because it enables people to mobilise their resources needed in order to solve daily community problems by working together and involving others, creating new capacities and developing new forms of leadership.

Support Resources and Follow up

The aim of the session was to provide an opportunity for existing FERYP members and participants in the study session as potential members and beneficiaries to find out more about the existing funding opportunities of the Council of Europe, Open Society Institute, European Union.

First speaker was Mara Georgescu, educational advisor from the Youth Department of the Council of Europe. She presented the Roma Youth Action Plan and the possibilities it gives to Roma young people. Among these opportunities and information presented:

- Educational materials for facilitators, trainers and youth workers on human rights education, anti-gypsyism, education for remembrance of the Roma genocide remembrance, multiple discrimination, all available at www.coe.int/youth/roma
- Local pilot projects funding through the European Youth Foundation
- National activities in Hungary, France and Greece in 2014
- Ongoing research on Roma youth participation (invitation to send materials and practices/projects fostering Roma youth participation)
- No hate speech movement campaign and EEA Norway grants funding possibilities
- FERYP study session on youth mobility in 2015
- The policy work of CAHROM, the ad hoc committee of the Council of Europe on Roma issues.



The second speaker was Nadir Redzepi from the MtM Open society foundations, Hungary, who presented his views on needs of changes in approaches and orientation of work of Roma activists and youth organisations. He challenged the current standard mentality of activists and invited to develop existing strategies more. He also presented the current funding trends and possibilities specifically for Roma youth to use funds in their projects and communities.

The specific objectives of the session on funding opportunities were:

- To provide a basic understanding of the EU and IPA Funds opportunities.
- To invest in building capacities for Roma women, using the existing funding opportunities.
- To enable participants with information to implement specific actions on women's engagement in Roma movements by using community organizing and the collaboration of FERYP as international network.
- To support the building of a strong Roma movement engaging Roma women in the process.

During the presentation, Mr Redzepi briefly presented the work of MtM (Making the Most of EU funds for Roma) this section of the Open Society Foundations is aimed at building capacity of stakeholders at the local level to include Roma in the local policy-making agendas and to access EU funding in order to address these concerns. The facility is operating in EU member states

participating in the Decade of Roma Inclusion by investing in the capacity-building of Roma organizations.

Mr Redzeqi paid special attention on EU and IPA funds, as current opportunities for young Roma to develop their strategies and to run projects under the European funding framework in order to connect the overall Roma movement, youth networking and EU funding opportunities, including MtM support to young Roma.

After these presentations participants used the remaining time in order to network and develop their follow-up in their local communities with the support of FERYP. Below some of the ideas expressed by participants for their own follow-up:

- Local workshops in community and youth centres on women empowerment
- Alternatives education: coming up with an educational pack including Romani fairy-tales from different countries, leaflets about famous Roma women, a board game, and video, with possibilities of digital story telling.
- Awareness rising about the importance of education for autonomy promotion in schools (based on success stories of Romani women, historical memories of Romani women, intergenerational dialogue). With being equipped with this knowledge about their own self and community, the youngsters will also be able to be more active in school.
- Gender equality camp for Roma young people (including workshops, training sessions on gender, advocacy, community organizing, good practices, lobbying) followed by a phase to implement small projects and as a final phase possibility to have an additional training on project management.

The project ideas were discussed and FERYP agreed that they take this to internal discussions to see what support can be given to these projects and will be keeping in close contact with the participants to help them in any way possible.

Prior to starting the follow up, one of the most important outcomes of the study session was the idea of initiating local projects on gender mainstreaming and empowerment from the groups mentioned above, taking into account the inputs given by Ms Georgescu and Mr Redzeqi on funding opportunities, by using FERYP as a core platform.

Also for improving the visibility of the FERYP activities, some participants proposed to group the participants by regions and also grouping them with current FERYP members with the potential members who would like to join the network as individuals or as member organisations.

On the other hand and after the inputs from the guest lectures of the Council of Europe, the participants agreed to make, by using FERYP, some recommendations for the Phenjalipe project, underlining the importance to widely disseminate the information regarding activities and further actions that this platform will take in order to open a specific space for newcomers Roma young women.

Some participants stated the need of creating regional focal points organised by groups of young Romani women, in order to be able to transfer the specific needs that affect the daily lives of many women from the grassroots.

As mentioned above, for some participants, decision-making and policies concerning Roma communities and more specifically to Romani women are sometimes too far from reality and there is no room for those with fewer opportunities to participate and be heard.

Making a link with the previous session of community organising, FERYP suggested organising these focal groups with the help of some participants for engaging more people as possible, so those with fewer opportunities would be able to raise their voices and concerns.

Following a logical line, participants can use FERYP as a platform to raise recommendations for both Phenjalipe and to the Council of Europe when it comes to making projects and recommendations directly affecting Roma women.

FERYP with its members wants to connect the outcomes from this study session and use them for supporting the presence of Roma youth in the current opportunities for developing projects funded by European institutions and highlighting the importance of the Roma women's participation.

The last day ended with an evaluation session, during which participants came up with the suggestion that, while it is very easy to keep the contact with organisers and with the rest of participants, it is very important to meet each other again to further develop the plans. In addition, one clear recommendation for the Council of Europe from participants is to give real support for offering opportunities for projects by using the European Youth Foundation, as well to hear their recommendations and proposals that can be set in the framework of the Roma Youth Action Plan. In this sense, FERYP committed with participants to use both, future focal points and those at individual level to transfer the recommendations made by participants and other young people who want to participate to be included within the framework of the Roma Youth Action Plan. We believe that by engaging young people at local level, we can develop a more focused strategy for the upcoming years, taking into account the importance of mainstreaming the gender component in all of our activities and start being more practical and specific when addressing recommendations to policy-makers.

General outcomes of the study session

The learning outcomes of the study session in terms of skills, knowledge and competencies for implementing projects with Roma women as a target group, in particular at local level, acquired during the training course should contribute to building up a number of experienced key Roma actors in communities who can act as multipliers with the collaboration of FERYP as an umbrella organisation in their regions.

As we indicated above, several working groups were set by regions in order to collaborate in the future for further common implementations.

To date (October 2014), we received the request for collaboration from participants from Moldova, Spain and the “former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”.

The development and implementation of those projects can be considered the main outcome of the study session, as well as an enormous learning and practical experience of the participants.

Furthermore, all of these projects should involve local participants, who will also develop new contacts, make new experiences during those activities – they will also acquire new knowledge and competencies and enhance their awareness of the realities in the different countries involved as a sharing experience. They will also learn about the Youth Department programme and the Roma youth action plan and about how to get further involved in it.



It can be expected that these small groups will grow with the implementation of the projects and that the participants in those seminars, training courses, contact making seminars or study visits will join them.

The main learning points for the participants were:

- Gender concepts and empowerment: the clarification of what gender and empowerment mean was very new for many participants. The intervention of the experts giving inputs about gender and participation, explaining the process leading to the creation of this concept and their work in this field was inspiring for some participants.
- Planning future steps and strategies (working groups).

Role of FERYP in following-up the outcomes

FERYP will stay in contact with active participants. Participants have the possibility to contact FERYP if they are looking for support with the implementation of the projects developed during the study session.

FERYP is also using participants of this study session as resource persons. For instance, two participants were invited as resource persons to the Seminar *Voices of Europe*, organised by YEN (Youth of European Nationalities), which was held in Ohrid, the “former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” in August 2014. They came together in workshops on Roma history, education, human and social rights and discrimination/ anti- discrimination. These workshops were evaluated and summarised in a future session to build up a Roma strategy and think about common actions which could be planned in future.

Recommendations made by participants in further engagements in FERYP activities, can be used as a tool to be disseminated in participants' organisations and to serve as multipliers in their communities and to engage more young people taking part in activities that the organisations will implement, highlighting the importance of women's participation.

This study session gave the tools for some participants to take specific actions related with women's empowerment and to promote high participation of young Roma women at local level.

Finally, the presentation about funding opportunities contributed in raising interest about the issue as some participants had little knowledge about the topic and now is clearer for them on how to take advantage of the current grants from European institutions.



Appendix I. Daily Programme

FERYP STUDY SESSION: Gender Equality - Roma women's empowerment 8th June- 15th June, 2014								Strasbourg, France
8 Jun Sun	time line	9 Jun Mon	10 Jun Tue	11 June Wed	12 June Thur	13 June Fr	14 June Sat	15 June sun
Dinner at 19.30 Welcome drink at 20.30 Welcome evening ... and short presentation about the Study Session.	7.30-8.30	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	
	9.30 - 11.00	Official opening CoE+FERYP+RYAP Introduction of the study session, objectives, team and Lectures.	Gender Inequality I - patriarchy, gender inequalities, violation of HR, types of discrimination, effects of Gen Inequality etc.	Visual representation of romani women vs creating an ideology among romani women	Empowerment II Ways to Empower	WORKSHOPS - advocacy (local and international level); HRE addressing equality; domestic violence; project planning on gen issues; input for FERYP strategy	Community Organizing II - Connections with Follow-up	Departures
	11.00 - 11.30	COFFE BREAK	COFFE BREAK	COFFE BREAK	COFFE BREAK	COFFEE BREAK	COFFE BREAK	
	11.30 - 13.00	Getting to know each other, Expectations and common values	Gender Inequality II - intersectionality, cultural and historical background, fluidity of Gen Roles REAL CASES	WHY TO PARTICIPATE - structural power, the importance of roma women representation in the institutions and public life	Activism through Social Media I	Lecture: Leadership and Community Organizing I	SUPPORT RESOURCES- funding opportunities/ connection with FERYP and next steps/	
	13.00-14.00	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	
	14.30-16.00	Team Building Treasure Hunt	Challenges I (testimonies), challenges within the community, legal framework, current situation, exchange of information	GENDER ROLES: breaking stereotypes, gender roles, social expectations, male perspective on Gen Equality	Activism through Social Media II	FREE AFTERNOON	FOLLOW-UPS- develop follow up- networking ; needs / offers	
	16.00 - 16.30	COFFE BREAK	COFFE BREAK	COFFE BREAK	COFFE BREAK		COFFE BREAK	
	16.30-18.00	Expectations and common values	PANEL DISCUSSION	Empowerment I - definition, ways to empower; (capacity building); agencies for women empowerment; plan to empower women	WORKSHOPS - advocacy HRE addressing equality; domestic violence; project planning on gen issues; input for FERYP strategy		EVALUATION and CLOSING	
	18.00-19.30	DINNER	DINNER	DINNER	DINNER	Dinner out	DINNER	
	20.00 - 22.00	Social committee	Social Committee	Movie night Debate	See you soon Party			

Appendix II. Materials

In the following links you can find in the cloud the materials used during the study session:

[Why Roma youth as a specific target group in Roma policies](#)

[Brief presentation of the role of the Council of Europe and the young people](#)

[Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017](#)

[EU strategy equality women men](#)

[Strategy for Roma women and girls advancement 2014-2020](#)

[Phenjalipe Action Plan](#)

[I'm a European Roma Woman Campaign](#)

[Intersectionality](#)

[Empowerment](#)

[Documentary: Solar Mamas: Why poverty?](#)

[Community organizing and Leadership](#)

[EU Funding opportunities](#)

[FERYP Strategy 2012-2015](#)



Source: <https://www.cloudfuze.com/cloud-storage-services-replacing-flash-drives/>

Appendix III. List of Participants

Albania

Joana Xhaferaj
Anjeza Bojaxhiu

Czech Republic

Denisa Horváthová
Veronika Konova

Greece

Lydia Tzevatoglou
Aristodimos Paraschou
Eleni Karafyllidou

Hungary

Patricia Csemer

“Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”

Suzane Usein
Martina Asanovska
Romina Kajtazova
Shejla Fidani

Preparatory team

Cristina Marian (Moldova)
Enerida Isuf (Albania)
Atanas Zahariev (Bulgaria)

Educational advisor

Zara Lavchyan (Armenia)

Council of Europe staff members

Mara Georgescu – Educational Advisor
Isabela Mihalache - Support Team of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Roma Issues
Siobhan Montgomery - Transversal Programme on Gender Equality of the CoE

Guest lecturers

Sebijan Fejzula - MA Student of Critical Gender Studies at Central European University
Suad Skenderi – MA Student of Political Sciences at Central European University
Nadir Redzeqi – MtM Open Society Foundations

Course director

Juan Ramon Flores

Republic of Moldova

Tatiana Caldarari
Aluna Lepadatu

Montenegro

Ivana Sekulic

Poland

Sonia Styrkacz

Romania

Carmen Tanasie
Terezia Terry
Maria Rostas
Ramona Constantin

Serbia

Tanja Djordjevic

Spain

Pedro Casermeiro
Noemi Fernández
Patricia Caro
Demetrio Gómez
Josefa Fernández
Rosamaria Kostic-Cisneros

