

## LIVING CONDITIONS – INFORMATION AND COUNSELLING<sup>10</sup>

**B**ecause of the lack of resources and their isolation from public services, young people living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods have limited access to information and counselling services, even though they have a greater need for these services than other young people.



**Following on from the example of this case study, national and local authorities should consider the following:**

- ▶ invest in setting up, or where they already exist, improve comprehensive, accessible, youth-friendly and up-to-date information services for young people (if possible, through ICTs on, for example, social rights, civil and social participation, and mobility);
- ▶ ensure that these information and counselling services are available through existing locations within the community, such as in schools, youth centres, health centres and public libraries;
- ▶ ensure that all staff involved in the provision of information and counselling services, and other professionals working with disadvantaged young people, are trained in intercultural and gender-sensitive awareness;
- ▶ put measures in place to ensure that recognised standards of quality and effectiveness for such youth information and counselling services are met.

10. Of relevance to the theme of youth information and counselling, the work of ERYICA has focused in recent years on information and counselling and social inclusion. More information about the principles of information and counselling for young people can be accessed at <http://eryica.org/page/european-youth-information-charter>, accessed 9 June 2016.



### **The Association of Citizens (Sumnal), Skopje, “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”<sup>11</sup>**

— This project raised the awareness of young Roma people aged 13 to 18, and from three Roma neighbourhoods in Skopje, about their social rights, to improve their access to employment and health services through human rights education and mediation with the social services. The project aimed to:

- ▶ promote citizenship and human rights within the Roma community;
- ▶ create links between Roma people and social care services;
- ▶ create possibilities for easy access to information for employment;
- ▶ create structures for easy access to health care and information about healthy lifestyles;
- ▶ underline the importance of the school and provide information on possible scholarship and professional opportunities.

— The project involved community outreach sessions, a needs assessment of students and workshops for students to address these needs interactively. A number of students helped in the fieldwork, assisted the experts and acted as project leaders.

— The project reached about 60 young people, most of whom are school dropouts or had never actually attended school in the first place, as well as, indirectly, some 180 young people in Topaana. The students helped:

- ▶ 50 young people to get scholarships from the Roma Education Fund (REF) and the Ministry of Education;
- ▶ 10 families to submit documents to receive monthly benefits, which, according to the law, were due to them after they had had a third child;
- ▶ 15 young people to submit the necessary documentation to get work as cleaners; this was done with the support of the Employment Agency.

— Another 15 young people participated in a number of courses where they also learnt how to apply for a job.

11. More information at [www.tigweb.org](http://www.tigweb.org), accessed 9 June 2016.