



COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

DDP-YD/ETD (2020) 45

Strasbourg, 4 March 2020



A training course on Roma youth participation for social inclusion,
gender equality and combating antigypsyism

4-9 October 2021
European Youth Centre Strasbourg

CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS

Deadline for applications: **19 September 2021**

Background of *RomaActiveYouth*

The Roma Youth Action Plan (hereafter [RYAP](#)) was a project of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe which, between 2011 and 2019, supported the participation and inclusion of Roma youth across Europe. Capacity-building and the development of competencies of young Roma, organisations and networks were a central part of the RYAP project and a way of supporting the autonomy and participation of Roma youth in areas of their concern. Issues of structural discrimination and antigypsyism were identified as main concerns of Roma youth as structural obstacles for access to their human rights.

The RYAP finished by the end of 2019 and produced a variety of experiences and good practices. A [seminar "Roma Youth Participation: What Now?"](#), held in September 2019 at which a study on the results achieved came to the following conclusions:

- The RYAP set a positive example of an approach in inclusion of Roma youth in the development of interventions and actions in the Council of Europe. It is important to continue the double mainstreaming approach of including Roma in youth programmes and Youth in Roma programmes;
- Human Rights Education training courses based on *Mirrors*, as well as *as Dikh he na Bister* activities, should be promoted as approaches for capacity building in identity, history, access to rights and other related topics. These courses, based on the needs and input of Roma young people, should seek to involve Roma trainers and become replicable by Roma youth organisations to the extent possible.
- A lack of capacity remains the greatest obstacle Roma youth and their organisations face to implement their own projects.
- Discrimination against Roma also continues to be a barrier for Roma organisations. Roma youth have structural disadvantages that hinder their chances to organise themselves, access public spaces and funding as well as, influence the policy and programme agendas. Many professional public service providers continue to lack basic knowledge about the Roma communities and addressing antigypsyism;
- Stakeholders and European societies are reluctant to acknowledge that the main root of the challenges faced by Roma youth today is structural racism;
- Although social rights are fundamental rights, the access and the implementation of these rights in the case of Roma children and youth is lagging behind;
- It is necessary to train and create networks of Roma mentors to inspire young people, provide career and educational advice and foster self-confidence;
- Not enough Roma youth take part in European projects, consultation processes and activities. Only a limited number of Roma youth grassroots leaders and organisations exist. And yet, it is apparent that even those Roma youth voices are neglected and not being heard in mainstream spaces. Roma youth organisations still lack access to youth councils at the local and national levels.;
- Funding for Roma youth organizations is scarce, primarily for grassroots organisations, as most donors choose to engage with and fund visible national and international organisations. Co-financing and pre-financing requirements greatly limit the participation of small organisations in application processes.
- Structural factors which hinder the participation of Roma youth not only in decision-making bodies but also in other areas that are relevant to them. There is still a need for the recognition of the specific needs of Roma youth in the policy making processes;
- It is crucial for the Council of Europe to conclude their experiences from the RYAP with a new standard-setting document in the form of a Committee of Ministers recommendation on Roma youth participation. This standard should reflect the

experiences from the double mainstreaming approach, used in the RYAP, and provide member states with clearer guidelines to support Roma youth participation;

- The Council of Europe Youth Department should maintain its focus on Roma youth participation activities. This should be but rather a continuous programme focus that will ensure that Roma youth participate including through human rights education;

The Joint Council on Youth took note of these proposals and decided to compose a task force to examine ways to consolidate the achievements of the Roma Youth Action Plan. The task force met twice between May and October 2020.

In addition to the task force meetings, the Youth for Democracy programme 2020-2021 prioritises support to youth organisations in promoting social inclusion, fostering active participation, gender equality and combating all forms of discrimination with an intersectional approach, including work with young Roma. The course **RomaActiveYouth** is the first of such activities.

The course will also connect with the Council of Europe's [*Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion 2020-2025*](#) with the work on Roma youth issues.

Aims and objectives of the training course

(Youth) Participation is central to any youth-focused policy or programme. The agency of Roma youth leaders and young people in matters related to Roma youth is essential to overcome remaining barriers and prejudice about Roma young people. Training new youth leaders is also central to the Youth for Democracy programme of the Council of Europe: "Youth" is a transitory stage; it is important to support the renewal of leadership and competences in youth organisations.

The training course is organised to develop the competences of 30 youth leaders to develop Roma youth participation projects and programmes at local and national level, with a concern for social inclusion, gender equality and combating antigypsyism. Its specific objectives include:

- To share and deepen understandings, in theory and practice, of youth participation in a human rights framework and how it experienced by Roma young people across Europe;
- To strengthen participants ability and confidence in applying principles of youth participation, human rights education, gender equality and combating antigypsyism with other young people;
- To identify and explore enabling/disabling factors and barriers to Roma youth participation based on the personal experience of participants and the realities of their communities and organisations;
- To support participants in developing or initiating projects or strategies for Roma youth participation at local and national level according to a double mainstreaming approach;
- To support networking and cooperation among participants and their organisations, especially in view of strengthening youth-led Roma youth organisations and networks at national and European level

Methodology of the training course

The training is designed to give participants the opportunity to experience and reflect upon activities and concepts central to human rights, human rights education and combating antigypsyism, based on experiential learning approaches. The activity will make an effort to go deeper into understanding the complexity of antigypsyism as well as to focus on the quality and effectiveness of Roma youth participation projects and initiatives. The programme will include theoretical and practical approaches based on participants' experiences and, taking advantage of non-formal learning approaches, favour experiential and dialogical learning.

The daily programme will be prepared by a team of trainers/experts which include youth leaders and trainers of Roma background. The development of specific competences will be based on the experiences of participants and the realities of the Roma young people that they are engaged with. All participants are expected to conclude the course by designing a project, activity or plan to initiate/develop Roma youth participation in their community.

Follow-up and support to those projects by the Council of Europe and/or by partners in the course (in particular participants' organisations) will be addressed during and after the course.

Profile of participants

The training course is designed for youth leaders and representatives of organisations and networks working with Roma young people at local and national level. Leaders in European/international Roma youth networks are also welcome, but the focus will be on local and national strategies and projects for Roma youth participation and inclusion.

All participants should:

- Be active within a Roma youth organisation or project, in a Roma community organisation, or in another youth organisation or project aimed at developing Roma youth participation and inclusion;
- Be motivated to learn and to develop their competences for Roma youth participation and inclusion, gender equality and/or combating antigypsyism;
- Be committed to and able to develop projects and initiatives for the participation of Roma young people within their organisations and communities as a result of the course;
- Be interested to share their experiences with other participants and contribute their learning process;
- Be aged between 18 and 30 years (exceptions are possible);
- Be able to work in English.

The Council of Europe welcomes applications from all candidates who fulfil the specific profile of this training course, irrespective of gender, disability, marital or parental status, racial, ethnic or social origin, colour, religion, belief or sexual orientation.

Practical and financial conditions

The training will be held from 4 to 9 October at the European Youth Centre Strasbourg. Selected participants are requested to attend and actively participate for the entire duration of the course. The arrivals to Strasbourg should be planned for 3 October and departure for 10 October 2021.

The working language of the training will be English; therefore, it is expected that participants are able to express themselves and actively engage in the dialogue with other participants in English.

Accommodation and meals for the event will be provided at the European Youth Centre Budapest and paid for by the Council of Europe.
Travel costs and visa fees for the training will be fully reimbursed according to Council of Europe rules.

A participation fee of 60 Euros is due from each participant and will be deducted from the travel reimbursements.

Application procedure

The Council of Europe will select up to 30 participants on the basis of the profile outlined above. It will try as far as possible to respect the organisations' priorities, but also to ensure gender balance, geographical regions, Roma communities, organisations and projects.

All candidates must apply online, completing the application form through the following link:
<https://youthapplications.coe.int/Application-forms>

Deadline:

Applications must be submitted by **19 September 2021**

Further information and contact

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