



# Inclusive Education in Times of Covid-19

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**THE CENTRE FOR  
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PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION**

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School of Social Work  
Care and Community

# Key Message

- ▶ **Learning from Roma children is necessary for recovery**
  - ▶ To develop inclusive education
  - ▶ To support health and well-being
- ▶ **Roma children's participation can help address the threats and maximise how they (and we) benefit from the opportunities**

Building on Rainbows: Supporting Children's Participation in Shaping Responses to COVID-19 <https://core.ac.uk/display/305109364?source=3>

Roma Children's Participation: Shaping Responses to Covid-19 in the EU and Bulgaria <https://core.ac.uk/display/323985874?source=2>

# Threat to Inclusive Education

*The economic and social conditions of disadvantaged families ... have deteriorated significantly...*

*Many people ... have lost their jobs due to the closure of sectors, especially in manufacturing, or have been forced to take unpaid leave.*

*Many children ... are without technical devices and Internet access to continue their education. ...*

*Many [C19] patients are from predominantly Roma neighbourhoods, mainly due to a lack of running water, disinfectants...*



# Threat: lack of informed decisions

## We need:

*“Data [on] needs of Roma families from social excluded localities ... We must prepare conditions for continuing normal life ... We must work on the mental health of children to understand what’s happening, and work with children.*

**No professionals could identify views of Roma children being taken into account in public decision-making**

**[UN CRC Article 12 – applies as much during Covid-19](#)**

**[CoE \(2012\) Recommendation on Child Participation](#)**

**[CoE Strategy for the Rights of the Child \(2016-2021\)](#)**

**[EU Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union \(Art 24\)](#)**

# 1. Overview of the challenges

- ▶ Housing, water, electricity, medication, poverty
- ▶ Digital: Devices, Internet and family digital literacy
- ▶ Economic safeguards not focused on informal economy
- ▶ Interventions focused on wellbeing not on the table
- ▶ Discrimination – movement, policing, public attitudes
- ▶ Lack of structured dialogue with Roma communities

## Potentials

- ▶ Solidarity: community / government / business
- ▶ Emphasis on Child-Centred Outreach in Education
- ▶ Children's Participation



# 2. Digitisation and e-learning

- ▶ **Provision:** internet, digital devices and printed materials
  - ▶ Solidarity and Collaboration countries/ neighbourhoods/ governments /civil society organisations / businesses
- ❌ **Systems not adequate**
  - ❌ Complicated application process, invisible to system
  - ❌ Not just devices – also internet, electricity, space



- ▶ **People not Digital at the heart of e-learning**
  - ▶ E-learning requested for years –now possible?
  - ❌ Unfamiliarity with laptops and online learning platforms
  - ▶ Named individuals providing support for (digital) learning, responsive child-centred learning provision
- ▶ **Connecting learning and inclusion**
  - ▶ Protection from bullying
  - ❌ Further segregation and social isolation
  - ❌ Poverty



# 3. Building Back Better

*Participation is a protective measure - not a luxury*

- ▶ Basic Essentials
  - ▶ Digital Divide
- ▶ Economic protection
  - ▶ Wellbeing
  - ▶ Discrimination
- ▶ Structured dialogue

## Lesson 1

- ▶ Young Roma can guide understanding and development of inclusive education policy, services and practice.
- ▶ Task = to establish processes that ensure their ideas will be taken into account in education decisions.

## Lesson 2

- ▶ Inclusive education links to improved poverty, health and wellbeing
- ▶ Task= to ensure Roma children's inclusion in developing economic, health, wellbeing, discrimination etc. policy and services.

# Examples of Roma children's participation

## Pre Covid-19, creating:

- ✓ Education policy papers and lobbying of government ministers/ influencing policy
- ✓ Peer research on community health and education services and needs
- ✓ Creation of curriculum content (eg anti-discrimination) and delivering training

## During Covid 19 pandemic:

- ✓ Active listening to and learning from Roma children and families.  
*'survey and communication with Roma families through our Roma coordinator'*  
Communicating information (for them) to local and national decision-makers.
- ✓ Creation of health information posters and healthy eating videos

**???** Inclusion in the surveys which suggest children are OK **???**

**???** Governments and schools learning and implementing **???**





# Practical Action Needed:

- ▶ **Strengthen mechanisms to support children (and families) to enable them to communicate into decision-making and to review and hold decision makers accountable**
  - ▶ School, local, national, and international
  - ▶ Digital, face-to-face, post, email, social media
  - ▶ Arts-based activities and surveys
  - ▶ Participation commitments and strategies
  - ▶ Link to children's ombudsmen
  - ▶ Public questioning and campaigning by children
- ▶ **Provide social protection to enable the most excluded families to support Roma children's health, wellbeing and education**
- ▶ **Tackle Discrimination**
- ▶ **Work with communities to lead, develop and oversee solutions**
- ▶ **Provide professional time and train them to support these activities**