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**E-GUIDE TO PROMOTE THE
PARTICIPATION OF ROMA
YOUTH IN ERASMUS+**

PROGRAMMES

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E-GUIDE TO PROMOTE THE PARTICIPATION OF ROMA YOUTH IN ERASMUS+ PROGRAMMES

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Introduction

What is New Roma?

The project NEW ROMA aims to develop educational materials that promote the social inclusion of Roma youth, as well as their active participation, through the knowledge of the opportunities offered by the Erasmus+ programme in the field of youth.

This project is integrated into the EU Youth Strategy, which is the European framework for cooperation for the period 2019-2027. Through this initiative, the EU aims to maximise the potential of youth policies through cooperation between Member States. This will encourage the participation of young people in democratic life and promote their social and civic participation.

The purpose of this project is to respond to the needs of groups and individuals who suffer exclusion in society, in particular Roma.

We aim to develop educational materials that promote the social inclusion of Roma youth, as well as their active participation, through the knowledge of the opportunities offered by the Erasmus+ programme in the field of youth, thus reinforcing their presence in Europe.

The project NEW ROMA aspires to, on the one hand, increase the civic participation of Roma youth, combat existing discrimination and antigypsyism and raise awareness of European citizenship. On the other hand, to teach active citizenship to associations and young people.

Through our project, and in a the more and more digitalised world, we have created this electronic guide, an updatable resource that can be downloaded on any electronic device.

Partners of the project



HORIZONTE XXII (ES)

It's a non-profit association that specialises in Social Responsibility and works under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals). It also develops educational training programmes to support and educate students and users. Its main purpose is to create and promote the value of ethical and sustainable management of any entity or project to generate positive impacts.

Horizonte XXII belongs to the General Board of the Casa de las Culturas y la Solidaridad of Zaragoza City Council. It is a social centre whose aim is to promote the social integration of migrants and ethnic minorities and to favour models of intercultural coexistence. The main purpose of this municipal service is to promote and encourage the organisation and development of activities aimed at raising society's awareness of the migration phenomenon and facilitating the participation of migrants and minorities through the associative fabric.

Activities:

- Socio-Cultural Dynamisation through Personal and Social Coaching.
- Arts and Spanish culture dissemination projects.
- Social and training projects.
- Educational coaching programmes.

- Erasmus+ projects.

Horizonte XXII's work profiles are students and users, groups in social exclusion or at risk of social exclusion, such as: long-term unemployed, unemployed over 40, older people, migrants and ethnic minorities.



VOX CIVICA (RO)

It's a non-profit association based on the principles of tolerance, multiculturalism, non-discrimination, respect, transparency, professionalism, efficiency, solidarity and the universally recognised values of freedom, dignity and equality.

Vox Civica aims to advocate for:

- Support the sustainable development of disadvantaged communities, especially those of national minorities at regional, national and European level; to support the personal development of young people from vulnerable groups by providing them with the necessary conditions to realise their ideals, values and aspirations;
- Promote and encourage tolerance, multiculturalism and diversity in different ethnic communities.
- Combat discrimination on the basis of ethnic origin and fight for respect for human rights.

Vox Civica has a high level of expertise in:

- **Education:** It develops curricula, carries out extra-curricular activities, conducts surveys among pupils and teachers, etc. The organisation has an in-depth knowledge of Romanian education legislation.
- **Entrepreneurship and the labour market:** They have a perfect command of all the legislation in this field. They understand the creation, modification and dissolution of companies and regulations concerning the self-employed.
- **Youth:** The organisation is known for developing strategies to attract and involve young people in public interest activities (NGOs) such as civic participation and community development activities, project implementation, etc.
- **Human Rights:** It writes and develops advocacy and campaigning campaigns for human rights.
- **New technologies:** Vox Civica is willing to learn and to participate in the development of new technologies in the fields of education, entrepreneurship, etc.



INNETICA (ES)

It's a non-profit foundation whose mission is to promote cooperation between entities across Europe to foster European values in accordance with Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union.

Its mission is to promote social innovation projects, as well as to develop educational projects and teaching activities. As a European network, it brings together universities, public bodies, companies, training centres from different countries, as well as intellectuals, professionals and volunteers who contribute their ideas and experiences to change and improve European society.

To achieve these aims, it carries out various activities: conferences and meetings at national and European level on education, training, culture, research and social innovation; it carries out dissemination campaigns

on the results of the projects carried out by the association; and it creates and develops digital content, applications and services in different languages.

Main work lines:

- **Education and training:** Improving the quality of education and training of partner organisations through the development of European projects that facilitate innovation and the exchange of good practices.
- **ICT applied to Education and Social and Cultural Innovation:** Using all kinds of digital tools (such as apps, e-learning platforms, etc.).
- **Dissemination area:** It designs websites, manages social networks, develops dissemination plans, prepares corporate identity manuals, designs press releases, etc.
- **European projects** related to various themes (art and culture, migrants and youth, ICT, environment, etc.).



KEPDER (TR)

KEPDER offers different services and programmes in different fields such as: youth and education, sport, environment, agriculture, European citizenship, culture, history, personal development, volunteering and the Erasmus+ programme. It has a team of mentors, who guide the young people, as well as volunteers, which gives added value to the organisation.

In addition, these volunteers collaborate in the development of the programmed activities.

One of the aims of the association is to promote participation and European citizenship, tolerance and civic solidarity. Both in the field of youth policy and European awareness-raising, KEPDER develops youth activities that promote active citizenship and the need for a more united Europe. Thus, KEPDER promotes youth initiatives and supports young people to participate in the activities it carries out as well as in the initiatives developed.

Activities:

- **Training:**
 - To the local population on different cultures, traditions, tourism, agriculture, environment, nature and climate.
 - Public health and health education to young people.
 - Vocational training for young people in the business world.
 - Agriculture for young people.
 - For NGOs projects.
 - For ethnic groups on social inclusion.
- **Educational work with ethnic groups** (in particular the inclusion of Roma youth in social life and the development of entrepreneurial skills of these young people).
- **European programmes** (in particular Erasmus+) in the field of youth.
- **Activities** to eliminate prejudices between young refugees and young Turks.



FAIR CHANCE (BG)

The aim of the activity of this association is to promote good governance and the dissemination of good practices and alternative solutions for the development of civil society, education, culture, tourism, economy and environment.

The organisation's efforts are aimed at implementing sustainable development strategies at the local level. Its aim is to achieve social and economic development while respecting the environment and applying a top-down approach in decision-making processes.

Activities:

The foundation implements educational, scientific and business projects in the field of international and European issues, policies and research, the promotion of economic development and IT development.

Fair Chance is currently involved in a project to support entrepreneurship education and training through the development of a simulation, which will address all the theoretical and practical areas of setting up a business. Mentors and "angel investors" will be on hand to guide students through the training process, all accompanied by a robust technology solution. The whole environment will be aligned with the standards of venture capital funds, the banking sector and crowdfunding options, so that the start-up idea can be tested and verified as viable and innovative.

They work with these main groups:

- Young people in the labour market.
- Young people neither working nor studying.
- Mothers without a partner.
- Ethnic groups.

1. What is Erasmus+ programmes

1.1. General description of the Erasmus+ programmes

Erasmus+ is a grant program of the European Union covering the fields of education, youth and sport, implemented between 2021-2027. The Erasmus+ Program aims to provide people with new skills, strengthen their personal development and increase their employment opportunities, regardless of their age and educational background.

The Erasmus+ Program was first launched in 1987 as a student exchange program to encourage the exchange of higher education students for one or two semesters. The program underwent structural changes over time and expanded to include school education, vocational education, adult education and youth as well as student exchange and was implemented under different components such as Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci, Lifelong Learning until 2013. In the 2014-2020 period, with the addition of the fields of education and youth as well as sports, it was unified under a single program and named Erasmus+. The European Commission has decided that the new program, which will cover the years 2021-2027, will continue to be called Erasmus+.

The Erasmus Program is named after the Dutch scholar Erasmus (1469-1536), who was one of the most important representatives of Renaissance Humanism and in a way the 'first' of today's Erasmus+ students, as he was both a student and an academic in different European countries.

[For more information, check this promotional video of European Parliament Erasmus+.](#)

1.2. Opportunities in the fields of youth, education and sport supported by the European Union

The European Union (EU) offers a wide range of opportunities in the fields of youth, education and sport through various programs and initiatives. This support is designed to raise the educational levels of European citizens, promote the social and professional development of young people and spread sport to all segments of society.

In this document, we will explore in detail the opportunities that the EU provides in these areas:

Youth Programs

- **DiscoverEU:** DiscoverEU is an initiative launched and managed by the European Commission. This program offers free train tickets for young people aged 18 to explore Europe and gain cultural and social experiences across the continent. The program aims to increase mobility among young people in Europe, promote cultural diversity and raise young people's awareness of European Union (EU) identity and citizenship. DiscoverEU is implemented under the Erasmus+ program and receives funding from this program.
- **Erasmus+ Youth Exchanges:** The Erasmus+ program provides opportunities for young people to get to know different cultures and gain international experiences. Youth exchanges bring together

young people aged 13-30 to work on a specific topic. These programs aim to increase cultural understanding and tolerance while contributing to the personal development of young people.

- **European Solidarity Program:** The European Solidarity Program supports young people to participate in community service projects. These projects can be in various fields such as environmental protection, social assistance, education and social integration. The program offers young people aged 18-30 the opportunity to volunteer at home or abroad. Participants receive support for living and travel expenses for the duration of the project.

Education Programs

- **Erasmus+ Higher Education:** The Erasmus+ Higher Education program offers university students the opportunity to study or do an internship abroad. This program helps students gain international experience, improve their language skills and get to know different education systems. Erasmus+ also gives students an advantage in finding a job after graduation.
- **Erasmus+ Vocational Education and Training (VET):** The Vocational Education and Training (VET) program allows students of vocational colleges and vocational high schools to do internships abroad. This program helps participants to improve their professional skills and become competitive in the international job market. The program also promotes cooperation between educational institutions.

Sport Programs

- **Erasmus+ Sport:** The Erasmus+ Sport program supports projects to promote sport and increase social cohesion through sport. It funds projects submitted by sports clubs, federations and other civil society organizations. Erasmus+ Sport particularly emphasizes the contribution of sport to physical and mental health and promotes social solidarity.
- **European Week for Healthy Living and Sport:** The European Week for Healthy Living and Sport is an annual event that promotes sport and physical activity across Europe. During this week, it aims to encourage people of all ages to lead active lifestyles through activities organized by schools, sports clubs, municipalities and various organizations.
- **Development of Sports Infrastructure:** The EU provides financial support for the development of sports infrastructure and modernization of sports facilities. This support is particularly important to increase the participation of young people in sports activities and to promote the use of sport as a tool for social integration.

The European Union supports the personal and professional development of its citizens by offering a wide range of opportunities in youth, education and sport. Initiatives such as the Erasmus+ program and the European Solidarity Corps enable young people to gain international experience and take part in social projects, while education programs offer students and trainees the opportunity to study and do internships abroad. Sport programs fund important projects to promote sport and increase social cohesion. EU support in these areas aims to create a more educated, socially active and healthy society across Europe.

2. Understanding the potential of Roma youth

2.1. The specific challenges faced by Roma youth

Roma youth face many specific challenges in the contemporary European social-political context. These challenges are multifaceted, encompassing issues related to education, employment, discrimination, social inclusion, and political representation. Here are some of the key challenges:

Educational barriers

Educational barriers faced by Roma youth in Europe are a significant concern, as they limit opportunities for social mobility and perpetuate cycles of poverty and marginalization. These barriers can be understood in several key areas:

- Segregation, which is manifest by putting Roma children in separate schools and classes, which are typically of lower quality and have fewer resources than those attended by non-Roma students. This segregation can stem from both explicit policies and informal practices.
- Roma children are disproportionately placed in special education classes or schools for children with disabilities, often without proper assessments, resulting in a substandard education that doesn't meet their needs.
- Early school leaving is confirmed by the high dropout rates. Roma youth have significantly higher dropout rates compared to their peers. Factors contributing to this include economic pressures, a lack of educational support, and experiences of discrimination and bullying.
- Economic pressures because many Roma families live in poverty and may rely on their children to contribute to the household income, leading to early school leaving.
- Low quality of education because of the under-resourced schools. Schools that serve predominantly Roma populations often lack basic resources, including qualified teachers, adequate facilities, and learning materials.
- Teacher expectations and training because in the schools from Roma communities, the teachers have lower expectations for Roma students and may not be adequately trained to address their specific educational needs or to work in a culturally sensitive manner.
- Difficult access to early childhood education because it is a limited enrolment of Roma children who are less likely to be enrolled in early childhood education programs, which are crucial for developing foundational skills and preparing for primary education. Barriers include cost, lack of awareness, and limited availability of programs in Roma communities.
- The discrimination and bullying constitute a hostile environment for Roma students who often face discrimination, prejudice, and bullying from peers, teachers, and school administrators. This hostile environment can lead to lower self-esteem, disengagement, and ultimately dropping out of school. Also, there is a lack of support for Roma students concerning this issue. Schools frequently lack effective mechanisms to address and combat discrimination and bullying, leaving Roma students feeling unsupported and isolated.

- Low parental involvement and support due to the educational background of parents. Many Roma parents have had limited educational opportunities themselves, which can affect their ability to support their children's education.
- Distrust of institutions due to historical and ongoing discrimination, which is often a deep-seated distrust of educational institutions among Roma families, leading to lower engagement with the school system.
- Language barriers of Roma students who speak Romani as their mother language and who lack non-native language instruction. Roma children might speak Romani or another language at home, while instruction at school is in the national language. This language barrier can hinder their comprehension and ability to engage fully in the classroom.
- Limited access to higher education because of the socio-economic barriers and discriminatory practices which often limit Roma youth's access to universities and higher education institutions.

Employment discrimination

Employment discrimination against Roma youth in Europe is a significant barrier that contributes to high unemployment rates and poor job quality within this community. This discrimination is multi-layered, encompassing direct prejudice, systemic biases, and structural inequalities. Here are the key aspects:

- Direct discrimination by prejudiced hiring practices. Many employers hold biases against Roma individuals, leading to discriminatory hiring practices. Roma applicants may be rejected based on their ethnicity rather than their qualifications.
- Negative stereotypes about Roma, such as perceptions of being unreliable or untrustworthy, can influence hiring decisions and workplace treatment.
- Systemic barriers such as poor access to education and training. Roma youth often have limited access to quality education and vocational training, which restricts their ability to acquire the skills needed for many jobs. This educational gap translates into fewer opportunities in the job market.
- Inadequate support services due to a lack of targeted employment support services for Roma, such as job placement programs, career counselling, and training schemes tailored to their needs.
- Workplace discrimination which is manifest in a hostile work environment. Roma employees may face hostility, harassment, and discrimination from colleagues and supervisors, creating an unwelcoming work environment.
- Limited career advancement such as, even when Roma individuals secure employment, they may encounter barriers to career progression due to discriminatory practices within the workplace, such as being passed over for promotions.
- Precarious employment expressed by informal and unstable jobs. Roma youth are more likely to be employed in informal, low-paying, and unstable jobs without proper contracts, job security, or benefits. This precarious employment often lacks legal protection and social security.
- Exploitation, which is expressed, in some cases, when Roma workers are subject to exploitative labour conditions, including unfair wages, poor working conditions, and excessive working hours.

- Geographical and social isolation due to segregated living conditions. Many Roma live in segregated and marginalized communities with limited access to job markets. Physical distance from economic centres and lack of transportation further hinders employment opportunities.
- Lack of social networks due to social exclusion, known as social networks, can help in finding job opportunities, which are crucial in many employment contexts.
- Legal and policy frameworks which develop ineffective enforcement. Even when anti-discrimination laws exist, they are often poorly enforced. Roma individuals may be unaware of their rights or unwilling to report discrimination due to fear of retaliation or lack of trust in authorities.
- Lack of targeted policies expressed by often lack of comprehensive and targeted employment policies that address the specific needs and challenges faced by Roma youth.

Social exclusion and discrimination

Social exclusion and discrimination significantly impact Roma youth in Europe, perpetuating cycles of poverty, marginalization, and limited opportunities. This multi-faceted issue encompasses various forms of discrimination and social barriers. Here are the main aspects:

- Racial everyday discrimination whose Roma youth frequently encounter racism and prejudice in everyday interactions, including in public spaces, shops, and services. This persistent discrimination fosters a sense of alienation and exclusion.
- Non-formal institutional discrimination by public institutions, such as schools, healthcare providers, and law enforcement, further marginalizes Roma communities. This can manifest in biased treatment, unequal access to services, and discriminatory policies.
- Social segregation, especially residential segregation. Many Roma live in segregated, marginalized communities with inadequate housing and infrastructure. These areas are often isolated from mainstream society and lack basic services such as clean water, sanitation, and transportation.
- Educational segregation in which Roma children are often placed in separate, lower-quality schools or classes, limiting their educational opportunities, and reinforcing social divides.
- Economic marginalization is due to poverty. A significant proportion of Roma live in poverty, which affects their access to necessities, healthcare, education, and employment opportunities. Economic hardship exacerbates social exclusion and limits upward mobility.
- Unemployment and underemployment, which manifest by a high rate of unemployment and underemployment among Roma youth result in economic instability and further social exclusion. Discrimination in the job market contributes to these high unemployment rates.
- Health disparities especially by hard access to healthcare. Roma youth often face barriers to accessing healthcare, including discrimination by healthcare providers, lack of information, and economic constraints. This results in poorer health outcomes and limited access to preventive care.
- The stress and trauma associated with living in marginalized conditions, coupled with experiences of discrimination, can negatively impact the mental health of Roma youth. Limited access to mental health services exacerbates these challenges.

- Cultural marginalization and stigmatization of Roma culture and identity which are often stigmatized and misunderstood by the broader society. This cultural marginalization contributes to social exclusion and hinders the ability of Roma youth to express and celebrate their heritage.
- Identity struggles manifested by Roma youth who balance between their cultural heritage and the pressures to assimilate into mainstream society. This can lead to a loss of cultural identity and self-esteem issues.
- Limited civic participation and political exclusion because Roma communities are underrepresented in political institutions and decision-making processes. This lack of representation means their specific needs and concerns are often overlooked in policymaking.
- Barriers to civic engagement because of discrimination and marginalization which limit the ability of Roma youth to engage in civic activities and participate in political processes. This includes barriers to voting, running for office, and participating in community organizations.
- Poor and inadequate social services and support. Roma youth often have limited access to social services and support systems, exacerbating their marginalization. This includes a lack of access to welfare benefits, housing assistance, and legal aid.
- Discrimination in social services manifested when Roma youth do access social services and they may face discrimination and biased treatment from service providers, further deterring them from seeking help.
- Political underrepresentation or lack of representation. Roma communities are underrepresented in political institutions and decision-making processes at local, national, and European levels. This lack of representation means that their specific needs and concerns are often overlooked in policymaking.
- Limited civic participation because of the barriers to civic engagement and political participation, including discriminatory practices and lack of support for Roma political candidates, hinder the ability of Roma youth to influence policies that affect their lives.

2.2. How Erasmus+ programmes can help to overcome these challenges

The Erasmus+ Programme, an EU initiative that supports education, training, youth, and sport, offers various opportunities that can help Roma youth overcome challenges related to social exclusion, discrimination, and limited opportunities. Here's how Erasmus+ can be leveraged to address these issues:

Educational opportunities

The Erasmus+ Programme offers a variety of educational opportunities specifically beneficial for Roma youth, addressing the unique challenges they face and promoting their inclusion and empowerment. Here are the detailed educational opportunities provided by Erasmus+ for Roma youth:

- Higher education mobility for Roma students, which helps them to apply for scholarships to study abroad at participating universities. These scholarships cover tuition, travel, and living expenses, making higher education more accessible.

- Exchange programs which help Roma students to participate in semester-long or year-long exchange programs, allowing them to experience different educational systems and cultures. This exposure helps broaden their academic and personal horizons.
- Credit transfer because the courses taken abroad are recognized by the home institution, ensuring seamless academic progression.
- Vocational Education and Training which, by VET Mobility programs, allow Roma youth to undertake vocational training in other EU countries. They gain practical skills and work experience in various fields, improving their employability.
- Internships and apprenticeships help them to fund placements in companies or vocational schools and provide hands-on experience and professional development opportunities.
- Skill development within VET programs focused on the acquisition of work-specific hard-skills, as well as soft skills such as teamwork, communication and problem solving.
- Youth exchanges and mobility projects such as short-term exchanges between groups of young people from different countries will promote cultural understanding, social inclusion, and personal growth. Roma youth can engage in activities that foster intercultural dialogue and learning.
- European Voluntary Service (EVS) within Roma youth can volunteer abroad, gaining valuable life experience, skills, and contributing to community projects. Volunteering opportunities often include accommodation, food, and a small allowance.
- Strategic Partnerships within Cooperation and Innovation Projects, because Erasmus+ Programme funds strategic partnerships between schools, universities, NGOs, and community organizations to develop and implement inclusive educational projects. These partnerships focus on improving educational practices and promoting social inclusion, including Roma Youth. Also, collaborative projects are designed to develop new teaching methods, curricula, and educational tools that address the needs of disadvantaged groups, including Roma youth.
- Erasmus Mundus joint master's degrees offer prestigious joint master's programs delivered by consortia of universities. Roma students can apply for fully funded scholarships covering tuition, travel, and living expenses.
- Job Shadowing and Teaching Assignments which help teachers to participate in job shadowing and teaching assignments in different countries, enhancing their skills and knowledge to better support Roma students.
- Inclusive education policies and Initiatives that promote inclusive policies and practices within higher education institutions, ensuring they are accessible and supportive to Roma students.
- Youth participation and civic engagement that, by project financed by Erasmus+ Programme, encourage the active participation of young people in civic and political life. These projects empower Roma youth to become active citizens and community leaders. Also, there are many trainings and workshops which open opportunities for Roma youth to participate in training and workshops on leadership, advocacy, and civic engagement.
- Support for policy reform ensured by the European Commission Erasmus+ which supports initiatives that contribute to policy reform in education and youth sectors, focusing on equity, access, and quality. These projects can help address systemic barriers faced by Roma youth.

- Research and innovation initiatives which are funded for research projects that explore innovative solutions to improve educational outcomes for marginalized groups, including Roma youth.

Employment opportunities

The Erasmus+ Programme can significantly contribute to reducing youth unemployment among Roma youngsters through a multifaceted approach. By enhancing vocational training, providing mobility and exchange opportunities, supporting entrepreneurship, developing essential skills, offering employment support services, engaging communities, fostering partnerships, and advocating for policy changes, Erasmus+ can create pathways to sustainable employment for Roma youth across Europe.

- Entrepreneurship and self-employment are supported by entrepreneurship training programs because Erasmus+ can fund projects that provide entrepreneurship training, including business planning, financial management, marketing, and accessing funding. This empowers Roma youth to start and run their own businesses, creating self-employment opportunities.
- Innovation hubs and business Incubators specifically for Roma youth which can provide resources, mentorship, and support needed to develop and launch successful business ventures.
- Skill development and lifelong learning which develop life skills through soft skills training by offering training programs that focus on essential life skills (e.g., financial literacy, communication) and soft skills (e.g., teamwork, problem-solving) can enhance the employability of Roma youth and prepare them for various job roles.
- Digital skills and ICT training by providing access to digital literacy and ICT training which ensures and equips Roma youth with the skills needed for the modern workforce. Erasmus+ can support initiatives that offer training in basic computer skills, coding, digital marketing, and other relevant areas.
- Employment support services career guidance and counselling because Erasmus+ can fund projects that offer career guidance and counselling services tailored to the needs of Roma youth. These services can help them identify career goals, develop job search strategies, and prepare for job interviews.
- Job placement and support programs by developing programs that connect Roma youth with potential employers and provide ongoing support to ensure successful integration into the workplace. This can include mentorship programs and follow-up services.
- Community engagement and empowerment community-based employment projects financed by Erasmus+ Programme which engage local communities in creating and implementing employment projects ensure that initiatives are culturally sensitive and address the specific needs of Roma youth. Community involvement can also foster a supportive environment for employment initiatives.
- Parental and community involvement by involving parents and community leaders in employment initiatives will increase the support network for Roma youth. Workshops and informational sessions can help families understand and support the employment aspirations of their children.
- Partnerships and collaborations public-private partnerships which foster partnerships between educational institutions, businesses, and NGOs and create comprehensive programs that provide

both theoretical education and practical work experience. These collaborations can offer a more extensive range of resources and employment opportunities for Roma youth.

- Collaboration with NGOs and community organizations which by working closely with NGOs specialized in Roma issues can help tailor Erasmus+ projects to be more effective. These organizations often have deep insights into the challenges and needs of Roma communities.
- Research, advocacy, and policy development research on employment barriers, because the Erasmus+ Programme funds research projects that analyse the barriers to employment faced by Roma youth and can provide valuable insights for developing effective interventions. This research can inform policy changes and the design of targeted employment programs.
- Policy advocacy and development which uses research findings to advocate for policy changes at local, national, and European levels. Erasmus+ can support initiatives that aim to influence employment and labour market policies to be more inclusive of Roma youth, promoting equal opportunities and combating discrimination.

3. How to benefit from Erasmus+ programmes

3.1. Application process and requirements

The Erasmus+ program is an EU-funded initiative that supports education, training, youth, and sport in Europe. If you're interested in participating in Erasmus+, here's a general overview of the application process:

- **Research and Choose a Program:** Start by researching the Erasmus+ program and its different opportunities. Determine which program fits your interests, academic goals, and eligibility criteria. Erasmus+ offers various opportunities such as study exchanges, traineeships, volunteering, and more. [You can check out the Erasmus+ 2024 Guide here.](#)
- **Check Eligibility:** Make sure you meet the eligibility criteria for the specific program you're interested in. Eligibility criteria can vary depending on the type of activity (study, traineeship, volunteering, etc.), your educational level, and your country of origin. [You can find more info about the criteria here.](#)
- **Contact Your Institution:** If you're a student, speak to the International Office or Erasmus+ coordinator at your home institution. They can provide information about available opportunities, application deadlines, and application procedures. If you're a staff member or a representative of an organization, you can also contact the relevant department for guidance. [You can find more information visiting the National Agencies websites, here you have the directory.](#)
- **Prepare Required Documents:** Depending on the program you're applying for, you may need to prepare various documents such as a CV/resume, motivation letter, language proficiency certificate (e.g., for English, if required), academic transcripts, letters of recommendation, etc. Make sure to carefully read the application guidelines and provide all necessary documentation. [You can check the here to get more information about this kind of documents.](#)
- **Submit Application:** Follow the application instructions provided by your institution or the organization managing the Erasmus+ program in your country. Applications are typically submitted online through dedicated platforms or portals. Be mindful of application deadlines, as late submissions may not be considered. [Here you have a guide on the Erasmus+ webpage to show you how to apply to the different processes.](#)
- **Selection Process:** After the application deadline, a selection committee will review the applications and select candidates based on various criteria such as academic performance, language skills, motivation, and relevance to the program's objectives. The selection process may include interviews or assessments depending on the program. [In this video you will find some useful tips to prepare the interviews.](#)
- **Pre-Departure Preparation:** If selected, you'll receive information about pre-departure arrangements including visa procedures (if applicable), accommodation options, health insurance, and other practical matters. You may also be required to attend pre-departure orientation sessions. [Salto Youth](#) usually prepares some trainings and guides that you can look for in order to get more information about the place you are going to travel to and the requirements.

- **Participation:** Once all preparations are complete, you can start your Erasmus+ experience whether it's studying abroad, undertaking a traineeship, volunteering, or participating in another activity. Make the most of your experience by actively engaging with the local community, immersing yourself in the culture, and seizing opportunities for personal and professional development.
- **Evaluation and Reporting:** After completing your Erasmus+ activity, you may be asked to provide feedback and participate in evaluation surveys to help improve the program. Keep in touch with your institution or the Erasmus+ National Agency for any reporting requirements. [You can follow this guide here.](#)

Remember, the application process may vary slightly depending on your country and the specific Erasmus+ program you're applying for. It's essential to carefully read and follow the instructions provided by your institution or the relevant authorities.

3.2. Potential barriers Roma youth may face when applying for programmes and strategies to overcome them

Members of the Roma community may face various barriers when applying for Erasmus+ programs. These barriers can include social, economic, cultural, and institutional challenges. Here are some potential barriers and strategies to overcome them:

- **Access to Information:** Lack of access to information about Erasmus+ programs due to limited outreach efforts or communication channels that don't effectively reach Roma communities.

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***Strategy:** Increase outreach efforts by partnering with community organizations, local NGOs, and Roma advocacy groups to disseminate information about Erasmus+ opportunities. Utilize multiple communication channels such as community events, social media, and local newspapers to reach Roma individuals and families. This project is an amazing example itself for raising awareness on the opportunities that the Erasmus+ Programme has to offer them.*

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- **Language and Literacy:** Limited proficiency in the official language of the host country or low literacy levels may hinder participation in the application process and integration into the host environment.

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***Strategy:** Provide language support and resources, including translated application materials and language courses tailored to the needs of Roma applicants. Offer pre-departure language training to improve communication skills and cultural orientation sessions to facilitate integration into the host community.*

Examples of these resources can be the [EduRoma](#) app by the Roma Education Fund.

- **Financial Constraints:** Economic disadvantage and financial insecurity may prevent Roma individuals from covering the costs associated with participating in Erasmus+ activities, such as travel expenses, accommodation, and living costs.

***Strategy:** Offer financial assistance and scholarships specifically targeted at Roma applicants to cover travel and living expenses. Provide information about available funding opportunities, grants, and financial support schemes offered by Erasmus+ and other sources. Advocate for inclusive funding policies that prioritize diversity and socio-economic inclusion.*

The [Roma Education Fund](#) is an international organization dedicated to promoting educational opportunities for Roma children and youth. They provide scholarships, grants, and capacity-building support to schools, teachers, and NGOs working on Roma education projects across Central and Eastern Europe.

- **Discrimination and Stereotypes:** Discrimination, prejudice, and stereotypes against Roma people may create barriers to accessing educational and employment opportunities, including participation in Erasmus+ programs.

***Strategy:** Implement anti-discrimination policies and awareness-raising campaigns to challenge stereotypes, combat prejudice, and promote diversity and inclusion within Erasmus+ programs and host institutions. Provide training for staff and participants on cultural sensitivity, intercultural communication, and inclusive practices.*

The [European Roma Rights Centre](#) is an international human rights organization advocating for the rights of Roma communities across Europe. They conduct research, legal advocacy, and strategic litigation to combat discrimination, improve access to justice, and promote equal opportunities for Roma individuals and families.

- **Cultural Differences and Social Integration:** Cultural differences and social isolation may impact the overall experience and well-being of Roma participants in Erasmus+ programs, leading to feelings of alienation or exclusion.

Strategy: Foster a supportive and inclusive environment by promoting intercultural dialogue, diversity awareness, and mutual respect among participants. Encourage cross-cultural exchange and collaboration through joint activities, cultural events, and community engagement initiatives. Provide mentoring and peer support programs to help Roma participants navigate cultural challenges and build social networks.

Phiren Amenca is a network of Roma and non-Roma volunteers and organizations working together to challenge stereotypes, combat discrimination, and promote social inclusion. They organize international volunteering projects, training seminars, and advocacy campaigns focused on Roma youth empowerment and intercultural dialogue.

By addressing these barriers and implementing targeted strategies, Erasmus+ programs can promote greater participation and inclusion of Roma individuals, enabling them to benefit from the valuable opportunities for education, training, and personal development offered by the program.

For more information, you can check the information available on the topic of organizations such as the [European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights \(FRA\)](#), the [Council of Europe](#), and the [United Nations Development Programme \(UNDP\)](#).

4. Educational and cultural exchange opportunities

4.1. Educational and cultural exchange opportunities offered through Erasmus+ programmes

Erasmus+ Youth Exchanges

Youth Exchanges (KA152-YOU) allow young people from at least two different countries to come together for a certain period of time around a topic of mutual interest and learn about each other's cultures. During a Youth Exchange, participants, supported by group leaders, jointly carry out a programme of activities through workshops, discussions, simulations, etc., designed and prepared by them before the exchange.

They use Informal Education and Non-formal (non-formal-unstructured) Education methods, they learn a subject in an interactive way.

Youth Exchanges enable young people to improve their competences, gain awareness on socially relevant issues/thematic areas, discover new cultures, habits and lifestyles, especially through peer learning, and strengthen values such as solidarity, democracy and friendship. Within the scope of this programme, young people can participate in projects abroad as well as carry out international projects in Turkey.

Erasmus+ Training Courses

An Erasmus+ training course is an international programme that focuses on the exchange of ideas to find a solution to a specific problem and offers innovative guidance to the participants.

The training courses help participants to raise awareness. In addition, by providing new and different perspectives, it contributes to becoming more solution-oriented and universal thinking individuals at the end of the programme. It enables participants to present their own projects in an international environment and achieve better results by sharing different ideas. By supporting the personal development of individuals, they can achieve better positions in business life.

These courses are open to everyone over 18 years of age. However, in some projects, participants may be required to have a certain level of foreign language or you may be expected to be closely related to the theme of the project in your daily life. The duration of the programme is between 5-21 days.

4.2. How Roma youth can gain new skills through these programmes

Language Skills

Roma youth participating in the above-mentioned programmes can learn new languages or improve their existing language skills by studying or doing internships abroad. Language learning not only facilitates daily communication, but also enables individuals to understand cultural differences and communicate more effectively internationally. Language skills increase job and training opportunities, enabling participants to be more competitive in the international labour market. For example, young people who gain competence in a widely used language such as English may have the chance to work in multinational companies or participate in international academic programmes.

Intercultural Communication

It offers Roma youth the opportunity to interact with different cultures and develop intercultural communication skills. Studying or working in different countries helps to reinforce values such as tolerance, understanding and respect. Intercultural communication skills enable Roma youth to become global citizens and contribute to their development into internationally active individuals. These skills can also help to increase diversity and inclusion within Roma communities and strengthen inter-communal dialogue.

Vocational Skills

Erasmus+ vocational training and internship programmes allow Roma young people to acquire practical skills and work experience required in the world of work. These programmes allow young people to specialise in a specific field and acquire competences that are in demand on the labour market. For example, young people who have the opportunity to do internships in areas such as information technology, engineering, tourism or health care increase their chances of a career in these sectors. Vocational skills and work experience increase participants' employability and contribute significantly to their career development.

Academic and Research Skills

Roma youth participating in higher education programmes can develop their research skills through academic studies in different educational systems. Studying at different universities offers participants the opportunity to gain in-depth knowledge in various academic disciplines and to carry out research projects. This allows them to improve their academic achievements and pursue further education. Research skills also help participants to develop critical thinking and analytical competences, which are of great importance in academic and professional life.

Social and Personal Skills

Youth exchange programmes allow Roma youth to develop social and personal skills such as teamwork, leadership, problem solving and critical thinking. These programmes allow young people to reinforce their social skills by working with peers from different cultures. Skills such as teamwork and leadership help

participants succeed in both their personal and professional lives. Problem solving and critical thinking skills enable young people to cope with the challenges they face and develop innovative solutions.

European Values and Citizenship Awareness

Cultural exchange programmes raise awareness of European values and active citizenship. Through these programmes, Roma youth learn about values such as democratic participation, human rights and social justice and put these values into practice in their daily lives. The European Union's core values of respect for human rights, democracy, equality and the rule of law contribute to the individual and social development of young people. These values enable Roma youth to become more active and aware individuals in society.

5. Communication and support

5.1. Strategies for communicating with Roma youth and encouraging them to participate in the programme

Communicating effectively with Roma youth and encouraging their participation in the Erasmus+ program requires a nuanced approach that acknowledges the diverse cultural, economic, and social realities they face. Here are some strategies that can be employed:

Community Engagement and Collaboration

- **Partner with Local Leaders:** Work with local Roma leaders, community organizations, and schools to build trust and understanding. These leaders often hold respect and influence and can act as bridges between the Erasmus+ program and the community.
- **Community Workshops:** Organize workshops in Roma communities to inform them about Erasmus+ opportunities. It has to be ensured that these are facilitated by individuals who either come from the community or have strong ties to it.

Tailored Communication

- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Adapting communication methods to be culturally sensitive. Use of language, symbols, or narratives that resonate with the Roma community can increase engagement.
- **Visual and Verbal Messaging:** Using visual aids, storytelling, and testimonials from previous Roma participants who have benefited from the program. This can help illustrate the practical benefits and inspire interest.

Accessibility and Support

- **Provide Language Support:** Offering materials and support in their native languages (if different from the national language) can help overcome barriers to understanding and engagement.
- **Guidance and Mentorship:** Establishment of mentorship programs where Roma students who are interested in Erasmus+ can receive guidance from someone who has already navigated the process.

Inclusive Program Design

- **Address Practical Barriers:** Understanding and addressing the practical barriers that Roma youth might face, such as transportation, language barriers, internet access, or documentation. Providing solutions to these can significantly ease the participation process.
- **Flexible Application Processes:** Simplify and provide flexibility in the application processes to accommodate varying educational and living circumstances.

Educational Initiatives

- **School-Based Campaigns:** Run informational campaigns in schools with significant Roma populations. Engaging teachers and counsellors in promoting these opportunities as part of career guidance.
- **Scholarships and Financial Aid:** Clearly advertising any scholarships or financial support available specifically for Roma students to help alleviate economic barriers.

Building Trust and Continuity

- **Follow-Up:** Continuously engaging with the community even after workshops or information sessions. Regular follow-ups can help maintain interest and assist potential applicants in navigating the process.
- **Success Stories:** Regularly highlighting and celebrating the success stories of Roma students in Erasmus+ to build a positive narrative around the program within the community.

Networking and Exposure

- **Exposure Visits:** Organizing exposure visits for Roma youth to universities or institutions participating in Erasmus+. Meeting current students and seeing the facilities can demystify the experience and motivate them to apply.
- **Online Platforms:** Utilizing social media and online forums to reach younger audiences where they are most active. Creating engaging content that can be shared easily to raise awareness.

Implementing these strategies requires consistent effort and dedication to understanding the unique challenges faced by Roma youth. Effective communication and engagement can not only foster their participation in programs like Erasmus+ but also contribute to their broader educational and social empowerment.

5.2. Methods of providing support and guidance

Supporting Roma youth in the development, implementation, and reporting of Erasmus+ projects involve a multi-faceted approach that focuses on accessibility, mentorship, and ongoing support. Here are several effective methods to consider:

Preparation and Planning Support

- **Workshops and Training Sessions:** Offering specific workshops on how to design and plan an Erasmus+ project, focusing on practical skills like writing proposals, budget management, and project planning.
- **Toolkit and Resources:** Developing a toolkit that includes templates, checklists, and guides specifically tailored to help Roma youth navigate the initial stages of project development.

Mentorship Programs

- **Peer Mentoring:** Connecting Roma youth with peers who have successfully participated in Erasmus+ projects. These mentors can provide firsthand insights, encouragement, and practical advice.
- **Professional Guidance:** Establishment of a network of professionals who can offer periodic consultations during the project lifecycle. This could include academic advisors, project managers, and subject matter experts.

Financial Navigation

- **Financial Planning Support:** Providing training on financial aspects of Erasmus+ projects, such as budgeting, managing funds, and financial reporting. This is crucial for compliance and successful project management.
- **Access to Micro-grants:** Offering small grants to help with initial project costs, ensuring that financial barriers do not prevent participation.

Technical Assistance

- **Technology Access:** Ensuring that participants have access to necessary technological resources, including computers and internet access, which are essential for developing and managing projects.
- **Online Platforms:** Using online platforms for training, meetings, and project management, which can help overcome geographical and mobility barriers.

Cultural and Linguistic Support

- **Language Support:** Providing translation services or bilingual project materials to ensure that language barriers do not hinder participation or understanding.
- **Cultural Advisors:** Include cultural advisors who can help tailor projects to be culturally sensitive and relevant, which is crucial for engaging the wider Roma community in the project's activities.

Regular Check-Ins and Reporting Assistance

- **Scheduled Reviews:** Setting up regular check-in meetings to monitor progress, provide feedback, and address any issues early on. This helps keep projects on track and participants motivated.
- **Reporting Workshops:** Offering workshops near the end of projects to assist with the final reporting requirements of Erasmus+, focusing on how to document outcomes and learning experiences effectively.

Networking and Community Building

- **Community Forums:** Creating forums where Roma youth can share experiences, challenges, and successes. This can foster a sense of community and shared purpose.

- **Showcase Events:** Organizing events where participants can present their projects to the community, stakeholders, and potential sponsors. This not only celebrates their achievements but also enhances their visibility and impact.

Sustainability and Follow-Up

- **Continued Engagement:** Providing opportunities for successful project participants to stay involved, perhaps in advisory or leadership roles, to create a sustainable cycle of mentorship and support.
- **Feedback Mechanism:** Establishment of a clear feedback mechanism that allows participants to express their needs and experiences, which can help improve the support system continuously.

These methods aim to build capacity, confidence, and competence among Roma youth, enabling them to fully engage with and benefit from the Erasmus+ program. By providing structured support and guidance, you can help ensure not only the success of their projects but also their personal and professional development.

6. Success stories and inspiring experiences

6.1. Success stories of Roma youth and Roma organizations in Erasmus+ and other grant programmes

6.1.1. Romania

Empowering Roma Girls through Community Art

The project aims to create a strong community of young Roma women, through exposure to information, dialogue and participation in community life, using a universal language, which invites creativity, expression and communication, through the technique of mural painting and participatory drawing.

Participating in an artistic project brings direct benefits, both to the young women involved in the project and to the local community by exposing and raising awareness of ethnic values, and to the general public, by promoting dialogue and eliminating stereotypes of Roma people.

Therefore, young Roma women have the opportunity to express themselves creatively and learn specialized painting, drawing and sketching techniques, under the guidance of a local artist. And together they create the concept of a very large drawing, which not only expresses the Roma identity, the qualities and values associated with the ethnicity, but also the stereotypes and types of exclusion, which they experience in their daily life.

Courage to Change – 9-Step Guide on Working with Roma Youngsters

This project aims to increase level of inclusion and participation of Roma youngsters in youth and non-formal activities. To do so, it has set these objectives below:

- Increase the knowledge and the competences of new youth workers, social workers—who has knowledge on the matter on the social perspective but not youth—, and volunteers—who would like to work with Roma— on working with Roma youngsters using non-formal.
- Enhance the effective usage of “9-Step Guide” in Roma communities.
- Increase the capacity of organizations on working with Roma youth.
- Share experiences and good practices to learn through peer-support.

The project fosters the quality improvements in youth work, enhancing international dimension of youth activities and the capacity of youth workers and organisations in their support for youth. Also, it promotes non-formal and informal learning mobility and active participation among young people, as well as cooperation, quality, inclusion, creativity and innovation at the level of organisations in the field of youth. It achieves this by helping the youth workers to develop different competences and become more efficient in their youth work by using adapted practical works gained through the “9 Steps Guide” when communicating and working with Roma youth.

Also, the project provides more and equal opportunities for young people, especially for those with fewer opportunities, creating inclusive societies, quality learning and space and participation for all by supporting the competences of youth workers by putting their knowledge into practice

The national anchoring of ROMINKO

This project aims to anchor the procedures of competence balance —*a way of assessment of the formal but particularly of the non-formal and informal abilities and skills of people without education or with a preschool education and without a formal professional background*— according to French Model for labour administration staff, career guides, labour consultants, job mediators, competence councillors and mediators, young Roma and non-Roma people.

A New ENTRance

This project for young Roma, adult education institutions, chambers of commerce and industry respectively chambers of handicrafts, networks of local start-ups, labour administrations, banks and fund administrators, aims to develop the entrepreneurial spirit among young Roma people as an alternative to their difficult access on the labour market because of some general issues of Roma such as the reduced level of education and the lack of a professional background.

RomABC – The Next Dimension

This project for teachers who work with young Roma people, education and social mediators, and young Roma and non-Roma people, aims to:

- Increase the number of digital literate young Roma.
- Increase the employment capacity of young Roma and, as a consequence, improving their level of social integration.
- Increase the skills of teachers (from a technical, methodological, personal and social, multicultural point of view) in implementing digital literacy courses for young Roma;
- Improve interdisciplinary cooperation in the field of young Roma digital literacy.

6.1.2. Spain

APG Zaragoza (Roma Promotion Association in Zaragoza)

Founded in 1975 by the Roma people for its members in Zaragoza, is a non-profit social and citizen entity. Its main focus is to transcend welfare, prioritizing promotion and development through training and promoting cultural interaction. This organization is dedicated to overcoming social and cultural challenges, empowering the Roma community through education and integration.

Best practices:

- **Collaboration Agreement with the Zaragoza City Council for mediation programs aimed at the Roma population in Zaragoza.**

- **For A Lachi City Program:** Social care project for homeless people.

FSG (Roma Secretariat Foundation)

It works for the comprehensive promotion of the Roma community developing all kind of actions that contribute to achieving full citizenship for Roma people, improving their living conditions, promoting equal treatment and avoiding all forms of discrimination, as well as promoting recognition of the cultural identity of the Roma community.

Best practices:

- **Access Program:** It's a training and employment program that promotes the incorporation of the Roma population into the labour market as a door to social inclusion.
- **Promote Program:** It's a project aimed at ensuring that more and more Roma young achieve academic success in Compulsory Secondary Education and continue studying to reduce the numbers of premature school dropouts.

FAKALI (Federation of Roma Women Association)

FAKALI is the Federation of Roma Women's Association, a social organization with two decades of experience that has among its objectives the comprehensive promotion of the social, cultural and human levels of the Gypsy People, and especially women, to achieve real equality of rights, while promoting knowledge and recognition of gypsy culture and its contribution to the physiognomy and character of Spain.

Best practices:

- **Mailbox against anti-gypsyism:** It's the first tool for direct denunciation of the specific racism exercised towards Roma people in our country. This online service provides support and advice, as well as free legal assistance if the case requires it, to Roma people who have experienced or witnessed any type of discriminatory crime.
- **Equality and feminism:** The federation understands that feminism cannot be characterized from the hegemonic point of view, but rather from attention to diversity. For this reason, it is part of the Women's Councils in Seville, La Línea de la Concepción (Cádiz) and Linares (Jaén), in addition to forming the most diverse networks of women, facilitating social participation at the municipal and regional levels. or national.

Red Campus Rom

The First University Roma Network in Spain. Pioneering network in Catalonia and Aragon that not only pursues access for Roma students to the University, but also accompanies all those who are already there. It was born thanks to the interest and concern of a group of Roma students and teachers of university access (GAU) for those over 25 years of age.

Its motto is: "Not a single Roma person. No Roma person behind."

Best practices:

- **RomExcellence22:** The success of the Roma People, a support program for people who are in post-compulsory training processes, after many years outside of education and without an academic family tradition.
- **ReferentsRome22:** Ensuring the success of the Roma People and improving the social image of the Roma community, a project that addresses two fundamental issues for the Roma community today: its educational and social success, while improving its social image.

Specific Continuing Training Teaching “Social Work and Roma People”, University of Zaragoza

Organized by students and Roma Social Work professionals, this course taught at the Faculty of Social and Work Sciences of the University of Zaragoza responds to the need to expand intercultural professional skills in students of the Degree in Social Work and other related degrees. to the social sciences, who work or want to work with and for the Roma People.

For the first time, a Public University offers a training proposal for students at university degrees related to social issues, developed, directed and taught by professionals and Roma students from a critical and reflective perspective. Through different sessions carried out by various speakers (mostly Roma) with academic experience and in social intervention with the Roma population, students are offered a complete overview of the historical and current reality of the Roma people.

AECGIT (Teachers with Roma Association)

The AECGIT works for understanding, solidarity and communication between women and men of all peoples, ethnicities and cultures; for the development of a Social Wellbeing model that addresses and guarantees fundamental needs and rights, to achieve constitutional equality of opportunities, for all people, groups or ethnic minorities in a situation of inequality.

Also, for the disappearance of all types of negative attitudes, discrimination, intolerance, racism, oppression and persecution of some human groups over others; based on doctrines or policies of racial, cultural, sexual, economic (marginal-poverty), religious, ideological, colour or ethnic origin discrimination that are scientifically false, socially unjust and dangerous, and ethically condemnable.

Best practices:

- **Training Sessions:** They're organized annually. The contents try to cover the educational, social and gypsy cultural aspects. The program attempts to respond to training needs, topics that need debate, as well as information and communication of materials and experiences. For this purpose, presentations, round tables, exhibitions and group work are carried out that allow the participation and opinion of all attendees. Public dissemination of the work and demands are made in relation to different educational and social policy issues.
- **Publications:** They make academic contributions, reports, exhibitions, teaching materials of high technical quality and highly valued to work for the inclusion of the Roma people.

Ververipen

“Our diversity is our wealth,” is the motto of the organization, made up of Roma and Gadjé people who work for respect for diversity, against homogenization, colonization and intolerance not only in the sphere of majority society but also within the Roma collective.

It claims an inclusive, intersectional, decolonized, feminist, multiple and free Roma identity. This entity carries out much-needed work, working especially on social networks on gender issues and gypsy emotional-sexual diversity.

Best practice:

- **Work in social networks** ([Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#)).

National Association Union of the Roma People

The National Association Union of the Roma People is a member of the International Roma Union. Organization recognized by the United Nations, dedicated to the defence of the Roma community. Its scope of work is the Spanish territory in activities that pursue the recognition of the culture of the Roma people as a value of universal culture.

Best practices:

- **Promotion of associations:** It's a permanent campaign that aims to raise awareness among Roma people of the need to unite. "Together we can achieve it" is the motto that illustrates the convenience of working together to achieve their objectives.
- **Journalists against racism:** It's a permanent campaign aimed at media professionals. Journalists are asked to sign a manifesto against racism and are kept informed of the most outstanding activities related to the Roma community.

Roma Culture Institute

The Roma Culture Institute is a state public sector foundation promoted by the Spanish Ministry of Culture and Sports whose objectives are the development and promotion of Roma history, culture and language, and the dissemination of its knowledge and recognition through studies, research and publications.

Through the organization of academic and cultural events as well as support for artistic creation, the Institute of Gypsy Culture aims to achieve recognition of the contributions of Gypsyism to the common cultural heritage and to value the Roma as one of the backbones of the Spanish culture. It is an international reference in the treatment of the Roma issue through its culture.

Best practice:

- **April 8 Awards of the Institute of Roma Culture:** It's a highly prestigious annual awards festival granted by the Institute in the following categories: Concord, Sports, Fine Arts, Communication, Performing Arts, Research, An entire career, Artistic Creation and Music. These awards recognize

the merits of personalities – Roma and non-Roma – who, from different artistic, social and academic fields, contribute to the dissemination and enrichment of Roma culture.

Kamira (National Federation of Roma Women)

Kamira is the National Federation of Roma Women in Spain that was founded in 1999 by Roma women activists and representatives of their associations, who have come together to form a non-profit entity, driven by the passion and resilience of Roma women, and has grown to become a federation of 25 associations spread throughout Spain.

It works in diverse areas, from promoting gender equality and combating discrimination, educational success, access to social services, health care and employment support.

Best practices:

- **ROMusicA (Erasmus+ Small Scale Partnership 2023 – 2024):** It's a project whose goal is to create a rich database of Roma music that is available to everyone and inspires new generations of artists.
- **Breaking a Taboo (Erasmus+ Cooperation partnership 2023 – 2026):** It's a project about adult education, it addresses the priority related to social integration and has as its target group Roma girls and women and their personal development.

AMURADI (Association of Roma Andalusian University Women)

AMURADI is an association that aims to defend Roma women's interests at college. Its activity is organized around three fundamental axes:

1. **Awareness-raising:** Actions to disseminate and raise awareness among citizens about the diverse and plural reality of the Roma community.
2. **Participation:** Promotion and visibility of the new "gypsy reality", in which the signs and values of their cultural identity coexist with the values demanded by today's society: training, professionalism and social integration.
3. **Intervention:** Social Intervention Actions in the Roma Community, for the promotion of Roma women and youth, and to improve their conditions.

Best practices:

- **Caixa Proinfancia Program:** It's an educational reinforcement project for minors, supporting their academic development in the school context. Likewise, families are protagonists in the education of boys and girls, attending group therapeutic workshops where content related to positive parenting is worked on. AMURADI also ensures the basic needs of the girls and boys by providing.
- **Equality, Everyone's Right:** It's a program that consists of a series of biweekly sessions for training, awareness and awareness of equality between men and women in Seville.

6.1.3. Bulgaria

I Want to Be a Student

This initiative is a collaborative project spearheaded by the Fair Chance Association in partnership with the local Roma organization, “Opportunities in the 21st Century”.

This initiative was launched in Asenovgrad municipality to address educational barriers faced by Roma children and other marginalized groups within the community. Targeting children aged six years from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, the project aimed to provide foundational education and language skills necessary for a seamless transition into formal schooling.

Asenovgrad is notable for its diverse cultural tapestry, being a hub for the Pomak population (ethnic Bulgarians of Muslim faith who speak Turkish) alongside the Roma community. The Roma community in Asenovgrad faces unique challenges, including language barriers and cultural isolation, which contribute to high rates of educational disengagement. The local organization, “Opportunities in the 21st Century”, played a crucial role as a mediator, leveraging its deep community ties to bridge the gap between the initiative and the community it serves.

Conducted over four consecutive summers from 2004 to 2007, the program involved a three-month training course held during the summer break at the local school. This preparatory course was designed to equip children with social skills, such as classroom behaviour and peer interaction, alongside intensive Bulgarian language instruction and basic preschool education. An additional appeal for families was the provision of full-day care, meals, and essential school supplies like backpacks, pens, and notebooks, which alleviated some of the economic burdens on participating families.

The project utilized a hands-on approach to ensure participation; each morning, project coordinators personally visited families to escort the children to school. These coordinators, who were also mothers of participant children, served as vital links, ensuring strong attendance and engagement throughout the program.

The success of the project was evident through the enthusiastic participation of children and the positive feedback from school officials. Teachers reported a marked improvement in the children's engagement and academic performance, with the initial dropout rate plummeting to zero by the end of the initiative. The transformative impact of the project was recognized and celebrated by both the community and educational authorities.

The Diplomatic Club in Bulgaria, consisting of diplomats' spouses, initially funded the project. Impressed by the initiative's outcomes, the Club advocated for governmental support to replicate this model nationwide. Their efforts were fruitful, leading to the Bulgarian government adopting a similar program to fund language and educational training for preschool Roma children across the country, building on the successful pilot model developed by this initiative.

This project not only addressed immediate educational needs but also set a sustainable precedent for integrating minority communities into the national education system, demonstrating the power of community-centred educational interventions.

Establishment of a Public-Private Enterprise for Cultivating Wild Herbs

Initiated in 2002, the project aims to establish a sustainable and structured approach to cultivating wild herbs in Velingrad, Bulgaria. This initiative is a collaborative effort involving the Centre of Business and Information in Velingrad, Fair Chance Association, the local Municipality, the High School for Agriculture, and the regional business community. Supported by funding from the United Nations Development Programme, the European programme PHARE, municipal resources, and local donations, this project seeks to transform the informal and unsustainable practices of wild herb collection into a structured agricultural enterprise.

The primary goal is to engage the local Roma population, which traditionally relies on collecting wild herbs and mushrooms, often leading to environmental degradation. By transitioning them into organized cultivation, the project aims to provide stable employment and protect local biodiversity. Additionally, it seeks to involve young Roma students from the local agricultural high school in this sustainable initiative, equipping them with practical skills and employment opportunities.

This initiative is an example of effective public-private collaboration. The municipality contributed land for herb cultivation, integrating local resources into the project. The local business community manages production and trade activities, ensuring economic viability. The Centre for Business and Information oversees quality control and export operations, while the Fair Chance Association develops educational content. This synergistic approach ensures that all facets of the enterprise are aligned with community needs and environmental standards.

The project not only provides a dependable source of income for the local Roma community but also serves as a model for sustainable agricultural practices in Bulgaria. It has been instrumental in reducing environmental damage caused by the unregulated harvesting of wild plants and has established a blueprint for similar initiatives in other regions. By incorporating educational programs, the project ensures that future generations are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary for sustainable development.

Still operational, the enterprise has become a cornerstone of local employment and environmental stewardship in Velingrad, demonstrating the long-term viability of integrating economic development with ecological conservation in community planning.

Activities:

- **Infrastructure Development:** Constructing a Centre for Wild Herbs, complete with storage facilities, a training hall, and administrative offices to support cultivation and distribution.
- **Botanical Research:** Conducting studies on local wild herb species to determine the most commercially viable and environmentally sustainable options.
- **Agricultural Operations:** Preparing land, planting, maintaining, harvesting, and processing herbs, ensuring quality and efficiency from soil to store.

- **Marketing Strategy:** Developing a comprehensive plan to market the herbs domestically and internationally, maximizing reach and profitability.
- **Educational Programs:** Creating targeted training modules for both local high school students and unemployed adults to foster skills in agriculture and business management.
- **Environmental Awareness Campaign:** Promoting conservation efforts through community education about the importance of sustainable harvesting practices and ecological preservation.

Establishment of a Social Centre for Poverty Alleviation

This project aims to enhance social services and reduce poverty levels in the city of Razlog. It focuses on the integration and active participation of young people from the Roma community at all stages of the project.

The project is funded by the British DFID and implemented by Fair Chance Association in partnership with Modra Association.

The centre coordinates activities such as:

- **Resource Mobilization:** Organizing campaigns to collect donations involving the active participation of young volunteers from the Roma community.
- **Resource Distribution:** Implementing transparent mechanisms for distributing the collected funds and resources among socially vulnerable groups.
- **Training and Capacity Building:** Developing and conducting training programs for youth and volunteers, particularly from the Roma community, to enhance their qualifications and participation in social and charitable activities.
- **Collaboration Enhancement:** Improving coordination between local authorities, the NGO sector, and businesses to provide effective and accessible social services.
- **Emergency Assistance:** Providing financial and advisory support to individuals and families in crisis situations.
- **Awareness Campaigns:** Initiating informational and educational campaigns to protect the rights and improve the living conditions of vulnerable groups.

By actively involving young people from the Roma community, the project contributes to their sustainable social inclusion and professional development. The centre is a key institution in Razlog, not only addressing immediate social needs but also fostering a sense of community and shared responsibility. This initiative serves as a model for similar projects in other regions, demonstrating how integrated community efforts can significantly alleviate poverty and improve social welfare.

Educational mediators for the local Roma community in Dobrich (Dobri Voinikov School)

The project is funded by the Bulgarian Government through a national programme implemented by schools with Roma children. The main goal of the Educational Mediator role within the school is to act as a bridge between families, local communities, students, and the school itself. This aims to ensure comprehensive school attendance and quality education for students, and to foster collaboration between the parents of at-risk students and educational specialists within the school.

General activities:

- Organize and implement activities ensuring regular school attendance and active participation in the educational process.
- Provide services that integrate parents and local communities into the educational and social life of the students.

More specifically:

- Assist in the inclusion of students required to attend compulsory school education.
- Visit families of children under compulsory education to organize meetings aimed at informing and ensuring regular school attendance.
- Support processes related to obtaining necessary documentation for school enrolment, assisting parents with application forms, explaining procedures related to application, classification, and results.
- Help develop a positive attitude towards the educational process and work towards fully integrating students into the educational environment, taking into account their specific and age-related needs and requirements.
- Facilitate mutual understanding among students from different ethnic and religious groups, creating an atmosphere of understanding and tolerance while upholding children's rights.
- Ease the communication process between educational specialists and students.
- Actively participate in resolving disputes, focusing on the interests of the students.
- Provide assistance in communication and interaction between all segments of the educational institutions and the students, their families, and the local community.
- Support activities that facilitate the involvement of parents/guardians and the community in the school life.
- Organize meetings with parents and attend council meetings as assessed by the school management.
- Ensure the effective implementation of distance electronic learning and all necessary activities to reach children and parents who lack electronic devices, and to ensure effective and safe training.

Intercultural Academy for Civic Participation and Tolerance

The Intercultural Academy for Civic Participation and Tolerance is designed to reach a broad spectrum of high school students, with a particular focus on those who have limited access to services. The main goal of the program is to enhance students' knowledge, interest, and motivation to engage in various forms of civic participation. This includes informed voting, defending minority rights, and combating anti-Roma discrimination and hate speech.

The program aims to develop a clear understanding of the attitudes, motivations, skills, and knowledge of young people regarding democratic processes and participation. Special attention is given to youth from vulnerable communities and regions, assessing methods that could more effectively reach and engage them.

Topics covered include stereotypes and prejudices, democratic values, and cultural interactions. The training seeks to empower students by fostering an understanding of diversity and inclusion, equipping them with the tools to participate actively and responsibly in their communities.

The project explores different forms of youth engagement, encouraging active and creative involvement in civic life. An online platform is developed to facilitate access to educational content and interactive learning experiences, promoting continuous engagement outside the traditional classroom setting.

A culminating event where students can share their experiences, learn from one another, and further their understanding of civic responsibilities. The program expects to see an increase in the civic engagement of high school students, particularly those from minority and underserved communities. By the end of the program, students should have a stronger sense of their roles in democratic processes and be more equipped to advocate for themselves and others in their communities.

The Intercultural Academy for Civic Participation and Tolerance is a significant initiative that strives to build a more inclusive society by empowering the next generation with the knowledge and skills necessary for active civic participation and fostering an environment of tolerance and understanding.

6.1.4. Türkiye

STGM (Civil Society Development Centre)

STGM is an organization working to strengthen civil society in Türkiye and increase the capacity of civil society organizations. STGM aims to encourage civil society organizations to work more effectively and sustainably by providing them with training, consultancy, resources and support.

The Civil Society Development Centre has a very important work. The report *titled "These Roma are Always Like This - Discrimination Experienced by Roma Youth in Education and Employment"*, which was prepared based on the findings of interviews with 105 Roma youth in 8 provinces, contains important data and recommendations on the disengagement of Roma children and youth from education.

Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality

The Roma Workshop held in Istanbul on 14 December 2019 was an important event to discuss the social, cultural and economic rights of Roma citizens in Türkiye. The workshop was organized with the aim of strengthening the social integration and rights of Roma citizens and allowed different stakeholders to come together to propose solutions. The problems faced by Roma were addressed in areas such as education, employment, housing and cultural identity, and solutions were discussed. The workshop was considered as an important step towards protecting the rights of Roma citizens and supporting their social inclusion.

Romani Godi

Romani Godi means "Romani Mind" in Romanes. Romani Godi is a journey that a group of young activists, concerned about inequality, discrimination, rights violations and the threat of extinction of the Roma language and culture, set out on in early 2022 with the slogan 'Opere Roma'.

Romani Godi recognizes the language, history and culture of the Roma, the inequalities experienced by the Roma, and any historical actions they have been subjected to, as social memory as a whole. Romani Godi carries out monitoring, research and reporting with the aim of strengthening the social memory of Roma and generating rights-based solutions to eliminate inequality. Romani Godi, which started out as an initiative, later became a legal entity under the name of Romani Memory Studies Association (Romani Godi).

The Romani Godi association has a very important study: *"Project on Combating Hate Speech against Roma in Türkiye"*. Within the scope of the project, 20 volunteers will be selected to organize capacity building workshops, followed by monitoring and reporting on hate speech against Roma in the media. At the same time, cases requiring legal action will be transferred to the ERRC (European Roma Rights Centre) and the ERRC (European Roma Rights Centre) will follow up the processes.

T.C. Trakya University (Academic Approaches to the Problems of Roma)

Trakya University Roma Language and Culture Research Institute organized a panel on "Academic Approaches to the Problems of Roma" on the occasion of April 8 Roma Day. Moderated by the Deputy Director of the Institute of Roma Language and Culture Studies, Assist. Prof. Dr. Tülay Tekin Yılmaz moderated the online panel and Prof. Dr. Emine Didem Evci Kiraz from Aydın Adnan Menderes University, Prof. Dr. Yusuf Genç from Sakarya University and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dilara Ustabaşı Gündüz from KTO Karatay University took part as speakers. In the panel, the problems and solutions to the problems of Roma citizens in the fields of health, education, business life, social and cultural areas were discussed.

The panel started with the opening speech of Assoc. Prof. Gökhan Ilgaz, Director of the Institute of Romani Language and Culture Studies. In his speech, Prof. Dr. Ilgaz talked about the activities of the Institute and introduced the Journal of the Institute of Romani Language and Culture Studies, the only academic refereed journal in this field in Türkiye.

Roma Academy

Within the framework of the Social Development Support Program (SOGEP) of the Trakya Development Agency, the "Roma Academy" project, implemented by the Tekirdağ Provincial Directorate of Youth and Sports, was launched as an important social development initiative. Partners of this program include the Tekirdağ Provincial Mufti's Office, the General Presidency of the Union of Roma of Türkiye and the Turkish Education Foundation.

The Roma Academy aims to support the social integration of Roma youth and increase their educational and employment opportunities. The main objective of the project is to contribute to the educational, cultural, sports and professional development of Roma youth and to enable them to participate more effectively in social life. To this end, the project organizes various educational and social activities and provides support to develop the skills of Roma youth.

The main activities of the Roma Academy include vocational training courses, language courses, cultural events, sports activities and employment support. In addition to these activities, the project also provides counselling services for Roma youth and creates networks to support their social integration. The Roma

Academy provides an important platform for Roma youth to discover their potential, develop their skills and participate more actively in their communities. In this way, it plays an important role in social development and social cohesion.

6.2. Motivating other young people with these stories

The success stories developed within already implemented projects for young Roma can be highly motivating for other young Roma individuals in the following ways:

Providing role models

Seeing people from similar backgrounds who have overcome challenges and achieved success provides young Roma with relatable role models. These role models demonstrate that success is possible, regardless of starting conditions. Success stories help young Roma envision a broader range of possibilities for their own futures, inspiring them to set higher goals and pursue ambitions they might have considered out of reach.

Creating a sense of belonging and community

Success stories foster a sense of community and shared identity, reinforcing the idea that individual achievements contribute to the collective pride and progress of the Roma community. They can also encourage the development of support networks among young Roma, where they can share experiences, advice, and encouragement with one another.

Demonstrating practical pathways to success

Success stories provide concrete examples of how challenges can be overcome through education, vocational training, entrepreneurship, or other avenues, offering clear and actionable paths to follow. They illustrate strategies for navigating and overcoming social, economic, and educational barriers, making these paths to success more accessible and less intimidating.

Boosting confidence and self-esteem

Hearing about others' successes can boost confidence and self-esteem among young Roma, encouraging them to believe in their own potential and abilities. These stories often highlight resilience and perseverance, instilling a mindset that setbacks and failures are part of the journey to success.

Highlighting the benefits of education and skill development

Success stories often emphasize the importance of education and skills development, motivating young Roma to invest in their education and personal growth. They also showcase the long-term benefits of education and training, such as better job opportunities, higher earnings, and improved quality of life.

Encouraging civic engagement and advocacy

Seeing peers succeed can inspire young Roma to become more actively involved in their communities and advocate for themselves and others. These stories can also be leveraged to influence policy changes and garner support for initiatives aimed at improving the conditions and opportunities for the Roma community.

Amplifying positive narratives

Success stories help counteract negative stereotypes and prejudices and amplify positive narratives about young Roma individuals and their successes by achieving a variety of strategies that leverage different media, community initiatives, and educational efforts.

Providing mentorship and guidance

Implement peer mentorship programs where successful Roma individuals mentor younger members of their community. This creates a direct line of support and personalized guidance. Pair young Roma with professionals in their fields of interest. This can help them gain insights into various career paths and build valuable networks.

Utilizing technology and social media

Create dedicated online platforms or social media groups where success stories can be shared through videos, interviews, and articles. This makes these stories accessible to a broader audience. Host live webinars where successful Roma share their stories and interact with young viewers, allowing for real-time questions and engagement.

Educational programs and workshops

Integrate success stories into school curricula and educational programs to provide ongoing inspiration and examples of achievable success. Organize workshops that focus on skills development, career planning, and personal growth, featuring guest speakers who share their success journeys.

Collaborations with organizations and institutions

Partner with NGOs that focus on Roma empowerment to help disseminate success stories and integrate them into their programs. Work with corporations to create internship and job placement programs for young Roma, highlighting success stories of those who have thrived in these roles.

Recognition and awards programs

Establish awards and recognition programs to celebrate the achievements of young Roma, giving them a platform to share their stories and inspire others. Host annual events where successful Roma are recognized, and their stories are shared with the community, creating a tradition of celebrating success.

Community involvement and outreach

Organize community events where success stories are highlighted, fostering a sense of pride and collective achievement within the Roma community. Engage parents and family members by sharing success stories that highlight the benefits of supporting their children's education and aspirations.

Addressing systemic barriers

Use these success stories to advocate for policy changes that address systemic barriers faced by the Roma community, ensuring broader and more sustainable support. Conduct awareness campaigns to educate the broader society about the potential and achievements of the Roma community, helping to reduce discrimination and prejudice.

Creating inspirational media content

Produce documentaries, short films, and other media content that tell the success stories of young Roma, making these narratives widely available and engaging. Publish books, articles, and blogs that compile and highlight these stories, providing inspirational reading material for young Roma and their supporters.

Encouraging entrepreneurship

Set up business incubators specifically for young Roma entrepreneurs, providing them with the resources, mentorship, and support needed to succeed. Share stories of Roma entrepreneurs who have built successful businesses, providing a blueprint for others to follow.

Building resilience and coping skills

Include success stories that address the mental health challenges overcome by young Roma, emphasizing the importance of resilience and coping skills. Create support groups where young Roma can discuss their challenges and hear from peers who have successfully navigated similar issues.

Enhancing cultural pride

Highlight success stories that incorporate and celebrate Roma cultural heritage, fostering pride and a strong sense of identity. Support and share success stories in the arts and music, showcasing the rich cultural contributions of the Roma community.

By employing a multifaceted approach that includes mentorship, technology, education, community involvement, and systemic change, success stories of young Roma can be powerful catalysts for motivation and inspiration. These stories not only highlight individual achievements but also pave the way for a supportive environment that nurtures the aspirations of the Roma community.

7. Promoting intercultural understanding

7.1. The contribution of Erasmus+ programmes to intercultural understanding

Cultural exchange is a fundamental tool for achieving the objectives of Erasmus+ Programme. At present time, the new knowledge management requires this exchange of ideas, values, cultures and languages not only on an intellectual level but also linked to mobility between countries. The best way to get to know other cultures is to interact directly with them in their physical space by promoting the cultural understanding.

Seeing a photograph is not the same as seeing something in nature, nor is it the same to interact online as in person. This is something that these types of projects solve by enhancing personal relationships as well as soft skills, creating a continuous flow of exchange of knowledge and people. And it is this flow the engine that drives and promotes the intercultural understanding.

More than ever in 2024, the Erasmus + Programme will align with European values. The new call further emphasises that Programme beneficiaries and the activities must respect the EU values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, in full compliance with the values and rights enshrined in the EU Treaties and in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

The Erasmus+ Programme supports active citizenship and ethics in lifelong learning; it fosters the development of social and intercultural competencies, critical thinking and media literacy.

All this are reached through the work of a consortium of partners from different countries to develop every chosen project. Each partner shares and applies their work methodology and culture. This allows others to learn about the different cultures that make up the EU and its idiosyncrasy when it comes to working and seeing life.

In the evaluation for the acceptance of a project, the participation of entities from different countries in it is valued, which ensures cultural exchange that of course includes knowledge and development at a technical and social level.

By participating in an Erasmus+ project young people take part in Youth Participation Activities that can be either national or transnational, so this international mobility has a positive impact in the intercultural exchange.

The activities developed can be workshops, debates, role-plays, dynamization techniques, simulations, use of digital tools, awareness raising campaigns, exchanges, volunteering and training among other. They are open to youth organisations and informal groups of young people from all backgrounds, with special focus on those with fewer opportunities.

The role of all types of youth workers is very important when it comes to involving young people to participate and benefit from these actions. Its functions are essential in all phases of participation:

- Information.
- Preparation prior to participation:
 - Contents of the project.
 - Cultural issues of the partners.
 - English language skills.
- Support in development.
- Assessment and maintenance and of the knowledge acquired upon return.
- Monitoring of participants.
- Final evaluation.
- New participation proposals.

It is important to take into account that the participation in an intercultural action does not automatically increase the intercultural understanding. It implies a learning and assimilation reflective process that is different for each person and requires support before, during and after. Also, the acquisition of the intercultural competence by participants may depend on their initial levels, gender (women benefit more), disposition to international mobility, getting out of the own comfort zone, or any other personal or collective characteristics.

Erasmus+ includes both participants and technicians or staff and the benefits are for both groups and creates a unique and rich feedback flow. The programme facilitates staff mobility for teaching and training being able to exchange knowledge, best practices, and innovative teaching methods across institutions.

This flow of intercultural understanding is a European challenge that helps to make empowered citizens in facing new challenges and social transformation, responsible and sensitive to cultural differences; that is Participant European Citizens in equality, no matter their social, economic or study level, or ethnic origin.

The participation in Erasmus+ Programme has got as a result a win-win situation one in which something good happens to everyone, for both the individuals and institutions, a mutual-gains in which parties work together to meet interests and maximize value creation.

In the case of Intercultural Understanding it contributes to professional growth, increasing opportunities and promoting collaboration.

As an example of methodology there is the Blended Learning (online courses with face-to-face components) and intensive programmes which combine online, and on-site Learning allow participants to benefit from both virtual and physical interactions. Blended programmes integrate online courses with face-to-face components. This approach allows students to benefit from both virtual and physical interactions.

By participating in these programs, you get to build bridges between cultures, fostering friendships, and creating a more interconnected world. It's worth a try!

Examples to see more about Youth participation activities:

- [About youth participation.](#)
- [About youth exchanges.](#)

7.2. How Roma youth learn and understand different cultures through these programmes

Participating individually or collectively in the Erasmus+ Programme is one of the best ways to learn about other cultures, share ours, and integrate, benefiting from the opportunities offered by the EU. There are different Actions, or kind of projects whose structure is clearly explained in the [“Erasmus+ Programme Guide”](#) for the 2021-2027 period (Pages 14-18).

Participating in Erasmus+ Programmes is a Constant training in soft skills that is very useful for the young Romani people we are working with. They will help them in the development of their daily lives, to get out of their comfort zone and to have a greater presence in the activities promoted by the EU.

And how can Roma youth learn and understand the different cultures? Through the cross-cultural communication.

Cross-cultural communication refers to the ability to communicate effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds. In an Erasmus+ project, this means being able to understand and respect the differences in communication styles, values, and norms of the project partners. This kind of communication is essential to encourage inclusion and fruitful coexistence.

We do not have to be scared or worried, this skill will be acquired participating in these programs.

Here are some tips for effective cross-cultural communication:

- [Brand Build for Leaders](#) by Bianca Isom in LinkedIn.
- [Berkeley Executive Education](#).

Learn about Erasmus+ projects are a great opportunity to work with people from different countries, backgrounds, and cultures in multicultural work teams at the beginning. One of the challenges of this work methodology is to become an intercultural team composed of multicultural agents (who have been trained throughout their participation in Erasmus+ activities) who promote very beneficial changes in their community.

The idea is that the Romani Youth participating in these projects acquire the tools to be agents of change in their community. More about cross-cultural communication and cultural understanding in:

- [Masterclass website](#).
- [Spring Institute website](#).

The understanding of the miscellaneous cultural backgrounds of your project partners, with the diverse communication styles, values, and norms allow us to learn about their customs, beliefs, and practices, as this will help us to reach a deep intercultural understanding reaching a fruitful coexistence.

In the particular case of Roma youth, these projects can be very useful in attracting their participation.

All these youth participation activities offer groups of young people the opportunity to get involved in civic society and economic, social, cultural and political life. By taking part they can get their voice heard on topics that matter to them.

Reasons:

- They encourage inclusion and participation, respecting one's own idiosyncrasy.
- They can participate by sharing their values and culture.
- Participation is open to all entities and groups.
- Non-free training is adapted to the needs and concerns of the individual.
- They are creative and inclusive.
- They are win-win projects.
- They promote equality and equity.

What makes you learn about different cultures?

- Travelling and meeting people from different backgrounds and nationalities.
- Establishing lasting relationships with people you sympathize.
- Exploring the new cities you visit.
- Showing your city and its culture to visitors.
- Exchanging with different work methodologies.
- Exchanging with different ways of life.
- Accessing to new technologies.
- Participating in Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps programmes to get the Youthpass, the European recognition for identifying and documenting learning outcomes that are acquired in projects under the Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps programmes. [Learn more about the Youthpass here.](#)
- Learning and/or practising English language skills.
- Learning and/or practising another language different local languages, almost the basic skills.
- Trying new food. Eating the local food is a good way to do a cultural immersion.
- Participating in local events.
- Involving yourself in activities completely new for you.
- Documenting your trips and activities through a diary, photographs or videos.
- Collecting information about the country visited to share it with other people.
- Being open-minded and flexible to absorb each other's culture.
- Being willing to share your culture without judging that of the other, as a personal enrichment.

[Click here to find more useful tips about this topic.](#)

All these attitudes are also useful in your private life and help you to enhance your soft skills, very important for your wellbeing. Share with others. It's worth a try!

8. Impact of Erasmus+ programmes on society

8.1. The contribution of the skills acquired by Roma youth from Erasmus+ programmes to their communities

Erasmus+ programmes have long been heralded for their capacity to enrich the educational experiences of participants through international exchanges, skill development, and cultural integration. For Roma youth, these programmes offer unique opportunities to acquire new skills and knowledge, which they can then leverage to benefit their communities. The impact of such skills is profound, influencing various aspects of community life from economic development to social cohesion and cultural understanding.

One of the most immediate impacts of Erasmus+ programmes is the enhancement of employability and entrepreneurial skills among Roma youth. Through various training modules, workshops, and internships embedded within the programme, participants gain practical skills in areas such as information technology, business management, and language proficiency. These competencies are crucial, not just for personal career advancement but for fostering local economic development. Roma youth who return from Erasmus+ programmes often initiate community-based projects or start small businesses, contributing to local economies and reducing unemployment rates within their communities.

Moreover, the exposure to diverse business environments and practices equips these young individuals with innovative approaches to traditional businesses, often leading to increased productivity and the introduction of new products or services tailored to the needs of their communities. This entrepreneurial spirit, supported by practical skills gained through Erasmus+, stimulates local economies and serves as an inspiration for other community members, particularly the younger generation.

Erasmus+ programmes are also instrumental in developing soft skills, such as leadership, teamwork, and intercultural communication. These are vital for promoting social cohesion and community engagement among Roma youth. Participants of Erasmus+ often return with a new perspective on community leadership, motivated to enact change and address issues such as discrimination, social exclusion, and education inequality within their communities.

Armed with new skills and a broader worldview, these young leaders engage more actively in local governance and community organizations, advocating for the rights and needs of the Roma. They become role models, showing that change is possible and that members of their community can aspire to and achieve high levels of personal and professional development. Additionally, by utilizing their enhanced communication skills, they can bridge gaps between the Roma and other community groups, fostering a greater understanding and reducing prejudice.

Erasmus+ participants often engage in cultural exchanges that enrich their understanding of their own cultural heritage in the context of global diversity. This renewed appreciation for their culture can lead to efforts aimed at cultural preservation within their communities. Roma youth use the skills acquired to organize cultural workshops, exhibitions, and performances, which not only celebrate Roma heritage but

also educate others about their history and traditions, combating stereotypes and fostering pride within the community.

Furthermore, these young individuals often take on mentoring roles, passing on the skills and knowledge they have acquired to others in the community through informal education settings. This peer-to-peer education strengthens the community's overall educational level, making it more resilient and adaptive to change.

The contribution of skills acquired by Roma youth through Erasmus+ programmes is multifaceted, impacting economic, social, and cultural dimensions of their communities. The blend of hard and soft skills enhances employability and entrepreneurial capacity, fosters social integration, and promotes cultural understanding and preservation. These programmes not only equip Roma youth with the tools needed to transform their own lives but also empower them to contribute significantly to the betterment of their communities, paving the way for a more inclusive and equitable society. By participating in Erasmus+, Roma youth become catalysts for change, demonstrating the profound impact education and skill acquisition can have on a community level.

8.2. Gaining a broader perspective by interacting with their community

The broader perspective for Roma youth gained through interacting with their community, especially when coupled with experiences from programs like Erasmus+, encompasses several key areas:

- **Interaction within their community allows Roma youth to bridge the gap between traditional Roma values and the broader societal norms.** By engaging actively with their community, these youths can help to challenge and change stereotypes about Roma people both within their own communities and in wider society. This enhanced interaction fosters a sense of belonging and acceptance, which is crucial for the social integration of Roma individuals into mainstream society.
- **Regular interaction within their community helps Roma youth to solidify their cultural identity by deeply understanding their roots, traditions, and values.** This strong sense of identity is vital for personal empowerment and self-confidence. It enables them to navigate the complexities of holding onto their cultural heritage while integrating into the broader social fabric. Empowered Roma youths are more likely to advocate for their community, tackle discrimination, and strive for equal opportunities in education and employment.
- **Interacting with community leaders, mentors, and role models within the Roma community can significantly influence the educational aspirations of Roma youth.** Seeing successful figures who share similar backgrounds can inspire these youths to pursue higher education and professional careers. Moreover, community interaction often provides practical support networks for Roma students, offering tutoring, advice, and encouragement that might not be available within traditional educational settings.
- **Through community interaction, Roma youth can develop leadership skills that are essential for community development.** They learn to organize community projects, advocate for

communal needs, and represent their community in political or social arenas. These leadership roles not only contribute to personal growth but also foster a sense of responsibility towards their community, driving developmental initiatives that benefit both Roma and non-Roma community members alike.

- **Interacting with their community allows Roma youth to build a network that can provide both social and professional support.** This network is crucial for sharing resources, such as information about job opportunities, educational programs, and social services that are accessible and sensitive to the needs of the Roma. Such networks enhance the community's resilience by ensuring that its members are not isolated and have access to opportunities for personal and collective advancement.
- **As Roma youth interact with various facets of their own community and engage with external communities, they play a vital role in promoting intercultural dialogue.** They can challenge misconceptions and educate others about the Roma culture, thereby reducing prejudice and fostering a more inclusive society. Their unique position as both insiders and bridge-builders enable them to facilitate understanding and cooperation between diverse cultural groups.

The broader perspective gained by Roma youth through community interaction is integral to their personal development and the socioeconomic upliftment of the Roma community. These interactions not only prepare Roma youth to face global challenges but also equip them to contribute positively to society by leveraging their unique cultural insights and experiences. Engaging with their community helps them to realize their potential as agents of change, capable of leading efforts towards greater equality and integration.

9. Cooperation with educational institutions and NGOs

9.1. Opportunities to collaborate with educational institutions and civil society organisations

The cooperation between organisations and institutions in the context of the needs of young Roma aims to promote the development and implementation of innovative practices that address their specific challenges at the local, regional, national, and European levels. Three key opportunities are highlighted:

- **Alliances for Innovation:** These alliances strengthen innovation capacity in areas such as higher education, vocational training, and businesses, offering solutions tailored to the needs of young Roma.
- **Capacity Development:** This approach focuses on improving the quality and recognition of work in the field of Roma youth, as well as supporting new mobility projects for non-formal learning. It seeks to increase the capacity of organisations working with young Roma, promoting non-formal learning activities, and supporting mobility plans to close gaps in education and employment.
- **Who Can Participate:** Non-profit organisations, NGOs, youth councils, and local, regional, or national public authorities are eligible to coordinate projects. Other participants may include public or private organisations working with young Roma, contributing innovative solutions and collaborating on capacity development programs.

This cooperative approach aims not only to address the specific needs of young Roma but also to strengthen their participation in society and close the educational and employment gaps they face, in line with the objectives of the EU Youth Strategy. [Check here for more information.](#)

Erasmus+ Youth projects offer a wide range of opportunities to collaborate with educational institutions and civil society organisations. These collaborations can strengthen projects by providing a broader perspective, specific expertise, and additional resources. Here are some ways in which organisations can collaborate on Erasmus+ Youth projects:

Educational Institutions:

- Schools, high schools, universities, and other educational institutions can collaborate by providing spaces for learning activities, access to educational resources, and facilitating student participation in Erasmus+ Youth projects.
- Teachers and educational staff can participate as mentors, workshop facilitators, or experts in specific project-related topics.
- Educational institutions can also collaborate by organising outreach events to promote Erasmus+ Youth projects among their students and the wider educational community.

For example: A Roma youth association with a local NGO specialising in community development to initiate a project focused on building leadership skills among Roma youth. Together, they organise workshops, community events, and mentorship programs aimed at empowering young Roma to become advocates for their community. The NGO brings its experience in community organising and access to funding, while the youth association provides a platform for Roma youth to voice their concerns and aspirations.

Civil Society Organizations:

- Youth organisations, community associations, NGOs, and other civil society groups can collaborate by bringing their expertise in working with young people, their network of contacts, and additional resources.
- These organisations can be key partners in implementing on-the-ground activities such as workshops, youth exchanges, awareness events, and campaigns.
- They can also collaborate in identifying specific needs of young people and designing activities to effectively address those needs.

For example: A collaborative effort between a Roma youth group, a university, and a cultural association results in the co-creation of a project centred on preserving Roma heritage and promoting cultural exchange. Through joint planning and decision-making, the partners develop workshops, cultural events, and exchange programs that celebrate Roma culture and identity. This collaborative approach ensures that the project is relevant and responsive to the needs and aspirations of Roma youth.

Co-Creation of Projects:

- Collaboration among educational institutions, civil society organisations, and other partners can lead to the co-creation of stronger and more relevant projects.
- By involving different stakeholders in all stages of the process, from conception to evaluation, projects that more effectively address the challenges and needs of young people can be developed.
- Exchange of Good Practices.
- Collaborations with educational institutions and civil society organisations from other participating countries in the Erasmus+ Youth program can offer opportunities for the exchange of good practices.
- This may include mutual learning about innovative approaches, effective methodologies, and youth engagement strategies that can enrich projects and enhance their impact.

For example: A consortium of Roma youth organisations from various European countries collaborates on an Erasmus+ Youth project focused on combating discrimination and promoting social inclusion. Through exchange visits and virtual meetings, the organisations share best practices, innovative approaches, and successful strategies for engaging Roma youth in advocacy and activism. This cross-border learning fosters solidarity and mutual support among Roma communities across Europe.

In summary, opportunities for collaboration with educational institutions and civil society organisations are essential for the success of Erasmus+ Youth projects, as they allow for the utilisation of a variety of resources, knowledge, and experiences to create more meaningful and sustainable interventions for young people.

[You can visit the Erasmus+ website for more information about cooperation between organisations.](#)

9.2. How partnerships can be established and sustained

Establishing and sustaining partnerships for a project aimed at addressing the needs of the Romani youth requires careful planning and implementation. Here's how partnerships can be established and sustained in this context:

- **Clear Objectives and Shared Vision:** Begin by defining clear objectives for the project, focusing on addressing the specific needs of Romani youth. Ensure that all partners share a common vision for improving the lives of Romani youth and are committed to achieving tangible outcomes.
- **Mutual Benefit:** Identify the benefits that each partner can bring to the project. This could include access to resources such as funding, expertise in youth development, networks within Romani communities, or experience in cultural sensitivity and inclusion.
- **Effective Communication:** Establish open channels of communication between all project partners. Regular meetings, email updates, and clear documentation of responsibilities help ensure that everyone is informed and engaged throughout the project.
- **Trust and Respect:** Build trust among partners by demonstrating integrity, reliability, and respect for each other's expertise and perspectives. Recognize the unique challenges faced by Romani youth and ensure that their voices are heard and respected throughout the project.
- **Clear Roles and Responsibilities:** Define the roles and responsibilities of each partner clearly from the outset. This includes identifying who will lead different aspects of the project, who will provide support, and who will be responsible for monitoring and evaluation.
- **Flexibility and Adaptability:** Remain flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances and needs. Romani communities may have unique cultural considerations that require adjustments to the project approach. Be open to feedback and willing to make necessary changes to ensure the project's success.

- **Continuous Engagement and Evaluation:** Maintain ongoing engagement with Romani youth and community leaders throughout the project. Regularly evaluate progress, gather feedback, and make adjustments as needed to ensure that the project remains relevant and effective.
- **Resource Mobilisation:** Identify and mobilise the resources needed to support the project. This may involve securing funding from government grants, foundations, or corporate sponsors, as well as leveraging in-kind contributions from partners and community members.

By following these principles and practices, partnerships can be established and sustained effectively for projects aimed at addressing the specific needs of the Romani youth, leading to positive outcomes and lasting impact within the community.

10. Strategies for increasing participation

10.1. Suggested strategies to promote the participation of Roma youth in Erasmus+ programmes

Promoting the participation of Roma youth in Erasmus+ programs require a combination of strategies focused on awareness-raising, inclusion and specific support for the needs of this community. Special mention must be made of the idiosyncrasies of the countries in which they are located.

First of all, for the defined strategies to be successful, we cannot consider it a population isolated from the rest. Therefore, to achieve their interest and participation in these programs, these actions do not only have to be directed at the Roma population. They have to be accompanied by their application also in the entities that are going to provide their support, accompaniment or co-participation and co-creation, it is about promoting coexistence and inclusion with them, and both are bidirectional. Additionally, these strategies offer opportunities for personal and professional development to all participants.

Awareness and dissemination strategies

Information and Awareness Campaigns:

- Carry out specific campaigns in Roma communities to inform about the benefits and opportunities of the Erasmus+ programs.
- Use local media and social networks to disseminate success stories of young Roma who have participated in Erasmus+.
- Invitations to participate in activities organized by the entities that participate in these programs.
- Distribution of publications.

Collaboration with Community Leaders and Organizations:

- Work together with Roma associations and leaders, as local agents, to build trust and disseminate relevant information.
- Carry out informative workshops in community centres, schools and in general in the spaces used by the Roma community.
- Create accessible and welcoming events for the Roma community, incorporating elements of Roma culture such as traditional music and food.
- Promote peer mentoring.

Inclusion and adaptation strategies

Cultural and Linguistic Adaptation:

- Create materials culturally relevant and easily understandable.

- Provide information materials and orientation sessions in the languages and dialects that the Roma community uses.
- Choose themes that ensure and guarantee their right to their identity, being able to value their culture, customs or language on equal terms with any other.

HR strategies

Training for Professionals and Volunteers:

- Orientation and training for community leaders, educators and youth workers in intercultural skills and raising awareness about the Roma community.
- Promote the development of specific training programs for Roma youth in skills that facilitate their participation in Erasmus+.
- Specific training in European values: equity, diversity, inclusion and human rights, beneficial for the inclusion of the Roma community.
- IT training to increase the quality and effectiveness of actions.

Roma Youth Leadership Promotion:

- Encourage and support the development of Roma youth leaders who can act as representatives and promoters of the Erasmus+ program in their community.
- Include the promotion of European Values with the use of materials and training that include how to participate in the Erasmus+ program.
- Strengthen knowledge of European values as a tool for social inclusion and personal development.

Support and accompaniment strategies

Support in Bureaucracy and Organization:

- Offer specialist advice and personalized assistance in completing forms and understanding application procedures.
- Support, accompaniment and mentoring strategies before, during and after their participation.
- Establish mentoring programs with young Roma people who have already participated in Erasmus+.

Financial and Logistical Support:

- Additional financing with scholarships and specific financial aid to cover additional expenses that may arise to facilitate access.

Collaboration strategies

Alliances with Other Entities and Institutions:

- Collaborate with schools, universities and non-governmental organizations that work with Roma youth.
- Promote joint projects and ensure that educational institutions actively support the participation of these young people.

Sustainability strategies

Monitoring and Impact Evaluation:

- Establish mechanisms for collecting data for impact evaluation.
- Impact studies, analysis of participation and good practices of Erasmus+ programs in Roma youth.
- Use of the results to improve and adapt inclusion strategies in real time.

10.2. Guidance for community leaders, educators and youth workers

The [Erasmus+ Programme](#) seeks to promote [youth participation](#), reinforcement of the quality of informal and non-formal learning processes and development of quality youth work, guaranteeing its quality, which gives greater freedom to both technicians and participants leaving a vital space for creativity.

After the presentation of the suggested strategies to promote Roma participation, we list a few guiding tips for leaders, educators and youth workers.

- Social Community revitalization and its tools are a fundamental work base to encourage this group, and all others, to participate in this program.
- The strategies must be adapted to the work group; the entire Roma community does not have the same needs or interests.
- They are projects in which to participate on equal terms, they are not social intervention projects in themselves, with constant feedback between all the actors of the same project and between those of the other projects of the Erasmus+ community.
- It is necessary to keep in mind that it is difficult for Roma youth to be agents of change and social transformation in their community and to move internally between their tradition and externally with modernity, which is also in continuous change.
- Participation has to be based on and with their idiosyncrasy; participation in projects that do not respect or understand their specific culture and values cannot be required and would require them to abandon them.
- It is very useful to locate Roma leaders in institutions so that they support and encourage participation.
- Including families in the first steps of participation facilitates the path since in this way they are informed about the project and can facilitate the involvement of young people.
- Promote networking.
- Establish synergies and alliances with the Network of [participation facilitators](#) belonging to the Roma Secretariat Foundation (FSG).

It is the state group of Roma young people, who are responsible for supporting the FSG teams to energize [participation activities](#). These activities are organized mainly within the framework of the State Program for the promotion of the participation of Roma citizens, especially the young population.

This group of young people act as local agents and have solid roots in their municipalities and skills to manage groups, which support the FSG teams in the development of this line by launching actions at the territorial and state level.

11. Institutions and organizations that support Roma youth

11.1. Romania

The main institutions in Romania that offer opportunities for young people, in general, and, as well for Roma young people are the following:

Romanian Government

The website has the following sections related to the project, such as: [Working in Romania](#), [Part-Time Internship](#), [Volunteer](#), and [How to find a job](#).

As well, the Romanian Government offers many other opportunities for the Romanian young people, such as:

- **Start-Up Nation Program:** This program provides funding for young entrepreneurs who want to start their businesses. The financing can reach up to 200,000 lei and can be used to purchase equipment, machinery, furniture, software, and other expenses necessary for business development.
- **First Home Program:** This program offers young people the opportunity to obtain a low-interest mortgage loan to purchase their first home. The program is intended for young people up to 35 years old who have never owned a home.
- **Social Scholarship Program:** This program offers scholarships for young people who come from low-income families and who wish to pursue undergraduate or graduate studies. The scholarship covers tuition fees and other expenses necessary to pursue studies.
- **Erasmus+ mobility programme:** This programme offers young people the opportunity to study or do traineeships abroad. The program is designed for undergraduate and graduate students and provides opportunities for personal and professional development.

Besides, on the [Romanian Government website](#), there is a section dedicated to trainees that offers a wide range of opportunities for them. These include:

- **Romanian Government Internship Program:** This program offers young people the opportunity to work in central public administration institutions. The program is designed for young people between the ages of 18 and 35 and offers 150 internship places every 1 year.
- **Internship Program of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs:** This program offers young people the opportunity to work in Romania's diplomatic missions abroad. The program is aimed at young people aged 18 to 35 and offers opportunities for personal and professional development.
- **Internship Program of the Ministry of Internal Affairs:** This program offers young people the opportunity to work within the structures of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The programme is aimed

at young people aged 18 to 35 and offers 3 opportunities for personal and professional development.

- **Ministry of Justice Internship Program:** This program offers young people the opportunity to work within the structures of the Ministry of Justice. The program is aimed at young people between the ages of 18 and 35 and offers opportunities for personal and professional development.
- **National Agency for Community Projects in the Field of Education and Vocational Training (ANPCDEFP):** The website has the following sections related to the project, such as: Opportunities for young people, and Professional career. As well, there is a section dedicated to youth mobilities. It provides funding opportunities for mobility projects such as youth exchange and volunteering in different countries. These projects help young people develop skills and increase their employability by allowing them to participate in European learning projects. The organisations involved can also develop new and innovative approaches to learning cooperate with organisations in other countries and exchange good practices. It also provides opportunities for youth workers. They help youth workers experience cultural diversity and learn different youth work practices from other countries. These activities help organisations develop new learning methods and cooperate with organisations in other countries over longer periods.

Erasmus+ Romania

The Erasmus+ programme offers a wide range of opportunities for young people, including mobility schemes, youth exchanges and traineeships abroad. Here are some of the programs dedicated to young people within the Erasmus+ Romania Program:

- **Youth Exchanges:** These exchanges take place outside school and allow young people to participate in all kinds of activities such as workshops, exercises, debates, role plays, outdoor activities and more. The Youth Pass (youth passport) allows participants' learning experiences to be recognized. The duration of youth exchanges lasts between 5 and 21 days, without travel time.
- **Mobility of Young Workers:** This programme offers young people the opportunity to do traineeships abroad. The program is aimed at young people aged between 18 and 30 and offers opportunities for personal and professional development.
- **Volunteering Projects:** These projects offer young people the opportunity to participate in volunteering projects abroad. The program is aimed at young people aged 18 to 30 and offers opportunities for personal and professional development.
- **Youth Exchange Projects:** These projects offer young people the opportunity to participate in youth exchanges abroad. The program is aimed at young people between the ages of 13 and 30 and offers opportunities for personal and professional development.

Partida Romilor

On the website of the Roma Party in Romania, I found information about opportunities for young people in the field of higher education. In the academic year 2021-2022, the number of places allocated to young Roma in university education will be supplemented.

Specifically, young Roma will have more places compared to those received last year in the following categories: Bachelor, Master, and Doctorate.

Also, the Pro-Europe Roma Party continues this year's educational campaign "We give you the recommendation" initiated in 2006, in partnership with the School Inspectorates in Romania. This campaign is the largest action in the field of Roma education in Romania and has so far benefited from over 30,000 beneficiaries.

11.2. Spain

In Spain, there are several institutions and organisations that support Roma youth in different aspects, from education to social integration and community empowerment. Here are some examples:

Government of Spain

- **National Strategy for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of the Roma People in Spain (2021-2030). Ministry of Social Affairs and Agenda 2030** [Information of the Ministry](#) and [Guide in English](#).

This Strategy provides for the implementation of two operational plans in which the measures and actions to be implemented to achieve the objectives set for the year 2030 will be specified. The first Operational Plan for the implementation of the National Strategy for the period 2023-2026 already is underway and includes the measures agreed upon by the different Ministries responsible for its execution, considering the proposals and recommendations made by the entities of the Roma associative movement represented in the State Council of the Gypsy People.

The second Operational Plan will be in force from 2027 to 2030. At the end of the first operational plan, a mid-term evaluation of the strategy will be carried out to see the impact it has on the Roma population, as well as a final evaluation in 2030.

- **The Spanish Observatory on Racism and Xenophobia (OBERAXE). Ministry of Social Inclusion and Migration.** [Information of the Ministry](#).

Gathers information on projects, surveys, resources, reports and research promoted by the Secretary of State for Migration and other ministerial departments, entities and organisations in order to serve as a platform offering information and analysis and spurring on work to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance as well as hate incidents and crimes. The work of the Observatory is done in cooperation with various levels of governmental institutions and civil society organizations in Spain, with European Union and other international institutions.

Universities

There are several universities that offer specific training studies to manage programs and services aimed at eliminating discrimination and reducing inequalities that affect the Roma community. Examples of them are the following:

- **University extension diploma in social intervention with the Roma community**, UPNA Foundation of the Public University of Navarra. [More information here.](#)
- **Specific Continuing Training Teaching “Social Work and Roma People”**, Faculty of Social and Labor Sciences of the University of Zaragoza. [More information here.](#)

Ayuntamiento de Zaragoza

- **EducaRom Project**, its main objective is to improve the social and educational situation of Roma children and teens in Zaragoza, and that of their families, through the implementation of Successful Educational Actions (AEE).
The support actions that Roma youth benefit from are educational reinforcement groups, economic and social support for Roma children and young people; for Roma people who are pursuing post-obligatory studies; preparation of the access test to the Intermediate Training Cycle (GAM) and Group of Roma women. [Access to the project.](#)

Ejemplos de entidades que trabajan con el colectivo Romani

Fundación Secretariado Gitano – Roma Secretariat Foundation

- **Fundación Secretariado Gitano**: The Secretariat Roma Foundation has been awarded by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in the youth category, which values striking examples of the commitment made by civil society to create a better future for European youth His “**Learning by Working**” project, which addresses the issue of unemployment among Roma youth, won first prize. [See the foundation website.](#)
- **ROMI Roma Women's Association**: This organisation focuses on supporting Roma women, including young women, to promote their participation in society and defend their rights. They offer training programmes, counselling and promote gender equality among Roma youth.
- **Acceder Programme**: Administered by the Secretariat of the Gypsy Foundation, this programme is aimed at young Roma who have dropped out of the education system. It provides individual support to help them reintegrate into formal education or vocational training programmes and find employment.
- **Cultural and Social Gypsy Association of Valencia**: This association works in the Valencia region to promote Gypsy culture and support the integral development of the Gypsy community, including young people. They offer cultural activities, educational programmes and social integration projects.
- **Yehudi Menuhin Foundation Spain**: Although not exclusively focused on Roma youth, this foundation develops cultural and educational projects that promote social inclusion and cultural diversity. They often work with organisations that work with marginalised communities, including Roma youth.

We also have the support of private foundations that finance projects aimed at the well-being of young Roma; you can submit applications for their annual calls.

Some examples:

FUNDACIÓN IBERCAJA – IBERCAJA FOUNDATION <https://www.fundacionibercaja.es/convocatorias/>

FUNDACIÓN IBERDROLA ESPAÑA – IBERDROLA SPAIN FOUNDATION

<https://www.fundacioniberdrolaespana.org/accion-social/programa-social>

FUNDACIÓN LA CAIXA – LA CAIXA FOUNDATION <https://fundacionlacaixa.org/es/programas-sociales>

FUNDACIÓN MAPFRE – MAPFRE FOUNDATION <https://www.fundacionmapfre.org/accion-social/>

FUNDACIÓN MUTUA MADRILEÑA – MUTUA MADRILEÑA FOUNDATION
<https://www.fundacionmutua.es/accion-social/ayudas-proyectos-sociales/convocatoria-anterior/>

FUNDACIÓN ONCE – ONCE FOUNDATION <https://www.fundaciononce.es/es/convocatorias-de-ayudas/para-entidades/convocatoria-general>

- **ROMI Gypsy Women's Association:** This organisation focuses on supporting Roma women, including young women, to promote their participation in society and defend their rights. They offer training programmes, counselling and promote gender equality among Roma youth.
- **Acceder Programme:** Administered by the Secretariat of the Gypsy Foundation, this programme is aimed at young Roma who have dropped out of the education system. It provides individual support to help them reintegrate into formal education or vocational training programmes and find employment.
- **Cultural and Social Gypsy Association of Valencia:** This association works in the Valencia region to promote Gypsy culture and support the integral development of the Gypsy community, including young people. They offer cultural activities, educational programmes and social integration projects.
- **Yehudi Menuhin Foundation Spain:** Although not exclusively focused on Roma youth, this foundation develops cultural and educational projects that promote social inclusion and cultural diversity. They often work with organisations that work with marginalised communities, including Roma youth.

11.3. Bulgaria

The main institutions in Bulgaria that offer opportunities for Roma community and their young people are the following:

- [Centre for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance "Amalipe"](#)
- [National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Demographic Issues](#)
- [Drom Dromendar Newspaper](#)
- [Ethnographic Institute with Museum at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences](#)
- [Specialized Library with Archive "Studii Romani"](#)
- [Portal of Ethnic Minorities in Bulgaria](#)
- [Roma Information Centre \(Drom Dromendar Newspaper\)](#)
- [Student Society for the Development of Interethnic Dialogue](#)
- [Next Page Foundation](#)
- [Centre for Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities](#)

11.4. Türkiye

Programs, Opportunities and Incentives provided by the Turkish Government

- **KOSGEB Incentives (Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization):** Supports are available for Young Entrepreneurs. These supports can be provided by many governmental organizations (although they vary depending on the type of entrepreneurship, they are provided by the government under 4 main headings). Besides young people, these supports are also available for women entrepreneurs.
- **First Home Program:** This program offers citizens the opportunity to obtain a two-year deferred low-interest mortgage loan to purchase their first home. The program is designed especially for young people and citizens who have never owned a home before.
- **Scholarship Programs:** Turkey, having the youngest population in Europe, has many scholarships for young people participating in Higher Education, especially by the state or state-sponsored organizations, such as the Council of Higher Education (YÖK), KYK (Credit and Dormitories Institution), TÜBİTAK (Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey), Turkish Education Foundation. The proportion of young people in Turkey (17-24 years old) with higher vocational education, associate degree, bachelor's degree, master's degree or higher education is 44.4%. Therefore, it provides scholarships, student loans and support such as dormitories, pocket money, book money, etc., especially for young people from low-income families. Except for private schools in Turkey, 12 years of compulsory education and higher education for students is completely free of charge, excluding university tuition fees (which average 600 Turkish Liras, equivalent to 18 Euros).
- **Erasmus+ Opportunities:** Young people can benefit from the opportunities of ESC projects, internship mobility, learning mobility, mobility of individuals, Mundus and Monnet scholarships, etc.

under the Erasmus+ program. [More information about Erasmus+ in Turkey can be found on the website of the Turkish National Agency.](#)

- **National Internship Program:** The National Internship Program (NIP) was launched by the Presidential Human Resources Office to ensure that young people benefit from internship opportunities offered by public and private sector organizations within the framework of equal opportunities and according to the principles of merit.
- **NATO Internship Program:** NATO offers six-month internships to third-year university students or recent graduates from a bachelor's or master's degree program. Internships offer opportunities in many areas of expertise and skills, including political affairs, defense and security, innovation, operations, communications, business support and human resources, finance, science and technology, and infrastructure and facilities.

- **United Nations Internship Programs:** Young people can apply for internships at the United Nations in general or in more specialized departments such as UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNOPS, UNHCR or the United Nations Environment Programme. Although open to all young people in Turkey, in addition to the projects and programs mentioned above, there are also special projects for all Roma in Turkey, especially for Young Roma, which are listed below.

Strategic Action Plan of the Republic of Turkey for Roma

The Ministry of Family and Social Services has announced that the state will provide social assistance and services in six different areas between 2023 and 2030 (housing subsidies, employment support, health assistance, education support, and social services).

These supports to improve the quality of life of Roma citizens are described below:

- **Housing Project:** TOKİ (Housing Development Administration) and the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change are in charge of planning better and earthquake-resistant city plans or urban transformation. In order to provide a better life for the Roma People, since the beginning of 2023, they have developed a project to build modern, spacious, safe and earthquake-resistant houses and to make our Roma citizens homeowners with the slogan "A Home for Every Roma" and so far, 5,133 houses have been delivered to their owners.
- **Employment Support:** In order to make it easier for Roma citizens to find a job, İŞKUR (Turkish Employment Agency) will organize neighbourhood-based activities. Thus, in areas densely populated by Roma citizens, the organization will work to help unemployed youth find jobs. İŞKUR will not only set up neighbourhood-based offices to help unemployed Roma youth find jobs. They will also organize vocational training for young people. Roma youth will thus learn a profession and receive a daily allowance while receiving vocational training.
- **Education Support:** Zehra Zümrüt SELÇUK, Minister of Family, Labor and Social Services, stated that another area of support for Roma citizens will be in the field of education. In addition to educational support, it is planned to establish Youth Centres in Roma neighbourhoods. The aim of these offices is to provide Roma youth with hobbies and quality leisure time. The steps to be taken in educational support for Roma citizens are set out below:
 1. Training and support courses will be opened.
 2. Steps will be taken to facilitate access to preschool education.
 3. Artistic and sports events will be organized.
 4. Improvements will be made in school areas.
 5. Additional activities will be organized. This is the headline of the support to Roma citizens in the context of education.
- **Culture, Arts and Travel Activities:** As part of social support, Roma citizens will be provided with support for culture, arts and travel. In addition to cultural trips and tours, the Traveling Theatre will perform in Roma neighbourhoods and aim to engage the public in cultural and artistic activities. Mobile libraries will also be set up in predominantly Roma areas. Finally, regular concerts on the themes of Roma Melodies and Culture will be organized.

12. Principles and values of the European Union

12.1. What is the European Union (EU)?

The European Union (EU) is a unique economic and political union between 27 European countries.

The EU has its roots in several treaties signed in the aftermath of the Second World War. The first step was to foster economic cooperation, based on the idea that countries that trade with one another become economically interdependent and so are more likely to avoid conflict. The result was the European Economic Community, created in 1958 with the initial aim of increasing economic cooperation between six countries: Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands.

Today the member countries are the following: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden.

What began as a purely economic union has evolved into an organisation spanning many different policy areas – from climate, environment and health to external relations and security, justice and migration.

One of the symbols of this union is the single European currency, the “euro”, used by more than 340 million citizens in nineteen of its countries.

The EU is governed by the principle of representative democracy, with **citizens** directly represented at the EU level in the **European Parliament** and **Member States** represented in the **European Council and the Council of the European Union**.

Since 1957 these have been its main achievements:

- A continent of peace, stability and prosperity.
- The abolition of border controls between most EU countries allows citizens to move freely throughout almost the entire continent to travel, study, work or retire.
- The world's largest single market, which allows the free movement of goods, services, people and capital.
- Freedom for its people to live, study or work anywhere in the EU.
- Aid and development assistance for millions of people around the world.
- It also plays an important role in diplomacy and works to promote the benefits of the EU, as well as democracy, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, across the globe.

More information in the [European Commission website](#)

The EU Principles and Values are set out in three groups or lines of work: Objectives and Values, Founding Agreements and Access to Information.

12.2. Aims and Values

The aims of the European Union within its borders are:

- Promote peace, its values and the well-being of its citizens.
- Offer freedom, security and justice without internal borders, while also taking appropriate measures at its external borders to regulate asylum and immigration and prevent and combat crime.
- Establish an internal market.
- Achieve sustainable development based on balanced economic growth and price stability and a highly competitive market economy with full employment and social progress.
- Protect and improve the quality of the environment.
- Promote scientific and technological progress.
- Combat social exclusion and discrimination.
- Promote social justice and protection, equality between women and men, and protection of the rights of the child.
- Enhance economic, social and territorial cohesion and solidarity among EU countries.
- Respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity.
- Establish an economic and monetary union whose currency is the euro.

The aims of the EU within the wider world are:

- Uphold and promote its values and interests.
- Contribute to peace and security and the sustainable development of the Earth.
- Contribute to solidarity and mutual respect among peoples, free and fair trade, eradication of poverty and the protection of human rights.
- Strict observance of international law.

The EU's aims are laid out in article 3 of the [Lisbon Treaty](#).

Values

The European Union is founded on the following values:

- **Human dignity.** Human dignity is inviolable. It must be respected, protected and constitutes the real basis of fundamental rights.
- **Freedom.** Freedom of movement gives citizens the right to move and reside freely within the Union. Individual freedoms such as respect for private life, freedom of thought, religion, assembly, expression and information are protected by the [EU Charter of fundamental Rights](#).
- **Democracy.** The functioning of the EU is founded on representative democracy. A European citizen automatically enjoys political rights. Every adult EU citizen has the right to stand as a candidate and to vote in elections to the European Parliament. EU citizens have the right to stand as a candidate and to vote in their country of residence, or in their country of origin.
- **Equality.** Equality is about equal rights for all citizens before the law. The principle of equality between women and men underpins all European policies and is the basis for European

integration. It applies in all areas. The principle of equal pay for equal work became part of the Treaty of Rome in 1957.

- **Rule of law.** The EU is based on the rule of law. Everything the EU does is founded on treaties, voluntarily and democratically agreed by its EU countries. Law and justice are upheld by an independent judiciary. The EU countries gave final jurisdiction to the European Court of Justice - its judgments must be respected by all.
- **Human rights.** Human rights are protected by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. These cover the right to be free from discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, the right to the protection of your personal data, and the right to get access to justice.

The EU's values are laid out in article 2 of the Lisbon Treaty and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

In 2012, the EU was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for advancing the causes of peace, reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe.

12.3. Founding Agreements

The European Union is based on **the rule of law**. This means that every action taken by the EU is founded on treaties that have been approved voluntarily and democratically by all EU member countries.

A treaty is a binding agreement between EU member countries. It sets out EU objectives, rules for EU institutions, how decisions are made and the relationship between the EU and its member countries.

Treaties are amended to make the EU more efficient and transparent, to prepare for new member countries and to introduce new areas of cooperation – such as the single currency.

Under the treaties, EU institutions can adopt legislation, which the member countries then implement. The complete texts of treaties, legislation, case law and legislative proposals can be viewed using the [Eur-Lex database of EU law](#).

12.4. Access to Information

Article 15 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union states that citizens and residents of the European Union have a right of access to the documents of Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies, whatever their medium.

This commitment is guaranteed through transparency and public access to these documents.

Transparency

La transparencia es uno de los principios fundamentales de la UE. Exige que ésta haga pública la información sobre formulación de políticas y gasto y que respete el principio de libertad de información.

Transparency is one of the EU's key principles. It requires the EU to disclose information on policy-making and spending and to uphold the principle of freedom of information.

Article 10 of the Treaty on European Union stipulates that open decision-making is carried out 'as closely as possible to the citizen'. Article 11 states that both individuals and representative associations should be given the opportunity to 'make known and publicly exchange their views in all areas of Union action'.

Public access to documents

It is a key element in transparency. The right of access to documents is an essential component of the transparency policy being implemented by the European institutions.

To ensure the access to the documents, the European Parliament has created an electronic register where they can be consulted. Documents not included in this register, such as documents from before 2001 and those to which an exception to the right of access may apply, can be consulted upon request free of charge and without any special justification.

The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union expands on these points. It states that the EU institutions are obliged to act publicly and to ensure that individuals and any natural or legal person residing or having its registered office in an EU country can access documents (Article 15).

To increase transparency, the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council of the European Union publish their meeting schedules. Those of the Commissioners, the President of the European Council and the President of the European Parliament are also available. The other EU institutions and bodies also publish the schedules of their presidents, meeting schedules and meetings broadcast on the internet.

You can find the access to the documentation related to the European Union in the following link: [Access to the information and data bases.](#)