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PEER

Participation,
Experiences and
Empowerment for
Roma youth



Country report card - Romania (A5)

This report briefly summarizes the learning from the evaluation of pilot PAI sessions held with Roma children/youth in Romania. With the help of partner institutions, we succeeded in delivering the PAI sessions to four groups as follows:

Location	Period	Partner institution	No. f children
Baia Mare	04.11.2015- 25.11.2015	Împreună pentru ei Association	19 participants (8 boys)
Timișoara	12.11.2015- 08.12.2015	West University of Timișoara	13 participants (4 boys)
Cluj-Napoca	03.11.2015- 15.12.2015	National College Anghel Salingy	11 participants (7 boys)
	11.11.2015- 16.12.2015	National College Anghel Salingy	13 participants (7 boys)

We reached more than 50 children aged 10-17 (the actual number varied from meeting to meeting as it was an open group), but more than 2/3 declared themselves as “Roma”.

Where have we worked?

The location varied from partner to partner. The group from Baia Mare held its activities in the organization’s headquarters. They are an organization with several years of experience working with Roma communities so they managed to reach the target group quite easily and the children were already used with the location, the staff and type of activities. The groups from Cluj-Napoca were recruited with the help of the school and the teacher referred the children to the two groups. In this case we had to comply with school regulations and the sessions were held in the classroom in the time slot that was approved. This raised some difficulties in terms of arranging the space and the length of the sessions (only 50’ available for the older group because they had classes before and after meeting with us). The group from Timisoara was the most difficult to recruit. Initially we had a space available at West University, but because it interfered with classes and children’s free time we had to use the space of an organization.

What have we done?

The facilitators had the liberty of organizing their own activities as long as it answered the general objectives of the Magic 6 program. Six meetings were held with each group, whereas the last meeting was mainly dedicated to the final evaluation. Participants were receiving vouchers as an incentive for their participation. This helped in some manner in mobilizing the group members and at the end they expressed the will to continue working with us on their projects.



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What was changed?

We can't state that significant changes occurred in just 6 meetings, but participants agreed on several issues they could get involved in the future in order to trigger significant change in their life and in community's. These are:

- Changing the preconceptions that others have about Roma, reducing the discriminatory practices in order for Roma becoming visible to the community in a positive manner;
- Creating special spaces where they can exercise their rights (parks, hospitals, kindergartens);
- Promoting a non violent culture;
- Promoting collaboration among children;
- Carrying activities outside the school setting.

What was difficult?

The difficulties mentioned by children included difficult interaction among children (noise, agitation) and differences among participants in respect with their level of schooling. These two can be overcome with better organization skills of the facilitators and specific training on working with children/youth from disadvantaged settings.

Facilitators mentioned difficulties related with the evaluation tools and expressed the need of more concrete examples of how children can be engaged and supported in their activities.

What have we learned?

Suggestions included: (1) simplifying the evaluation tools both for children and facilitator; (2) clearer instructions for working with older children; (3) a guide for stimulating participation for children, but culturally grounded; (4) sharing best practices.