**ITALY**

**WS4 - COUNTRY REPORT**

Concerning Italy, and in particular the city of Florence we remind you that the PEER Project was conducted in the districts 4 and 5 of the city.

In general we can be said that the project has achieved good results in terms of participation, in particular in the district number four where this has gone far beyond expectations, while some problems related to active participation of Roma young it was found in the district number five where the project is It was reorganized from the initially structure, in order to reach the project goals.

The data on the different participation seen by the young Roma in the two areas in which there was the project is the concrete manifestation of what for them is the **concept of participation**. We learned to do so that young Roma participation is closely linked to the degree of involvement in the topic that they feel they have to claim in a more determinated way and that therefore it units them as a cohesive group. In summary we can say that the degree of participation it moves according to the presence / absence of a strong claim content by the group.

In the District number 4 in fact, where the most frequently topics emerged during the meetings were about the difficult living conditions in the camp, the prejudices, the stereotypes related to the concept of Roma camp itself, and then to the overcoming of the same towards the desired transfer of Roma families in social housing, the participation and the involvement of Roma young people has been constant and constructive managing to overcome inter-ethnic divisions.

The project participants met weekly interchanging moments of discussion in group to role play games and in meeting guests external to the project. On the contrary in District number 5, where young people are already living in public housing and where has not emerged a feeling of discrimination suffered by Roma, the topics emerged concerned mainly the structural conditions of the district where the live and any initiatives to improve it. Here, the participants discussed in groups, made visits in the district where also they interviewed some residents but did not find, however, a strong motivation to join as a cohesive group, the participation was more reduced and it was more difficult to get them involved.

In general it was noted that the different living conditions of young people in the district number 4 than in the District number 5 has been central element that has diversified the two projects and leading to very different results and indications.

The open discussions, the role plays and the works in groups have been very functional **forms of participation** in the unity of the group and useful because Roma young could express their involvement. However the aspect that it was found most successful was the meeting of young people with any policy makers or with key figures of the territory. The boys and girls were able to carry out their demands feeling listened to and taken seriously.

This is perhaps the aspect that made the **difference** in the two contexts and at the same time is the key to improve the participation of young people in projects dedicated to them. When they felt considered by outsiders to the project they have gained self-confidence and awareness both on their capacity and on the situation about the context in which they live.

Roma young people in the District 4 have met the President of the District, a city councilman, the Assessor for Social Policies of the Municipality of Florence, the director of the municipal library of the District. Young Roma have learned to present their ideas publicly and listen to different points of view on some issues for discussion.

The **difficulties** in conducting meetings concerned mostly any moments of confusion or carelessness of the participants, as well as some tense situations in the discussions. However, these have been overcome through the dialogue and with the good work of the Roma facilitators who have managed to channel the young people’s energies towards the pursuit of common objectives. In the district number 5 difficulties largely include the reduced participation and the absence of the female component at the meetings. In the second phase, the project has undergone changes involving a middle school class of the District. This allowed to complete all matches opening a discussion on the live condition in their district also supported by visits in the same.

**Adults** who have participated in various ways in the project have had mostly the role of supporters and / or trainers to leave much of the management of the meetings for young Roma facilitator. The adults have to maintaining the right balance between improving and promove the acrivities – traning, facilitation, preparing setting, contacting stakeholders and policy makers – and improving and promote the skills of young roma. In other words, it’s important to value the abilities and capacities of roma, in particolary of roma facilitators – key players of the project.

All the meetings were in fact co-organized by the Roma facilitators with the involvement of NGO workers who have given advice or have offered their knowledge on some themes. Youth participation should be supported in this sense, through **practices** that are mainly concrete and so that they point to the empowerment of the participants. That is an important key success factor.

Empowerment in fact passes through the assignment of group’s management roles to the youth with the experience and support of adults and with interventions aimed at training young people themselves. The concreteness also is a key element for the creation of common objectives and can be reached through various ways such as the visits in the district, creating videos and the elaboration of proposals for policy makers.