

Barabaripen

Young Roma speak about
multiple discrimination



Roma Youth Action Plan

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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Young Roma speak about multiple discrimination

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<http://www.coe.int/youth/roma>

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The cover image is part of a series of five photographs taken by Lukas Houdek for the Czech organisation ARA ART on the occasion of launching their online counselling service for Roma LGBT. They portray young Roma LGBT who identified a homophobic remark that they had received from those close to them. The photographs, which represent the young people with these homophobic remarks in the background, were taken in a street in Prague inhabited by sizeable numbers of Roma. To date, most of the writings have stayed in those public spaces.

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Barabaripen means equality in the Romani language, among other related meanings such as together, togetherness, next to each other, etc.

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We have made all possible efforts to trace references of texts and activities to their authors and give them the necessary credits. We apologise for any omissions and will be pleased to correct them in the next edition.

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1 Introduction

Welcome to a publication where Roma young people share their personal stories about multiple discrimination. This publication is here to support the work against discrimination and for the human rights of young Roma, and to reaffirm the need for recognising those groups of Roma young people who face discrimination at several levels, both inside and outside their community.

This is the result of a joint project started in 2013 by the youth and LGBT sectors of the Council of Europe; its need was identified by Roma young people and activists during the 2011 Roma Youth Conference, which led to the creation of the Roma Youth Action Plan, a series of activities and co-ordinated efforts by the Council of Europe and its partners which aim to combat discrimination and support the participation of young Roma. The Support Team of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Roma Issues also contributed to the project.

Barabaripen is the main result of a project that included several interviews and meetings with Roma young people in eight countries: Albania, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain and the United Kingdom. The project involved a multicultural team of researchers.

The project looked specifically at the following grounds for discrimination: ethnicity (all the young people involved are Roma), sexual orientation and gender identity, sex, and migrant status. The project also looked at two aspects: how young people live their lives within the community and outside the Roma communities: what they have to deal with, and what strategies they have to counter the often discriminatory attitudes that surround them.

The publication is meant to be used as an awareness-raising tool for a variety of purposes: education, campaigning, or advocacy. It is intended to be used by practitioners, and especially those who work with young people (youth workers, youth leaders, members of NGOs, etc.). Policy makers and researchers are also potential readers of this publication. The publication can also serve the purposes of youth policy, as it offers proposals for policy makers in fighting discrimination.

The publication places young people's voices at the heart of the discussion about multiple discrimination. Each life story is accompanied by a summary for learning, and questions for reflection. In addition to the life stories, there are other stories and reflections, from young people across Europe and also stories about youth activism against discrimination.

The objectives of the publication and of the project that led to it are:

- to make known the realities of Roma young people who face multiple discrimination
- to explore the factors, mechanisms and consequences of multiple discrimination

- to offer those who work with young people in educational settings a tool for human rights education
- to make proposals, including at policy levels, for improving the situation with regard to multiple discrimination.

The publication starts by providing information about the context of this project, the situation of Roma young people in Europe and, also, gives an introduction to multiple discrimination. Nine life stories follow, and for each of these there are questions for reflection and a summary for learning, both intended to support the reader in understanding the issues at stake. Further on, the publication includes a synthetic interpretation of the stories, and a summary of the strategies young people use to tackle discrimination, and raises some of the issues which are specific to the situations of the young people we involved in the project. This chapter uses the information from the nine life stories, as well as from other activities of the project, namely focus groups and other interviews.

The publication is complemented with background information as follows:

- other life stories and the results of some of the focus groups carried out as part of the project
- an overview of the legal framework related to multiple discrimination, from national to international levels
- proposals for educational activities using the life stories
- the interview guidelines used in the research
- a glossary and a list of references.

1.1 Multiple discrimination and Roma young people

Multiple discrimination entered the work of the Council of Europe regarding Roma young people with the Roma Youth Action Plan, adopted in 2011. Giving visibility to and achieving equality for “minorities within the Roma minority” is one of the main aspirations of the Plan.

Discrimination is one of the most common forms of human rights violations and abuse. When looking at the Roma population, discrimination is deeply-rooted, and a common reality all over Europe. There are approximately 10 to 12 million Roma in Europe, and the Roma population is also one of the youngest in Europe, with a wide proportion of the Roma being under 30. While there is awareness that this population is disproportionately vulnerable and less favourably treated in many aspects of their daily lives, there is still little progress in ensuring equality. Antigypsyism is a widespread reality in Europe, and it is often combined with historical intolerance against the Roma, poverty, marginalisation, exclusion, stigma or violence. While these realities go beyond *just* discrimination, they clearly play a significant role in making the Roma more vulnerable and at risk of being discriminated against.

When looking specifically at the situation of Roma young people, discrimination is a major concern. Within the “Roma youth cohort”, several groups may be treated less favourably than

other people who are in a comparable situation, only because they belong, or are perceived to belong, to a certain group or category of people, due to one or more aspects of their real or perceived identity. We speak of multiple discrimination when a Roma young person is discriminated against because of their being, for example, gay, poor, or migrant. While the fact of being Roma seems to be the most visible ground for discrimination, other grounds – such as the ones we will be exploring with the Roma young who speak in this publication, for example, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or migrant status – can also play a role, so that the young person is discriminated against on multiple levels.

A word of caution is needed when using the term ‘multiple discrimination’. One may find this term used in legal texts, in activism, in human rights organisations, as well as in academic publications. There is no universal consensus on this term, and each field may use it with small variations, either in a more restricted way or in a broader way. Several other terms are in use at the moment; for the purpose of the publication, the option chosen was the term ‘multiple discrimination’, as it is an umbrella and neutral term. For this publication, we took a view of multiple discrimination that includes:

- several discrimination episodes, where different grounds of discrimination are at stake
- additive discrimination, when in the same discrimination episode two or more grounds for discrimination are at stake and it can be shown that each ground adds up to the discrimination
- intersectional discrimination, where in the same discrimination episode two or more grounds for discrimination are at stake; however, in this case, the grounds cannot be analysed separately.

The problem of multiple discrimination is a problem of social justice and access to human rights, as well as a legal problem. In order to ensure the access of all human beings to justice and to the universal right to equality, it is of outmost importance to assess correctly those situations where more than one ground of discrimination enters into play. When a person’s situation is assessed only on one ground of discrimination, the supporters of the multiple discrimination discourse, and more specifically those in favour of an intersectional approach, criticise the lack of accuracy of the analysis as well as the lack of specific policies and legal remedies that offer a just compensation to those experiencing discrimination on more than one ground. Moreover, with the multiple discrimination lenses, more structural forms of discrimination and social exclusion are also assessed in cases of discrimination, as they may aggravate the discriminatory treatment.

Furthermore, from a policy perspective, putting on the lenses of multiple discrimination allows for a better assessment of policy intervention. For example, when taking affirmative action, the policy makers, thanks to a multiple-discrimination perspective, could also assess if those sub-groups that are least privileged within the group for which the affirmative action is taken are reached by the policy measures.

A view based on multiple discrimination also allows a clearer understanding of in-group dynamics, and a possibility to challenge practices that, in fact, put some members of the group in a position of disadvantage. For example, taking a view based on intersectionality allows for a better assessment of what is at stake in situations such as the specific situation of young girls entering into forced marriages and dropping out of school.

In addition, taking multiple discrimination into account allows for more comprehensive advocacy. While during the 20th century, groups based only on one ground of discrimination – for example anti-racist movements or women’s rights groups – have been the predominant ones, an advocacy based on several grounds would allow for a more specific and effective outcome, and one that reflects the situation of *minorities within the minorities*. This is a very recent and ongoing process.

It is also important to reaffirm the fact that multiple discrimination is still a very recent concept, both for scholars and for human rights activists or legislators. Only since the 1980s have we begun to speak about multiple or intersectional discrimination. This type of analysis of discrimination came from the experience of African-American feminists in the USA, who pointed out that the existing understanding of racial discrimination did not reflect the specific situation of African-American women who faced stereotypes and discrimination in ways different from the situation of African-American men or other women in general. From that point onwards, the discussion on multiple discrimination has developed into an understanding that all grounds of discrimination may interact with each other and produce specific experiences of discrimination that require both a specific perspective and specific responses.

The rationale behind looking specifically at multiple discrimination relies on the relatively little information, awareness and understanding of *how* multiple discrimination happens. Multiple discrimination is obviously still discrimination; however, its specificity is that the interplay of grounds of discrimination make the young people more vulnerable in different fields of their lives (ranging from education, to employment, participation, and access to rights), more vulnerable in relation to different discriminatory factors (institutions, the wider public, the Roma community), and also more vulnerable regarding their identity and the possibility to live their lives while fully affirming this identity.

Another rationale for the approach of the publication is that legal, political and educational actors need to be made aware of the existence of multiple discrimination. Those taking decisions about youth policies, for example, need to be aware that some young people may suffer from oppression and discrimination in more than one aspect in their lives, for example, also within the Roma communities. When deciding on services for youth work, decision makers need to acknowledge that youth workers also need to understand the situation of young Roma within the communities, as well as in their relation to the non-Roma population. They also need to look at the young people according to their plural affiliations and analyse the best responses accordingly. Our publication intends to provide different actors with more insight into the complexity of young people’s lives and into the consequences that multiple discrimination has on their lives.



Chapter 4 looks specifically at the concept of multiple discrimination, within the human rights framework.

The methodology of the project

The publication is based on life stories: such an approach makes it possible to reveal how multiple discrimination happens, and how it affects young people in their everyday life, while keeping the dignity of those involved and the complexity of their lives in the foreground.

In elaborating this publication, several parameters were at stake:

- a limited number of life stories, from young people aged 18 to 30
- various grounds for discrimination (ethnicity and sex, ethnicity and sexual orientation/gender identity, ethnicity and migrant status), while keeping a flexible approach, taking into account the grounds for discrimination that young people identify as relevant
- several European countries, with different equality and anti-discrimination legislation
- a broad understanding of multiple discrimination, and a broad understanding of the manifestations of discrimination, from racist jokes and prejudice, to forms of discrimination which are illegal under national legislation
- particular attention to intra-community relations, as well as antigypsyism.

A total of 9 life stories were collected through individual in-depth interviews. The interviews were conducted by several researchers, and consisted of a series of semi-structured conversations; the researchers synthesised the materials collected during the interviews and re-shaped them in the form of life stories. The young people were identified based on their life experiences of multiple discrimination as Roma young LGBT, Roma young women and migrants. Roma and non-Roma civil society organisations active in the communities and the researchers' informal networks have contributed to identifying the participants. It is important to acknowledge that the young people who participated in the project are Roma young people who were willing to tell their story. On the basis of a first approach during which the young people were informed about the project and also identified some of the experiences they wanted to share, the researchers went into greater depth through a dialogue, and extracted from a variety of experiences those which focused on discrimination. In this respect, we must acknowledge that the life stories obviously do not cover all the aspects of the interviewees' lives, nor are they intended to. They are not exceptional stories, meaning that the young people who participated in the project do not represent more than themselves and snapshots of their experiences of discrimination.

Another aspect to be mentioned here is the age of some of the interviewees. For some younger young people, it was difficult to tell their stories, either because they had difficulties in identifying discrimination, or because they were very close emotionally to some of the episodes. Some of the interviewees who are older than 30 and had taken more distance from

their experiences told their stories while keeping the focus on discrimination. For most of the interviewees, the episodes of discrimination start at a very early age and continue to this day.

The focus groups were meetings organised with Roma young people in order to gather more information about their experiences related to discrimination, and the strategies they use to tackle it. A total of five focus groups were held in Slovakia, the United Kingdom, Romania, the Czech Republic and Spain. The focus groups included both young people and activists from civil society organisations. In some cases, they were also used as a means of identifying young people to be interviewed on an individual basis and as a forum for verifying or echoing some of the findings from the individual interviews.

November 2012	Preliminary study carried out to describe the legal background related to multiple discrimination, to point out the specific issues in relation to the situation of Roma young women, Roma young LGBT and Roma young migrants and to define guidelines regarding the approaches to the project
June 2013	Preparatory meeting of the team of researchers defined the research project steps, including the profiles of young people to be involved and the interview guidelines
Summer – Autumn 2013	Focus groups and interviews
January – May 2014	Elaboration of the publication
June 2014	Conference to present the publication and discuss further multiple discrimination issues

A disclaimer needs to be made here. While we refer to LGBT in this publication, we recognise that none of the life stories included are of transgender individuals. Accessing and including Roma transgender participants was a particular challenge in this project and much more work is needed on understanding and recognising Roma transgender specific issues. However, we have decided to refer to LGBT rather than just sexual orientation as some issues do overlap and if we wrote about sexual orientation only there would be a risk that gender identity could fall off of the agenda.

Finally, as an introduction to the life stories, several young people decided not to reveal their real names. We offered them the possibility of having a fictional name, and, with the exception of one person and one music band whose names feature in the public domain, all the other names have been changed in order to preserve the anonymity of the respondents.



2 The Council of Europe and Roma youth

The work of the Council of Europe is based on the values of respect for and promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. At different levels, through a variety of tools, legal, political or educational, the Council of Europe supports the creation in Europe of societies based on a culture of peace and human rights.

The work of the Council of Europe regarding the situation of the Roma started when the Parliamentary Assembly adopted its Recommendation 563(1969) on 'the situation of Gypsies and nomads in Europe'. A series of recommendations, meetings and seminars followed, with a clear focus on education and non-discrimination. Later, the themes tackled were extended to equality of opportunities, Roma women, training and education, the fight against racism and xenophobia, and youth.

In October 2010, the Council of Europe High Level Meeting on Roma resulted in the Strasbourg Declaration on Roma (CM(2010)133 final), which has become a guiding document for all the activities that the Council of Europe undertakes regarding Roma people, based on the following priorities:

- Non-discrimination, citizenship, women and children's rights
- Social inclusion including education, housing and healthcare
- Empowerment and better access to justice.

The European Court of Human Rights and the European Convention of Human Rights have also been important instruments of the Council of Europe to make governments respect their commitments to the human rights of the Roma. Several cases relate to discrimination, school segregation, forced evictions, attacks on Roma villages and destruction of property, racially-biased police investigations, forced sterilisation of Roma women, to name a few. The Court has recognised that the Roma are "a specific type of disadvantaged and vulnerable minority" who "require special protection" (the case of *D.H. and Others v. Czech Republic*). Several articles of the European Convention of Human Rights are particularly relevant to situations of discrimination faced by the Roma population, namely article 14, which prohibits discrimination in the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in the Convention, and Article 1 of Protocol No. 12 to the Convention, which extends the scope of protection to any right set forth by law, and, in so doing, introduces a general prohibition of discrimination.

2.1 Working with and for Roma youth and the Roma Youth Action Plan

The youth sector of the Council of Europe has associated young Roma with its policy and activities since 1995, when a ground-breaking training course for Roma youth leaders was held at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg. During the last 20 years, the Council of Europe has also:

- supported the development of Roma youth networks, through study sessions with Roma European youth networks covering human rights education, youth mobilisation, the management of Roma youth organisations, and intercultural dialogue
- organised activities where the concerns of Roma young people were particularly relevant, such as young migrants, young women, violence in everyday life or gender equality
- carried out training courses for youth leaders and youth workers, such as the series of long-term training courses on Participation and Citizenship of minority youth, and the Enter! project on access to social rights for young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods (2010-2012)
- supported local pilot projects, through the European Youth Foundation.

In 2011, the Council of Europe organised a Roma Youth Conference which brought together some 60 Roma youth activists, members of youth organisations and international institutions to discuss a co-ordinated approach to tackling Roma youth issues. The participants in the Conference developed guidelines for what the Council of Europe and other partners should take up as themes for their future projects and actions in the following five years, in the areas of youth work and youth policies; a Roma Youth Action Plan was developed based on the Conference input. The Roma Youth Action Plan became a response by the Council of Europe to challenges faced by Roma young people in Europe, particularly in relation to their empowerment, participation in policy decision-making processes and structures at European level, and multiple realities of discrimination.

The Action Plan includes activities of the Youth Department and of other sectors of the Council of Europe, along with activities proposed by other partners, first and foremost, youth organisations: the Forum of European Roma Young People (FERYP), ternYpe – International Roma Youth Network, and the European Youth Forum.



The Roma Youth Action Plan is articulated around six themes, as follows:

- Strengthening Roma youth identity
- Addressing multiple discrimination and recognising multiple identities
- Building a stronger Roma youth movement
- Increasing the capacity of Roma youth organisations to participate in policy making
- Human rights and human rights education
- Combating discrimination and antigypsyism.

The plan is implemented through a variety of activities, from capacity-building activities for Roma youth organisations, to seminars and conferences, policy debates, production of educational tools, summer schools and training courses. Non-formal education methodologies are applied in the activities of the Plan.

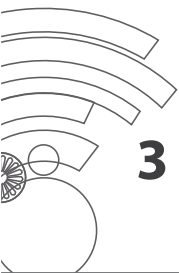
For more information, see: <http://www.coe.int/youth/roma>

2.2 Recommendation CM/Rec (2010)5 and multiple discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity

In 2010 the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted the Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)5 to member states on measures to combat discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity. The recommendation indicates policy measures for member states in relation to areas such as hate crime, freedom of association, expression and peaceful assembly, respect for family life and private life, employment, education, health, housing, sports, asylum, national human rights structures and discrimination on multiple grounds.

While it is not a legally binding instrument, all Council of Europe member states should implement this recommendation. From 2011 to 2013 the Council of Europe carried out a pilot LGBT project in six member states in order to support them in implementing this Recommendation. Albania, Italy, Latvia, Montenegro, Poland and Serbia received support in drafting national LGBT or anti-discrimination strategies and/or action plans, in reviewing legislation and in conducting capacity-building and awareness-raising activities.

This recommendation was particularly valuable for our project, as it sets clear guidelines and standards to be pursued in order to tackle multiple discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity.



3 Introduction to the situation of Roma youth

Roma people constitute the largest ethnic minority group in Europe with an estimated population of 10 to 12 million. Roma communities are very heterogeneous. Within the Roma population, young people occupy a very important part and are the most numerous group. While there is very little research specifically about Roma young people, it is estimated that about 4 million young Roma live in the 47 Council of Europe member states. The Roma population is younger than the EU average: 26.7% of Roma are aged between 15 and 29 compared to 19.3% in the EU (Fundación Secretariado Gitano, 2009).

Roma young people are often disproportionately vulnerable to discrimination and marginalisation, human rights violations and related problems. Access to education, employment, housing, healthcare and services in general are some of the social, economic and cultural rights explored in the life stories, and we will discover, through the experiences of young Roma people, that discrimination affects them in their access to these rights on an almost daily basis. Other issues concern the lack of Roma young people's participation, including political participation, prejudice and discrimination against the Roma, involving external as well as internal discrimination. There are other vulnerability factors that the current life stories touch upon: lack of birth certificates, identity documents and citizenship status make Roma invisible to services, thus exacerbating their social exclusion and their lack of access to rights; at the same time, these increase the risk of Roma children and young women and men becoming victims of trafficking and exploitation.

As shown in a number of the life stories, Roma young people also have to face the additional challenge of coming to terms with the deeply embedded Romani traditions and cultural heritage governing cultural expectations and gender roles; in some cases, these may run contrary to the rights of certain groups, particularly Roma young women and/or LGBT Roma people. However, as demonstrated in David's life story, this process of reconciling with these highly diverse aspects of one's identity does not necessarily have to be a negative experience: he has succeeded in affirming both his Roma and LGBT identity.

Last but not least, Roma young people are aware of the detrimental influence of the media on the portrayal of Roma communities, including Roma youth. During one of the focus groups, an 18-year-old Roma male said that Roma, especially Roma young men are increasingly portrayed as aggressive criminals by many TV programmes and newspaper articles. According to him, many young Roma feel frustrated and angry because of this, as there seem to be very few avenues for changing these negative perceptions.

3.1 Realities of discrimination

As with the rest of Roma in Europe, Roma young people face discrimination, antigypsyism and limited access to rights. Nowadays, young people are up against a series of challenges in relation to their transition to sustaining an independent life, especially the high unemployment. Roma young people's situation is worsened by the stigmatisation and discrimination to which they are subjected. This is even worse for Roma young women and for vulnerable groups such as those with disabilities, LGBT people, migrants and undocumented young people.

Racist stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, hate speech and hate crime affect young Roma in the same way as other strata of the Roma communities. As indicated by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) and the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, antigypsyism is deeply rooted in European history (ECRI, 1998) and continues to prevail in the minds and attitudes of the non-Roma population, rooted in ignorance, fear and segregation (Linge and Warmisham, 2013). The recent resurgence of extremism targeting Roma demonstrates that antigypsyism continues to be a driving force of political populism. In addition, generally negative portrayal of Roma in mainstream media and online reinforces prejudices, stereotypes and racist attitudes.

The life stories also highlight the existence of institutional discrimination which manifests itself in Roma young people's everyday dealings with schools, hospitals, enforcement agencies and/or public administration and governmental institutions. The judgements delivered by the European Court of Human Rights in matters such as the segregation of Roma pupils in education (*D.H. and others v. the Czech Republic; Orsus and others v. Croatia*), coercive sterilisation of Roma women (*V.C. v. Slovakia; N.B. v. Slovakia*), to name a few, are an acute reminder of the persistence of institutional discrimination against Roma across a whole spectrum of public services.

Institutional discrimination at the level of police investigations is specifically referred to by many young people who were interviewed during our project. Police abuse and aggression "just because" the young people were Roma seems to be a common reality among the young people we have interviewed. This has been reiterated by the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe as a cause of concern.

Hate speech and hate crime also affect the Roma population disproportionately and several political parties across Europe use the Roma population as scapegoats for social and economic problems in their countries. This widespread rhetoric of hate makes the Roma even more vulnerable and marginalised. As reported in the De la Negra story, anti-Roma marches have become a real problem in several countries. In many cases of hate crime against the Roma, hate speech plays an important role in fueling intolerance and racism towards the Roma. Within the No Hate Speech Movement, a youth campaign carried out from 2013 to 2015 by the youth sector of the Council of Europe, anti-Roma hate speech has often been reported from many European countries.

3.2 Education

As the vast majority of the life stories demonstrate, entering school was a key moment for the young people in terms of encountering racism and discrimination for the first time and having to deal with the fact of being seen as different by virtue of their ethnicity. At the same, all the young people we interviewed saw education as a key for success and for advancing in their lives. This makes it obvious that discrimination, humiliation and bullying during their first school years had a permanent impact on young people's self-esteem and possibilities for their future.

Across Europe, pre-school, primary and secondary education systems often fail to ensure equality of opportunity and outcome for Roma children. Even though the impact of pre-school education on the child's intellectual and social development has been widely acknowledged as positive, it is rarely available to Roma children. While 3% of non-Roma children fail to complete primary education, the rate among Roma children is 50% (Linge and Warmisham, 2013), resulting in Roma children having very poor literacy and numeracy skills, and fewer chances to participate within the labour market. In this respect, the issue of gender also plays an important role: the illiteracy rate in South-East Europe is 32% for Roma women, compared with 22% for Roma men; as a result, in some countries, Roma girls are the lowest achieving group (UNICEF, 2011).

Additionally, across Central and Eastern Europe, Roma children are still streamed into special classes and/or schools for the mentally and physically disabled, or ghetto schools, leading to de facto racial segregation. Since these schools teach less demanding school curricula, Roma children are unable to go on to secondary and/or tertiary education. The number of those who do so is extremely low, about 0.9% (Linge and Warmisham, 2013).

Segregation, discrimination, racist stereotyping, bullying and violence, including from school staff, targeting young Roma in the school setting, are the most significant factors hindering Roma young people's achievement, attainment and successful completion of the education process. With a few exceptions, this is a common thread that can be identified in most of the life stories. Hostility of the majority school environment and the school curricula that often sideline the Roma's history, culture and traditions is an additional negative factor. Participation in the school's community life may be challenging, at times impossible for Roma, most of whom have a different social status, are routinely rejected by non-Roma parents and/or often cannot afford the associated expenses such as clothes, books or other equipment.

For many Roma young people today, a vicious cycle of poverty and social exclusion starts very early on in their lives: at school, with poor attendance, educational achievement and attainment. Without qualifications and skills, employment is difficult to come by. This also has repercussions on citizenship and social participation, which are key factors in social inclusion.

3.3 Employment

The lack of quality education, as well as discrimination within the labour market, are important reasons for a high unemployment rate among many young Roma. According to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, integration into the labour market is one of the key development tasks on a young person's road to autonomy and independence (Resolution 346, 2012). Additionally, taking up gainful employment is considered to be a crucial step in their personal development and in forming their identity. It is an important basis for securing one's livelihood, for participating and positioning oneself in society.

As some of the life stories show, without employment Roma young people are at an increased risk of being permanently excluded from the labour market and vulnerable to exploitation and trafficking. Roma young people quite often want to apply for a job following an initial contact over the phone, only to be told at the interview that the post is no longer vacant. However, as a number of life stories show, there are also success stories in their own right. Some of the young people we interviewed found their way and overcame the multiple challenges they have faced as Roma, Roma women, Roma migrants or Roma LGBT persons.

3.4 Access to housing, health and services

The education and employment of Roma young people are often hindered by the fact that access to adequate housing is often not ensured. As shown in a number of the life stories, segments of Roma communities live in specially segregated slum housing which puts their health at risk; the right to the highest attainable standards of health is also often violated. The average life expectancy of Roma is shorter than that of non-Roma. Roma infant mortality rates are also higher. (Council of Europe, 2012)

Roma children and young people are more likely to live in overcrowded households with poor infrastructure, often lacking basic utilities such as electricity or gas, running (potable) water, and toilet and bathroom or sewage systems, as shown in a number of the life stories from North-Eastern Hungary, Romania, Eastern Slovakia and Northern and Western Czech Republic. Such houses are often damp, the walls are not insulated well and the roofs leak. They are also at an increased risk of being evicted. Most of the residential hotels into which a number of Roma are evicted in the Czech Republic offer substandard accommodation but charge extortionate sums of money for rent.

3.5 Participation in decision-making processes

As the participants of the Roma Youth Conference highlighted (RYCP 2011: 44), young Roma have limited access to political participation and they are often absent from relevant decision-making bodies and processes, including voting. The reason behind this phenomenon is sometimes a lack of political will, which does not incorporate Roma youth inclusive approaches into mainstream youth politics; Roma youth issues are absent from related mainstream legislation.

When it comes to young people's right to association and to forming organisations, lack of continuous funding targeting Roma youth activities has been observed and youth activities often exclude Roma and Roma youth organisations due to their weakness and specificities (Kocze 2012 and 2013); as a result, Roma people only rarely take part in mainstream youth events and initiatives. Despite these difficulties, a number of some successful Roma youth initiatives are referred to in the life stories.

With specific regard to internal relations within Roma communities,

some scholars and activists have helped to breach the fixed dichotomies "majority/minority" and "victim/offender", by explaining that each individual (e.g. Roma person) can be discriminated against because of his or her ethnic origin by non-Roma and, at the same time, he or she can discriminate someone else on other grounds even within his or her community or group (e.g. Roma women, LGBT Roma, Roma belonging to different communities or sharing a different religion). In terms of active participation, this aspect is very related to the problem of letting all voices within the Roma minority be heard, and not just the privileged and dominant ones. It is also linked with the issue of Roma young people's representation (Bello, 2012).

While needs and aspirations of Roma youth stay rather invisible in many strategies for Roma inclusion, in recent years the Roma youth movement has shown vigour at the European level, and the potential to redress this imbalance. Among others, Roma youth networks such as FERYP or ternYpe have actively sought ways to eliminate any paternalistic approaches to mainstreaming Roma youth issues, and have been active in the discussions, for example, in the youth policy agenda of the Council of Europe regarding Roma youth.

3.6 Internal factors

A series of external as well as internal factors hamper Roma young people's ability to assert their rights. They face prejudice and discrimination from majority societies (external factors) as well as from their own communities (internal factors). While in some Roma communities Roma girls are still oppressed by practices such as early marriage and pregnancies, prominent Roma feminist scholar Kocze believes that the systemic institutional discrimination against Roma girls should be explored: poverty, lack of opportunities and programmes fostering their access to school and preventing school drop-outs contribute to pushing Roma girls to the margins of society (Bello, 2012). From this perspective, "the intersection of gender, ethnic origin and social / economic status can exacerbate the situation of Roma young women within the Roma communities", according to Goodwin (as cited in Bello, 2012, page 12). The Roma Youth Action Plan and the European Roma and Traveller Forum have come to similar conclusions: early and arranged marriages pose a problem for young people, especially for young women, for continuing their education or pursuing a professional career (RYCP, 2011); in the case of LGBT Roma young people, these practices may run counter to the individual's sexual orientation and gender identity. Research shows that the main barrier to education for Roma girls lies in traditional gender patterns in Romani communities: it is believed in some communities that Roma girls do not need education and are expected to marry and look after their siblings and the household

(Linge and Warmisham, 2013). However, as shown in some of the life stories, this is not the case for every Roma young woman. On the contrary, some Roma young women across Europe have gone on to study at university and have become successful professionals.

Additionally, some groups of Roma young people (both men and women) are more vulnerable to human trafficking, due to both in-group and out-group factors, such as ethnic and gender discrimination, structural poverty and social exclusion, low levels of education, high levels of unemployment, growing up in state care, or usury. At the same time, none of these factors are Roma-specific, although in Europe, they do affect Roma disproportionately. (ERRC/PiN Slovakia, 2010)

3.7 Young Roma women

The situation of Roma women has been repeatedly recognised as a priority within the international Roma rights movement, particularly in relation to discrimination and violence against Roma women and girls, including in their own community. In particular, the problems of domestic violence and of forced / child marriages, which constitute a violation of human rights, have been established as priorities also to be addressed by the Roma communities themselves. The tensions between the preservation of a Romani identity and the violation of women's rights, including through early and forced marriages, have been brought to the foreground by Roma women activists and scholars who believe that custom and tradition should be changed, as they cannot be an excuse for human rights violations. (Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, 2012)

3.8 Young LGBT Roma people

To date, many LGBT individuals remain invisible and conceal their sexual orientation or gender identity out of fear of negative reactions, discrimination, harassment, rejection or violence at school, work, in their neighbourhood or in their family. Across the Council of Europe 47 member states, homophobic and transphobic attitudes have been identified, including inflammatory and aggressive discourse against LGBT people, occasionally amounting to hatred and hate speech, which are rarely officially condemned. LGBT people have often been portrayed by media outlets as a threat to the nation, religion, and traditional notions of gender and the family (Council of Europe, 2011). This invisibility on the one hand and public reprisals on the other are even more pronounced in the case of Roma, including Roma youth.

The Roma Youth Action Plan and some of the life stories suggest that vulnerable groups among Roma young people such as LGBT Roma may feel torn due to there being a cultural clash between sexual orientation and some Roma traditions and societal expectations governing gender roles. According to Czech Roma LGBT activist David Tiser, Roma LGBT people are the most vulnerable group who face triple discrimination: firstly as Roma, secondly as LGBT people, and thirdly as LGBT people in the Roma community. In the case of young Roma LGBT living in ghettos, there is a fourth ground for discrimination: exclusion. Due to the address of their residence, they are often unable to access services and are at a major disadvantage in terms of engaging with agencies such as the police, healthcare, and so on.

Some traditional Roma in the Czech Republic and Slovakia still maintain the concept of caste reflected in the Roma tradition of ritual purity, according to which some people in the Roma communities cannot take part in the preparation of food. Similarly, in some families, LGBT people are still perceived as unclean. If they touch a plate or other items, everything has to be thrown away after they have left because it is unclean, or they have their separate plates and cutlery. At the same time, as Maria and David's life stories show, when living in a close-knit Roma community where each of the members depends on one another, Roma young LGBT people are accepted and relied upon by their non-LGBT counterparts in a way which is indicative of a high degree of intra-communal acceptance.

In terms of young LGBT Roma people's "coming out" (i.e. publicly acknowledging their sexual orientation or gender identity), there seems to be a fundamental difference between Roma and non-Roma families, stemming from the different family structure, hierarchy and expectations. In non-Roma families, which are often nuclear and where there tends to be more distance among the individual members, a gay person may have to come out only once or twice (to mother or father or both), while in Roma families, which are generally extended and close-knit, a gay person may have to come out to every member (parents, siblings, cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents). Roma LGBT people may avoid the risk of social isolation, stigmatisation and rejection by hiding their sexuality or gender identity. The story of the youth organisation ARA ART is particularly relevant in showing the complexity of responses that civil society needs to provide for these situations.


3.9 Migrant young Roma

The migration of Central and East European Roma throughout the 20th century intensified across the former Soviet block soon after the 1989 collapse of communism to an unprecedented degree when Roma started migrating westwards in the 1990s as asylum seekers, escaping increasing racist persecution in their countries of origin. Migration movements increased following the enlargement of the Council of Europe in the early 1990s, followed by the 2004 and 2007 enlargement and integration of the EU. This happened to coincide with the beginning of the financial crisis and an outbreak of anti-Romani hostility, violence and systemic discrimination, which has brought the social inclusion of Roma more forcefully into European policy concerns. (Council of Europe CM, 2008)

As can be seen from some of the life stories, for some Roma young people migration is a chance for a better future elsewhere, in those cases where they have little or no chance of succeeding in their home countries. Migration also impacts on young people's visions about what is considered possible: as results from some of the stories, what seemed impossible in terms of relations between Roma and non-Roma, such as being treated with respect when entering a shop, is fully part of the reality in another country. Furthermore, as young people show in their life stories, migration also increases their chances of progressing in their professional lives and demonstrating their competences, while in their home countries they were not even given a chance to do so.



4 Understanding multiple discrimination



... categories of discrimination may overlap, and ... individuals may suffer historical exclusion on the basis of both race and gender, age and physical handicap, or some other combination. The situation of individuals who confront multiple grounds of disadvantage is particularly complex. Categorizing such discrimination as primarily racially-oriented, or primarily gender-oriented, misconceives the reality of discrimination as it is experienced by individuals. (Justice Claire L'Heureux-Dubé, cited in Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2001)

Discrimination, like traffic through an intersection, may flow into one direction and it may flow into another. If an accident happens at an intersection, it can be caused by cars travelling from any number of directions, and, sometimes, from all of them. Similarly, if a black woman is harmed because she is in the intersection, her injury could result from sex discrimination or race discrimination. (Crenshaw 1989)

4.1 Discrimination and human rights

Discrimination is a form of human rights violation and it is prohibited under human rights law. Human rights are based on the principles of equality and non-discrimination, as we can read in Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR): "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights". Article 2 of the UDHR makes it clear that all human rights apply to all human beings without discrimination: "Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status".

The Council of Europe member states have all committed to the European Convention of Human Rights, which, through its Article 14, gives protection from discrimination in relation to the enjoyment of the other rights set forth in the convention. Moreover, Protocol 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights, which entered into force in 2005, expands the scope of the prohibition on discrimination to cover any right which is guaranteed at the national level, even where this does not fall within the scope of a right set forth in the European Convention of Human Rights. Only 17 of the 47 Council of Europe members have ratified Protocol 12, among which six are member states of the European Union. This means that among the EU member states there exist different levels of obligations in European non-discrimination law. European Union member states have also transposed EU law into their national anti-discrimination acts. These reflect the core idea that all human beings, irrespective of their different background, enjoy the same human rights and should have equal access to them.

Discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than other people in a comparable situation only because they belong, or are perceived to belong, to a certain group or cat-

egory of people and this treatment cannot be objectively and reasonably justified (*Compass*, 2012). Discrimination has devastating effects on people, as it may affect their self-esteem, their access to their human rights and hurt them in their dignity and development. Discrimination can take place on any characteristic attributable to a human being, including inherent and rather stable characteristics such as ethnic origin, as well as acquired and relatively changeable characteristics such as political and other opinions.

There are several types of discrimination we can encounter.

Direct discrimination refers to a situation in which a person is treated less favourably directly on the basis of a prohibited ground, for example, when an employer puts measures in place in order not to hire immigrants. This includes harassment or bullying.

Indirect discrimination refers to a situation in which an apparently neutral provision or practice is discriminatory in its effects. A typical example is the much criticised practice across Eastern European states of streaming Roma children into special schools for children with learning disabilities. The effect is the exclusion of a disproportionate number of members of the Roma community from mainstream education.

Institutional discrimination refers to practices or procedures in a company, an institution, and/or society as a whole, which have been structured in such a way as to produce discriminatory effects. Institutional discrimination may be intentional, hence “institutionalised discrimination”.

Experienced or subjective discrimination is the experience of being discriminated against. Experienced discrimination does not necessarily entail discrimination in the legal sense.

Racism

Discrimination is often racist in nature. Racism is an ideology which involves discriminatory and abusive behaviour towards people because of their imagined “inferiority” (*Compass*, 2012). Although race is no longer accepted as a biological category, the impact of racism is still present and takes a variety of forms. Often, Roma people are discriminated against on the basis of a racist ideology, which sees them as inferior to other people.

Stereotypes and prejudices

A stereotype is a generalised belief or opinion about a group of people, where the aim is to simplify reality. Stereotypes can be positive, negative or neutral, and they are often based on personal experiences or on impressions formed in early school years, from the mass media, and which have been generalised. A prejudice is a judgement, usually negative, made about other people without really knowing them. Prejudices are formed during early socialisation processes. Discrimination is often accompanied and justified by stereotypes and prejudices.

4.2 Multiple discrimination as a concept

People may be discriminated against because of any aspect or combination of aspects that are part of or are being perceived as part of their identity. People's identities are multi-layered and multi-faceted: one may define themselves (or be identified by others) by their sex, age, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation and gender identity, social status, disability, religion and belief, and so on. When more than one aspect or ground is involved when one is discriminated against, one is said to experience multiple discrimination.

Each human being belongs, at the same time, to several groups. It is important to pay attention to the fact that for disadvantaged groups, such as the Roma, very often there is an internal heterogeneity of the group, and within this group people may be discriminated against on several grounds. Multiple identities can multiply the possibilities for discrimination, as well as the directions from where discrimination happens. For instance, LGBT people of Roma origin may be rejected by other members of the LGBT communities due to their ethnicity. At the same time, in traditional Roma communities, although they are part of the communities by way of ethnicity and heritage, Roma LGBT people may be ostracised due to their minority gender identity and/or sexual orientation.

Using the fictional example of Anabela, a poor Roma young woman, we can identify several types of multiple discrimination:

- discrimination on different grounds on separate occasions; in its narrower sense, multiple discrimination describes a situation in which discrimination occurs on the basis of two or more grounds operating separately.



On one occasion, Anabela was not accepted by a doctor in the hospital because her "surname sounds Roma". On a different occasion, she was harassed as a woman on the street during the night. On another occasion, she was employed and paid a lower wage than the minimum because "she needed to learn the job first". Lastly, she was insulted by school teachers because she was "stinking and dirty".

- additive or compound discrimination describes a situation in which discrimination occurs on the basis of two or more grounds at the same time and where one ground multiplies or intensifies in the same instance as the discrimination experienced on another ground.



Anabela obtained a low quality education because her parents could not afford a better school, and she was excluded from some classes because she was a Roma girl. While the overall result was discrimination in education, both aspects (being a woman and being poor) accumulated and made the result worse. It can be argued that the two factors contributed independently to her low-quality education.

- intersectional discrimination is the term widely used to describe a situation where several grounds operate simultaneously and interact in an inseparable manner, producing distinct and specific forms of discrimination.



At a job interview, Anabela was not even allowed to enter the interview room as the interviewers noticed she had a Roma surname and she was young and female, which probably means she would have lots of children soon. She was discriminated against because of being a Roma young woman.

In the case of Roma, and Roma young people in particular, the intersectionality of different grounds of discrimination has been explored only to a limited extent. The Council of Europe and EU institutions such as the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency and other bodies have recognised that visible minorities such as Roma are more likely to suffer multiple discrimination than other minorities (FRA, 2011).

4.3 Multiple discrimination: reality, law and policy

Multiple discrimination needs to be analysed at different levels in order to understand its gravity and the rationale behind the need to take it into account at all levels, legal, political and societal.

First of all, multiple discrimination challenges the way discrimination is usually seen in society and also how it is seen at a legal level. Discrimination is often viewed on the basis of separate events and on the basis of one ground for discrimination; most of the time, it is also considered to be intentional. In other words, someone intentionally discriminates against someone else because of one characteristic of this person. Multiple discrimination questions this assumption at the following levels:

- First of all, discrimination may not always be intentional, but rather deeply rooted in the structures and institutions existing in a given society. For the specific case of Roma young people, one may claim that antigypsyism is an aggravating factor in many cases of discrimination. At the moment, this is not fully reflected within the legal framework.
- Secondly, discrimination may be something more than one episode of discrimination, in other words, for example, a constant process or attitude in society, prejudice or hostility.
- Thirdly, when several processes of discrimination are at stake and follow each other, what results is something more than the sum of each episode of discrimination taken separately. The quality and consequences of multiple discrimination are specific and do not follow mathematical reasoning. Being discriminated against at school for example can lead to discrimination in access to employment later on, and to a very vulnerable position at the margins of society overall. (Makkonen, 2002)

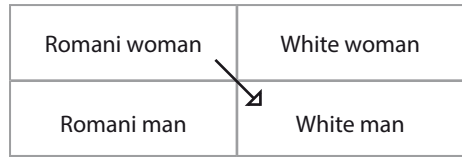
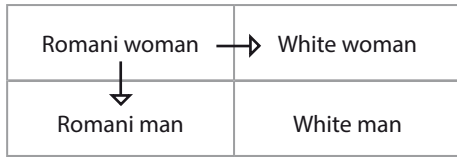
These three arguments make a case that, when looking at discrimination, the multiple discrimination perspective can ensure a better assessment of the situation and can also allow victims to have access to more adequate remedies.

As Makkonen shows, if we are to take into account multiple discrimination perspectives, some specific situations come into play:

- Victims are more likely to be discriminated against more frequently, also due to the different characteristics of their identity that are at stake in cases of discrimination
- Victims are more likely to suffer from aggravated forms of discrimination, which are more intense and make the position of the person even more vulnerable in society
- Victims experience, especially in the case of intersectional discrimination, a different experience of discrimination that is difficult to categorise by only looking at one ground at a time
- Victims are also more likely to suffer from structural inequalities in society, poverty and social exclusion and, generally, marginalisation, as all these factors enter into play. When the whole mindset of society does not link poverty for example with discrimination, episodes of blaming the victim are also more likely to occur. Those who are poor are seen as a problem, while the existing structure and processes of discrimination in society remain invisible
- Victims are represented in essentialist terms, and minorities within a minority remain invisible in the public sphere, while their interests are also ignored within their group, due to discrimination from inside the group itself. For example, gay Roma are invisible within gay communities and invisible within Roma communities, while they suffer from exclusion from both communities.

From a legal perspective, multiple discrimination requires a reform in the way discrimination is dealt with in law, and in the remedies available to victims. Legal instruments are, at the moment, in most European countries, inadequate as they require the so-called 'single ground approach', where the person who suffers discrimination needs to make their claim based on only one ground of discrimination. There is a need for added protections in law as well as remedies that acknowledge the specific situation of those victims of multiple discrimination.

Recognising people's multiple identities has important practical implications for how discrimination is dealt with in law. As opposed to the multi-ground (or diagonal) approach, the single-ground (or horizontal-vertical) approach to addressing discrimination fails to see people's identities as multi-faceted and fails to consider in what ways different identities interact.



Gay Moon, 'Multiple Discrimination: Justice for the Whole Person', in *Roma Rights Quarterly*, 2/2009

The complex and fluid nature of people's identities, particularly in cases of intersectional discrimination, has not been always reflected adequately in law. When discrimination involves more than one ground, and those grounds interact with each other in such a way as to be completely inseparable, it will not be possible to analyse the grounds of treatment separately, and this is not reflected adequately in the current legal framework. (Moon, 2009)

Furthermore, multiple discrimination also calls for specific positive obligations from governments in order to remedy the situation of exclusion and discrimination. Positive action, in this respect, is required, on condition that it is based on a thorough assessment of multiple disadvantages of certain minorities within a minority. It has already been identified that positive action in favour of a general group, Roma for example, can lead to those members of the group who are already more privileged within the Roma group to access more privileges, while those who have least access remain outside the reach of positive action. A multiple discrimination perspective would, in this case, provide specific information for better and well-targeted policies.

In broader terms, multiple discrimination lenses point to those who are the most marginalised within a group and to their specificities and needs. Moreover, they point to more structural factors, such as poverty or antigypsyism, which aggravate the discrimination suffered by the victims and have combined effects. In this respect, legislation at the moment lacks adequate responses. If each ground of discrimination is considered on its own, then the risk is to neglect the combined experience of discrimination, and, for instance, to award victims damages that do not reflect the gravity of their experience.

Multiple discrimination lenses also mean that ground-specific legal remedies need to be more consistent in themselves. At the moment, within the European Union, for example, several directives deal with different grounds of discrimination and different rights, but the legal framework is overall far from consistent and harmonised. A positive example can be cited from Canada, where the Ontario Human Rights Commission has proposed an approach based on multiple discrimination which takes into account how historical disadvantage, social, political and cultural context or socio-economic issues impact on an individual's identity and society's response to this identity. In the *Mercier* decision (2000) the Supreme Court of Canada indicated that the "determination of what constitutes a disability should be based on whether the person has experienced 'social handicapping' rather than focusing on bio-medical conditions or limitations". (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2001).

The background features a complex arrangement of thin, light-colored lines forming various geometric shapes. These include concentric circles, overlapping arcs, and straight lines that intersect to create a sense of depth and movement. A prominent diagonal line runs from the top left towards the bottom right. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern, with a focus on geometric patterns.

5

**Life stories:
young Roma
speak about
multiple
discrimination**

Klara



In the UK I feel part of one colourful society. I have only lived here for a year and a half but I feel more at home here than in the Czech Republic where society is divided into two parts: black and white; I never belonged to either.

Klara (24), Manchester, England, originally from Brno, the Czech Republic

I am a young Roma woman. I came to work in the UK in November 2012. Even though I had worked on a number of Roma community development projects prior to coming to the UK, I now do work through employment agencies: mainly unpacking or manual work.

I am the youngest of three daughters from a well-integrated Rumungro Roma family living in Brno, the Czech Republic. Brno is the second largest city in the Czech Republic, with a population of 500,000 inhabitants. Approximately 16,000 Roma live in Brno. We are all fluent in Romanes as we speak it at home a lot.

As a child and teenager in the Roma community, but also in our extended family, I always felt different. I felt good about the fact that my mum is educated and has achieved a lot in her life as a Roma woman, is the mother of three daughters, and is very busy in her household. She has a really good job: Roma advisor for Brno city council. She sets a good example. She has managed to do her job really well and she has succeeded in learning many other things.

Back at school, I sometimes heard anti-Roma abuse yelled at me because I am Roma. I first went to primary school in Brno where I studied until Year 3. My class teacher was a racist and she bullied me as the only Roma child in the class to the extent that I was so anxious, stressed out and nervous about school every morning that I vomited.

I have tried to forget about it so I don't remember much; but I was a keen, enthusiastic child and an involved pupil; I kept raising my hand and she would never ever call me. She never acknowledged me or gave me an opportunity. She ignored me. I realised she really disliked me.

In Year 1, there was another Roma girl who started school at the same time as I did and we were sat together from the first day. After a week, the class teacher sent her away and referred her to a special school for the mentally disabled. She was normal, so I didn't understand why she had been sent away and I remember asking myself why this had happened.

In Years 1 and 2, my non-Roma classmates asked me if I was a Gypsy. I always admitted I was. It wasn't a pleasant feeling though because I always had to defend myself and it has stuck with me ever since. I started to differentiate between Roma and non-Roma at primary school because I was constantly reminded of the fact that I was a Gypsy. My classmates often reminded me of the fact that I was different from them because I was Roma. I was not bullied or anything but they treated me differently. This has impacted on my low self-esteem. This whole issue of

low self-esteem runs in our family as a generational trauma. My father is the same and before my mum took up her current job, she, too, had low self-esteem.



How did racism and discrimination affect Klara?

How does racism affect children and young people in general?

Why did Klara feel different in school? What should be done in schools in order for children to be able to affirm their identity without fear?

I was ashamed of myself. There was a lot of anti-Roma verbal abuse going on, targeted at the Roma as a whole group. I recall some of the children were actually nice but they hated Gypsies. I am Roma, so I took it personally of course. I felt torn because on the one hand, I felt that they liked me as a person but they hated Roma; and I am Roma. In fact, they saw me as a non-Roma. I always had to defend myself against their anti-Roma prejudice and stereotypes because my mum is educated, and all my life she has been working in a job which is much more high-ranking than the jobs that my classmates' mothers had. What hurt me most was the kind of common statements about Gypsies: "they steal, are dirty, their homes are messy and there are at least ten of them in a single household". And jokes about Roma. As a result, I never had a friend among non-Roma and I never wanted any non-Roma to come and visit. At primary school, some of my classmates wanted to come and visit but I refused. I never wanted a non-Roma girl friend because I thought she would always look down upon me, see me only as a Roma, and that I would be inferior to her. I didn't want a friend like that.



Why do people hold stereotypes and prejudices? Where do they come from?

What could Klara do in order to fight against negative stereotypes and prejudices against Roma?

How did the bullying and prejudice affect the way Klara felt about her identity?

Then I went to another primary school and even though I was the only Roma there, everyone accepted me and respected the fact that I was Roma, my peers and teachers alike. After finishing primary school, I went to secondary school. There was a Roma class for future shop assistants and hairdressers, part of a nationwide chain of Roma secondary schools. It was supposedly easier but I didn't go there. I studied accountancy and business management and my classmates were predominantly non-Roma. There, I realised that there were some people among non-Roma who could see me for the person I was, not just for the "Roma" label.

After finishing secondary school, I was unemployed for some time. I then worked as a receptionist for three months at the Museum of Romani Culture. I was on a very low salary though despite having to work a 12-hour shift three times a week. I was really proud of being able to work there. I was influenced by the non-Roma staff there and I realised that I no longer had to hide my Roma identity from them.

I then searched for work again and ended up working for an environmental organisation for three months. Then I did a part-time accountancy job at the Association of Roma in Moravia and I sometimes covered for absent staff at the Museum of Romani Culture, mainly as the Director's secretary and guide. Then I worked for them part-time as a mentor and as a tutor in the nursery run by the Museum. My contract ended in August 2012.

When I looked for work, I was very sceptical and didn't believe in myself. When I was asked to go to an interview, I was really anxious and nervous about it. I went to quite a few, about three interviews a month, always for accountancy or administrative posts which had been advertised. I feared they would immediately assume I am Gypsy. I thought they would think me stupid and ridicule me. I was afraid of going for an interview to ask for a good job even though I had obtained a good education and was able to do the job. I kept replying to adverts for work by email, attaching my CV and a cover letter, but no-one ever got back to me. After several months, I started to wonder if this had anything to do with my last job at the Museum of Romani Culture, my address, which was at that time in the middle of the infamous Roma ghetto known as Brno Bronx, or my age and my gender, as prospective employers assume that young Roma women will get pregnant soon, so they prefer not to hire them. This certainly has been the experience of both of my sisters, my mother, and all of my Roma female colleagues from the Museum.



How can someone's ethnicity, age, sex, or address influence an employer? What should be done in order to ensure everyone has a fair chance to get a job interview? What should be done when they are excluded with no explanation?

Back in the Czech Republic, I never worked for a non-Roma company or organisation. The first time I worked for a non-Roma company was when I came to the UK last year. When I started living in the UK in November 2012, a "boulder" was lifted off my chest. I no longer had to be alert when going into a shop. For instance, in the Czech Republic, I would be routinely "watched" or followed by a security guard. When I come into a shop here in the UK, they greet me politely as with every other customer. Here, I feel I am treated as a dignified human being every day; I do not have to face the everyday stress of being identified as a Roma.

I was really fascinated by the fact that when I came here last year, I found a job within a week despite the fact that my English was quite poor. Yet I was given the opportunity to work. In the Czech Republic, where I was born, speak the official language and obtained a good education, I would spend half a year looking for a job and would be unsuccessful. In the UK, there are many people like me who can't speak the language well, are shy but are given a chance. I see the progress they make when they are given the opportunity to develop. They educate themselves and constantly strive for improvement. In a way, it seems many things are much easier here. Here, they are used to foreigners. They accept different ethnicities, races, cultures, traditions and customs.

The UK is very diverse, colourful, and multicultural. There are so many shades and colours. Here I don't feel different or even "black" as we are often seen in the Czech Republic. I feel my niece and nephew, who are quite dark, would feel much better here. For instance, my nephew who is eight years old is only used to seeing "white" non-Roma people and "black" Roma people. Here he would see that there is a richness of various different complexions, there are more colours than just black and white; here he would see that all these colours live together. Many couples are mixed. Different cultures have been able to keep their traditions and customs, such as the Chinese in Manchester's Chinatown, and they are respected by the other cultures. I have noticed that people take an active interest in differences. Since I came here, a lot of different people, Pakistani, Hungarian, and Polish, have asked me about my language, culture, traditions and customs, and I tell them about Czech Roma culture. We work but at the same time we inform each other about our cultures and roots. I feel that very few non-Roma people in the Czech Republic are interested in the Roma or our culture. A lot of them operate on their stereotypical views and prejudices about Roma. People do not know each other. Here I can tell people about myself and be proud of who I am. I sometimes come across expressions of antigypsyism here in the UK, but usually from Czech people living here. For instance, there is a Facebook group of Czechs and Slovaks in Manchester and someone asked about people's experience of using a specific coach company. A young woman replied that it was horrible, there was no room to sit down, and it was stinky and dark (i.e. there were dark Gypsies). This kind of online hate speech targeting Roma or anyone else is terrible as it goes unnoticed and unpunished most of the time.



What can you do when you encounter hate speech online?

Which agencies or institutions can you approach?

One of my Czech non-Roma roommates also told me that he was certain that Roma and other "blacks" have a lower IQ and therefore are unable to perform jobs such as bank managers, directors and so on. In this case, I was at least able to say to him that I thought that was very racist. I also asked him if he realised that by that statement, he was implying that my IQ was lower than a white person's IQ.

As for my Roma identity, I have always felt I never belonged to either the non-Roma or the Roma community. I'm Roma but I am also different from most of the Roma living in Brno. Our family is a minority within a minority. My parents' families came to Brno from a place near the Slovak-Hungarian border and we are the only extended family in Brno who originally came from that location. Most of the other Roma families originally came from eastern Slovakia. We speak a different dialect of Romanes. As a result, our family is not accepted by them. Some of this rejection has to do also with my mum's job as some Roma see her as a Roma working for and paid by non-Roma; and with the fact that although we observe Roma customs and family traditions, our family's traditional way of life was not seen as traditional by the other Roma as we are generally considered to be integrated. Compared to other Roma children, I had very

different interests, such as studying and various out-of-school activities, so growing up wasn't easy in this respect either.

I am the only daughter and granddaughter in our family who is already adult but does not have children. At one point, there was a lot of family pressure, especially from my father who kept saying that he would like to live to see my children. He isn't old though. Both of my sisters and even my mum had already had children at 24. So it feels a bit strange for me. I feel ready to be a parent but there are other priorities at the moment. As the youngest child, I was the only one to venture abroad. All of my family members are planning on joining me, one by one. And I am responsible for preparing everything. Early next year, my older sister wants to join me, together with her two children aged 10 and 8. That entails a lot of responsibilities, finding the right house and school for the children. My mum and dad plan to come after my sister. So it seems there is no room for me to have children. I have to work. I feel it might be easiest if I have children just as a single mum. It feels like a safe option for me and I know my mum would help me. I helped raise my younger sister's children; I looked after them very frequently and I know I can rely on my mum and sister for that. Our family is very close-knit and it is a very solid safety net for me.



What type of discrimination did Klara suffer? On which grounds was she discriminated against?

What could she have done to combat this discrimination?

What steps could she have taken to take legal action? Which institutions do you know of that she could have approached?

Which NGOs do you know of that would have been able to help her?

Summary for learning

As a Roma child, Klara experienced bullying and abusive behaviour in her school due to the fact she was a Roma. This influenced her self-esteem and the way she felt about her identity. This made her feel torn about her identity.

As a young woman of Roma heritage, Klara repeatedly experienced discrimination within the Czech labour market when applying for jobs. Klara, who received a very good education, believed it is highly likely that she suffered intersectional discrimination when she was not considered for the jobs she had applied for because of her age, gender, ethnicity / race and perceived social status (i.e. she was young, Roma, a woman, and living in an excluded location).

Racism is an ideology that involves discriminatory or abusive behaviour towards people because of their imagined "inferiority". Racial discrimination intervenes when a person is treated less favourably because of their real or imagined belonging to a group identified by their colour, citizenship, ethnicity, national origins and so on. Racism has a devastating impact on

its victims and society in general. Although race is no longer accepted as a biological category, the impact of racism remains and takes on different forms.

In the UK, legal cases about racial discrimination have made it clear whether certain groups of people can be counted as being ethnic. These include Jewish people, Romany Gypsies, members of the Irish traveller community and Sikhs.

According to the United Kingdom Equality Act 2010, it is illegal if racial discrimination takes place in any of the following situations and the victim may be able to take legal action:

- employment and training
- education
- when providing goods and services, for example, banking, entertainment and transport
- housing
- any of the activities carried out by public authorities, such as healthcare providers, government departments, local authorities, the police and prisons.

For more information about discrimination, please see Chapter 4.

Maria



Although we are two barely educated Roma women living in quite bad conditions, we dared ask to be recognised as a same-sex family and, when resettled, to be granted one social housing unit where we will be living together.

Maria (28), Belvil informal Roma settlement, Belgrade, Serbia

I live in a small shack made of cardboard, and old carpets coated with a new nylon covering I got just a few weeks ago, in an area that was once the largest informal Roma settlement in Belgrade's business area. My shack is rather tiny but I spend most of the time with my partner in the shack next to mine. I moved to Belgrade from Novi Sad five years ago, escaping a violent husband who was making me suffer to an extent one can hardly imagine.

Soon after escaping him I met another woman with a similarly worrisome fate: we were both harassed by our husbands and we made the decision not to marry again nor live with a man ever again. Over time our relationship became more emotional. Other settlement dwellers were more vocal about my partner's sexual orientation than about mine. Yes, they call us lesbians. So what? I don't mind what other people are doing, so why should they mind what I am doing? Apart from being finger-pointed all the time, I haven't been harassed or discriminated against by other community members. There are also several transgender people in the settlement and I think our community is quite tolerant. Everyone should live their life the way they want.

It isn't always that easy, especially for us, residents of informal settlements. In Belvil, we have been waiting to be evicted for a number of years now while waiting for loop roads for Ada Bridge to be built on the site where our houses are now. Talks with our community have taken place and the housing options after resettlement have been explained to us. My partner and I have opted for a joint household. We explained to the authorities that the two of us constitute a family and should live in one household. Serbia has no registered partnerships and I don't think anyone else has ever applied for social housing claiming to live in a same-sex partnership and to be treated as a family. Although we are two barely educated Roma women living in quite bad conditions, we dared ask to be recognised as a same-sex family and, when resettled, to be granted one social housing unit where we will be living together. Our request has been accepted.

It is now up to us to decide how we will organise our life once resettled. Yet some other differences are standing in our way: religion is one of them, for example. I consider myself a Muslim, though not a practising one. Yet I observe the religious holiday Eid (Bajram), which I embraced later in life, and I identify with people who celebrate it. My partner, on the other hand, is a Christian and she stresses that it is important to her. There has never been a misunderstanding between us because of that, though. We both have our own fantasies about a joint life once we move into the social flat. We have already visited several locations and chose one during the consultations, but nothing is certain as yet. Life is by no means going to be easy on us

when we resettle. The social housing is located on the outskirts of Belgrade and jobs are hard to find. We are now surviving by collecting mostly scrap metal which is dumped around the settlement where we are living in, and that will not be a possibility once we move into social housing. Finding a job with my education will be hard. My partner recently started working for a company. She has a part-time job that pays less than the minimal wage even if she works full-time. At least this gives some certainty though. She has an identity card, so they took her. She is also entitled to health and social insurance.

When I started school they sent me to a special school for the mentally disabled in Novi Sad just like my partner and many other Roma that I know. This changed when my family decided to move to Sombor, a city in the north of Vojvodina, when I was 9. I was enrolled into a mainstream school without having many difficulties to adjust to the new school. However, I remember the first few years as a period of constant teasing and mocking by other non-Roma children. I was laughed at because of my accent, second-hand clothing, and so on. However, when talking and thinking about this I tend to understand such behaviour as typical behaviour of children of that age. On the other hand, the final years of my primary education after my peers accepted me as one of them was so much fun. I have great memories of our trips and the teenage parties I participated in.

After primary school, when I was to choose my profession, I decided to go to a trade school to be a locksmith. Everyone kept telling me, "It is a male profession, do you know that?" I didn't understand it then and I don't understand now how something can be a strictly male or female profession. My partner also does a "male thing": she repairs mechanical devices, most often bicycles and other appliances found in the settlement. We are considered here in the settlement to be skillful people willing to help others. My neighbours often ask me to help them build shacks, repair tools and appliances, and connect them to the electric grid "illegally". There are many women here who are either single parents or their husbands don't care a lot about their families, so the women are often left to take care of all these things. And this is where I step in and help them. I feel this is the reason that the people in the community accept me and my partner. Maybe they don't like the way we live but they need us!

We live like any other couple. We prepare for the winter by putting additional nylon on our shed. We add one layer of overused carpet to strengthen the insulation. I have this huge pile of wood I've cut and collected making sure that we have enough to get through winter. We look for winter clothes now and any kind of help would be good for us. I asked some people who came to interview us just the other day but I stressed, no skirts and stuff like that, but jeans and army trousers, if possible. Yes, we somewhat dislike traditional women's clothes as well as make-up. However, I would be happy if I could fix my teeth and I'm thinking how much prettier I'd look. Even if I had a health insurance card, I know I'd have to pay for that service. Since I learnt about that, I've become less motivated to obtain a health insurance card. The reason why I can't get any health insurance is because I currently have no identity card either. I'd need to travel to Novi Sad to obtain a new one; the travel costs and all the administrative costs of issuing an identity card would be a fortune. We spoke to city officials when they were here and the only reply I got is that they can pay for my return journey, nothing else. We also tried to explain to them that my partner and I live in a sort of union and that I need health

insurance as next of kin. We never got any reply to this. But when I think of the possibilities and rights I will be able to attain, I am interested in getting those documents. I need to learn more and about everything. There is a whole life before me, you know.



How did Maria define her sexual orientation? How do the others perceive her sexual orientation?

What do you think is the main reason for Maria being discriminated against? To what extent is she being discriminated against? By whom?

Maria lives in a neighbourhood without running water and electricity. Why does this happen? Who should do something about it? Is this a case of discrimination? Is living in poor conditions always a case of discrimination or only in certain circumstances?

Summary for learning

As a school child, like many Roma children, Maria was first denied access to mainstream school and was streamed into a special school instead due to practices that amount very often to institutional racism. It does not result from her story that there were sufficient elements for the public authorities to make the decision to send her to a special school for children with learning disabilities. When children belonging to a specific ethnic group are disproportionately streamed into education for children with learning disabilities, this can amount to discrimination when accessing the right to education.

Furthermore, Maria has experienced discrimination as a young Roma lesbian woman living in a residentially segregated and excluded area. At present, Maria and her partner live in an informal settlement, with limited access to water and almost no access to electricity, sanitation and other utilities. There is also no access to healthcare or identity documents. As a result, everyone in the settlement helps each other since that is the only way to survive the harsh and hostile conditions.

Like in Maria's case, poor education (if at all), extremely rare cases of integration in society, and constant negligence by the Serbian authorities do not signal to Roma people that they are entitled to equality. However, in spite of the constant discrimination, Roma people rarely perceive discriminatory acts by public authorities as such even when those acts are accompanied by inhuman and degrading treatment. The life the Roma have and the inferior treatment they get daily from people ranging from ordinary citizens in the streets to public officials and institutions is something they perceive as normal, as given and expected.

Maria lives with a woman. They consider themselves partners but have never identified as lesbian or bisexual. As they both have a heightened sense of their rights and entitlements, they have applied for social housing as a couple, which they were eventually offered.

In their community, each and every person is dependent on the other members in one way or another. The fact that Maria and her partner have come to be appreciated and relied upon by

the other community members means that they have also become accepted by them as two female partners living together. In a small Roma community such as this one, discrimination is rarely present. People seem to be more open to diversity as such, as well as to what can be termed 'intra-community dependence'. In practical terms, they see each other as equal, fully-fledged and irreplaceable community members.

David



I have always been attacked due to my ethnicity but rarely due to my sexuality. I have always felt that any negative perceptions people have had of me over the years have always had to do with the fact that I am Roma.

David (28), born in Plzeň, living in Prague, the Czech Republic

I have lived in Prague for nine years. I studied Romani studies at Charles University in Prague. I am a long-standing Roma, LGBT, minority and human rights activist, member of the Government Council for Roma Community Affairs and the Government Council for Sexual Minorities, and founder of Roma youth organisations' Emergency committee and ARA ART. I currently co-operate with over 1,700 young Roma people throughout the Czech Republic, some of whom are secondary school, vocational course and/or university students.

I come from a large family (*famelja*): I have six siblings aged 24, 12, 8, 6, 4 and 1. I am the eldest. I grew up with my father, mother, uncles, aunts, cousins and grandmothers and grandfathers; unfortunately, both my grandfathers have died. At home, we speak Romanes only; we use the eastern Slovakian dialect of Romanes.

My family is very traditional; by that, I mean traditional in a good way. We speak Romanes at home, we observe Roma traditions and customs, including during Christmas and Easter when we eat traditional Romani foods. At Christmas, we eat *bobalky*, which is a traditional Christmas Roma dish. Nowadays, many Roma have replaced *bobalky* with traditional Czech Christmas food. I mention this here on purpose because many people, including some Roma, think that to come from a traditional family is something bad, that traditional equates with socially-excluded (i.e. from a ghetto). They think that traditional Roma do not appreciate education and, as a result, they do not send their children to school. Or that they do not want to mingle with other groups such as ethnic Czechs, hence are unable to integrate. That is not true. Education and things that are commonplace these days are entirely natural for traditional Roma. Similarly, in the past, we, the Roma, appreciated the importance of crafts. Crafts such as smithing were passed on from father to son. However, what still exists to date is the passing on of the musical tradition. I see this as an education too. With most crafts gone, we have learnt to appreciate the importance of education. My siblings grow up in the same circumstances as I did, except requirements imposed on them by family and society change as time changes. And while my family have been able to keep our traditional values, we have also integrated well within society and have made a significant contribution by being engaged in social and community activities.

When I was born, we lived in a predominantly Roma neighbourhood of Plzeň, called Husovo square, inhabited by both Slovakian and Vlach Roma. Then we moved to an area called Bory, which is a non-Roma part of Plzeň.

We grew up proud of our Roma heritage; I never struggled with my Roma identity and I didn't perceive it as something different; only those people who question or search for their Romani identity, or *Romanipen*, do this. It is the same as being an ethnic Czech. Have you ever questioned your being a Czech? I know we are a minority in the territory of the Czech Republic but I received an excellent upbringing from my parents and, as a result, I have never had to question my Roma identity. When I went to primary school, I was the only Roma there. My friends accepted me the way I was. They came to visit and play with me in our flat. I never had to question the relationship between Roma and non-Roma. My teachers were excellent because when I started school, I couldn't speak a word of Czech. They were patient with me and they took it as a personal challenge.



Was it important for David to be accepted in school for who he was? Is being accepted by others without discrimination important? Why?

I came out as a gay person at the age of 23 when I wrote the script for the film 'Roma boys', a partly autobiographical story of a gay Roma activist who meets another gay Roma young man (Marek) in an online forum. For some time, they communicate on the Internet only. Then they are supposed to meet in person one day and Marek, who is from a Vlax Roma family, comes out to his parents, who respond very negatively. His father and brother end up driving him to a field on the outskirts of Karvina where they assault him brutally. Marek is then obliged to marry a girl, another outcast from the Roma community; he can never meet his boyfriend again. The attack was based on my boyfriend's life story; however, in real life, my boyfriend was not forced to marry a girl. There was a plan for him to marry in the future but when he was hospitalised after the attack, he signed a personal statement, left the hospital at his own risk and fled the town for Prague.

There is a second ending to the film in which the two protagonists meet at a gay pride march in Vienna. The ending alludes to the possibility of their meeting in secrecy, since in real life many gay Roma males do meet their lovers in secret. In fact, families often know this about gay Roma men who lead double lives: they are married with children and, from time to time, they go off with another man. What matters is that they have a wife and children, which is of paramount importance.



How can we find a balance in this case between one's sexual orientation and the fact that the community has specific expectations (for one man to have a wife and children)? What could one do in this case besides keeping the secrecy?

Writing the script for the film was my way of coming out. When I came out, I had already

lived in Prague for some seven years or so. Many people who knew me at that time may have wondered if I was gay. I decided to time it with the first screening of the film: it was first shown at the Gypsy Spirit Award ceremony at which I presented. I wanted people to make the connection. After seeing the film, they knew for certain and told those who had some doubts about my sexuality. Afterwards, I travelled to Bulgaria to study there for half a year. By coincidence, I escaped all the gossiping which took place among Roma activists after the film was screened. I know about the gossip that went on in the meantime from my close friends who told me that several Roma activists referred to me as “faggot”. When I was back in Prague, they would not say this to me directly but spoke about me negatively behind my back. They would also discuss my sexuality in very derogatory terms at various public meetings. Once, the person in question was hypocritical enough to approach me regarding co-operation on a project. I replied to this by saying that I only work with faggots.

As for my family, when I came back from Bulgaria, everyone was happy to see me and I never had to explain this to any of my family members again. They were supportive and keen to meet my boyfriend. I was very fortunate in this respect.



Why does David consider himself fortunate regarding his family reaction to his coming out? What could the consequences have been if his family hadn't accepted him as gay?

As for the wider community, I never allowed them an opportunity to express their views on my sexuality because it was none of their business. It was a personal issue that only my family and I were able to comment on. The rest of the community had to respect it. What's more, I am in a position where members of the wider community need me; it is not the other way round. Non-Roma accepted my gay identity as par for the course. It is true that it was a much lengthier process regarding acceptance from Roma, including from some Roma activists, as homosexuality, or sexuality in general, have been traditionally considered taboo by the Roma.

After I finished university, it took me a month to find a job. In the meantime, I signed up at the job centre. I have to say the lady at the job centre treated me with respect when she looked at my ID and saw that I had a degree. A Roma lady, who was about 50 years of age and went to speak to the same job centre lady after me, was treated horribly by her, though.

Back in 2005, I experienced discrimination when a Roma female friend of mine and I tried to get into a club in Plzeň. We were the first guests and thus knew that the club would be empty. We were refused entry. There was a second couple who were non-Roma and were let inside immediately after us. The bouncers spoke very openly about the reasons for which they did not allow us to go in: we were Roma. We both showed them our Charles University student cards but that did not help. We tried to gain access to the club and another club owned by the same owner several times, but each time we were turned down. On one occasion, they were very vulgar. As this was part of testing, everything was being recorded onto a hidden camera. I called the police at 11pm after we had been refused entry into the Arena club. The police arrived in approximately 25 minutes. First they spoke with me and at times raised their

voice and shouted at me. When I explained the situation to them, they said that I should not tell them how to do their job; they knew better. Then they went inside and asked the bouncers about the reason for not letting us in. The bouncers wrongfully accused me of stealing several handbags from their customers in the past. This was nonsense because I had never been to the club before. The police did not question this at all, nor did they ask for a police report of the alleged incident or the name of the perpetrator. After the police had been informed that everything had been recorded on a camera, they said they were investigating the case but they never called me or my friend to give evidence. However, the conduct of the police officers was called into question by the Department for Control and Complaints at the Plzeň Police Directorate.



What type of discrimination did David suffer in this case? On which grounds was he discriminated against? By whom?

What else could he have done to seek justice in this case?

When it comes to my ethnicity, for years I, myself, have experienced problems looking for a flat. Not long ago, I spent a year trying to find a new flat in Prague. I even hired a real estate agent who identified suitable flats for me. He knew what I was looking for and he did find some excellent flats but as soon as my ethnicity got mentioned, the flats were no longer available. After about two or three months, he ended up paying back the fee he had originally charged, as he was unable to find a suitable flat for me. After a year, I finally found a good flat; however, the rent I pay is so high that the landlord can't really decide not to rent it out to me because I am Roma.

As a Roma gay man, I find that the recent increase in anti-Roma societal attitudes have been reflected in attitudes by non-Roma Czech gay men, too. When I state my ethnicity openly, no-one wants to correspond or meet up with me. I feel this more than, say, six years ago. It is sad because members of the LGBT community themselves are discriminated against and know what it feels like to be discriminated against. Still, they have very little or no empathy when it comes to Roma.



Why is there such an attitude among the LGBT community members regarding the Roma? What should be done to change this?

In terms of physical assaults, I have been brutally attacked in Plzeň at least five times. In one of the physical assaults, I suffered a permanent injury to my back. I have always been attacked due to my ethnicity but never due to my sexuality. There have been a few people who called me "faggot" but I choose to disregard it. I have always felt that any negative perceptions people have had of me over the years have always had to do with the fact that I am Roma. Recently, I was verbally abused by two non-Roma men on a bus. They made racist and homophobic comments about me. They were yelling at me, "Look at him, a faggot and, what's more, a Gypsy!" They used many more swear words to humiliate me and everyone on the bus was turning in

my direction. I ended up defending myself verbally saying they had no right to say what they were saying. Luckily for me, they stopped the abuse; but I cannot imagine a situation in which I would be the weaker one and would not be able to defend myself. Still, I felt really humiliated.



What is the link between hate speech and hate crime? What are the differences?

When does racism / discrimination become a hate crime?

What laws exist in your country in relation to hate speech and hate crimes?

Recently, a change has taken place in our society, which is now more open to the issue, despite numerous persisting problems facing Roma LGBT. Times have changed since I was a teenager; I find that a lot of young Czech and Slovak Roma come out when they are 15 years of age; this would have been unthinkable for me at that time. They are able to come out instead of waiting until they turn 30 or 40, getting married, having children in the meantime and then running away from their families with a person of the same sex. They are openly gay when socialising, going to a disco or spending time with their family.

Summary for learning

David has experienced discrimination and abusive behaviours both as a gay man and a Roma. He has also experienced internal discrimination as a gay Roma within the Roma community and as a Roma within the LGBT community. Due to the aforementioned grounds, David has been a target of hate speech and hate crime, which represent direct manifestations and expressions of racism, xenophobia and homophobia: he has been physically assaulted several times, resulting in a back injury with permanent consequences for his health.

David has suffered discrimination on the grounds of his ethnicity and sexual orientation (and a combination of the two) when attempting to access goods and services such as housing, public transport and clubs.

As a Roma, David has also encountered institutional discrimination when reporting a case of discrimination to the police.

The racial discrimination David suffered is illegal when it takes place in any of the following situations and the victim may be able to take legal action:

- employment and training
- education
- when providing goods and services, for example, banking, entertainment and transport
- housing
- any of the activities carried out by public authorities, such as the healthcare providers, government departments, local authorities, the police and prisons.

Marcy



I have heard people say that Roma do not have more difficult lives than other people but I think it does matter whether you are Roma or non-Roma, man or woman, rich or poor, settled or migrant, gay or straight.

Marcy (33), Glasgow, Scotland, originally from Pavlovce nad Uhom, Slovakia

I am currently studying for a degree in community development at the University of Glasgow and work part-time at Oxfam Scotland as a Roma Support Worker. I am one of the main founders of a Glasgow-based Roma community organisation called Romano Lav. Over the past five years, I have been involved in various international Roma youth programmes, including ROMED and initiatives organised by the Council of Europe's Youth Department.

I come from a medium-sized rural village in eastern Slovakia called Pavlovce nad Uhom. Over half of the inhabitants are Roma, approximately 2,700. All of the Roma are Rumungro. There is a Vlax Roma family living in the neighbouring village but they do not ascribe as Roma. In the Govanhill district of Glasgow, there are approximately 2,500 to 3,000 Slovakian and Czech Roma. There are also some Romanian Roma but no-one knows how many. A lot of Slovak Roma in Govanhill live in substandard accommodation and some of them live in exploitative slum housing.

I am the youngest child in my family: my eldest brother is 52, the second eldest is 50; my sister is 48 and my third brother is 41. We all speak fluent Romanes even though my mother and father communicate in a mixture of the eastern Slovakian dialect and Romanes. They speak the eastern Slovakian dialect with me and my younger brother and eastern Slovakian and Romanes with my other siblings who grew up in the so-called "camp" (like a Roma settlement). I never spoke Romanes in front of my classmates as I felt torn about my identity.



What has determined Marcy not to let her classmates know she spoke Romanes? What are the possible reasons for feeling torn about one's identity in this case?

I grew up in a house which divided the Roma part of the village from the non-Roma; the house has become a physical as well as a literal symbol of the deep divide and spatial segregation separating Roma from non-Roma. Similarly, part of me has always felt Roma but my life experiences, particularly from childhood, have drawn me towards the non-Roma. I grew up thinking that it is not good to be Roma. Our parents have always tried to hide it: it is almost as if they had this internalised picture, associating non-Roma identity with positive things such as working and going to school, whereas being a Roma was negative for them.

I remember not wanting to invite my schoolmates over to our house as I feared they would realise I was Roma. I never looked Roma but I was afraid that they would find out about my origin.

I never wanted them to come to our house because I felt it was better to hide it. My father has a light complexion, unlike my mother who is a bit darker. It was my father who always attended parents' evenings; my mother did not want to go. As a family, we felt it was safer for our dad to go; we did not arrive at this decision by accident, there was a good reason for it. Since my mother is darker, she was exposed to verbal abuse at work due to her Roma ethnicity.



Why did Marcy hide her identity? Why are people sometimes forced to hide their identity? What influence does it have on their lives?

Who has a responsibility in creating the conditions for people to be able to express their identity freely?

My father was always seen as a Gadžo. When I was younger, he told me that I should always avoid having darker partners so that I could have lighter-skinned children. I grew up knowing full well that it is good to be white and it is bad to be dark. Like me, my sister has never looked Roma; in later years, we agreed that actually it is better when you are Roma and look Roma because people do not make unpleasant, vulgar and racist remarks about Roma in your presence.

I had excellent results at school and that was how I got to befriend a lot of non-Roma. I was initially sat next to a Roma girl at the back of the classroom but as my grades were always excellent and partly because of my appearance, I gradually moved to the front seats. I remember feeling ashamed when our teacher called all Roma to stand up. I did not want to. Inside, I knew I was Roma but I felt different because I associated Roma with extremely poor and those who do not want to learn. One day, one of the teachers told me, "Marcy, you are not Roma." I felt very torn.

When I started studying at grammar school, there were only two Roma: me and another Roma girl. I remember that, from the outset, our classmates would make very nasty racist remarks about Roma. I felt personally offended and decided to stand up for my Roma friend and also for myself; we have remained friends since then. It was then that I realised most acutely that I did not belong to the non-Roma world. Around that time, one non-Roma boy told me that I did not belong with the non-Roma, that I should find myself a Roma boyfriend. So I did.

After finishing grammar school, I started working as a teaching assistant at a local nursery; and then, I worked in a local information centre for Roma in Michalovce. There, I realised there was a lot of racism amongst the Roma themselves as well; they would differentiate between those who were rich and poor and look down on the poorest ones.



Why do poor people fall victim to abusive behaviour and racist remarks by others, even within the same ethnic group?

I was 27 when I first came to live in the UK. I started to feel more comfortable and at ease with my Roma identity because no-one was preoccupied with whether or not I was Roma. I also read a lot about identity and started to study.

I recall realising quite early on that the British had no idea what 'Roma' meant but they knew full well what 'Gypsy' meant. I worked in a factory and when I asked my supervisor what he associated with Gypsy, he produced a stereotypical image of Gypsies coming round to people's houses to ask for money and putting a spell on the non-Roma if they refused to give them any. However, this same person ended up falling in love with a Roma friend of mine and accepting her for who she was, although I remember that at first, she did not want to tell him that she was Roma.

I started work as a Roma community officer in Glasgow and have continued to work in similar Roma support jobs to the present day. I have been very fortunate because I was never a victim of discrimination in employment in Slovakia or in the UK.

However, my nephew recently went to a job interview in Slovakia. All the job seekers were told that the company would hire all of them as they were short of staff. My nephew was the only Roma. Several days later, he received a letter saying that they would not be hiring him.

According to my brother, who is a construction manager in the Czech Republic, some of his contractors request white workers only. Most people accept this because they would lose income. My brother employs both Roma and non-Roma workers. He tells me that those contractors who do hire his Roma workers are usually very nicely surprised at realising how good, skilled and disciplined they are.

I have felt discriminated against on two occasions; once I was with a group of Roma and we were not allowed into a club in Glasgow. The bouncers failed to provide an explanation, which they are not obliged to do; however, we knew that they had immediately picked up on the fact that we were not British.

The second incident took place approximately two months ago when I was looking for a flat to rent. I was dealing with a private landlord and when I came to view the property, he asked me what nationality I was. I told him I was Slovak, which has a very negative connotation in Glasgow as most of the locals think that Slovak equals Roma. Although he had originally sounded positive, he ended up not offering me the flat due to an unknown reason. I feel I have been treated less favourably because he saw me as Slovak, Roma and an East European migrant. Also, I feel he would have acted differently if I were a man; however, I can only speculate as to why he did not let the flat to me but I feel that his assumptions about my ethnicity played a key role in this respect



In what way do these two episodes amount to discriminatory behaviour: not being allowed in a club, and not being allowed to rent a flat?

What steps could Marcy have taken to change the situation?

To whom could she have reported this behaviour?

In terms of community and family expectations, my parents had different expectations of me as a Roma girl / woman. For instance, they did not expect that I would achieve well at school because I was a girl.

As for my role as a woman, I was brought up in line with traditional expectations according to which a Roma girl should remain a virgin in order to get married. If she has sex with a man, she is expected to stay with him. When my boyfriend and I first became intimate, I felt really bad afterwards. I was anxious and associated it immediately with having to marry him. These issues still remain a taboo in our family. My mother is very religious. A few years ago, it would have been inconceivable to talk about sexuality with her. Now, she has come a long way because she knows that I have been single for a long time, have no children at the age of 33 and that my flatmate is gay. I remember that when I first told my sister that I lived with a gay bloke, she asked me whether I was afraid of him, so I told her there was no reason to be afraid. Naturally, this initial hostility did not relate to my own sexuality but in a way, I took it very personally. After I had explained to both my mother and sister what it means to be gay, they became more accepting as they realised I am really fond of this friend of mine who also helped me very much. In a way, I think my mother's unconditional love has played a key role in this change in her attitudes; her trust is more powerful than stereotypes. But just like it used to be with my mum, sexual orientation is still taboo among some of the more traditional Roma communities.



What type of discrimination did Marcy suffer? On which grounds was she discriminated against?

Which institutions do you know of that she could have approached?

Which NGOs do you know that would have been able to help her?

Summary for learning

Marcy comes from a Roma family which experienced residential segregation and different treatment based on race and ethnicity. Marcy's first years at school show that on the grounds of her ethnicity, she experienced hostile remarks from other children. This had an influence on her perception about her identity as a Roma.

In Scotland, a group of Roma and Marcy were not allowed to go to a bar because they spoke Slovak and Roma amongst each other and were most probably perceived by the bouncers as East European migrants of Roma heritage. They could have called the police as, in the UK, it is illegal for anyone providing goods, facilities or services to discriminate because of race. Examples of goods, facilities and services include shops, banking, entertainment, transport and libraries.

In the second case, Marcy was refused a privately rented flat after the landlord had enquired about her nationality and origin. This means that she was treated less favourably by a private

landlord who probably acted illegally. As the landlord initially wanted to let the flat to Marcy and then changed his mind, Marcy could have challenged him, as private landlords must not discriminate against a person because of their race. In this case, Marcy's nationality, ethnicity and age all played a role.

Marcy was unable to access goods and services provided by private owners on the basis of her real or perceived belonging to the Roma group. In the UK, legal cases involving racial discrimination have made it clear that certain groups of people can be counted as being ethnic, including Romany Gypsies.

According to the United Kingdom Equality Act 2010, racial discrimination is illegal in the following domains and the victim may be able to take legal action:

- employment and training
- education
- when providing goods and services, for example, banking, entertainment and transport
- housing
- any of the activities carried out by public authorities, such as the health services, government departments, local authorities, the police and prisons.

For more information about discrimination, please see Chapter 4.

Florin



I was feeling unwell, I had some health issues and there were a lot of people in the waiting room. After some time, my mother told one of the doctors that I needed medical attention and the doctor told my mother, "I'm tired of all these Gypsies!"

Florin (20), Iași, Romania

I come from a traditional Roma family where we have always spoken Romanes. We are seven siblings in total: three girls and four boys. Until the age of 5, we lived in a block of flats in a small town near Iași; we had what we needed there. My parents had money back then so my brothers and I had a very good life. People wouldn't call us names or anything. My brothers and I are light-skinned and people would not associate us with Gypsies. Things were different though when we were seen with our parents who are dark-skinned.

From the age of 6 we moved in with our grandparents here in Iași. The conditions here are not great: we don't even have running water although we are located in the town centre. We have got used to having to carry the water from the market place nearby to our home or asking our neighbours to give us a bucket of water so we can wash, cook, and drink.



What do you think about the living conditions of Florin's family? Are they acceptable? Who should do what in order to change this?

My parents are both Roma but from different subgroups: Ursari and Răcari. My mother is a peddler: she sells all kinds of merchandise, and my father is a day labourer. He collects scrap metal and then sells it; he used to sell horses too. Both my parents take decisions in our family, although my father has the last say. The responsibilities are different: the girls have to cook and clean and the boys have to do the heavy lifting, carrying water or taking out the rubbish.

I had a very nice childhood until we moved to Iași; after we moved, I only played inside the house with my best friend, who was also my cousin. All I wanted to do was to go with my father and help him collect scrap metal or take care of the horses. It made me feel important. I enjoyed travelling with my dad and grandfather. I remember that my siblings used to be jealous of me because they wanted to go as well, and to prevent that from happening dad would wink at me before he left. That meant that I had to run to the corner of the street and wait for him, and then he would pick me up from there, so my other brothers couldn't see me.

Education is important but I dropped out of school at an early age. I only have four grades. There were some differences between my classmates and me in terms of clothing. My parents' financial situation wasn't great at that time. I sometimes felt that they saw me as different in some way. We didn't talk much. They had their own group. The teacher liked me, I think; I sat on the front bench.



Why do you think Florin has left school? How did the fact that he was poor influence this event?

Why are poor people more likely to be excluded or discriminated against in education? What should be done to change this situation?

I have been discriminated against on various occasions. I remember going to the hospital with my mother one day. I was feeling unwell, I had some health issues and there were a lot of people in the waiting room. After some time, my mother told one of the doctors that I needed medical attention and the doctor told my mother, "I'm tired of all these Gypsies!" My mother felt very bad and so did I. I remember yelling at him, too. Everyone in the hallway heard what he said.

The police often stopped me just for walking down the street. They would just stop me at night and make me go to the police station. They gave me fines for every imaginable thing. I was too afraid to tell my parents so every time this happened I ripped the paper into little pieces. I knew I was innocent. One day, before New Year's Eve, I was approaching the end of our street with some boys who live on the street, too. One of them had some fire-crackers and we lit two of them. I don't know why, but one of the boys saw a police car approaching and for no reason he yelled, "Police!" and started running. I started to run too. The police car started chasing us, and then the policeman in the car yelled, "Stop or I will fire!" I stopped and fell onto my knees. They got out of the car and started beating us, hitting me in the head with the gun, and they were yelling, "Damn you Gypsies, you good for nothing Gypsies, stay down!" They gave us a heavy fine and I had to stay in a cell for one day. I don't understand why they acted so cruelly.



What do you think about the police officers' behaviour? How should the police officers have acted in this situation?

Is violence an expression of discrimination in this episode?

I worked as a construction site worker. Unfortunately, now I am jobless. I've tried searching for a job but it's difficult without a diploma, or certificate. I never tried to go abroad, but if things don't work out I guess I should start considering this an option. I have my own family now; I plan to get married with my girlfriend this summer. She is Roma. We also have a baby already. My baby needs to be taken care of. My parents now, struggle to give us the necessary.

In our community there are no mixed marriages. We are allowed to marry whomever we want, but it's a personal choice as long as it is a Roma. Everyone thinks it's better to marry a Roma than a non-Roma; there are things that only we can understand.

I have a brother who has a disability. He was born with this condition. He is in a wheelchair; there were several problems with his spine. We all take care of him. We love him very much. I

personally can't even eat if he is not in the room. I always try to make him feel better. I would give anything to make him feel better. We all suffer because he is such a good soul.



Would Florin have dropped out of school if his family had had better living conditions and a decent income?

How would you address the lack of access to services experienced by Roma in situations where discriminatory attitudes and acts against Roma persist at the institutional level?

Summary for learning

From a very early age, Florin experienced racial discrimination when he was denied access to services at the institutional level, often at the hands of officers in public and law enforcement agencies in the following areas:

- education
- employment
- housing
- healthcare facilities
- policing.

As a Roma, he has faced spatial and racial segregation and numerous hate-motivated incidents of racial discrimination, including hate speech and racist remarks. Due to his family's low social status and the school's failure to keep him there in order to ensure he can have access to a good education, he dropped out of school, helping his father instead. Due to his low education, Florin has never been able to access the mainstream labour market.

Last but not the least, he experienced racial discrimination by association as in the presence of his Roma-looking dark-skinned parents, all of the family were regarded as such and discriminated against on grounds of their ethnicity and poverty.

Even if the government has in this case the obligation under human rights law to prohibit discrimination, similar daily acts of discrimination against the members of the Roma communities often go legally unchallenged and unpunished, depriving the victims of access to their human rights. As a result, the social exclusion, marginalisation and poverty of a high number of Roma have been self-perpetuating, thus creating a vicious circle.

Péter



I felt the weight of being Roma everywhere and all the time. Public transport was a typical environment where I encountered racism.

Péter (28), from in a city in north-eastern Hungary, living in England, United Kingdom

The Roma settlement where I was born played an important role in my life, which started there. I grew up there and lived there when I got married. My wife moved to the settlement and all of my children were born there. I studied at a local school which belonged to the Roma settlement. I liked that school. None of the Roma had difficulties at this school. The teachers were used to working with Roma pupils. They liked us and we liked them.

Studying at the secondary school turned out to be more difficult. I applied to a secondary school and I took part in a very competitive examination. I clearly remember how the other applicants and their parents were staring at me. They did not understand why I was there, what a Roma boy was doing there. Naturally, I felt completely different from everyone else. This feeling had been familiar to me since I was a small child. I was a Gypsy and I was miles behind the non-Roma. I was somehow smaller. Even my chances were smaller chances. In the end, it was not the school's fault that I was not able to study: the financial conditions of my family made my education impossible.



In what way can these circumstances affect the education of young Roma people?

Why is it more difficult for a person living in poverty to complete their studies?

Is it important that teachers know about Roma young people's situation? Why? How can they learn about it?

My mother was a housewife and my father was unemployed after he lost his job as all of the factories had been closed in the area. We did not have enough money to live on. The amount of money that the school required from families to buy equipment for the pupils was simply too much. I stayed at home. I was lost. As we did not have enough income, I had to work despite the fact that it was prohibited for minors to work. However, I was able to join men from the Roma settlement who worked in smaller groups, mainly at construction sites. Employers were happy with my work, especially as they realised that I worked hard. I was short and thin but I could do the same job as a man who was twice my size. Most of the work I did was illegal, involving many disadvantages. If you worked, you had income. If you did not work, you had nothing. If you were unable to work because you had had an accident while you were working or you fell ill because of the work, nobody was interested. This was the only kind of job you could find as a Roma.



Why does Péter say, "This was the only kind of job you could find as a Roma"? Who should make sure the Roma have access to employment opportunities just like everyone else? How?

Because of the circumstances in the Roma settlement, I decided to move to another district of the city where only a few Roma lived. We tried to have a normal life and to integrate. However, I was not able to change some of the hostile attitudes that we encountered. Once, we were celebrating my birthday and a few relatives of mine visited us. There were four of us: we were chatting, laughing and having fun. Suddenly, somebody knocked on the door. My neighbours called the police. Two policemen were standing in front of my door and warned us to be quiet. I asked one of them, "What should I do, sir? I am celebrating my birthday and some of my friends are here now. Should we whisper if we want to talk to each other?" The policemen were angry and threatened that if they had to admonish us one more time, we would be in trouble. They spoke nastily to us, in the way that policemen often speak to the Roma. They talked down to us. I asked them why they talked to us nastily but I should not have asked that question. They asked about the owner of the flat. As the flat was mine, I had to turn around. I was handcuffed and they took me to detention. I was waiting there until the next morning. And something else happened in detention. I was sitting on a chair in the corridor when five or six masked policemen came with shields, guns and batons. They were either just going to, or on their way back from a mission. I greeted them, saying, "Good afternoon!" This was all I said. One of them asked me to stand up and hit me on my chest so hard that I fell down. The chair almost crashed. And they left. The following morning they told me that I had to sign a paper. I wanted to read it. I am a Roma who knows his rights and with whom they cannot do what they want. The policemen did not understand me, and they replied, "You cannot even read! Why would you like to read the paper?" I answered, "If I read it, I will sign it!" Eventually, they allowed me to read it. They stated that I was under the effect of drugs when the policeman caught me. That was nonsense. I have never done drugs! In the Roma settlement, we did not have a clue what drugs looked like. I refused to sign the paper. I said that I did not have money but would call a lawyer if necessary. I did not want anybody to think of me as a drug user. In the end, they rewrote that paper and I signed it.



Why are people violent toward Roma people? Why is the situation of violence and abuse even worse when public officials and police officers are the perpetrators?

What kind of institutional discrimination did Péter suffer from? What should he have done?

Are you aware of any laws protecting people from institutional discrimination in your country?

I felt the weight of being Roma everywhere and all the time. Public transport was a typical environment where I encountered racism. One day, a group of people were waiting for the bus and I was the only Roma among them. When we got on the bus, the driver asked just me to show him my ticket. As they would usually put it, "Hey, that guy with glasses! Come over here, and show me your ticket!"

Another example: I had a non-Roma friend. He suggested that I visit the Employment Centre as they were looking for unemployed physical workers. My friend called and informed the Centre that I was interested in that job. He even gave them my name. However, when I visited the Centre I was told that the jobs had been taken. What could you do in such a case? Nothing. I was complaining to my friend about it. He did not understand what the problem was either, so he called the Centre and asked them for an explanation. He was told that there were still jobs available but they asked him not to send Roma.

All of these experiences and hopelessness have had an impact on me. I did not have a vision about a better life. I was thinking about my children. What kind of life will they have when they grow up in such a country? They will never be able to step forward. As Roma, they will be treated as dirty animals. That is why I decided to leave the country and to emigrate to Canada and later to Ireland and England.

In Ireland and England we do not have problems when we ascribe as Roma. Being Roma is nothing to be ashamed of. Here, people do not know what Roma look like. They are interested in your performance as a worker and respect you when you accomplish your tasks.

However, there are migrants from Hungary, Poland, Lithuania and other East European countries. Among these migrants, you can feel this Roma issue. You are a Gypsy, the last of the lot. It is hard to work at a workplace where other Hungarians work, too. You are a burglar who raids their houses. If something disappears from their cupboard, they blame the Roma without any proof. They do not care if you do a good job, work hard, are not late for work or never miss a day from work. They do not see that you are clean. They forget that your children attend the same school as their children. Your children never miss school while their children miss school all the time. The achievement of your children is better than their children's. Yet, you are a dirty dustbin, you are a predacious Gypsy. You are a Gypsy who raided England and steals jobs from them.

Recently I had a bad experience with my boss. The job description emphasises that nobody can be disadvantaged because of sexuality or ethnicity. Since a number of my East European colleagues harassed me without a reason, I decided to report them. It was not an easy decision because it might mean the end of your career. If you tell the truth you may become a traitor. My boss suggested that I tolerate the behaviour "unless it becomes more serious". I do not understand him. If an English man complained about similar problems, his case would be investigated, I am sure. But I am just a migrant Roma who is despised by his migrant colleagues; according to my boss, it is better not to deal with my problems.



Who should have decided whether to tolerate or not the behaviour of Péter's colleagues? Should Péter have pursued with the complaint or not? What could the consequences be in case of Péter's inaction, and continued abusive behaviour?

Summary for learning

Péter originally comes from a city in north-eastern Hungary with a higher than average unemployment rate. The city has been at the centre of public attention due to the conflict between non-Roma and Roma, as well as because of the increasing number of Roma migrating abroad.

Due to his Roma ethnicity and social status, Péter encountered different forms of discrimination in the following fields:

- education
- public transport
- policing, mainly in relation to ethnic profiling.

Due to his family's financial difficulties, he did not have access to school. Instead, he was hired illegally in order to help his family earn money.

Additionally, as a Roma migrant, Péter was racially harassed by other East European non-Roma migrant workers and by his boss, who refused to deal with his complaint regarding racial discrimination in the workplace.

As the discrimination took place in England, it is important to note that racial / ethnic discrimination in the workplace is prohibited in accordance with the Equality Act: Péter could have sued his colleagues and his employer for racial discrimination as it is illegal when it takes place in any of the following situations:

- employment and training
- education
- when providing goods and services, for example, banking, entertainment and transport
- housing
- any of the activities carried out by public authorities, such as the healthcare providers, government departments, local authorities, the police and prisons.

Gianina



One day I wanted to go to the bathroom during class; all the children were allowed to do so if they raised their hand and asked for permission. I held my hand raised for several minutes and when she finally noticed me, she yelled, "What do you want?"

Gianina (20), Iași, Romania

My name is Gianina; I come from a Roma family that consists of three girls, three boys and my parents. Until 2006, we had been living in a disused building, also known as the "phantom block" due to its very precarious state. We didn't have any electricity, methane gas, heating, running water, or drainage and we had to use a public bathroom which was located in the hallway of our floor. As many as ten families shared the same bathroom, so you can imagine the state it was in. There was a lot of dirt, lice and all sorts of filth, and the stench was unbearable. Now we live in a block of flats with one-room apartments for single people near the "phantom block". Here, the conditions are better than in our previous home but there are still many things that we lack, such as heating, gas, and well, space in general. We all sleep in one room, the only one that we have. Now, in winter we use the stove to heat our home, which is fuelled by a gas tank.



Who should ensure that living conditions for Gianina's family are in line with their rights to a basic standard of living? What should change? How?

My parents are very religious people; we are part of a Neo-Protestant group, the Evangelical Christians or the "repented ones", as people call us. My mother is a housewife; she only did two years at primary school. My father is a day labourer; he completed primary education. Our resources are very, very limited but I'm proud of the fact that we are honest people. There were many days when we didn't even have a hot meal to put on our table. My father kept his calm and didn't try to commit any illegalities, in order to provide for my brothers and me. When he was younger, before he repented, he was easily tempted by these kinds of situations; he would often lose his temper and things weren't good at all back then. He used to drink; he would be violent towards my mother sometimes.

The decisions in our family are taken by both of my parents. The duties in our household are different for the boys and the girls. The girls have to clean the house, do the dishes and do the laundry and the boys do nothing. Our parents always try to give them chores but they are not very open to the remarks. They are very strict with my sisters and me, but very lax with my brothers when it comes to going out, or coming home late.

Education has been important; my parents were supportive. Unfortunately in 2010 I dropped out of school because I didn't pass an exam and was very upset. Now I'm a student in the 12th

grade, but things aren't great. I only hope to pass the baccaureate exam but the chances are very slim.

My first memories from school are the saddest of my life. I never felt as bad in my life. I was very shy and I was always by myself. I remember my elementary teacher who liked to drink alcohol while she was in the classroom, during classes. I remember her having a secret bottle under her desk. She made me feel like an intruder in the classroom. She made me sit on the last bench of the "stupid row". The row which was nearest to the window was the smart row; there was the middle row and the stupid row, and I had to sit on the last bench, near the door and the bin. She would often beat me, pull me by my hair and by my ears, and call me names such as "you good for nothing Gypsy".

After that, things became even worse. One day I wanted to go to the bathroom during class; all the children were allowed to do so if they raised their hand and asked for permission. I held my hand up for several minutes and when she finally noticed me, she yelled, "What do you want?" I timidly responded that I needed to use the bathroom. She yelled again, "Oh really? You can urinate on yourself then!" After bouncing my leg up and down for a while, the inevitable occurred. I wet myself. This was the most embarrassing moment of my existence. I remember the non-Roma children laughing at me during the break and yelling, "Gypsy, gypsy, you wet yourself". One day my mother saw the bruises on my hands and asked me what had happened. I told her that the teacher had beaten my hands with a stick. The next day my mother came to school and beat the teacher. I'm not very proud of my mother for acting that way but she lost her mind when I confessed what I was going through every day. After the teacher had received the punishment from my mother, she didn't treat me as badly as she had before. In the 5th grade everything was fine, I was in the same class with my brother; the following year he dropped out of school. High school has been good so far; there are a lot of Gypsies in my school.



How was Gianina affected after these abusive episodes in school?

What else should have been done regarding the teacher?

I never applied for a job as I am still in school. I wish I had a job, but I don't think I have many chances to get hired. I am very dark-skinned and people don't react well around me. The only one in our family who has a job is my eldest brother, who is currently in Sweden. He works as a driver there. I think he has a very risky job, being on the road all the time. He left because he had no prospects for a life here. Sometimes he sends us money.

In the next 10 years I see myself married, with two children, a boy and a girl. I want my husband and I to have a job, and not struggle to provide for our children; just plain things, simple things. I don't wish for a big house, or lots of money. I just wish that my future children have the things that I didn't have growing up. My biggest dream would be to graduate from high school; I dreamt about being a clothes' designer when I was little but I know you have to be very blessed to achieve such a thing. I want just a regular job, permanent and legal, to feel

secure and to provide for my family, no matter what kind of job, except in public sanitation, which Roma usually get.



Could Gianina's experience and success in school have been better if she was not a dark-skinned Roma?

Could Gianina's life have been different if her family had had a proper living space and a better economic status?

Summary for learning

Gianina has experienced marginalisation and discrimination on several grounds:

- because of her ethnicity (she is Roma and looks Roma due to her dark complexion), she has experienced intolerance and racism at school, where she struggled to overcome daily acts of discrimination and bullying against her from her peers as well as from teachers. The fact that she was able to overcome the discrimination and succeeded in going on to secondary school is a major achievement for her.
- as a woman: societal expectations for a woman are primarily about looking after the household and children. This makes it harder for women to access the labour market, for example, through higher education. In this general context, Roma women, coming from an even more traditional background, are educated mainly in the spirit of being good wives and mothers.
- because of her religion: like many Romanian Roma, Gianina is neo-Protestant as opposed to the majority society which is Orthodox Christian.
- because she is poor, hence her family could not support her in getting a better education and continuity in school and she could not afford to get any vocational training.

Ismail



Sometimes the controller beats us to scare us, he shouts a lot and I am afraid of him. He puts bandages on my hands and on different parts of the body so that people think I am wounded, feel compassionate and give me more money when I beg.

Ismail (20), from a Roma slum in the region of Constanța, Romania, currently homeless in Spain

I was born in a slum where most of the inhabitants are very poor Muslim Turkish Roma called Horahai (Horahano / Xoraxano Roma). My house was a room made of mud: my father built it with his own hands. It had one room without any kind of sanitation or heating system. We used to take water from a public water pump and for the heating and cooking we used a stove in which we burnt wood collected in the surrounding area. I lived there with my parents and my older sister. We spoke Turkish at home and in my neighbourhood, but I don't know Romanes. My Romanian is very poor.

My parents had no education at all, nor jobs. We collected scrap and plastic bottles. Due to our poverty, my sister and I never went to school: at school kids need books, clothes, and shoes, which we could not afford. There were a few Horahai kids from other families in my neighbourhood who went to school, though. I don't know how to read or write. Now I am so sorry I never went to school. I think people can have a better life if they go to school. Life is different in a good sense: only with some education can you get a job. In my situation, who would give me a job? I wish my parents had sent me to school.



Who is responsible for the children who never get to go to school? How does poverty affect children's possibilities to access schools?

Why is education important for a child's development?

Imagine you never went to school: how can such a situation affect your chances of getting a good future?

Our life was good until my father died; I was 14 years old then. No, I can't tell you a good memory from my childhood. We never celebrated birthdays, I never got presents or toys, but we were a family, my parents were taking care of us, protecting us, and teaching us what is right and what is wrong. We never hurt anyone; I have never stolen from other people or done other bad things. My dad used to punish me if I used bad language or did something bad. He always told me to be a good person, never to hurt anyone, and never steal from others, despite our poverty.

After my father died each of us had to do something to make money to live, to eat. I started to look for a job and asked around. I started to work for different people (mostly Romanians)

around their household, anything they told me to do, such as cutting wood, cleaning stables, or other things they needed. They paid me around 5 - 8 euro per day; some of them gave me food or paid me in kind. When there was no work I collected rubbish and scraps that could be sold to make some money for food. Although I worked all day around people's households, I barely earned the minimum to survive. I didn't have anything, not even a house.

I have never been to see a doctor in my whole life. When I am a little bit ill, I just take some pills and that's it. I am afraid of doctors. My family does not go to the doctor either: we look after each other and we never had any major health issues. When I was around 12 years old a Horahai boy from the same slum was very ill and his parents took him to a hospital in town and he died.

I have never had problems with the people in my neighbourhood and all the people know me. When I go to town non-Roma people avoid me and the police often stop me on the street asking for my ID. They check me and usually leave me alone as I never did anything wrong. Once, some people in the street called me names and hit me but I didn't answer back and they left me alone. In our neighbourhood, the police would come into the people's homes carrying guns and would take the men out at night.

Nowadays, most people from the area work abroad, they beg just like me. Unlike me, though, they are there with their families and work for themselves. When they arrive in Spain, they become bad; there are a lot of bad people here and I no longer trust anyone. There are many people here from Romania and from other countries. We all try to earn some money. What could I do back in Romania?

Things are the same here in Spain: the police have stopped me many times. Since I have never done anything wrong, they leave me alone. I would like to be hired somewhere but I don't have any education. I don't speak Spanish and cannot ask them for a job. Many Roma boys with an education have not been able to find a job here: they are struggling to survive by collecting scrap. When the Spanish see we are Roma and poor, they think we are going there to steal something and they reject us from the beginning; they don't care if some of the boys have an education or if they are good workers.



How could Ismail, as a migrant Roma, succeed in Spain? Who has the responsibility for him gaining access to basic services? What should be done?

In the summer of 2013, my mother remarried and told us to leave the house. I decided to go to Spain. A Horahai man from Constanța whom I met once in town asked me at the beginning of this year if I wanted to go to Spain to work and to make some money. He said he would help me out with the money needed to travel to Spain, would protect me and teach me what I have to do there. I heard that many other Roma from my neighbourhood had gone there and made good money. When they came back to Romania, they bought nice houses and had a good life. This man gave me 70 euro and we agreed that I would give him back 250 euro. It was a good

deal for me because he promised he would do so many things for me. When I first arrived here in May 2013, he took my Identity Card. In three months I made the money to pay off the debt and I also made some money for myself.

I beg in the streets as you can see. I wake up in the morning and start walking the streets begging people to give me money until night falls. People give me 50 cents or 1 euro; sometimes they give me food. I don't go into restaurants or bars; they take me out, I can only stay in front of them. You can make good money if you are on your own, but I am not on my own; I have to work for this man. There are two other people from Romania: a boy and an old man who beg with me but we are not allowed to talk with each other. He asks us to give him our daily earnings. If we give him less than 20 euro, he is furious. He says, "What did you do all day long? Are you walking and having fun out there? I've brought you here to work not to walk!" Sometimes he beats us to scare us, he shouts a lot and I am afraid of him. He puts bandages on my hands and on different parts of the body so that people think I am wounded, feel compassionate and give me more money when I beg.



Is begging a "job" for Ismail or a form of exploitation? Should begging be acceptable in this case, as it was the only possibility for Ismail to have a small income? Why or why not? Who has a responsibility regarding the people who beg on the streets and their rights?

After the first three months, I went back to Constanța; I stayed there for two months and spent all the money on rent, food and some clothes. When I ran out of money the same man asked me again if I wanted to go back to Spain under the same conditions, so I came back in autumn. I trusted him because he had kept his promise before.

Now I have been in Spain for two months; I told him I want to go back home but he is not letting me go home. He keeps my ID and all my money. There is nothing I can do without my ID and money. He keeps telling me that he will give me my ID and money next week, then the following week and so on. I don't know what to do. I have already paid off my debt and he still doesn't let me go. If I had my ID, I could go to another town in Spain to make money for myself. If I leave this person I can no longer stay in Spain, as he would look for me. I can't imagine what he would do to me if he found me. His brothers and his family are here having people to work for them. They are dangerous people.

I considered reporting him to the police but I don't have my ID and can't speak the language. I don't want to have problems. Even if I had an interpreter, who would listen to me, believe me? And if I report him and the police arrest him, how will I get my money and my ID back? I want back all the money I have made during the past two months. I have decided to wait one more week and then to ask him again to give me my money and my ID. I don't have another choice. If he doesn't give me the money, I don't know what I am going to do.

Who could help me? Nobody, only God. I don't think a person or an institution can or would help me. I don't trust anybody. When I'm back home in Romania I'll look for a job to rent a room, I don't want to work abroad again. The people are mean and I don't trust them anymore.



Would Ismail's life have been better if the authorities in charge of social work had taken action to address the problems he faces?

Would Ismail's life have been different if he had been given access to an education?

Ismail mentions several times that he does not trust institutions and fears they would not believe him. Why is it important to have trusted allies in situations such as Ismail's? What people, institutions or organisations could there be to support him?

Summary for learning

Ismail's testimony tells the story of the deeply-rooted marginalisation and institutional discrimination experienced by many Romanian Roma based on their ethnicity, social and economic status across a whole spectrum of services, including lack of access to education, adequate housing, employment, healthcare and a range of other services that everyone should have equal access to. The basic communication possibilities in the cases of Ismail and his family are very reduced, as they do not speak Romanian and services are not inclusive for those who do not speak Romanian.

People like Ismail and his family are totally disenfranchised because they are Roma and extremely poor, hence have no power to break out of the vicious circle of poverty and extreme human degradation. As a result, they are vulnerable to the most extreme types of labour exploitation and trafficking in human beings.

Human trafficking is defined as follows: the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of people, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation, including the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

Ismail's story includes several episodes that make his marginalisation worse and worse: lack of education and housing, lack of possibilities for employment, access only to inadequate forms of employment, vulnerability to those who can exploit him economically, lack of trust in any public institution, either in Romania, or in Spain, lack of documents, and so on. In this situation, Ismail is almost invisible to the public authorities or NGOs who should tackle his situation and address it as a presumed case of exploitation and trafficking.

Freju



Four years ago my partner applied for a bank loan. On the day I went to sign as a collateral, the bank officer who had previously approved the loan, denied him the loan the moment she noticed that I am Egyptian.

Freju (36), originally from Golem, Kavajë, Albania, living in Tirana

I'm a 36 year-old gay male. I'm Roma (Egyptian) originally from a village in the central-coastal part of Albania, Golem-Kavajë. I have lived here in the capital of Albania, Tirana with my partner since I was 30. While I was growing up in my hometown there weren't many Roma / Egyptian families, so I was easily exposed. It is one of the reasons why I came to Tirana, but also because of education and work. I went to university and studied business administration but still haven't graduated because of my work. I got a job in a call centre. It doesn't pay much, around ALL 30,000 (Leks) (around 215 euro) but it is better than nothing and it covers my expenses.

I live together with my partner, sharing a room without a proper toilet. We have a room in my partner's parents' house where his widowed mother also lives. We are not allowed to use the rest of the house. My partner's mother and brothers do not accept me. My parents know about my sexual orientation but have been in a sort of denial, I think. They still hope it's not true and they keep pressuring me to come back to my hometown and marry a girl, any girl, as they say. I have never told them that I live with my partner but I've introduced them and they were very impolite to him, as if they knew or suspected something. I know my mum suspects because she'd tell me a couple of times that she is worried about what people are saying about me in my hometown. This really hurts me because my family is a crucial part of my life. I always saw them as the basis of my life and I was raised to uphold values, such as God, love and family. Still, everything I've learned in my family about the way you should treat your beloved ones I use in my life and in my relationship with my partner. We are dedicated, and full of tolerance and mutual understanding. All the decisions we make, we make together.

While I was at school, I was shy and kept myself out of the company of other kids in my school. They'd often tease and bully me. Today, as an adult man, things have changed for the worse, I believe. Now people's actions hurt me the most. For example, I have been working at my company for a long time but I haven't made a single friend. They all seem to avoid me. I can say almost the same about my Roma friends. They discriminate against me because of my sexual orientation, not so obviously but it would always end in us not having much in common because I'm gay. After I met my partners' friends who are gay, they kept saying to my partner that he is too good and kind to be with a Roma. In the LGBT community, I was often discriminated against because of my ethnicity. I only have one lesbian and one gay friend.

Four years ago my partner applied for a bank loan. On the day I went to sign as a collateral, the bank officer who had previously approved the loan denied him the loan the moment she noticed that I am Egyptian. She gave excuses but it was obvious she could not trust me. She could not believe the fact that I was employed. She called my employer to prove that I was

employed there. When they confirmed I was employed there, she still did not approve the loan. And the loan was of a very low amount (around 750 euro). We did not report this case.

An even worse thing happened when my partners' brothers, whom we live with in the same house, beat my partner and me in 2011. When we went to the police to report the case they laughed at us. Instead of taking on our complaint, they held us in the police station overnight, for 10 hours. They undressed us and beat us. All night long they came to our cell to mock us because we told them we loved each other and lived together. We reported the case at the Internal Audit Service, the police department that deals with complaints against police misconduct. There was no follow-up of the case or punishment of the perpetrators. We also reported the case to the Commissioner for the Protection against Discrimination but her office closed the case by finding no relevant evidence in the policemen's misconduct.



What do you think motivated Freju to leave his hometown? Besides education and a job, did his sexual orientation or ethnicity play any role? In your opinion, how does moving to a different town help, and does it, in fact, help?

Do you see the fact that Freju hasn't made any friends at work for a period of time as discrimination? If so, who is responsible for it?

Do you think employers have an obligation to integrate their workers, and why? If yes, what policies would you recommend in these instances at the workplace?

What should Freju do after being rejected as a collateral by the bank?

Being gay and Roma, Freju faced discrimination from within LGBT and Roma communities. Who should do what in these cases?

Summary for learning

Being of a minority background anywhere in the Balkans is not easy, whether it is one's ethnic, religious or sexual orientation. In large cities such as Belgrade, Sarajevo, Podgorica, Skopje, Pristina or Tirana, which are perceived as metropolitan areas where opportunities are better and people are more diverse and open than in smaller towns, there is little solace for people of minority backgrounds. However, many LGBT people migrate from smaller towns to capitals not only for work and education, but often because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, only to find more or less the same problems and obstacles.

Much has changed in the Balkans over the past 10 to 15 years as the countries have been transitioning towards EU accession. However, the Roma constitute one group that has seen relatively little improvement in their lives. While unemployment levels among Roma remain high, access to education, health care, documents and other services is still very low. Political and other participation is minimal if any. What remains a burning issue in the Balkans is the response by public authorities to cases of discrimination involving grave misconduct by police and other institutions that are supposed to be independent, foster equality and protect

human rights. Discrimination remains pervasive, including double or triple discrimination against Roma gay men or Roma lesbian women.

Freju has experienced internal discrimination within both the LGBT and Roma communities based on his ethnicity and sexual orientation. He has also experienced verbal harassment and domestic violence at the hands of his non-Roma partner's family, resulting in yet another case of LGBT-related hate crime and institutional discrimination when the police disregarded the couple's complaint in relation to the hate crime perpetrated by the family members, and ended up detaining them and beating them up due to their sexual orientation.

Last but not least, Freju was denied access to a financial service on the grounds of his ethnicity.



6 What has been learned through the life stories?

This chapter looks into the multiple discrimination issues raised through the life stories, as well as the strategies which young people use to tackle discrimination.

6.1 Being young and Roma

Before looking into the forms of discrimination and related problems that the young people who shared their stories spoke about, it is important to reaffirm that the young people we met are, first and foremost, young people just like other young people. All of them spoke about their transition from childhood to adulthood and all of them are confronted with the vulnerability and challenges of growing up. Each one of them is unique in their own right.

Many of the young people we interviewed hold a strong sense of optimism and hope for their future, even if the circumstances they live in are currently far from ideal. This inner strength makes these young people self-reliant and finally represents their sense of dignity.

When speaking about their dreams and hopes for the future, the Roma young people we interviewed express similar wishes: a good education, a job, a family, and a peaceful environment.

Multiple discrimination is a phenomenon that Roma young people are forced to face since a very early age: they are deprived of important aspects of being a child or young person as societal conditions and discriminatory dynamics turn them into having to act like grown-up people too soon. In many cases, these issues are combined with expectations from within the Roma community towards the young people. Florin is only 20 years old and one would say that he is already expected to be an adult and be the “head” of his family. Young girls in Bold-ești-Scăeni are expected to marry at around 15 years of age. Ismail is 20 years old and he has few chances in his situation now to make mistakes. These examples, and others in the stories, show how, in some cases, young Roma are expected to grow up very quickly, and so they have little time for their youth; while for many young people being young is a time for trial and error and development, for some of the Roma young people, youth is a very short period or even a jump from childhood to adulthood. This is by no means something we can generalise about, and we can read from Klara’s or Marcy’s stories that even expectations towards girls marrying at a young age is becoming less and less widespread.

Another striking and important aspect in the stories is the presence of meaningful relationships with adults as a key condition for the development of young people. The interviewees refer often to their family as something to rely on at all times. Even in those stories where the relationship with the family was interrupted due to a lack of acceptance, for example, of the young person’s sexual orientation, the reliance on adults and the sense of community is very

important for the Roma young people. Further on, those who migrated also refer back to their families and their wish to have them nearby.

6.2 Patterns of discrimination

It is obvious from the life stories that all the young Roma we involved in our project have experienced racial discrimination, for example, when Roma young people interact with non-Roma and attempt to access public as well as private services, offices, educational, health or social care systems.

The following instances of discrimination were identified:

- discrimination in accessing goods and/or services, such as bank loans, housing or health services: this is a common trend in most of the life stories, for example access to housing (David, Marcy), access to bank loans (Freju), access to healthcare (referred to in Florin's story and in Ismail's story), and public transport (Péter)
- name-calling, bullying, prejudice and hate speech (referred to in almost all the stories)
- police abuse and aggression (David, Florin, De la Negra, the young Spanish Gitanos, Ismail, Péter, Freju)
- lack of or negligence in investigations by the police in cases where the victims are Roma (Freju, Péter)
- discrimination in education, from a "mild" hostile climate in the classroom and among classmates, to bullying and name-calling, and to episodes of humiliation and violence from teachers (Klara, Marcy, Gianina)
- segregation and the placing of Roma children in special schools for children with learning disabilities (Maria, also referred to in Klara's story)
- discrimination when accessing employment, for example when some of the young Roma people were excluded from job interviews simply because of their skin colour (Gianina, Klara)
- discrimination when accessing public spaces or services, such as shops or clubs (Marcy, David)
- exclusion and hostility from the members of the Roma community because the person does not conform to certain gender expectations (referred to by David and Freju)
- exclusion and hostility from the members of the LGBT community because the person is Roma, that is, due to the prejudice against the Roma (David)
- hostility from indigenous Roma people or non-Roma people who migrated from the same country just as the young Roma (Péter, Ismail, and the stories of the young Spanish Gitano).

Being a Roma was quoted most often as the key factor when young people were discriminated against. Other factors were harder to identify, as ethnicity played such an important and evident role.

Direct overt discrimination seemed to occur more often than indirect, covert discrimination. Non-Roma do not hide their negative attitudes and hostility towards the Roma. Several cases were reported where police officers, social workers, health professionals, teachers and school staff were openly hostile and insulted the young Roma.

Discrimination by association, or perceived discrimination, was also reported. On one occasion, one of the participants mentioned a case of a Roma young lesbian, who was attacked and beaten by police because of her ethnicity and perceived gender (she was perceived to look like a boy).

The most frequent types of multiple discrimination cited were as follows:

- separate instances of discrimination on different grounds; for instance David was physically assaulted several times and discriminated against on one occasion on the grounds of his Roma ethnicity when he tried to gain access to a club; on a separate occasion, he was verbally assaulted because he is gay
- compounded / additive discrimination was the second most cited type, for example when Ismail was excluded from education because he did not know the language used in school and because his parents did not have the means to buy books for him
- intersectional discrimination was the least cited one. Klara believed it is highly likely that she was not considered for the jobs she had applied for because of her age, gender, ethnicity and perceived social status (i.e. she was a Roma young woman living in an excluded location).

The most frequent ground for multiple discrimination referred to by the Roma young participants was a combination of ethnicity, age, gender and social status when seeking work or housing. They did not refer to it as multiple discrimination but said they thought they had been rejected, or not been offered accommodation, or a service or job because of their ethnicity, gender and their social status, including also discrimination because of their address. Expectations and hopes for the future for some of the young people who were interviewed were strongly conditioned by their surroundings; for example, Gianina's expectations have been scaled back because of some of the failures she suffered in education.

Many participants referred to episodes from their early childhood as determining their path towards their young and adult lives. Episodes from primary education were often recalled as impacting on young Roma's self-esteem. Klara referred to this as a "generational trauma" that runs in her family. School bullying or name-calling were often recalled. At the same time, some of the young people who did not face any difficulties in school also remembered education and school years as very important for their becoming adults.

Most of the Roma young people interviewed reported that the first time they encountered discrimination was when they started school at the age of 6. The young people's experience of institutional discrimination starts at the point of their entering into the wider society (i.e. kindergarten or school) and carries on through secondary and higher education and employment to their experience of discrimination at the level of police enforcement (Florin and Péter's life stories) as well as across the board: compared with their non-Roma counterparts,

they are less likely and at times unlikely to access mainstream services such as education, employment, healthcare, housing or private goods and services such as shops and clubs, without being discriminated against.

Many examples young people reported testify that complex exclusion or discriminatory situations led to a spiral of harmful events. For example, Ismail's not having a chance to get an education or access to a job in his country played a key role in his deciding to leave the country without having sufficient information and security; he is now in a situation that amounts to exploitation, potentially trafficking.

In relation to social status, a number of respondents referred to living in an excluded location, which they believed was immediately associated with the assumption that they would cause problems as "bad Roma". Poverty or even living in a neighbourhood associated with being a Roma "ghetto" are also factors that contribute to the exclusion of the young Roma and to their vulnerability. Poverty appears in the stories in conjunction with the lack of possibilities in finding a job: Maria, Florin, Gianina and Ismail, amongst others, refer to the difficulty of finding a job, and they link this both to poverty and to the lack of going to school and getting an education. It is important to mention poverty and marginalisation as aggravating factors when it comes to discrimination, and even as a ground for discrimination in its own right. The combination of both leads to situations of despair and few possibilities for development altogether (the case of Ismail is telling in this respect).

The way young people refer to discrimination speaks for itself. Most of them felt humiliated, invisible, less than human, scared and powerless. Lack of trust in any public authority was a decisive factor in most of them not taking any legal action. Some of them faced even more violence when they complained to the police. Some of them felt torn about their Roma identity.

Many of the participants had a vague understanding of discrimination (or multiple discrimination), despite the fact that they have experienced different forms of discrimination. Many Roma young people have got used to the fact that they are routinely discriminated against; as a result, they are not able to differentiate between discrimination and life without discrimination.

Regarding the situation within the Roma community, when it comes to the situation of young girls, the landscape is quite varied. Some of the young people who were interviewed viewed themselves as not necessarily conforming to gender roles, but still as young women with good prospects for the future. At the other end of the spectrum, young women in Boldeşti-Scăeni affirmed clearly that gender roles and expectations around Roma young women very strongly condition a young woman's future and possibilities. Issues such as domestic violence appeared only a few times in the stories of the young people.

The situation seems just as complex regarding Roma young LGBT. While in some situations, the Roma community accepted the young person's sexual orientation, in other cases this created conflicts and hostility. Maria's story is important in this case: while she is aware of people in the community not being in favour of her sexual orientation, she has the respect of the community because she is a helper and respected member for many of the people in the

community. Similarly, within the LGBT community, hostility and hate speech against Roma LGBT has also been reported. As one of the young people we interviewed puts it:

It was more difficult to face non-acceptance from where I least expected it: the gay community. There are a lot of gays with prejudice and negative attitudes towards the Roma. A number of gays did not accept me because I was Roma and told me, "You have body odours". In the countryside, gay people are usually not accepted and have to hide their sexuality. However, this undercover community is still able to exclude another minority. From this point of view, there is no difference between straight or gay non-Roma: both of them hate the Roma.

In some cases, young gay Roma chose a lifestyle that responds to community expectations, while still being able to affirm their sexual orientation:

There are unwritten rules in Roma communities. A man has to be a man and a woman has to be a woman. A Roma man must have a wife: the contrary simply does not exist. Even if you are twenty years old and still study, they want you to have a wife and children. I was lucky because no one ever called me "fag" to my face. My family felt ashamed and I had a lot of difficulties within my family. I chose to be open with my wife about my experiences and fights in relation to my sexuality and the prejudice I had had to cope with. I wanted to be accepted as I am. I regard myself as a gay man whose lifestyle is heterosexual now.

Finally, experiences of migration shared by young Roma were varied as well. Here the spectrum ranges from successful stories, as in the cases of Marcy and Klara, to situations where migration has led to a complex situation of human rights violations, such as in the case of Ismail. As a Roma young migrant, young people observed some hostility coming from other Roma or non-Roma migrants, as in the case of the Slovak non-Roma who insulted the Roma migrants online, or the racial harassment in the workplace reported by Péter. Furthermore, it seems that, as a migrant, Roma young people felt more insecure and were more likely to be taken advantage of, as in Péter's case, where his supervisor advised him not to accuse other employees of harassment at the workplace. Indigenous Roma, such as some of the Gitanos in Spain, sometimes complained about the arrival of Roma from Eastern Europe as a potential cause for making the image of the Roma even worse in the media or among the general public.

Those respondents who had some experience of working in community development, human rights and/or Roma organisations were more familiar with the concept of multiple discrimination, including internal multiple discrimination. Despite their awareness of human rights, it was still hard for them to dissect the individual grounds involved in the episodes of discrimination.

The participants only rarely reported that organisations, institutions or citizens supported them in cases of discrimination. Most of the young Roma people involved in the interviews and the focus groups were not associated with an organisation and had little, if any, knowledge about their rights in cases of discrimination.

6.3 How young people tackle discrimination

The young people who shared their stories have all found a way to face and deal with discrimination and its related problems, which is adapted to their possibilities for acting or reacting, as well as contextualised in a broader system, where the young person needs to be seen as part of a family, a group of friends, or a community member. Some of the ways out are referred to as very painful, but these strategies – even if not necessarily positive – are also important in order for the young people to be able to move on in their lives. Strategies such as hiding, denial of identity, or suppression of discrimination episodes are just as relevant as the more positive and change-orientated ones, such as getting information, reporting the discrimination case or starting activism, and they all testify to the young people's resilience when facing discrimination.

Escape and migration

Some of the young people claimed that the only way to escape discrimination would be to leave the Roma settlement or their country. A young person from eastern Slovakia expressed this in the following way:

I have been to Bratislava once. I felt like a human being there. However, I have been feeling like a Gypsy in the eastern area of Slovakia.

A number of the life stories testify that moving abroad was, for some of the young Roma, the only way to escape an endless spiral of discrimination. However, other young people contradicted this opinion saying that they "will have more difficulties with discrimination if they travel abroad".

Hiding the Roma identity

In several cases, young people felt that their Roma identity was the cause of the problem of discrimination. Often, they wanted to lose this identity or change it. As one young person put it, "I wondered why I was a Roma. I wished I were non-Roma with white skin". In many cases, young people felt torn about their identity.

Suppression

As most of the episodes shared by the young people were not reported to the police and not even to close family or friends, we can conclude that one strategy used by young Roma people to cope with discrimination is to suppress it, forget it or even deny it happened. However, according to some young Roma, suppression is not always successful:

When I faced discrimination the last time ... I turned around, opened the door and I walked home. And do you know what I thought while I was walking home? 'Screw you!' I hated them. But I did actually say it.

I tried to suppress my nervousness. If it worked it would be fine. But if it did not work ... I would explode.

Retaliation

Some of the participants said they would choose to fight when they were discriminated against or oppressed. However, many of them are aware that retaliation may, in the long run, put them in an even more vulnerable situation, due to the fact Roma people are also discriminated against when it comes to law enforcement.

Acceptance of discrimination

As in some cases, discrimination was seen as part of the norm for many generations; a number of the young people even started to believe it was a natural way of being a Roma. Some of the young people internalised discrimination in the form of guilt and thought that it was the Roma who had to change in order for discrimination not to happen.

Reaffirming identity and the sense of community

Some of the young people referred to their community as the primary source of help in case of need. Parents and the extended family are often helpers for the young people. In some cases of discrimination, young Roma also found that affirming their identity as Roma made them stronger when dealing with discrimination:

Why should I forget who I am? I am a Gypsy and I like dancing, singing. Gadjos are angry and shout at us. What is my answer? We mustn't be afraid and stay silent. This is our life! I am proud and I will be proud of being a Roma!

Coalitions and allies

Being alone facing discrimination was a factor that made the young Roma feel powerless and isolated. This is why it is important to find allies with whom one can share problems: parents, relatives, friends, a local Roma NGO or even teachers "who are fond of Roma" and can be supportive.

Art as a means of fighting discrimination

De la Negra members created their music group out of lack of other leisure-time opportunities for young people. According to the members, putting their feelings and emotions into words and music really helped them. At the same time, they felt that the message about anti-racism and equality gets across to the youngest generations of Roma, as well as non-Roma who, after having listened to their songs, may decide not to join forces with neo-Nazis.

Another youth group which was involved in the focus groups is the Slumdog Theatre project, based in Moldava nad Bodvou, Slovakia. The approach used is to involve the Roma young people in theatre performances which speak about the current problems of young Roma. In this case, the artistic expression is also a forum for young people to start discussing different ways to fight discrimination and exclusion and to make society aware of the problems young Roma face.

Starting from the Roma community: if you don't want to be discriminated against, don't discriminate yourself

Roma LGBT activist David Tiser believes that,

for the overall situation to improve, it is of key importance that Roma themselves should stop discriminating against other minorities, not just LGBT people but also other minorities such as Ukrainians, and so on. Many Roma accuse them of stealing their jobs, for example. In fact, they behave just as badly as non-Roma when it comes to treating other minorities. If Roma want non-Roma to respect them and protect their human rights and their right to life and dignity, it is unthinkable that the Roma would defend their own rights and deny other people their human rights.

As mentioned in some of the stories, the expectations towards Roma girls or the relation of the Roma communities with the LGBT Roma also need to be questioned and are also undergoing changes.

Participation and getting engaged in political life and decision making

As a long-term strategy, in order for the situation to change, Roma participation and engagement in political life was seen as one solution by some of the young Roma people. For example, having even one Roma politician in the Parliament was seen as a step forward as they would “stir the waters” and start raising some of the Roma issues. Their presence would also make it harder for other politicians to go on unchallenged with their hate speech against the Roma.

Acting for one's rights

Young people thought that knowing their rights and knowing some of the legal aspects of anti-discrimination or equality legislation were important assets when fighting discrimination. For many Roma young people, being informed and confident when demanding rights was a key aspect to finding a solution.

If they talk to Roma who know their rights, Gadjos leave these Roma alone. However, if there are children without knowledge of their rights, Gadjos could say or do anything they want to them.

I spoke up ... I was decided. I was sure that he did not have the right to do what he wanted. Finally, he retreated. I had the feeling that he respected me.

Activism and forming organisations

Many of the young Roma thought that youth activism is still insufficiently developed among young Roma, also due to the lack of strong Roma youth organisations. However, in the case of the organisation ARA ART from the Czech Republic, the very existence of the organisation mobilises and gives hope to Roma young people, including Roma young LGBT who may have

been excommunicated and/or have run away from their families. A number of the Roma young people also saw being involved in youth activities with other young people, Roma and non-Roma alike, as a way of broadening their perspectives on life and increase their understanding of discrimination.

Experiences of discrimination determined some of the young people we interviewed to take action and get organised. This was the case for David.



Background information

- 1 Other stories and reflections on multiple discrimination of Roma young people
- 2 International and European human rights standards pertaining to multiple discrimination
- 3 Learning about multiple discrimination using the life stories
- 4 Interview guides
- 5 Glossary
- 6 References



1 Other stories and reflections on multiple discrimination of Roma young people

The story of De la Negra: challenging prejudice through music



This story was collected as a result of a focus group organised in Prague, the Czech Republic, with five young Roma: Pavel Nistor (18), Radek Grajcar (17), Denis Dreveňák (19), Radek Kurej (18) and Karol Bady (17), who are from Krupka near Teplice in northern Bohemia and are members of the Roma anti-racist rap group, De la Negra. They all study at a secondary vocational school in Krupka. The aim of their lyrics is to minimise expressions of racism and to end racism, which they have experienced several times. Jozef Miker (48), David Filipek (13) and David Tiser (29) were also present at the focus group.

The situation in Krupka

Krupka is a town in the north-western part of the Czech Republic, in the Ústí nad Labem region, and has about 14,000 inhabitants. Since 2009, Krupka has seen regular anti-Roma neo-Nazi marches organised by the extremist Workers' Party for Social Justice and other neo-Nazi and racist movements and groups. Krupka is one of a number of towns where young as well as adult Roma have mobilised and have been protesting against the anti-Roma marches in a peaceful way. The civic association Konexe and Hate is No Solution have supported the initiative.

Life in Krupka is not the easiest. Most people have no work and no promising likelihood of any. In 2012, the municipal council passed a decree banning sitting outdoors on corner stones, flights of steps, and so on, except on a bench in the main square and in a number of areas including Maršov, part of which is inhabited by a sizeable Roma population. At that time, most benches in Maršov were removed and playgrounds for children have been turned into parking spaces or garages. There are no clubs for young Roma, who end up loitering or taking drugs.

De la Negra started its career out of boredom. There are no activities for young Roma in Maršov and that is why the young men decided to start a music band. Most of the members of De la Negra grew up together as friends and when the anti-Roma marches started, they felt the need to respond by establishing the rap group. From the outset, they were supported by Jozef Miker, who accompanied them to their first performances. They started writing lyrics about racially-motivated violence and discrimination, which turned out to be popular with particular audiences, mainly with people from the anti-fascist organisation Antifa, who started to arrange other concerts for the band. Nowadays, De la Negra performs at all major anti-racist rallies throughout the Czech Republic.

According to its members, putting their feelings and emotions into words really helped them. At the same time, they feel that the message about anti-racism and equality gets across to the youngest generations of Roma, as well as non-Roma who, after having listened to their songs, may decide not to join forces with neo-Nazis. Their songs are also about exploitative residential hostels, young people who have died, poor families and other issues Roma face today. There have been quite a lot of people in the audience who wept when listening to their songs. They feel they are too young to get into politics, so activism and performance are their way of changing people's hearts and minds.

On 28 September 2013, Czech Lions (a Czech right-wing extremist movement) demonstrated in Krupka. Karol B and the others from De la Negra were protesting against the march by organising an anti-racist concert. In the evening, Karol decided to go home. He did not want to go along a dark pathway, so he had to cross the main square. When he crossed the road, there was a group of 15 neo-Nazis who started to chase him and who yelled racist abuse at him, such as, "Gypsy, go to work!" They were accusing Roma of living off their income tax. Karol said he was really scared and feared for his safety because he was on his own and was being chased by 15 men. He managed to escape.

Two years ago, there was an anti-Roma march. De la Negra's Roma lesbian friend, who was 14 at the time, was attacked and beaten during the march organised by neo-Nazis. The Roma organised an outdoor peaceful religious service because they did not want the neo-Nazis to march along the streets of Dukelských hrdinů and Karla Čapka. Among the neo-Nazis were also Slovak neo-Nazis dressed in uniforms reminiscent of the fascist past. Approximately 500 Roma stood up to the neo-Nazis after the mass. There were mounted police who used tear gas to disband the Roma demonstration. When the neo-Nazis were marching through the estate, they were accompanied by the police and the Roma had to stand on the side and watch. The participants, among whom were a lot of unemployed non-Roma, kept yelling, "Gypsies, go to work". The Roma lesbian could not take it anymore and she threw a stick at them. She was seized by the police but because she looked like a boy, they treated her really brutally, bending her arms behind her back. Her friends shouted, "Stop it, she is a girl!", but the police officers started beating her with truncheons on her back and legs. No protest helped them. They filed a complaint with the Constitutional court, but to no avail.

Pavel

My siblings and I grew up in an orphanage where I first learnt about the difference between Roma and non-Roma. After some time, our mother was able to take us back home. We lived in Fojtovice, which is a small village and part of Krupka. We had a house with a garden there, kept a pig and hens, and had an allotment. We lived a peaceful life, frequently making bonfires and spending a lot of time outside. Then the property was sold off to a private owner who also owned a local farm. Gradually, he evicted all of the Roma living there or he increased the rent so much that the Roma were no longer able to afford to pay it. At one point, my family were accused of stealing something and the owner evicted us in the end. About 15 other families were evicted in this way. We currently live on a housing estate in Krupka. My cousin used to live there too; he had his own flat. A former police officer, who was friends with the landlord,

arrived drunk in his Jeep one night and brutally beat my cousin. He destroyed the flat with a baseball bat. He accused my cousin of owing him a certain amount of money. In the end, my cousin was sued and sentenced. A number of Roma families' houses were raided by groups of drunk people with baseball bats and the Roma were systematically intimidated to move out of the properties. Rumour has it that the former mayor was involved in organising the raids. The properties were up for sale and my father was one of the bidders; however, the municipal property was sold off to the owner of the farm in the end. The owner of the farm had photos on display of the Roma families who had previously lived there with racist captions which I saw. Some of them were in German and suggested that the families were dirty, and so on. I knew the families and it shocked me to read such abuse about them.

I think that a lot of TV programmes and newspaper articles suggest that Roma, especially young Roma men are aggressive. Many young non-Roma are influenced by this reporting or the ideas that are being implanted into their brains, although they are not true. Young Roma feel frustrated and angry because of this; at the same time, the other members of De la Negra have friends among non-Roma who know we are good guys. I recall one trip to a small town in northern Bohemia where there were very few Roma: we went to a local restaurant where everyone kept staring at us as if they had never seen Roma before. I have been exposed to a lot of physical aggression from non-Roma males. On one occasion, I was travelling on a train and wanted to see if there were any spare seats in one compartment. The man who happened to be sitting in the compartment immediately hit me fiercely in the head. I had to control myself in order not to retaliate as I was aware that I might be the one who would be facing the consequences of hitting back at the perpetrator. I think a lot of young Roma, especially males, are in a similar position; even if they have been physically attacked, they cannot defend themselves physically because the situation would turn against them.

Denis

When I was nine, two neo-Nazis burnt down our house in Šluknov, northern Bohemia, in an arson attack at night. At that time, four people were sleeping inside the house: me, my mother, father and brother. Dad woke everyone up in the middle of the night and rushed us to the car, taking with us the most valuable things that he was able to rescue. When the fire brigade arrived, one half of the house had already burnt and collapsed. The perpetrators, who had set fire to the rear of the house so that no one could see it, received conditional sentences. My family ended up having to leave the town as we feared for our lives. We moved to Teplice and then decided to move to Krupka where we knew there was a sizeable Roma community. We felt we would be safer there. I recall that when I went to a local primary school, I was the only Roma child in my class. I was bullied because I was Roma. I was scared to go to school and often skipped school; as a result, my attendance was very bad.

Radek

I grew up among non-Roma until the age of 11; I was the only Roma at the lower housing estate but also at school. At that time, I did not know there were Roma families living in the upper part of the housing estate. I was friends with non-Roma, who, however, regarded me

as non-Roma too. When my cousin arrived, though, the non-Roma were warning me to be careful because a Gypsy had arrived. They said Gypsies were aggressive and got embroiled in fights. They accused Roma of stealing; at the same time, I knew that these non-Roma were going into people's storage rooms down in the basement to steal their stuff. Sometimes they would call me to join them but I refused. They also said Gypsies didn't go to work. However, among the non-Roma, there are many families who deal in drugs and don't work. Once, when I was 18, I tried to get a job. I went to an interview for a post, along with 12 other people. The company wanted to recruit three people. I had a lot of work experience in construction: as I always looked older, I had been working since 15. However, even though I was clearly one of the best candidates, I was not offered the job. They called and told me that because I was Roma, they would expect me to perform many more tasks than non-Roma because if they were to sack someone, it would be the Roma. I felt frustrated and discriminated against by not being given the chance to work; most Roma would say this is racism.

ARA ART: a story of activism



ARA ART is an organisation founded by David Tiser (28), who has also shared his personal story in this publication. The organisation provides counselling for Roma LGBT people who can contact the organisation through the website <http://www.romalgbt.info> or otherwise. The organisation offers support for free and, as with many NGOs, struggles to get funding.

The organisation receives many emails and provides support not only for the Roma LGBT community but also their families. Parents often write saying that their son or daughter has got a problem with sexual orientation and they believe it is an illness. It makes a lot of sense for David's mother as a straight person, who is also involved in the project and whose son is a Roma gay man, to try to provide support for straight Roma parents who are struggling with their child's sexual orientation and gender identity. As David puts it,

We call them or go to visit them. We try to help them. We don't encourage young LGBT Roma to 'come out' because it entails a lot of responsibility for the young person's fate in case they come out and their family rejects them. We can't risk that. Instead, we gradually come to learn about the family and the whole set up in order to assess whether or not it is possible for the LGBT person to live openly as an LGBT Roma person. Often, the parents insist on seeing us. When we meet them in person, we try to explain to them that they have nothing to be ashamed of. It is easier when their child is educated because we can point to the positive aspects of the LGBT child which the parents should be proud of.

The organisation is often asked to deal with cases where Roma LGBT people run away from their families, from Moravia to Prague, where they know nobody. Previously, they lived with their extended families and suddenly, they find themselves in a situation where they are unable to sustain their livelihoods. At times, this may go hand in hand with prostitution, petty theft, pick-pocketing and drugs. In the future, the organisation would like to offer them sheltered housing with secret addresses where they would stay temporarily for four to six months. The organisation has already negotiated work placements.

For the moment, the organisation tries to find accommodation for them and works with them through the so-called "life-coaching method", which is not an officially recognised or approved social service in the Czech Republic. By using the method of life-coaching, the organisation teaches them to do all of these tasks themselves, independently. The organisation currently works with about five or six Roma LGBT people. The counselling component has been of key importance.

There are approximately six volunteers working with the organisation on Roma LGBT issues, both men and women. There has been a much bigger focus on gay men, as opposed to gay women who are less visible. However, the issues faced by Roma lesbians are as important as those faced by Roma gay men.

There is an artistic branch of ARA ART, too: the organisation produced a play called 'Guli Daj' and it also organises regular concerts to support talented young Roma musicians.

Stories of Spanish young Roma



The Roma population in Spain is estimated to number around 750,000 people, with the highest concentrations in Andalucía (40%), Catalunya, Valencia and Madrid. The Roma population is a young one; the average age is 28, while the average age in the mainstream population is 41.

These stories were collected during a focus group organised in Madrid, Spain, with the support of the Fundación Secretariado Gitano, involving eight young Gitanos (Spanish Roma) from Madrid, aged 17 to 19. We first talked with the young people about discrimination and their own experiences and we then collected ideas about strategies for combating discrimination.

Among the definitions of discrimination, here are some that came up more often during the discussion:

For me discrimination is something which is done against a person because of his/her colour, or the place where he or she comes from, and it is not accepted by the others.

When a person is treated differently because of their ethnicity, social status, sexual orientation, being HIV positive, because of their disability or their nationality, it is discrimination.

Discrimination is a lack of respect! We are all human beings, beyond race, ethnicity, nationality or any other ground.

The young Gitanos had a clear understanding of discrimination and knew what were the most frequent grounds for discrimination (nationality, ethnicity, and migrant status) and which groups were most likely to be discriminated against, for example, migrants of different nationalities living in Spain, Roma in general, Roma migrants from East European countries and people from North Africa. The participants said they had Romanian Roma friends, and they did not like it when Roma migrants “do bad things because this causes repercussions for and gives a negative image of all Roma, including Gitanos”.

According to the young Gitanos, discrimination happens in all areas, especially in education, with access to different services or through police abuse on the street. For example, Roma women are identified on the street based on the way they arrange their hair, and are verbally abused by the mainstream population and police officers. Another specific aspect for Spain is that some family names are associated with Roma and even in the absence of direct or personal contact, Roma are often discriminated against simply because of their names when accessing services, namely, education, employment, and so on.

The examples mentioned most often were:

- **Education and schools**

The teachers treated me differently because of my being Roma; I was punished by one of them especially for minor things, while my Spanish peers were doing bad things without

being punished. I reported that to the director of the school who told me that I was punished because I deserved it for being different, obviously for my ethnicity. I left school when I was 16 because my family needed me to bring money into the home. I decided this by myself; my intention was to go to vocational school to become a mechanic like my father. I succeeded in being admitted to such a school, but then they kicked me out and gave my place to a Spanish boy.

It was a teacher who always called me a 'dirty Gypsy'. Once he told me, 'I will cut your hair, you Gypsy bastard!' I told my parents everything; they came to school and talked with the principal and that teacher was fired.

In my school the Roma were placed either on the first benches or on the ones at the back. It was a class called the 'X class', with only Roma kids. In that class you could do anything you wanted but learn.

When I studied Law at Almeria University I had problems with a teacher because of my name; in Spain there are certain family names specific to Roma who are identified as Roma only because of their name. This teacher, who was also the principal, told me I would never pass her class. After so many problems with her, I finally moved to another Law University as a correspondence student.

- **Relations with the police**

We (Roma men) are often stopped on the street by the police without a reason. If you have a ring on your finger or a mobile phone they ask you where this object comes from; they always suspect you have stolen it.

Once the police stopped me on the street; I was with two girl friends. They searched us and we were asked to take off our trousers; they touched us and they asked if our jewellery was stolen from other people. They took us to the police station and they didn't even let us go to the toilet. Our parents came and they let us go home.

When they see us on the street they call us 'Gypsies' and other bad names without a reason. They know we are Roma because of our hair; we arrange our hair differently.

Other discriminatory experiences mentioned by the participants were during job interviews and in accessing public places and services.

When discussing relations within the community, participants mentioned as particularly sensitive aspects the situation of young LGBT Roma who are discriminated against within the Roma community.

There are clear roles for girls/women and boys/men within the Roma community and the Roma family. Girls still face limitations from their families when they want to study, work or travel to another neighbourhood or town. This is often perceived by the girls as a protective measure.

When my twin sister dropped out of school my parents didn't allow me to go to school either. This happened six months before graduating from high school. They said it wasn't safe for me to go to school alone, without my sister. They won't let me go anywhere by myself; I don't even know how to use the metro.

Among Gitanos there is a preference for having friends and marriages within the Roma community. It is not forbidden to marry a non-Roma, but we prefer to marry Roma; I can't even imagine myself married to a girl who isn't Roma. I know I will make my parents proud when I marry a Roma girl, and it's the same in all Roma families, a matter of family honour.

The young people were not familiar with the concept of multiple discrimination but, when asked to imagine how a person whose identity is formed by being Roma, young, very poor, a migrant in Spain, a woman, lesbian, or HIV positive, and how they are treated by different categories of people, they started to realise that many aspects of one's identity can make it harder for the person to be accepted and to have access to their rights. From the participants' reactions it was clear that it was the first time they had thought about this.

Finally, the young people reflected on their strategies for overcoming discrimination in the following ways:

- to ask protection from the family (parents)
- to report to the superiors of the person who commits an act of discrimination (in school)
- to ignore minor incidents on the street or to avoid them
- to find alternative solutions: as in the case of education, they dropped out of school for different reasons, but they try to complete their education with the support of an NGO.

Being a young Roma woman in Romania



Boldești-Scăeni is a small locality in the southern part of Romania with approximately 11,000 inhabitants, an urban area, but with the aspect of a rural area: it used to be an industrial zone, but after the communist period all the factories were closed. At present, there is a high rate of unemployment of more than 60%. The Roma community represents 10% of the local population and is located in three communities: two of them close to the centre and the biggest one segregated and relegated to the margins of the locality. Less than 30% of the Roma households have basic utilities and are connected to an asphalt road and public transportation. They are semi-traditional Roma, non-Romani language speakers, most of them having social benefits as their only income. The Roma people living here are traditionally Orthodox, but in the last few years neo-Protestant churches have been attracting more and more Roma.

Within the Roma community, the roles of Roma women are very well defined and internalised so deeply that there are no explicit rules to specify them. A young woman simply knows what she has to do or what she is allowed to do, and what is forbidden or improper. Domestic violence is part of the unwritten law; a situation where the husband is aggressive to his wife and children is not perceived as worrying.

In Boldești-Scăeni, before getting married, the virginity of Roma young girls is a high value. The practice of showing, publicly, evidence that the bride was a virgin before the wedding is still common (for instance, showing bed sheets with a blood stain on after the night of the wedding). The average age when a Roma girl gets married is around 15. "Getting married" means that the girl moves in with her future husband and his family and they consummate the marriage, which is not necessarily associated with the legal act. When a young woman cannot prove or convince the family of her future husband and the community that she was a virgin, she is excluded by everybody, including by her family members and she has this stigma for the rest of her life. Getting married also means being part of the husband's family, living in his extended family's household and obeying the rules imposed by the parents, especially by the mother-in-law.

As far as mixed marriages are concerned, this is nowadays a matter of choice. There seems to be a preference for marrying within the Roma community, but there are many cases of mixed marriages.

In Boldești-Scăeni, we met a group of Roma young women aged 18 to 30. They were already married with children, mostly unemployed and had not finished secondary school. One participant had worked in Spain for one year. We discussed with them their experiences of discrimination, how they deal with it and also their hopes for the future.

The participants mentioned that Roma men often prefer to keep their wives at home, in order to protect them from other men. In the Roma household, the man is the person who has the most power.

Within the community, religion was mentioned as a dividing line, with Orthodox Roma interacting very little with neo-Protestant Roma. Another criterion is social status: wealthier Roma usually look down on the poorer ones and do not let their children interact with the children from poor families because they are afraid of lice and contagious diseases.

As far as relations between Roma women and the majority population are concerned, most of the cases of personal experiences of discrimination mentioned by the participants were related to access to education, health, employment, and police abuse. This widespread phenomenon of discrimination could also have contributed to why less than half of the Roma in Boldești-Scăeni self-identified themselves as such on the last census. Below are examples of some of the young Roma women's experiences of discrimination.

When I went to school we used to have Roma classrooms and Romanian classrooms; the teachers of the Roma were not interested in teaching us anything and the non-Roma colleagues were looking at us and treated us as if we were animals.

Recently my niece came home from school crying. She told me her classmates had seen her father who is dark-skinned, and they stopped talking and playing with her all of a sudden. They told her she is a Gypsy and they are not allowed to have Gypsy friends.

I went to hospital to see a gynaecologist. There was also a traditional Roma woman with long skirts in the doctor's office. When she came in and the doctor saw her, she started yelling at her, 'You filthy Gypsy I'm sick of seeing you here.'

The biggest problem for Roma women here is the lack of jobs. Even if there are sometimes job announcements, when we go there and they see we are Roma, they say they don't need people anymore.

I used to work in a small factory here. My cousin came to ask for a job; she has darker skin than me. The lady owner told her she didn't need a Gypsy woman; my cousin told her that I was a Gypsy and I worked there. The next day the lady fired me, telling me that I would receive my payment for two weeks, which I never received. I couldn't get another job.

The Roma young women in Boldești-Scăeni were concerned about their children's future. Even though they were the same age as most European women who are fully immersed in their professional lives, they have given up their personal lives. Their plans for the future are orientated towards the well-being of their children. They said they wished there were a law to forbid discrimination against the Roma people and were very shocked to find out that such laws have existed in Romania since early 2000.



2 International and European human rights standards pertaining to multiple discrimination

2.1 Human rights standards and multiple discrimination

Several international human rights institutions have developed human rights standards that are relevant when looking at multiple discrimination.

The Council of Europe

All member states of the Council of Europe are parties to the European Convention on Human Rights. The Convention provides an open-ended list of grounds in Article 14 on the prohibition of discrimination, which are repeated in Protocol No. 12 to the Convention on the general prohibition of discrimination. The Protocol has a wider scope of application than Article 14 since the scope of its application is not limited to the rights and freedoms set out in the Convention itself. Neither Article 14 nor the Protocol specifically mentions sexual orientation or gender identity as prohibited grounds for discrimination but the commentary on the provisions of this Protocol stipulates that the list of non-discrimination grounds is non-exhaustive; as a result, it leaves open the possibility for the European Court of Human Rights to find that a combination of grounds constitutes another protected status.

Another binding Council of Europe instrument, the revised European Social Charter, includes an open-ended non-discrimination provision in Article E with reference to the enjoyment of the rights set out in the charter.

The principle of non-discrimination can also be found in more specialised Council of Europe conventions. On 7 April 2011, the Committee of Ministers adopted the Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. The non-discrimination article of the convention includes the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, thereby making it the first international treaty to include explicitly both sexual orientation and gender identity as prohibited grounds for discrimination.

Of particular relevance is also the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, specifically Article 4.

Another relevant document is Recommendation 1557 (2002) of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, particularly paragraphs 3 and 15, which underline the widespread discrimination against the Roma, and the need to strengthen the system for monitoring such discrimination and to resolve the legal status of the Roma.

A large number of member states have adopted legislative and other measures to prohibit discrimination against individuals on grounds of their sexual orientation and, though in fewer cases, also on grounds of gender identity. According to a research carried out by the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe (Council of Europe, 2011), the majority of member states (38) have recognised, in line with international and European standards, that sexual orientation is one of the grounds of discrimination in comprehensive or sectoral non-discrimination legislation. Nine member states do not appear to protect LGBT people against discrimination. A lower number, 20 out of 47 member states cover discrimination based on gender identity in their non-discrimination legislation, either as gender identity explicitly, or as a recognised interpretation of the terms 'sex', 'gender' or 'other ground for discrimination'. For the other 27 member states, the non-discrimination legislation remains silent or is unclear on the protection of transgender people.

The European Court of Human Rights confirmed in 1999 that sexual orientation is a discrimination ground covered by Article 14 of the Convention. Similarly, in 2010, the Court explicitly mentioned transsexuality – albeit not gender identity – as a prohibited ground for discrimination under Article 14 of the Convention, although this could also have been deduced from its earlier rulings. The Court has issued several landmark judgements on alleged discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation, in which Article 14 has been invoked in conjunction with substantive articles of the Convention, in particular Article 8 on the right to respect for private and family life. In these cases, the Court has severely limited the margin of appreciation of states stressing that differences in treatment related to this ground require particularly weighty reasons to be legitimate under the Convention.

In 2012 Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted Resolution 1887 on Multiple discrimination against Muslim women in Europe, which makes specific reference to multiple discrimination.

Other recommendations and policy guidelines by the Council of Europe also refer to multiple discrimination, such as the Committee of Ministers' Recommendation 5 from 2010 to member states on measures to combat discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity, and the Council of Europe Disability Action Plan 2006-2015.

The European Union

Currently, 28 member states of the Council of Europe are also members of the European Union. The general principle of equal treatment between men and women was introduced into European Union law in 1957 by the Treaty Establishing the European Economic Community (the Treaty of Rome). Specifically, Articles 3, 6, 7, 29 and 149 of the EC Treaty commit the Member States to ensuring equal opportunities for all citizens; Article 13 of the EC Treaty enables the European Community to take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin.

Recent examples of legislation that have added additional grounds for discrimination, and have further developed the ground for discrimination in relation to sex, include:

- Directive 2000/43/EC – Racial Equality Directive: this establishes a framework against discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin both inside and outside the labour market
- Directive 2000/78/EC – Employment Equality Directive: this establishes a framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation, and in Article 1, it lays down a general framework for combating discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation with regards to employment and occupation
- Directive 2004/113/EC – Gender Directive (and Gender Recast Directive 2006/54/EC): this establishes a framework for equal treatment between men and women in access to and supply of goods and services; it is the first European Union Directive which also refers to people intending to undergo or having undergone gender reassignment.

The EU prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, religion or belief, disability, age, or sexual orientation in employment and occupation. At present, at the European Union level, there is no legislation which binds member states to address multiple discrimination. Gender identity is not explicitly recognised as a prohibited ground for discrimination in the EU directives. However, the Court of Justice of the European Union has applied the ground of sex to extend equal treatment guarantees to cover, at least partially, the discrimination experienced by transgender people.

To the present day, a handful of countries continue to block the draft EU directive (the so-called “horizontal” equal treatment directive) which would prohibit discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation (and would eliminate the hierarchy of rights that currently exists in the EU by giving the listed grounds the same protections guaranteed under the Race Directive). This draft EU directive would cover all areas of European Union territory in the context of access to goods and services, healthcare, housing, education, and social services, which the European Commission proposed in July 2008.

Of particular relevance to the multidimensional issues faced by Roma women in the EU are, firstly, the 2005 European Parliament resolution on the situation of the Roma in the European Union, and, secondly, the 2006 Resolution on the situation of Romani Women in the European Union, introducing a gender dimension into EU policy on Roma, which is specifically relevant to the issues faced by Roma women in the EU. It notes that “Romani women face extreme levels of discrimination, including multiple or compound discrimination”.

The United Nations

The principles of equality in dignity and rights and non-discrimination are fundamental elements of international human rights law enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and reiterated as legally binding obligations in the Charter of the United Nations and International Covenants on Human Rights, particularly the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and Article 2(2) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). These human rights documents proclaim and agree that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms, without distinction of any kind. The principle of non-discrimination is also part of more specialised UN human rights conventions. These include

the following: the UN Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC); the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; the Millennium Development Goals. Of particular relevance to Roma is General Recommendation XXVII (Discrimination against Roma) of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

A major international breakthrough in raising awareness of intersectional discrimination was the United Nations World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance held in Durban, South Africa in 2001. The documents adopted at the conference, the Durban Declaration and the Programme of Action, contain numerous explicit references to the concept of multiple discrimination, for example, in the second article of the Conference Declaration:

We recognize that racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance occur on the grounds of race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin and that victims can suffer multiple or aggravated forms of discrimination based on other related grounds such as sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, social origin, property, birth or other status.

In terms of sexual orientation and gender identity, the United Nations Human Rights Council adopted the first United Nations resolution on sexual orientation and gender identity (resolution A/HRC/RES/17/19) in June 2011, expressing “grave concern” at violence and discrimination against individuals based on their sexual orientation and gender identity. Its adoption paved the way for the first official report on the issue prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/19/41).

The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe

The OSCE Ministerial Council and the 57 participating states endorsed the Action plan on improving the situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE area in December 2003. The Action plan makes specific reference to “respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without adverse distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion or belief, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status” and “the adoption and implementation of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation to promote full equality of opportunities for all”.¹

2.2 Multiple discrimination in national legislation

Within the European Union, the regulations and directives which are based on the Treaties establishing the European Union (primary law) are called secondary law. The secondary law currently in force results in levels of protection from discrimination differing from one ground to another. The resulting difficulty in tackling multiple sources of discrimination means that policy is often directed at only one aspect of an individual’s identity. At the same time, there is a need to tackle multiple discrimination in a consistent way throughout EU secondary law in

order to enhance legal clarity. Despite the lack of harmonisation at EU level, EU member states should tackle multiple discrimination involving the grounds of race, religion or belief, disability, age, sex, gender and sexual orientation at national level in an efficient and encompassing way. In its amendments to the European Commission proposal for a Horizontal Directive, the European Parliament suggested introducing legislative provisions to prevent and combat multiple, or intersectional discrimination. This would more accurately reflect the experiences of victims, ensure that plaintiffs can raise all aspects of a multiple discrimination claim in a single procedure and could also assist in raising awareness of this phenomenon, although the ground of sex would remain protected under separate legislation with a narrower scope.

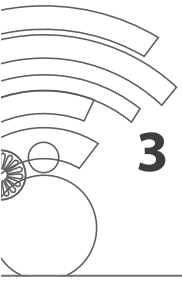
The report “Multiple Discrimination in EU Law: Opportunities for legal responses to intersectional gender discrimination?” found that “[t]he reports show that national legislation differs widely as to whether multiple discrimination (or equivalents thereof) is explicitly defined or even mentioned.”

What follows are examples based on the above-mentioned report regarding how national legislation takes into account discrimination on more than one ground:

Country	Provisions
Austria, Italy	Multiple discrimination is taken into account when calculating compensation in a case of discrimination. The legal provisions mention the possibility that discrimination based on more than one of the prohibited grounds occurs.
Germany	The legislation clarifies that, in cases of multiple discrimination, the justification requirements for each single ground must be fulfilled, and thus presupposes that discrimination on several grounds may occur.
Poland	The legislation expressly provides that direct and indirect discrimination may both be based on more than one ground.
Cyprus, Denmark, France, Iceland, Ireland, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden	The national legislation allows claimants to bring claims of multiple discrimination. In some cases, national legislation ‘silently implies’ the existence of such forms of discrimination.
Belgium, Finland, Greece	Multiple discrimination could be tackled within the existing legal system, but courts neglect this aspect in some cases.
Bulgaria	A basic definition of multiple discrimination is found in the provisions of the Bulgarian Protection Against Discrimination Act. According to the law, public authorities are under a positive obligation to devise policies and conduct surveys on multiple discrimination.

Romania	<p>The revised Romanian Act on Equal Opportunities defines as multiple discrimination any discriminating action based on two or more discrimination criteria. The Romanian Equal Treatment Act (2006), for example, covers the grounds of age, disability, race and ethnic origin, religion and belief, and sexual orientation. The Act provides that discrimination on two or more grounds are treated as an “aggravating circumstance”.</p> <p>Multiple discrimination is taken into account when calculating compensation in a case of discrimination.</p>
Spain	<p>The national legislation allows claimants to bring claims of multiple discrimination. According to the law, public authorities are under a positive obligation to devise policies and conduct surveys on multiple discrimination.</p>
Czech Republic	<p>Lack of definition of multiple discrimination in national legislation, lack of understanding of how to reflect this in legal practice.</p>
Slovakia	<p>The Anti-discrimination Act stipulates the different grounds of discrimination, but it does not exclude the application of the definition in cases where several grounds are accumulated. At present, only a small number of court decisions concerning cases of gender discrimination are known. None of them includes multiple discrimination. In some cases, the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights as Equality Body represented the injured parties – Roma women who were discriminated against at work on the grounds of both their gender and ethnic origin. However, in all cases it based the formulation of the breach of the principle of equal treatment on the racial ground only.</p>
Hungary	<p>Multiple discrimination is not explicitly prohibited by statutory legal instruments in Hungary.</p> <p>The Hungarian Equality Act lists 19 grounds for discrimination. Another ground was added, as “another situation, attribution or condition”. While there have been numerous cases where a claim was submitted on multiple grounds, in which sex was coupled with another ground (age and sex, family status and sex, ethnicity and sex), no decisions are known where the administrative authority’s decision or the court decision explicitly found multiple discrimination. Although there are many cases, the multiplicity of grounds is either never addressed, or it is overlooked.</p>
United Kingdom	<p>Only one type of intersectional discrimination is explicitly covered by the Equality Act, namely direct discrimination because of two characteristics. This is referred to in section 14 as “combined discrimination: dual circumstances”, often called “dual combined discrimination”. Section 14 of the Equality Act 2010 prohibits direct discrimination on the basis of a combination of no more than two of the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.</p>

¹ Other instruments include the 1990 Copenhagen Document, the 1992 Helsinki Summit meeting, the 1999 Istanbul Summit Declaration, and the 1999 Charter for European Security



3 Learning about multiple discrimination using the life stories

One of many important uses of these life stories is in educational processes with young people, both in formal and non-formal education settings. The questions and summaries for learning included in each life story can also be helpful starting points. Life stories can be an important pedagogical tool for those involved in human rights education, allowing young people to learn more about their rights and how to claim them.



If you are not familiar with human rights education, *Compass* – the Council of Europe Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People, provides the essentials for those interested in the topic. Learn more here: www.coe.int/compass

The main topic of the life stories included in this publication is multiple discrimination. However, this is not to be considered as an isolated topic. For example, you could use the life stories in order to:

- make young people more aware of their identity and more confident about their rights
- combat stereotypes and prejudice
- create empathy with those who suffer from discrimination
- discuss specific human rights issues, such as housing, education, hate speech, and so on
- raise awareness with your group of young people about situations of injustice
- start campaigning for human rights.

3.1 Running educational activities based on the life stories

When running educational activities with young people about such a complex and sensitive topic as discrimination, the role of a facilitator is to make things smoother and to help participants move forward. If you are running these activities, and if you are the facilitator, keep in mind the following:

- You do not necessarily need to be an expert in anti-discrimination to run the activities; however, a minimum level of familiarity with the topic can help in many cases! If you are asked questions for which you do not have the answer, be honest about this and try to find the information together with the group.
- Start from where the group is. Ask yourself how much the young people already know about discrimination.

- It is your role to create a safe space where topics such as discrimination can be discussed. It is important to know your group and reflect on this in advance. You cannot predict every reaction, but be ready to show support and to guide young people to other support services.
- Prepare yourself for prejudice and stereotypes that the group you work with may have and, if they appear, discuss them with your group.
- Set realistic objectives for the activities and ask yourself if these objectives really matter for your group. You may often need to adapt to their needs and questions in any case.
 - » *What do you want your group to know by the end of the activity?*
 - » *What would you like them to be able to do?*
 - » *What attitudes would you like them to develop during the activities?*
- Do not underestimate practical aspects, such as the time and place available for discussions, and so on.
- Search for local organisations working on anti-discrimination: you could invite them to your activities or young people could, after the activities, be interested in joining their actions!

During the activities, keep in mind the following:

- Set up, with your group, a learning contract and agree together on what is allowed and what is not allowed. Violence or insults should not be tolerated.
- You cannot always predict the direction an activity will take! If young people find another aspect than the one you had prepared to be important, follow their interest!
- Encourage everyone to express their ideas and do not discard any! There may often be many questions: address them as they come or “park” them for later, but do not discard them. Asking questions is also a vehicle for learning.
- Always refer back to the realities and experiences present in the group, otherwise young people may not see any relevance in the activity. How much is this a real issue in their lives?
- Avoid giving ready-made answers or generalising. It is important for the group to be involved in an experience, find their way through it and discuss it on the basis of this experience.
- Try to organise several activities if the group needs more time. Avoid overwhelming the group with too much information or long presentations!
- Be respectful and demand that the group respect the life stories you will be using for your activity.
- Do not forget to evaluate your activities! This can be done through simple exercises or a round of impressions from the group. Evaluation is very important for learning and for planning future activities.

3.2 Educational activities

Activity 1. Self-reflection: understanding my own identity

Objectives:

- to reflect on one's own identity
- to understand that identity is multi-layered
- to explore the conditions for people's dignity to be respected

Time: 45'

Group size: any

Instructions:

- Ask participants to take a sheet of paper and draw a circle. Within the circle, they should place symbols or write words that represent their identity. Tell them to think about themselves, and how they would introduce themselves. What makes them who they are? Give participants about 10 minutes for this.
- After this, ask them to write or draw outside the circle what they need around them, from other people or even living conditions, in order to develop themselves and to safeguard their dignity. Give participants also about 10 minutes for this.
- Now, ask participants to form groups of 3 and to see how many things they have in common in their identities, and how many things they have in common amongst what they need. Give participants about 15 minutes for the small group discussion.
- Bring everyone together and ask groups to present their findings. Follow up with a group discussion. You could use the following questions:
 - » How was it to think of your identity and your needs? Did you find anything surprising about yourself?
 - » How was it to see other people being diverse from you?
 - » What would happen if some of the needs that you expressed were not fulfilled or respected? How would you feel?
 - » What if you were hurt or insulted because of one aspect of your identity? Or more than one aspect?
 - » Is there any link between the needs you expressed and some of the human rights you know about?
 - » What can we learn about identity from this exercise?

Another activity that reflects on the concepts of identity and human rights is 'Who are I?', from *Compass* – the Council of Europe Manual on Human Rights Education with Young People.

Activity 2. Case study and group discussion: mapping the issues

Objectives:

- to analyse the life stories presented in this publication
- to map human rights issues and violations present in the life stories

Time: 60'

Group size: 5+

Instructions:

- Ask participants to read together with you one of the life stories. According to the time you have at your disposal, you may want to read a full life story, or several episodes from one, or more than one. After reading, ask for their reactions to the story. Explain that the story may contain episodes that put the rights of the person at risk.
- Divide participants into small working groups of up to 5 people and provide them with the summary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. (You can find one summary of the UDHR on the Compass website, www.coe.int/compass). Ask participants to make connections between specific parts of the story and the rights in the UDHR. Give them about 30 minutes for this exercise and share outcomes in plenary. Ask participants to identify the rights at stake in the story and also to identify the episodes of discrimination.
- Follow up with a group discussion. You could use the following questions:
 - » What are your first impressions from this activity?
 - » Were you surprised to see the number of rights involved in the life story?
 - » Have you ever witnessed any other person's experience which raised issues around the same rights?
 - » What would you do if the person from the story was a person close to you? Would you support him/her in some way?
 - » Explain to participants that the UDHR is based on equality in rights despite any difference in the groups one belongs to. Do they agree with this principle?
 - » Did they identify any episodes of discrimination in the text? On which grounds?
 - » How would you feel if you had to deal with the same problems as the person in the text? What would you do?
 - » How would you react if you were the neighbour of the person in the story? What would you do?

Activity 3. Role play: developing skills to tackle discrimination, developing empathy

Objectives:

- to understand how discrimination works
- to develop empathy for those experiencing discrimination
- to find solutions to situations of discrimination

Time: 60' – 90' · Group size: 5+

Instructions:

- Choose among the life stories an episode where there is a clear example of discrimination and several people involved. Read this episode to the group, divide them into smaller groups according to the number of people in the story, and provide each with a role. Give each small group time to prepare the role play, of up to 20 minutes. Ask each group to develop the role play so that it reaches an outcome.

Examples of episodes from the life stories that could be used for this exercise:

- Renting a flat – Marcy's story
- School discrimination – Klara's story and Gianina's story
- Conflict with the policy and neighbours – Péter's story
- Conflict with ticket collectors on public transport – Péter's story
- Harassment at the workplace – Péter's story
- Discrimination and verbal abuse in hospital – Florin's story
- Inability to get a loan because of Roma ethnicity – Freju's story
- Ismail's situation in Spain – imagine you are the interviewer and try to help him in his situation
- Scenario of "Roma boys" – David's story (You could also screen the film and discuss it; the film is available at <http://vimeo.com/25854654>)
- Coming out in a Roma family – David's story and Freju's story
- Discussion with the officials about obtaining an ID card for which you would have to travel far away, with costs you cannot afford – Maria's story

- Ask each group to role-play the story. After all the groups have done so, gather everyone together. You may want to run first a short exercise to take participants out of their roles.
- Follow up with a group discussion. You could use the following questions:
 - » How was the exercise for you? How was it to put yourself in a different role?
 - » How satisfied are you with the result of your group's work?
 - » What were the issues in the story?
 - » What solution did your group find for the story?
 - » How realistic is the outcome you provided for the story?
 - » What did you learn from this exercise?

Activity 4. Campaigning for equality and human rights

Objectives:

- to explore the problem of discrimination
- to develop skills for campaigning

Time: 70' · Group size: 10+

Instructions:

- Ask participants to imagine that they are part of a small local NGO working with victims of discrimination. Recently, two young people approached the NGO and shared their experiences of discrimination. Here you could use some of the life stories to exemplify.

Examples of episodes you could campaign about:

- Bullying of Roma children in schools – Marcela's story or Gianina's story
 - Discriminating against Roma in their access to employment by rejecting them from job interviews based on their being Roma – Klara's story and Gianina's story
 - Online hatred against the Roma – Klara's story
 - Police violence and abuse against young Roma – Florin's story or Péter's story
 - Trafficking in human beings – Ismail's story
 - Poverty affecting Roma settlements – Florin's story and Gianina's story
- Ask participants to imagine that they are about to develop a mini-campaign, either online or offline, to address this issue. Divide participants into small groups and provide them with a target audience for their actions. Each group will work on actions targeted at that specific audience around the topic of multiple discrimination:
 - » *Group 1: Roma community*
 - » *Group 2: non-Roma population*
 - » *Group 3: policy makers, Parliament or government representatives*
 - » *Group 4: NGOs*
 - Each small group will now have about 40 minutes to propose activities targeted at that specific group to tackle the issue of multiple discrimination. Ask them to think of online actions as well.
 - Bring the groups back into plenary, and ask them to present their actions. Follow up with a discussion, based on the following questions:
 - » How easy did you find it to think of actions in your group? What was difficult?
 - » Do you think your actions will be successful? Why? Why not?
 - » Is it important to campaign against discrimination?
 - » After this activity, would you like to continue working on this topic? What could you do to combat discrimination?
 - » What did you learn from this activity?

3.3 What else could you do?

Education and awareness-raising

- Include the topic of multiple discrimination in educational activities dealing with human rights or anti-discrimination
- Use the life stories to show and demonstrate that multiple discrimination can have strong and long-lasting impacts on those that it affects
- Collect information about multiple discrimination in order to understand better whom it affects and how
- Tell stories about those who are affected by multiple discrimination and demand empathy
- Set up a website to share information about multiple discrimination or add a section to your organisation's website about this
- Organise awareness-raising or training events.

Supporting victims

- If you work in services or organisations that work with victims of discrimination, analyse the issues: is there anyone among the victims who could be discriminated against because of other "less obvious reasons"?
- Are the workers in your organisation prepared to work with people who are discriminated against on multiple grounds?

Mobilisation

- You could use several days from the human rights calendar – for example, 21 March, International Day against Discrimination; 17 May, International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia; 25 November, International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women – to organise events and explore more specific situations of multiple discrimination
- Network with other organisations working on discrimination, even when they do not work with the same target groups as you do! As people have multiple identities, if one person is discriminated against on two grounds or more, it is important that organisations are also linked to address these complex situations.

Advocacy and campaigning

- Is multiple discrimination recognised as such in any policies or laws in your country? If this is not the case, you could start a campaign for changes in the legislation
- Organise public actions to bring the issue to the attention of policy makers.



4 Interview guides

The life stories included in this publication were collected by using interview guidelines, based on the following questions:

- name, if the interviewee wishes to have his/her name publicised; however, the interviewees were aware that they could be anonymous if preferred
- gender and age
- nationality / ethnicity / origin
- place of residence and country of origin

The questions were structured so as to elicit information relevant to the interviewee's experience of discrimination in the following domains:

- housing and accommodation (city / countryside; mainstream conditions, or excluded / territorially segregated)
- family-related information, including information about the household / institutional care, type of family (nuclear / extended) and family / community / social expectations in terms of gender roles, including pressure to conform to social conventions and norms
- self-identification regarding real / perceived ethnicity and sexual orientation / gender identity, including coming out
- health status, including status in relation to having a disability, or HIV status
- ability to access goods and services
- education (primary / secondary / university / none)
- employment status and welfare
- (im)migration status and economic vulnerability, including trafficking and exploitation
- citizenship, including possession of identity documents and contact with law enforcement agencies
- religion, socialisation and friends, including peer / community pressure and internal factors and dynamics
- domestic violence, harassment, racial and homophobic bullying, hate crime and hate speech, including approaching agencies that provide support.



5 Glossary

Antigypsyism: hostility, prejudice, discrimination or racism directed at Roma

Bullying: repeated and habitual behaviour, which can include force, verbal harassment or threat, physical assault or coercion to abuse, intimidate, or aggressively impose domination, and such acts that may be directed repeatedly towards particular targets. One essential prerequisite is the perception, by the bully or by others, of an imbalance in social or physical power. Justifications and rationalisations for such behaviour sometimes include differences of class, race, religion, gender, sexuality, appearance, behaviour, body language, personality, reputation, lineage, strength, size or ability.

Coercive sterilisation: the process of surgically removing or disabling an individual's reproductive organs without their full and informed consent

Coming out: a phrase referring to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people's disclosure of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Dignity: term used in moral, ethical, legal, and political discussions to signify that a being has an innate right to be valued and receive ethical treatment. It is an extension of the Enlightenment era concepts of inherent, inalienable rights.

Empowerment: the process of increasing the economic, political, social, educational, gender, or spiritual strength of individuals and communities

Equality body: an independent organisation assisting victims of discrimination, monitoring and reporting on discrimination issues, and promoting equality. The EU equal treatment legislation requires Member States to set up an equality body, which is legally required to promote equality and combat discrimination in relation to one, some, or all of the grounds for discrimination covered by European Union (EU) law: gender, race and ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief and disability.

Ethnicity (or ethnic group): a community or a group of people who identify with each other based on common ancestral, social, cultural, or national experience. Membership of an ethnic group tends to be associated with shared cultural heritage, ancestry, history, homeland, language (dialect), or ideology, and with symbolic systems such as religion, mythology and ritual, cuisine, dressing style, physical appearance, etc.

Exploitation: the action of treating someone unfairly in order to benefit from their work

Gender: the range of physical, biological, mental and behavioural characteristics related to, and differentiating between, masculinity and femininity. Depending on the context, the term

may refer to biological sex (i.e. the state of being male, female or intersex), sex-based social structures (including gender roles and other social roles), or gender identity.

Gender identity: a person's deeply felt individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth, and includes the personal sense of the body and other expressions of gender (that is, "gender expression") such as dress, speech and mannerisms. The sex of a person is usually assigned at birth and becomes a social and legal fact from then on. However, some people experience problems identifying with the sex assigned at birth: these people are referred to as "transgender" people. Gender identity is not the same as sexual orientation, and transgender people may identify as heterosexual, bisexual or homosexual.

Gender roles: the social and behavioural norms that are generally considered appropriate for either a man or a woman in a social or interpersonal relationship. They are influenced by a combination of the innate personality of the person, cultural or social factors (i.e. the product of socialisation), biological and physiological differences. Gender roles differ according to cultural-historical context; while most cultures express two genders, some express more.

Ghetto: part of a town or city in which members of a minority group live, especially because of social, legal, economic or inter-ethnic pressures. The term was originally used in Venice to describe the part of the city to which Jews were restricted and segregated.

Hate crime: criminal acts with a bias motive. Hate crimes include intimidation, threats, property damage, assault, murder or any other criminal offence where the victim, premises or target of the offence are selected because of their real or perceived connection, attachment, affiliation, support or membership of a group (e.g. LGBT, Roma, migrant, disabled).

Hate-motivated incidents: incidents, acts or manifestations of intolerance committed with a bias motive that may not reach the threshold of hate crimes, due to insufficient proof in a court of law for the criminal offence or bias motivation, or because the act itself may not have been a criminal offence under national legislation

Hate speech: public expressions which spread, incite, promote or justify hatred, discrimination or hostility towards a group of people (e.g. LGBT, Roma, migrant, disabled), for example, statements made by political and religious leaders or other opinion leaders circulated by the press or on the Internet which aim to incite hatred

Homophobia: an irrational fear of, or aversion to homosexuality and to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people based on stereotypes and prejudice

Identity: a person's conception and expression of their individuality or group affiliations (such as national, cultural, ethnic, sexual, gender, etc.)

Intercultural dialogue: a process that comprises an open and respectful exchange or interaction between individuals, groups and organisations with different cultural backgrounds or world views

Intersex people: people who are born with chromosomal, hormonal levels or genital characteristics which do not correspond to the given standard of 'male' or 'female' categories in terms of sexual or reproductive anatomy. This word has replaced the term 'hermaphrodite', which was extensively used by medical practitioners during the 18th and 19th centuries. Intersexuality may take different forms and cover a wide range of conditions.

LGBT people: this is an umbrella term used to encompass lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. It is a heterogeneous group that is often grouped together under the LGBT heading in social and political arenas. Sometimes LGBT is extended to include intersex and queer people (LGBTIQ).

Ombudsperson: a public official usually appointed by the government or by the parliament but with a significant degree of independence who acts as an impartial intermediary between the public and government or bureaucracy, representing the interests of the public by investigating and addressing complaints of maladministration or violation of rights

Participation: the act of being a full-fledged part of society; different mechanisms for the public to express opinions – and ideally exert influence – regarding political, economic, management or other social decisions along any realm of human social activity, including economic, political, cultural (i.e. multiculturalism) or familial (i.e. feminism)

Racial segregation: separation of humans into racial groups in daily life. It may apply to activities such as eating in a restaurant, attending school, riding on a bus, the process of renting or buying a home, etc.

Roma: a term referring to Roma, Sinti, Kale and related groups in Europe, including Travellers and the Eastern groups (Dom and Lom), covering the wide diversity of the groups concerned, including people who identify themselves as 'Gypsies'

Roma settlement / slum: a heavily populated, often segregated informal settlement characterised by substandard housing, lack of sanitation services, supply of clean potable water, gas, electricity and other utilities and basic services such as access to healthcare, education

Romanipen / Romipen: Roma identity (the concept of being Roma)

Sexual orientation: each person's capacity for profound emotional, affectionate and sexual attraction to, and intimate and sexual relations with, individuals of a different gender (heterosexual) or the same gender (homosexual, lesbian, gay) or more than one gender (bisexual)

Social exclusion (also referred to as **marginalisation**): a concept used across disciplines including education, sociology, psychology, politics and economics to characterise contemporary forms of social disadvantage and relegation to the fringes of society

Social status: the relative rank that an individual holds, with attendant rights, duties, and lifestyle, in a social hierarchy based on honour or prestige

Special classes / schools: originally designated for children with special educational needs and “mild mental disabilities”. Roma children are disproportionately placed in special schools or classes.

Structural poverty: a process in which the class system reproduces itself over time, and sees the organisation of the economy and institutional discrimination as contributing causes, together with increasing social isolation of the ghetto

Trafficking in human beings: trade in humans most commonly for the purpose of sexual slavery, forced labour or commercial sexual exploitation for the trafficker or others. Trafficking can occur within a country or trans-nationally. Human trafficking is a crime against the trafficked person because of the violation of the victim’s rights through coercion, and because of their commercial exploitation.

Transgender people: people who have a gender identity which is different from the gender assigned to them at birth, and who wish to portray their gender identity in a different way from the gender assigned at birth. It includes those people who feel they have to, prefer to, or choose to, whether by clothing, accessories, mannerisms, speech patterns, cosmetics or body modification, present themselves differently from the expectations of the gender role assigned to them at birth. This includes, among many others, people who do not identify with the labels ‘male’ or ‘female’, transsexuals, transvestites and cross-dressers. A transgender man is a person who was assigned ‘female’ at birth but has a gender identity which is ‘male’ or within a masculine gender identity spectrum. A transgender woman is a person who was assigned ‘male’ at birth but has a gender identity which is ‘female’ or within a feminine gender identity spectrum.

Transphobia: a similar phenomenon as homophobia, but specifically to the fear of, and aversion to transgender people or gender non-conformity. Manifestations of homophobia and transphobia include discrimination, criminalisation, marginalisation, social exclusion and violence on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Xenophobia: intense or irrational dislike or fear of people from other countries.



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Discrimination remains one of the most widespread forms of human rights violations in Europe today and one which disproportionately affects Roma people and communities. Many Roma young people grow up with discrimination. Among them, many experience multiple discrimination because of their ethnicity and also other grounds of discrimination, such as social status, sexual orientation and gender identity, sex or migrant status. This publication aims to bring to light their situations and to provide a space for their life stories to unfold.

Multiple discrimination entered the work of the Council of Europe regarding Roma young people with the Roma Youth Action Plan, adopted in 2011. The action plan calls for the recognition and appreciation of “their [young Roma] history, plural cultural backgrounds and affiliations as young people, as Roma, as citizens of their countries and as active Europeans”. Addressing multiple discrimination and recognising plural identity affiliations is key to challenging the blindness of prejudice. A research project was launched in 2013 to acquire a deeper understanding of the situation of Roma young people who experience discrimination on several grounds. The project involved interviews and meetings with Roma young people in eight countries: Albania, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain and the United Kingdom.

Barbaripen includes life stories of nine young Roma affected by multiple discrimination across Europe, an analysis of the mechanisms of discrimination and the strategies that young people use in order to tackle it. *Barbaripen* is also an awareness-raising and educational tool; it includes proposals for educational activities with young people using the life stories and background materials.

Multiple discrimination may still be a recent concept, but its reality is deeply set in our societies. Young people themselves, by telling us their stories with their own words and emotions, represent the humanity, depth, complexity and uniqueness of each life experience.



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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It includes 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

