

## Work Package 2 (Activity 2.3)

### Education and Training Material

#### Session 1

### Reality & Data in each country of early marriage and early motherhood. National (&European) framework

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## Activities

- national researches
- training courses
- Roma Influencers Network
- awareness raising campaigns
- Roma Influencers festivals
- good practices guide
- policy recommendations
- national & transnational workshops
- documentary films



## Objective

The project "Roma Influencers breaking the circle of early marriages and early motherhood in Roma communities" under the title acronym "Roma Influencers Network" derives from the gravity of the extremely harmful practice of **early marriages and early motherhood** in Roma communities. It is focused on **empowering, supporting, protecting and awareness raising of the Roma community**, especially women & girls affected by the specific concern by suggesting ways to change behaviors and attitudes in order to **overcome, reduce or eliminate** it.

## Session 1

### Part 1 (5 hours)

Welcome (10 minutes)

Introduction to the Project and planned activities (1 hour)

Role of Roma Influencers and discussions (80 minutes)

Break (15 minutes)

Rules for Roma Influencers (40 minutes)

Look at Roma Influencers Website (25 minutes)

Role Models in the Roma Community (55 minutes)

Feedback on what we have learned (10 mins)

Attendance (5 minutes)

### Part 2 (5 hours)

Welcome (10 minutes)

Reality & Data of early marriage and early motherhood & Participatory exercises. (80 mins)

Irish report and graphics (1 hour)

Break (15 minutes)

Comparative Report and graphics (1 hour)

Exercise 5 – My rights (1 hour)

Feedback on what we have learned (10 mins)

Attendance (5 mins)



The present training material is part of the European Project

**“Roma Influencers Network - breaking the circle of early marriages and early motherhood in Roma communities”** - ERASMUS+ Programme.

“Roma Influencers Network” project centers on early marriage and early motherhood in Roma communities and focused on empowering and awareness raising of the Roma community, especially women and girls. The main purpose is to suggest ways to change behaviors and attitudes in order to overcome, reduce or eliminate the phenomenon and its harmful impacts.

The project includes the participation of 4 countries: Greece, Ireland , Portugal and Romania.

This training material is part of the Work Package 2: “Breaking the circle of early marriages and early motherhood in Roma Communities”,

Activity 2.3: “Development of Educational and Training material” and will be used for:

Activity 2.4: “Training of Roma Influencers in 4 countries”.





WP2	Breaking the circle of early motherhood in Roma communities
2.1	Project Transnational Meeting in Lisbon
2.2	National Researches on early marriages and early motherhood in 4 countries Reports on National researches in 4 countries and Comparative report Social Media
2.3	Educational & Training Material for “Roma Influencers” in 4 countries
2.4	Training courses in 4 countries for 20 Roma women & girls (5 in Ireland) Trained as Roma Influencers for early marriages & early motherhood
2.5	Transnational Zoom Meeting of 20 Roma Influencers from 4 countries for exchange of knowledge, practices, perceptions & methodologies and creating bonds between Roma Influencers from 4 countries
WP3	Roma Influencers Network
3.1	2nd Project Transnational Meeting in Dublin – Ireland in October 2025 Transnational Workshop in Dublin – Roma Influencers Network from 4 countries for exchange of knowledge & awareness on orthcoming awareness raising campaigns, networking and strong relationships with other countries.
3.2	Awareness raising campaigns on early marriages and early motherhood in Roma settlements in 4 countries to create awareness of the Roma community, decision making centers & the wider community and • adapted positive attitude towards democratic values, fundamental rights children & women's rights into Roma culture
3.3	Transnational (virtual) Meeting of 20 Roma Influencers from 4 countries for exchange of experiences, good practices & recommendations about awareness raising campaigns
3.4	policy recommendations (national) from 4 countries & policy recommendations (transnational) Press releases, 12 newsletters, social media posts & e-mail

WP4	Influencing new Influencers
4.1	Redesigned Educational & Training Material for “40 new Roma Influencers” in 4 countries on the issue of early marriages & early motherhood new Training courses in 4 countries – 40 new Roma women & girls will be trained from Roma Influencers
4.2	National workshops with 200 representatives of NGO’s, Roma associations, local, national, regional and European Authorities, Mass Media to optimize cooperation between the Roma community and representatives of decision making centers. Social Media - Press releases etc
4.3	National Good Practices Guide - early marriages & early motherhood & Transnational Good Practices Guide
5.1	5 short films, duration: 5-10 min 400 photos shot & 100 photos edited during the awareness raising campaigns/visits Transnational Documentary Film edited by the 20 national documentary short films (duration: 50-75 min.) Transnational documentary film to European and national film festivals 20 Uploads in links & platforms
5.2	Roma Influencers Festivals in 4 countries to develop & expand understanding and responsiveness to all kinds of diversity, e.g. social, ethnic, gender and cultural diversity by the wider community

## **Role of Roma Influencers**

### **Participatory Activity - Discussion**

**Why can Roma Influencers influence young girls in the Roma Community?**

**How can Roma Influencers help young girls to improve their lives?**

**How can you encourage Roma to change their attitudes?**

**Is there a role model who you admire in the Roma community?**



## Role of Roma Influencers

- Roma women / girls are the closest to communities and can have a significant influence for social change.
- Roma influencers have the best knowledge about their communities attitudes and behaviours.
- Roma influencers care about changing discriminatory norms, especially around woman's human rights.
- Roma influencers are important in the process of addressing early marriage and early motherhood and finding solutions.
- Roma influencers can use their voice for their community.

## **Participatory Exercise**

### **Discuss**

What are the effects of early marriage and early motherhood for young Roma girls?

How can it be harmful for them and their children?

What are the advantages to Roma girls to wait until they are older to get married and have babies?

- **Adolescent girls aged between 13-18 years face the highest risk in getting married early**
- **Limited educational and employment opportunities**
- **They have limited decision making abilities and powers in choosing**
  - **education**
  - **Livelihood**
  - **Selecting a life partner**
  - **Having children**
  - **Managing household expenses etc.**
- **They are subjected to age-old customs of early marriage, dowry and gender discrimination**
- **Perpetuating the vicious cycle of exclusion and poverty with which many Roma communities struggle.**

- They are expected to conform to old societal expectations from women as daughters/bride/wife/ mother
- They mostly possess little self-value, self-respect and selfconfidence
- They largely display insufficient negotiation skills
- The Roma women/girls though aware about the issue of early marriage and its impact, did not have the tools and talking points to address this complex issue in the community. They also were unaware of the linkages between patriarchy, early marriage, domestic violence and rights violation.

## Roma Influencers Rules

- Respect: Give undivided attention to all persons
- Confidentiality: What we share in this group will remain in this group
- Openness: We will be as open and honest as possible, but we won't disclose or discuss with others' (family, neighbors and friends) personal or private issues or lives. It is okay to discuss situations as general examples, but we won't use names or other identification.
- Non-Judgmental Approach: We can disagree with another person's point of view or behavior without judging or putting him/her down.
- Sensitivity to Diversity: We will remember that members in the group may differ in any background and/or other preferences

## **The Role of the Roma Influencers**

Roma women & girls will take action to challenge the harmful practice of early marriages & early motherhood to advocate for policy change, to support the marginalized Roma community by Roma themselves amplifying their voices, to integrate their perspectives into decision making processes, overcome apathy, disconnection, disengagement, unequal access to resources, information, and opportunities, to give them the floor to express opinions, contribute to decisionmaking processes & policy decisions that affect them that shape their communities and lives, to share perspectives and collaborate with community, local, governmental, non governmental Organizations, to be the influencers to change hearts and minds of other Roma women & girls, contribute to the general objectives:

- create awareness of the Roma community, the representatives of decision making centers & the wider community and
- Adapted positive attitude towards democratic values, fundamental rights children & women's rights into Roma culture.



## Role of Roma Influencers - Training

- Provide skills in information and communication technology (ICT), to engage the Roma community in active participation
- To establish Roma Influencers Networks on the phenomenon,
- To gain knowledge and awareness in fundamental, women and child's rights, to empower for their active participation in education, employment and society
- adapt alternative ways of shaping the individual's future and to promote different life styles in the Roma community, to motivate Roma women & girls in education, employment and society.
- To raise awareness and act as role models for young Roma girls.

Roma Influencers will bring new Roma women & girls from the Roma community into the Network.

Will redesign the educational & training methodology to educate 40 new Roma women & girls from the Roma community,

Will enhance and strengthen their advocacy skills (teamwork, creativity, communication, networking, collaborating),

Will take the lead to change hearts and minds of other 40 Roma women & girls and the Roma Influencers Network will be expanded.

## **Role Models in the Roma Community Group Activity**

Each member of the group is to pick a role model

Find / give information about this person

Do a short powerpoint or other presentation on this person.

Group can google information and discuss the role model

What do you admire about the role model?

What is there job / position in the world?

Have you been influenced by them?

What have you learned from them.

# Session 1

## Part 2

# Reality & Data in each country of early marriage and early motherhood.

## European framework

- Every year at least 15million girls are married before they reach the age of 18.
- Violation of fundamental, child's, women' rights.
- Early marriage is a global problem that is not restricted to one country, culture, religion or ethnicity.
- International human rights conventions and bodies have acknowledged the need to take measures to address early marriage but the phenomenon is still viable.
- In 2015, United Nations (UN) Member States committed - through the Sustainable Development Goals - to end early marriage by 2030.
- With an estimated population between 10 to 12 million (Estimated number for the 47 member states of the Council of Europe), the Roma are among the most disadvantaged and marginalised groups in Europe.
- While often affected by poverty and social vulnerability, the Roma constitute diverse and heterogeneous communities, with groups and sub-groups representing different degrees of integration or social exclusion.
- The health situation of many Roma communities is precarious and often compounded by inadequate housing, lack of employment and limited access to education.
- In Europe, early marriage rates are particularly high among the Roma, in the respective age groups 13-17 and 15-19, more than 40% are married or have a 'companion'.

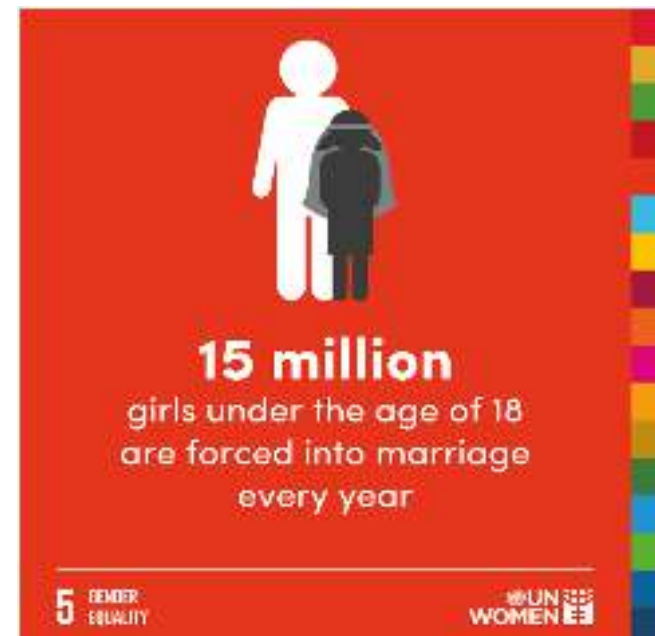
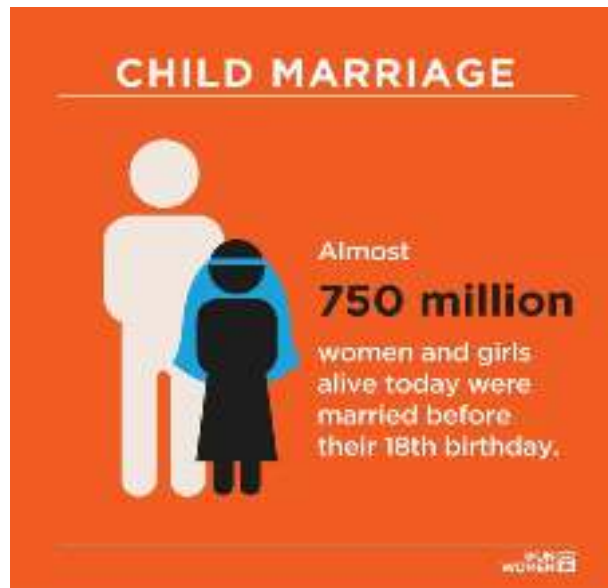
Despite the fact that the EU Roma strategic framework by 2030, the 2020-2030 National Roma Strategic Frameworks are adopted and the EU and Member States developed several initiatives to involve Roma in preparing the strategies, and consulted relevant stakeholders, such as equality bodies and national human rights institutions and mainstreamed Roma inclusion in several policy and legislative files, on major policy areas, such as employment, education, health and housing, Roma inclusion is not achieved.

All above data and facts affect the lives of millions of Roma women and girls in the EU pointing out that this extremely harmful phenomenon is a gross violation of child rights, especially the rights of girls, child neglect, deprivation of the right to childhood, education, proper and full development and freedom of choice as well as gender based violence.

**Girls Not Brides. Child Marriage Atlas** <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/learningresources/child-marriageatlas/atlas/>







<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VaaSQteodLs>

Child marriage: 'At 12, I was sold into marriage for \$9' - BBC 100 Women, BBC World Service

## Irish National Legal Framework

Child marriage is legally not allowed in Ireland. From 1 January 2019, the legal age requirement for marriage is 18 years. It is no longer possible to get a Court Exemption Order allowing a marriage to proceed if one or both parties are under 18 years.

If at least one of the persons is under the age of 18 years shall not be valid in law which means that child marriage in practice is an illegal ceremony of marriage between persons under the age of 18.

Early marriage is not defined. However, forced marriage is foreseen in legal documents and it occurs when a person is pressured into a marriage they do not consent to or cannot consent to due to age or disability. A 'forced marriage' is not the same as an 'arranged marriage', where families take a leading role in choosing the marriage partner, however the marriage itself is freely entered into by both parties.

This concept of forced marriage is clearly defined and sanctioned by law. Domestic Violence Act 2018 criminalises the act of forcing someone to enter into a ceremony of marriage or removing a person from the country for such purposes. In addition, the Family Law Act, 1995, emphasizes that marriage must be based on free will and informed consent.



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# ROMA INFLUENCERS NETWORK

## ROMA IN IRELAND



According to the 2022 Census in Ireland, the Roma population was 16,049. This was the first census in Ireland to record Roma ethnicity as a distinct category.

- **Age Composition:** The largest age groups are Roma children aged 0-14 years and Roma adults aged 25-44 years, together making up over half of the total Roma population in Ireland. The smallest group is those over 65 years old.
- **Marriage Data:** In 2022, 5,558 members of the Roma community aged 15 years and over in Ireland were married.



### KEY PROBLEMS

Information provided by Cairde's National Roma Infoline Annual Report 2023 highlights that over 70% of incoming calls were made by or on behalf of Roma experiencing homelessness. Below is the breakdown of these calls:

- 41% were living in emergency accommodation (hostel, hotel, B&B, etc.),
- 30% in overcrowded private rented accommodation,
- 18% in private rented accommodation,
- 6% in unspecified situations, and
- 3% in social housing.

According to Cairde's National Roma Infoline Annual Report 2020, during the first month of the infoline's establishment (March 2020), 16% of calls received were from individuals experiencing poverty. Of these, 92% were related to urgent needs for essential items such as food, medication, and baby supplies.






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## **International Conventions and orientations**

Ireland has adopted several international policies and implemented a national legislative framework in relation to early marriage and early motherhood.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) entered into force in September 1990. Ireland ratified the Convention on 28 September 1992. In 2016, in its periodic report on the implementation of the CRC, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that Ireland expedite the removal of all exemptions in the Family Law Act 1995 that allowed for marriage under the age of 18. As a result of this recommendation, from 1 January 2019 it is no longer possible to obtain a court exemption order allowing a marriage to take place if one or both parties are under the age of 18.



## Irish National legislative framework

**The Child Care Act 1991** is the primary piece of Irish legislation regulating childcare (alternative care) and child protection policy. The 1991 Act is a wide-ranging piece of legislation, which, at its' core, seeks to promote the welfare of children who may not be receiving adequate care and protection, and it covers several main areas of this care and protection. However, early marriage and early motherhood are not mentioned as so.

**Domestic Violence Bill 2017**, sponsored by the Minister for Justice and Equality, is the Act to consolidate the law on domestic violence. One of the objectives of this law is to consider forced marriage a criminal offence; to repeal provisions for exemption, in certain cases, from minimum age requirements for marriage.

In addition, the **Domestic Violence Act 2018**, which came into force on 1 January 2019, criminalises the act of forcing someone to enter into a ceremony of marriage or removing a person from the country for such purposes. It includes several indicators that can indicate a situation of forced marriage.

**Ireland Family Law Act 1995** (amended 2022) requires that people are over 18 before they can get married. The Family Law Act addresses early marriage by prohibiting marriage before the age of eighteen. This is the case even if either person lives in Ireland, but you marry outside of Ireland. Even if you are not ordinarily resident in the State, you must be over 18 years of age to marry someone in Ireland. There are no exceptions. The Act states that people must freely consent to marriage. Also, the person who wants to marry must have the mental capacity to understand the nature of marriage and not be related by blood or marriage to a degree that legally prohibits you from marrying each other.



## National policies and projects covering early marriage and early motherhood

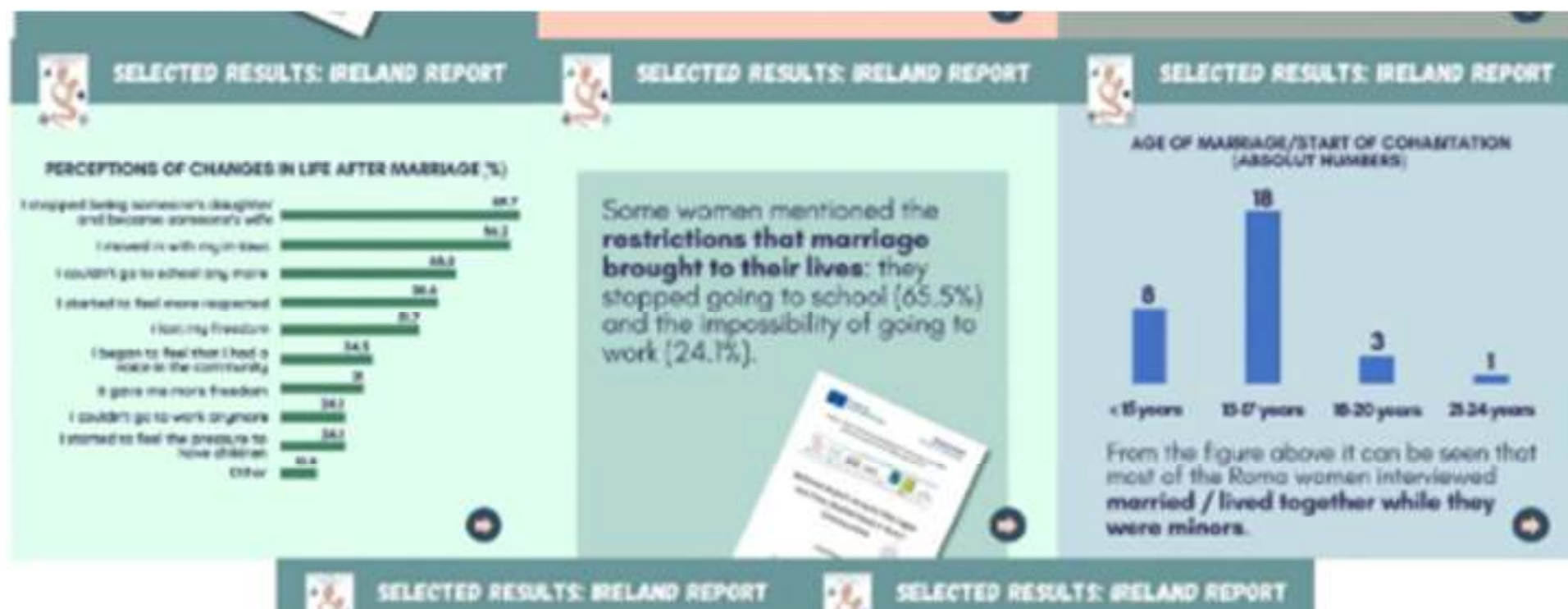
Ireland has an **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024** which recognises that “diversity and inclusion is for everyone”. However, there are certain groups that should be the focus of specific efforts to promote an inclusive environment. One of these groups mentioned in this strategy is Roma people but there is no specific reference to Roma women nor to early marriage and early motherhood that affects particularly women.

Irish Government has a **National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2024 - 2028** (NTRIS II) which aims to create a safe, fair, and inclusive Ireland where both Travellers and Roma are supported to lead inclusive, healthy, and fulfilling lives. Its overarching objectives are focused on addressing the disadvantages, discrimination, and inequalities faced by these communities across various life domains such as health, education, employment, and accommodation. The specific high-level objectives include: Combatting racism and discrimination; Ensuring equal access to education, employment, health, and housing; and Promoting equal participation across all societal sectors. The Strategy specifically emphasizes Roma women, highlighting their unique needs, particularly in gender equality and access to services such as domestic violence support, health, and housing.

Ireland has also started implementing the **Traveller and Roma Education Strategy (TRES) 2024-2030**, with its goals developed in consultation with the TRES Advisory Group and incorporates the rights-based approach that has underpinned all work on the strategy. TRES focuses on improving educational outcomes for Traveller and Roma communities in Ireland.



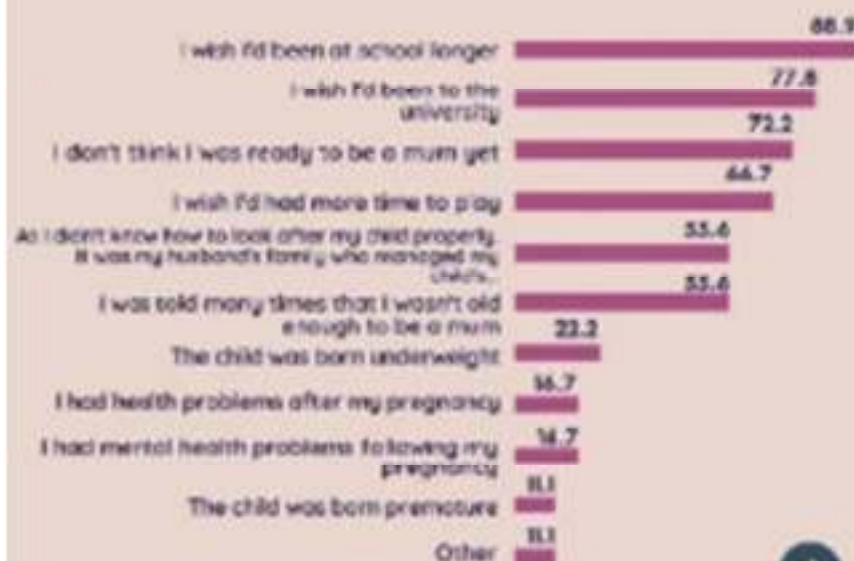
SELECTED RESULTS: IRELAND REPORT	SELECTED RESULTS: IRELAND REPORT
<p><i>Roma Influencers Network</i></p> <p>The new 'National Report on Early Marriages and Early Motherhood in Roma Communities - IRELAND' was developed as part of the <b>Roma Influencers Network</b> project's national research on early marriage and motherhood in Roma communities.</p> <p>This research was conducted across the project's partner countries: Greece (Kultura), Ireland (Cairde), Portugal (Cesla &amp; COOPERACTIVA) and Romania (EASTERN).</p>	<p><i>Roma Influencers Network</i></p> <p><b>The aim of this report</b></p> <p>is to contribute to a deeper understanding of early marriage and early motherhood by outlining the legal frameworks, relevant policies, and the lived realities of the Roma community in Ireland.</p>





## SELECTED RESULTS: IRELAND REPORT

### REASONS FOR WANTING TO HAVE CHILDREN LATER IN LIFE (%)



## SELECTED RESULTS: IRELAND REPORT

Nearly all the women expressed their wish to **continue education and experience childhood** before they became mothers.

Over half of the women felt they were **unprepared for motherhood (55.6%)** when they got married.







## Exercise 5

### My rights

#### Theme

Girls' rights and protection

#### Objective

To recognize fundamental rights and identify support networks

#### Dynamics | Circle discussion

Material: Cards with dilemmas (e.g. marrying young, leaving school)

Each person expresses their opinion and listens to that of their colleagues without interruption

Support material: Set of printed dilemmas with illustrations, girls' rights guide