

Work Package 2 (Activity 2.3) Education and Training Material

Session 4 Alternatives Girls with a future

*Our Future, Our Choice
Freedom to Dream, Time to Grow*

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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.

Attendance (5 mins)

*Our Future,
Our Choice*

Freedom to Dream, Time to Grow



Session 4

Part 1





La entrevista | Beatriz Carrillo

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Following on from the research carried out as part of the European Project Roma Influencers Network - breaking the circle of early marriages and early motherhood in Roma communities (Grant Agreement n. 2024-1-EL01-KA220-ADU-000247507) in the framework of the Programme ERASMUS+, some of the most relevant data is presented below:

i) Consequences of early marriage

The women interviewed from all the countries said that getting married at a young age meant they had to stop their education and/or employment.

	Greece		Ireland		Portugal		Romania	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
I couldn't go to school anymore	21.6	8	65.5	19	33.3	11	26.3	10
I couldn't go to work anymore	5.4	2	24.1	7	33.3	11	31.6	12

ii) Consequences of early motherhood

The same goes for the consequences of early motherhood.

	Greece		Ireland		Portugal		Romania	
	%	a.n.	%	a.n.	%	a.n.	%	a.n.
I wish I'd been at school longer	16.2	6	88.9	16	73.7	14	57.8	26
I wish I'd been to the university	16.2	6	77.8	14	26.3	5	18.8	9

Participatory Group Discussion

Would you like to have continued education?

How would continuing education benefit young Roma girls?

In this day and age is it still acceptable to not continue education?

What about your daughters?

Roma in Ireland particularly stressed the importance of education – why?

Becoming a mother early in life also means missing out on childhood.

	Greece		Ireland		Portugal		Romania	
	%	a.n.	%	a.n.	%	a.n.	%	a.n.
I wish I'd had more time to play	13.5	5	66.7	12	63.2	12	4.4	2

Participatory Group Discussion

Do you feel you have missed out on childhood?

Do you think your daughter is experiencing childhood more than you did?

Early motherhood can also have negative consequences for the health of both mothers and newborn babies.

	Greece		Ireland		Portugal		Romania	
	%	a.n.	%	a.n.	%	a.n.	%	a.n.
I had health problems after my pregnancy	2.7	1	16.7	3	10.5	2	20	9
I had mental health problems after my pregnancy	5.4	2	16.7	3	15.8	3	0	0
The child was born premature	2.7	1	11.1	2	0	0	2.2	1
The child was born under weight	0	0	22.2	4	5.3	1	37.8	17

Group comment on each statement as we go through them

iii) How you can intervene:

Many suggestions and opinions were made by those who believe that action can be taken to prevent and reduce early marriages and pregnancies.

‘Before they get married and have children, they must grow up, become women. To work. To feel themselves first.’ Roma Woman, 27 years, Greece.

‘Girls must at least finish high school, have a high school diploma, and be able to find a job to comfortably raise their children.’ Roma Woman, 36 years, Greece.

‘Girls need to learn that when they become mothers, responsibilities arise. As children, they should learn to live carefree.’ Roma Woman, 32 years, Greece.

‘Girls should continue school, learn a craft. Family can wait. It will come at any age.’ Roma Woman, 26 years, Greece.

'Girls are still children. They should not give birth. They should live their lives.' Roma Woman, 40 years, Greece.

'I would advise them to finish school, get a job, see what life is like and then have a family.' Roma Woman, 62 years, Greece.

'We have to tell them that they have to grow up. Girls are children. They don't know what love and motherhood mean. Obligations are created.' Roma Woman, 71 years, Greece.

'It's a waste of life, so let them know how to choose and how to enjoy life, and only then think about it.' Roma Woman, 43 years, Portugal.

'To prevent it! Get to know each other first, give it time, and then become parents.' Roma Woman, 37 years, Portugal.

‘Girls should prioritise studying.’ Roma Woman, 28 years, Portugal.

‘Children should finish school earlier and become mothers at an older age.’ Roma Woman, 48 years, Greece.

‘Children should get married at older ages, such as 20 to 22. They should go to school and finish school.’ Roma Woman, 19 years, Greece.

In Romania and Portugal in particular, the importance of role models is emphasised. The role of older women is also highlighted in Portugal:

'I think it would be good if we had more positive role models'. Roma Woman, 19 years, Romania.

'Roma women should talk to teenagers and set an example for them'. Roma Woman, 24 years, Portugal.

'A respected woman in the community should be the one to have this conversation.' Roma Woman, 46 years, Portugal.

'Talking to older people it makes you realise that there's time for everything and that there's no point in rushing.' Roma Woman, 50 years, Portugal.

'Meet someone who is important and respected in the community.' Roma Woman, 28 years, Portugal.

‘Parents need to learn that it is wrong for children to have children. It would be good for them to get married and have children at a legal age. To enjoy their lives. To find a job so they can live. To have a maximum of 3 children and not 10.’ Roma Woman, 53 years, Greece.

'Parents should send their children to school. When children go to school, they think differently, they become smarter. Parents should not marry their children young.' Roma Woman, 30 years, Greece.

‘The problem are the mothers-in-law. The mothers of the boys. We need to talk to the mothers of the boys and tell them that girls are still children. They need to finish elementary and high school. They need to get married after they are 18. They need to know what they want.’ Roma Woman, 28 years, Greece.

‘There should be fines and imprisonment for parents who "marry" their teenage children.’ Roma Woman, 28 years, Greece.

Others are aimed at the girls themselves and their capacity for self-determination so that they don't give in to community pressures:

'We need to tell girls that they need to go to school, finish it, go to college so they can get a job and be independent. When all of that is done, get married so they can support themselves and their children.' Roma Woman, 45 years, Greece.

'We need to tell girls that they need to continue school, study, get a job, have their own money and everything will come at the right age. e.g. 25 years old.' Roma Woman, 40 years, Greece.

'Many girls don't know how not to get pregnant. If someone explained it to us, maybe we wouldn't have children so early.' Roma Woman, 25 years, Romania.

In conclusion, here's a quote from a Roma woman who emphasises integration as a fundamental pillar:

'Society has to stop being xenophobic. Because they never make integration easy. Once there is ease of integration, it will be easier for the girls and the Roma community to become aware.'

Roma Woman, 29 years, Portugal.

Session 4

Part 2

“Message to my future” sheet

✨ Message to my Future ✨


My name _____

When I think about my future, I want to be...

To do that, I'm going to... _____

Something I'll never forget about myself:

One piece of advice I leave for myself:

 (free space for drawing or collage) |

Exercise 1

Who am I?

Theme

Self-knowledge and self-esteem

Objective

To identify personal qualities and promote self-worth.

Dynamics | "Mirror of Strength"

Materials: A3 sheets, mirrors, colored markers

Each girl draws the outline of her face and writes down 3 qualities she likes about herself.

Sharing in a circle: each girl compliments the other girl next to her

Support material: Poster with positive phrases and illustrated symbolic mirror

Exercise 2

Communicating and socializing

Theme

Social skills and communication

Objective

To develop empathy, active listening and clear expression

Dynamics | Paper theater

Materials: Cards with everyday situations (arguing with a friend, asking for help, refusing something)

In pairs, they act out the situation and the group comments on alternatives

Support material: Set of laminated cards with illustrations of the situations

Exercise 3

My body, my rules

Theme

Body, consent and sexuality

Objective

To reinforce respect for personal boundaries and the right to one's body

Dynamics | Myths & Truths

Material: Cards with statements about sexuality (true and false)
Read them out in groups and each person goes to the "MYTH" or "TRUTH" side and justifies it.

Support material: Cards with colored symbols (M/V) and poster with reproductive rights

Exercise 4

Deciding is Power

Theme

Decision-making and life plans

Objective

To explore choices and planning for the future

Dynamics | Dream map

Materials: Magazines, scissors, glue, cardboard

Create a "vision board" with images of what they want for the future

Support material: "My Future" collage template, with printed frame and encouraging phrases

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

This exercise has already been used in session 2

Exercise 6

School as an ally

Theme

Valuing education

Objective

To promote staying in school and access to Opportunities

Dynamics | Inspiring meeting

Material: Guest from the community (a woman who has studied and overcome barriers)

Conversation round with questions from the girls

Support material: Preparation sheet with questions, mini-biography of the guest on poster

Closing

Symbolic certificate of participation;
Presentation of the "Dream Maps" to family members;
Final dynamic: "Message for my future";
Support material: Certificate template with space for name and personalized phrase; "Message to my future" sheet with illustration for coloring.