

Training of new Roḿa Influncers by Roma Influncers

BREAKING THE CIRCLE OF EARLY MARRIAGES

AND EARLY MOTHERHOOD IN ROMA COMMUNITIES



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ROMA INFLUENCERS NETWORK/2024-1-EL01-KA220-ADU-000247507

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1. About the Project

THE PRESENT REVISED TRAINING MATERIAL (WORK PACKAGE 4, ACTIVITY 4.1), IS INTEGRATED IN THE EUROPEAN PROJECT:

- “ROMA INFLUENCERS NETWORK - BREAKING THE CIRCLE OF EARLY MARRIAGES AND EARLY MOTHERHOOD IN ROMA COMMUNITIES” (GRANT AGREEMENT NO. 2024-1-EL01-KA220-ADU -000247507) IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME.
- IT SPECIFICALLY CONSTITUTES THE EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL THAT
- WILL BE USED BY THE ALREADY TRAINED ROMA INFLUENCERS TO EDUCATE NEW ROMA INFLUENCERS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE NETWORK.
- THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF WORK PACKAGE 4, ACTIVITY 4.1, IS TO EXPAND BOTH NATIONAL AND TRANSNATIONAL NETWORKS OF ROMA INFLUENCERS.
- THIS WILL BE ACHIEVED BY IDENTIFYING, INTRODUCING, AND TRAINING NEW ROMA INFLUENCERS, BUILDING ON THE
- GROUNDWORK LAID BY EXISTING INFLUENCERS WITHIN ROMA COMMUNITIES.
- THE INFLUENCERS WILL SUPPORT AND GUIDE NEW PARTICIPANTS, HELPING THEM DEVELOP THE SKILLS AND CONFIDENCE NEEDED TO BECOME ACTIVE INFLUENCERS IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.



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About the Project

THE PRESENT REVISED TRAINING MATERIAL (WORK PACKAGE 4, ACTIVITY 4.1), IS BASED ON THE EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS DEVELOPED IN WORK PACKAGE 2, ACTIVITY 2.3 BY THE ORGANIZATIONS PARTICIPATING IN THE PROJECT :

GREECE: KLIMAKA WWW.KLIMAKA.ORG.GR

IRELAND: CAIRDE WWW.CAIRDE.IE

PORTUGAL: CESIS WWW.CESIS.ORG &
COOPERACTIVA WWW.COOPERACTIVA.INFO

ROMANIA: SASTIPEN WWW.SASTIPEN.RO/RO/

VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO FIND ALL THE PROJECT'S OUTPUTS, INCLUDING THE EDUCATIONAL HANDBOOKS AND THE BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [HTTPS://WWW.ROMAINFLUENCERSNETWORK.EU/LIBRARYDELIVERABLES/](https://www.romainfluencersnetwork.eu/librarydeliverables/)



INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT WORK PACKAGES & ACTIVITIES

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.

Activities

- national researches & reports & comparative report to describe and analyze the harmful practice of early marriages
- and early motherhood and its consequences in 4 countries to compare it in transnational level, to verify the need of
- intervention and change
- training courses to train Roma women & girls in each country to become influencers on the concern of early
- marriages and early motherhood
- Roma Influencers Network (national & transnational) to engage the Roma community and specially Roma women &
- girls in active participation breaking the harmful practice
- awareness raising campaigns to Roma settlements to create awareness of the Roma
- national & transnational workshops, documentary films (national & transnational) & Roma Influencers festivals to
- increase awareness of women’s institutions, local and regional authorities, national & European institutions, NGOs,
- civil society, policy decision makers, mass media & broader community on the thematic of early marriages and early
- motherhood
- good practices guide (national & transnational) & policy recommendations (national & transnational) to create
- awareness of decision-making centers representatives

Statistics on Early Marriages



In some Roma and vulnerable communities, up to 50% of girls marry before 18. Many become mothers before completing education. These patterns affect generations of women and families.

UNDERSTANDING THE NUMBERS HELPS US CREATE MEANINGFUL CHANGE

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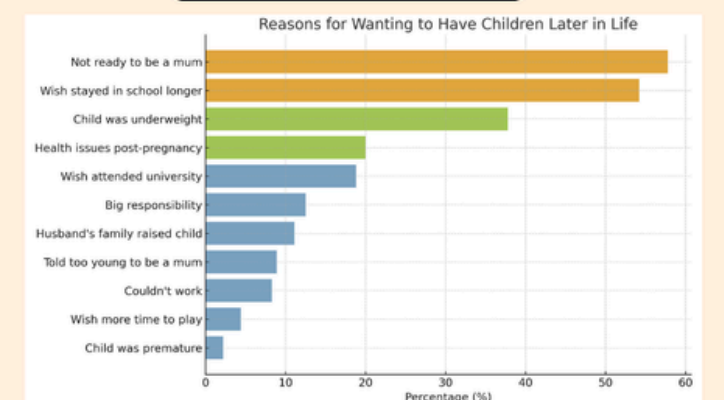
Roma Influencers Network project, coordinated by KLMKA under the Erasmus+ Programme, conducted national research (Work Package 2) in five countries—Greece, Romania, Portugal & Ireland—focusing on early marriages and early motherhood in Roma communities. The findings presented here are based on desk research and fieldwork (questionnaires and interviews) carried out between January and March 2024. Research tools were translated and adapted to each national context and are now available in English and local languages. These results mark the beginning of wider knowledge-sharing efforts across countries.

FIGURE 1
AGE OF WOMEN AT THE BIRTH OF THEIR FIRST CHILD (%)



- Most Roma women (92%) had their first child as minors, and 96% of pregnancies were unplanned.
- Eight out of ten said they would have preferred to wait longer before becoming mothers.

FIGURE 2
REASONS FOR WANTING TO BECOME A MOTHER LATER IN LIFE (%)



- Most women said they weren't ready to be mothers (57.8%) or wished they had spent more time in school (54.2%).



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Reality & data of early marriages and early motherhood

COMPARATIVE REPORT SELECTED RESEARCHES RESULTS IN 4 COUNTRIES



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Roma Influencers Network

Project Overview

The Roma Influencers Network project (Erasmus+, Grant Agreement n. 2024-1-EL01-KA220-ADU-000247507) aims to empower and sensitize the Roma community, particularly women and girls, to address the detrimental effects of early marriage and early motherhood. The primary goal is to facilitate overcoming, reducing, or eliminating these practices.

Project Consortium

- Greece
- Ireland
- Portugal
- Romania

Project Aims

- The overarching aim is to contribute to a deeper understanding of early marriage and early motherhood among Roma women and girls. This encompasses:
 - Analyzing legal frameworks
 - Examining relevant policies
 - Assessing the current situation within the Roma community in each partner country.

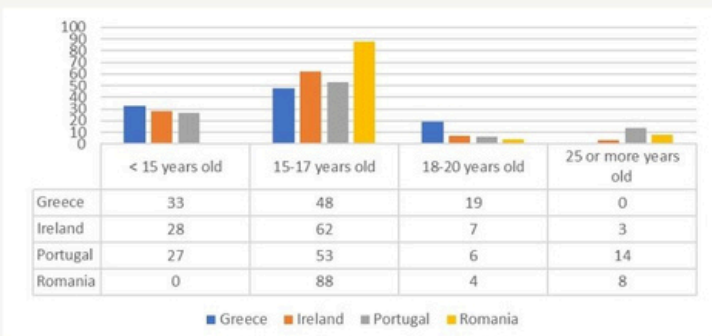
This newsletter highlights the key aspects of the Roma Influencers Network project and its related national report on early marriage and early motherhood within Roma communities. The project aims to empower and sensitize the Roma community, particularly women and girls, in Greece, Ireland, Portugal, and Romania, to overcome the harmful effects of these practices. The national report contributes to a better understanding of the legal frameworks, policies, and the situation of the Roma community in each partner country.

National Report Context

This report is an integral part of WP2, Activity 2.2, led by CESIS. It represents the culmination of national research conducted within Roma communities across the participating countries.

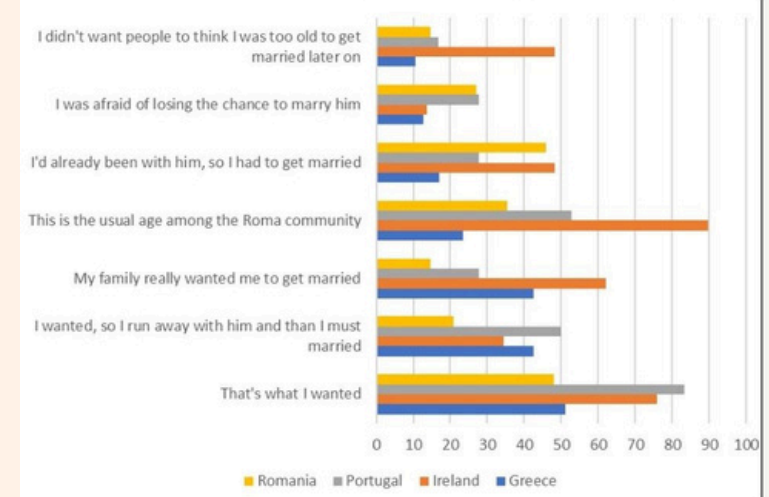


DATA 1- Age of marriage/start of cohabitation, by country (%)

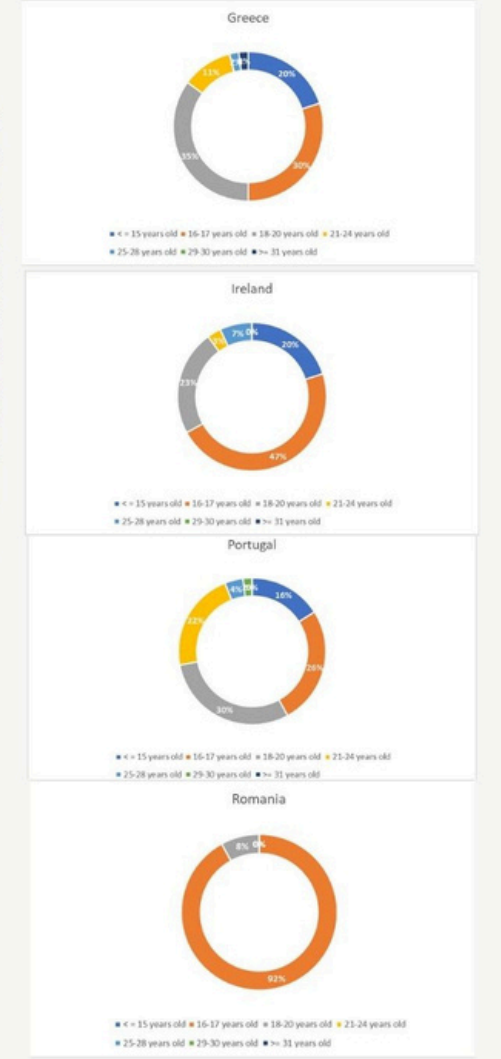


Most of the Roma women interviewed had married or entered into a partnership while they were minors, regardless of the country. Greece emerges as the country with the highest number of women interviewed who married under the age of 15 (33%). However, the age group between 15 and 17 is the one with the highest number of women who married at that age, especially in Romania. This information shows that there is a tendency towards early marriage in these populations, regardless of country of origin. For women in particular, marriage is perceived as a rite of passage from childhood to adulthood in a world where childhood is short and adolescence is almost non-existent.

DATA 2- Reasons for marrying at this age, by country (%)



MORE SPECIFICALLY, MOST BIRTHS GENERALLY TOOK PLACE BEFORE THE AGE OF 20. HOWEVER, MOST OF THE ROMA WOMEN INTERVIEWED HAD THEIR FIRST CHILD AS MINORS, AND IN MOST CASES BEFORE THE AGE OF 15, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ROMANIA. THE YOUNGEST MOTHERS, AGED 13, WERE FOUND AMONG GREEK, PORTUGUESE AND ROMA WOMEN LIVING IN IRELAND.



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Reality & data of early marriages and early motherhood



NATIONAL REPORT ON EARLY MARRIAGES AND EARLY MOTHERHOOD IN ROMA COMMUNITIES

Romania Report

This national report is part of the Work Package 2: "Breaking the circle of early marriages and early motherhood in Roma Communities", and in particular of the Activity 2.2: "National research on early marriages and early motherhood among Roma community".

The aim of the report is to contribute to a better understanding of early marriage and early motherhood, outlining the legal framework and policies and the situation of Roma community.

Preventing early marriage and early motherhood

- Given the importance of the issue of early marriage and motherhood and how it can affect the lives of young Roma women, not only physically but also in terms of their choices and futures, respondents' opinions highlight the need for intervention.
- In this sense, promoting some activities to reduce and/or prevent early marriage and early motherhood - 48 (96%) and 47 (94%) respondents respectively.

Women empowerment

'Be encouraged to have a career before we get married.'
Roma Woman, 21 years.

Information and advice on health

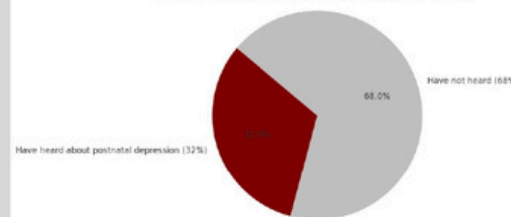
'The risks girls face when getting married early should be promoted.'
Roma Woman, 19 years.

Mental Health

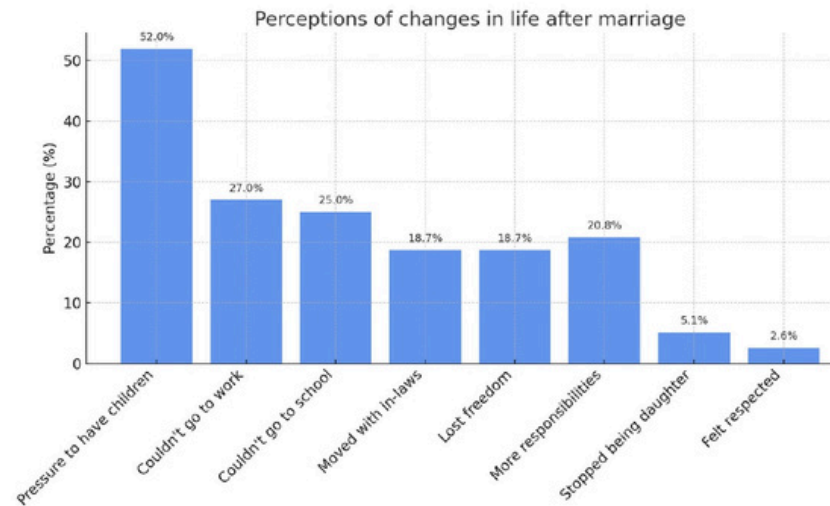
- 48% reported tiredness.
- 38% mentioned physical demands.

The survey reveals a significant burden on the mental and physical well-being of young mothers, highlighting the need for mental health support and resources.

Awareness of Postnatal Depression Among Roma Women



Perceptions of changes in life after marriage



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RESEARCH RESULTS ROMANIA

EXPOSING EARLY MARRIAGE ISSUES

01 EARLY MARRIAGE

Most women (87.5%) started marriage or cohabitation between 15-17 years old, while only a few did so later, after age 18.

02 MOTHERHOOD

Early motherhood was common, with some women already pregnant at the time of marriage. For many, becoming a mother meant taking on adult responsibilities while still in adolescence.

03 MENTAL HEALTH

For many young mothers, early motherhood brought both joy and challenges. While some felt tired or overwhelmed, others adapted with strength and discovered new sources of love and responsibility.

04 FUTURE PERCEPTION

Many women feel that early marriage and motherhood limit their future. They suggest solutions like empowerment programs, health education, and support in their communities.

05 COMMUNITY IMPACT

In Roma communities, family and community members often play an active role in supporting young mothers. This support reflects shared responsibilities and the potential for positive community involvement in improving maternal being.

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Our Group Rules

2024

- Respect each other's voices and experiences
- Confidentiality stays in this room
- Non-judgment creates safety



- Active listening with open hearts
- Diversity and inclusion welcome all
- Together we create change



2. GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

THIS SESSION IS DESIGNED TO HELP PARTICIPANTS GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER, CREATE A SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT, SHARE EXPECTATIONS, AND BUILD TRUST WITHIN THE GROUP THROUGH INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES AND OPEN DISCUSSION.

3. THE ROLE OF ROMA INFLUENCERS

THIS SESSION EXPLORES THE ROLE OF ROMA INFLUENCERS AS ACTIVE VOICES WITHIN THEIR COMMUNITIES, FOCUSING ON LEADERSHIP, COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT, ADVOCACY, AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF ROMA WOMEN AND GIRLS. PARTICIPANTS WILL REFLECT ON HOW THEY CAN SUPPORT POSITIVE CHANGE, RAISE AWARENESS, AND ENCOURAGE EDUCATION, PARTICIPATION, AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.



Leadership. Voice. Empathy. Advocacy

Who is a Roma Influencer?



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INFLUENCERS FROM THE COMMUNITY

- Roma women and girls are often the closest to their communities and play an essential role as first responders, supporters, and agents of social change.
- Roma Influencers are trusted members of the community who understand the realities, challenges, values, and needs of the people they work with. Their experiences and connection with the community allow them to build trust and have a meaningful impact on the lives of girls and women.
- Because they are deeply familiar with community attitudes and behaviours, Roma Influencers can actively contribute to challenging harmful stereotypes and discriminatory norms, especially those affecting women's rights, education, health, and equal opportunities. Through leadership, empathy, and community involvement, they can inspire positive change and empower other Roma women and girls to believe in their future and their voices.

INFLUENCERS FROM THE COMMUNITY

- ROMA INFLUENCERS ARE KEY ACTORS IN THE EFFORT TO PREVENT AND ADDRESS EARLY MARRIAGES AND EARLY MOTHERHOOD WITHIN THEIR COMMUNITIES. THEIR CLOSE CONNECTION WITH ROMA FAMILIES AND YOUNG GIRLS ALLOWS THEM TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE SOCIAL REALITIES, CHALLENGES, AND PRESSURES THAT OFTEN CONTRIBUTE TO THESE SITUATIONS.
- FOR THIS REASON, IT IS ESSENTIAL TO SUPPORT THEIR ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT AND STRENGTHEN THEIR KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE EMOTIONAL, EDUCATIONAL, SOCIAL, AND HEALTH CONSEQUENCES OF EARLY MARRIAGES AND EARLY MOTHERHOOD.
- BY DEVELOPING THEIR COMMUNICATION, LEADERSHIP, ADVOCACY, AND COMMUNITY INTERVENTION SKILLS, ROMA INFLUENCERS CAN CONTRIBUTE TO CREATING SUSTAINABLE AND LONG-TERM POSITIVE CHANGE. THROUGH AWARENESS, EDUCATION, SUPPORT, AND EMPOWERMENT, THEY CAN HELP BUILD SAFER ENVIRONMENTS WHERE ROMA GIRLS AND WOMEN ARE ENCOURAGED TO CONTINUE THEIR EDUCATION, MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS, AND DEVELOP THEIR OWN FUTURE.

3. ROLE OF ROMA INFLUENCERS

- *BUILD A SOUND UNDERSTANDING ON HUMAN RIGHTS , HUMAN AND CHILD RIGHTS AND HOW IT IS LINKED WITH THE ISSUE OF ERALY MARRIAGES AND EARLY MOTHERHOOD. THIS UNDERSTANDING WILL ALSO INCLUDE WAYS IN WHICH GEBDER ROLES LEAD TO VIOLATIONS OF WOMEN IN ACHIEVING THEIR POTENTIAL.*
- *CREATE AWARENESS ON THE REASONS WHY EARLY MARRIAGES & EARLY MOTHERHOOD ARE SO PREVALENT. PARTICIPANTS WILL BE ABLE TO ANALYZE THE MESSAGES WE RECEIVE FROM THE SOCIETY ON THE ROLES WOMEN MUST PLAY, WHICH IS INTRISICALLY LINKED TO WHY FAMILLES CHOOSE TO GET THEIR DAUGHTER MARRIED EARLY. WITH THIS UNDERSTANDING, PARTICIPANTS WILL BE ABLE TO FRAME THEUR ARGUMENTS AGAINST THIS THEREFORE*
- *ROMA INFLUENCERS PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN PREVENTING EARLY MARRIAGES AND EARLY MOTHERHOOD BY SUPPORTING GIRLS, RAISING AWARENESS, AND PROMOTING EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN ROMA COMMUNITIES.*
- *IN ROMANIA, COMMUNITY HEALTH MEDIATORS ARE ALSO KEY ACTORS IN VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES, HELPING FAMILIES ACCESS HEALTHCARE, EDUCATION, AND SOCIAL SERVICES. PREVENTING EARLY MARRIAGES REQUIRES INTEGRATED SERVICES AND STRONG MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAMWORK BETWEEN MEDIATORS, SOCIAL WORKERS, TEACHERS, HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS, AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN ORDER TO PROVIDE EFFECTIVE SUPPORT FOR GIRLS AND FAMILIES.*

The Reality of Early Marriages

Early marriage remains a sensitive reality in many Roma communities, often rooted in tradition and economic circumstances. Understanding this context with empathy is the first step toward meaningful change.





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Understanding Roma Communities and Cultural Diversity

IDENTITY, BELONGING, AND CULTURAL TRADITIONS

Traditional and non-traditional communities
Cultural values, customs, and family influence
Identity and community belonging
Effects of discrimination and social exclusion



Causes and Risk Factors of Early Marriages and Early Motherhood

POVERTY, EXCLUSION, AND LIMITED OPPORTUNITIES

Poverty and social vulnerability

School dropout and lack of access to education

Limited access to healthcare services

Community pressure and gender roles

Reduced future opportunities for girls



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Impact on Girls' Lives

SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND HEALTH CONSEQUENCES

Emotional stress and anxiety

Interrupted education and lost opportunities

Early responsibilities and dependency

Health risks related to adolescent pregnancy

Reduced personal development

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Supporting Girls and Building Positive Futures

EMPOWERMENT, LEADERSHIP, AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Importance of education and empowerment

Role of Roma Influencers and health mediators

Multidisciplinary teamwork and integrated services

Creating safe opportunities for girls

Encouraging dreams, leadership, and equal opportunities



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Social and Emotional Impact

Early marriages disrupt family dynamics, creating cycles of dependency and limiting girls' roles within their communities. Young brides often face isolation from peers and loss of childhood connections.

The emotional toll includes anxiety, depression, and diminished self-worth. Girls experience grief over lost opportunities and struggle with the weight of adult responsibilities before they are ready.



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Education Opens New Opportunities

PERSONAL GROWTH AND EQUAL ACCESS

- Importance of education for girls
- Personal growth and independence
- Discovering talents and abilities
- Access to equal opportunities



Every Girl Has the Right to Dream

DREAMS, GOALS, AND OPPORTUNITIES

Future aspirations and life goals

Career opportunities and professional growth

Breaking limitations and stereotypes

Encouraging ambition and leadership



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Believe in Your Voice and Your Strength

SELF-CONFIDENCE AND MOTIVATION

Building self-confidence and inner strength

Emotional support and encouragement

Positive role models in the community

Motivation and resilience for the future

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My Future. My Choice.

FREEDOM, RIGHTS, AND INFORMED DECISIONS

Importance of informed decisions

Freedom to continue education

Healthy relationships and personal safety

Equal rights and opportunities for girls

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Impact on Education and Health

HOW EARLY MARRIAGES AFFECT SCHOOLING AND PHYSICAL WELLBEING

Early marriage leads to school dropout, limiting girls' futures and economic independence. Young mothers face serious health risks including complications during pregnancy and childbirth.

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Girls With a Future

EVERY GIRL DESERVES THE FREEDOM TO DREAM AND GROW



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Education Opens Doors

Education creates pathways to independence, skills development, and lasting opportunities. Every girl deserves the chance to learn, grow, and build a future of her own choosing.



Dreams Matter

EVERY DREAM YOU HOLD IS A SEED FOR
YOUR FUTURE



11

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Your future has no limits

Career Possibilities



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Freedom of Choice and Self- Confidence

Your choices shape your future. Every decision you make—about education, relationships, and your path—belongs to you. Autonomy means having the power to decide what is best for your life.



Self-confidence grows when you trust yourself. Believe in your abilities, speak your truth, and know that your voice matters. You are capable of achieving your dreams.



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What is Storytelling ?

Personal stories have the power to inspire, connect, and create change. When we share our experiences openly, we give others permission to do the same and build bridges of understanding.

How Personal Stories Create Change

THE RIPPLE EFFECT OF SHARING YOUR TRUTH

When one woman shares her story, it creates waves of transformation. Personal experiences inspire others to speak, connect communities, and spark lasting change across generations.



How to Speak from Experience

Be honest and vulnerable. Share what you truly felt. Use "I" statements. Focus on emotions, not just facts. Speak from the heart, not from perfection.





Building Trust Through Stories

HOW STORYTELLING CREATES CONNECTION AND COMMUNITY

When we share our stories, we create bridges of understanding. Trust grows through vulnerability and authentic connection. In Roma communities, storytelling strengthens bonds and builds lasting support networks.

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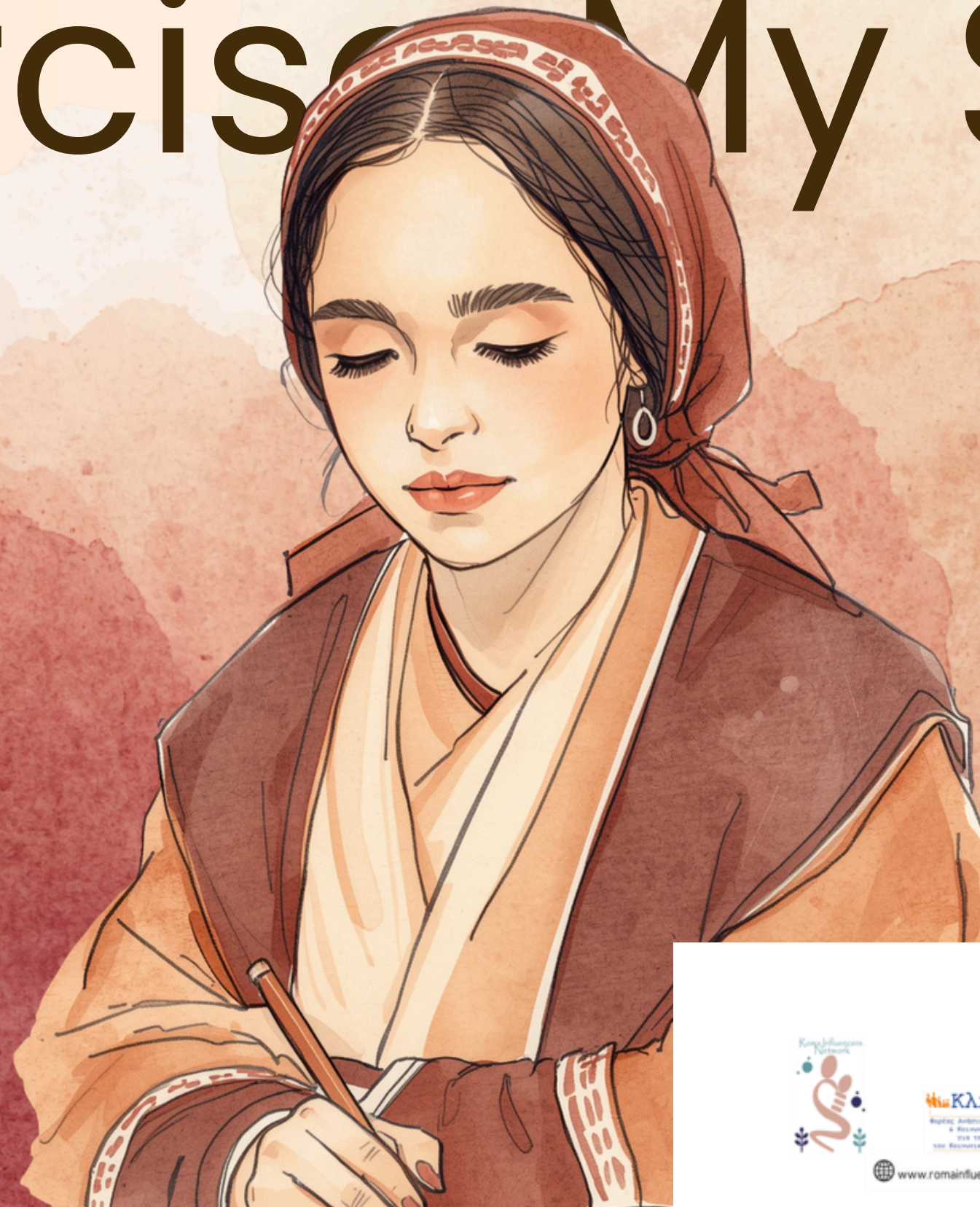


Interactive Exercise: My Story

Take a moment to reflect on your journey. What experiences have shaped who you are today? Write about a meaningful moment in your life that you feel comfortable sharing.

Prompts to guide you:

- What is one thing you are proud of?
- Who has inspired you?
- What dream do you hold for your future?



A Difficult Moment I Overcame

Reflect on a challenging time in your life. How did you find strength? What did you learn about yourself? Your story of resilience can inspire others.



The Message I Want Girls to Hear

20

CRAFT YOUR EMPOWERING MESSAGE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

Think of a young Roma girl facing difficult choices. What words of wisdom, hope, or encouragement would you share with her? Write your message from the heart.



Communication and Empathy

Empathic communication is the foundation of meaningful connection. When we listen with our hearts and speak with understanding, we create safe spaces where others feel truly heard and valued.



Active Listening Builds Connection



Active listening means giving your full attention, making eye contact, and showing you care. It builds trust and helps others feel valued and understood.

TRULY HEARING OTHERS OPENS HEARTS AND MINDS

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Empathic Communication

Speaking with empathy means truly understanding another person's feelings before responding. Use gentle words, validate emotions, and create safe spaces for honest conversation.





How to Support Vulnerable Girls

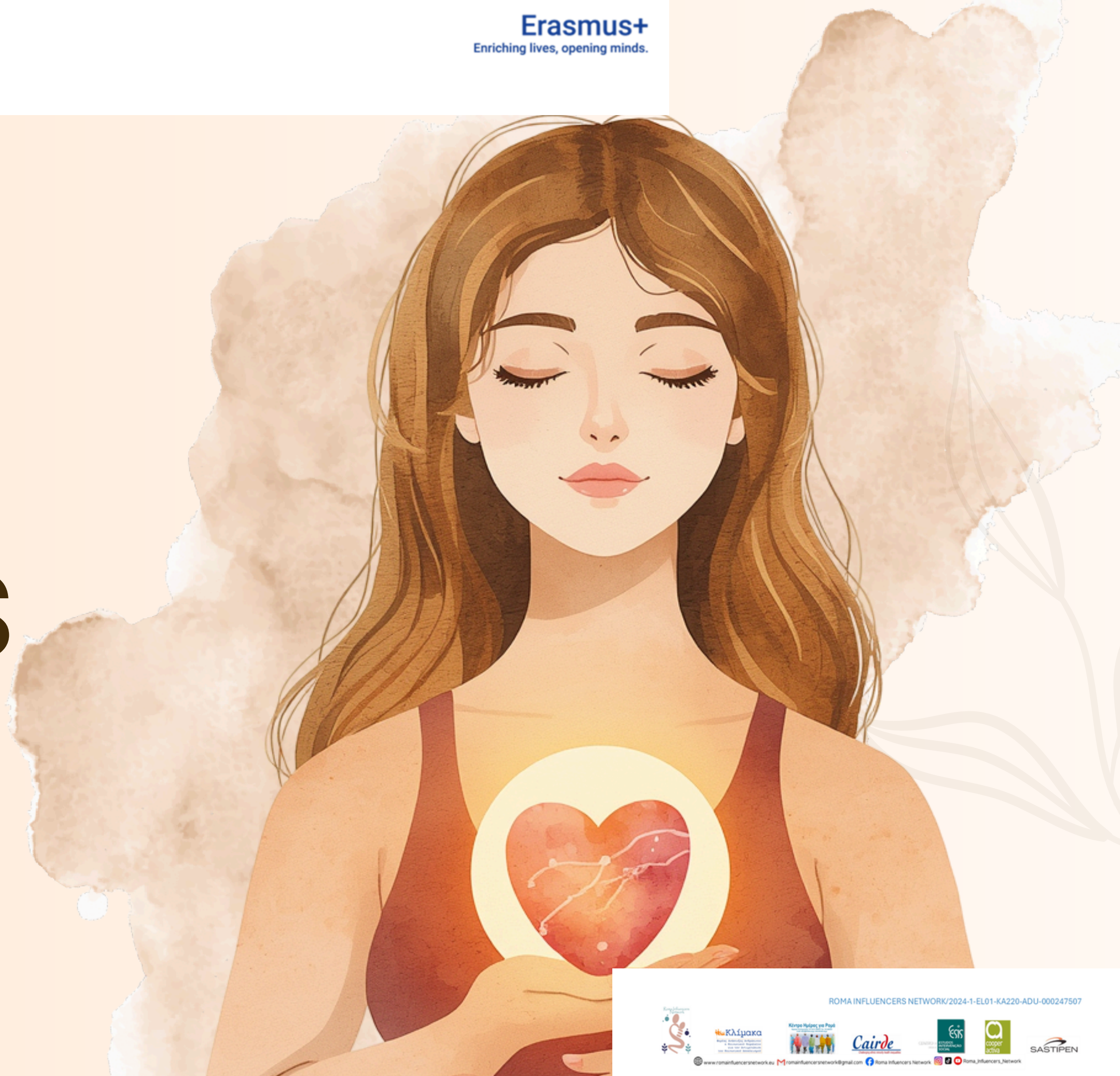
PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR MENTORSHIP AND GUIDANCE

Listen without judgment, create safe spaces for sharing, connect girls with resources, be consistent and reliable, celebrate small victories, and empower them to make their own choices.



Mental Health Matters

TAKING CARE OF YOUR EMOTIONAL
WELLBEING IS ESSENTIAL



Understanding Stress and Anxiety

Stress is your body's natural response to challenges. Learning to recognize and manage stress helps you stay healthy, focused, and emotionally balanced. Remember: it's okay to pause and breathe.





Understanding Postpartum Depression

COMPASSIONATE SUPPORT FOR NEW MOTHERS IN OUR COMMUNITY

Postpartum depression affects many new mothers and is not a sign of weakness. Symptoms may include sadness, exhaustion, anxiety, and difficulty bonding with baby. With understanding, support, and care from family and community, recovery is possible.



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Asking for Help is Strength

REACHING OUT CONNECTS US TO THE SUPPORT WE DESERVE



2026

Seeking help is not weakness—it is courage. Every strong woman has a network of support behind her. Whether from family, friends, or professionals, asking for help opens doors to healing and growth.

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Understanding Your Body is Empowerment

Knowledge about reproductive health gives you the power to make informed decisions about your body and your future. Every woman deserves access to clear, respectful health education.



Body Changes and Puberty

UNDERSTANDING YOUR BODY'S NATURAL DEVELOPMENT

Puberty is a natural journey every girl experiences. Your body grows taller, develops curves, and prepares for adulthood. These changes are normal and beautiful signs of becoming a young woman.



Reproductive Health Basics

Menstruation is a natural monthly cycle. Understanding your body helps you track health patterns and recognize what is normal for you. Periods typically last 3-7 days and occur every 21-35 days.



Fertility and pregnancy are connected to the menstrual cycle. Knowing when ovulation occurs helps with family planning. A healthy pregnancy requires proper nutrition, rest, and medical care.

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Protecting Your Health Through Knowledge

Understanding sexually transmitted diseases and prevention methods empowers you to make informed choices. Knowledge about protection, regular health check-ups, and open communication with healthcare providers are essential steps toward safeguarding your wellbeing.



Myths vs. Truths: What You Need to

MYTHS:

- Early marriage protects girls
- Education is not important for girls
- Young mothers are healthier
- Traditions cannot change
- Girls have no other options

TRUTHS:

- Early marriage limits opportunities
- Education empowers and protects
- Early pregnancy carries health risks
- Communities evolve and grow
- Every girl deserves choices



Interactive Workshop Activities

Role Play Scenarios:
Act out supportive
conversations with a
friend facing pressure.
Practice saying "no" with
confidence. Share what
you learned.

Reflection Questions:
"My dream in 5 years..."
"What would you say to a
13-year-old girl?"
Share in pairs or small
groups.





Our Future. Our Choice. Freedom to Dream.

COMMUNITY ACTION FOR LASTING CHANGE

Together we organize awareness campaigns, build peer support networks, and work with families. Time to grow. Time to lead. Time to inspire the next generation of Roma women.

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Thank You

OUR FUTURE. OUR CHOICE. FREEDOM TO DREAM. TIME TO GROW.

