

Project: “Roma Influencers breaking the circle of early marriages and early motherhood in Roma communities”

WP 4, Act. 4.3: Good Practices Guide Greece

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



1. Local and Community-Based Intervention Practice

Name of the initiative Roma Child VOICE – Exploring Roma Community Attitudes and Perceptions on Early Marriages and Adolescent Pregnancy: Formulating Recommendations for the Protection of Roma Children’s Rights

Country/Location Greece – Roma communities across various regions of the country

Promoting organisation Prolepsis Institute, in collaboration with the Union of Greek Roma Mediators and Their Associates, within the framework of the PREVENT programme.

Implementation period: 01/04/2025 – 31/03/2026

Brief description of the context in which the practice was implemented

The Roma Child VOICE project focuses on exploring the attitudes and perceptions of Roma communities regarding early marriages and adolescent pregnancy, with the aim of identifying the social and cultural factors that sustain these practices and formulating policy recommendations to protect children and adolescents.

The initiative is based on the active participation of Roma communities themselves, providing Roma women and men with the opportunity to share their experiences, views, and concerns regarding child protection and gender equality issue.

Main objective of the practice

- To explore knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions regarding early marriages and adolescent pregnancy.
- To understand the social, economic, and cultural factors that contribute to the persistence of these practices.

- To highlight the impact of early marriages and early motherhood on children, particularly Roma girls.
- To formulate evidence-based recommendations and policy guidelines for public authorities and relevant stakeholders.
- To strengthen the discussion on children's rights and the protection of Roma girls.

Brief description of the intervention (main actions/activities implemented)

The practice was based on a combination of qualitative and quantitative research:

Qualitative Research

- Conducting focus group discussions with Roma women and men.
- Collecting views and experiences from institutional representatives and professionals working with Roma communities.
- Exploring social perceptions, gender roles, and factors influencing decisions related to marriage and parenthood at a young age.

Quantitative Research

- Administration of structured questionnaires within Roma communities.
- Recording attitudes, knowledge, and perceptions regarding early marriages and adolescent pregnancy.
- Gathering data to identify trends and needs within the communities.

Who is/are the main target group(s)?

- Roma women and men.
- Adolescents and young people from Roma communities.
- Representatives of local and national authorities.
- Roma mediators.
- Public administration officials.
- Elected representatives and policymakers.
- Child protection and social inclusion professionals.

Main results achieved

- Processing and analysing the collected data.
- Developing conclusions and policy recommendations.
- Producing guidelines and recommendations for the prevention of early marriages and early motherhood.
- Disseminating the findings to institutional stakeholders and civil society organisations.

Success factors

This initiative is considered a good practice because it:

- Incorporates the active participation of Roma communities in the knowledge-generation process.
- Combines research evidence with policy development.
- Addresses a sensitive issue while respecting the cultural specificities of Roma communities.
- Creates a valuable evidence base for future interventions.
- Strengthens the protection of children's rights and contributes to the prevention of gender-based violence and discrimination.

Explanation of the criteria that justify considering the initiative as a Good Practice or a Promising Practice

- Increased knowledge of the causes and consequences of early marriages and adolescent pregnancy.
- Enhanced public dialogue on the rights of Roma children.
- Development of evidence-based recommendations for improving public policies.
- Greater participation of Roma communities in decision-making processes affecting their lives.

2. Local and Community-Based Intervention Practice

Name of the initiative BREAKING A TABOO: Participatory Awareness-Raising for the Prevention of Early Marriages and Early Motherhood in Roma Communities

Country/Location Germany, Greece, Serbia, Hungary, Spain, Romania, and North Macedonia

Promoting organisation The coordinating partner is JugendStil e.V., a non-profit organisation, working together with partners from Germany, Greece, Serbia, Hungary, Spain, Romania, and North Macedonia.

Implementation period: 01/09/2023 – 31/08/2026

Brief description of the context in which the practice was implemented

The BREAKING A TABOO project was developed as a transnational initiative aimed at addressing early and forced marriages in Roma communities through an approach based on the active participation of Roma women themselves. The initiative recognises that many previous interventions were designed and implemented “from the outside,” without the meaningful involvement of the communities concerned, which often limited their effectiveness. The project uses personal narratives, documentaries, and community dialogue to highlight the impact of early marriages and early motherhood on the lives of Roma girls. Through real-life stories of women who have experienced these situations, the project seeks to raise awareness within communities and promote alternative life pathways based on education, gender equality, and personal development.

Main objective of the practice

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to reducing early marriages and early motherhood in Roma communities by empowering girls and transforming the social attitudes that perpetuate these practices.

More specifically, the project aims to:

- Break the taboo surrounding issues related to marriage, sexuality, and reproductive health.
- Strengthen intergenerational dialogue within Roma families, particularly between mothers and daughters.
- Promote sexual education and family planning.
- Highlight education as a key prerequisite for personal development, economic independence, and social participation.
- Challenge stereotypical and patriarchal perceptions regarding gender roles.

Brief description of the intervention (main actions/activities implemented)

The innovative aspect of this practice lies in the use of participatory storytelling and audiovisual materials as tools for social change.

Within the framework of the project, Roma women from the participating countries are trained as “DocuMedis” (documentary mediators) and actively participate in the production of documentaries that highlight the consequences of early marriages and early motherhood, as well as positive examples of women who have followed different life paths.

The documentaries produced are screened within local communities and are accompanied by facilitated discussions involving the trained mediators. This creates safe spaces for dialogue and reflection among Roma families.

At the same time, educational materials and training programmes are developed to strengthen the capacities of community multipliers and mediators.

Who is/are the main target group(s)?

- Roma girls and young women.
- Roma mothers and families.
- Young people from Roma communities.
- Community mediators.
- Local leaders and community representatives.
- Educators and professionals working with Roma communities.
- Civil society organisations and social inclusion stakeholders.

Main results achieved

The expected outcomes of the project include:

- Production of seven national documentaries featuring Roma women.
- Creation of a European documentary with English subtitles and its screening at international film festivals.
- Development and implementation of a training programme for DocuMedis.
- Certification of trained mediators.
- Training of 42 community multipliers.
- Organisation of 70 film events and public discussions across the participating countries.
- Production of a guide for applying the documentary-based methodology in other fields of social intervention.
- Wide dissemination of project results at the European level.

Success factors

The experience of the project demonstrates that the prevention of early marriages and early motherhood is more effective when interventions are designed and implemented with the active participation of Roma communities themselves. Empowering Roma women as role models and agents of change, combined with the use of audiovisual tools and community dialogue, can make a significant contribution to changing attitudes and perceptions and to promoting the rights of Roma girls

Explanation of the criteria that justify considering the initiative as a Good Practice or a Promising Practice

- The BREAKING A TABOO initiative is considered a good practice because it:
- Is based on the active participation of Roma women as agents of change.
 - Addresses a highly sensitive issue while respecting the cultural specificities of Roma communities.
 - Uses personal stories and lived experiences that foster identification with and acceptance of the project's messages.
 - Creates conditions for meaningful dialogue within the communities themselves.
 - Combines awareness-raising, education, and community empowerment.
 - Demonstrates strong potential for transferability and implementation in diverse social and cultural contexts.

3. Good Practices or Promising Practices in the Legislative or Public Policy Domain

Title of the law/policy document ROMplat2019 – Development of
the National Roma Contact Point for Social Inclusion: A
Participatory Approach to Addressing Early Marriages

Country/Location: Greece (Athens, Patras, and Thessaloniki)

Year of adoption / entry into force: 30/06/2020 – 29/06/2021

Implementing Organisation: General Secretariat for Social
Solidarity and the Fight Against Poverty, acting as the National
Roma Contact Point for Social Inclusion of the European
Commission

Brief description of the legal document/public policy

The ROMplat2019 project was implemented with the aim of strengthening institutional dialogue and enhancing the participation of Roma communities in the design and implementation of social inclusion policies. Within the framework of the project, two-day consultation meetings and training activities were organised in Athens, Patras, and Thessaloniki, involving Roma community members, staff of the Roma Branches of Community Centres, representatives of public authorities, field professionals, and civil society organisations. Early marriages constituted one of the four main thematic pillars of the project, alongside empowerment, coexistence, and school dropout prevention. Through the consultation process, the multiple dimensions of the phenomenon, the social and cultural factors sustaining it, and the interventions required for its prevention were explored and highlighted.

Identification of the main objective

- The initiative aimed to:
- Highlight early marriages as a significant challenge to Roma social inclusion.
- Strengthen the participation of Roma communities in the development of policies that affect them.

- Document experiences, needs, and recommendations from local communities.
- Promote cooperation between Roma communities, public institutions, and field professionals.
- Support the design, monitoring, and evaluation of the National Strategy for Roma Social Inclusion.

The practice was based on participatory consultation and educational processes.

Two-day workshops and working meetings were organised in the three participating cities, during which participants discussed the causes, consequences, and possible responses to early marriages within Roma communities.

The discussions were structured to ensure the active participation of Roma community members themselves, placing particular emphasis on the experiences and perspectives of women and young people. At the same time, policy recommendations and practical intervention proposals were collected and documented, with the aim of integrating them into the national framework for Roma social inclusion.

Who is/are the main target group(s)?

- Members of Roma communities.
- Roma women and girls.
- Roma youth.
- Staff of the Roma Branches of Community Centres.
- Social workers, psychologists, and mediators.
- Representatives of public services and local authorities.
- Civil society organisations active in the field of social inclusion.

Main changes/results produced

The initiative contributed to:

- Highlighting early marriages as a critical issue related to social inclusion and the protection of children's rights.
- Documenting experiences and perspectives from different Roma communities across the country.
- Strengthening dialogue between Roma communities and institutional stakeholders.
- Developing policy recommendations and strategic directions for addressing the phenomenon.
- Integrating the perspectives of Roma communities into the design of public policies.

The experience of ROMplat2019 demonstrated that effectively addressing early marriages requires the meaningful participation of Roma communities in decision-making processes. Establishing communication channels between communities and institutions, strengthening girls' education, and systematically empowering Roma women are key prerequisites for the sustainable prevention of the phenomenon and the promotion of social inclusion.

Explanation of the criteria that justify considering the initiative (legislative or public policy-related) as a Good Practice or a Promising Practice

This initiative is recognised as a good practice because it:

- Applies a participatory approach that gives a voice to Roma communities themselves.
- Links local experiences with national policy planning.
- Builds bridges of cooperation between communities, professionals, and public institutions.
- Addresses early marriages as a multidimensional social issue connected to education, gender equality, poverty, and social exclusion.
- Produces evidence-based recommendations that can inform the design of future interventions.