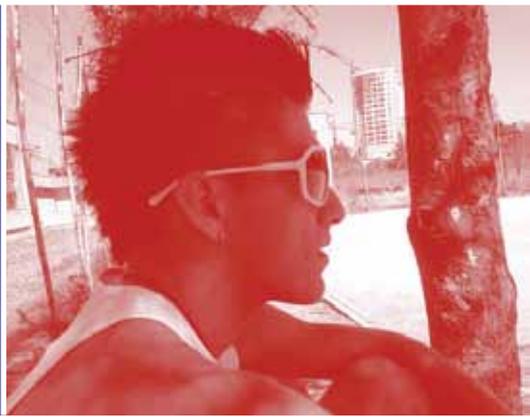




Save the Children



REPORT ON CONDUCTED ACTION
RESEARCH
YOUNG ROMA IN ACTION

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OUR VISION is a world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation.

OUR MISSION is to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children, and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives.

REPORT ON CONDUCTED ACTION RESEARCH YOUNG ROMA IN ACTION

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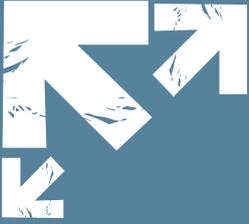
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SUMMARY

The Roma are the largest minority in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with as many as around 50,000. The vast majority live in isolation from their fellow citizens, in extremely harsh conditions without regular income, health insurance, education, and involvement in the social life of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Many of them are legally invisible, that is, they were not registered at birth and thus are prevented from exercising their rights guaranteed under the law.

Project LYRA – Leaders, Young Roma in Action, implemented by Save the Children with support from the U.S. State Department, aims to strengthen and develop the capacity and skills of young Roma leaders and activists in the Western Balkans, so that they would take efficient actions to improve social inclusion, reduce discrimination and increase the protection of the Roma population at the local, national and regional levels. The regional project is being implemented in 10 communities in the three countries of the Western Balkans (Albania, BiH and Kosovo). Local communities covered in Bosnia and Herzegovina include Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Mostar, Tuzla and Bijeljina. Selection of Roma youth in each municipality was followed by training and work on expanding the group of young people involved in the project in each of the communities. Once the wider group of young people was established, the implementation of initial activities was launched with participatory action research on problems faced by Roma in their communities. Results of the research will serve as the basis for further project activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The report gives an overview of the results of local research in five cities of Bosnia and Herzegovina conducted by a group of 78 young leaders. In every community, the research team was formed, comprising six members (three of whom are members of the Roma minority), to carry out field activities, that is, field research. Research topic was jointly agreed within each group, in addition to the agreed methodology and work plan. Research was carried out in the majority Roma-populated settlements in Banja Luka, Bijeljina, Mostar, Sarajevo and Tuzla. Depending on the topic, representatives of institutions or other ethnic groups were also surveyed in some cases. All research was based on structured interviews. More than 280 persons were surveyed, mostly members of the Roma population, of different sex and age structure.

Studies have shown that Roma often live in **harsh economic conditions** and that most of them face financial difficulties. Most do not have regular income; very few are employed full-time. Families are mainly supported through grey economy, collecting raw materials or street work. A large number of Roma have **low levels of education**, many have completed only a few years of primary education, and almost none continue their education after graduating from secondary school, although the lack of education is considered one of the main reasons for difficulties in finding employment. A particular problem is the position of girls who are not sent to school by their parents so as to get married, or engage in street work, although it was found that those who believe that education is important do not differentiate between male and female children. Few Roma are sufficiently **informed about their rights** and institutions that can help them attain their rights, while **many of them are unfamiliar with the concept and forms of discrimination**. Children and young Roma rarely participate in sports activities and other clubs in their community, or the work of school sections.

During the research, youth groups have established the **contacts and good relations** with members of the Roma community and the institutions that will be greatly beneficial in future work. Thanks to the



inclusion of the Roma community in the preparation of the research and creating a relaxed atmosphere during the survey, in many cases researchers overcame the distrust that Roma had originally expressed.

For most young researchers, this was their first professional engagement where they gained valuable skills and knowledge that will serve them in their future personal development, but also proactive approach in addressing the negative aspects in society that affect their lives.



INTRODUCTION

In early 2013, Save the Children in north west Balkans (hereinafter: Save the Children) launched a project Young Roma in Action, known by its abbreviation in English AS LYRA (*Leaders: Young Roma in Action*). It is anticipated for the project to continue until late February 2015, and its overall goal is to *build capacities and competence of young leaders, Roma and other population groups in the Western Balkan countries in order to empower them for effective action at local, national and regional level to improve social inclusion, non-discrimination and protection of Roma.*¹

The regional project is being implemented in ten communities in Albania (Korca, Fieri and Pogradeci), Bosnia and Herzegovina (Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Tuzla, Bijeljina and Mostar) and Kosovo (Prizren and Đakovica). Sixty young people, Roma and others in these communities are the direct beneficiaries of the project aimed at strengthening their skills and capacity to identify common factors of exclusion and discrimination faced by Roma in these countries, followed by the preparation of feasible and applicable action plans to address these problems through facilitating the interstate exchange and networking, and collaboration with civil society organisations and advocacy.

The project has three specific objectives:

- empower young leaders, within the framework of capacity building and regional networking, in identifying the issues of discrimination and social exclusion of importance for the Roma in the entire region and advocacy messages;
- enable young leaders through community research to identify the key issues in these communities to reduce discrimination against Roma and design evidence-based interventions for positive changes;
- enable young Roma leaders to make their voices heard and taken into account in decision-making on municipal, cantonal and national policies and action plans for addressing social exclusion and discrimination against Roma in the Balkans.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the process of selecting young Roma leaders began by holding meetings with local partners, civil society organisations and potential beneficiaries in five selected communities,² who were informed about the LYRA project. Thereafter, a call was announced for young Roma leaders, and advertised via the media, NGO networks, and also disseminated to all secondary schools in selected communities. In the process of evaluating applications, it was noted that a significant number of applicants do not meet the completed primary school criteria even though they are older than 18 years. Save the Children has decided to make exceptions and undertook to develop a mechanism of support that will enable young people to graduate from primary school by the end of the project. Ultimately, five youth groups were established, each with three young Roma whose parents were also familiar with the LYRA project and who gave consent for their children's involvement in the project, thus further ensuring commitment of the youth to the project in the next two years.

Following the selection of candidates, the project was focused on training young people in the skills of conducting research whose results will be the basis for further formulation of priorities and developing action plans for addressing problems in their communities. In July 2013, young leaders of BiH joined

¹ The notion of Roma in this report refers to all members of the Roma groups: Roma, Ashkali, Egyptians and others.

² In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the largest urban areas across the country were selected, as populated by the majority of Roma.



their counterparts from Albania and Kosovo on a joint training held in Albania, where special attention was paid to educating young leaders in the field of participatory action research. Upon return, these young leaders first worked to form a wider group of young people from their communities who will be actively engaged in the project and participate in the research. Wider groups of young people as formed (18 in Banja Luka, 14 in Bijeljina, 16 in Mostar, 14 in Sarajevo and 16 in Tuzla) first underwent training in the field of participatory action research, held by young Roma leaders who had been trained in Albania, followed by concrete activities on organising participatory action research in their communities.

From a total of 78 young people involved in the wider LYRA group, research teams were formed at the level of each city, in charge of field research, while other members provided administrative support to the research (keeping the minutes of meetings of young people, updating the Facebook page of the LYRA project, assistance in data processing, and similar).

Regular meetings of the members of LYRA groups were held in all five communities so as to prepare the research, in addition to organising meetings and roundtables with Roma communities in order to obtain the necessary information about the current problems faced by Roma population in the targeted communities.

Cooperation was also established with non-governmental organisations in the communities that have offered support in terms of office space, computers, etc.

Context

In post-conflict societies and developing democracies, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, **discrimination and social exclusion** of certain groups is a serious problem. According to the latest reports on human rights published by Amnesty International (May 2013), discrimination against minorities is especially prominent, including children with developmental disabilities, refugees, displaced persons, persons who represent an ethnic minority in their places of residence and Roma, as the largest of the 17 national minorities in BiH.³ Thanks to the efforts of non-governmental sector and international requirements set before Bosnia and Herzegovina on its EU accession path, some progress has been noted, yet it remains insufficient.

Anti-Discrimination Law was adopted at the state level in August 2009, with the aim of providing a comprehensive framework for civil and administrative regulations to ensure protection from discrimination. However, in practice, the problem is the fact that the governments in the country adopt legislation without serious consideration of financial implications and ways of enforcement. Citizens are still not sufficiently aware of the protection measures and mechanisms available to them when discriminated against. The institution of Human Rights Ombudsman in Bosnia and Herzegovina concluded that it is necessary to make an effort to familiarise citizens with the existence and content of this Law, while the Helsinki Human Rights Committee in its latest annual report noted that the Law is not applied and that local authorities are very little or not at all familiar with the Law. Alternative Report on the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Bosnia and Herzegovina, prepared by non-governmental organisations, reads that complicated procedures often cause people to waive their rights guaranteed under the Anti-Discrimination Law.

³ It is very difficult to determine the number of Roma in Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to the 1991 Census in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 8,864 declared themselves as Roma. According to the Special Report of the Human Rights Ombudsman of December 2013, it is estimated that 50,000 Roma live in Bosnia and Herzegovina.



Complex structure of the country is the very essence of the problem. Different municipalities, cantons and entities have different priorities, also in relation to Roma. Action plans to address the issue of the Roma population are available in most municipalities and cantons, as well as at the national level, but are not followed by significant financial budget allocations.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, economically weak in the past, has now been further affected by the global economic crisis. Youth unemployment is estimated at about 50%, poverty is on the rise, as well as the number of those in need of social welfare. Allocations for minorities are considerably lower than in other population groups, such as veterans, civilian war victims, war veterans, etc. It is estimated that the largest share of gross national income is spent on public administration and salaries of employees in this sector. Significant steps to find solutions have not yet been taken, and entities continue to borrow from commercial banks, the International Monetary Fund, issuing treasury bills, etc. to service the existing debt, salaries for budget users and social benefits.

The lack of reliable data is an additional major problem in Bosnia and Herzegovina, still using data from the 1991 Census (*results of the census carried out in October 2013 will be gradually published in the next two years*). There is no statistical data, analyses, procedures, standards and norms based on professional principles. As a result, it is very difficult to get a picture of the actual situation of the rights of Roma in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Local communities:

According to the 1991 Census, the number of persons who declared themselves as Roma in BiH was 8,864. However, even this number cannot be used as a realistic indicator since at the time of this census, citizens had the opportunity to declare themselves as Yugoslavs and not to declare themselves at all. Therefore, it was difficult to determine the exact number of members of the Roma minority. In its special report of December 2013, the Human Rights Ombudsman of BiH estimates that 50,000 Roma live in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

For a number of years now, Roma NGO sector has been active in BiH, with 44 Roma non-governmental organisations registered and trying to contribute to improve the position and respect for the rights of Roma through their actions, as well as to change the negative perception of this population.

Research within the LYRA project was conducted in five communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which are also the most densely populated areas in the country and communities populated with the largest number of Roma.

Banja Luka (*population of approximately 200.000⁴*)

According to data from the Roma Association *Veseli brijeg*, some 2000 to 3000 Roma lived before 1991 in Banja Luka, in the following settlements: Veseli brijeg, Gornji Šeher, Budžak and Mejdan. In those days, at least one member of the household had a full-time job, 90% of children went to school, and almost all families had adequate accommodation. In the pre-war period, Roma were recognised as a socially vulnerable category, and the government had a far more proactive approach towards the Roma population.

About 200 Roma lived today in Banja Luka on permanent basis.

⁴ Number of registered in October 2013 Census.



Although Banja Luka was not directly affected by war back in the 90-ies, this city was affected in demographic and economic terms. It is estimated that as many as 98 % of Roma had left the city during the war, and their property was destroyed. The majority of Roma Banja Luka is now residing in the settlement of Veseli brijeg. For years now, unfinished infrastructure has been the biggest problem.

Bijeljina (population of approximately 115.000)

Some 7,000 Roma lived in Bijeljina before the war. Roma settlement in this city before the war was the best regulated settlement in Bosnia and Herzegovina in terms of infrastructure. Every Roma family had at least one family member temporary working abroad, mostly in Germany (http://gfbv.ba/index.php/Romi_BiH.html). Today in Bijeljina, there are 270 Roma families who are mostly residing in three communities (Čopor, Divlji Zapad and Tornbak).

The economic situation in Bijeljina is adverse, as is the case in the rest of the country, with high levels of unemployment recorded. When it comes to the Roma population, most of them are on the verge of poverty. There are only two Roma employed in the Bijeljina municipality, while for others, collecting scrap metal, selling in market place, and the like are the only sources of revenue. Due to this economic situation and unemployment, the Roma from Bijeljina go abroad to provide for their families. A total of 105 children from 1st to 4th grade were enrolled in the 2013/2014 academic year, yet it is estimated that only about 10 % of them would graduate from primary school.

Mostar (population of approximately 113.000)

In the area of the City of Mostar, according to some estimates, there are about 500 members of the Roma minority. When it comes to place of residence, they are settled in areas of Južni Logor, Karašerbeš, Novo Naselje and Bišće Polje. Of this number, 150 Roma settlers originate from Kosovo and have the status of refugees (http://gfbv.ba/index.php/Romi_BiH.html). Similar to Sarajevo, during the tourist season, there is a significant increase in the number of Roma beggars at this time.

Since 2006, the authorities of Mostar, with the support of international organisations, launched the activities of solving the housing problems of Roma. In the first phase of the project, housing units were built for 18 Roma families, and beneficiaries were selected on the basis of the applications received for the public call announced by the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina (at the time when the study was conducted, not all housing units have yet been assigned to Roma families. Researchers went out few times to the settlement of Novo Naselje, to find a total of 12 families there). The survey also included the settlements of Karašerbeš and Novo Naselje, where it was found that 24 Roma families currently live in the settlement of Karašerbeš, and 12 Roma families in Novo Naselje. It should be noted that the settlements selected for the survey are primarily populated by domicile Roma families. Unresolved property-legal issues remain a significant problem when it comes to their location. They do not own the land where they had built their homes and therefore have no rights.

Sarajevo (population of approximately 300.000)

In the area of the City of Sarajevo, there are several settlements inhabited by a large number of Roma families on the verge of poverty, living in difficult economic conditions. Before the war, the number of Roma was about 3,000, while more recent data is unknown. It is estimated that the number of Roma with registered residence is much smaller, but there is a growing number of Roma from other parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina residing in Sarajevo during the tourist season, mainly for the purposes of begging. (http://gfbv.ba/index.php/Romi_BiH.html). There are numerous Roma beggars on the streets, washing windscreens and collecting scrap metal. There are many drop-outs, and an even greater number of them are not listed in birth registers. As a result, they are legally invisible and



excluded from education, health and social protection systems. The research was conducted in the settlements of Gorica, Aneks, Mojnilo, Crna Rupa, Nedžarići and Mala Aleja.

Tuzla (*population of approximately 120.000*)

The highest concentration of Roma settlements in Bosnia and Herzegovina is in the Tuzla Municipality. It is estimated that the total number of Roma in this area exceeds 5,000, including the highest number of Roma returnees from Germany, who lived in the towns in Republika Srpska before the war (http://gfbv.ba/index.php/Romi_BiH.html). The living standard of citizens in the Tuzla area, as well as in the rest of the country, is steadily declining in the aftermath of the war and economic crisis. There is a growing number of unemployed, especially young people, and the average income of employees are barely sufficient to cover all living costs.

Roma are particularly affected by poverty and Roma families mainly sustain themselves by collecting raw materials and selling goods on the street. The number of Roma children attending schools is inadequate, and very few are enrolled in preschool institutions. Less than 2 % of the local Roma have permanent jobs, and only 15% of Roma children complete primary school. Children are rarely registered in birth registers. The research was conducted in the settlements of Mosnik, Krojčica and Kiseljak, populated by around 140 Roma families with a total of approximately 700, of which about 230 children are aged 0-18 years.



PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

Initially, the main focus of young leaders involved in the LYRA project was to examine the problems faced by Roma in selected communities. To this aim, youth leaders have conducted preliminary interviews with the people on all five locations to be covered by the research with a special focus on citizens from among the Roma population. The objectives of the preparatory interviews were to obtain information from Roma citizens about the current problems that they face, and to inform potential respondents timely about the project and upcoming research. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the research was conducted in Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Tuzla, Mostar, Bijeljina, and its findings will be used to plan future interventions. In addition, the goal of this project activity would be to enable the youth to acquire skills for research, analysis and data processing.

Given the lack of reliable data and situation analysis, the research in these communities has ensured that the activities of young leaders by the end of the project are focused on those problems which are indicated as the most prominent according to the data collected, and which directly affect the lives of the majority of Roma.



METHODOLOGY

At the onset of the LYRA project implementation, young leaders in five communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina were selected, with three members of the Roma population in each group. Halfway into the year, along with young leaders from Albania and Kosovo, they all attended the training, and in the next step, they became active in creating wider groups in their communities. Ultimately, research teams of 6 young people (three members of Roma and non-Roma respectively) with completely different backgrounds were selected, while other members of the wider group had other assignments. Each group also gathered those who have not been trained previously to independently conduct the activities; hence, additional training was organised.

The focus of the training was on a specific research approach known as **participatory action research** or **PAR** for short. PAR approach involves the direct participation of the community that is the subject of research. Features of this research approach are as follows:

- the focus is on research aimed to enable action (*participants collect and process data, and decide on further actions accordingly*);
- attention is drawn to relations between the person who conducting the research, and those who are the subject of research. Contrary to other approaches and methodologies, those who are the subject of research in the PAR approach are considered *partners* who can influence the selection of research topics, data collection, etc. (*before determining the research topic, young leaders have consulted with members of the Roma community*);
- the process is led by members of the group who have the interest in the issue that is the subject of the research;
- cooperation is the key in every stage of the process, including discussions and joint work;
- the result of the research is a concrete action, a change or improvement in relation to the issue that is the research subject.

Young people have chosen a list of issues that were discussed in official and less formal meetings and roundtable discussions with people living in Roma and refugee settlements, representatives of government institutions and non-governmental organisations. Further on, two preparatory meetings were then held in each community, where members of the wider LYRA group jointly made the final decision on what should be the research topic. In addition, they discussed all the elements of the research; questionnaires were prepared and it was concluded that it is necessary to organise additional training on interview techniques for researchers in Tuzla, Banja Luka and Mostar.

Ultimately, the young leaders involved in the project identified the research topics as follows:

Banja Luka: Identification of the key problems of the Roma community in Banja Luka

Bijeljina: Sustainability of Roma children and youth in the education system

Mostar: Creating a social map of socially disadvantaged Roma settlements Karašerbeš and Novo Naselje

Sarajevo: Social inclusion of young Roma

Tuzla: Examining discrimination of the Roma population through areas of information dissemination, migration, employment and health



SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The following chapter outlines the key findings of individual action researches conducted in the listed communities.

BANJA LUKA

Title of the research: Identification of the key problems of the Roma community in Banja Luka

Period: The research was conducted from September to November 2013

Introduction: A group of young leaders engaged in the research concluded in the preparatory stage that there are no reliable data and analysis of the Roma situation in the area of Banja Luka, which would help identify the specific problems faced by the Roma population. Therefore, they decided that the objective of the research would be to **identify the key issues**, primarily of the Roma community, but also other residents in Veseli Brijeg, the largest Roma settlement in Banja Luka.

Approach: The research was conducted in three phases, thus ensuring the participation of all residents of the settlement of Veseli Brijeg:

- Phase I: Preparatory meeting with residents, where they were asked to present their views on the situation in the settlement and the problems that they consider to be the biggest problems. After the meeting, the topic and purpose of the research was determined, and also, methodology was prepared.
- Phase II: Implementation of research using previously composed questionnaire used for conducting structured interviews with Roma. Three teams of two members interviewed a total of 39 respondents, members of 15 families.
- Phase III: Interviews with representatives of other groups who live in settlement in order to obtain a more comprehensive picture of problems faced. 23 children from 13 families were interviewed, and questionnaires that were used were different from questionnaires for the Roma, who were focused on their views on discrimination against Roma and key issues of the community.

Findings: The results of the research were presented in five thematic sections: general information, education, employment, discrimination, and key problems as identified.

General information: A total of 62 were interviewed, specifically 30 men and 32 women of various ages (from 14 to over 60).

Education: Out of 39 Roma respondents, 12 of them did not go to school.

Education breakdown of Roma respondents			
Education level	M	F	Total No. of respondents
Did not attend school	3	9	12
Primary School	4	2	6
Three-year vocational school	1	6	7
Secondary school	5	7	12
Graduate	1	0	1
Higher education level	1	0	1
Total	15	24	39



Education data indicate that a small number of Roma decide to continue their education after secondary school, and there are many who drop out during or after primary school.

Employment: From a total of 36 adult respondents from the Roma population, only three are employed, and one of them is employed abroad. 25 are registered as unemployed with the Employment Service, which has so far found a job for four respondents (*and not all of them stayed in their jobs*). Most of the surveyed Roma have vocational background (cooking chef, caterer, winemaker, electrician, technologist, construction technician, etc.).

Discrimination: The most interesting data obtained through research in the area of Banja Luka refer to the opinion of the respondents about the presence of discrimination against Roma. The same question was posed to respondents who are not representatives of the Roma population.

Level of discrimination against Roma			
Population	There is discrimination	There is no discrimination	Total No. of respondents
Roma population	5	34	39
Non-Roma population	11	12	23
Total	16	46	62

Most of the Roma respondents believe that they are not victims of discrimination, while a significant number of members of the non-Roma population as surveyed believed that discrimination exists. Researchers have noted that a significant number of Roma respondents did not know how to define the concept of discrimination, and there are many who maintained this view even after the clarification.

Key issues in the community: All respondents were asked to indicate any problem in their community that they considered a priority for improving the life of residents in the settlement: significant majority of respondents indicated a particular problem in relation to the unfinished infrastructure in their settlements (32 respondents cited unpaved road as a key issue, 19 of them mentioned no lighting in the settlements and 13 mentioned unregulated sewer system); the inability of young people to find employment is a key issue for the community according to 18 respondents (out of which 17 of are Roma), and nine of them mentioned the poor financial situation; as many as 10 respondents believe that the key problem is the nepotism in Roma associations; only two of the respondents believe that discrimination is their biggest problem.

Challenges: The challenges that the researchers encountered mainly concerned lack of motivation of respondents to all questions. They were quick to respond to the questions that dealt with the problems they are facing, but reluctant to respond to questions related to education and employment, so not all data have been collected in these areas.

Recommendations and plans: Based on the obtained data, the research team identified several issues that are considered essential for future activities:

It is recommended to further investigate the reasons why so many Roma remain outside the education system or drop out during or after completion of primary education, and the reasons why those who complete secondary education do not take into account the possibilities of further education.

Given the results of the answers to the question on discrimination, the conclusion was that it is necessary to carry out further research on the perception of discrimination by respondents.

Only one respondent believes that youth unemployment is the biggest problem of the community but he is not a member of the Roma population. Therefore, it is recommended to conduct further research to answer the question whether the Roma tend to have difficulties in finding a job due to discrimination or economic crisis that affects the lives of all citizens in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The only common problem that all residents of the settlement of Veseli Brijeg have identified is infrastructure, with emphasis on lack of street lighting and unpaved road, which is a major problem especially for children who walk to school. The LYRA group in Banja Luka is planning advocacy activities with the relevant authorities in order to resolve this problem.



BIJELJINA

Title of the research: Retention of Roma children and youth in the education system

Period: The study was conducted from September to November 2013.

Introduction: Members of the LYRA group in Bijeljina held consultative meetings to discuss possible research topics, and it was concluded that many of the problems faced by the Roma population in the town of Bijeljina are caused by or are the result of poor quality or lack of education. This applies particularly to girls, who often drop out of primary school. It was therefore decided to study this phenomenon in greater detail in the research.

Approach: The research was conducted according to the principle of field the survey using questionnaires. Two questionnaires were used: one for parents whose children attend school or have dropped out, and another questionnaire for teachers in schools attended by children from the community that is in the focus of the research. A total of 60 were interviewed in three field locations: 50 Roma and 10 teachers. The research was conducted on the principle of anonymity of respondents.

Findings: The results of the research were presented in several thematic sections: general information, education, attitudes on education and the importance of education among Roma respondents, and particularly attitudes about education and the importance of education of the Roma population from the perspective of teachers.

General information: Out of 50 Roma who participated in the research, 20 men and 30 women of different ages (25 to 65) were examined in the three communities. Additionally, 10 representatives of educational institutions were also interviewed.

Education: The research among adult Roma has shown that very few of them decide to continue their education after completing school, and there is a significant number of those who dropped out during or after primary school.

Education breakdown of Roma respondents

Education level	M	F	Total No. of respondents
University level	1	0	1
Secondary school	3	2	5
Primary school	10	7	17
Incomplete education	2	2	4
Illiterate	4	19	23
Total	20	30	50

Data on education of respondents who are now parents of children whose education they decide on indicate a major difference in the education of men and women. A total of 23 out of 50 respondents are illiterate, which is an aggravating factor for the education of their children in terms of providing assistance in learning.

Views of Roma on the education: Responses as obtained from Roma respondents indicate that many believe that education is important for children, even after they graduate from primary school. There is an evident community support, given that all respondents confirmed that they regularly receive free textbooks and school supplies. Without this assistance, the majority believes that they could not continue to send children to school.

- 48 respondents said that it was important to have their children in school, while two stated that “either way is fine”;
- 48 respondents feel that it is important that their children remain in school even after graduating from secondary school;



- 34 respondents stated that they would not be able to send their children to school without assistance in the form of free textbooks and school supplies;
- 43 parents responded that the education of both male and female children was equally important to them. Seven of the respondents indicated that the education of boys is more important, and some of them have stated that it is a question of tradition and that female children cannot continue their education as they marry early on.
- 24 respondents said that they regularly attend parent-teacher meetings, 17 do so “occasionally”, and nine respondents never attend PTA meetings,;
- 34 respondents believe that children can primarily turn to them in learning, and seven believe that they can turn to their classmates. As many as 9 respondents said that their children have no one to turn to for help because they are all illiterate in their household;
- All 23 respondents who said they were illiterate confirmed that they would attend free reading and writing classes if organised;
- 40 respondents claimed that their children feel safe in school and so far have never had any problems, and eight of them reported that their children sometimes experience something unpleasant for being Roma. Two respondents indicated that their children do not feel safe at school for the same reason;
- 39 respondents indicated that teachers in the school treat their children in the same way as other children.

Teachers’ attitudes on Roma education: With the aim of comparing the data and obtaining information outside the Roma population, 10 teachers in schools attended by Roma children were also interviewed.

- All respondents said that they find the education of Roma children important;
- None of the teachers confirmed regular attendance of Roma parents in PTA meetings; three responded that parents do not come at all due to general lack of interest or other reasons and seven do come occasionally (data point to the difference in responses between Roma and teachers).
- Teachers generally believe that Roma children can turn for help to their friends or no one else since their parents are illiterate, while others in the class discriminate them. Only one teacher believes that parents can help children to learn;
- Out of 10 teachers respondents, 6 believe that the teaching staff has the same educational approach towards Roma and other children, while four said it was not the case;
- 3 respondents believe that Roma children feel safe at school, 6 to feel “less safe” and one teacher believes that in general they do not feel safe at school;
- 9 teachers felt that financial difficulties prevent the education of Roma children and the same number confirmed that they would participate in an intervention that would help resolve this problem in terms of the education of Roma children. All 10 teachers responded that they themselves would initiate such a charity event to collect funds (exhibitions, performances, etc.)

Challenges: The research team did not face difficulties in conducting this research, primarily thanks to the fact that its members are also Roma. Among the respondents, they could feel the expressed fear of deception, so depending on the degree of trust among respondents, the time spent in the interview was adjusted.

Recommendations and plans: Team members in Bijeljina believe that it is crucial to improve the situation of Roma in terms of education through **work with parents**. It was concluded that the activities to increase the level of education of Roma are mainly focused on children, while most of the projects does not seek to involve parents whose role is crucial in the education of children.



- It is recommended to have further parallel work on raising awareness of parents about the importance of education of their children and strengthening their skills and capacities to be able to provide quality support to their children in schools. Activities to be carried out in cooperation with educational institutions.
- It is recommended to present research results in the settlements where the research was conducted.
- Plans identified by the LYRA group in Bijeljina:
 - Working with parents on the topic of responsible parenthood;
 - Strengthening the capacity of parents through the organisation of evening schools for their education;
- Cooperation with educational institutions and teaching staff in order to ensure more active involvement of parents and children from among the Roma population in full-time education.

MOSTAR

Title of the research: Creating a social map of socially disadvantaged Roma settlements Karašerbeš and Novo Naselje

Period: The research was conducted from September to November 2013

Introduction: In the preparatory phase of the research, it was found that some institutions working with socially vulnerable groups of the population do not have sufficient data on the social situation in individual settlements. Therefore, it was decided that the research focuses on obtaining general information about the settlement, socio-demographic data, educational breakdown of the population, household economic status, health and welfare for households in the Mostar settlements of Karašerbeš and Novo Naselje. The aim is to provide competent institutions with an insight into the actual needs of households in these neighbourhoods and develop action plans to address these.

Approach: Members of the group have developed a questionnaire with questions on the above listed segments of life of two Mostar communities or settlements. Given that the practice where heads of households provide data on the household, themselves other members of the household in preparation of the social map, it was not possible to check the validity of their responses.

Findings: The results of the research were presented by the following thematic sections: general information, educational breakdown of the population, economic status, and health and social protection/welfare.

General information: A total of 70 Roma (44 men and 26 women) lives in the settlement of Karašerbeš, while the settlement of Novo Naselje has 60 Roma inhabitants (29 men and 31 women). In the settlement of Karašerbeš, 24 households were identified with the highest number of 3 household members (6 households without children) and 12 households in the settlement of Novo Naselje, with the largest number of 6 household members (one household without children). Data on the number of households are significantly different, and in some cases, the numbers also included members who have moved away, so it was impossible to come up with a reliable average number of household members. In the total of 24 households surveyed in both settlements, respondents stated that all members were **registered in the birth register** and had a **registered place of residence** in Mostar. **The place of birth** of heads of households points to a great diversity among the Roma who live in these Mostar settlements:

- In the settlement of Karašerbeš, the majority of heads of households are born in Mostar (10), 5 were born in Kosovo and 2 in Montenegro, while seven of them did not know or did not provide information about the place of birth.
- In the settlement of Novo Naselje, two heads of households were born in Mostar, and the rest come from other cities and towns in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

All residents in the settlement of Novo Naselje live in municipal-owned **housing units**. In Karašerbeš, 15 households own an apartment in which they live, three households live in municipal-owned container homes, two in a borrowed accommodation and one household lives in an illegally built home. Most respondents in both settlements believe that they live in adequate housing, with the average floor area of 50 square meters.

Education: Examination of education breakdown of household heads in both settlements indicates that there is an equal number of those without primary education (8), with completed several years of primary school (9), completed primary school (7) and completed secondary school (10). None of the heads of households graduated from college or university. The education of other members of the households in both settlements was also researched (a total of 25 is not of school age). There are differences in the level of education in the settlements of Karašerbeš (where a larger number of household members in the education system was registered) and Novo Naselje.

Education breakdown					
Education level	Heads of households		Other household members		Total number
	Karašerbeš	Novo Naselje	Karašerbeš	Novo Naselje	
University	0	0	2	0	2
Secondary school	9	1	18	0	28
Primary school	4	3	10	9	26
Incomplete education	7	2	6	0	15
No primary school	3	5	6	15	29
Not of school age			14	11	25
Attending school or another form of educational institution			17	14	31
Total	23	11	73	49	156

Economic status: A small number of the heads of households in the two Mostar settlements is employed (a total of 8 out of 34 respondents), whereas the majority are registered as unemployed with the Employment Service (20 respondents). The average monthly income of the entire household ranges from 100 to 500 BAM, while nine households reported no income. Households are mainly sustained as follows:

- 7 households sustain on income from permanent employment (*all these households were from the settlement of Karašerbeš*);
- 9 households live on labour wage;
- 14 households sustain themselves by collecting raw materials, and
- 2 household are engaged in begging and other forms of seeking alms.

Health and social protection/welfare: The differences in the position of Roma households in the two settlements are evident when it comes to data on health and social protection. Namely, out of 23 surveyed households in Karašerbeš, heads of households for 18 of them claim that all household members have regulated health insurance, while five households reported that all or some household members do not have regulated health insurance. In the settlement of Novo Naselje, five households



reported that all household members have regulated health insurance, while six households reported that all or some of household members do not have regulated health insurance.

- As far as the health status of household members is concerned, they are mostly of good health without illnesses. As for those who do suffer from a disease, they mainly have diabetes, cardiovascular problems, and six people suffer from some other form of chronic disease.
- Members with certain disabilities were registered in five households.
- Heads of 18 households reported that from among their family members, there is no one in need of medical examination that they cannot afford, while in seven families, there are members who require a “general physical examination” and in 9 families, there are cases of those who require “specialist examination”.
- 24 households (out of 27 with children) said they regularly perform or have performed vaccinations of children.

When it comes to benefits that they enjoy or government assistance, the following responses were provided:

- The majority of households (30 out of 34) said they did not receive any form of social assistance/welfare.
- 30 households claimed that they were not entitled to use one-time financial assistance in 2013.
- 31 households reported that they do not enjoy the benefit of reduced payment or non-payment of utility bills.

Challenges: The basic difficulty in collecting data by members of the Mostar research team was to overcome the distrust expressed by respondents towards the survey itself, its purpose and intent of the researchers. Therefore, the group concluded that prior to similar studies, the target group should be informed in greater detail about the purpose, objectives and methods of this process. Given the unadjusted data in certain respects, the researchers came to the conclusion that some of the questions were not fully understood by the individual members of the household.

Recommendations and plans: Based on the results and lessons learned from this research, the team concluded that the majority of the Roma population is not aware of the rights that can be exercised in certain institutions. On the other hand, institutions that deal with this problem do not have sufficient relevant information on households. Therefore, it is believed that this research can serve as solid basis for preparation of strategic plans to address the problems faced by these households.

In Mostar, there are at least two other large Roma communities, and the group recommended the continuation of activities with regards to social mapping. Given that the process is time-consuming and professionally challenging, it is necessary to consider the possibility to further empower researchers and ensure financial support of the city institutions.

SARAJEVO

Title of the research: Social inclusion of young Roma

Period: The study was conducted from September to November 2013.

Introduction: Through group work, at the very onset the group members discussed numerous proposals on research topics, and ultimately decided to explore the issue of social inclusion of young Roma, considering that these data would provide a better insight into other problems faced by Roma children.

Approach: The research was conducted according to the principle of field survey, where interviewers asked questions and note down important information through interviews with respondents. Where



approved by the respondent, interviews were recorded. In local communities, the research was conducted in six field locations and five sports and dance clubs or school sections. Surveys were specifically designed for representatives of clubs and sections for young Roma. As for research findings, it is important to note that sports and dance clubs and primary schools were selected since due to their location, they gravitate to the most populated areas of the city of Sarajevo, inhabited by Roma. All interviews were conducted on the principle of anonymity.

Findings: The results of the survey were presented in three thematic sections: general information, socialisation of children and youth, and results of the research in clubs and sections.

General information: In the six urban settlements, a total of 50 young Roma aged 13 to 20 years were interviewed (28 boys and 22 girls).

- 40 young Roma who were interviewed live in families with more than five members;
- 16 respondents are not registered in the registers, and the reasons are equally due to the lack of information or foreign nationality;
- 26 have no health insurance (*most respondents said it was because their parents are foreign nationals, and a slightly fewer number cited a lack of information on the part of the parents and dropping out of school as a reason for lacking health insurance*);
- 19 respondents regularly attend primary or secondary school, 15 were not enrolled, 14 discontinued their education and only two had completed secondary education (*according to the respondents, the main reasons for the fact that more than half of the respondents were not enrolled or have interrupted schooling are owing to adverse financial situation and lack of identification documents. Certain number of them cited discrimination and street work as reasons for not attending classes*);⁵
- 34 respondents can read and write, 11 have passive knowledge of reading and writing and 5 are completely illiterate;
- 30 respondents indicated that they like going to school;
- 27 respondents said that their parents are not able to help them with the school;
- 15 respondents do not believe that school is important.

Socialization of children and youth: Researchers in Sarajevo developed a set of indicators of the level of socialisation and social inclusion of Roma children and youth. Respondents were asked questions in relation to socialising with peers and places where they usually spend their free time, membership in clubs or sections and the general awareness of leisure activities.

- The majority of respondents said they have friends in their environment;
- Respondents spend most of their time downtown or in their neighbourhood;
- As many as 36 respondents do not attend school sections and did not attempt to engage in a club, and the parents of the majority of children cannot pay their membership fees in a club;
- 23 respondents do not go to any events in the city. Those who do go to certain events, generally mentioned sport events, and fewer go to the movies.
- The majority of respondents would like to have the opportunity for a free membership in clubs, tickets for the cinema and theatre.

⁵ It should be noted that there are no major differences in data on the education level between boys and girls.



Education breakdown of respondents			
Education level	M	F	Total No. of respondents
Completed secondary school	0	2	2
Regularly attending school	10	9	19
Children who are not enrolled	9	6	15
Discontinued primary education	8	6	14
Total	27	23	50

Research in clubs and sections: Results of the research conducted with representatives of five dance and sports clubs, and school sections in different locations in Sarajevo suggest the following:

- None of these institutions employs a Roma in the administration, as a coach, teacher or support staff;
- Roma children do not participate in section only in one school; all others reported that there are Roma among children with whom they work;
- The majority of respondents said that there are certain benefits upon enrolment of Roma children (free of charge membership fees and/or equipment, free textbooks and school supplies). One school makes additional efforts in the enrolment of children who do not have a birth certificate and personal identification number, and their staff provides assistance to parents and children to ensure the necessary documents in cooperation with the line ministry;
- Clubs do not cooperate with local communities to include Roma children in their activities, while schools are working with the NGO sector;
- Respondents generally argued that parents of Roma children are mostly not interested in the inclusion of children in their activities;
- The majority of respondents feel that their institutions are vesting certain efforts to help Roma children to be more involved in their activities. All of them expressed willingness to participate in projects aimed at active participation of Roma children and youth in the social life of the community.

Challenges: Members of the research team in the area of Sarajevo have not met significant challenges that would have a negative impact on their work. Approximately 20 respondents refused to participate, expressing distrust.

Recommendations and plans: Based on the research findings, it was concluded that a significant number of Roma children do not participate in the social life of the city and that there is much room for improvement in this regard. It was also found that many parents are either unable or lack interest to involve children in a variety of activities offered in their environment. In the end, it was concluded that although there are no formal barriers to inclusion of Roma children in school clubs or sections, these institutions are not actively working to encourage children to participate.

The LYRA group in Sarajevo plans to focus its activities in the future to work with the parents of Roma children in order to increase awareness among them and animate them to support the inclusion of their children in various social activities.

TUZLA

Title of the research: Examining discrimination of the Roma population through areas of information dissemination, migration, employment and health

Period: The research was conducted from September to November 2013.

Introduction: Members of the wider LYRA group in Tuzla jointly discussed proposals on the research topic and came to the conclusion that all topics have discrimination against the Roma population as a common denominator. Having established the area of research, the group decided to examine this phenomenon in the context of information dissemination, migration, employment and health.

Approach: The research was conducted according to the principle of field survey, where interviewers asked questions of respondents and noted down important information. The process was time-consuming, but it was an opportunity to create a relaxed atmosphere and thus obtain a detailed and open answers. All surveys were anonymous. The respondents included Roma in three field locations and representatives of the four institutions (Elementary School *Kreka*, Pedagogical Institute of the Tuzla Canton, Association *Zemlja djece* and Health Centre).

Findings: The results of the research were presented through the following topics: general information, education, discrimination, employment, migration, information dissemination and access to health services.

General information: The research included 71 respondents, of which 67 are Roma, and four representatives of institutions from different age groups (19 to 53). Among the Roma, 33 men and 34 women were interviewed.

Education: Among the surveyed Roma, none would choose to continue their education after secondary school, and many of them drop out during or after primary school.

Education breakdown of the Roma respondents

Education level	M	F	Total No. of respondents
University	0	0	0
Secondary school	14	10	24
Primary school	12	14	26
Incomplete education	5	6	11
Illiterate	2	4	6
Total	33	34	67

The interviewed representatives of institutions believe that the key to education of Roma children is in working with parents, believing that it is necessary for them to develop the principles of responsible parenthood and change awareness of the importance of education.

Discrimination: Out of the 67 surveyed Roma, 45 were unfamiliar with the meaning of discrimination, while 22 people were familiar with the term.

- 36 stated that they were not a victim of discrimination;
- 31 confirmed to have been the victim of discrimination, usually by the police, neighbours, social welfare centres, schools, on the streets and in seeking employment;
- 21 encountered violent behaviour, and sought help from NGOs.

According to the respondents, the most common causes of discrimination against Roma are unemployment, lack of education, poverty and unresolved housing issues. Respondents see the possibility of reducing the level of discrimination in employment, formal and informal education. It is important to emphasise that the affirmative support of the media was recognised as one of the ways to reduce the level of discrimination against the Roma population.



Analysis of the statements of representatives of institutions about discrimination against Roma indicates that they believe that Roma are not discriminated against in either law or in practice, “*for they attain about 90% of their rights*”. An employee of an elementary school said that “*the Roma themselves are to be blamed since they brought this situation upon themselves given their attitude towards life and society, where they discriminate against themselves*”.

Employment: Out of 67 respondents, only one person has a steady job, and 13 of them are working on the grey market.

- 53 individuals were never employed. They find that the main barriers to employment are insufficient level of education and grey economy;
- The majority of respondents believe that unemployment affects not only Roma, but it is a general problem for all inhabitants in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- Respondents are generally not familiar with the work of organisations or institution concerned with the employment of Roma. None of the respondents mentioned the Employment Service as an institution that could help them in employment.

Representatives of institutions believe that Roma are not discriminated against in the employment process, but in some cases they are privileged since lower criteria are applied to them compared to others. In addition, they believe that the main obstacle to Roma employment is their inadequate level of education.

Migration: The largest number of Roma respondents, as many as 59 of them, said they wanted to leave Bosnia and Herzegovina, in belief that could get asylum in other European countries such as Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, France, Belgium, Hungary and Norway, and thus gain better living conditions. Representatives of institutions believe that other citizens, not just Roma, want to leave the country, primarily in order to improve their financial standing.

Awareness: The number of respondents who are aware of their rights and institutions that can help them in their affirmation, as well as those who do not have this knowledge is almost identical. Many (45) respondents attended some sort of training on the topic of attainment of rights.

- The majority of respondents mentioned the Municipality and the Social Welfare Centre as institutions that can help them.
- Respondents are mainly informed about their rights through non-governmental organisations and the media.
- The majority holds that they are not sufficiently aware of their rights.

In general, representatives of institutions believe that Roma have ample opportunity to be informed about their rights, and it is up to them how to make use of these opportunities.

Access to health care services: A large number of respondents have health insurance and are quite well informed and aware of their rights to free health checks. Out of 67 respondents, 44 have used the services of medical facilities and free health checks, while 23 respondents had never used these services. Respondents stated that they did not experience discriminatory behaviour by employees of health facilities, but there are still prejudices against Roma. All surveyed representatives of the institutions believe that their community offers access to health services to Roma and that there is no discrimination.

Challenges: The research team was not faced with major challenges given that they were ready to change the plan if required so by circumstances on the ground. In a few cases, people have refused to participate in the research work due to distrust.

Recommendations and plans: Based on the research findings, it is believed that it is necessary to implement existing strategic plans for resolving the Roma issues at the cantonal level as soon as possible, so as to improve their position. In addition, the research team believes that it is necessary to present the research results in communities and institutions where it was conducted.



The plan of the group is to continue to focus on responsible parenthood, arguing that the work with parents is necessary to ensure that a greater number of Roma children attend and graduate from schools, and thus prevent their street work.



CONCLUSIONS

Common findings

In individual researches conducted in Banja Luka, Bijeljina, Mostar, Sarajevo and Tuzla, a total of **263** Roma persons were interviewed, as well as 19 representatives of various institutions from all age groups and with equal representation of male and female respondents.

Based on the comparative analysis of the gathered and processed data, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- **Roma from the communities where the research was conducted live in harsh economic conditions.** Very few of them have permanent jobs, while most provide for their families work thanks to the grey market, collecting raw materials or street work.
- **A large number of Roma have no health insurance**, although it should be noted that the data on social protection vary from one community to other. For example, there are two settlements in Mostar, where the majority of members of Roma households have health insurance.
- In Bosnia and Herzegovina, **very few Roma have graduated from university.**
- **Many Roma drop out of the education system during or after primary school.** One of the crucial factors for many parents who send their children to school is the assistance in the form of free textbooks and school supplies.
- **Roma are not sufficiently aware of their rights** or institutions in their environment that can help them in attainment of those rights.
- **Children and young Roma are insufficiently involved in the social life of their communities.**

Discrimination

One of the most interesting findings of the research relates to the way that Roma understand the concept of discrimination and how they perceive it.

- None of the Roma respondents blamed other ethnic groups, political party, municipal government or the state for their situation.
- The research, and in particular the one in Banja Luka, have shown that **a large number of Roma do not understand the concept of discrimination** and therefore do not know how to recognise a situation where they are being denied their rights on discrimination grounds.
- The largest number of surveyed Roma considered that their biggest problem is poor financial situation or living conditions, not discrimination. Responses indicate that Roma do not link discrimination with the reasons why they found themselves in such a bad situation in the first place.
- Discrimination is also present among the Roma. Girls are rarely sent to school due to early marriage, and in one community, nepotism in the Roma associations was mentioned as a major problem faced by Roma.



- Representatives of institutions believe that Roma are not discriminated against under the law, their access to education and health services. Roma and their traditions are mainly to be blamed for their poor position, and indifference.
- Even in the case where institutions have committed themselves to greater involvement of Roma population, there are no plans for its representatives to establish contact with the community in order to act proactively.

Education

All research have pointed to the fact that education is one of the priority issues to be addressed in order to improve the lives of the Roma population in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Working with parents is essential. All groups have concluded that efforts to ensure a higher level of education of the Roma should primarily focus on the parents:

- It is necessary to raise the awareness of parents about the importance of education after completing primary and secondary schools;
- Given that a large number of parents are illiterate, they need to be convinced about the importance, and then provided with an opportunity to become literate (evening classes or workshops).

Community support in the form of **free textbooks and school supplies** is an important factor in increasing the number of Roma children involved in the education system.

The education of girls is particularly important issue that needs to be further explored. There is a common understanding that Roma girls are in a less favourable position compared to boys, as more of them are illiterate, excluded from the education system for the purposes of early marriage or street work. However, the data from one of the studies conducted (Bijeljina), although insufficient to make an evidence-based conclusion, they raise the issue which should be further explored:

Specifically, parents (both mothers and fathers) were surveyed on the importance they give to their children's education. Of the total number of parents, 23 of them are illiterate: 19 women and 4 men. At the same time, the vast majority of respondents who believe that education is important for their children note that they do not differentiate between the education of male and female children. Additional data provided the basis that could be useful for further exploration whether the higher illiteracy among female children is essentially the result of gender discrimination or general lack of understanding of the importance of education by parents. While it is indisputable that gender discrimination exists, it is likely that **parents who do understand the importance of education do not distinguish between male and female children or do so to a lesser extent**. Those who do not believe that education is important for a better life of their children can be equally discriminating their male and female children alike. Female children marry early and fulfil their duty, while male children are sent to primary schools that they quickly drop out from due to the need to generate income through street work, collecting raw materials, etc. Should this hypothesis prove valid, it would be an important piece of information in planning future activities within the LYRA project.

Achievements

In conducting the participatory action research, many achievements have been noted, yet three are particularly noteworthy and essential for achieving the ultimate objective of the LYRA projects:



- Participation and the key role that young Roma have in all activities, including this research. In this way, young Roma leaders have become active participants in activities with an ultimate goal to improve the lives of their peoples and do so in all stages – from identifying the priority issues to determining the type of activities that would minimise or resolve these problems.
- All planned research activities were carried out according to plan, and young leaders who were selected and trained took over the ownership of the entire process.
- The research has identified some of the problems that have been long present in the society and Roma communities, to the extent that they are not even perceived as problems any more by local communities or Roma themselves, much less dealt with (e.g., work with parents).

Lessons learned

Based on the experience in conducting research in five communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the preparation of the national report, the following lessons have been learned:

- **Preparation** is essential for the process. Harmonization of methodologies, work on the questionnaires, determining the focus of the research and the ability to adapt depending on the circumstances on the ground are all criteria that must be met in order for the data processing to be successful.
- **Community participation and preparation** significantly facilitates the activities of the group. Research teams that have informed members of the community clearly and sufficiently with the purpose and objectives of the research already in the preparatory stage, also had a higher degree of confidence demonstrated by respondents.
- **Creating a relaxed atmosphere** where the survey was conducted in the form of a friendly conversation was of great importance for all researchers to obtain open and detailed answers.

Challenges

Most researchers were engaged in research for the first time, especially in one that requires field work. For them, it was the biggest challenge that they successfully handled. The only other noteworthy challenge is the number of Roma respondents who refused to participate in the research believing that they will somehow be deceived.

Impact of the research

The impact that the research had on actual researchers is mainly reflected in their greater motivation due to newly acquired knowledge and skills. For individual team members, this was their first work experience for which they were paid, and they also emphasised the importance of common engagement of young Roma and students/volunteers. Gaining experience and training they have undergone is essential to their continued professional development, but also for their own initiative in terms of initiating change within their communities and the society as a whole.

The impact of research on the community can only be assessed after the next stages of the project in terms of its advocacy activities that young people would undertake by using the findings



of this research. A large number of respondents expressed a desire to be informed on how the data collected is to be used. Many respondents clearly expressed that they are not confident about real impacts of the research, although they participated in it.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations presented below are derived from the individual research and the preparation of the national report.

The impact of the research on the Roma community greatly depends on the type of activities that will follow after the research conducted. Each group included the recommendations in their respective reports. For future work, it is recommended to clearly define priorities and action areas. Considering that three groups have highlighted the need to work with parents of Roma children as a priority, it would be beneficial, to link members of these groups to work together on formulating their advocacy messages and plans for future activities.

Community work was an important segment of this process; researchers have achieved significant success in terms of overcoming the respondents' distrust towards the purpose of the research. Those who had included the community in the process of preparing research had even stronger relations with its members, which is an excellent basis for further activities. In order to maintain this trust, it is essential that all teams present the findings of their research to communities where the research was conducted, but also to clearly communicate their future plans. This contact should be maintained in each of the next stages of the project.

Contacts with institutions for further research are an important resource that researchers can rely on in their future work.

Issues for further research have been identified, most notably the need to examine perceptions and understanding of discrimination among Roma. The ultimate goal of the entire project is to reduce discrimination; therefore, it seems to be extremely important to gather more information on the level of awareness among Roma when it comes to human rights in general and what is considered discrimination. In addition, it is necessary to further explore the motivation of parents and young Roma in terms of attending or leaving school. More insight into their thoughts on education is very important for planning future advocacy activities among Roma and representatives of the competent authorities.



APPENDIX

List of persons working on participatory action research

Banja Luka

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Slađana Milićević

Bijeljina

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Fatima Džanić
Damira Alimanović
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Mostar

Toni Kolar
Luca Aleksić
Martina Glavaš
Sanel Bislimi
Edin Sejdović
Ahmet Sejdović

Sarajevo

Bešić Medina
Januzi Gazmend
Spasoli Ramiz
Gazija Nermin
Sujoldžić Sanela
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