



Practical Guide for NGOs

to prevent discrimination against the Roma communities



*With financial support from the Fundamental Rights and
Citizenship Programme of the European Union
Project Code Number: JUST/2012/FRAC/AG/2848*



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Title

Practical guide for NGOs to prevent discrimination against the Roma communities

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Note: In this publishing series there are also the following guides: Practical guide for police services to prevent discrimination against the Roma communities; Practical guide for Media Professionals to prevent discrimination against the Roma Communities; Human rights litigation on behalf of the Roma - A guide for lawyers.

Date: July, 2014

Disclaimer:

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects only the views of the authors and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Layout and printing: Pardedós.

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Introduction

The NET-KARD Project:

The main aim of the *Net-Kard Project: Cooperation and Networking between Key Actors against Roma Discrimination* is to prevent discrimination of Roma communities and enhance support to victims by promoting cooperation and networking among key agents involved in the defence of the right to equality and by improving and transferring the already existing body of methodological experience in this connection to the different countries taking part in the project.

This project falls within the *Fundamental Rights and Citizenship Programme of the European Union* and involves the following partners:

Fundación Secretariado Gitano (lead partner, Spain), Rede Europeia Anti-Pobreza/Portugal (EAPN Portugal) (Portugal); Alto Comissariado para a Imigração e Diálogo Intercultural, I.P. (ACIDI, I.P.) (Portugal), Centrul de Resourse Juridice (CRJ) (Romania), Fundatia Secretariatul Romilor (Romania), Ufficio Nazionale Antidiscriminazioni Razziali (Italy), and Istituto Internazionale Scienze Mediche Antropologiche e Sociali (Italy).

Aim of this Guide:

The present Guide is aimed at NGOs and Roma Associations and the main purpose is to provide resources for professionals of these structures in order to prevent discrimination against Roma Communities, as well as mechanisms and practices to promote networking between other stakeholders.

It is also important to highlight that this Guide is a resource for these entities and therefore some important premises should be considered: on one hand in order to understand all the information contained in the following chapters, it is necessary to realise that this is a global instrument and it must be used in an integrated way together with other instruments and the knowledge of professionals; on the other hand this guide is an instrument to enhance the practices that are already being developed by NGOs and Roma Associations.

Methodology used:

The material presented in the Guide is the result of a set of focus group and interviews conducted in Portugal, Spain, Romania and Italy by project partners. The participants were NGOs and representatives of Roma Associations/communities who provided their testimony and experience gained in the work they do to fight discrimination against Roma communities and address their main difficulties. Solutions and recommendations regarding how to improve this work were likewise proposed. The knowledge that Net-Kard partners have of these issues was also used to produce a Guide that could help all NGOs and Roma Associations at European level.

Structure of the Guide:

This guide is broken down into 6 chapters. The first looks at the role that NGOs/Roma Associations play in the fight against discrimination of Roma communities, presenting different ideas and procedures of their daily work. The second chapter lists different barriers that these associations still face in the work they do and some suggestions are provided at the end of the chapter which NGOs can use to overcome them. The third chapter describes different tools and methodologies to enhance the fight against discrimination and shows their usefulness through concrete examples presented in text boxes. Chapter four features the main training subjects that meet the needs of NGOs/Roma Associations and that can enhance the work they do within Roma communities and the society at large. Chapter five presents some best practices taken from different experiences conducted at national and European level with mention of both the countries and sources. The last chapter focuses on a set of recommendations that the Net-Kard project highlights as crucial to the work done by these entities in the fight against discrimination of Roma communities. The guide also contains a list of useful links to help readers.

The context: NGOs as Key partners

The Roma population is one of the most vulnerable groups. It is subject to poverty and social exclusion and is the most socially unaccepted ethnic minority in Europe. This is partly due to a lack of prevention work, awareness-raising mechanisms and attention to the victims of discrimination. NGOs and Roma Associations, thanks to the close relation they have with Roma communities, are potential key players in the fight against discrimination of these groups and also serve as key partners for joint work with other public or private entities. These entities still face barriers which hinder progress and diminish the positive impact they intend, although they do not undermine all of their work. The effort made by these associations and their ability to overcome some of the barriers makes them important drivers of different practices and methodologies, some particularly innovative, but sometimes not well known within the social sector. In terms of partnership or networking, they usually act as strategic organizations in the development of actions with Roma communities, especially at local level, but even there we can identify barriers, but also important alliances, some of them at the decision-making level.

This Guide aims to be a tool for NGOs and Roma Associations. It is not merely informative but is also intended as a working tool for the planning of actions on the field, especially strategic actions aiming to fight discrimination against Roma communities.



1. Awareness

Roma is one of the ethnic groups most vulnerable to discrimination at national and European level. Awareness raising of the majority society, including key professionals, is one of the most relevant tasks undertaken by NGOs/Roma Associations and other key players at national and local level.

Following is a set of proactive procedures in which NGOs/Roma Associations can play a key role:

- **Monitoring of social policy and Lobbying:**

NGOs/Roma Associations can play a vital role in the monitoring of social policies insofar as they are often closely involved in their implementation. There are countries in which that role is formalized under structures such as the National Roma Integration Strategies and also through other local and national structures. This participation is important when engaging in lobbying work and influencing the decision-making process. Similarly, their participation can also help to define measures to promote the acknowledgment of discriminatory practices and to monitor their effects and expression.

These organizations may also play an important role in the implementation of the Racial Equality Directive (EU Directive 2000/43/EC). According to Article 7(2) of this Directive, NGOs with a legitimate interest have legal standing to act on behalf of or in support of the complainant with his/her approval. In simple terms, NGOs which fight for human rights may legally represent or support Roma victims of discrimination.

- **Awareness raising campaigns/actions:**

Awareness raising remains an essential strategy in combating discrimination against Roma communities and promoting a deeper understanding of this

group. These actions can be carried out on a national and local scale and in partnership with other public and private bodies and focus on different target groups. It is important to note that these actions can target Roma and non Roma citizens, the latter referring to everyday citizens and not only key professionals.

In the design of a campaign it is important to clarify the target group and its characteristics to ensure that the message designed to change people's mindsets gets passed on. Selection of the target group depends on the goal that the entity wants to achieve with the campaign.

Since the involvement of the target group is crucial for a proper effective campaign, the participation of Roma communities is a must in the design of a powerful and successful awareness-raising campaign.

- **Training actions and Technical assistance:**

NGOs play an important role in offering training activities and joint work with all of the professional groups entrusted with guaranteeing equality and therefore such activities are one of the cornerstones of their intervention and must focus on training and awareness-raising of groups of professionals.

NGOs can provide information and assistance to the Roma population, counselling them as to procedures to follow when they are victims of discrimination, the main structures that can help them in these cases and even helping them in court to defend their right to equal treatment as mentioned above. This sort of technical assistance can also be provided to other groups (health organisations, social services, police, and so on) that work with these communities.

The overarching objective of these actions is to show the Roma population and other citizens the importance of reporting all cases of discrimination. First of all, uncovering the phenomenon of discrimination which is often associated with hate crimes will activate the justice system and raise the awareness of all relevant players (policy makers, police, media, lawyers, etc...) that this is a tangible problem which must be combated. Secondly, potential legal victories will encourage other victims to come forward, demonstrating that it is possible to obtain justice and also that they are not alone in this fight.

- **Publications and theme-based documents:**

NGOs are an important source of know-how but sometimes this knowledge is only shared amongst themselves. It is important to exchange information

and technical resources with other organisations and particularly with the state bodies which have the potential to mainstream the knowledge produced by NGOs, i.e. “best practices”, within the system.

- **Encouraging the establishment of Roma Associations:**

Roma Associations are currently one of the best ways to promote the social participation of Roma communities because: 1) associations are often the first to address the problems of the Roma; and 2) they have the capacity to make Roma communities aware of their own needs and their ability to solve problems and promote their own development.

- **Promote the participation of Roma communities by giving them a voice:**

The participation of Roma communities must envisage the exercise of the rights of citizenship and the real power to translate their interests and expectations into collective action. Focusing on the active participation of Roma communities and their associations, not only when performing diagnoses but also as a way to present real testimonies and monitor and evaluate actions (empowerment), is a strategic procedure.

Working “with” and not “for” is essential for effective social intervention because the Roma must be an active player in their own inclusion process. The participation of these citizens in the definition of social measures and actions, and in their subsequent implementation, is a right and guarantees that their “voice” is heard and that their real interests are protected.

- **Promote/mediate Roma communities access to different sectors such as education, health and others.**

NGOs are key players in breaking down the barriers that Roma communities still face in gaining access to general services. In this connection it is important to make NGOs aware of the need to work jointly and in cooperation with these services when developing a project or activity. An example of this kind of cooperation is the Roma mediator, a figure which exists in several European Union member states. The role of mediators is to improve the access of Roma communities to a number of public services such as education, healthcare, etc. Bolstering intercultural mediation is a key strategy when promoting a direct link between Roma communities and the majority society. That is why it is important to promote the involvement of Roma mediators in the process of breaking down barriers since they are key players with keen insight into

Roma communities and the overall social environment. Roma mediators can be instrumental in adapting the grass roots implementation of instruments and methodologies used in social intervention to the real situation of Roma communities. However, one must not lose sight of the fact that mediators are considered to be a temporary solution insofar as the ultimate aim is for Roma communities to achieve direct access to services without the need for mediator intervention. To that end, services should be adapted to serve all citizens in an equal manner, responding to people's specific needs.

- **Networking:**

The entire society must contribute to resolving the issues affecting Roma and these must be approached in a systemic fashion where all players interact and this includes decision-makers, professionals, Roma communities and associations. It is important to improve networking between these different agents as a way to take full advantage of resources, share responsibilities and make social intervention more efficient and effective.

- **Cooperation with media to prevent stereotypes:**

The active involvement of the media is essential given their role in forming opinion and they must therefore be made aware of the situation along with the society at large. Their cooperation with NGOs is crucial in portraying a true image of Roma communities, doing away with the myths that still prevail in society and increasing respect for diversity and intercultural dialogue. This can be achieved by involving Roma communities and making them the lead figure in the transmission of positive images. This could include disseminating their traditions, practices, activities and also their problems. Creating opportunities for Roma communities to express and share their cultural richness will contribute to changing the preconceived notions that society has of them. Roma NGOs are a good intermediary between journalists and the community and journalists often seek out NGOs when dealing with Roma issues.

2. Main barriers and suggestions to overcome them

The work being done by NGOs/Roma Associations has come up against different barriers in the fight against discrimination of Roma communities. Some of these barriers are related to isolated areas such as specific intervention or work of professionals, but there are others related to global issues like the long history of exclusion faced by Roma communities and also some political strategies and measures targeting these communities. These barriers have got worse over time and the effort made by EU Member States to define and implement national strategies for the inclusion of Roma communities is still very recent and with little measurable impact. In recent decades, projects and actions in this area were carried out in piecemeal fashion by NGOs but were not included in a more comprehensive and integrated strategy.

Following are some of the barriers faced and ways to overcome them:

- **The stereotyped image that the majority society has of the Roma communities**

Roma are generally considered a homogeneous group identified exclusively by their ethnic group. They are not considered as individuals with diverse characteristics in different areas. To make matters worse, the stereotyped image of the Roma is negative and this is learnt through socialization. There are images that can spark prejudice which act as barriers in the social inclusion of these communities, so a major and indispensable step that must be taken is to mobilize all the relevant stakeholders to do away with this image and build an accurate one.

- **The stereotyped image of Roma communities in the Media**

Considering the power of the media to influence society, the way in which the media presents the Roma is vital. Negative stereotypes of the Roma are typically found in mainstream media. However, we cannot blame only the

media for racist speeches and the legitimization of discriminatory practices towards Roma people. The fact is that these discourses need to be used to disseminate a positive perception of these communities. The Media are a key partner for NGOs to build and share a new and diverse image of Roma communities and to show positive examples of inclusion of these groups.

- **Lack of political priority on Roma communities**

Globally speaking, one of the major barriers lies in the political sector and in the political attention given to these communities. First of all, in some countries, there is no opportunity for these communities to participate in the political process at national or local level. Secondly, the economic and social vulnerability of these communities accounts for their lack of political power and keeps them off the political agenda. This has a significant impact on the development and implementation of measures targeting these communities. It is important to define and effectively create an adequate space for the participation of NGOs and Roma communities in the decision-making process.

- **Lack of economic sustainability**

NGOs and Roma Associations encounter numerous difficulties procuring financial support for their work and are highly dependent on financial programmes; alternative funding sources to support their activities being equally difficult to find. Inconsistent funding generally leads to interruptions in programme funding and has a negative impact on beneficiaries' expectations. In fact, discontinuous funding and partnership is responsible for the difficulties encountered in designing integrated action plans with long term and sustainable outcomes and in mainstreaming and disseminating best practices.

Another issue is that many NGOs do not have the resources or the skills to provide real support to victims of discrimination, file complaints or to help and guide victims throughout the litigation process. Some legal systems encourage lawyers to provide pro bono services to vulnerable groups and these lawyers could effectively work in partnership with NGOs and be very effective in providing adequate protection for Roma and vulnerable groups in general.

- **The paternalistic attitude of some NGOs**

In some countries (Portugal, for instance), NGOs sometimes take a protective stance towards Roma communities thus engendering a paternalistic attitude that limits their participation. This happens when NGOs consider that some

behaviours within Roma communities are legitimate due to cultural specificities or they believe that they know what is best for these communities. In both cases, barriers are erected which limit the participation and social inclusion of these groups.

Related to this, it is important to draw attention to the lack of faith on the part of some professionals regarding the work being done with Roma communities and the low priority they put on raising awareness of Roma cultural issues and cultural diversity. Lastly, we would note the scant use made of Roma mediators at local level to facilitate activities or, on the other extreme, the excessive workload some Roma mediators have and the lack of resources at their disposal to conduct their work.

- **Failure in the implementation of national and European anti-discrimination legislation**

Despite national legislation on the books and European directives enacted to combat discrimination, these are not always enforced or monitored. This situation has allowed for the development of segregation and discriminatory practices such as schools for Roma children only.

- **Mechanisms for reporting cases of discrimination**

A victim of discrimination can report his/her case to the competent national authority called the equality body. Typically, complaints must contain a series of elements to be considered as a potential case of discrimination. Most people are not aware of the procedures that apply to reporting discrimination or how to formulate a valid complaint. NGOs and government authorities are in a position to implement activities to make more information on anti-discrimination legislation and procedures available to Roma communities. Additionally, in accordance with Article 13(2) of the Race Equality Directive, equality bodies must provide independent assistance to victims of discrimination in pursuing their complaints on discrimination.

In the *Equinet* (European Network of Equality Bodies) web page it's possible to identify all the organisations at European level in which the victim can report the case of racial discrimination: <http://www.equineteurope.org>

Considering all of the aforementioned barriers, we would draw attention to the following suggestions and proposals that NGOs can use to overcome them:

- Use and disseminate good examples of Roma inclusion in order to fight the negative perceptions that still remain in society towards these communities;
- Highlight the need to promote training on anti-discrimination and cultural awareness for professionals working at NGOs. NGOs can also be trainers of other professionals on these subjects;
- Stress the importance of training on diversity and anti-discrimination and combating stereotypes earlier with schoolchildren and run awareness raising campaigns and actions targeting the general public;
- Encourage professional training of Roma mediators and recognition of mediation as a profession. Roma mediators are key players in facilitating work between Roma communities and NGOs and through their work they can help break down the stereotypes held by both groups;
- Work directly with Roma communities in tackling problematic practices where they exist, i.e. deficient participation at school, and informing about rights, duties and procedures for reporting situations of discrimination;
- Raise societal awareness of the problems affecting Roma communities using the media and other information channels such as internet and social media to stress the positive;
- Put together transnational, national and local projects that enhance the exchange of best practices in fighting discrimination against Roma communities.

3. Intervention Tools and Methodologies

Combating discrimination against Roma communities and facilitating their social inclusion must be considered as overarching objectives when working with Roma. Therefore, this is constant and ongoing work that should underpin most of the activities implemented.

From a methodological and experiential point of view, it is essential to **promote the participation and involvement of Roma communities** in the projects and actions carried out. If the strategy is intended to improve and enhance already-existing skills in these communities, there is an opportunity to promote joint work between professionals and Roma communities where the former can learn from the latter.

Roma mediators/facilitators should be used to enhance the work done by different organisations with Roma communities. A great deal of work remains to be done inside the communities insofar as they must assume a key role in reducing stereotypes. Fighting discrimination is a task involving many players and Roma communities must never be left out of that process. One of the key jobs of mediators and facilitators is to provide information for Roma communities, not only on their rights and duties but also on the procedures they must follow when reporting situations of discrimination.

Roma mediators/facilitators play an important role in **schools** in some European countries, a practice that should be institutionalized (i.e. mediators becoming full-fledged faculty members) with the support of the school staff. Specific training in this regard should also be provided for teachers to prevent and combat any prejudice these professionals may still harbour about the Roma population.

NGOs also play a valuable role as a source of **data on discrimination and in drawing attention to cases of discrimination**. They gather cases of discrimination against Roma during the year and some publish an annual report to documenting them. The report can usually be presented to the public authorities responsible for fighting discrimination and to lawyers, mass media, police etc. These documents can be used as evidences of discrimination with specific and useful information for lobby and advocacy work.

Annual report on Discrimination and the Roma Community (Spain)

http://www.gitanos.org/centro_documentacion/publicaciones/fichas/100777.html.es: published since 2006 from Fundación Secretariado Gitano. The main object of which is to inform the Government and the society in general and to raise awareness and denounce the everyday discrimination faced by the Roma community by presenting these cases which bear witness to this violation of the fundamental right of equality. This publication also gives voice to the victims of discrimination who need to be defended and supported with a view to seeking solutions to this social problem and to contributing to the creation of a fairer society.

NGOs working as **lobby and advocacy** agents may also be effective in fighting discrimination.

Cooperation between Roma NGOs and public administration on assistance of victims of discrimination (Spain)

Creation of the Network of Assistance Centres for Victims of Discrimination by the equality body Council for the Promotion of Equal Treatment and Non-Discrimination on the Grounds of Racial or Ethnic Origin.

One of the Council's most important lines of work is to provide independent assistance to victims of direct or indirect discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin in processing their complaints. In June 2010 the Network of Assistance Centres for Victims of Discrimination based on Racial or Ethnic Origin was created. This network is formed by different NGOs, including Roma NGOs, all of which are working to achieve equal treatment for different vulnerable groups of the population.

The Network of Assistance Centres for Victims of Discrimination based on Racial or Ethnic Origin was devised to allow Network members to put together a common action protocol based on a service handbook.

Networking is an effective strategy when dealing with multidimensional phenomena such as discrimination and is also an important intervention tool to promote the participation of different stakeholders, share responsibilities and resources and more clearly define solutions for a problem that is common to all partners.

Following are some of the strengths of this sort of cooperation:

- The current mediator and community facilitator network in the field plays a key role in the construction of “bridges” between Roma communities and NGOs in order to promote greater insight and proximity between the two groups. Networking with these agents promotes the sharing of knowledge on Roma culture and on the legislation and mechanisms in place to combat discrimination. With a view to greater consistency, mediation work should be legally regulated as is already the case in some European countries.
- The involvement of public and private entities in promoting strategic and integrated intervention in different sectors of society is also crucial to the fight on discrimination against Roma communities. Stereotypes about Roma communities in key sectors such as housing hinders their social inclusion. The involvement of these stakeholders can provide solutions for these problems not only at micro (grassroots intervention) but also at macro level (by changing policies and social measures). In this connection, local and global intervention must dovetail so as to facilitate a bottom-up and top-down process.

4. Training needs

Training is one of the most important ways of gaining knowledge on the subject of equality, human rights and discrimination insofar as it helps to develop professional competences and improve personal skills. A variety of different training methods can go a long way in producing quality work, generating new ideas and helping to identify priorities.

When it comes to Roma/minority issues, who needs training? We should start with the Roma themselves. Roma communities need to have better knowledge of the law, not only in the field of discrimination but also regarding institutional rules and working procedures. In addition to Roma communities, we would highlight other target training groups such as NGOs, media professionals and public services professionals, namely teachers and school administrators, prison guards, police officers, judges, lawyers and employment centre professionals.

The involvement of Roma trainers in this process is essential because they are members of the community and can act as role models for Roma and non-Roma participants. Therefore, the training of Roma trainers (in greater numbers) destined to work in the field of training and non-formal education is a very important responsibility of public and private organizations.

Regarding training topics, in addition to anti-discrimination legislation we would stress the following: Roma history and culture, the role of Roma mediators, cultural specificities, citizenship (including fundamental rights), intercultural education and cooperation. Also, human rights and anti-discrimination legislation should be compulsory subject matter built into the university curricula of health and education studies. In addition to this initial university preparation, personnel working at public institutions must also be exposed to training in human rights and anti-discrimination legislation.

Concerning NGOs, training should focus on the following fields:

- Roma culture and history at national and European level;
- Integration policies at national and European level;
- Funding and fundraising practices;
- Network-building;
- Human rights;
- Strategic planning;
- Strategic monitoring;
- Strategic litigation;
- Advocacy

Participatory and interactive training methodologies should be employed involving practical situations (including personal experiences) and, where possible, field visits.

Finally, it should be stressed that training alone is not enough to achieve change but rather should be viewed as a support mechanism to implement the policies and standards of the NGO.





5. Best practices

This chapter includes some best practices under way to combat discrimination against Roma Communities. First and foremost, these practices are measurable, their goals clear, they are notably successful and are hopefully replicable in every country.

Designation:

Project for Municipal Mediators

Promoter/Leader Organization: ACIDI, IP

Country: Portugal, 21 municipalities

Description

This project is the result of a partnership between ACIDI, municipalities and local civil society, to train Roma mediators and employ them in local municipalities to provide Roma inclusion services, thus guaranteeing the establishment of a close relation between local services and organizations and local Roma communities. National and local authorities, civil society organizations and Roma communities work together in this project. It allows for collaboration between the entities responsible for European funds, national authorities responsible for monitoring Roma issues and communities, civil society organizations and the municipalities that are most familiar with the real local and immediate needs.

The goal of the project is to improve Roma communities access to local infrastructures and services and to promote equal opportunity, intercultural dialogue and social cohesion through the employment of Roma mediators by several municipalities in Portugal.

Following are some project results:

- Mediators are contributing to improving knowledge of Roma culture and the need for public services;
- Mediators are promoting more adequate solutions with the participation of Roma communities;
- Mediators are facilitating the access of Roma communities to public services and resources;
- Mediators are facilitating the participation of Roma communities in decision-making processes.

Contact: Roma Communities Support Office **Tel:** +351 218 106 100

Web page: <http://www.acidi.gov.pt>

Designation:

Programme “Escolhas” (Choices) and its Roma community facilitators

GOOD
PRACTICES

Promoter/Leader Organization

ACIDI, IP

Country

Portugal – national level

Description

This Program was internationally recognised as a best practice at European and international level. It is a mainstream governmental programme, created in 2001 and managed and coordinated by the High Commission with the aim of promoting the social integration of children and youngsters from disadvantaged social backgrounds - many of whom are the descendants of immigrants and members of the Roma communities. The overarching objective of this programme is to promote equal opportunity and the social inclusion of programme beneficiaries. Presently in its fifth phase, the programme supports 140 local projects, 85 of which target Roma communities.

Contact:

Tel: +351 218 103 060

Web page: <https://www.programaescolhas.pt>

Designation:

Awareness raising sessions

Promoter/Leader Organization:EAPN Portugal

Country: Portugal

Description

Involve Roma communities and encourage the participation of other professionals from different intervention areas.

EAPN Portugal has a Strategic Plan¹ for Roma issues. This organisation engages in different types of actions targeting (and working with) Roma communities and the majority society. These actions aim to make people more aware of Roma practices and combat prejudice and negative stereotypes of these communities, the ultimate objective being to defend the development of an intercultural society and respect for difference. These actions focus on information, awareness-raising and training activities. The target groups are very diverse but they are quite often professionals of different intervention areas, normal citizens, Roma citizens (women, young people, parents and so on).

We would note that EAPN Portugal has been asked to develop these kinds of actions for students who will be the future professionals in these areas (social and health). This is also a way to prepare these future professionals and draw attention to the fact that there are courses that support the development of this knowledge.

Lastly, we would mention that some of these actions are carried out in partnership with other NGOs, local authorities, public entities, universities, Roma associations and others.

Contact: +351 225 420 800

Web page: <http://www.eapn.pt>

Designation:

Professional ethics course

GOOD
PRACTICES

Promoter/Leader Organization

ADIS - Association for Development and Social Inclusion

Country

Romania

Description

ADIS (Association for Development and Social Inclusion), in partnership with several university medicine and pharmacy faculties, has promoted the teaching of a module called Ethics and non-discrimination of vulnerable groups in the health system.² This course deals with topics related to the phenomenon of discrimination to better prepare students to work with diverse patients, Roma in particular, and to prevent discrimination in health care in the future.

Contact: office.adis@yahoo.com

Web page: <http://adis.org.ro/en/news/ethics-and-nondiscrimination-in-health-starts-in-school>

Designation:

State Council for the Roma People

Promoter/Leader Organization

Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality of Spain

Country

Spain

Description

The aim of this State Council is to formalize the collaboration and cooperation of the Roma associative movement with the General State Administration.

The Council has a collegiate, inter-ministerial structure with consultative and advisory powers and answers to the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality. It serves as an institutional channel for collaboration and cooperation between the General State Administration and Roma NGOs for the development of social policy. This policy should foster a holistic approach to the needs of the Roma population both by ensuring equal opportunity as regards general policies and through policies specifically targeting the Roma population.

Contact: consejogitano@msssi.es

Web page: <http://www.msssi.gob.es/ssi/familiasInfancia/inclusionSocial/poblacionGitana/consejoEstGitano.htm>

Designation:

Consulting Group for the Integration of Roma Communities

GOOD
PRACTICES

Promoter/Leader Organization: ACIDI, IP

Country

Portugal

Promoter / Leader Organization: ACIDI, IP

Description

The Portuguese government, recognising the importance of a consultation group to monitor the implementation of the National strategy and also to assess the socioeconomic situation of Roma communities, decided to create (Council of Ministers Resolution 25/2013 of 27 March 2013) a group consisting of representatives from various governmental departments, state bodies, private entities and Roma communities.

Contact: Roma Communities Support Office

Tel: +351 218 106 100

Web page: <http://www.acidi.gov.pt/acidi-i-p/-o-grupo-consultivo-para-a-integracao-das-comunidades-ciganas-%E2%80%93-concig->

Designation:

Platform for Police Diversity Management

Promoter/Leader Organization

UNIJEPO (and 8 NGOs)

Country

Spain

Description

In 2010 several NGOs in Spain and an organization of Local Police Heads agreed to create a Platform for Police Management of Diversity to bring about change in police forces and improve their action procedures with a view to guaranteeing that the diverse society, and most particularly the most vulnerable minority groups including Roma, receives equal treatment from the police.

Contact: info@gestionpolicialediversidad.org

Web page: <http://gestionpolicialediversidad.org/>

6. Recommendations

NGOs are key players in civil society in combating discrimination against the Roma communities. NGOs play a role in monitoring, evaluating and reviewing action taken by the Government and other entities (public and private) to supplement and complement the efforts being made by Governments in combating discrimination and helping individuals and groups to exercise their rights. With a view to enhancing this role, we propose a series of recommendations that we think will contribute to a more equal society:

- NGOs should engage in more diagnostic work on the reality of Roma communities, including research into existing barriers and solutions that can be implemented, as well as research into the best practices implemented across Europe.
- NGOs can be an active partner in the development of integrated and coordinated policies between different areas of intervention designed to effectively allow the exercise of full citizenship and eliminate discrimination and racism.
- NGOs can promote the effective participation of Roma communities by: working “with” instead of working “for”; working together with other NGOs and entities to increase effectiveness; and providing information and opportunities to involve Roma communities as an integral part of the inclusion process.
- NGOs should put a high priority on networking involving different stakeholders to gain greater insight into the needs of these communities, make the best use of resources, promote the engagement of participants and find adequate solutions to promote respect for difference and diversity.

- NGOs should seek new forms of intervention and strengthen existing ones such as intercultural mediation, making these common practice through outreach efforts at European level.
- Roma NGOs can play an active role in assisting victims of discrimination. Many Roma do not generally file discrimination complaints to public bodies or the Courts. Roma NGOs are organizations where Roma people should be more willing to talk about their problems, including situations of discrimination. These NGOs can serve as an intermediary to transfer these complaints to equality bodies or to the police and are also in a position to give advice and help victims.
- NGOs can provide technical assistance and training to key players in the fight against discrimination: mostly technical personnel and the heads of administrations and social organizations, legal experts, lawyers, police and the media, including Roma Associations.
- NGOs can offer training activities and work in partnership with all other key players, educating and raising the awareness of this group of professionals.
- NGOs can promote policies supporting the progress of equal treatment by monitoring anti-discrimination legislation and its everyday enforcement.
- NGOs play a key role in Social awareness-raising actions through the dissemination of information related with the fight against ethnic discrimination and the promotion of equal treatment and different awareness raising campaigns, including respect for diversity and promotion of intercultural dialogue.
- NGOs can lead Strategic litigation defending equal treatment in the courts. There is still a great degree of permissiveness, inaction and impunity when it comes to racism and discrimination towards the Roma community. Victims of discrimination are in a position of defencelessness regarding their basic social rights such as access to employment and housing which are crucial, especially in these times of economic crisis.
- NGOs can cooperate with media to avoid negative stereotypes about the Roma communities which has a perverse effect on the community's image and is a breach of the equality principle. The growth of anti-Roma sentiment on the Internet and social networks is of growing concern as is the difficulty in combating it.

- NGOs can help Security forces to improve their communication with Roma citizens taking in consideration that police play a fundamental role in guaranteeing the right to equality.
- NGOs can monitor whether governments are complying with their obligations under Directive 2000/43/EC to create an independent body to promote equal treatment and non-discrimination.
- NGOs can be used to provide instruction about the laws promoting equal treatment and non-discrimination; these laws are still practically unknown and are not applied in the courts. NGOs can engage in training actions for Roma communities on citizenship, discrimination laws, rights and duties and intercultural dialogue.

Bibliography

Other cases of litigation led by Roma NGOs:

Discrimination against a Romani Woman Before the European Court of Human Rights

http://www.errc.org/en-research-and-advocacy-roma-details.php?article_id=3564&page=5

Cases promoted by European Roma Rights Centre:

<http://www.errc.org/en-search-results.php?mcountry=0&mtheme=1&mare=3&mkeyword=Enter+keywords+...&ok=OK>

Glossary

Anti-romanism:

Anti-romanism or anti-gypsyism or is another sign of intolerance which includes all forms of hatred, discrimination, hostility and violence towards this group. It is based on prejudice and ignorance and has strong historical roots in popular culture taking the form of stereotypes, clichés, jokes, derogatory and demeaning attitudes. It is also called romaphobia when it is a hate crime motivated by hatred against Roma.

Non-Governmental Organisation

Notwithstanding the different definitions that exist for NGOs, for our purposes, non-governmental organizations refer generically to any organization that does not belong to or is linked with any level of government. It is fair to say that NGOs are social groups with a social and political role within the community and society; they have a formal legal structure; are related and connected to society or the community through acts of solidarity; are non-profit; have considerable autonomy. This is a sector where only a small number of entities has ample financial independence since the resources of most depend on the public sector.

Networking

Networking is a work methodology in response to the complex and multifaceted reality characterising the environment in which social entities work. Networking requires a commitment on the part of the different organisations taking part to pool their efforts to solve shared problems. For this to happen, some attitudes need to be adopted, namely inter-institutional cooperation; the willingness to accept and seek new values and a new working culture; change of the social realities in which we operate; and management of differences.



Equality body

Equality bodies are independent organisations whose role is to assist victims of discrimination, monitor and report on discrimination issues and promote equality. They are legally bound to promote equality and combat discrimination in relation to one, some, or all of the grounds of discrimination covered by European Union (EU) law – gender, race and ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief and disability.

Social-cultural mediation

Social-cultural mediation is an organized effort seeking to strengthen social cohesion. Certain social realities require the creation the figure known as a mediator who is responsible for promoting and facilitating communication between parties, especially when one faces a particularly disadvantaged social situation. The work of mediators, based on intercultural principles, seeks to modify the relationship between the parties, reinforcing what they have in common.

Racial Directive

EU directives lay down certain end results that must be achieved in every Member State. National authorities have to adapt their laws to meet these goals but are free to decide how to do so. Directives may concern one or more Member States, or all of them.

Each directive specifies the date by which the national laws must be adapted giving national authorities the necessary manoeuvring room within the deadlines to take account of differing national situations.

Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination implies less favourable treatment of a person or a group in comparison with another one in a similar situation on a ground covered by the directive (either racial, ethnic, religious, belief, disability, age, sexual orientation).

Indirect Discrimination

When a universally applicable and apparently neutral provision, practice or criterion has a less favourable effect on a “protected group”. This group, defined by its religion, origin, disability, age or sexual orientation, suffers negative effects compared to the general population due to this treatment. Comparisons are drawn as in the case of direct discrimination.

Harassment

The directives consider harassment to be discriminatory if the unwanted conduct is related to a protected ground and if its purpose or effect is to “violate the dignity of a person” and/or to create “an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or

offensive environment”. As a form of direct discrimination, harassment is expressly referred to by the directive to highlight this particular form of discrimination rather than to create a separate concept of discrimination. In most cases, questions of fact are dealt with by national jurisdictions.

Instruction to discriminate

Instruction to discriminate on the basis of protected grounds is deemed to constitute discrimination, even where the directives do not provide for a specific definition. The European Court of Justice will need to clarify this concept, especially in terms of whether it needs to be an order or if incitement or expressed preference to treat certain groups less favourably based on a protected ground is sufficient to constitute discrimination.



Useful links

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Network of local monitors in human rights, initiated by Romani Criss

http://www.romanicriss.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=373:reteaua-demonitori-locali-de-drepturile-omului&catid=60:parteneri-romani-criss



Network “Social partners for health without discrimination”
<http://adis.org.ro/ro/noutati/etica-i-nondiscriminare-insntate-incepe-in-coal>

Antidiscriminare.ro: <http://www.antidiscriminare.ro/despre-noi/>

Annual reports of FSG

<http://www.gitanos.org/publicaciones/discriminacion12English/>
<http://www.gitanos.org/publicaciones/discriminacion11English/>
<http://www.gitanos.org/publicaciones/discriminacion10English/>
<http://www.gitanos.org/publicaciones/discriminacion09English/>
<http://www.gitanos.org/publicaciones/discriminacion08English/>
<http://www.gitanos.org/publicaciones/discriminacion07English/>

Equality bodies:

European level:

Equinet – European Network of Equality bodies

Website: <http://www.equineteurope.org>

Spain:

Council for the Promotion of Equal Treatment and Non-Discrimination on the Grounds of Racial or Ethnic Origin

Website: www.igualdadynodiscriminacion.org

Italy:

National Equality Councillor

Website: <http://www.lavoro.gov.it/ConsiglieraNazionale/Pages/default.aspx>

UNAR - Office against Racial Discrimination

Website: www.unar.it

Romania:

National Council for Combating Discrimination (NCCD)

Website: www.cncd.org.ro

Portugal:

Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment – CITE

Website: www.cite.gov.pt

Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality – CIG

Website: <http://www.cig.gov.pt/>

High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue (ACIDI)

Website: www.acidi.gov.pt



With financial support from the Fundamental Rights and
Citizenship Programme of the European Union
Project Code Number: JUST/2012/FRAC/AG/2848