

Romomatter Project

Nov 2019

A year ago, the Romomatter Project began its journey at a meeting in Seville. It was just a year earlier that we had submitted the project proposal after becoming aware that Roma girls are one of the most ignored and marginalized groups in Europe today. At the same time, Roma girls are a key group in terms of making significant advances to overcoming oppressive living conditions experienced by Roma people in Europe.

We know that this gap is not random, that the challenge is demanding and complex and that is an important journey. But we believe in the worthiness of our goal, we enjoy what we do, and we are committed to working with Roma girls, families and facilitators until the project's completion in the winter of 2020. In this quarter's newsletter, you'll find links to updates about Romomatter's work over the past months. During this first part of the project, we have established contact with communities, gotten to know life stories of many Roma adult women, engaged with key agents in the lives of Roma people, mapped community strengths and resources and established local coalitions set up by the different actors. We have been pleased to participate in events including the SCRA Conference in Chicago over the summer, where we had the opportunity to share the methods and tools we use to support empowerment of Roma girls. In our research tasks, we have gathered preliminary but important information through interviews with Roma women and Roma community and social service stakeholders. These efforts support the development of various publications, a task which is currently underway.

This December the project team will meet in Alicante, Spain to celebrate the end of this current stage and the beginning of a new year of work. In Alicante we will share and discuss the multiple and diverse tasks planned to carryout fieldwork with Roma girls and their families and communities in 2020. In our research tasks, we have gathered preliminary but important information through interviews with Roma women and Roma community and social service stakeholders. These efforts support the development of various publications, a task which is currently underway.

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The excellent work developed under the leadership of Daniel La Parra (University of Alicante) in the different scenarios of our consortium is proof of the meaningful engagement of us all. This activity has served to accumulate a significant quantity of evidence and material, and also to build a strong sense of inter-subjectivity among all of us, creating a strong scenario for the stage of work we now embark on.

For most of us, working with Roma girls and their families is the part of the work we are most passionate about, however it is also the most sensitive and delicate. As such, it is a group effort. In this sense, we look forward to connecting with staff, community workers, facilitators and others at this meeting and beyond.

For those wanting to learn more about our work, I encourage you sign up for our newsletter updates on our website. Our current featured blog discusses Reproductive Justice which is the central issue of the project. In research matters, Romomatter Project interviews with key stakeholders in the education and social services systems helped identify over 90 community assets. Interviews also point to system challenges to meeting the needs of Roma communities in support of girls. In June the project team attended the SCRA biennial conference in Chicago, USA. And our project partners are currently engaged in supporting local community coalitions and mapping community assets linked to reproductive justice for Roma girls in the project target countries. More details on all of this can be found on our project website at www.romomatter.org.

