Empowering Roma

Reflections from FRA's Local Engagement for Roma Inclusion (LERI) Research

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4th Danube Participation Day

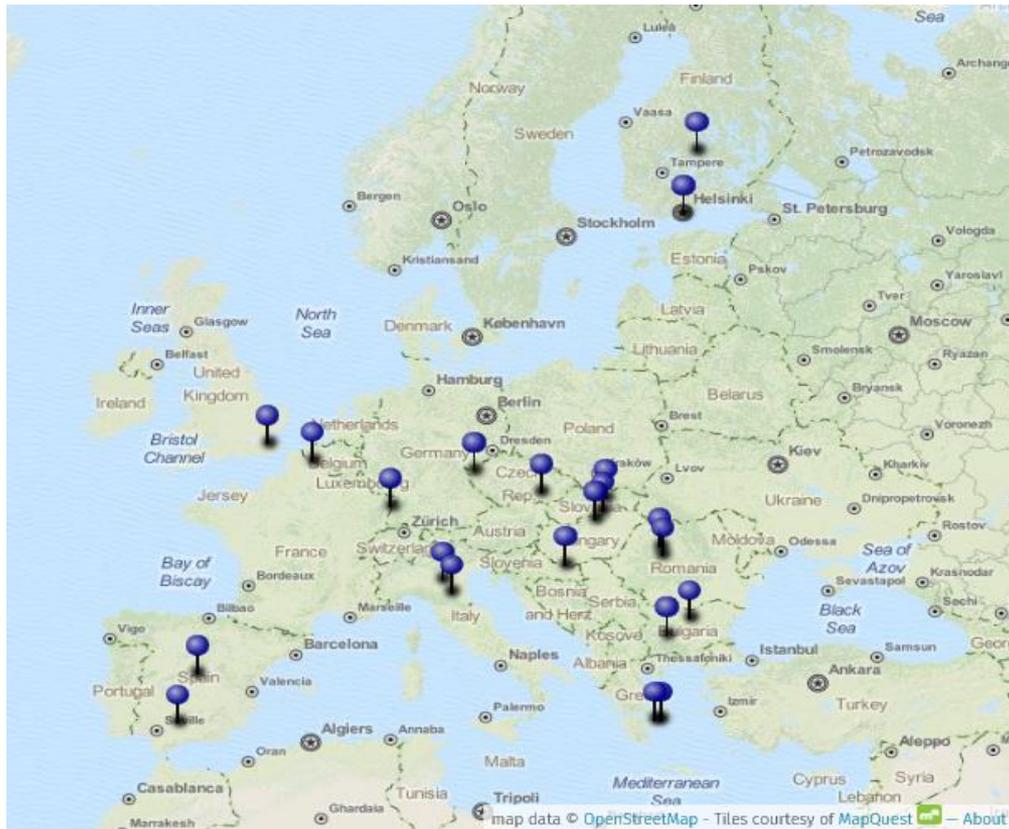Budapest, 17 October 2017

Policy importance

Why promote participation & empowerment?

- Ensure that money, resources and efforts actually improve the lives of rights holders

- Understand the realities and specificities of communities – to achieve real change

- Understand the complexities of social inclusion & exclusion

  - contextualise other data

  - first step towards addressing the real problems

- "Right to participation" & value of participatory approaches for empowerment, rights-based approach

- <u>Research question</u>: Identify what *works* and what *doesn't work* for Roma inclusion at the local level – and *why*?

- <u>Participation and engagement</u> of local level stakeholders, *Roma and non-Roma*

  - Local authorities
  - Roma communities
  - Non-Roma neighbours
  - Local NGOs
  - Others (schools, service providers, housing authority, police, mediators, etc.)

Where is LERI implemented?

21 LOCALITIES in 11 EU MS

Bulgaria	Pavlikeni
	Stara Zagora
Czech Republic	Brno
	Sokolov
Finland	Helsinki
	Jyväskylä
France	Lille
	Strasbourg
Greece	Aghia Varvara
	Megara
Hungary	Besence
	Mátraverebély
Italy	Bologna
	Mantova
Romania	Aiud
	Cluj-Napoca
Slovakia	Hrabušice
	Rakytník
Spain	Córdoba
	Madrid
United Kingdom	Medway

2014   Preparatory Phase

Selection of localities, feasibility check, project plans, piloting, etc.

2015 – 2016 Implementation of Project Activities

Needs assessment, revision of plans, data collection, training, etc.

2017 - 2018 Final Outputs

Case studies, video clips & audio-visual material, comparative study, technical report on PAR, toolkit "Do's & Don't of Roma inclusion at the local level, etc.

- Participatory Action Research (PAR)
  - Participation
  - Action
  - Research
- Small-scale interventions
  - Facilitating real capacity building and participation
  - Producing knowledge on processes
  - Achieving tangible results for the communities
- Documentation of processes
  - The process itself is a key outcome of the project

- PAR light techniques
  - Peers as part of the advisory board
  - Peers as research staff
  - Interviews
  - Surveys
  - Public hearings
  - Focus groups
  - Visioning sessions/charrettes
  - Citizen's councils/citizen's juries/consensus conference

- PAR deep techniques
  - Peers as co-researchers
  - Forum theater / legislative theater
  - Participatory video
  - Photovoice

PAR in the context of Roma communities, an opportunity for:

- Giving local communities a real voice
- Implementing 'nothing for Roma without Roma'
- Learning from the people
- Questioning common stereotypes in 'Roma-targeted projects'

Empowerment of local people

- To gradually take over the research process
- To look critically at their own social reality,
- To think about their situation and take action

- Participation
  - Real participation of the community
  - Incentives to participate
  - Maintaining motivation to stay involved
  - Fluctuating willingness to participate
  - Depth of participation
  - Representation

- Trust
  - Mutual mistrust
  - Building trust
  - Power relations
  - Concrete outcomes needed
  - Time needed – to build trust, to implement activities, to ensure participation

- Community characteristics
  - Every local situation is different
  - Lack of past experience participating
  - Conflict of roles of experts/activists & their physical presence
  - Literacy and education levels
  - Political developments
  - Feasibility of expressed needs

- Other challenges
  - Contractual and management modalities
  - Ensuring quality of deliverables & process
  - External influences (e.g. elections)
  - Gender issues
  - Ethical concerns and sustainability
  - Transparency
  - Communication

- **Building trust** is essential for the success of any social inclusion action
  – Keeping everyone informed & finding out what they most need

- **Participation** must be meaningful
  – Involving Roma as equals rather than as a token gesture

- **Empowering** people to claim their rights
  – Engaging in dialogue with authorities and developing shared understanding of needs and expectations

- Acknowledging and learning from failure
  – Understand why things went wrong to improve chances of success

Thank you for your attention!

Questions? Comments?
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LERI project webpage
http://fra.europa.eu/en/project/2015/local-engagement-roma-inclusion-leri-multi-annual-roma-programme