

# INTERSECTIONALITY

## TRAINING MANUAL

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# INTRODUCTION

“Through an awareness of intersectionality, we can better acknowledge and ground differences among us” – wrote Kimberlé Crenshaw in her 1991 paper Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics and Violence Against Women of Color”.

**Having an intersectional approach in social work is fundamental in order to allow for a better understanding of the problem in its complexity, thus offering answers and possible solutions that take into account all the identities and specific needs of the person being supported. The intersectional approach allows the user to be listened to in all of her needs and identities. Working with this type of approach is often considered more complex and requires more energy. In reality, the intersectional approach saves a lot of time, making it easier to understand which actors to involve in the creation of an effective and efficient network. To do this, it is important to work leaving aside stereotypes and personal prejudices as much as possible and making the environment as comfortable as possible. Before starting to work with an intersectional approach, it is essential to do research on which associations and services are available in the reference area dedicated to specific needs or communities.**

**This manual aims to offer a thorough toolkit to various stakeholders concerning intersectionality and (to a larger degree) discrimination. It consists of three chapters: Know the facts! (chapter 1), Fight discrimination! (Chapter 2); Be an ally! (Chapter 3).**

**The first chapter is divided in two sub-parts: a sociological perspective on discrimination (I); stereotypes and instances of discrimination, examples from Romania, Finland, Italy (II). Whilst in the first sub-part we present some main concepts (profiling, stereotyping), the second sub-part is based on the sociological research conducted by Carmen Gheorghe and Cristina Mocanu<sup>1</sup> and it consists of a rich, and (we need to warn you) a highly emotional account of real situations of discrimination encountered by Roma women in Finland, Italy and Romania. This part depicts the major areas of discrimination: housing discrimination, health discrimination, discrimination in education and employment.**

**The second chapter, Fight discrimination!, attempts to answer the question “How to fight discrimination?” by taking a historical approach to protests and civil unrest, by surveying the main relevant**

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<sup>1</sup>The testimonials used in this chapter and findings are part of the comparative research on multiple discrimination in Finland, Italy and Romania conducted by PhD Carmen Gheorghe and PhD Cristina Mocanu, as part of the project Intersect Voices in Europe – combating discrimination against Roma women, funded by the European Union's Fundamental Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020). The research is available at: <https://e-romnja.ro/project/intersect-voices-in-europa/>

**legislation in the European arena and taking a deep dive, providing concrete steps to file a complaint when discriminated in all of the three countries: Finland, Italy and Romania. This chapter is based on the comparative legal research conducted** by Emanuela Ignăţoiu-Sora, Barbara Giovanna Bello, Heidi Lempiö, Anca Enache, and coordinated by Adriana Iordache<sup>2</sup> - it also discusses important cases, such as Garib, D.H. and others vs. Czech Republic or Brown vs. the Board of Education.

**The third chapter, Be an ally! focuses on the important work NGOs do in combating intersectional discrimination. In this chapter, you will discover some of the NGOs working with an intersectional perspective, find out more about the 10 aspects to be considered for an ally with privileges, and you can assess how diverse your organization is with an intersectionality checklist.**

**The manual ends with a practical part consisting of 6 possible activities, a bibliography and a list of further reading. As you will see by going through this manual, the approach is very practical, with palpable advice and info, as the goal is to promote intersectionality as an effective tool to combat discrimination and promote complexity and diversity.**

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<sup>2</sup>This chapter is based on the comparative legal research on multiple discrimination in Finland, Italy and Romania coordinated by Adriana Iordache and written by the authors: Emanuela Ignăţoiu-Sora, Barbara Giovanna Bello, Heidi Lempiö, Anca Enache, as part of the project **Intersect Voices in Europe – combating discrimination against Roma women**, funded by the European Union's Fundamental Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020). The research is available at: <https://evermade-hdl.s3.eu-central-1.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/15150741/Comparative-analysis-in-Romania-Finland-and-Italy-on-multiple-discrimination.pdf>

# Chapter 1: Learn the facts!

## I. A sociological perspective on discrimination

Key concepts: stereotypes; prejudice; discrimination; profiling.

### The problem with stereotyping

We all often think in terms of “us” and “them” and put people in boxes more than we realize. We grow up and live our day-to-day lives surrounded by images of stereotypes and casual expressions of prejudice and racism. Mass-media, music, movies, the fashion or beauty industries, to name just a few, are constantly bombarding us with objectification, stereotyping and other damaging representations of women or different minorities. Stereotypes are often more insidious and harder to pin down than specific racist or discriminatory practices, and they are everywhere - at the toy shop, making us buy pretty dolls or toy kitchens for girls, and robots, cars or guns for boys, at the clothing store influencing us what colors to wear, or in school, teaching us how to behave or which high-school or college profile to choose. And these are just a few examples.

Let’s think about racist advertisements, racist images or derogatory names (such as “Zigeunersauce”<sup>3</sup> or “Eskimo Pie”<sup>4</sup>) used by some famous brands to sell their products. It took U.S. companies 130 years to recognize that Aunt Jemima’s and Uncle Ben’s images are racial stereotypes connected to slavery and only removed them after protests and criticism. Why did it take so long to remove racist imagery? Because stereotyping and racism have become so powerful, they serve as a basis for an entire social system spread worldwide.

The terms stereotype, prejudice, racism and discrimination can overlap and intersect in many ways. Take a look at this example:

*Neither of her parents went to school – not even for a single day. Her mother married at 15. Why should I encourage her to study and go to school? I don’t see her capable of doing so. And, anyway, coming from such a family, what life perspective could this little Roma have besides giving birth to many children and doing household work?*

<sup>3</sup> “Zigeunersauce” or “gypsy sauce” has been used in Germany for more than 100 years to describe a hot sauce based on tomatoes with small-chopped pieces of bell pepper, onions, vinegar and paprika. It used to be one of the most popular products sold by a well-known German food company. In 2020, the company decided to change the name of its “Zigeunersauce” to “Paprika Sauce Hungarian Style”, following recent international debates over racism, especially in the United States, where big national companies have also renamed traditional brands in response to concerns about racial stereotyping. Civil rights groups have for years called for the renaming of the brand, but in 2013, the company rejected the demand.

<sup>4</sup> “Eskimo Pie” is the former name of a chocolate-covered vanilla ice cream bar produced by Nestle which has been used for nearly a century. In 2020, the company acknowledged that the name was offensive toward native arctic communities, as the term “Eskimo” has long been used by non-native groups to refer collectively to Inuit and Yupik people. In 2021, the dessert was renamed “Edy’s Pie”.

## Do you agree? Why is such thinking problematic?

A stereotype is a preconceived idea

The notion of **stereotype** was explained and explored by numerous sociologists and psychologists through different lenses and theories. In simple words, a stereotype is a preconceived idea, a simplistic representation, accepted and conveyed without reflection, without knowing enough about something or someone.

According to sociologist Joel Charon<sup>5</sup>, a stereotype is characterized by six attributes: **it makes a judgment based on a personal and emotional opinion rather than facts**; it leaves no room for exception and creates categories that dominate all the other features of an individual, **not allowing for other characteristics to be seen and appreciated**. A stereotype does not change **even in the light of evidence**; it is learned from others and used without critical thinking or formed **based on someone's personal experience and then generalized**, and lastly, a stereotype **does not encourage people to understand and embrace the differences**, but to judge and discriminate.

Stereotypes are ubiquitous in all our societies and cultures. They can be based on **race, ethnicity, culture, age, gender, sexual orientation**, etc. The practice of stereotyping not only supports the feeling of superiority of those among whom the stereotype circulates, but also acts as a way of validating elements of an existing social order and cultural hierarchy. It does so by creating symbolic **boundaries** between people and cultures, **excluding those powerless or less privileged**.

Sometimes, stereotypes may be interpreted as positive (Asian men are good at science and math, Black women are strong, gay people are fashionable, women have a natural mothering instinct, Black people make better athletes), **but they are still one-sided projections and may lead to negative consequences for others, for example by confining them to a set role, function or ability**.

There are instances when people adapt to a certain stereotypical characteristic. They may **internalize** the stereotype under the pressures of social conformity, expectation, censure or fear of what may happen if they don't fit into that stereotype. And, by doing so, they confirm and validate it.

**Prejudice** refers to the beliefs, thoughts, feelings, and attitudes someone holds about a group or an individual. A prejudice is not based on experience; instead, it is a prejudgment, originating outside actual experience. A prejudice may determine us to behave differently towards other groups or to avoid certain individuals.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://mymission.lamission.edu/userdata/kleinmc/docs/Generalizing%20and%20Stereotypes%20Joel%20Charon.pdf>

If we want to understand prejudice, we must understand that **the prejudice against a white middle-class woman because of her gender is very different from the multi-layered prejudice against a poor Roma woman from a marginalized rural settlement, who is affected by stereotypes and discrimination related to being poor, being a woman, and being a Roma.**

**Stereotypes validate preexisting manners of thinking, placing people in categories.**

**Prejudice refers to thoughts and feelings, while discrimination refers to actions. Racism refers to the belief that one race is inherently superior or inferior to other races.**

### The chain of consequences: from stereotyping to discrimination

**Stereotype:** Roma people don't like school; they don't value education.

**Prejudice:** the belief that Roma children have a lower IQ than majority children.

**Discrimination:** In many European countries, Roma children are systematically being failed by discriminatory school systems which continue to segregate them, to enroll them in special education schools and to refuse them access to quality education.

### Forms of prejudice:

- Prejudice based on gender is called **sexism**. People of all genders, gender identities and gender expression can be victims of this, but it is more common for women and gender minorities to be the victims.
- Prejudice towards Jews is called **anti-Semitism**.
- Prejudice towards Muslims is called **Islamophobia**.
- Prejudice towards LGBT+ people is called **homophobia or transphobia**.
- When people, young or old, suffer from prejudice because of their age, it is called **ageism**.
- **Racism** represents an entire system of prejudice, hatred and discriminatory practices directed to people because of their ethnicity or color. The system of oppression is based on a constructed racial hierarchy that gives privileges to white people. When discussing racism we need to also talk about **white supremacy**, which according to Elisabeth Betita Martínez<sup>6</sup> is “an historically based, institutionally perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations, and of peoples of color by white peoples and nations of the European continent, for the purpose of maintaining and defending a system of wealth, power, and privilege.”
- **Colorism** is another kind of prejudice in which someone believes one type of skin tone is superior or inferior to another within a racial group.
- **Anti-Gypsyism (antiziganism, anti-Roma sentiments)** is a specific form of racism against Roma people.

<sup>6</sup> **Elisabeth Betita Martínez** (December 12, 1925 - June 29, 2021) was an American Chicana feminist, anti-activist and scholar. Her best-known work is the bilingual photo book, “500 Years of Chicano History in Pictures”, used by teachers, community groups, and youth since 1976. She joined the socialist Democratic Workers Party and ran for governor of California on the Peace and Freedom Party ticket in 1983. In 1997 she co-founded the Institute for MultiRacial Justice in San Francisco, which served to combat white supremacy and advance solidarity among people of colour.



- **Fatmisia** (also called **fatphobia** or **sizeism**) is the prejudice directed against fat bodies/people based on the belief that thinness is superior.
- **Ableism** is the prejudice against people with disabilities and/or people perceived as disabled.
- **Classism** is the prejudice against an individual or a group on the basis of social class.

**Remember:** when a preconceived opinion or feeling about a person or a group is put into action, prejudice becomes discrimination!

- **How do you deal with your own prejudices?**
- **How do you deal with the prejudices you hear about others?**

## Discrimination

For many people, discrimination is not some abstract term in a human rights brochure, but a day-to-day reality. To put it simply, **discrimination represents the unfair and prejudicial treatment, laws or policies against individuals or group of people based on characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, religion, medical condition etc.**

*I have a dream (...) that my four little children (...) will be judged on the basis of the content of their character, and not the color of their skin. I have a dream (...) that one day (...) Negroes will be able to buy a house or rent a house anywhere that their money will carry them and they will be able to get a job.*

**MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.,  
I Have a Dream, August 28, 1963<sup>7</sup>**

The terms **systemic discrimination** and **systemic racism** highlight how racism and discrimination are not isolated manifestations of some individual, but rooted practices at systemic level. Systemic discrimination or systemic racism pervades seemingly neutral policies, laws, and cultural practices that provide differential access to goods, services, and opportunities according to a hierarchy of race.

Systemic racism affects one's chances starting from birth and impacts all aspects of life from education, job opportunities, to health and other services. It is implanted into the social, economic, political and cultural systems of our societies and has influence over society, by oppressing Black people and other racialized groups, while offering power and privilege to non-Black others.

<sup>7</sup> <https://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/i-have-a-dream/>

Systemic racism is not always evident, that is why it is more dangerous and difficult to combat. The voices of those affected by systemic racism and discrimination are getting louder and louder, but at the same time, those who are privileged most often do not recognize it or may even deny their privileged positions within the system.

In the 1991 artwork “Us and them”, Gary Simmons – an artist that explores themes of race – invites us to choose which robe to wear, and thus to reflect on placing people in categories and discriminating against them just for belonging to a certain group.



Gary Simmons, *Us and them*, 1991.

### Racial/Ethnic profiling

"Racial Profiling", as defined by the European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) refers to “the use by police, **with no objective and reasonable justification, of grounds such as race, color, language, religion, nationality or national or ethnic origin in control, surveillance or investigation activities**”<sup>8</sup>, and represents **an institutional discriminatory practice**.

Profiling can occur whenever an officer **is in a position to exercise power**, to the extent that the decision

<sup>8</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/ecri-general-policy-recommendation-no-11-key-topics-combating-racism-a/16808b7639>

to use that power to target particular individuals can be influenced by considerations of race, ethnicity or religion.

As the Open Society Justice Initiative noted in an extensive report on ethnic profiling in the European Union (OSJI 2009)<sup>9</sup>, ethnic profiling is manifest most often in police officers' decisions about whom to stop, ask for identity papers, question, search, and sometimes arrest, and **may result from the racist behavior of individual police officers, or from the institutionalized bias ingrained in many police forces.**

Examples of racial or ethnic profiling:t

- a law enforcement official assumes someone is more likely to have committed a crime because he/she is Roma;
- school personnel treat the behavior of a dark-skinned child as a cultural and ethnic mark, while the same behavior from a white child might be seen as normal "kids' play";
- a private security guard follows a Roma shopper because she/he believes the shopper is more likely to steal from the store;
- an employer wants a stricter security clearance for a Muslim employee following the September 11th terrorist attacks;
- a landlord asks a Chinese student to move out because he believes the tenant will expose him to COVID-19, even though the tenant has not been to any hospitals, facilities or countries associated with a high risk of infection.

Ethnic profiling can contribute to spreading and perpetuating prejudice and stigma among those who are subjected to it, by linking one's ethnicity, national origin, religion or immigration status with criminal activity.

## Roma profiling

The Roma people are Europe's largest ethnic minority and one of the most vulnerable and discriminated populations, having been targets of slavery, genocide and eugenics policies. Hence, Roma profiling is deeply rooted in a long history of discrimination, abuse and oppression: centuries of slavery, Roma Holocaust, forced displacement policies during the communist regime, birth control policies and the forced sterilization of Roma women, etc.

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<sup>9</sup> [https://www.justiceinitiative.org/uploads/8cef0d30-2833-40fd-b80b-9efb17c6de41/profiling\\_20090526.pdf](https://www.justiceinitiative.org/uploads/8cef0d30-2833-40fd-b80b-9efb17c6de41/profiling_20090526.pdf)

## Example: Lingurar vs Romania<sup>10</sup> case

Although it is not an isolated, but rather a systemic problem of institutional racism and abuse in Romania, the *Lingurar vs Romania*<sup>11</sup> case brings hope of justice for Roma people.

In April 2019, the European Court of Human Rights condemned Romania for racist police brutality **and, for the first time, found that Roma people faced institutionalized racism from law-enforcement in Romania.** The Court stated that “the manner in which the authorities justified and executed the police raid shows that **the police had exercised their powers in a discriminatory manner, expecting the applicants to be criminals because of their ethnic origin.** The applicants’ own behavior was extrapolated from a stereotypical perception that the authorities had of the Roma community as a whole. The Court considers that the applicants **were targeted because they were Roma and because the authorities perceived the Roma community as anti-social and criminal**”.

This conclusion, also supported by the general reports of racial stereotyping of Roma presented by the third party (ERRC<sup>12</sup>), goes beyond a simple expression of concern about ethnic discrimination in Romania. It shows concretely that the decisions to organize the police raid and to use force against the applicants were made on considerations **based on the applicants’ ethnic origin. The authorities automatically connected ethnicity to criminal behavior, thus their ethnic profiling of the applicants was discriminatory.**

## II. Stereotypes and instances of discrimination, examples from Romania, Finland, Italy

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### HOUSING DISCRIMINATION

Denying housing opportunities to people because of race, ethnicity, color, religion, sexual orientation, gender, national origin, disability, marital status, illness etc. is known as housing discrimination. Examples of these discriminatory practices include:

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<sup>10</sup> [https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{"itemid":\["001-192466"\]}](https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{)

<sup>11</sup> Application no. 48474/14. The case refers to a raid in 2011 by 85 policemen and gendarmes on a Roma community in Vâlcele (Romania).

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.errc.org/uploads/upload\\_en/file/third-party-intervention-aron-linguara-and-others-v-romania-15-december-2015.pdf](http://www.errc.org/uploads/upload_en/file/third-party-intervention-aron-linguara-and-others-v-romania-15-december-2015.pdf)

- refusing to sell to, rent to or deal with an interested tenant or buyer;
- applying different sale, rental or occupancy terms for different people;
- asking certain persons (ex. people of color, LGBTQ+, Roma, etc.) to pay higher security deposits;
- the refusal by real estate professionals or companies to serve minority customers, steering customers to certain neighbourhoods or making claims about the racial makeup of an area (includes a real estate agent who tells white clients interested in a certain home that a minority family lives next door, or companies that place ads suggesting that they prefer no children or people of a certain ethnicity, race or national origin);
- lying about the availability of housing (includes telling people of colour, Roma, families with children or a disabled person that an apartment is already taken, when it is not);
- inducing people into renting or selling their property by manipulating their prejudices (called **block-busting**: includes efforts to buy property below the fair market value by telling people that members of a minority group are moving into the area);
- discrimination in home financing by a bank, savings and loan association or other business (includes charging creditworthy minority customers higher interest rates than white customers);
- harassing or frightening tenants and homeowners into abandoning their leases or leaving their homes (through racial or sexual harassment, slurs, threats of violence, sexual advances and innuendoes);
- local zoning laws that have an unfair effect on minorities and are discriminatory in nature (includes laws that restrict the areas in which group homes for the disabled may be located);
- attempting to threaten or intimidate people so that they will not exercise their rights or file discrimination complaints.

Accessing adequate housing that meets personal or family needs could be challenging for Roma women, as exemplified below:

“Yes, it happened to me several times when I arrived in Italy. Nobody wanted to rent their house to me, even though I had a lot of cash, as I had just sold my big house, as well as a job and all. It took me 6 months to find a house to rent, because the owners knew about my Romani origin, so they refused to rent their houses to me. “(Roma woman from Italy)

“I have heard about situations where some condominiums / housing cooperatives, private ones, simply do not approve of a Roma family living in their apartments. It can be very openly stated, even in different documents... There is still this stereotypical thought that if a Roma moves into an apartment, soon all of their relatives will come live in the same place, and it is impossible to get them out. And there are many other stereotypes as well, like ‘why do you Roma do so much laundry?’” (Roma woman from Finland)

“Before I came to live here, I would call people to schedule a house viewing, but the moment they saw me, they would claim being sick, busy, saying they can no longer show me the place, and this didn’t happen just once ...” (Roma woman from Romania)

**The same barrier occurs as a Roma Transgender woman:**

“People are not willing to rent you an apartment when they see you are a transgender woman, maybe they would finally accept the fact that you are Roma, but not that you are a transgender. Or you pay double, as I pay here, you pay the right amount and shut his mouth and he doesn’t care what you are anymore.” (Roma woman, Romania)

**Roma women and families are often alone in facing harassment, threats and hate, and sometimes feel insecure in their environments. They are not trusted by neighbors, owners and not even by authorities.**

“I personally believe that if a neighbor wanted to kick me out, for any reason, it would be easy, because I am a Roma. Any story would be believed. This means we are not allowed to make any mistakes, not even small ones.” (Roma woman, Finland)

“But it’s not that I wanted to, they kicked us out. We’ve been through many houses. My mother used to wander around with us from house to house, because they kicked us out. Their reason was that *we don’t want gypsies*.” (Roma woman, Romania)

“When, in 2014, the demonstrations organized by Casa Pound [far-right political movement, ed.] began, the threats against me also began. Initially, the threats were light, then they became severe. Thus, I left the neighborhood for about seven months ... When the situation calmed down, I returned to the neighborhood. ... For a while, everything was quiet, but, in 2018, when there were all those cases of violence against Roma in Rome [a girl shot and injured, a Roma family attacked because they had the right to access a public housing, Roma families attacked because they were brought by the institutions to a reception center], the situation has again become unlivable for me. Thus, one of the reasons why I decided to move is also this: I cannot live in a neighborhood where I am sometimes accepted and sometimes not.” (Roma woman, Italy)

**Roma lesbians and transgender women are among the most exposed to hate threats.**

“I moved from a rented place two years ago because I had some elderly neighbors who watched everything I did, and since I am young, I can’t act like I am in a monastery (she laughs). People were

coming to my place often, we were not loud, but friends were coming over, and they were watching to see who is with who, they saw some gay people kissing in front of my door, and then I heard all kinds of discussions, so I said, “We better go, there is no point”. And we moved out. I do not like arguing. I’d rather leave and mind my own business.” (Roma LGBTQ+, Romania)

“I have two pairs of homophobic neighbors. They pick on my friends; they pick on me. The situation escalated into physical aggression. And then, yes, I thought about moving somewhere else. But why should I move? ... Let me tell you something: when I was assaulted, I was slapped by one of the neighbors, and I could have been aggressive too, but I didn't and I felt good about myself. And that can be an asset in protecting myself, and that's exactly what I did. I made a complaint because I was slapped, insulted and so on, and at this moment, the complaint I've made is pending.” (Roma LGBTQ+, Romania)

### Reflections:

Have you ever been denied renting or buying a house?

Do you know somebody who has been denied renting or buying a house?

Did you suspect you were discriminated against, but thought you couldn't prove it or that authorities would not do anything about it?

Do you know where to file a complaint? If you filed a complaint, did you feel your case was handled well or were you disappointed with the outcome?

## DISCRIMINATION IN EDUCATION

Education is a fundamental human right for all as affirmed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights<sup>13</sup>. At national level, each state has ratified treaties covering aspects in respect to the right to education and equal rights to education for everyone. Also, most states have made strong commitments against discrimination in education, but in practice discrimination in education takes place on a daily basis.

Roma girls' experiences in education are sometimes only a “replica” of Roma women's position and experiences in society, mixed with feelings of invisibility, inferiority, and being considered less capable than their non-Roma peers.

In the following examples, ethnic discrimination intersects with discrimination against migrants or against those with challenging socio-economic backgrounds:

“I remember a teacher who was mean to me, she was racist. Sometimes she treated me really badly, she told me ‘you're a gypsy, that's why you don't do your homework’”. (Roma woman, Italy)

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<sup>13</sup> Article 26

“When we went to school, we didn’t have too many notebooks. We used to take notes from many courses in one single notebook and the teacher was picking on us because we didn’t have notebooks. I preferred not to go to school.” (Roma woman, Romania)

“I was little, and it was a child’s birthday. He brought chocolates, as customary, and he gave them to the teacher so the teacher would give chocolates to the children. And the teacher told me, ‘I will not give you one because you are a gypsy’, not that I asked for it, she gave chocolates to all children, and she saw me and told me, ‘I will not give you one because you are a gypsy’.” (Roma woman, Romania)

“Sometimes there was some surprise among the teachers, when I was able to do well in school and get good grades. That felt a bit disrespectful.” (Roma woman, Finland)

Roma girls encounter experiences of being ignored or treated with less respect and attention, as we can see below, keeping in mind the socio-economic conditions linked with poverty and social exclusion:

“I was seen as the gypsy of the camp, so no teacher was interested in me. Nobody made sure that I understood the explanations, for example.” (Roma woman, Italy)

“(…) the teachers (…) treated me badly. If I asked for some explanation, they told me that I first had to think about learning the language [immigrant, ed.], and then the other things. ... They used to give me low marks and they used to tell me that those marks were enough for me [because I was ‘the gypsy’, ed.]” (Roma woman, Italy)

“In some cases, then, if a Roma child had not done his/her homework, the fact would have been considered very serious. If, on the other hand, a Gadgé child had not done his homework, it wouldn’t have been a problem.” (Roma woman, Italy)

“I think the girls were sitting in the front desks, and the boys in the back. It didn’t matter, but I felt differences in the way teachers delivered the information. I realize it now, looking back with maturity, but then I didn’t. I felt something, but I didn’t know what. Teachers always sat in front of the Romanian girls. I was always the only Roma girl who was called out at the blackboard by the Romanian language teacher because he liked me, he knew I had potential ...” (Roma woman, Romania)

- A particular type of discrimination experienced by Roma girls in education is linked with **discouragement** in attending school. When receiving career advice, Roma girls are **directed towards vocational education or discouraged from continuing their education and attending university, even when they have high achievements.**



- This type of discouragement is often not perceived as a form of discrimination and is more pervasive, as teachers advising pupils in their careers are supposed to do their jobs in the pupils' best interest and without using stereotypes and prejudices.
- However, the impact of such guidance on the entire life course of a pupil could be enormous, as shown below: some of the Roma girls and adolescents **decided not to follow their dreams or skills and competences, or even delayed their transition to a higher level of education.**

“But there was one who was really racist: she treated me badly and treated all Roma badly...That teacher [the racist one, ed.] said that for Roma it was useless going to school, that school was not for them.” (Roma woman, Italy)

“In middle school, what I remember is that I was recommended to attend a vocational school, because the idea behind it was that I did not have the skills to do anything else. I actually went to a vocational school but then I got to the doctorate. The teacher who advised me on the professional institute met me after I graduated from University and I was featured in an article in the newspaper entitled "First nomad who graduated from University". She told me: ‘I would have never guessed that.’” (Roma woman, Italy)

“It happened to me with an educator who was engaged in the job placement of young Roma. I told this person that I wanted to go to university but she told me to think of something more practical. I was 17-18 years old. I remember getting very angry, I treated her badly.” (Roma woman, Italy)

“In the 11th grade, by my Romanian teacher, after asking ‘what do you want to be when you grow up?’ All my life I wanted to fulfil my grandfather's ‘curse’<sup>14</sup>, to get into Law School. I had prepared for that. I was already studying Economics in the 11th grade, but the teacher told me: ‘I don't think you'll have a chance, since I, as a teacher, can barely handle having my daughter in Law School, how could you? It's difficult. Let's say you'll get there and graduate from law school, but do you know what taking the bar exam is like? Do you know how hard it is to get in? Will you find a law firm? Who is going to help you?’ And I didn't realize it because I used to think that people have my best interests at heart ...” (Roma woman, Romania)

“I wanted to go to a Philology high school, but the geography teacher told me that I should go to the Agriculture high school and specialize in Accounting, because the Agriculture high school is not as competitive as the other one. So, I should better go to this one. If I go to another high school, I might not be able to handle it. And I followed her advice. To be honest, I don't think she had bad intentions but the fact that I never used accounting affected me. After that, I went to college, Philology special-

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<sup>14</sup> Here, "curse" is a figure of speech and it means blessing.

ization, because I wanted to study philology.” (Roma woman, Romania)

“This also brings to my mind the fact that Roma children are not encouraged in school in general: when they reflect about what profession to choose, the teachers always suggest the ones with the lowest education and least challenges. That is so wrong. Our children are individuals, they have the right to become doctors and teachers, if they wish. I do not mean everyone has to be highly educated, I respect all fields of work, but the opportunities should be equal.... I have not been told straight to my face that I would not be able to do something, but there was this hesitation when I told them about my dreams or goals.” (Roma woman, Finland)

**FACTS: Ethnic discrimination is often coupled with harassment and violence, from teachers, classmates and other pupils. Racism among teachers acts like a catalyst for racism among classmates and pupils, as shown in the following examples:**

“I remember a teacher who made us, Roma children, take off our shoes and socks to check if our feet were clean ... Sometimes, teachers used to hit us - Roma children - on the hands. ... I was bullied at school, multiple times. For example, when I would go to the bathroom and get in line, the other children would pass me because ‘the gypsy can wait’ or, as I told you before, they used to look at me and laugh.” (Roma woman, Italy)

“...at the end of the class, this mom told me, ‘Did your daughter tell you that the principal hit her?’ He hit her in the mouth. He broke her lip, making her bleed. (...) And my daughter didn’t want to tell me anything because she was afraid. She said, ‘Mom, I thought I was to be blamed.’ I went back home and I asked her what she did at school, and she told me, ‘look, mom, there was a boy in the classroom who picked on me, he called me names, he called me a crow.’ And I said, ‘Ok, if he said that, why didn’t you tell the principal?’ ‘I told him, mom, but he picked on me too, he hit me and broke my lip.’ (Roma woman, Romania)

Many children who witness such language and behavior from teachers grow up with prejudices towards Roma, but also towards other minority groups.

They normalize such attitudes and behaviors and grow up disrespecting diversity, other cultures, or democratic values.

● **What is common to the experiences depicted below is that school is the space where Roma girls found out that there’s something wrong with being a Roma:**

“... it happens that three girls from my classroom stop me and ask me: ‘... but your surname ... are you

a gypsy?’ At that point I say: ‘Yes, I’m a gypsy’. Since then, I have decided not to hide my Roma identity anymore. The people at school couldn’t stand me very much. I was considered a ‘loser’ .” (Roma woman, Italy)

“I became aware of the fact I am a Roma when I left my community to go to high school. I swear! I realized it when my headmistress came to me and said that I have a certain accent and I have to get rid of that accent. ... No, but since that episode with my headmistress, I haven’t spoken Romanes. I haven’t had an accent since then because I haven’t spoken Romanes with anyone for 4 years. I spoke Romanes only when I went home, and when my grandmother no longer felt the accent, she started speaking to me in Romanian. And now I speak Romanes and I am answered in Romanian.” (Roma woman, Romania)

“I remember feeling different from others in middle school, between the ages of 10-15. I was bullied at school all day, every day for 5 years, so I was made aware of my difference, and other children taught me that. I did not get any kind of support in that situation; the kids were allowed to continue teasing and bullying me. ... At home I would ask what it meant that I was being called a ‘gypsy’ at school – and that was the time when the word Roma was not yet used in Finland, there was only the word gypsy, and then my family tried to explain to me – but by then the other children had already made me believe that I was somehow wrong, that there was something wrong with me.” (Roma woman, Finland)

Racism in school takes direct forms of different treatment, but also more perverse and subtle forms of constantly having to prove that you are not the same as the community you are coming from:

“So, what if I am a gypsy? I wanted to show them that a gypsy is never stupid, that a gypsy, after all, can study. I had a technological education teacher, and when she opened the classbook she saw that I have only good grades and looked at me, she realized I am a gypsy, and told me, ‘Come to the blackboard to see if you do as well as the classbook indicates’, and when she saw me do well, she was surprised.” (Roma women, Romania)

“I was discouraged by my math teacher from primary school because I didn’t like math one bit (...) And I said, ‘I don’t like it, it is enough for me if I pass, I am okay, it is safe for me’. And then he said, ‘You, in your community, anyhow, after the 8th grade, get married, you don’t need high school, you need nothing else’, and I said, ‘Well, you will see that I will not get married, I don’t plan on it, at least not now’ and he said, ‘All the girls from your community get married’.” (Roma woman, Romania)

A consequence of discouragement, bullying, and racism faced by Roma children is dropping out of school.

It is very difficult to attribute one single explanation for dropout, when in fact a series of events, experiences and circumstances are leading to it.

“Certainly, the fact that I was not [ed. feeling] well in school led me to no longer want to go there, it's normal. In fact, even though I enjoyed studying, I stopped studying, precisely because I didn't like going to school.” (Roma woman, Italy)

“Then there is also the phenomenon of Roma children who, being bullied so much, lose the desire to go to school... most of them get tired and the reasoning is: ‘They don't want me at school, I don't go to school’. And for the schools it is better this way, better that the Roma are not there, so they have one less problem.” (Roma woman, Italy)

“A bad memory was that I felt marginalized. I didn't have the strength to go forward. Because I said to myself that no matter how much I studied, if I am being mocked and labeled as a gypsy all the time, why should I keep going to school among Romanians? It's better to mind my own business, and that's it! A woman ends up being a housewife anyway. That's what I thought back then. Now I am sorry I wasn't optimistic; I am sorry I wasn't a fighter.” (Roma woman, Romania)

### **Reflections:**

Read all the above testimonials again and identify remarks made by school personnel to teach Roma children wrong messages about their Roma identity and culture.

How can we change the problematic language, stereotypes and cultural inaccuracies used by teachers?

Have you ever been discouraged or, on the contrary, encouraged by a teacher or someone at school to continue your education?

What lessons do you take away from analyzing all the above narratives?

How can we create a more inclusive educational environment?

Keep in mind: A Roma child does not start in life on equal footing with a child of a different ethnicity.

To ensure an inclusive environment in the classroom, teachers and educators should:

- educate themselves, reflect on their own biases and practice the principles of tolerance, respect and diversity;
- manifest respect for Roma or other ethnic identity, culture and language;
- treat all pupils equally;
- address discrimination, stereotyping, prejudice, bullying and violence;

- advocate for fairness.

## **Discrimination in HEALTHCARE**

**Oftentimes, blacks, Hispanics and other minority groups experience worse health outcomes and premature death compared to white people.**

- One of the specific forms of discrimination and unequal treatment in the healthcare system faced by Roma women is the superficial check-up, when patients do not receive adequate time and attention as physicians avoid touching them or their children.
- When accessing healthcare services, racism may be accompanied by homophobia and classism, as the most humiliating and shameful experiences are encountered by Roma women
  - with low levels of education,
  - coming from rural areas,
  - having darker skin,
  - being beneficiaries of the social aid or minimum guaranteed income.

“However, racism towards Roma in hospitals is very high. My family and I manage to cure ourselves. However, Roma often go to private doctors precisely because they know they are discriminated against in hospitals and in public health services...When I went to hospitals with some traditionally dressed Roma women, for example, I always realized this. Nothing specific happened, but I could feel it. It is no coincidence that Roma women are often seen by private doctors, because they know that public health services discriminate against them.” (Roma woman, Italy)

“Personally, as a Roma woman, I have never been discriminated against in the health services because, knowing that it would happen, I always avoid wearing traditional skirts when I need to go to health services. I have seen with my own eyes that Romanian Roma, for example, who dress traditionally, are victims of great discrimination in hospitals: even health workers avoid them. As for my gender identity, I have been very often discriminated against in the gynecological field: doctors don't even ask you if you are homosexual, they take it for granted that you are heterosexual...” (Roma woman, Italy)

Take a look at some the most common experiences of Roma women when accessing healthcare:

- **long waiting times, low trust levels in the quality of treatments, racism:**

“I would rather search on the internet or ask certain people who know better, than end up waiting at

the doors to be treated badly because I am gypsy... I don't know... they made me wait in vain for hours. I was there because I had an appointment, but they kept me waiting... or I don't know... they were afraid I would steal, so they were hiding their bags. So, yes, I've had this kind of problem.” (Roma woman, Romania)

- **humiliating services and traumatizing behaviors when giving birth:**

“When I went to the hospital to give birth or when I was admitted to the hospital, they didn't pay attention to us as they do with the Romanians. They would tell us, ‘stay there’ or ‘there is nothing we can help you with’ or ‘did you bring us anything?’. They requested money from me, or to put something in their pockets, and told me that we are Roma and Roma always lie, ‘you don't want to tell the truth’, and I would say, ‘what you want me to tell you?’. ‘Sit there, if you didn't bring anything, what can I do?’ And when I went to deliver the baby, they yelled at me, they scolded me, and they did not look at me until I gave them something so they would give me an injection so I could deliver the baby, I would just sit and suffer a lot.” (Roma woman, Romania)

“When they heard that I am 40 years old and I have six children at home, and the girl is the seventh child, they behaved so badly. They cut me in such a way that I couldn't stand on my feet. I couldn't sit on my back or in any way. When I went to the hospital to get my stitches removed, the nurse told me: ‘Were you a pig on the table or a human being?’ To them I was. That's how badly they treated me. And my daughter was badly treated too, and that's why I bottle-fed her. She was taken away from me because they ‘discovered’ that I had tuberculosis. I told them that it was not true, I could not have tuberculosis. ‘Nobody in my family had suffered from lungs. How could I have tuberculosis? You didn't take any blood tests. How did you find out?’ After a day, after they kept my daughter away from me, they brought her back to me, saying they had made a mistake. ‘A mistake had been made, but look, my child refuses to breastfeed. What am I going to do now? Where do I get money from to buy baby formula?’” (Roma woman, Romania)

- **classism:**

“Ah, and here is another issue because if you call 112 and you have a less chiseled vocabulary, less academic, you are discriminated against from the very beginning. They will call you ‘filthy gypsy’ or something like that and they'll hang up the phone.” (Roma woman, Romania).

“... but doctors are often racists. They see that you are a gypsy and don't explain things to you well. They talk in such a difficult way and they don't care if you understand what you have or not. I always have this problem, that I just don't understand. In fact, when I can, I have my children accompany me,

as they speak Italian better, but even for them it is difficult to understand. However, I only go to the doctor when I feel terrible and can't walk, otherwise I take [pain killers, ed.] and that's it." (Roma woman, Italy)

"... there is discrimination against Roma in health services. If you are not clean, or if you are not combed well, they treat you badly. They don't give you the red code, which is urgent, but they give you the green code, so you wait as long as they want. This is exactly what happened to me once." (Roma woman, Italy)

- **fear and shame:**

"There is this fear that you are at their mercy, and especially when you are visibly a Roma, and you have no education, it is horrific. I think it is a fear that we can never understand if we don't experience it. To be at the mercy of someone who could harm you, only because you are Roma, I think it is horrific, honestly, and I've noticed that many women have this fear." (Roma woman, Romania)

"I was ashamed to, forgive me, to be checked down there. I had a cold from those nights spent in the cold, my belly hurt badly and I could not even sit." (Roma woman, Finland)

**Reflections:**

Has a doctor or other medical personnel ever treated you differently, inferiorly, or superficially compared to other people?

Do you know where to report a doctor's unprofessional or racist behavior?

Do you consider that every patient should be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of ethnicity, race, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, social status, age, etc.? Motivate your answer.

**The access of LGBT+ Roma women to healthcare services is even more challenging, as racism blends with homophobia and transphobia.**

**The challenges and barriers faced in accessing needed healthcare can include stigma, substandard care, outright denial of care, cost-related hurdles.**

"I never want to go to the doctor in Romania, I am afraid and scared, if something happens to me, I'll go to Italy... First of all, I am scared of their racism and discrimination. Because I asked for medical help when I had the problem with my finger and never, since then. Because I am afraid to go there. They could harm me because I am trans, because I don't want to be a man, because I don't want to be the way they want me to be. No sister, because I had a bad experience with my finger. How can I put

my life in the hands of a transphobic, racist and misogynist surgeon? He could kill me because of hate. He would say ‘a transvestite less’. No, sister! And the same happens to Roma. In their minds it’s better to treat 100 Romanians than a single Roma.” (Roma LGBT+ Woman, Romania)

“I went to a private clinic for tests, and the receptionist asked me:

- What should I write down: Mister or Madam?
- I gave you my ID card.
- Yes, but I thought it’s a mistake in your ID.
- No, ma’am, that’s me, I am a transgender person.
- What does transgender mean?
- Ma’am, you finished Medicine School and you don’t know what a gender woman means?
- Miss or Mister, don’t talk to me like that!
- Dear lady, it’s your job to know about these things. You know what, let’s leave it at that, I am going to another clinic!” (Roma LGBT+ Woman, Romania)

#### **If you are a healthcare provider:**

- ✓ you may consider being more inclusive for your LGBT+ patients;
- ✓ ask your patients what pronoun they prefer when addressing them;
- ✓ be culturally sensitive to gender identities;
- ✓ be self-aware of your limitations and biases.

## **DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT**

**Employment discrimination involves: unfair treatment because of race, color, ethnicity, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy status, disability, age, etc.**

There are many stereotypes and prejudices about Roma people when it comes to employment: they would not have the discipline to work; they would not have the motivation to work; they would steal; they would be unreliable, lazy and prefer to live on social assistance and child allowances.

### **The types of work Roma women do:**

In terms of access to the labor market, in the absence of a certain level of education or the 12 accessing the upper segment of the labor market (where labor contracts guarantee access to social security schemes).

- Depending on the national context, Roma women **could perform self-employed activities or engage in different types of informal activities, such as scavenging in bins, collecting plastic bottles and cans, selling magazines, selling in flea markets, begging, etc.**



- In the labor market, migrant Roma women without education and language skills will most likely continue to be excluded.
- The level of education for which they are not adequately supported throughout their schooling years becomes a new stigma in the world of paid jobs, which can prevent them from accessing quality employment, stable incomes and social benefits.

Without a doubt, education is an important instrument for accessing the labor market, but regardless of their level of education, the treatment Roma women receive when working or the fact that they have to adopt several coping strategies in order to keep their jobs, clearly emphasize the idea that **the level of education will not stop racist attitudes but it is rather a systematic problem** where the lack of clear mechanisms to access, include and respect diversity on the labor market is a concept unaddressed, unsanctioned and perpetuated.

- When obtained, job interviews are often so subjective and not-transparent, most of the real reasons for not considering Roma women candidates remain hidden.
- In some cases, belonging to the Roma community could be a reason for not getting an interview or a job, while in other situations, one's ethnic background mixes with the immigrant status in blocking the access to the labor market. If women can be depicted as migrants based on their name, the skin tone and language pronunciation become visible during the interview.
- For these reasons, many women do not even get an interview, are rejected or never called after the interview. **But in many situations, Roma women's quest on the labor market ends before they actually have the opportunity to take on a job interview.**
- **Racism remains one of the reasons for discouragement in job searching, well hidden behind low levels of education or skills.**

“It happened to me once, I left my CV and then I was told by others that **I had been rejected because my surname showed my Romani belonging.**” (Roma woman, Italy)

“I don't know if it had anything to do with it, but when I talked about it, everything was nice, beautiful, okay. **When I told them I am Roma, I felt like the whole interview took another turn. They didn't insult me, but I felt reluctance from their side, and I realized from the start that it is going to be a no.** And how did they find out I am Roma? Well, you can see it and so on, but I've also started talking about the Roma NGOs because they asked me about it, they were very curious, and then, in all honesty, I felt they were reluctant.” (Roma woman, Romania)

“I have had situations in which I feel **that my ethnicity prevented me from getting a job, but this is something that is very hard to prove and point out.** I think this issue is one of the most difficult to prove when it comes to racist structures; there always seems to be ‘some other reason’, when there

really isn't." (Roma woman, Finland)

"... here [ed. in Finland] you cannot go and get a job without knowing the language. If you don't know the language by default nobody hires you. But in Romania, yes. **You're a Roma woman, you don't have education, you don't, you cannot work.**" (Roma woman, Finland)

"It happened to me once. I went to ask for a job in a cleaning company. It seemed to me that the interview went well. They told me 'we'll let you know', but they never called me. I thought **they understood that I am a gypsy. They were racists and even if they did not understand that I am a gypsy, they certainly understood that I am a foreigner and that's why they did not call me: you can see that I am a foreigner from the way I speak and also because of my darker skin.**" (Roma woman, Italy)

- **Hiding one's Roma identity at the workplace is a strategy used to protect their job, to avoid jokes, differential treatment and labeling. Hiding becomes traumatic, especially in situations where something is missing from the workplace and they could be blamed for it:**

"When I became aware of being Roma, I shared this at work, where I worked before: I was a company secretary for a photographer and, while talking, I said it, without thinking. I had already shared my homosexuality with my boss and colleagues, and they had taken it quite well. Thus, as they had taken it well, I thought: 'Since they already know that I am homosexual, I will, at this point, tell them everything'" But I was wrong, because the fact that I was homosexual was ok for them, but they didn't accept my Roma identity. Because of my Roma identity, they fired me, even though I didn't have a contract there [she was working informally, ed.]" (Roma woman, Italy)

"I was working in a perfume shop, it was Christmas time, and a group of Roma stole things from the shop. I didn't notice what was going on, because I was serving other people. On the contrary, the owners noticed what happened when the girls were already escaping. I obviously felt a lot of shame and I knew that the owners had hypothesized there was a link between me and these Roma women who had stolen, because they knew, however, that I was Roma. A few days later, the owner of the perfumery saw my mother at the bus stop and asked her if she had a daughter named V. ... By the way, I look a lot like my mom ... but she said no, she denied, precisely to protect me. Anyway, they fired me. **My family told me not to say that I am Roma at work, because the owners and colleagues would always blame me for anything wrong.**" (Roma woman, Italy)

#### **Facts:**

- The types of activities that Roma women are performing in order to survive show the extent to which different subsystems of the European welfare states have failed (a failure of social aid/minimum guaranteed

income schemes, in countries such as Romania, but also of immigration policies in some other cases).

- Some of the women, irrespective of how much they are struggling, are kept forever outside the safety nets of the societies in which they live, whether as natives or immigrants.

**Reflections:**

Have you ever been rejected for a job?

Have you ever been refused to work with an employment contract?

Have you ever felt treated differently at your workplace?

Does your workplace have anti-discrimination, equal pay, inclusive and diversity policies?

If you are an employer/company:

- ensure that you have policies which promote non-discrimination, equal opportunities and fair treatment;
- don't make any hiring decisions on the basis of personal characteristics such as gender, race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, unrelated to inherent job requirements;
- ensure that job advertisements, job descriptions and applications do not refer to applicants'/workers' race, ethnicity, gender, marital status, age, disability or other personal characteristic that is irrelevant to the job

For example:

- women should not be asked if they are married, pregnant or have children;
  - interviewees should not be asked about their ethnic identity or sexual orientation;
  - job applicants or workers should not be asked about or required to undertake health or pregnancy tests (except as strictly required by health and safety laws), nor be asked directly or indirectly about their HIV/AIDS status.
- 
- ensure that the selection for the job is made on the basis of clear, pre-determined, objective criteria of what is necessary for the job in terms of experience and skill;
  - ensure that your recruitment officer is trained on equality and anti-discrimination;
  - take steps to enable workers with disabilities to retain their jobs and make accommodations required by national law for physically disabled persons.

# Chapter 2:

# Fight discrimination!

\* This chapter is based on the comparative legal research on multiple discrimination in Finland, Italy and Romania coordinated by Adriana Iordache and written by the authors: Emanuela Ignăţoiu-Sora, Barbara Giovanna Bello, Heidi Lempiö, Anca Enache, as part of the project Intersect Voices in Europe – combating discrimination against Roma women, funded by the European Union's Fundamental Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020). The research is available at

<https://evermade-hdl.s3.eu-central-1.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/15150741/Comparative-analysis-in-Romania-Finland-and-Italy-on-multiple-discrimination.pdf>

## How do you combat prejudices and stereotyping?

How do you combat prejudices and stereotyping when they have a direct and strong impact on the lives of individuals just because they belong to a certain group?

This is a question people and especially activists ask themselves when facing and/or observing cases of discrimination.

## I. How to fight discrimination?

- Through protests and civil unrest
- Through legal action
- Through legal measures, programs and policies

### Protests and civil unrest

The civil rights movement was a struggle for social justice in the 1950s and 1960s in the USA, with the intention of ending racial segregation, institutionalized racial discrimination and obtaining equal rights for African Americans. Grassroots organizations, churches, etc. mobilized to participate in direct actions: sit-ins, marches, boycotts.



Rosa Parks, called the “mother of the civil rights movement”: in 1955 she refused to give up her seat to a white person and started the Montgomery bus boycott, which would last for 381 days and lead to the desegregation of buses in Montgomery.

In 2020, the killing of George Floyd led to the greatest protest to end police brutality and to gain racial justice in the US:



On the 5th of June 2021, a group of Roma activists, NGOs and allies organized a demonstration in Helsinki to bring attention to Roma rights, equality in public spaces and Roma inclusive

policies, especially at the municipality level.

The protest was motivated by an event during which a security guard was filmed using violence against a Roma woman - something constantly happening in the lives of Roma in Finland.

Roma rights demonstrations do not occur often in Helsinki, thus the event was a powerful sign of solidarity and change: many other discriminated minorities stood up for Roma rights visibly and the discourses of different Roma generations were also shared and reflected upon.



Photo: Marjaana Toiviainen

## Legal action

In 1954, the Supreme Court of the US ruled in **Brown vs. Board of Education** that segregated schools were unconstitutional. One of the arguments used by the lawyers from NAACP to convince judges to put an end to segregated schools was that exposure to interracial contact in the school environment would later prepare children to live in an interracial world and give a better chance to democracy.

In 2007, the European Court of Human Rights ruled in **D.H. and others vs. Czech Republic** that the disproportionate assignment of Roma children to special schools amounted to indirect discrimination. The case had been brought by the European Roma Rights Centre as part of their strategic litigation regarding the rights of Roma.

Strategic litigation or impact litigation involves selecting a specific case and bringing it before the court with the aim to create broader changes in society

**Note:** In strategic litigation, it is important to choose a case with strong evidence and general facts which possibly apply to several similar cases - not exceptional circumstances. It is also important to choose the best legal path, by paying attention to which branch of law and which authorities can provide a) the best remedy; b) the most exposure. In Finland, for instance, strategic litigation includes choosing the right forum, since there are several options to consider. Also, NGOs in particular should investigate if they have amicus curiae or other legal options to put forward and support a case.

**Reflection:** you are an NGO working on Roma rights. You've identified a systematic problem and you are working on building a strategic litigation case and bringing it before your national courts. What do you do?

### Steps:

- Hire or ensure you have pro-bono lawyers trained in human rights working on your team
- Research the issue at hand
- Talk to as many victims as you can and convince them to testify
- Make sure you understand what is considered evidence according to your own legislation
- Make sure you create a safe environment for the victim(s)
- Expect and prepare for retaliation
- Prepare the victim and the community for the possibility of a negative outcome
- Secure as many allies you can for your cause
- Engage journalists and use social media to further your cause
- Give voice to the victims!

## Legal measures, programs and policies

**Affirmative action** is a policy aimed to address structural, past injustice and to increase opportunities for a certain underrepresented group. Since 1993, the Romanian government, for instance, has allocated “reserved spots” for Roma persons in universities. Since 2000, the program was extended to high schools too<sup>15</sup>. In order to access the program, a Roma pupil needs to present a written recommendation from the president of a Roma NGO certifying the person belongs to the Roma community.

The so-called **Equality Planning** is an obligation set in the Finnish anti-discrimination legislation to all public authorities, schools and employers that employ more than 30 persons. The equality planning requires first an assessment to be made of the impacts on equality of the authority’s work. Based on the assessment, the plan should include efficient actions to improve the equality of different minority groups.

## II. Types of discrimination

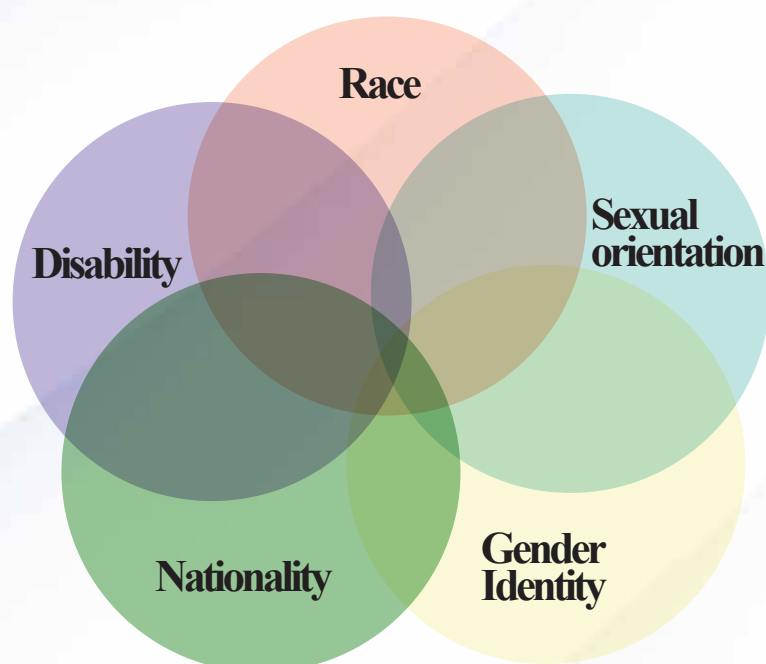
We mentioned that the ECtHR ruled against indirect discrimination in education in *D.H. and others vs. Czech Republic*, but what is indirect discrimination and which other types of discrimination and abuses are prohibited by the law?

Type	Definition	Example
Direct discrimination	When a person is treated worse than another person just because of a certain characteristic (race, age, gender, etc).	An owner refuses to rent someone his/her flat because they are lesbian.
Indirect discrimination	When a policy/program appears to use the same criteria for everyone but disadvantages a certain group of persons.	Lower pensions for part-time employees will affect women since women are more likely to be employed part-time than men.
Multiple discrimination	When someone is discriminated against for several reasons.	Someone is being discriminated for being black and old, or Roma and woman.
Intersectionality	A concept which shows that we need to take into account the multiple and overlapping	When using the concept of intersectionality, we understand that a discriminated

<sup>15</sup> [https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/uploads/62751cdf-d887-456b-91ae-137801486e96/romania2\\_20070329\\_0.pdf](https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/uploads/62751cdf-d887-456b-91ae-137801486e96/romania2_20070329_0.pdf)

Type	Definition	Example
Intersectionality	identities and experiences of people in order to understand and combat the complexity of prejudices they face.	Roma woman is being discriminated not only because she is Roma or because she is a woman, but because she is a “Roma woman”. In this case, the identity markers “Roma” and “woman” do not exist independently of each other.
Instruction to discriminate	When someone gives instruction to someone else (who is usually in a dependent relationship employer-employee, spouse, etc) to discriminate against another person.	Employer to HR: “Only applicants with Finnish names are to be interviewed”.
Retaliation	Punishing someone (e.g. employee) for complaining, protesting or testifying against a discriminatory action.	Changing job duties. Reducing the wage.

**Intersectionality:** The term was coined in 1989 by Kimberlé Crenshaw<sup>16</sup> and revolves around the traffic intersection metaphor: several identities overlapping.



<sup>16</sup> In her paper “Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: a black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics”





Activity: please go back to the first and second chapters, go through the testimonials and identify which type of discrimination people were subjected to.

### Legislation & national authorities

These types of discrimination are regulated and fought against through various laws, such as: the legislative decree no. 215/2003 in Italy, Government Ordinance no. 137/2000 in Romania or Section 11 of the Criminal Code in Finland, where chapter 47, section 3, for instance stipulates:

*“An employer, or a representative thereof, who when advertising for a vacancy or selecting an employee, or during employment, without an important and justifiable reason puts an applicant for a job or an employee in an inferior position:*

*(1) because of his/ her race, national or ethnic origin, nationality, color, language, sex, age, family status, sexual preference, inheritance, disability or state of health, or*

*(2) because of religion, political opinion, political or industrial activity or a comparable circumstance shall be sentenced for work discrimination to a fine or to imprisonment for at most six months.”*

Intersectional discrimination is not currently defined and regulated as such in international conventions nor in EU policies and legislation (However, intersectionality is recognised as one of the guiding principles of implementing the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025)

In most cases, when the victim belongs to multiple disadvantaged groups and when the facts of the case could be analyzed from an intersectional perspective, the courts either analyze the grounds of discrimination separately or just focus on one of the grounds and overlook the others. This is both due to the lack of legal provisions on intersectional discrimination as well as due to the lack of awareness about this concept among legal professionals, lawyers and judges alike.

Be aware that an intersectional perspective is rarely identified by courts/equality bodies

Cases like **Garib**<sup>17</sup> are still rare. In this case, a single mother living on social welfare was refused a housing permit on account of a legislation imposing minimum income requirements to reside in a number of areas in Rotterdam. The European Court of Human Rights did not find it discriminatory. However, the dissenting judges Pinto De Albuquerque and Vehabović disagreed and expressed that:

*“it is now indispensable to take (intersectional discrimination) into consideration in order to reach a global and comprehensive understanding of the various discrimination situations (...)”. “The concept of intersectionality (...) helps us to perceive the relevant situations as a whole, rather than, as before, from a purely one-dimensional perspective (for this method) allows us to consider the effects of the intersection of the relevant forms of discrimination. To sum up, it is a question of acknowledging the composite nature of the sources of discrimination and the synergy of their effects. (...) it is precisely this consideration of the additional harmful effects produced by the combination of factors of discrimination, which has proved indispensable in addressing complex situations of discrimination. It is therefore not always sufficient to add together the multiple factors of discrimination, especially where the intersection between them exacerbates their consequences.” There is therefore no doubt, conclude the judges “that the applicant’s intersectional situation, being both a woman and impoverished, considerably exacerbated her vulnerability vis-à-vis the Dutch housing policy in question”.*

Whilst national judicial courts have the main competence to adjudicate on such provisions, national authorities have specific, and at times, broad powers with regards to enforcing anti-discrimination measures.

In Finland, the Finnish Non-Discrimination Ombudsman supervises the application of the Act on Non-Discrimination<sup>18</sup>, whilst the relevant authorities in Italy and Romania are UNAR (Italian Office against Racial Discrimination)<sup>19</sup> and CNCD (National Council for Combating Discrimination).

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<sup>17</sup> Garib v. The Netherlands, Application no. 43494/09, 6 November 2017.

<sup>18</sup> It is important to underline that Finland has three equality bodies, the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman, the Ombudsman for Gender Equality and the Non-Discrimination and Equality Tribunal.

<sup>19</sup> There is also the National Equality Councilor.

### III. What can you do when faced with discrimination?

If you are in ROMANIA and you were discriminated against, you can file a complaint with CNCD, where you:

- Mention the name and address of the victim
- Ask that the CNCD recognizes and sanctions the discrimination that occurred, in accordance with Government Ordinance no. 137/2000.
- Describe the discriminatory action/practice
- Enclose evidence
- Sign and mention the date of the complaint

You can also petition CNCD online, via <https://www.cncd.ro/depune-o-petitie/>. By clicking this link, you will obtain information for every step necessary to fill in and send the petition.

You can also call +021 312 65 78 or send an email for more info at: [support@cncd.ro](mailto:support@cncd.ro)

If you are in FINLAND, you have several options to consider if you have suffered discrimination; it depends on the facts of the case, where and in what circumstances the discrimination has occurred. You may contact the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman, file a complaint to the Non-Discrimination and Equality Tribunal or initiate civil or criminal proceedings depending on the nature of the case.

The easiest option is to contact the telephone helpline of the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman +358 (0) 295 666 817 (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 10-12 AM), where you can get advice on how to proceed with your case. You can also fill in a form on the webpage of the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman, where it is important to include:

- the name and contact details of the victim
- a description of what happened (when and where)

There is a Victim Support NGO (Riku) providing advice and assistance to victims of crimes. You may contact them in English by filling out a contact request form at <https://www.riku.fi/en/contact-information/-contact-request/>

You can also ask for general advice in the helpline-chat on Mondays and Wednesdays from 1 pm to 3 pm on the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman's webpage: <https://syrjinta.fi/en/customer-service>

The helpline provides free legal advice on what to do and how to proceed with the case; in some exceptional cases, the Ombudsman may also decide to litigate on behalf of the victim. In any event, the Ombudsman

may contact the party allegedly guilty of discrimination, ask for a statement or clarification of the events and try to mediate a conciliation agreement between the victim and the party guilty of discrimination, including compensation. If the discrimination happened within employment, the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman does not have a mandate but will direct the victim to the Regional State Administrative Authority responsible with investigating discrimination within employment. If the discrimination was based solely on the victim's gender, gender identity or expression, the correct authority to deal with the matter is the Equality Ombudsman. Contacting the Ombudsmen or Regional State Administrative Authority is free of charge and can be done informally and even anonymously if so wanted.

In addition, the victim may file a complaint with the Non-Discrimination and Equality Tribunal. This can be done free of charge and even without a lawyer, but the proceedings are formal and done in writing. The Tribunal can only rule whether discrimination has occurred or not, but it does not have a competence to order for any compensation to be paid. That must be sought separately in civil proceedings if the guilty party is not willing to agree on a conciliation agreement and compensation.

A written petition to the Discrimination and Equality Tribunal must state:

- the name and the place of domicile of the petitioner
- the contact details of the petitioner's legal representative or agent, if he or she has one
- the address to which summonses, requests and notices concerning the case can be sent
- the names and contact details of the other parties
- the specific claim of the petitioner
- the detailed facts and grounds on which this claim is based
- the details of any other authority that is currently examining the petitioner's case
- the name and contact details of the alleged discriminator
- It is recommended that the application is signed by the petitioner or by the person who prepares the application.
- If the petitioner uses an agent, the power of attorney authorising the agent to act on behalf of the petitioner must be submitted to the Tribunal. The power of attorney must be signed by the petitioner.

The petition and the power of attorney may also be submitted by secure email. An electronic petition does not have to be signed, if the document includes sender information and there is no uncertainty about the authenticity or integrity of the document. If the electronic petition delivered to the Tribunal by secure email includes a clarification of the authority of the agent, the agent does not have to submit a power of attorney.

Contact details of the Tribunal:

NATIONAL NON-DISCRIMINATION AND EQUALITY TRIBUNAL OF FINLAND  
P.O. BOX 27

FI-00023 GOVERNMENT

TEL. 029 5150 159

E-mail address: yvtltk(at)oikeus.fi

If you need advice and assistance in preparing a petition to the Non-Discrimination and Equality Tribunal, you may contact the offices of the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman or the Ombudsman for Equality.

The decisions of the Tribunal may be appealed against in the Helsinki Administrative Court and ultimately leave to appeal may be sought from the Supreme Administrative Court within 30 days from the date of the notification of the decision.

If the facts of the case appear to amount to a criminal offence of discrimination, the victim may also contact the police to file a criminal complaint. In that case s/he should give detailed information about what happened and where, provide details about the victim, possible witnesses and /or other evidence and the contact details of the party guilty of discrimination, if possible. A victim of a crime and discrimination who does not have the means to pay a lawyer's fee may use the services of the Public Legal Aid Office of his/her municipality of residence.

If the police investigation leads to criminal charges, the prosecutor may also seek compensation on behalf of the victim from the perpetrator.

It is also possible to initiate civil proceedings to confirm discrimination and to seek possible compensation, but a lawyer is needed and there is always a risk of paying the legal fees of the opposite party in case of losing the case.

In ITALY, in order to complain to The Office for the Promotion of Equal Treatment, you can access a Contact Center. The Contact Center was established on 10 December 2004 and can be reached on the toll-free number 800.90.10.10 and via the web.

The toll-free number of the Contact Center is active every day, including holidays, from 10:00 to 18:00 and is available in Italian, English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Russian, Romanian and Mandarin Chinese. Telephone operators are trained in cultural mediation to deal with multi-ethnic users and are also able to respond in Hindi, Urdu, German, Kurdish, Farsi, Turkmen, Aseri, Dari, Turkish, Pashto, Lingala, Kikongo languages and Punjabi. The Contact Center offers immediate assistance to alleged victims of discrimination, constituting a first level of response that collects and examines the reports, provides an initial orientation and clarifications in the victims' native language and sends the necessary data to a group of legal and social experts for conducting an initial research of useful information for the resolution of the cases envisaged. The Contact Center and first-level experts solve the problem in real time in the case

proposed by the user. If the proposed problem cannot be solved in real time by the Contact Center staff or the request is received through channels other than the telephone, the first level forwards the reports to the second level, internal to UNAR, which files the request and, with the coordination and supervision of the Office's experts, resolves the case.

Any request, at both first and second levels, ends with a final communication to the user. The cases received at the first level, be they pertinent or irrelevant, follow this procedure: the forms transmitted by the Contact center are analysed and classified as relevant or not, with respect to racial discrimination; irrelevant cases are dealt with, they are analysed and users are referred, through the call back, to local contacts identified on the basis of the reported discrimination factor (handicap, age, sexual orientation) or of the expressed needs; relevant cases are handled by analysing them and performing the first documentary collection for the investigation of the case; research and documentation by macro-areas (school, work, etc.) and a documentary and regulatory analysis are carried out; the alleged victims are contacted in order to obtain more information on discriminatory conduct; the alleged perpetrators of the discriminatory conduct are contacted; the file is closed or sent to the second level of expertise; the case is examined and solved; the result is communicated to the user by means of the final communication. All cases considered relevant to UNAR's competences are referred to an internal team of officials, magistrates and experts in legal and social sciences who handle them, conduct the investigations and identify the most appropriate strategies for solving the problem. The UNAR toll-free number, in collecting complaints of discrimination cases, answered calls that often did not contain the specific elements of ethnic or racial discrimination. Even in this case, however, the cultural mediators of the UNAR Contact Center managed the distressful situation underlying the complaint and became a reference point for all users, answering every call, from requests for general support and information, to complaints of discrimination unrelated with the ethnic and racial origin of the caller. UNAR has also set up a complex data management information system for IT management and the sharing of complaints collected between the first and second levels, as well as for a statistical analysis of data on racial discrimination.

The complaints collected are thus inserted into an application that allows case management, the integration and sharing of documents in real time, the statistical analysis of the complex of complaints received and their correlation with the various social indicators set up. For more information, visit the website: [www.pariopportunita.gov.it](http://www.pariopportunita.gov.it)

Useful contacts in Italy for Roma people that live with intersectional needs.

All these organizations and services provide support for free.

(specific focus on needs related to gender and LGBT+ topics)

intersectionalitiesandmore@gmail.com

Facebook: IAM Intersectionalities and more APS

+339 3389448

ROMNI

www.romni.org

info@romni.org

UNAR

(National Anti-racial Discrimination Office)

www.unar.it

segreteriaunar@governo.it

unar@unar.it

0039 0667792267

OSCAD

(Security Observatory Against Discriminatory Acts)

oscad@dcpc.interno.it

Avvocati di strada

(free legal support with offices in the biggest Italian cities)

www.avvocatidistrada.it

info@avvocatodistrada.it

0039 051 227143

### **How you can contribute if you are a lawyer:**

- Get familiar with the national and European legislation in the area of equality and non-discrimination
- Participate in trainings
- Offer to assist victims or NGOs pro-bono
- Offer legal counselling
- Participate in cross-sectoral discussions

- Engage with the media
- Educate the larger public on the issues
- Hear victims

#### **How you can contribute if you are a judge:**

- Get familiar with the national and European legislation in the area of equality and non-discrimination
- Read relevant cases in other jurisdictions, ruled by the European Court of Justice or the European Court of Human Rights
- Participate in trainings
- Hear victims

#### **How you can contribute if you are a member of a national equality authority:**

- Get familiar with the national and European legislation in the area of equality and non-discrimination
- Offer trainings
- Organize awareness campaigns
- Engage the media
- Have consultations with NGOs and other stakeholders
- Hear victims



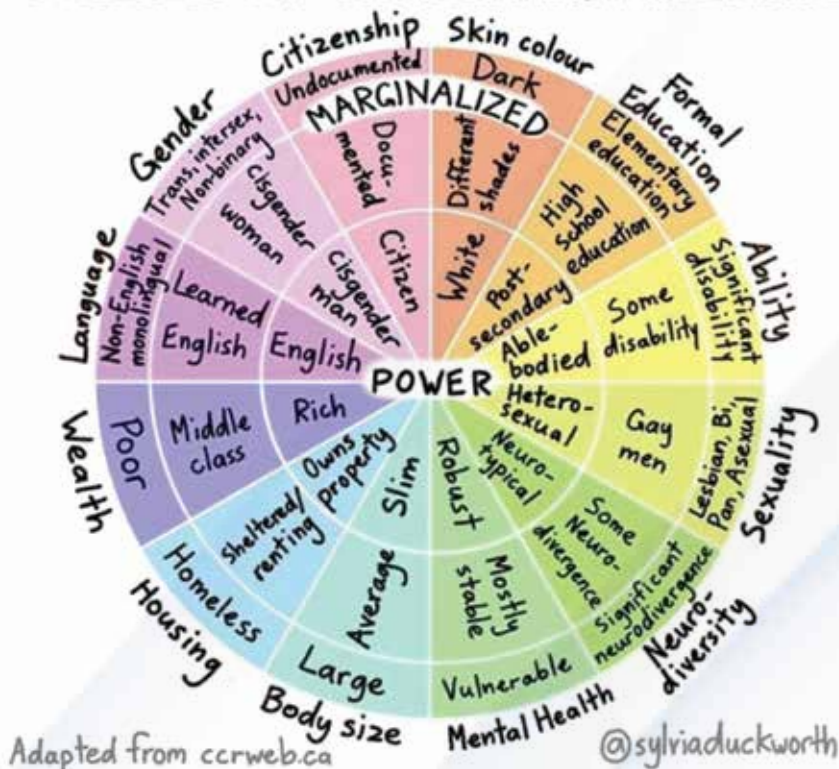
# Chapter 3: Be an ally!

For NGOs, intersectionality is a way of challenging oppression and inequality

The role and experience of NGOs in combating intersectional discrimination

The work of NGOs focusing on minority rights is strongly intertwined with the reality of intersectionality. In their everyday activism and daily activities, they are faced with the fact that individuals as well as groups have multiple identity markers which shape their experience of life, their rights and the discrimination they are subjected to. However, this is something that has to be actively recognized: **what is needed is a critical reflection on intersectionality and a clear perception on how one's status and position in a society or community are simultaneously affected by several elements.** Even if the NGO in question would focus mainly on one of those markers (for example disability issues or anti-racism), the work lacks depth if intersectionality as an essential tool in understanding the crossing and overlapping forms of differences is ignored. For NGOs, intersectionality is a way of challenging oppression and inequality as well as a tool for self-understanding and constant, constructive self-criticism. In doing the practical work, the intersectional approach directs the focus not only on the interplay and complexity of identities, but also on the centrality of power relations: to work as an NGO in the field of human rights means to analyze and question the **power in place.** In this chapter we deal with case studies and examples of the perspectives and experiences of actors in the field of human rights in regards to understanding and combating intersectional discrimination.

## WHEEL OF POWER/PRIVILEGE



## NGOs working with an intersectional approach - reflections

Having an intersectional approach in social work is fundamental in allowing for a better understanding of the problem in its complexity, thus offering answers and possible solutions that take into account all the identities and specific needs of the person being supported. The intersectional approach allows the person to be listened to in all of their needs and identities. Working with this type of approach is often considered more complex and requires more energy. In reality, the intersectional approach saves a lot of time, making it easier to understand which actors to involve in the creation of an effective and efficient network. To do this, it is important to work by leaving aside stereotypes and personal prejudices as much as possible and making the environment as comfortable as possible.

Before starting to work with an intersectional approach, it is essential to do research on which associations and services are available in the reference area dedicated to specific needs or communities.

In Italy, this type of approach has only become common in recent years, mainly with regard to social work with women or people belonging to the LGBT+ community even if it is still from being included in the official training paths of many professional figures such as lawyers, social workers, doctors and police. The challenge for Italy in the short term is to make the institutions and the academic world (and no longer just

the world of activism and associations) understand how fundamental the intersectional approach to social work has now become in offering services.

**Romni Onlus** is one of the NGOs working in Italy with an intersectional perspective. The association facilitates the process of female emancipation and social inclusion towards a modern life, promoting the overcoming of all practices that are characterized as limiting and disrespectful to personal dignity and autonomy.

Deaconess Foundation is one of the organisations in Finland working for and with migrant Roma communities for over a decade. In the lives of those communities and people, intersectional analysis helps take into account the historical, social and political issues which impact their contexts: to recognize the unique experiences of migrant Roma individuals and communities based on the intersection of all relevant grounds. This allows the particular experience of, for example, migrant, homeless, disabled, female Roma to be acknowledged and remedied. In the work of Deaconess Foundation, the intersectional approach also acknowledges that discrimination tends to not be overt, but often rather quite subtle, multi-layered, systemic and institutionalized. Multiple oppression is also perceived to be operating on internalized and interpersonal levels. This refers, for example, to: not having a residence-permit or being a citizen, being stopped or relocated in public spaces (ethnic profiling), being a EU-citizen, but not having access to social security (even falling outside the category of “undocumented”), being denied full access to emergency shelter

(sleeping outside), being referred to as a “beggar”, no matter what your source of income is, living transnational lives and having no rights in any of the nations. Many of those experiences are strongly racialized and based on discriminatory structures which resemble, for instance, the experiences of other Roma in Finland or those of different migrant groups, but also have very particular, intersectional manifestations which typically concern migrant Roma. In addition to that, Deaconess Foundation has developed a framework which addresses issues that impact minorities among minorities, for example displaced women, racialized groups among the unemployed, BIPOC with disabilities etc. Those forms of discrimination can often be poorly understood in the Finnish system, and are more difficult to combat. For example, Roma women living in illegal settlements are not only discriminated against because they do not have access to decent housing, but also excluded from the labor market because of their gender, housing status or because they are labelled as racialized “Gypsy women”. Combating these forms of discrimination requires a constant understanding of systemic and historic dimensions.

E-Romnja is one of the first intersectional feminist Roma women's NGOs in Europe. Here are some of their thoughts regarding intersectional work: “We, as Roma feminists and activists for human rights, are aware of the various systems of oppression and inequalities within our societies. And so, in the past few years, intersectionality increasingly became the core of our community interventions as the experiences of Roma women we work with are found in the interaction between ethnicity, gender, social status, sexual identity and colour. For us, intersectionality dismantles the essentialist image of ‘Roma’, which is wrongly seen in a unified way and excludes the most marginalized experiences and voices. We consider that it is essential to integrate an intersectional perspective in our feminist work as we want to change the narrative about Roma, create support networks and solidarity among us.

All of our projects and initiatives are designed and implemented from an intersectional perspective. By developing and supporting initiative groups made up of Roma women, Roma youth from our communities, we are careful to have as much diversity as possible from the perspective of the types of people, their religion, age groups, colour, disabilities etc. We treat their experiences with an intersectional key that ensures that we include all dimensions and contexts in which they live, creating safe spaces for their voices, empowering them to speak for themselves and their communities. This approach, which envisages an entire system, provides us with the knowledge, learning and tools in order to fight discrimination and balance the inequalities.

Our intersectional perspective is also reflected in working in different formal and informal networks and coalitions (gender equality, fighting against violence and different forms of oppression, LGBT+ community rights, forced evictions). Why so? Because we want to create a common framework to understand the identities, privileges, and oppression of Roma women and other groups with which we intersect in our work.”

## CLNR – The Center for Not-for-Profit Law

CLNR is an important actor in the NGO field in Romania, actively advocating for a stronger civil society. Founded in 2013, it specializes in providing research, advocacy and other related services to civil society organizations and citizens.

### Its main objectives are:

- Strengthening the capacity of non-governmental organizations in Romania to identify and represent citizens' interests in respect to public authorities.
- Increasing the level of NGOs' and citizens' civic engagement and participation in the processes of policy formulation and advancement.
- Encouraging the social inclusion of vulnerable persons and the sustainability of nonprofit activities by stimulating social entrepreneurship among non-governmental organizations and people from disadvantaged socio-economic groups.
- Promoting civic participation and the inclusion of vulnerable groups through formal and non-formal education.

Intersectionality is one of the key concepts for the work conducted at CLNR, which aims to bring the concept to the forefront of legislation and policies, particularly in the social services that most affect Roma persons: education, healthcare, employment opportunities.

### How to be a better ally?

One important aspect to be considered and reflected upon is the work for human rights and minority rights by activists and professionals who themselves are not part of the minority in question. How to show solidarity in a constructive way? Based on experiences of solidarity and majorities working for minorities, here are 10 aspects to be considered for an ally with privilege,

**1. Listen to BIPOC<sup>20</sup> and other marginalized communities.** Be aware that it is a gift and privilege to hear and have someone share their experiences with you. Focus on simply listening: you are given access to knowledge and experiences you yourself do not have. Honor the time and courage people show in those situations. Do not defend or equate your struggle with others' struggle. Also do not be offended if you are trying to engage and someone is not automatically receptive. You should always center the conversation on the needs of the minorities rather than make a performance out of your assistance. Ask what you can do to support.

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<sup>20</sup> BIPOC refers to black, indigenous, and other people of color and aims to emphasize the historic oppression of black and indigenous people

**2. Educate yourself.** The responsibility is yours – do not rely on minorities for education about your own or institutional racism or other forms of discrimination. Do not wait for people of color to raise white people's awareness. Work on your research, read books by non-white authors, find resources and guides online. Be inspired and learn more.

**3. Boost the voices of Roma and of other minorities.** Do not speak for people of color, for Roma, other minorities or attempt to explain their positions; rather make space, promote the work of minorities within your teaching and research, trainings, networks and social media feeds. When participating in anti-racist action, do not draw the attention to yourself, your organization (if mainly white) or your work/project. Make sure there is more time, space and focus for Roma, persons of color and other minorities. Show that you respect the knowledge acquired through identities different from yours.

**4. Acknowledge your privilege.** Understand that you have privilege and think, read and reflect about how you can use it to make a change. Make space for any discomfort you might experience: it is valuable to recognize one's limitations as a white person doing anti-racist work and being part of racist structures at the same time. Acknowledge racist mindsets that we all have: recognize yours, challenge them and strive to reach a situation in which they do not direct your actions. Talk about your whiteness and how you benefit from it. However, realize that it is not about you: avoid over-personalizing issues that minorities raise. Rather spend the energy moving the common vision forward.

**5. Accept feedback.** Believe minorities when they tell you something is discriminatory or that they have experienced racism. In case of disbelief, spend some time deeply thinking about where the impulse arises from and what kind of bias might have caused it. When you are called out for unequal behaviour, recognize it and apologize, preferably publicly. Be accountable for what you said/did, because your mistake can be a powerful tool to help others deconstruct and correct inappropriate acts. We all make mistakes, but we can own them and use them in service of causes we think are right. In case you experience guilt, do not look to minorities to absolve it; your emotional labor should not become their additional burden.

**6. Remember everyday acts.** Support minority-run businesses in your city. Buy and learn about minority art, movies, music. Read biographical (and other) books from a diverse group of authors. Follow the social media accounts of minority activists. When in charge of hiring or promoting, recruit those less privileged and pay them well above minimum wage. Promote anonymous recruiting. Support leadership from people of color, Roma and other minorities. Contact your MP to ask them about what they are doing to combat multiple discrimination.

**7. Seek several perspectives.** The intersectional approach encourages us to always remember that one person (or few) does not represent the view of an entire identity group. Ask yourself who you have not

heard, listened to, who you do not know: elderly, LGBT+, people with disabilities, undocumented people, etc.

**8. Get up, stand up.** It is up to you to speak when you hear others say something offensive or when there is structural inequality. You can choose to do this publicly or privately. Remaining silent means you choose the side of the oppressor. Speak up especially in situations which include institutions of power, such as the police or other public establishments. If you see a racist interaction in the public space, record video on your phone, step in calmly and try to de-escalate the situation. Tell the victim you are there for them and ask if they are ok. Only share the video material or photos online with the victim's consent and in cooperation with them.

In social media, it is preferable to participate calmly and constructively, without purposely escalating any conflicts. Discriminated minorities have all the reason to get mad and even rude about the structural oppression they experience - it is hurtful and painful to them. They do not have to be polite, for their trauma and emotions are well justified. But it is not your pain, so as an ally, try to keep your temper in check and participate in a respectful manner. Doing otherwise can harm the minorities you are in solidarity with and make the space less safe for them. Agitated fights in social media increase the stress and energy costs for minorities and can hurt and trigger them at a disproportionately high level in the current aggressive climate of discussions.

**9. Be prepared to disagree.** If you have the energy, try not to avoid and block people whose views you disagree with, simply because they make you uncomfortable (this does not include those who experience discrimination personally – they should prioritize safety). Blocking people and turning them away might send them the message that discrimination is ok, as long as they practice it elsewhere. Be prepared to engage, if possible, patiently and with warmth, until you gradually reach deconstruction. This is a process which takes days, years, and even our entire lives. Give it time, but know that it does work and it is important.

**10. Call in your peers with (white/any) privilege.** If you have family, friends or colleagues who take a different stance on issues of equality, engage in discussions with them. People are more likely to listen to people they personally know. Be proactively anti-racist in all the contexts you interact in. Talk to your children about diversity and equality, be a role model for them to speak up in a calm and productive way when kids or teachers behave inappropriately and in discriminatory ways. It is also important to have constant conversations with other like-minded allies: talk about how you can support one another, do better and strengthen solidarity. Look out for activism which is too elitist, academic or exclusive. Make space and be patient. Welcome people who are trying to learn. Centre acceptance, love and community.

Look out for activism which is too elitist, academic or exclusive. Make space and be patient. Welcome

people who are trying to learn. Centre acceptance, love and community.

## **Challenges, limitations and tools in NGOs' efforts for combating intersectional discrimination:**

### **Awareness-raising campaigns**

In campaign work, it is important to recognize that communities are not homogeneous but have different and changing needs, capabilities, interests and experiences. Therefore, the actions and campaigns should be targeted and based on experiences collected among diverse participants, e.g., Roma women of different age groups face different kinds of exclusions and may have different needs.

An important principle is the slogan “**Nothing about us without us**”, made popular by disability activists. Campaigns led by the marginalized communities themselves, not only as participants / “material” but in leadership positions ensure proper representation. The impact and sustainability of actions is greater when targeted rights-holders are directly involved and fairly represented. By applying this principle, the stereotypes against different marginalized communities can better be broken and collective and systemic forms of discrimination are combated that prevent those affected from fully participating and accessing rights.

Awareness-raising campaigns are all about having a voice. It is crucial to make time to respect and center the voices of those most affected by the policies, practices and issues in question: their goals for their communities, their storytelling and their role as spokespeople for their own lives. Intersectionality requires this recognition because of the lack of diversity of voices in mainstream conversations. Direct experience makes the campaign plausible and it makes the right people the thought leaders of the movement for social justice.

### **Monitoring**

When monitoring any activity aiming at equality, it is important to pay attention to the need for disaggregated data. Whenever possible, it is valuable to pay extra attention to groups (in the intersections of identities) that might not otherwise be represented in adequate numbers in evaluation processes. This helps improve performance and achieve better results in any project management or social justice work.

Transparency and accountability include paying attention to issues such as age, ethnicity, religion, gender, housing status, sexual orientation, national origin and social class. Too often monitoring processes miss the stories of communities that sit at the intersections because the questions asked only focus on singular aspects of their identity. Highlighting the importance of disaggregated data ensures that the experiences of communities with intersectional identities are not missing and can be improved.

Monitoring should also pay careful attention to inclusivity and incorporate different perspectives when talking about issues. There are multiple voices within a movement and community, and no singular way of expressing an idea or a problem. Real, lasting and equitable change happens through various voices and perspectives being considered: the experiences of transgender communities, indigenous people or homeless youth. Different experiences within the system also play into different narratives and require different policing solutions. The “success” of an intersectional approach may be as simple as ensuring different voices are included in the dominant discourse about an issue or identifying ways that different communities experience policies and laws. Promoting access to opportunities also requires deliberate consideration of how seemingly unrelated issue areas connect: criminal justice issues are related to public health issues, which are related to poverty, which is related to immigration and so on. Incorporating a truly intersectional approach requires routinely considering how various issues may be impacted, how they connect with each other and whether one approach in one issue area will somehow undermine the efforts of those working on a different, but intersecting area.

## **Advocacy**

Intersectional interventions and communication processes should be designed with the communities which are affected by the human rights injustices they are focused on. Only then the specific and diverse ways of facing multiple and intersecting barriers can be impacted. When advocating, for example, for reproductive rights, the experiences of economic, ethnic and migration status differences should be addressed. This sort of movement constantly engages and activates new audiences and stakeholders in ways that resonate with their experiences and values.

Creative advocacy includes understanding multiple struggles, recognising that there are multiple forms of discrimination that block people from reaching equal opportunity. However, recognising these multiple, systemic barriers to opportunity and multiple forms of prejudice is only the first step in adopting an intersectional approach. The next step is to ask how this should be advocated for in an impactful but also diverse way. Generating media coverage and issuing reports should happen after this consideration is reflected upon.

## **Reporting cases and assisting victims**

**How can an NGO use all this multicolored information regarding intersectionality?**

**Two Cs: collaboration and community.**



Aim to collaborate with people and provide resources for people from different communities and areas to promote real, transformative change. At its best, intersectionality encourages cross-community, cross-sector and cross-issue collaborations, investing equally and in solidarity in each other's issues, stories and policy agendas.

Too seldom activists, advocates, lawyers, artists, scholars, cultural workers and strategists come together and share their points of view in such a way that breaks down hierarchies amongst them. In intersectional work it is crucial to acknowledge and question the social hierarchies also within the movements themselves. Extroverts who are good at talking or people with brilliant writing skills tend to have more power, while those with less education, experience or courage have the least. This makes social justice movements themselves less accessible and prevent more people from being heard, even if the issues affect them the most. We have to be the change we want to see in the world: if our movements want to question the abuse of power and hierarchies in the world, we have to undo them also in our own communities. Collaboration also boosts creativity, encourages innovative solutions, thinking outside the box, expands networks and encourages transformative change.

While working towards intersectional justice, highlight the importance of coming together as a community to achieve equal opportunity. Impactful things can only be done together; community is a salient value in the process. Intersectionality recognizes people's eagerness to be part of a diverse and safe community and amplifies the importance of ensuring that all members of the community are respected and enjoy access to participation. Building community and encouraging alliances, coalitions and networks helps us look out for each other and actually solve problems.

### **What about the diversity of your own organisation?**

When trying to change the world, it is crucial to start at home. Remember to reflect the everyday work and activities of your NGO, network or team, from the point of view of diversity. Every now and then, give some thought to questions such as:

- Are your events accessible to all types of identities, abilities, backgrounds and bodies?
- Which identities have not been taken into account in your projects, events and campaigns?
- Who has the most power in your organization?
- Who appears on your webpage or promotional materials?
- When you say "we", who do you refer to?
- Who does your organization or community cater most to (when it comes to documents, language, resources, information, events)?
- Who has been left out in your work until now? How could they be included?
- Are you practicing charity or solidarity?

- What kind of assumptions do you make of the people attending or participating in your work?

## INTERSECTIONALITY CHECKLIST

You can also consider the intersectional diversity and depth of your community with a checklist which you can go through regularly to see the progress and openly talk about the issues lacking. You can use the following or similar questions and rate them for example with:

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = unclear

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

Grade the following remarks. If your organisation is really diverse in intersectional ways, you will score higher. And if you score lower, you can focus on the questions for which you got the least points. (When done as a whole team, the results are more informative.)

- \* There is a range of ethnic identities who attend/work/lead/are in the decision-making board or committee in my group/ organization
- \* There is a range of genders represented in the community/board/leadership
- \* There is a range of people from different socioeconomic statuses represented
- \* There is a range of people with (dis)abilities represented
- \* Socioeconomic statuses are regularly discussed/considered as part of our work
- \* No single gender makes up the majority of attendees
- \* We have links with LGBT+ organisations
- \* (Dis)abilities are regularly discussed/considered as part of our work
- \* The trans community is welcome and represented
- \* Anti-racism is regularly discussed and strategically planned as part of our work

- \* We co-operate with migrant lead organizations
- \* We consider the accessibility of our physical spaces and the language used
- \* We work towards creating a safer space
- \* We analyse the intersectionality of our participants and use this data to develop our work
- \* We are aware of the significant days, practices and traditions of the religions practiced in our community
- \* We consider diverse dietary requirements

## **PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES**

### **Activity 1**

Title: Two truths, one lie

15 minutes

The activity can also be conducted online

Goals:

- Participants get to know each other
- It creates a welcoming atmosphere
- To present the practical aspect of the seminar

Materials:

no materials needed

Instructions:

The facilitator explains the activity to the participants:

1. This is an icebreaker / getting to know each other exercise. He / she explains that each participant has to tell, in addition to their name, two truths and a lie about themselves and the others have to guess what the lie is. To make the exercise more fun, everyone should try to make their lie seem realistic.

2. When a participant has shared their statements, the group votes on which of the three they believe is a lie and at the end of each round, the participant in question reveals what the lie is.

If the participants hesitate to start the exercise, it is recommended for the facilitator to begin, to create a more relaxed atmosphere.

## Activity 2

Title: Which are the three words that come to your mind?

15 minutes

It is possible even online (without post-it notes)

Goals:

- Participants get to know each other
- It creates a welcoming atmosphere
- To present the practical aspect of the seminar

Materials

Post-it notes

Instructions:

The facilitator prepares two questions that allow three answers per participant for each question.

1. This is an icebreaker / get to know each other exercise, to introduce the theme of the seminar. He / she sends the link of the online tool to the participants and tells them that they have two minutes to answer the questions with the three words that come to their mind.

2. When answering a question, the most frequently used words will appear in a larger font, creating a word cloud. The facilitator waits 2-3 minutes per question for all participants to answer and read the words (from those with the largest font to those with the smallest font), commenting on them and establishing connections with the training.

Questions for participants:

- What three words come to your mind when it comes to the rights of Roma people?
- What three words come to your mind when it comes to prejudice against Roma people?

### Activity 3

The gender unicorn

50 minutes

Possible even online

Materials:

blackboard

Instructions:

The gender unicorn illustrates the five key dimensions of a human being in relation to gender and sexuality: gender identity, gender expression, gender attributed at birth, sexual orientation, and romantic / emotional orientation. Ask participants to choose the correct definition of gender attributed at birth from four options. Emphasize that this is not a test, but a fun way to learn something that is probably new to most people. Read each option slowly out loud, with a short pause between each. Give the participants time to consider the options, then ask a volunteer to give the answer. Read the correct definition. Ask attendees if they have any questions or comments. Explain the gender attributed at birth:

- Usually, when a baby is born, he is assigned a sex, often based solely on his visible genitals.
- The sex attributed at birth, however, is much more complicated than simple genitals. The gender attributed at birth includes a person's chromosomal, hormonal, and anatomical characteristics. Intersex is an all-encompassing term that describes people born with sexual characteristics that do not reflect the typical definitions of female and male. For example, in about one in 2,000 births, the genitals are not clearly male or female (Blackless et al., 2000). Other times, there may be no visual indication that a person is intersex. In fact, in many cases, indications that a person may be intersex don't appear until a later age (often after puberty). Some people may never find out.
- This is much more common than you might think. In about one in every 100 births, there are some variations in one of the many sexual characteristics we have mentioned.

Ask attendees if they have any questions or comments. Read the correct answer. Ask attendees if they have any questions or comments.

Useful information to better explain gender topics

(source: TGEU – [www.tgeu.org](http://www.tgeu.org))

Read the definition of gender norms. Explain that gender norms change from culture to culture. For example, an occupation that is commonly seen as “normal” for women in one country may, in another country, be commonly seen as inappropriate for women. Discuss how gender norms change over time. Likewise, a person’s gender expression can change, either because gender norms change or simply because of personal discovery or confidence. Take, for example, a person who only feels comfortable expressing her gender in a way that society disapproves of when she is with friends in the evening. Earlier in the day, when this person is with co-workers, she may feel compelled to express her gender in another way. Make explicit references and links with the predominant Roma communities and cultures to simplify the topics covered.

If sex is a condition given to us, gender identity is about what we feel we are. It refers to each person's feeling of being a woman, a man, queer, gender nonconforming, etc. Gender identity refers to the inner and personal experience of gender that each person feels deeply and which may or may not correspond to the sex attributed at birth. For trans people, the inner gender identity does not coincide with the sex attributed at birth. Most people have a gender identity of man or woman (or boy or girl), but for some people their gender identity clearly does not fit into either of these two choices. Unlike gender expression, gender identity is not visible to others. Gender expression refers to the manifestation of one's gender identity. In general, people try to match their gender expression or presentation with their gender identity/identities, regardless of the sex attributed to them at birth.

NOTE: It is important to understand that our look and name are very important to us, so if a person asks you to address her / him/they with a certain name or pronoun, it is important to respect this request. “Cis-gender” or “cis” is a term used to describe non-trans people. It is used in the same way that heterosexual is used to mean non-homosexual.

“Transsexual” refers to people who identify entirely with the gender role opposite to the sex attributed at birth and who seek to live permanently in the preferred gender role. This is often accompanied by a strong rejection of one's primary and secondary sexual characteristics and a willingness to adapt one's body to the preferred gender. Transsexual people may want to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment treatment (which may or may not involve hormone therapy or surgery).

Trans person / persons / man / woman is an open all-encompassing term referring to persons whose gender

identity and / or gender expression differs from the sex attributed at birth. This includes (non-limiting list): men and women with a transsexual background and people who identify as transsexual, transgender, transvestite / cross-dressing, androgynous, multigender, queer, agender (or genderless), gender variant or any other identity and / or expression that is not the standard masculine or feminine and expressing their gender through the choice of clothing, presentation or body modifications, including undergoing multiple surgeries.

#### Activity 4

Take a step forward inside the Roma community

45 minutes

Freely inspired by the activities of “Compass – Manual for human rights education with young people”

maximum 15 participants

Goals:

- to raise awareness about inequality of opportunity;
- to develop imagination and critical thinking;
- to foster empathy with others who are less fortunate.

Materials:

- an open space (a corridor, large room or outdoors);
- tape or CD player and soft/relaxing music;
- role cards.

Instructions:

1. Create a calm atmosphere with some soft background music. Alternatively, ask the participants for silence.
2. Ask participants to take a role card out of the hat. Tell them to keep it to themselves and not to show it to anyone else.
3. Invite them to sit down (preferably on the floor) and to read carefully what is on their role card.
4. Now ask them to start getting into their role. To help them, read out some of the following questions, pausing after each one, to give people time to reflect and try to picture themselves and their lives:
  - What was your childhood like? What sort of house did you live in? What kind of games did you play? What sort of work did your parents do?

- What is your everyday life like now? Where do you socialise? What do you do in the morning, in the afternoon, in the evening?
- What sort of lifestyle do you have? Where do you live? How much money do you earn each month? What do you do in your leisure time? What you do during your holidays?

If you do this activity outdoors, make sure that the participants can hear you, especially if you are doing it with a large group! You may need to use your co-facilitators to relay the statements.

- What excites you and what are you afraid of?

5. Now ask people to remain absolutely silent as they line up beside each other (like on a starting line).

6. Tell the participants that you are going to read out a list of situations or events. Every time they can answer “yes” to the statement, they should take a step forward. Otherwise, they should stay where they are and not move.

7. Read out the situations one at a time. Pause for a while between each statement to allow people time to step forward and to look around to take note of their positions relative to each other.

8. At the end, invite everyone to take note of their final positions. Then give them a couple of minutes to stop the role-play before debriefing in plenary.

In the imagining phase at the beginning, it is possible that some participants may say that they know little about the life of the person they have to role-play. Tell them this does not really matter and they should use their imagination and do the best they can.

The power of this activity lies in the impact of actually seeing the distance increasing between the participants, especially at the end when there should be a big distance between those who stepped forward often and those who did not but even by seeing the similarities between people who are members of the Roma community even if they have another identity at risk of discrimination (e.g. a Roma person with one or more disabilities, a Roma person with a LGBTIQ+ identity, a Roma woman or a Roma senior person).

To enhance the impact, it is important that you adjust the roles to reflect the realities of the participants’ own lives. As you do so, be sure to adapt the roles so that only a minimum of people can take steps forward (i.e. can answer “yes”). This also applies if you have a large group and have to devise more roles. During the debriefing and evaluation, it is important to explore how participants knew about the character whose role they had to play. Was it through personal experience or through other sources of information (news, books, and jokes)? Are they sure the information and the image they have of the characters are reliable? In this way you can introduce how stereotypes and prejudice work.



## Role cards

All identities live in the same country during the same historical period.

you are an unemployed Roma middle-aged person;

you are a Roma middle-aged person that works with a full-time contract but still lives in a camp in Italy;

you are a disabled young Roma man who can only move in a wheelchair;

you are a 17-year-old Roma girl who never finished primary school;

you are a 33-year-old Roma gay man that lives in a camp for the gipsy community in Italy with his family;

you are gay Roma man, 32 years old that defines himself as straight but does sex work with other men to earn money;

you are a middle-aged Roma man in Italy;

you are a Roma homeless young man, 27 years old;

you are a Roma student at the Univeristy of Bologna;

you are a 54-year-old Roma woman who lives with her family in an house in Torino;

you are a Roma woman, 34 years old, who lives and works in Milan with a part-time job;

you are a 75-year- old Roma man who arrived in Italy 5 years ago to live with his sons;

you are a 40-year-old Roma woman without children;

Read the following situations out aloud. Allow time after reading out each situation for participants to step forward and also to look to see how far they have moved relative to each other.

- you have never encountered any serious financial difficulty;
- you have decent housing with a telephone and television;
- you feel your language, religion and culture are respected in the society where you live;
- you feel that your opinion on social and political issues matters and your views are listened to;

- other people consult you about different issues;
- you are not afraid of being stopped by the police;
- you know where to turn for advice and help if you need it;
- you have never felt discriminated against because of your origin;
- you have adequate social and medical protection for your needs;
- you can go away on holiday once a year;
- you can invite friends for dinner at home;
- you have an interesting life and you are positive about your future;
- you feel like you can study and follow the profession of your choice;
- you are not afraid of being harassed or attacked in the streets or in the media;
- you can vote in national and local elections;
- you can celebrate the most important religious festivals with your relatives and close friends;
- you can participate in an international seminar abroad;
- you can go to the cinema or to the theatre at least once a week;
- you are not afraid for the future of your children;
- you can buy new clothes at least once every three months;
- you can fall in love with the person of your choice;
- you feel that your competence is appreciated and respected in the society where you live;
- you can use and benefit from the Internet;
- you are not afraid of the consequences of climate change;
- you are free to use any site on the Internet without fear of censorship.

## Activity 5

Take a step forward

45 minutes

Freely inspired by the activities of “Compass – Manual for human rights education with young people”  
maximum 15 participants

Goals:

- to raise awareness about inequality of opportunity;
- to develop imagination and critical thinking;
- to foster empathy with others who are less fortunate.

### Materials:

- an open space (a corridor, large room or outdoors);
- tape or CD player and soft/relaxing music;
- role cards.

### Instructions:

1. Create a calm atmosphere with some soft background music. Alternatively, ask the participants for silence.
2. Ask participants to take a role card out of the hat. Tell them to keep it to themselves and not to show it to anyone else.
3. Invite them to sit down (preferably on the floor) and to read carefully what is on their role card.
4. Now ask them to start getting into their role. To help them, read out some of the following questions, pausing after each one, to give people time to reflect and try to picture themselves and their lives:

- What was your childhood like? What sort of house did you live in? What kind of games did you play? What sort of work did your parents do?

- What is your everyday life like now? Where do you socialise? What do you do in the morning, in the afternoon, in the evening?

- What sort of lifestyle do you have? Where do you live? How much money do you earn each month? What do you do in your leisure time? What you do during your holidays?

If you do this activity outdoors, make sure that the participants can hear you, especially if you are doing it with a large group! You may need to use your co-facilitators to relay the statements.

- What excites you and what are you afraid of?

5. Now ask people to remain absolutely silent as they line up beside each other (like on a starting line)
6. Tell the participants that you are going to read out a list of situations or events. Every time they can answer “yes” to the statement, they should take a step forward. Otherwise, they should stay where they are and not move.
7. Read out the situations one at a time. Pause for a while between each statement to allow people time to step forward and to look around to take note of their positions relative to each other.
8. At the end, invite everyone to take note of their final positions. Then give them a couple of minutes to stop the role-play before debriefing in plenary.

In the imagining phase at the beginning, it is possible that some participants may say that they know little about the life of the person they have to role-play. Tell them this does not really matter and they should use their imagination and do the best they can.

The power of this activity lies in the impact of actually seeing the distance increasing between the participants, especially at the end when there should be a big distance between those that stepped forward often and those who did not. To enhance the impact, it is important that you adjust the roles to reflect the realities of the participants' own lives. As you do so, be sure you adapt the roles so that only a minimum of people can take steps forward (i.e. can answer "yes"). This also applies if you have a large group and have to devise more roles. During the debriefing and evaluation, it is important to explore how participants knew about the character whose role they had to play. Was it through personal experience or through other sources of information (news, books, and jokes)? Are they sure the information and the image they have of the characters are reliable? In this way you can introduce how stereotypes and prejudice work.

### Role cards

All identities live in the same country during the same historical period.

you are an unemployed single mother;

you are the daughter of the American ambassador to the country where you are now living;

you are a disabled young man who can only move in a wheelchair;

you are a 17-year-old Roma girl who never finished primary school;

you are a 33-year-old Roma gay man who lives in a camp for the gipsy community in Italy with his family;

you are the girlfriend of a young artist who is addicted to heroin;

you are an HIV positive, middle-aged prostitute;

you are a mother of 3 children with a part-time job that lives next to a big city;

you are a middle-aged Roma man in Italy;

you are a homeless young man, 27 years old;

you are a student at the university born in Italy, 23 years old;

you are a trans girl from Perù that lives in Milan;

you are an Italian mother, 34 years old that lives in Milan;

you are 55 years old. Now you are free but you spent the last 13 years in prison;

you are a middle-aged man with a mental health disability that works in a restaurant in Milan;

Read the following situations out loud. Allow time after reading out each situation for participants to step forward and also to look to see how far they have moved relative to each other.

- you have never encountered any serious financial difficulty;
- you have decent housing with a telephone and television;
- you feel your language, religion and culture are respected in the society where you live;
- you feel that your opinion on social and political issues matters and your views are listened to;
- other people consult you about different issues;
- you are not afraid of being stopped by the police;
- you know where to turn for advice and help if you need it;
- you have never felt discriminated against because of your origin;
- you have adequate social and medical protection for your needs;
- you can go away on holiday once a year;
- you can invite friends for dinner at home;
- you have an interesting life and you are positive about your future;
- you feel like you can study and follow the profession of your choice;
- you are not afraid of being harassed or attacked in the streets, or in the media;
- you can vote in national and local elections;
- you can celebrate the most important religious festivals with your relatives and close friends;
- you can participate in an international seminar abroad;
- you can go to the cinema or to the theatre at least once a week;
- you are not afraid for the future of your children;
- you can buy new clothes at least once every three months;
- you can fall in love with the person of your choice;
- you feel that your competence is appreciated and respected in the society where you live;
- you can use and benefit from the Internet;
- you are not afraid of the consequences of climate change;

- you are free to use any site on the Internet without fear of censorship.

## Activity 6

Forum theatre

online version also possible

maximum 1 hour

Create as many groups depending on how many persons will join the training.

For each group a maximum of 5 participants

Goals:

The aim is to make the participants reflect on the existence of multiple identities and needs within Roma communities

Materials:

no materials needed

Instructions:

Forum theater is one of the techniques of the method called “theater of the oppressed”.

Divide the participants into groups with a maximum of 5 participants. Assign each group an additional identity to match the Roma one (LGBTIQA+ person, person with disabilities, woman, elderly person). Ask the group to reflect on the problems of these people who experience a condition of hypothetical double discrimination in the society in which they live (both within the Roma community and outside) and to stage a short scene concerning a possible problem that this person might encounter during his/her life. Try to delimit the situation, the historical moment and the people involved as much as possible. All the people in the group must have a role in the scene and play a part. Emphasize repeatedly that it is not important to have acting experience or to be talented. Remember that the group is a safe place where you shouldn't judge other people. What happens within the group activity must remain in the group, to make sure nobody feels judged. After 20 minutes, call the groups back and ask them to play the scene created by them in front of the others without first specifying what the problem they represented was. At the end of each performance, think about how the actors felt during the performance. What were their emotions and their memories? The facilitator also reflects on this with the spectators. Also make connections with real life and with situations that people may have actually experienced.

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## LIST for further reading:

- White Fragility: Why it’s so Hard for White People to Talk about Racism by Robin DiAngelo
- How to Be an Antiracist by Ibram X. Kendi
- So You Want to Talk About Race by Ijeoma Oluo
- Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become a Good Ancestor by Layla F. Saad
- Kimberlé Crenshaw: Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color.
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- Rom e gagé: la storia d'amore di due donne ora unite in matrimonio | Il Grande Colibrì
- <https://www.ilgrandecolibri.com/sono-rom-e-sono-gay-questa-e-la-mia-vita-tra-due-mondi/>

## Examples of specific toolkits:

<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/334355/9789240008458-eng.pdf>

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Identità rom in Italia. Intervista a Saska Jovanovic (ROMNI APS) - YouTube

"Nostro figlio non ammesso a scuola perché gay": un anno fa era stato lasciato nel corridoio - YouTube

Rom bosniaco gay di origine islamica Valter di Torino - YouTube

Essere Rom ed LGBT\* - YouTube







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