

UPSCALING THE ROMA PLATFORM

Newsletter 1/2018

Topical Matters in the Upscaling the Roma Platform project

Dear Reader,

This is the first newsletter of the Upscaling the Roma Platform project. In this letter, we will tell you about

- the regional event held in Rovaniemi at the beginning of December
- the programme for spring 2019, including important dates, and
- topical reports by the Police University College and the National Institute for Health and Welfare.

At the end of the letter, you can find contact information for the people working on the project. The next newsletter will come out in February-March 2019.

Series of local events begins in Rovaniemi

The main goal of the Upscaling the Roma Platform project is to develop cooperation networks between Roma people and county authorities. With this in mind, the project is organising three local events that will bring together Roma people and representatives from the counties and municipalities to discuss the local needs of the Roma population. Counties and municipalities play a very important role, because under the new Counties Act concerning Finland's 18 counties, the management of Roma matters is one of the 28 tasks being transferred to the responsibility of the counties. Each county will draw up a separate county-specific Roma policy programme (a MAARO programme) based on the National Roma Policy (ROMPO2) programme. The goal of the local events is to initiate this process.

What is the Upscaling the Roma Platform project?

Upscaling the Roma Platform is a project funded by the European Union. It will continue to promote the network-based work started in the Building a National Roma Platform project. The objective of the project is to promote the visibility of the new National Policy on Roma (ROMPO2) programme and Roma affairs in general at the regional and local level, to advance the participation and influencing opportunities of Roma youth and to continue the work on gender equality started during the previous project. The project will be carried out in cooperation with Regional Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs and the local Roma population.

The Upscaling the Roma Platform project organised its first county-level event in Rovaniemi on 1 December 2018. The event was held at a venue provided by the Rovaniemi Pentecostal Congregation at its Kaira temple. The organising team also included representatives from the Northern Finland Regional Advisory Board on Romani Affairs and the region of Lapland.

The event attracted more than 40 participants from Rovaniemi, Kemijärvi and Sodankylä. Event participants included active representatives from the Roma community, along with a good number of city, municipal, county and congregation

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As in the events organised during the previous project, the event held in Rovaniemi used dialogue methods facilitated by the Monkey Business coaching company. The participants were divided up into workshops to discuss important aspects of the Roma policy programme affecting the everyday lives of Roma people in the county, and to share experiences on the functionality of public services and examples of different cooperation networks and forms of Roma work. Participants also brainstormed ideas for this year's summer camp.



Workshops in Rovaniemi dealt with local priority areas. Photo: Hanne Seppälä

The group discussions highlighted differences and similarities between the different municipalities in Lapland. The participants were active in making development suggestions that will hopefully inspire ideas moving forward. A more detailed summary of the event will be published on the project website at www.romani.fi/sanoista-tekoihin.

Spring 2019 events to cover a variety of themes

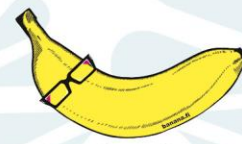
The next two regional events will be held in **Pori on 29 January** and in **Tampere on 12 February 2019**. Local Roma Working Groups and/or Roma organisations are involved in organising of these events.

In addition to the situation of Roma in different regions and Roma work at the local level, two other important themes of the project are empowering Roma youth and promoting gender equality. Related to aforementioned theme, an event targeted especially for Roma women will be held on **4 February 2019 in Jyväskylä**. The event will focus on the health and wellbeing of Roma women and families, and on the political participation of Roma women. The goal of the event is to promote cooperation between organisations, active individuals and other stakeholders and to share good practices and information.

Upscaling the Roma Platform project will also organise a series of three events intended for Roma youth between 15 and 29 years of age. At these events, we will hear young people's everyday experiences and needs, and discuss the possibilities for Roma youth to participate and influence the society around them. The first event in the series will be held in **Nurmijärvi** on 7 March, followed by events in **Kauhajoki** and **Iisalmi**. The youth events are organised in cooperation with Nuorten Akatemia (Youth Academy), an organisation that promotes participation among young people. Some of the events will also be streamed on the web.

Topical publications

At the end of November, the Police University College of Finland published a review of suspected hate crimes reported to the police in 2017. Hate crimes include crimes committed based on ethnic or national origin, which can affect Finland's national and ethnic minorities, such as the Roma and Saami people. One of the measures of Finland's Policy on Roma is to keep a record of the number of reports of hate crimes against Roma people filed



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each year and to monitor the nature of the incidents. For this reason, the 2017 hate crimes report aims to investigate in further detail the number of crimes committed due to the injured party's Roma background and the situations in which these incidents occurred.

Of all reported crimes and principal offences committed based on ethnic or national origin in 2017, 10% (or 81 incidents) were targeted at Roma people. The incidents most commonly occurred in public spaces, such as public buildings, offices or shops. More than a third (38%) of suspected principle offences took place during a customer interaction, i.e. in connection with the provision of services. With the exception of one, all of these offences were discrimination cases. Permalink to the publication (in Finnish): <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-951-815-350-7>

In the beginning of December, the National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) released the main results of the Roma Wellbeing Study for 2017–2018. The report examines the wellbeing, inclusion, health, experiences of discrimination, functional and work ability, lifestyle and living conditions of the Roma in Finland and investigates their use of and need for services. The results show that experiences of discrimination, low levels of education, lack of employment and a weak economic status are commonplace among the Roma. The results reveal various challenges, such as chronic diseases and risk factors, as well as difficulties with physical functional ability. Strengths include strong social relationships among the Roma people, a strong community and mutual help between community members. Permalink to the report (in Finnish): <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-343-246-8>



Inquiries about the project

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Ask me about: the Building a Roma Platform project, policy on Roma, National Policy on Roma (ROMPO 2), the National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs

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Ask me about: Upscaling the Roma Platform project, the project website (romani.fi/sanoista-tekoihin) and project events

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Ask me about: the National Advisory Board on Roma Affairs, travel and finance management