

UPSCALING ROMA PLATFORM

-newsletter 3, 2/2019

Topical Matters in the Upscaling the Roma Platform Project

Dear Reader,

This is the third and final newsletter of the Upscaling the Roma Platform project. In this letter, we will tell you about Roma youth events in Nurmijärvi, Kauhajoki and Iisalmi.

More detailed summaries of Minustako vaikuttaja? ("Me, changemaker?") workshops and of other events during the project are available at <https://romani.fi/en/building-a-national-roma-platform>. At the end of the letter, you can find contact information of persons working on the project.

Workshops at three locations

The events under the heading 'Me, changemaker?' focused on Romani youth and influencing. The National Roma Policy (ROMPO2) programme highlights the need to increase the activity of children and young people and to make their voice heard. Roma youth have fresh viewpoints and they play a key role in forwarding positive attitudes. The idea behind the events was to collect young people's ideas and experiences regarding influencing, and to give them better views about their own opportunities to influence both as individuals and as a community.



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.

Workshops under the theme were organised in March and April 2019 at three locations: Nurmijärvi, Kauhajoki and Iisalmi. The total number of participants was 77, including 40 young Roma between the ages of 13 and 29. Local organisations and local Roma people participated in organising the events. Some regional coordinators for Roma affairs were also present at each workshop.

The events were organised in cooperation with the Youth Academy, which has solid experience in organising inclusive workshops for young people. Young peer influencers participated in planning and implementing the series of workshops. Luovi Vocational College contributed to producing visual materials.



UPSCALING ROMA PLATFORM

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The workshops dealt with the topic of influencing, based on everyday themes derived from ROMPO2 priorities, such as access to housing, studies and employment, as well as inclusion and preservation of culture. The themes were refined in small groups at five desks, where the participants were encouraged to create new ideas. Peer stories and playing cards (made by Luovi) describing influencing channels facilitated the working. Each group chose one interesting theme for further discussions. The group processed the theme and planned measures for its implementation, and all workshop participants then discussed the measures.



Preservation of Romani language and Roma culture is important

The Roma youth worked with the themes in an intensive and in-depth manner. The range of influencing measures and channels was already partly familiar to the participants, and the most valuable result of the workshops was that their own means to influence were concretised and connected to their everyday action. The most popular theme was, surprisingly enough, the preservation of the Romani language and the Roma culture, which was chosen for further discussions by all three workshops. The young participants felt that it is important to strengthen cultural skills.



They also wanted to improve the mainstream population's knowledge of the Roma culture. In Nurmijärvi, cultural encounters and making new friends were seen as a good means to influence attitudes, which are reflected even in the access to employment and housing. In Kauhajoki, participants brought up the need to find a meeting place, and the groups presented ideas about starting a club. In Iisalmi, the groups discussed peer support and mentoring, which could benefit persons who are trying to find their own field or workplace.

The participants felt that the Roma youth struggle with similar challenges as other young people when it comes to, for example,

selecting an occupation. Finding one's own place and feeling accepted are matters that affect all young people. The



UPSCALING ROMA PLATFORM

-newsletter 3, 2/2019

workshops showed, however, that the participants had a strong belief in the future and in their own possibilities to make a difference.

European Roma youth from Bulgaria, Holland, Kosovo and Hungary had sent video greetings to the workshops. On the videos, they highlighted how important it is to have a positive attitude, be persistent and cooperate with others.

You can watch a webcast of the workshop in Nurmijärvi at this permanent YouTube link:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-W3dPHz-Qbw&feature=youtu.be>



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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