

# UPSCALING ROMA PLATFORM

-newsletter 2, 1/2019

## Topical Matters in the Upscaling the Roma Platform Project

Dear Reader,

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

- regional events in Pori and Tampere
- meeting of Roma women in Jyväskylä
- events held in spring 2019

More **detailed summaries** of the MAARO events and the national meeting of Roma women are available at [romani.fi/en/building-a-national-roma-platform](http://romani.fi/en/building-a-national-roma-platform). At the end of the letter, you can find contact information for the people working on the project. The next newsletter will be published in April-May.

## MAARO Events Come to a Close

The main goal of the Upscaling the Roma Platform project is to develop cooperation networks between Roma people and county authorities. The project has organised three local MAARO events, which aim to bring together Roma people and representatives from municipalities, counties and cities to discuss the local needs of the Roma population. The word MAARO, which means 'bread' in the Roma language, refers in this case to the county-specific Roma policy programmes that are being drawn up based on the outcomes of the regional events.



Group work ongoing in Pori. Photos: Hanne Seppälä

### 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.

As we mentioned in the previous newsletter, we held the first MAARO event in Rovaniemi in December 2018. In the beginning of 2019, the Upscaling the Roma Platform project travelled to Pori and Tampere.

The MAARO event in Pori was planned and organised in collaboration with Länsi-Suomen Romanit ry (the association of Roma in West Finland) and the City of Pori. A total of 18 people braved the snow to attend the event held on 29 January. In addition to active members of the local Roma population, the event was attended by representatives from the city's basic services, church congregation and cultural services.

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The main ROMPO2 themes highlighted at the Pori event included equal treatment in services, participation in education and challenges related to employment. Participants commented that positive experiences and information gained through Roma projects have helped in overcoming prejudice and reducing discrimination. The most important goal at the moment is to revive the activities of the local Roma working group in Pori. The event offered insight on how to proceed with this process and provided important background information for the working group to use when they begin their work.



The MAARO event in Tampere (pictured on the left) was held on 12 February in collaboration with the city's Roma working group. The event was attended by 16 people. Participants were especially interested in discussing the transitions between comprehensive education, vocational training and employment, and the support needed at these stages. In smaller groups, the attendees discussed how to improve cooperation with employment services and the police.

Participants emphasised the need for more information on how to influence Roma matters at the different levels of public administration. This theme was addressed in all three of the

locations where MAARO events were held.

All of the MAARO events were fruitful and good-spirited. Above all, they provided important up-dates on the situations in different areas. The participants were very active and the atmosphere at the events was open and interactive. On behalf of the project, we would like to once again thank everyone who attended and helped organise the MAARO events for their successful collaboration.

## Roma Women Meet in Jyväskylä

A national meeting of Roma women was held in Jyväskylä on 4 February. The day-long event explored two topical themes: health and wellbeing and civic participation. The event attracted 27 participants from various parts of Finland. Among the attendees were representatives from a variety of organisations and projects.

In the morning, the participants discussed the results of the Roma Wellbeing Study, published in 2018 by the National Institute for Health and Welfare. A discussion led by the LIKES Research Centre for Physical Activity and Health explored ways to promote physical activity and health in everyday life. The discussion continued in small groups, which also addressed the wellbeing of families and their need for support. The other main topic of the day was the civic participation of Roma women. The participants heard a presentation about the international

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Phenjalipe Strategy on the Advancement of Romani Women and Girls (2014–2020). The Coalition of Finnish Women’s Associations (NYTKIS) offered insight on ways to support women’s participation in party politics and organisations. The discussion also addressed the realisation of both gender and generational equality.

The national meeting of Roma women brought new and familiar faces to the same table. The day was filled with lively discussion that could have gone on for much longer. The Roma women of Jyväskylä, who were in charge of catering arrangements, brought a great atmosphere to the event. Many thanks to everyone involved!



*Attendees at the meeting of Roma women. Photo: Janette Grönfors*

## Me - Changemaker Events for Roma Youth in Spring

A series of Me – changemaker (*Minustako vaikuttaja?*) events for Roma youth kicked off in Nurmijärvi on 7 March. You can watch a webcast of the event at this permanent YouTube link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-W3dPHz-Qbw&feature=youtu.be>. The next events will be held in Kauhajoki on 4 April and in Iisalmi on 8 April 2019. We will tell more about this project in the next newsletter.

## 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](http://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