



Final project evaluation report

Amalipe - Center for Interethnic Dialog and Tolerance

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1. Project overview

The project “Early Marriage – Culture or Abuse?” was awarded an action grant under the call for proposal in the framework of the Specific Programme "Daphne III" (Action Grants 2013) of the European Commission (DG Justice). In compliance with one of the priorities of the call “violence linked to harmful practices” the main objectives of the project are focused on exploring the sociological aspect of the Roma view on early marriage, early detecting the problems in the Roma community as well as educating teachers, Roma representatives, experts in the field of social work, counselling and health care, NGO’s and the police on how to act as a mediator at the occurrence of early / forced marriage. Furthermore, education prevention program have been developed to raise awareness among schoolchildren on topics like reproductive health, cultural diversity, violence, peaceful resolution of conflicts.

The main target group have been members of the Roma community, especially parents. Their children in particular girls of 12-14 years are the main beneficiaries of these activities. The target group are also public services on local level (schools, social services, health community centres, police and others) and NGO’s and Roma activists.

The project uses “door to door” method of field work in order to have reliable picture about the problem. The project applies a method of coordination and participatory approach and ensures coordinated work of responsible institutions, NGO's and Roma authorities for preventing early / forced marriages.

As a result members of the Roma community and others have developed higher awareness on the topic and have been presented with the notion that early / forced marriage is not a cultural norm and getting education and marrying later is more favourable practice that does not violate Roma culture but contributes to its development. School children have received knowledge on reproductive health, sexual education and family planning, encouragement to learn and acquire skills for constructive solving of conflict situations; awareness of cultural diversity and modernization of Roma culture. Roma mediators have been trained and have had the experience to detect problems. Public services on local level (schools, social services, health community centres, police, others) and NGO’s have gained necessary knowledge on how to act as a mediator.

Most important outputs and deliverables are tools and results of the sociological research, prepared and executed training program for mediators, employed Roma mediators who have carried out "door to door" visits in Roma settlements, organized thematic discussion of interdepartmental teams, implementation of prevention programs in primary schools with educational film, discussions in the community, discussions in the group and guidelines with



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research findings and tested recommendations for the prevention of early / forced marriages to be sent to decision-makers in all project partners countries.

Dissemination strategy includes work with mass media, project website, promotion in elementary schools, publication of the program for mediators, publication of prevention program for schoolchildren and final conference in Ljubljana.

The project activities have been implemented in the period from 1.1.2014 until 30.9.2016.



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2. Internal monitoring and evaluation

Objectives of the internal evaluation

The internal monitoring and evaluation has as main objective to assess and improve the planning, implementation and impact of project activities, through the evaluation of its process, products and results. The internal monitoring allows the coordinator and the partners to improve the project results on the basis of the assessment done during the project, so improvements can be done before the end of the project. The sustainability of the project is another goal of the project internal monitoring, as it should be assured through the development of quality products.

The internal monitoring is a self-assessment of the work of partners during the project and will gather information for evaluation processes from own partners and from people participating in the different stages/activities of the project. This people will participate in

- Conducting and analyzing the results from the sociological survey
- Training for Roma mediators
- Door to door visits
- Educational program for prevention of early marriages

The major objective of the final evaluation is to assess to overall implementation of the project and the level to which the project goals and objectives have been achieved. Furthermore, the final evaluation aims at studying to what extend the efforts of all partners through the implementation of the project have managed to achieve sustainability of the model tested. However, the basic purpose of the final evaluation is to highlight the effectiveness of the established and approved overall model for prevention of early marriages in Roma community.

Methodology

When implementing the study, the following methods were used for collecting information:

- Overview of key project documents (desk review): information and protocols of trainings performed, materials and examinations issued and published, events performed, campaigns, case work;





- Six-monthly reports from each partner on the implementation of the Quality Assurance Plan”. Members have been invited to make open comments to be introduced in the Report about every key detail that could be basic for the project.
- Interviews and questionnaires - standardized interviews and questionnaires with key participants, project team members and representatives of various stakeholders involved with the project

This Report includes the following contents:

- Follow up of work and results of Work Packages.
- Identification of measures, risks and how they have been solved
- Challenges and opportunities



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3. Evaluation of the project

WS1. Sociological Research “Early Marriage: Culture or Abuse”

The elements assessed in WS1 were the two rounds of the field survey and the two survey reports. The first round of the survey took place in March - May 2015 and covered 1335 respondents in total (557 questionnaires in Slovenia, 351 questionnaires in Italy and 426 questionnaires in Bulgaria). The second round of the survey took place in February - March 2016 and covered 163 respondents in total (71 questionnaires in Slovenia, 45 questionnaires in Italy and 47 questionnaires in Bulgaria).

In order to provide the quality of the questionnaires and additionally, the survey, both has been discussed and evaluated by all partners prior to their finalizing. In order to keep high level of the quality of the survey and the report, all partners followed strictly the methodology previously agreed by all partners. The high quality of the report has been assessed on several indicators:

- Information from all countries included presenting the situation of the given Roma communities, national legislation, state of art of the early marriages problem in all participating countries
- High and active involvement of representatives of Roma community in carrying out the survey and preparing the report which guarantees taking into consideration the objective point of view of the community
- Broad involvement of various stakeholders in the processes

An important and expected long-term impact of WS1 was to explore the sociological aspect of Roma view on early marriages and prevent abuse situations and drop-out from school.





WS2. Training on mediation and “door to door” visits

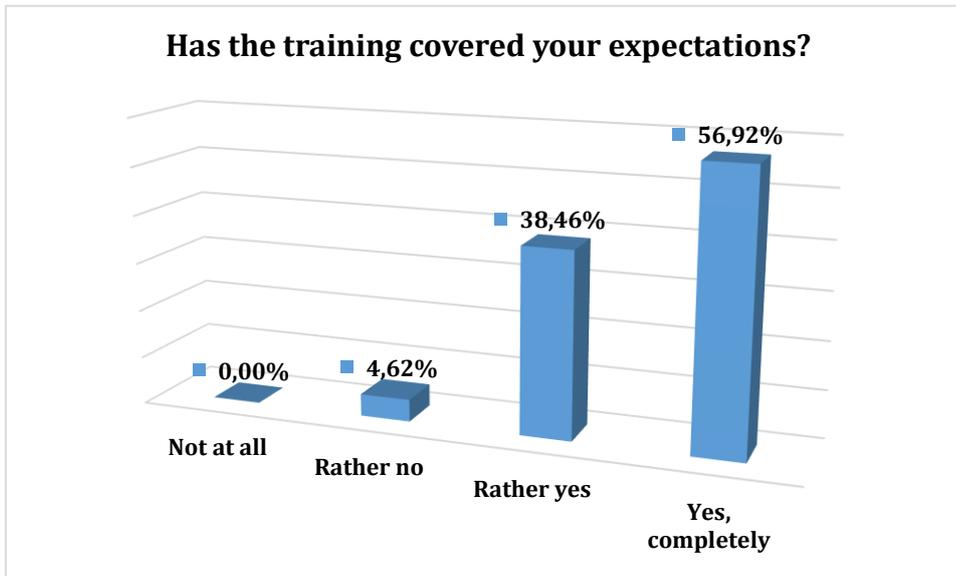
The mediation training was supposed to start in the second half of the first year of the project and bring together from 20-35 representatives of local public services (social services, health community centres, police, NGO, police, schools, other education institutions, Roma associations, local community) and others, working with Roma. The purpose of the training has been to ensure better efficiency in dealing with the Roma issue, with an emphasis on obtaining skills in the area of mediation in a multicultural community. The training involved various institutions and non-governmental institutions that work and are in contact with the Roma issue, as well as representatives of the Roma population.

All of the trainings in the three participating countries have been organized in an interactive way following the methodology suggested in the guidelines: the chairs have been arranged in a circle. A lot of play roles and interactive games have been included during the sessions. The latter included both theoretical knowledge with a lot of practical information. The information was based on the manual suggested by the WP leader with a basic package of information enriched with information relevant for the local specifics, the local Roma community and adapted to the legislation framework in the given country.

Almost 98% of the trainees who provided feedback at the end of the training share that the group that they have been working in made them feel relaxed and comfortable. Although different participants had different ideas about the length of the sessions and the training in general, 78% of those, who filled the final questionnaire shared that the length of the training was optimal. The final evaluation of the training showed also that the logistics of the training was highly appreciated and the trainers believed it also contributed to achieving the overall goal of the training. General assessment of the lecturers shows that they have been very adaptable to the audience and sometimes changed methods of teaching and materials used in order to answer in the best possible way the needs of their trainees. From the final evaluation of the training it became clear that almost 98 % of the trainee think that the lecturers used the right methodology to better reach the audience.

The participation of representatives of the Roma community has been highly evaluated. It has not just helped them better understand the community point of view but establish partnerships and allies within the community. Moreover, it helped the various institutions get a more “human” image of the people from the Roma community.





At the beginning of the trainings most of the participants shared that they have been scared – not to be judged by the others. Most of them themselves had prejudices towards the other professionals, not just towards the Roma community. After the training they saw it is not like this. They became more open, everybody shared experience. One of the teachers in the trainings in Slovenia shared for example, that she never expected that the policemen were involved in actions like this and were so devoted. Bringing professionals with different background helped the participants share experience from the field; this enriched the others and gave them a lot of information.

According to evaluation questionnaires, expectations about the training have been generally covered and attendants have felt comfortable in the group.

Lecturers have used rather well their methodology to reach the audience and the facilities at disposal contributed to the achievement of the goals of the training.



WS 3. Prevention program for school children

The objective of WS3 has been the elaboration and the testing of a prevention school program focussing on five topics: emotional education, cultural diversity, resolution of conflicts, knowledge of minority culture, recognition of violence. A set of pedagogical materials (including teaching materials, short 3-4 minute videos and pedagogical playing cards) have been prepared.

The evaluation of the program has been based on feedback from project partners, questionnaires from school teachers and lecturers, interviews with various people involved in the work package.

The lecturers reported curiosity and high participation of the schoolchildren during the activities of the Prevention Program. All topics were very interesting for the students and discovered different things, for example:

- The module about emotional education provoked a lot of reactions among the students about their feelings and emotions. The different experience about lecturers (internal and external) showed that external lecturers make students more open and likely to speak about the topic. The general feedback was that these sessions lasted longer than planned with increasing participation towards the end of the classes. In general the students appreciated the conduction of the workshops without taboo on these topics.
- The modules about cultural diversities and knowledge of minority cultures provoked students to express their interest in exploring new cultures, students from different countries described their tradition and the discussion was highly dynamic.
- The modules focusing on conflict resolution and recognition of violence showed that the students were proactive and they worked together in the class to test the suggestions in a collaborative mood. In addition, these sessions resulted in activating the boys who “discovered” that violence is not only reserved for women but boys could also be victims of violence. Nevertheless, the topics opened a space for free and intensive discussions on these acute issues.

The lecturers noticed a widespread interest of the students in the methods and instruments used for the activities. The teaching materials, the role games and the collaborative learning methods have been appreciated by all the classes involved in the prevention program, giving the highest appreciation for the playing cards and being a bit resistant to the video films.





Finally, all the participants involved in the programme (students, teachers and lecturers) asked for the possibility to extend or to repeat the activities.



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WS 4. Project Promotion and Dissemination

WS4 has been directed towards communicating project findings and results to the public and various stakeholders. Additional objective of this WS has been raising awareness and sensitivity about harmful traditional practices such as early marriages among institutions, general public from one side and Roma community from another.

Therefore, in all countries project partners organized two types of round tables – such with institutions and such with Romani women. Both types of round tables have been highly appreciated both by participants, and by general public/ institutions.

Very important element in the WS for achieving its objectives was the Final concluding conference which took place in Ljubljana in June 2016. There was great attendance and huge interest from different stakeholders not just from Slovenia. The project approach was assessed as an example of a good practice to be shared and further developed. Interlinking and cooperation of all included, public institutions, NGO and Roma community is the key to desired changes in preventing early marriages.





4. Conclusions and recommendations

The project »Early Marriage – Culture or Abuse?« introduces a broad set of prevention activities in preventing early marriages, which include various target groups – from professional workers, Roma community, schoolchildren to general public – and establishes valuable engagement and cooperation between local public institutions and Roma community. As a result members of the Roma community and others developed higher awareness on the topic and presented it with the notion that early/ forced marriage is not a cultural norm and getting education and marrying later is more favorable practice that does not violate Roma culture but contributes to its development.

