

The Limits of Inclusion? Exploring the views of Roma and non-Roma in six European Union Member States

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Aims

To evaluate the degree to which the inclusion of Roma communities has progressed, in order to inform broader policy across the EU.

The main objective was to gather qualitative, empirical data from both Roma and non Roma in 6 member states which would identify the experiences and needs of Roma; indicate how they were perceived by non Roma and consider the level of integration / segregation of the 2 communities. Research focused on paid work and employment, community relations, social welfare and social inclusion / exclusion.

The report forms the second part of a research project for the Roma SOURCE project. The first part was a rapid review of key materials relating to the integration and inclusion/exclusion of Roma in 6 EU countries. [Brown, Dwyer and Scullion, 2012]. Roma SOURCE was a partnership of 6 organisations, 1 in each EU state.

Methodology

- Data was gathered from 24 focus groups in 6 EU countries; 12 of the groups were comprised of Roma residents and 12 non-Roma. 180 individuals participated in the focus groups, 92 men and 88 women.
- Fieldwork was undertaken in Bulgaria, Hungary, Greece, Italy, Spain and the UK. The location in Yorkshire was Bradford.
- The selection of fieldwork sites in each country was largely determined by the location of the respective partner organisation, as they were responsible for recruitment, convening and facilitation of the required focus groups. The precise venues were often local community centres or similar.
- Each focus group was conducted in an appropriate language, audio recorded, translated and transcribed verbatim into English. Two members of the research team were routinely

present at each focus group to observe and document relevant non-verbal communications, for quality assurance purposes and to ensure consistency of approach. Simultaneous English language translation was provided to researchers in each focus group, to enable any queries.

Conclusions

Roma populations face significant barriers in access to the paid labour market where they mostly undertake precarious, low skilled, low paid work. However, non Roma regarded the Roma community as being largely engaged in specific activities such as market trading or criminality.

While the report acknowledged community relations include the full spectrum of experiences [from everyday neighbourliness to racist attack], overall it concludes Roma and non Roma do lead segregated and parallel lives.

While Roma and non Roma participants agreed that the social exclusion of many Roma communities persists, there were different perceptions why this was the case. Roma respondents blamed structural factors [for example, discrimination] but non Roma blamed what they termed the 'dysfunctional behaviour' of Roma, regarding them as lazy and unwilling to work. Non Roma viewed Roma as exploiters of welfare benefits, who were perceived as not having contributed to the system, but Roma felt poverty was the main factor in poor access to adequate education and housing.

Recommendations

A series of recommendations was aimed at policy makers mostly focus on challenging structural factors faced by Roma such as ingrained poverty, improving access to paid work and education, and ensuring equal treatment of Roma and non-Roma.

A second series of recommendations was aimed at agencies working in community based settings. These included actions to encourage better relationships between Roma and non-Roma, challenging of negative stereotypes, tackling poor housing conditions and the need for local government to have a coordinated approach to Roma inclusion.

Web Link
[The Limits of Inclusion? Exploring the views of Roma and non-Roma in six Europe...](#)
Migrant Group
[EU migrants](#)
Topic
[Community and society](#)
[Community cohesion](#)
[Integration](#)
[Roma](#)
[Place](#)

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Extra Information

Roma SOURCE [Sharing of Understanding Rights and Citizenship in Europe] project was co-funded by the European Union's Fundamental Rights and Citizenship Programme.

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