

Empowering marginalised groups through education and training in the Danube Region

Oct 2nd to 3rd 2014, Vienna
OeAD-Haus

The thematic conference "Empowering marginalised groups through education and training" in the Danube Region, organised by the OeAD - National Agency for Lifelong Learning in cooperation with the Austrian Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs (BMBWF) as EUSDR Priority Area Coordinator 9 served as platform in order to initiate meaningful synergies on the topic Social Inclusion of individuals from vulnerable groups, especially the Roma communities.

The thematic integration of the topic was based along several strategies: the strategy EU 2020, the strategic framework Education and Training 2020 and the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies. The EU Strategy for the Danube Region is a crucial interface to non-member states in Europe as a vast majority of Roma and Sinti live in the Danube Region.



Conference audience



Jürgen Schick (BMBWF, EUSDR)



Participants

On the first day Jürgen Schick (Austrian Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs, PAC 9) welcomed the participants and gave a brief overview of the political aims of the EU Strategy of the Danube Region with regard to the specific issue of empowering marginalised groups.

Emilia Venot (EACEA) introduced the EU Policy on Roma Inclusion and emphasised on the role of the Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013 and its Key Action 1 projects that supported transnational co-operation and network activities focussing on Roma integration. She further mentioned the November 2014 Call for proposals on projects to support activities on non-discrimination and Roma integration (Action Grant 2014).

In her keynote "Education policies and Roma participation and leadership in education reforms" Tünde Kovacs-Cerovic, former Secretary of Education in Serbia, addressed the open and hidden barriers that Roma face in education. She highlighted findings from analyses

through different perspectives and stated several recommendations on how to develop effective policies.

Mikael Luciak (University of Vienna, Initiative Minderheiten) gave an insight into his research on success and sustainability of projects in favor of Roma communities. In his keynote he addressed experiences with and outcomes of various projects funded by the European Union that aim to enhance learning opportunities and social inclusion of Roma.



Emilia Venot (EACEA)



Tünde Kovacs-Cerovic (University of Belgrade)



Mikael Luciak (University of Vienna)

Further, the Erasmus+ program (call in spring 2015) was highlighted as possibility for continuing international activities.

In the afternoon participants from Austria and countries of the Danube Region were offered an opportunity to gain insight into existing and completed projects emphasizing on the topic in four parallel workshops:

Workshop 1: Early Childhood Education & Early School Leavers

Best practice projects:

- "TERNO - Teachers' Education for Roma New Opportunities in School" (Action Synergy, GRE, 2012)
- "Empowering Roma-children in Viennese Schools through Roma-School mediators and learning assistance" (Romano Centro, AT)

Workshop 2: Literacy skills and participation of family education

Best practice projects:

- "MS4ROW: A mentoring system for Roma teenage girls and women on their vocational and educational path" (CIK Trebnje, SI, 2013)
- "Literacy Cubed" (Consortiul International LSDGC, RO, 2013)

Workshop 3: Vocational Education and Training

Best practice projects:

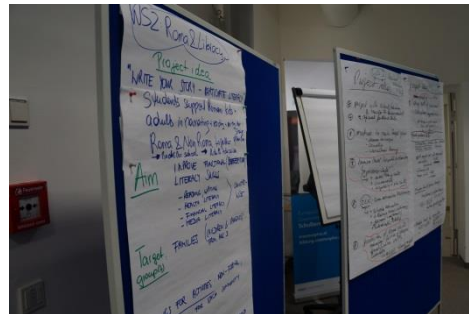
- "ERNE - European Roma Integration good practice exchange and policy network" and "Fair Future Garlic" (European Neighbours, AT, 2014)
- „THARA" ROMA Initiative (Volkshilfe Österreich, AT, 2005 – ongoing)

Workshop 4: Awareness Raising and Networks focussing on Roma

Best practice projects:

- "e-Roma Resource" (Development and Education Centre Novo mesto, SI, 2013)
- "SEDRIN – School Education for Roma Integration" (Action Synergy, GRE, 2012)

Mutual learning on best practices from multilateral Roma projects, which have been financed by the European Commission, should help to promote activities in this specific area. After the presentations of best practice projects in the workshops participants were invited to elaborate new project ideas and present them in the plenary session.



On the second conference day Susanne Pfanner from the Austrian Roma Contact Point in the Federal Chancellery introduced the EU Framework for National Roma Strategies and gave an overview of the Austrian Roma inclusion policy, focussing especially on the field of education.

In a final plenary session Sabrina Kopf (University of Vienna) interviewed Ernst Gesslbauer (Head of the National Agency/Erasmus+), Jasminka Marković (Centre for Education Policy/ERI-SEE) and Susanne Pfanner on the topic. Mr. Gesslbauer emphasised on the Erasmus+ programme and encouraged participants and project representatives to take advantage of the possibilities offered by the programme.



Susanne Pfanner (Austrian Roma Contact Point)



Moderator Sabrina Kopf interviewing Ernst Gesslbauer and Susanne Pfanner

Links:

Documentation of the Conference: <http://www.bildung.erasmusplus.at/index.php?id=6330>
www.bildung.erasmusplus.at
<http://www.peopleandskills-danuberegion.eu/>

Project Ideas:

Project Idea 1	Workshop 1 - Early Childhood Education & Early School Leavers
Title:	<p>“Breaking down barriers & biases”</p> <p>Capacity building for pre-school educators and parents of disadvantaged children</p>
Countries:	<p>Austria, Hungary, (countries within the Danube Region that have compulsory pre-school attendance)</p> <p>+ 1 best practice example</p>
Aims of the project:	<p>Improve the dialogue and cooperation between pre-school teachers and families of disadvantaged children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve the frequency and quality of meetings - Increase the inclusion of families of disadvantaged children in pre-school activities with other families - Awareness-raising among future pre-school teachers through diversity and anti-discrimination training - Facilitation of meetings between teachers and parents to discuss the children’s individual needs, available educational materials, etc.
Target group/s of the project	<p>Students</p> <p>Teachers</p> <p>Families</p>
Project partners:	<p>Preschools/Kindergarten</p> <p>Training institutions/universities</p> <p>Local authorities for education</p> <p>Civil society organisations</p> <p>Parents groups</p>

Project Idea 2	Workshop 2 - Literacy skills and participation in family education
Title:	<p>“Write Your Story – Practice Literacy”</p> <p>Students support Romani kids & adults in narrating, reading, writing their stories of their lives</p> <p>Roma and non-Roma together</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Books for school ➔ Adult education
Countries:	
Aims of the project:	<p>Improve functional literacy skills</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(country wise)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading - Writing - Financial literacy - Media literacy <p>Settings for activities: non-formal, tailor-made for each country</p> <p>Important aspects: keep in mind the policies, include Roma on all levels</p>
Target group/s of the project:	Families (children from age 3 and parents)
Project partners:	

Project Idea 3	Workshop 3: Vocational Education and Training
Title:	Learner-driven educational programme Preventing drop out of vocational training/apprenticeship Secondary (mandatory) school (DE – mystifying learning)
Countries:	AT, DE
Aims of the project:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To offer free, open learning resources online covering all school/vocational training subjects. Starting with numeracy and literacy skills, especially the topics pupils have most problems with (core subjects: German, English, Maths, Accountancy etc.), which pupils/apprentices can access via the Internet - Learning hot spots: establish spaces where pupils/apprentices can access PCs and Internet and where there are tutors present who can support them in their learning
Target group/s of the project:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mandatory school pupils - Apprentices of all ages - People who want to learn German, improve their literacy and numeracy skills in general
Project partners:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry of Education - Publishers of textbooks for schools - NGOs already offering learning assistance programmes - Teachers who identify topics of interest - Experts with experience in minority education - Video production company (or companies) - Webdesigners (platform)

Project Idea 4	Workshop 3: Vocational Education and Training
Title:	Phoenix Inspire Training Creative: Theory or Practice
Countries:	Bulgaria
Aims of the project:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To scale-up the success of Phoenix Café by widening the benefit of more people - A key aim is to develop a training centre, where education or training will take place - Another key aim is the creation of a live venue of Phoenix
Target group/s of the project:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Young people from pupils in poverty - Young people from the Roma countries
Project partners:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social Partners = Municipality - FSC I – Partners – Training – Roma NGO - Stakeholder of Roma countries and international experts - International education partners

Project Idea 5	Workshop 3: Vocational Education and Training
Title:	Roma's fashion – Roma's skirts
Countries:	ME, SR, AL, KV, DE, BG, AT, HU
Aims of the project:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Professionalizing know-how, exchange, networking and institutional lobbying in order to foster minorities and the exchange of good practice - Build up strategic Roma fashion and brands on European level
Target group/s of the project:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Roma fashion organisations - Designers
Project partners:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Network of 10 fashion organisations ins EU - VE Centre, school, college - Possible employers who accept mentioned qualification - National employment agency (acceptance of degree)

Project Idea 6	Workshop 4 - Awareness Raising and Networks focussing on Roma
Title:	Roma Mobile Supporting Teams (RMTS)
Countries:	Slovenia, Montenegro, Greece, Italy, Spain
Aims of the project:	<p><u>Overall:</u> More effective and sustainable inclusion of Roma in education and employment</p> <p><u>Specific:</u> developing and operating Roma Mobile Supporting Teams</p> <p><u>Activities:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Forming the RMS Teams (experts, Roma mediators), establishment of supporting networks 2. needs assessment (research, counsellors) 3. training for RMST members, based on outreach concept 4. piloting RMST operations in chosen Roma communities 5. follow-up, evaluations, presentations of wrap-up lessons learnt (monitors the outcomes at the personal level of beneficiaries)
Target group/s of the project:	<p>Local Roma Communities from the countries involved (1 per country as piloting target group), results of the project can be transferred Europe-wide</p> <p>Target group including women, youth and children</p>
Project partners:	RIC (Slovenia), CEDEM (Montenegro), ACTION SYNERGY (Greece), SEA, VEC, and local Roma partners