

PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF THE **NEEDS ASSESSMENT** AMONG THE ROMA COMMUNITY OF CAMPOBASSO.





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1. BACKGROUND

Premise

This need assessment report is prepared in the frame of the WP2 activities of the Municipality4roma project. It is devoted to assess the needs of the Roma community living in the city of Campobasso (Molise).

The report is the result of three diverse focus groups with different target groups representatives, aimed at evaluating the community integration levels, the daily life quality, the general life conditions.

Before introducing the outcomes of the interviews, we find it important to make an introduction concerning the Campobasso Roma community.

Roma of Campobasso. An ancient history

The Molise community is part of the oldest and largest community of non-native Roma in central-southern Italy. As known, such Roma reached this region in very ancient times, certainly coming from the Yugoslav and Albanian coasts after the Kosovo battle in 1392; they settled in Molise between the end of the 14th Century and the beginning of the 15th Century, and they are Italian citizens for many generations.

They speak mainly the Italian language, together with the ancient Romanì language, with different dialectal arrays. In this regard, it should be noted that despite the existence, in Italy, of a law protecting linguistic minorities (Law No. 482/1999), the Roma are not yet recognized as being a linguistic minority. This can be regarded as a serious obstacle to their possible integration, because it deprives them of a cultural dignity - and consequently, existential-, as well as a variety of protection measures that could promote their integration.

Together with job exclusion, this represents today the strongest discrimination and social exclusion from, suffered by the Roma.

The Roma from Molise belong, as mentioned, to the cultural area of the Abruzzi Romans, with which they share several cultural features: the autonym of "Rom Abruzzesi", given to several groups - originally nomads - since the beginning of the 1990s, in fact is extended also to the Roma of Molise (and of Northern Puglia). Moreover, such groups are united not only by geographical contiguity, but also by strong parental constraints.

Afference in the Romanès cultural and linguistic sphere, besides being witnessed by cultural traditions - including speaking an ancient language - can also be deduced from the peculiar surnames of this specific population.

Historically, the work activities practiced by these people consisted, as far as men are concerned, in the breeding and trading of livestock (in particular, horses), while the women (Romnìa) were traditionally dedicated to the practice of palmistry.

Data about the local population

Currently, based on data provided by the registry office in May 2018, it is currently estimated that the people belonging to the Roma population in Campobasso amount to 232 people.



Within this population, there are two main groups, which correspond to two extended families that we will indicate, with respect and protection of privacy, with the numbers 1 and 2

1. The extended majority family n. 1
2. The extended minority family n. 2

Although the Community is characterized by a prevalent group endogamy, over the years, numerous marriages have been registered between people of non-Roma origin, so that the number of those who have a cultural belonging to the Rom universe is certainly higher than what estimated.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the traditional surnames of the two main population groups of Roma origin are sometimes transcribed, in the registry office, with slight vocalic variations; also this evidence must be kept in mind, and inclines to consider the number of people of Roma origin higher than the “official” one.

Employment context

Most adults of the two extended families are currently unemployed; in the past, the main work activity consisted in breeding and trading in livestock. Today, those who work are mainly employed in construction activities, with occupations characterized by a high degree of informality (these are activities such as bricklaying, for which no professional or formal qualification is required) and widespread irregularity.

The unemployment condition means that many people in the Community receive a subsidy from the State (identified by the acronym of “REI”).

Housing context

The **extended family n. 1** has its own historic residence in Contrada Macchie. Housing has multiplied over the years, so that with the formation of new family groups, there was a need for new housing. Most members of the extended family have thus obtained “public housing”, owned by the IACP, a public Italian Institution.

These social housing units are located in the San Giovanni districts, Fontana Vecchia, Cep.

An analogous situation characterizes the living context of the **extended family n. 2**, whose members had their first residence around 1970 in the Sant’Antonio Abate district. They currently reside in small owned homes.

There are no particular meeting places used by this micro-population, which shares the spaces of the urban context.

The situation that most denotes the features of a partial “spatial segregation” can be seen in the location of the homes of the two main families themselves, in the above mentioned neighborhoods.

Educational context

Today, all young members of the Community regularly attend compulsory education; the schools attended vary according to the district of residence. The school with a greater number



of Roma pupils is the Istituto Comprensivo D'Ovidio, whose catchment area is the Fontana Vecchia and Sant'Antonio Abate districts.

As regards the level of schooling, it should be noted that in most cases, the level of education achieved is limited to the Middle School.

Very low is the number of young people who continue on the course of study or undertake a professional training.

The condition of economic precariousness, due in turn to the widespread unemployment of members of the Community of both extended families, as well as other less numerous family groups, can be considered in part a cause of this situation, but at the same time, it is an effect. In this way, a true "poverty trap" is nourished, which should not be considered in reference to a merely economic and working condition, but also a socio-cultural one.

For this reason, it is believed that an important focus of the project activities should be on the analysis of the barriers perceived by the Community, and the existing ones - social, economic, but also "cultural" - present not only outside the Community, but also within it, and which determine this criticality.

2. FOCUS GROUPS METHODOLOGY

Target groups and discussion environment

On 27 and 28 May 2019 three meetings were held in Campobasso, carried out through qualitative methodology.

In order to understand the training needs of the local Roma community, 19 Roma people from five different families (5 diverse family groups) were interviewed, divided into 3 groups with participants representing the following target groups:

Women. The group interviewed was composed of 6 people, aged between 25 of the youngest participant and 49 of the oldest people. The majority of the women were married, except for the two youngest of 28 and 25, and with a number of children from 2 to 4 (for the married participants).

Family heads. The group was composed by 7 people, aged between 47 years of the oldest one, and 32 years old for the youngest participant. All the participants, except one, had children (from a minimum of 2, to a maximum of 6 children).

Young people. The group interviewed was composed by 6 people (3 female and 3 male), aged between 23 years of the youngest participant, and the 27 of the oldest one. 2 people out of the six participants had children.

They took part in the focus groups also:

- 2 project members
- 1 employee - social worker - of the Municipality of Campobasso
- 1 Roma cultural mediator employed in the project



Methodology

To conducting the focus groups with the representatives of the Campobasso Roma Community it was prepared a grid, with the aim of allowing the participants to represent their “vital world”, highlighting the critical issues and providing suggestions for improvement, identifying possible interlocutors for their realization.

In this way, we intended to avoid an expropriation of the needs’ ownership, made towards the members of the community and instead exercise an advocacy function, involving them and recognizing their ability to represent their needs and propose solutions for them.

By ensuring dialogue with the Municipality of Campobasso, it also intends to ensure and promote a privileged institutional channel through which these needs are heard at institutional level.

This reversal of perspective in the approach to the Roma question is itself a means of qualifying and making explicit the ultimate goal of the project, which is **community empowerment**. It also represents a workable relationship model with institutions, as an alternative to opposing or mere request for assistance.

For the description of the “vital world” of the Campobasso Roma population sample, we intended to investigate the following areas:

A. Housing

B. Work Placement/employment

C. Educational: Education and training

D. Citizenship Rights

- ☒ D.1. *Civil rights: personal freedom, equality in front of the law, presumption of innocence*
- ☒ D.2. *Political rights: vote, having representatives, get elected*
- ☒ D.3. *Social rights: relationship with services and with voluntary organizations*

E. Free time, community life

For each of the above mentioned areas, some guiding questions that must be tracked for the development of the discussion, have been identified.

The needs and the criticalities pointed out

All the three diverse focus groups started from the strong proposition of the job exclusion, and this not by the will of the interviewers, but by the spontaneous emergence of the topic.

Along with this theme, at the same time, and homogeneously in all the focus groups, it was reported the problem of a widespread racism, experienced by the Roma Community.

“Here there is racism!”, *“The people in Campobasso is too racist”*, *“When you go to the Municipality to ask for work, they use to answer, ‘here come all gypsies!’* “: these are only a few sentences pronounced, aloud, by all the participants.

In the perception of all the Roma interviewed, there is a very strong hostility against them by the institutions, citizens, politicians, and this afflicts the daily life of the Community, generating a climate of human suffering, social and relationship that emerges strongly, above all, in reference to the feeling of foreclosure of the professional integration.



It should also be emphasized that all the members of the three diverse groups, referred to themselves with a term that, in reality, is a derogatory historically attributed, in Italy, to the various Roma communities: it is that of “gypsy”, while referring to the non-Roma people like “the Italians”, “the civilians”.

Automatically, they came to be characterized, by intrinsic opposition, as “non-Italian”, even though they all possess Italian citizenship, and “non-civil or uncivilized”.

A very strong perception of being rejected from the socio-relational point of view by the non-Roma community of Campobasso, accompanied by an equally strong perception of job discrimination conceived as caused by the belonging to the Roma Community, are the topics that were absolutely the most brought to the attention of the discussion, in a homogeneous way, in the three groups and by all the participants.

3. MAIN RESULT

Employment and Job Inclusion

With reference to this topic, 18 of the 19 participants in the discussion groups declared that they did not work at the moment.

Only one people, belonging to the group of young interviewees, declared to work occasionally, thanks to a job exchange that the young woman had used in the past, and which allowed her to establish an occasional professional collaboration.

About half of the respondents said they had worked in the past, but in most cases, in a non-formal and discontinuous manner.

All the participants stated to be in search for a job; the channels they use to look for a job are: asking to the Municipal offices; asking to friends; applying to open positions in answer to public announcements.

Two members of the women’s group, who had in the past participated in educational experiences organized by the Municipality of Campobasso, had then started, together with another Roma women, an autonomous sartorial enterprise, which then failed due to the no longer available time - in turn linked to the need for care of the children - of one of the two members.

In the group of young people, only one member stated that he had always worked even if irregularly, until recently.

The work activities carried out in the past by the members of the three groups - with the exception of those who declared they had never worked - were: collaborator at a senior center (1 case); female micro-entrepreneurship (2 cases); electrician, plumber, building services (2 cases); agriculture (2 cases); worker (1 case).

The tension to job insertion emerged in all groups, without gender foreclosure: women want to enter the labor market and to find a job, and also among the members of the youngsters’ group as well as the one of households’ heads, it emerged the need to women to work for contribute to the domestic economy.

The most negative vision, joint to a sense of resignation and loss of hope, even with respect to the image of a possible redemption and exit from the unemployment condition - characterized the group of household heads, who have shown a profoundly pessimistic view of their condition,



also with reference to their age and not to recognizing any chance to train themselves, due to the absence of structured pathways to employment.

A **more positive view**, with a perception of greater hope combined with greater combativeness, **emerged indeed in the group of women and young people**. One young male participating in the youngsters focus group claimed, as an example: *“To find a job, you have to fight; you have to make people know you; you also have to trust yourself”*.

In the perception of all the interviewees, two are the main barriers to access to the labor market

- Being a Roma
- Not having high educational levels or a vocational training

Being a Roma is the condition that determines, according to the opinion of all the members of the three groups, job exclusion; often, this exclusion is determined *aprioristically* when the surname is communicated, as the traditional surnames of the Roma families of Campobasso are generally known to the non-Roma population of the city.

In the group of family heads, however, it emerged that, according to some interviewees, there would be no work exclusion in the case of a Roma with good vocational training or a high level of education (as a degree).

At the same time, it was unanimously acknowledged that the lack of education and professional training, that is widespread in the Roma community of Campobasso, strongly afflicts the access to the labor market.

In turn, this condition is caused, according to the interviewees of all three groups, by the scarce economic possibilities of Roma families, while its importance is recognized by all.

Education and Training

The second topic of discussion that was brought to the attention of the discussion in all the groups was education and training.

With respect to this field, all the interviewees expressed satisfaction with the degree of interrelation with educational and educational services.

As pointed out above, it has been reported that they are unhappy about their educational levels, combined with the desire to give their children a higher education. This was also referred to as the reason why - in the case of respondents with children - it was decided to have no numerous families (a traditional feature of Romani communities worldwide), or to give more possibilities for education to the same children.

The **lack of exclusion perception** / difference with respect to the rest of non-Roma students was reported; the attitude of the teaching staff was positively assessed both towards the interviewees themselves, when they went to school, and towards their own children.

In particular, women reported **feeling accepted by non-Roma mothers** of schools and kindergartens attended by their children, and of having relations of normal attendance.

In one case, at interviews ended, however, a young woman referred to a recent episode of **exclusion from a children's party, of a Roma student**.



Still in the group of young people, investigating more in depth, it emerged that if on one side when they attended school they didn't have memory of particular exclusion, on the other hand, the memory of **not wanting to attend school** is equally alive. Also, it was stressed a

general **disinterest of teachers** for pupils like Roma who had greater learning difficulties because of their being bilingual: in fact, in the majority of cases in the Roman families the Romanés is commonly spoken instead of the Italian language.

In other words, going deeper into the issue of school exclusion, it can be analysed how the young Roma who enter the world of school, while not experiencing direct discrimination, are subjected to a process that quickly leads them to become discouraged and see the school as a constriction. The initial difficulties due to language or adaptation to a context that is often very different from that of one's own community, leads them from a condition of disadvantage. These difficulties would require a lot of efforts on the part of educational institutions and teaching staff to compensate these initial gaps. However, this extra effort required often clash with a context that due to certain prejudices or overwhelmed by other needs, tends to not take on these needs in consideration and inevitably create a condition of exclusion for young Roma. These people, in fact, not receiving the necessary support to compensate for their initial gaps, lose their hopes and begin to consider the school as a personal failure to which they choose to escape showing disinterest, not attending and abandoning as soon as they are allowed. In this perspective the mismatch between what the interviewees declare about the importance of education and the actual behaviours they bring into play is explained. When it comes to education, in fact, all the participants in the focus defined it as a fundamental tool to improve their future possibilities. Yet in the face of such a positive judgment with respect to the role of education as a tool for possible social mobility, all the interviewees stated that they had had difficulty completing their studies and had participated almost exclusively in compulsory education and in any case occasionally and discontinuous.

This cultural variable has been described in the youth group as a critical issue in access to education, because it generates more difficulties for small children who start elementary school.

To facilitate the scholastic learning of their child, one of the participants in the youth group, stated, in this regard, that **she did not want to speak Romanés with her child**.

Finally, another fundamental barrier to education reported by each group was the cost of books and schools materials. This aspect has a double face: it represent a direct cost in terms of resources for buy books and materials, but it is also a opportunity cost as far as the person in education takes time away for possible forms of work.

Living and Family Area

Regarding this aspect, no specific critical issues emerged during the interviews.

The city of Campobasso has, over the past few years, worked intensely to promote the inclusion of the Roma community, with good results.

In fact, almost all the members of the community reside in social housing houses, granted with non-market rents and therefore particularly facilitated - almost symbolic.

Among the group of women, only one person claimed to reside in a neighborhood not traditionally inhabited by Roma families, being awaiting lodging of the municipality. All the other members of the interviewed sample group stated that they reside in housing owned by the municipality.



- The perception of one's own living space and, in general of the neighborhood services appeared to be good; despite the fact that almost all the interviewees stated that they have always resided in the neighborhoods where they currently reside, no particular perception of spatial segregation or minor integration has emerged in relation to the living space.

- The opportunity to reside in public housing has been positively evaluated by all the groups interviewed, mainly due to the unemployment condition that characterizes 98% of the interviewees.

Both in the group of women, in that of the family heads of and young people, satisfaction was expressed for their housing situation: the women declared themselves satisfied, both for the facilities offered by the neighborhood - with the sole exception of the public spaces used as area games for children, which were deemed deficient - yes with regard to the interrelation with the numerous non-Roma families residing in the neighborhoods of reference. It was stressed that Roma are considered by non-Roma from the neighborhood as *"good, clean people who behave even better than 'others'"*.

This was emphasized by all participants in the different groups. However, to point out that, in partial contradiction to what was said, in the group of family heads it was mentioned that when something bad happens in the neighborhood, it is common habit to look for the person responsible within the Roma community.

Regarding the organization of domestic and family life, most of the interviewees declared that they live in nuclear families composed of a wife, husband and children; in some cases, cohabitation with the in-laws has been reported, both for cultural and economic reasons. In 1 case (a man from the youth group), the cohabitation of several families placed in a single context (large villa) with independent apartments has been reported.

The division of tasks within families follows the traditional logic according to which the **woman takes care of house and children, while men spend more time outside the home, looking for a job.**

More than being determined by cultural variables, this factual condition was attributed to the need for women to look after young children. However, forms of cultural discrimination still remain as far as many of the man who participate in the focus gurus declared that the division of works depend on the facts that they are "not able to make household services".

This gender gap is reducing over time and we can say that the condition of women was regarded as being comparable to that of non-Roma societies. This is also reported by all the interviewees, that declared **there is no perception of a specific gender gap** in Roma society. The role of women is evaluated as important. **Women have a high decision-making power within families**; in the youth group, there were conflicting opinions about who use to decide inside the family about raising children. It was, however, a homogeneously widespread opinion that the woman has, even if in a less "formal" way, **a decision-making authority**, which expresses itself according to culturally accepted channels and more "behind the scenes" than explicitly.

At a certain stage of the interviews, **the issue of cultural change** that has characterized the community for some years has emerged.

This change is expressed in particular in two spheres:

- Courtship and engagement, and therefore the ways in which a new family is formed
- The practices of mourning.



With regard to the first aspect, reference was made to the increasingly widespread practice of the “escape” of two young people who want to start a life together.

In the Campobasso Roma culture, it was “prescribed” by tradition the custom of courtships lasting from 1 to 2 years, with the custom of “serenade” as a manifestation of the desire to begin an engagement - which could however be met to denial by the girl’s family. Currently, this practice is becoming less and less popular.

The growing recourse to the practice of escape can be read - and in fact this is also interpreted by the interviewees - as the **progressive will of young people to affirm their decision-making autonomy in a field that traditionally** was the exclusive prerogative of families, who decided in advance which could be the ideal bride or groom for their son or daughter.

However, part of the respondents referred to the loss of traditional values and to “*technologies like Facebook and telephones*”, guilty of **creating unexpected connections between children, outside the direct control of families.**

The change in the practices of mourning, which are ever shorter, is still blamed on technology.

In the past, mourning was “carried” by all members of an extended family, and imposed specific restrictions on clothing (which was supposed to be black) and in everyday life (such as not watching television); it had a substantial duration, from one to several years.

Citizenship Rights

This part of the focus group aimed to explore the perception that Roma participants have of themselves and their community, in their role as citizens with civil, political and social rights, and to assess their degree of integration with respect to such areas.

In particular, the questions were aimed at bringing out how the members of the community perceive their degree of freedom (personal, of movement, equality in rights and before the law) with respect to the non-Roma population; how they live the rights / political duties related to voting and the freedom to elect their own political representatives, and finally, with

respect to social rights, how the relationship with the services offered by institutions and voluntary and assistance institutions is experienced.

All participants in the three different focus groups claimed **to exercise the right to vote**; during the discussion, the awareness of the fact that the **Roma community suffers a serious**

delay in the enjoyment of political rights, that relates to political representation, emerged strongly. Both in the group of women and in that of the young and the family heads, the importance for the local community of having a political representation that knows how to be

the spokesman of the community requests was discussed. At times, the participants observed, almost in amazement, without knowing how to explain why, the fact that unlike other minority groups present in the Campobasso area (the example of the Moroccan community was mentioned, which has a representative in the Municipality), the Roma community has never been able to organize itself politically, **so as to have a more systematic and formalized dialogue with the institutions.**

Finally, the discussion focused on the knowledge of the law for the protection of linguistic-cultural minorities, and the exclusion of the Roma from it.



It allowed us to assess that all the 19 participants **are not aware of either the law of protection, nor of the serious consequences** on the level of rights, that this exclusion has for the community. Just think that in the absence of such protection, it is not possible to intervene with specific measures in favor of the Italian Roma, for example with dedicated funds intended for to training professional, job scholarships, etc., as any provision of this nature not framed in the perspective of protecting a minority (with Italian citizenship) fragile from the point of view of socio-cultural and working integration, would be discriminatory.

Leisure, Community Life

A set of questions guided the discussion to reflect on current living conditions, and of the problems perceived by the participants with reference to the integration in the local society tissue - interaction with the non-Roma population, and the evaluation of the possible perception of exclusion.

All participants stated that they spent their free time walking in the city center main streets, in cafés or clubs located inside their neighborhood, and in the company of both Roma and non-Roma people, mainly in their own neighborhood.

In the previous section, to explicit questions about feeling limited in movements or controlled compared to the rest of the population, the participants had answered in a negative way.

Indeed, during this time of the discussion, an aspect that emerged strongly was precisely that of the gap related to freedom of movement and perceived equality before the law.

If in the first instance almost all the participants declared to feel free, investigating more in depth, a strong criticality emerged from this point of view, in particular in the group of women: all the participants, in fact, showed a strong sense of frustration for they don't feel free to go for a walk in the city shops during their free time.

This feeling is linked to the fact of being constantly and regularly followed by shop assistants, who fear that Roma women may steal; according to the opinion of women interviewed, being stalked in shops is linked to their clothing, which denounces ethnic belonging, to the use of the traditional long skirt as well as the habit to wear peculiar jewelry, further to being known in the city as belonging to the Roma community.

Also in the group of young people, reference was made to discriminatory behaviors from the Campobasso population. The women participating in the focus of young people, referred as happened in the focus of women, to be followed in shops, while men have referred, above all, to the fact of being stopped more often during police checks (however, this seems to be a subjective perception, not being supported by examples or references to concrete facts), and to be pointed out as authors of car theft.

The constant manifestation of these attitudes is a cause of withdrawal to the Roma interviewed; in the focus group of women, three out of the six participants stated that they often renounced going around stores, so as not to suffer such discrimination.

In reporting such incidents, all women expressed pain, deep anger and frustration.



4. CONCLUSIONS

During the three focus groups, almost homogeneous criticisms emerged, with components that it was possible to highlight more in some groups rather than others, but in any case, generally overlapping.

The problem of job exclusion (94% of respondents are in a state of unemployment) and the perception of being discriminated, despised and subject to unfounded prejudices are the strongest problems that dominated the discussion, in all three focus groups.

Even the necessity to increase the actually low level of education (2 out of 19 participants got a diploma; 1 person with an elementary license; 17 with a middle school diploma) and the need of professional training to the Roma people are important issues.

The major evidence that emerged from the discussion concerns:

- 1) **The “passivity” of the interviewees**, an attitude that consists in the exasperated proclamation of the desperate search for work, a feeling of being abandoned by the institutions, by waiting - without doing any action - for a solution coming from the outside. This attitude is undoubtedly grounded in the constant research carried out by the competent work institutions (many of the women interviewed and all the family heads, stated that they regularly use to go to municipal offices in search of a job), however the difficulties encountered **led to a state of immobility and resignation**, difficult to fight. In this perspective a large effort has to be put on the issues of self-empowerment and the enhancement of their own competences and characteristics.
- 2) **The disorganization of the community**. The problems of the Roma, and not only in Molise, are rooted in a mix of historical and cultural causes, which have determined stereotypes and prejudices, which in turn have generated anti-social behavior, such that today it is very difficult to undermine the walls that obstruct the integration of the Roma community throughout Europe. The members of this community, regardless of their citizenship, are characterized by the sharing of peculiar value systems, customs (practices of engagement/courtship, mourning, lifestyles), clothing style, which in most cases make these people “different” from mainstream societies in which the Roma, however, do live their lives. This diversity, combined with precarious economic conditions that prevent the raising of the levels of education and training of the Roma community members, make any person belonging to it particularly fragile. For this reason, **activism is essential** to promote the legal recognition, in Italy, of this community as a linguistic-cultural minority; only this, would allow the **planning of specific interventions in favor of professional and scholastic inclusion** through dedicated funds that allow the provision of work grants, professional internships, that is, **protected and targeted paths to promote work and social integration for this community**. Furthermore, in addition to the more “practical” and material aspects, it must also be stressed that being considered as a linguistic and cultural minority would contribute to change the perception of this community in society, **giving cultural importance to the history and customs of these people**, and would help the members of the community itself to start **building a feeling of pride of belonging**, for a community that on one hand feels proud of itself and feel close towards the world of the “gagi”, while on the other hand, feels shame for its own identity, historically perceived, in the western world, **as strongly negative and oppositional**. The Roma community must be aware of this and be actively organized to promote specific regulatory changes.



- 3) The theme of work as a tool for social inclusion and personal development. The high level of unemployment and the difficulties in accessing formalized work make the Roma community fragile, unmotivated, completely hopeless and consequently prone to self-pity and to feel a sense of inferiority towards the rest of the Campobasso community. Therefore, the free access to the labour market becomes fundamental tool to allow forms of true inclusion that can last over time. However given the difficulties that emerged during the discussion, in particular with reference to the prejudice and the conditions of informality, it becomes essential to imagine forms of intervention that are not limited to the promotion of training courses for professional retraining, but that lead to support for entrepreneurship and the aggregation of subjects for the creation of cooperatives and other tools that can contribute to the job creation.
- 4) **Activity to fight against school dropout and encourage education.** As stated also by interviewees education is the main tool to over their discrimination condition and imaging form of real inclusion. In this perspective it is not enough to imagine forms of economic contribution for help the community in the purchase of schools materials. As we analysed before indirect discrimination affect the capability of young Roma to successfully complete their studies. In this sense it is fundamental activate specific projects in cooperation with schools and public institutions to support teachers and school staff in the promotion of specific support services able to fulfil eventual gap among young students as soon as possible avoiding the process of indirect exclusions described above.

In conclusion, in response to these two major critical issues affecting the community, **guidance and awareness paths will have to be constructed, so as** to ensure that the community can lay the foundations for the **construction of active citizenship paths and dialogue with the world of institutions and policy makers.**

In this view, it could be profitable to promote networking and dialogue with members of the most aware and organized international Roma communities, engaged in the struggle for the protection of Roma rights as minorities.



5. APPENDIX: GRID WITH QUESTIONS TO GUIDE THE FOCUS GROUPS

A. LIVING AND FAMILY AREA

Discussing the following aspects with the group:

- Perception of the living space
- Assessment of the existence of any spatial / geographical barriers to integration
- Perception of one's condition of greater or lesser integration, in relation to the living space
- Evaluation of the position of subjects with respect to possible housing inclusion policies

Questions scheme:

- 1) In which neighborhoods of the city do you live?
- 2) Are you satisfied with your homes?
- 3) Would you like to live in another neighborhood of the city? (survey on the perception of spatial segregation)
- 4) Are the houses in which you live owned or rented?
- 5) How long have you / your family lived there?
- 6) How would you define your neighborhood? Choose adjectives
- 7) What could be done to improve your housing situation? Have you ever seen it realized somewhere?
- 8) Who could do it?
- 9) How many people are there in your family unit / how many people live in the house?
- 10) What are the family relationships of the family members?
- 11) How is domestic and family life organized?
- 12) Could you describe the gender and intergenerational relationships of your family?

B. EDUCATIONAL AREA: EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Discussing the following aspects with the group:

- Perception of the school world by the interviewed group
- Feeling of being excluded / feeling difference with respect to the rest of non-Roma students and attitude of the teaching staff
- Existence of a feeling of distance / of not being understood by teachers (with reference to the specificities of the history and culture of the Roma community)
- With respect to education levels, assessing the attitude of the interviewees (tending towards a higher educational qualification, interest in education, perception of possible barriers)



Questions scheme:

- 1) Do you attend school? If so, which one? (for parents: Do your children attend school? Which one?)
- 2) How do you evaluate the relationship with teachers?
- 3) Do you feel treated like all other students / parents?
- 4) Once these studies are finished, do you want to continue studying? (for parents: if these studies are finished, will you send your children to school again?) If NOT, can you tell why?
- 5) Would you like to continue studying (for parents: would you like your children to study over middle school?) If NOT, can you say why?

C. EMPLOYMENT AND JOB INCLUSION

Discussing with the group the following aspects:

- Professional occupations of Roma community members: evaluation, perception, satisfaction degree
- Feeling integrated / non-integrated in the labor market
- Stakeholders that should be sensitized, according to the group interviewed, to favor the improvement of the local Roma community living conditions (NGO Associations, voluntary organizations, representatives of trade unions, employers' associations, institutional and other subjects in the territory, that could impact on employability and accessibility to education)

Questions scheme:

- 1) Do you work? (For the youngest: do your parents work?)

- If YES:

- A. What kind of job do you do / do your parents do?
- B. Do you have a regular contract?
- C. Do you feel satisfied with your work?
- D. Do you think you could change job one day?

- Otherwise:

- A. How long have you been no longer working / are your parents no longer working?
- B. What are the reasons why it is difficult to find a job?
- C. What could be done to solve this problem?
- D. Who, in your opinion, could help you concretely solve this problem?
- E. Are you looking for a job?



F. Which channels do you use to look for a job?

D. CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS AREA

This part of the “questionnaire”, divided into 3 sections (D.1-D.3), is aimed to explore the perception of Roma participants as citizens with civil, political and social rights, and to assess the degree of integration with respect to these areas.

In particular, the questions are intended to reveal how the members of the community perceive their degree of freedom (personal, of movement, equality in rights and before the law) with respect to the non-Roma population, how they live the political rights / duties linked to the vote and the freedom to elect their own political representatives, and finally, with respect to social rights, how the relationship with the services offered by institutions and voluntary and assistance institutions is experienced.

Questions scheme:

D.1. Civil rights

1) Does belonging to the Roma community affect your rights in any way from the point of view of your freedom of movement, expression, personal freedom, equality before the law?

D.2. Political rights

1) Do you use to vote?

IF NOT, why?

2) Do you feel politically represented?

3) Has the community had, or does it currently have, a reference political figure? (for example, a person who has visited the community at the time of an election or another particular moment)

4) Have any of you ever thought of applying or finding someone from the community to propose as a political representative?

5) Are you aware of the existence of a law that protects linguistic minorities?

6) Do you participate / are you interested in local political life?

7) What rights do you think to have as Italian citizens?

8) What are your duties as Italian citizens, according to your opinion?

D.3. Social rights: relationship with services and with voluntary organizations

1) Are you, or your family, followed by social services?

IF YES:

A. Do you perceive subsidies? What kind?



- B. Do you benefit from any other type of help from the Municipality or other institutions or voluntary organizations? If yes, by whom, and what type?
- C. What do you think about the type of subsidy or help you receive? Indicate some positive and negative aspects
- Q. How could the aid you receive be improved or changed?
- E. Do you think that your community should have different / greater help? If yes, why?
- F. Do you think you need to do something particular, in the face of having such aid? If so, what?
- G. Do you think that the aid you receive can also have negative consequences? If yes, which ones?

OTHERWISE:

- A. Have you ever contacted the Municipality or another body to receive a subsidy or other assistance / help?
- B. If you did it, but your application was rejected, could you say why?
- C. Would you like to have access to subsidies and aid?

2) Are you satisfied with the health care you receive?

IF NOT, could you explain the reasons?

E. LEISURE AND COMMUNITY LIFE

Discussing with the group the current living conditions and the perceived problems:

- Integration into the local society tissue - interaction with the non-Roma population
- Evaluation of the possible perception of exclusion (understanding with respect to which field)

Questions scheme:

- 1) Do you feel satisfied with how you live in this city? Motivate the reasons for yes or not
- 2) How would you rate the relationship with citizens residing in other neighborhoods?
- 3) Do you mostly attend people who belong to your community or not?

If NOT:

-Why?

- Would you also like to attend people outside your community?

- Do you feel excluded from people who do not belong to your community?

4) Do the places you attend (school, work, places to have fun like clubs, get-togethers in general) are mainly in your neighborhood?

IF YES: could you say why?