

Local engagement for Roma inclusion

Locality study Jyväskylä (Finland), 2016

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1. Executive summary

The implementation of the LERI research in Jyväskylä, Finland is described, including an overview of the Roma minority in Finland. Five Participatory Action Research (PAR) interventions were conducted focusing on the areas of education, work, social services, the reduction of discrimination, and strengthening Roma identity. Successful support groups for Roma youth struggling to complete comprehensive education and gain access to the labour market were held, together with family discussions. The second intervention concentrated on the development of Lifelong Guidance for the Roma at local, national and international level. Intervention 3 focused on the development of professionals in the social welfare sector to improve social services for the Roma via a newly established Centre of Excellence on Social Welfare, specialised in Roma affairs. To increase awareness of the community at large and decrease prejudice regarding the Roma, LERI focused on the annual International Roma Day celebration. The enhancement of the Finnish Roma identity was the target of Intervention 5. Valuable elements were found in all five interventions including support groups for youth for comprehensive education completion, the need for professional development for guidance counsellors and social workers, inclusion of students in all pertinent fields in the organisation of International Roma Day and collaboration with non-local Roma. These processes should continue in the future.

Keywords/Tags:

Roma youth, support groups, school/work transitions, Roma inclusion, Roma Life-Long Guidance

2. Description of the local context

Ensuring the Fundamental Rights of the Roma in Finland

The status of the Kale Roma, who have lived in Finland since the 16th Century, differs from that of other Finns. They were persecuted from 1600 to 1800, after which state-appointed committees from 1900 to 1955 concluded that only an assimilation programme would make the Roma acceptable to the rest of Finnish society.¹ Then, in 1956, the infrastructure changed when the Advisory Board on Romani Affairs (Romaniasiaain neuvottelukunta, RONK) was established, "to enhance the equal participation of the Roma population in the Finnish society, to improve their living conditions and socio-economic position and to promote their culture" (<http://romani.fi/>). This body continues to work today along with regional and local boards called Roma Work Groups. These three levels of collaborative groups of Finns, half of which are Roma, have contributed to the National Policy on Roma in Finland 2010–2017, adopted in 2009 (Sosiaali- ja terveystieteiden ministeriö).

¹ Grönfors and Tuomi, p. VII_152

The Jyväskylä Roma Work Group (RWG), established in 2003 by the City of Jyväskylä, was one of the contributors to this national policy. The key areas of Finland's National Policy on Roma are: 1) Enhancing the participation in education of Roma children and youth, 2) Enhancing the education of Roma adults and the promotion of their access to the labour market, 3) Promotion of the equal treatment of Roma and their access to services through the establishment of operational policies focusing on their needs, 4) Supporting the preservation and development of the Romani language and culture, 5) Promoting the equal treatment of Roma and preventing discrimination and 6) Developing the policy on Roma and enhancing their opportunities for participation. A steering and monitoring report was produced in 2014 and work will soon start on a National Policy II. The findings from the LERI research will be included in the national policy.

An Assessment of Needs in Jyväskylä

There are 400–450 Kale Roma, including children, in Jyväskylä,² a city of 135,000 approximately 270 km north of Helsinki³. This number grows to 500 when taking outlying areas into consideration. The Kale Roma in Finland are unique in that they wear a distinctive dress at all times when seen publicly, even in their own homes. The number of non-Kale Roma originating from Eastern Europe living in Jyväskylä is unknown since they have been unwilling to identify themselves as Roma.

A needs assessment of the Finnish Roma in Jyväskylä reveals five critical areas: 1) education, 2) social services, 3) successful transition into employment, 4) prejudice found in the surrounding community and 5) identification of the Roma with the greater European Roma community. All Roma children attend pre-school and finish comprehensive school. However, no statistics are available, as the national legislation prohibits compiling data based on ethnicity.⁴

Most Roma who live in Jyväskylä are unemployed and use welfare support. Roma have difficulties in using public services. They do not use child protection services due to the fear that their children will be taken into custody. The Finnish Roma all speak Finnish as their native language but the level of their Finnish tends not to be on a par with the Finnish majority, making it difficult to understand the language used by the authorities and explain their needs.⁵ The Roma often meet prejudice when they attempt to move into a rental flat; Roma cultural reasons further affect the choice of residential location⁶ because Roma mores require that Roma families having feuds do not physically live in the same area.

The work situation of the Roma has somewhat improved as a result of a project carried out in Jyväskylä 2004–2007 to support the vocational education, employment and entrepreneurship of the Roma and to decrease prejudices. An increasing number of Roma seek education and a working life. The project, Romanit työelämään (Roma into Working Life), was coordinated by the City of Jyväskylä as an EQUAL project, carried out with funding from the European

² Anttonen, interview 1.21.2014

³ (www.jyvaskyla.fi).

⁴ Anttonen, interview 2.17.2014.

⁵ Florin, Roma worker interview 2.17.2014.

⁶ Anttonen, interview 1.21.2014.

Union. For this project, Jyväskylä received the Dosta prize from the European Union (see appendix). Areas for LERI research were identified based on the previous work undertaken by the RWG, such as Roma into Working Life, ROMKO (Romanien koulutustason nostamisen esiselvitys) and SOSKU (Sosiaalisen kuntoutuksen valtakunnallinen kehittämishanke), which will be described later in more detail.

There are five research questions for the LERI research programme in Jyväskylä. They are:

1. What are the drivers and barriers to Roma youth finishing their education and enabling them to get work? A separate, ongoing two-year ESIF (European Structural and Investment Fund) project named Rainer (Roma energy through education) will be used as a starting point. This programme, attended by 15–25-year-old Roma youth, will be evaluated and assessed to see how it can be improved to better meet the needs of the Roma youth of Jyväskylä to finish their degrees and enter the job market.
2. Informed social service professionals with the skills to work with the Roma population are sorely lacking (see interview, Anttonen). The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (Sosiaali- ja terveystieteiden ministeriö STM) has established nine regional centres of excellence. Each centre is obligated to coordinate a wide range of responsibilities such as child protection and substance abuse. Additionally, the ministry has designated that the centre in Central Finland, located in Jyväskylä, will be the centre for Roma issues. This centre, the Centre of Excellence on Social Welfare, which specialises in Roma affairs (Romaniasiaian sosiaalialan osaamiskeskus, KOSKE) has not yet begun functioning properly because the funding promised has not yet been allocated. The research question is how to organise and coordinate the centre in these circumstances to best suit the needs of the Roma now and in the future and how to receive the required funding.
3. Appropriate lifelong guidance services are lacking for the Roma youth in Jyväskylä. How and what type of lifelong guidance services would serve the needs of the Roma youth?
4. General awareness and knowledge of the Kale Roma is minimal among the general population in Jyväskylä. How can International Roma Day be used as a way to increase awareness and positive media in Jyväskylä?
5. In what way do the Kale Roma in Jyväskylä identify themselves in relation to the other Roma in Jyväskylä, in Finland and in Europe? How does this shape their identity?

Main Stakeholders and LERI Local Team

By decree of the Jyväskylä Parliament, the municipal Roma Work Group was established in 2003. The main stakeholders in the working group are, of course, the Roma themselves and it is the Roma who make up the largest portion of the RWG. Other members are representatives of Social Services, Employment Services, Early Childhood Day Care, the Local Board of Education, Adult Education, Jyväskylä University and the University of Applied Sciences, Housing Offices, the Police Department and the local church. The Finnish Roma have been active in the RWG in Jyväskylä since its inception. Half of the members of the RWG are Roma and therefore were involved in the PAR process at all stages of the enhancement of Roma inclusion in Jyväskylä. The chair of the RWG is the

Director of Adult Social Work and Empowering Services. The institutional stakeholders in the RWG include members from all essential public services and educational institutions (see Figure 1). Additional stakeholders are added, and experts invited to be consultants, as necessary.

Figure 1. Stakeholders found in the municipal Roma Work Group of Jyväskylä



Source: LERI Field expert, 2016

All Roma-related projects, such as the LERI research, are initiated by the RWG. In addition to Roma-related projects, issues important for Roma inclusion such as day care, schooling, working life and society are discussed. Roma integration projects have been organised in Jyväskylä since the beginning of the 2000s. The projects have been administered by the Jyväskylä Vocational Training Centre (JAMK), NGO Support in Central Finland Assoc. (Keski-Suomen yhteisöjen tukiry, KYT) and the City of Jyväskylä. Collaboration with the University of Jyväskylä and the RWG has taken place continuously in the area of research and the teaching of lectures and courses on the Finnish Roma. The Roma integration projects are thus fully connected to each other.

The local team for the LERI research included the LERI field expert, Margaret Trotta Tuomi, from the University of Jyväskylä, a co-researcher, Kirsi Florin, from the City of Jyväskylä, and consultants Railli Haaki from Social Services (KOSKE), and Taja Kiiskilä from the University of Applied Sciences (JAMK).

3. PAR methodology employed

Consultation as a Tool in Participatory Action Research

Participatory action research, a form of action science which involves practitioners as both subjects and co-researchers, suits the LERI research well as it engages the participants in the full, ongoing process for sustainable development. Action research (AR) is, by definition, a collaborative experience

involving all the stakeholders in the research⁷. Stringer sees it as encompassing the entire process from systematic investigation, to plans and solutions. Carr and Kemmis in *Becoming Critical* speak of AR as a powerful tool for “*school-based curriculum development, professional development, school improvement programmes, and systems planning and policy development.*”⁸ Action research as a genre is well suited to enhancing local engagement on the ground for Roma inclusion. The researcher in this case becomes an enabler, a force for positive progress in partnership with other stakeholders. The main thrust of the LERI research, Local Engagement for Roma Inclusion, is to include Roma as agents in the inclusion process. Indeed, the agency of the Roma is a key factor in LERI. This means PAR fits the LERI research especially well. PAR has been used throughout the LERI process and before. The RWG, which is organised loosely on a consultation style of PAR, runs all the Roma affairs in Jyväskylä. Consultation was also used in LERI in the development of the Rainer project, KOSKE, and in individual discussions regarding lifelong guidance, the development of the International Roma Day celebrations and in gaining a better understanding of the Roma identity in Jyväskylä.

Consultation is a non-adversarial process of synergic discussion for decision-making and problem-solving. It is an instrument for setting goals and discerning the means to achieve them. Anselm Strauss states, “*one of the intriguing questions about social theorists is why they virtually all have neglected to single out negotiation as one of the major phenomena of human life.*”⁹ There are many non-adversarial decision-making techniques on the market today. The word consultation here will be used to define a process of collaboration among individuals to create synergic solutions.¹⁰ This model of PAR was used in a variety of ways during the implementation of the LERI research in Jyväskylä.

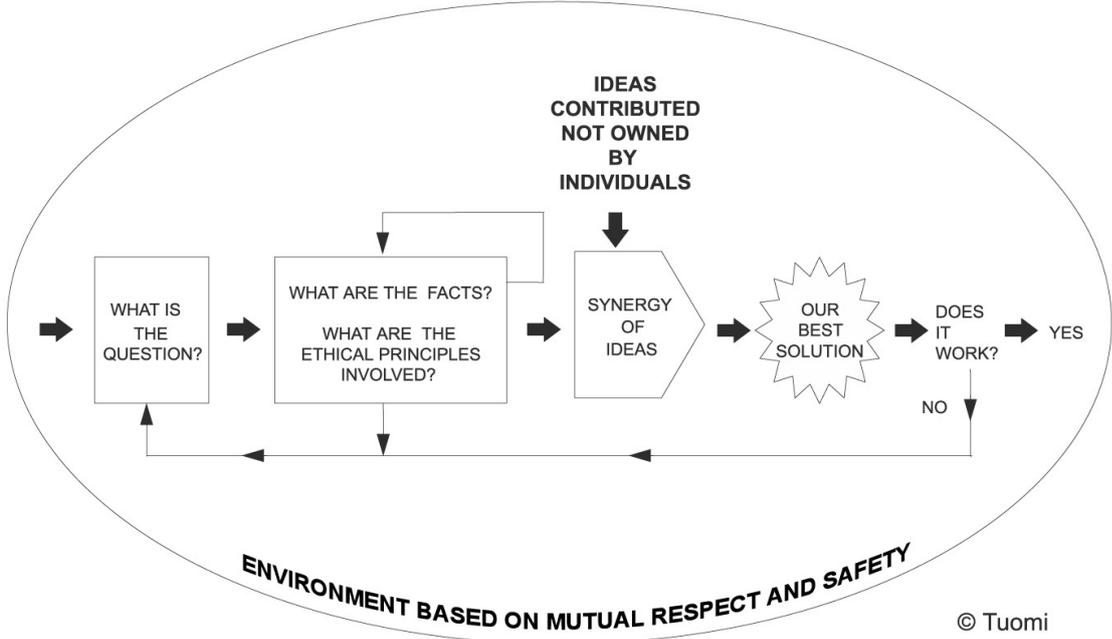
⁷ Stringer (1996), p. 15

⁸ Carr and Kemmis (1986), p.162

⁹ Strauss (1978), p. 12

¹⁰ See Shoghi (1938)

Figure 2. The Flow of Consultation (Shoghi, 1938)



Source: LERI Field expert, 2016

Qualitative interviews were also used at all stages and in all interventions. One could wonder at why many of the interviews reported here are from the Roma worker of the City of Jyväskylä, Kirsi Florin. This is a reflection of Finnish Roma culture. Due to the discrimination of the Roma in Finland throughout the centuries, from both the general population and the officials, the Roma became a closed society. They only had each other to depend on for help in all matters, including health and safety. Their language was kept secret so that they could maintain control of what others knew about them and their affairs. This has changed to a certain extent now, but Roma do not share information freely with others without knowing them well. Through years of contact and collaboration, Kirsi Florin and I have learned to trust and communicate with each other and it is through the trust that many of the comments have been communicated here. All of these comments have been verified and have been crosschecked for language translation.

4. The local intervention description – Goals, partners, process and results

The LERI research in Jyväskylä eventually took on a series of five interventions in five key areas, the first, which focused on youth education, used the Rainer project (Roma energy through education) as a starting point. The second intervention was to enable appropriate lifelong guidance counselling for the Roma so that they can get suitable training for a profession and work to fit their talents. The third used KOSKE as a starting point to improve the standard of the social welfare sector for the Roma population, which is offered by the municipalities and, additionally, to promote equality and non-discrimination. The fourth intervention was to enhance engagement with the local community so that the Roma can become more known in society to reduce prejudice against the Roma. Finally, the fifth intervention enabled the meeting of the Kale with Roma

from other parts of Europe to get a wider picture of Roma inclusion. These five interventions will be briefly described here and then in more detail.

A main focus of LERI in Jyväskylä was to better understand the drivers and barriers of Roma inclusion at the local level. To this end, LERI worked alongside the Rainer project to remove the obstacles to education and labour market entry that Roma youth face. Rainer is a two-year project (1 June 2015–31 January 2018) funded by the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), that seeks to facilitate labour-market entry for the Roma people. The City of Jyväskylä is the main coordinator of the Rainer project. Under the City of Jyväskylä there are two sub-coordinators for Rainer, KOSKE and JAMK.

The objective of Rainer is to improve the level of education among the Roma population in Central Finland by supporting the Roma in acquiring an education, learning a trade, finding employment and succeeding at work. The programme is based on participation and engagement. The project addresses the obstacles to the acquisition of an education. It includes family work and a coaching programme, with Roma youth support groups and tutors who can, with permission, liaise with schools to clarify assignments and unclear concepts and support assignment completion. Rainer provides support and reinforcement for Roma training and working life skills. The programme is implemented by partners working in pairs by drawing upon the expertise of parties with experience in this field from Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences (JAMK). The LERI field expert also attended the Rainer project Board of Directors' meeting and became a 'permanent' visiting expert.

The second LERI intervention concerned the lack of appropriate lifelong guidance for the Roma. Guidance counsellors are currently not trained in working with Roma youth, and lack understanding of how to approach Roma due to variations in culture and Finnish language skills; and counsellors lack an understanding of how unaware Roma youth are of available professions in society. Roma youth, for their part, fail to see the guidance counselling lessons in school as 'being for them'. They do not believe that they will ever get a job, even if they do become qualified. This intervention attacks this issue from the perspective of the youth, the guidance counsellors and international recommendations regarding those in most danger of under- and unemployment.

The third LERI intervention focused on the development of KOSKE. The Centre of Excellence on Social Welfare, specialising in Roma affairs,¹¹ is to include the Roma issues in the centre's services as a special priority area. The plan is to create a framework for the dissemination and promotion of good practice in Roma services by making use of the existing social welfare and multi-professional networks at local, regional and national level. The inclusion of the nationwide centre of excellence network in the Roma network will increase, in the long term, the level of expertise in Roma issues among the social welfare professionals. The goal is to improve the standard of basic services available to the Roma population offered by the municipalities and promote equality and non-discrimination.

¹¹ The Centres of Excellence of Social Welfare were established in 2001–2002 (www.socca.fi/tietoa_soccasta/kumppanit/sosiaalialan_osaamiskeskukset)

The fourth intervention addressed the reality that the majority of the predominant Finnish population lacks knowledge and personal contact with the Roma and has never spoken with a Kale Finn. There is a tangible lack of published facts and verified information about the Roma. Promoting equality and non-discrimination – such as increasing general awareness of the Roma culture – will generate added value to the existing services and improve access to the range of services available.

Fifth, the number of non-Finnish Roma in Jyväskylä is unknown to the city authorities or the local Kale Roma. There has been no outreach to the foreign Roma in Jyväskylä and they have not come forward to identify themselves as Roma. An estimated 16 million Roma live in the 47 countries of the Council of Europe and nearly 8 million in the European Union.¹² As a first step in this area, visiting a variety of different Roma communities, familiarising one with their cultural values and attitudes towards education, receiving more knowledge of Roma education models in Sweden, to be shared among the Finnish Roma was undertaken. This can open one's eyes to a wider understanding. A delegation including Kale and non-Roma Finns visited a training programme in Sweden, which is for Roma from all parts of Europe.

Intervention 1: A PAR Analysis of Rainer, (Roma Energy through Education), Addressing the Need to Improve the Educational Level and Access of the Roma to the Labour Market

Local Intervention 1 was an assessment and evaluation of the independent Rainer project in Jyväskylä and an analysis of how it is fulfilling the needs of the Roma. The intervention also focused on how to develop the Rainer programme so that these needs can be better met in the future. The LERI intervention involved all the Roma youth involved in the Rainer project in Jyväskylä, approximately 10 participants aged 15–23. That is, a combination of the Rainer groups in Jyväskylä for 15–20-year-olds and the 21–25-year-olds. It involved two tutors from JAMK, the Roma City Worker. The Rainer project began 1 June 2015 and will continue until 31 January 2018.

Rainer – Roma Energy through Education

Rainer is a project independent of LERI, funded by ESIF. The intervention of the LERI research was to research the Rainer project to evaluate its strengths and weaknesses to see how Rainer should continue in the future. This investigation is only one aspect of the LERI research project in Jyväskylä. The Rainer project takes place in a number of cities in Central Finland and is meant for all Roma between the ages of 15 and 64. The Rainer project in the City of Jyväskylä focused on youth aged 15–25.

Most Roma people in Finland have a low level of education.¹³ The Roma need to improve their educational levels and, in doing so, increase their access to the labour market. Although today all Roma children attend school, many find it

¹² See estimates of Roma population in European countries (www.coe.int/en/web/portal/roma/)

¹³ Rajala, S., Salonen, M., Blomerus, S. and Nissilä, J., OPH (2011) OPH. Romanioppilaiden perusopetuksen tilannekatsaus 2010–2011 ja toimenpide-ehdotukset. Raportit ja selvitykset 2011:26 (Basic eEducation of Roma pPupils – Review 2010–2011 and pProposals), . Opetushallitus. (2011)

difficult to complete comprehensive school. The Roma have a short educational history and often do not completely realise the significance of education in modern life. This lack of access to employment combined with the lack of access to the safety nets of the social security systems in Finland effect many aspects of Roma life such as poor income levels, access to housing, educational opportunities, social security, political and social participation, and access to justice.

The Rainer project is based on a long history of work to improve the educational level of the Roma. Earlier there was ROMKO (Romanien koulutustason nostamisen esiselvitys) a project completed in 2014 to improve the educational level of the Roma. The project was carried out in two phases. The first phase was to identify the impediments to education for Roma youth in the Jyväskylä area and their need for support. The second phase described the role of the Centre of Excellence on Social Welfare, specialising in Roma affairs in supporting the integration of the Roma population. The project was included in the European Social Fund (ESF) programme for mainland Finland and its objective 2: promotion of employment and labour market participation and prevention of marginalisation.

An extension of ROMKO is SOSKU (Sosiaalisen kuntoutuksen valtakunnallinen kehittämishanke 2015–2018) a national development project of social rehabilitation administered by the City of Jyväskylä funded by the ESF. SOSKU includes Rainer as a sub-project for promoting the integration of the Roma in society.

The Rainer (Roma energy through education) project seeks to facilitate labour market entry for the Roma people. The objective is to improve the level of education among the Roma population in Central Finland. Other measures foreseen in the project – such as increasing general awareness of the Roma culture – will generate added value to the existing services and improve access to the range of services available.

The project seeks to support the Roma in acquiring an education, learning a trade, finding employment and succeeding at work. The project will address the obstacles to the acquisition of an education and completion of qualifications through assistance provided by sponsors and family work.

A coaching programme will be provided for the target group with the aim of supporting and reinforcing the Roma's training and work life skills.

In the early stages of the Rainer programme, workers visited the officials of Jyväskylä and the surrounding areas to involve and obtain agreement from the local political leaders in the initialisation of the Rainer programme for Roma 15–64-year-olds.

Due to the short period that the Roma have been taking part in education, most Roma youth are unable to seek support from their parents in understanding and completing their school assignments. For this reason, the Rainer project includes family work conducted by two Rainer workers, one Roma and the other a non-Roma who visit Roma homes to support the family as a whole and identify what barriers exist within the family to prevent school completion. This is an essential

part of the process. The parents of those students trying to get their diplomas were also given support to complete their own schooling.

It is imperative to state clearly what is meant by "support group". It is a place where the Roma youth come together to discuss their experiences in the school environment, their fears and dilemmas and their assignments. How are they managing? How is the on-the-job training going? In the Rainer support groups, they get peer support from each other and individual support from their tutors to better understand the theoretical material in their books and to complete their assignments. Many of the students, especially the young men, had past assignments that had not been completed. The tutors have also, with the permission of the Roma youth, visited or contacted their schools for various reasons. This applies to both comprehensive and vocational-level schools. The tutors have also become involved if there is a problem situation at the school. The tutors have given support in school applications, finding places for on job training and getting comprehensive school diplomas. Assistance in family difficulties has also been discussed with the tutors.

When the LERI research activities began, Roma youth were asked about their participation and experience in the Rainer project. They were quite forthcoming. Hemming Florin, a young Roma man aged 17 stated, *"Before this project, I was not managing in school. I learned that again I was going to be left back a grade in school, and I had already been left back in the third grade. I learned that this project would help with school. With the help of this project I have been able to finish my unfinished assignments from the spring and the autumn."* He was not alone in his assessment. Tamara Lindberg, a Roma woman aged 18 stated, *"What use has LERI been? I have been able to get help. For example, if we have questions about our assignments, we get answers. In addition, we have been able to answer questions for the LERI project on how to improve the project. We help each other because we really want the project to be the best it can possibly be."* Seventeen-year-old Jasmin Florin stated the following, *"What benefits have come from LERI? Earlier I was not able to finish my assignments to the end. Now someone comes to the school and supports me so that I can complete my assignments and help me with school tasks. Because of the support group I've been able to attend school and get my motivation back."*

The PAR technique of Collaborative Group Consultation¹⁴ was conducted with 10 Roma youth present representing the 15–20 and the 21–30-year-old members of the Rainer project group. The theme of the consultation was how to develop the Rainer project to its optimal form in the future. After discussions on the situation of the Roma in general, the theme evolved to, 'How would you improve the Rainer project so that it could be better for your younger brothers and sisters?'. This question worked very well. It was concrete enough and close enough to home to make the answers come very easily.

PAR Data Collection, Analysis and Verification: Data collection was conducted by audio taping, transcribing and translating into a set of field notes including the actual transcription of the discussion including all the stakeholders involved in the Roma youth support groups. The LERI field expert analysed the data

¹⁴ Tuomi, M. T. 2004. "Planning Teachers' Professional Development for Global Education". *Journal of Intercultural Education* 15 (3), 295–306.

collected data from the intervention and organised the expressions of the youth into a set of conclusions, a discussion of results and implications that could assist in the rationalisation of the difficulties the youth have been facing. After the data was interpreted, a collection of conclusions was drawn up based on the transcribed audio tapes collected in the PAR intervention. These conclusions were brought back to the Roma youth for verification to confirm that their thoughts had been understood and transcribed correctly. The translation was also verified by back translating the findings collected in Finnish, translated into English and then translated back to the group in Finnish.

Picture 1. PAR Intervention I: With the Rainer Participants



Source: Kiiskilä, 2015

Lessons Learned from Intervention 1

The multi-levelled fears among Finnish Roma youth regarding school, work and fear of becoming a failure in life became apparent. In addition, a belief that Roma youth support groups, where they could encourage each other and get practical advice on their homework assignments, was extremely useful. Furthermore, the fact that the tutors could make, with their permission, contact with their schools to clarify assignments was also seen as valuable. Additionally, home visits by the tutors increased the support received from home.

A key finding is succinctly described in a verified quotation from a 23-year-old male participant showing multileveled feelings of inadequacy. The approach to dissipate these feelings of inadequacy must also be multi-levelled.

"It is difficult for me to concentrate in class. Will I be able to understand what the teacher is saying? Will I be able to do all the work needed for the class? Will I be able to do all the tasks required to pass the entire class? If I pass this class,

will I be able to do all the work to pass all the other classes required in order to graduate? If I do complete all the classes, will the grades from the classes be good enough to get me into a secondary school? What kind of school would I be able to get into? Is there a secondary school that I could get into that would teach me something that I am interested in doing? If I could get into that school, would I be able to complete all the classes of all the years in a way that I could actually graduate and get a degree? Even if I do all that, and get a degree, is that something I would like to do, will I be able to get a job anyway? Will it all be for nothing?"¹⁵

An analysis of this quotation shows the deep levels of inadequacy felt by the Roma youth. This is not only a feeling of insecurity or low self-esteem, or the common impatience with delayed gratification found in many youth. This response, rather, shows the insidious effects of prejudice, the results of which display as a multi-levelled, self-defeating 'inner voice' gnawing away at the self-respect of the Roma. That is, the external discrimination of the Roma is not the only problem. This young man's analysis clearly describes the multi-levelled feelings of inadequacy experienced by the Roma youth, feelings that need to be dealt with at each and every level.

Get rid of the inner voice of inadequacy and get ready for tomorrow

An added value from LERI was the finding that work is needed to root out the 'voices' in the minds of the youth telling them that they are inadequate. These voices have been placed there by the prejudice of others telling them that they are less, cannot achieve and are not good enough. The Roma need to become aware of this negative inner voice to stop the cycle of generation after generation believing this voice, listening and letting it grow. Prejudice works in a pernicious way on the mind of the person being discriminated. As part of the validation meeting, the LERI field expert spoke about the theory of self-fulfilling prophecy, that is, that you become what you are told you will become. More about this process and what prejudice does to the person who is prejudiced against should be part of the Rainer project, indeed any programme, which focuses on a reduction of prejudice.

It would be valuable, in future, were the Rainer tutors to set aside some time at the end of each session to go over the terminology and theme of the students' next lesson. That is, spend less and less time on learning what the teacher taught in yesterday's lessons and more time 'prepping' for tomorrow's lessons. This will significantly improve the self-confidence that the Roma youth feel when they enter the class self-assured and prepared and will enable them to participate more fully. More can be done in preparation, not only prepping for tomorrow's lessons, but also prepping for tomorrow's on-the-job training day. One young man reported, "We need advertising about how good we are. People need to see how talented we are. Every morning when I wake up to go to my 'on-the-job practice' place I feel that I need to really show myself, to prove myself." (Leif Palmoroos, Roma man aged 19). The Rainer group for 15–20-year-olds has proved to be so useful, that there is great hope that it will continue. A cost analysis of the Rainer project will be conducted during the next academic year.

¹⁵ Roma man, aged 23

The benefits of the Rainer project have been singled out by the European Union. They state:

“Funded by the European Social Fund, the Rainer project ‘Roma energy through education’ (2015–2018) is a Roma-targeted measure aiming to facilitate labour market entry by improving the level of education, supporting jobseekers and succeeding at work through coaching among the Roma population in Central Finland. The project — sometimes covering all the target population — demonstrates that targeted approaches can also work in municipalities with a small Roma population and underlines the importance of cooperation among multiple actors such as social, employment, housing offices and educational centres. The long-term aim is to create a framework for sharing and promoting good practice in targeted Roma services by making use of the existing professional networks at local, regional and national level (Finland)”¹⁶

LERI research also revealed the importance of training, including guidance counsellors with the skills to work with Roma youth, as illustrated in Intervention 2: and the need for more training for guidance counsellors both at the pre-professional stage and professional development level. For this reason, an additional intervention was added, Intervention 2, which included the development of lifelong guidance standards on an international level and also a visit by the Rainer participants to the One-stop Ohjaamo programme, which is intended to enhance guidance counselling for the general public. The Rainer working group is excited at the prospect of being able to use the LERI findings to improve the Rainer project even more.

Intervention 2: Lifelong Guidance for Roma – How can it be done?

Lifelong guidance is defined by the European Council as “a continuous process that enables citizens at any age and at any point in their lives to identify their capacities, competencies and interests, to make educational, training and occupational decisions, and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which those capacities and competencies are learned and/or used”.¹⁷ The European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network stresses the importance of guidance for social inclusion for the “social and economic integration of individuals and groups; reduction in long-term unemployment and poverty cycles; overcoming barriers to accessing learning and work; active ageing; gender and social equity.”¹⁸

In Intervention 1, the Rainer students, lifelong guidance was identified as a factor lacking in the enabling process for the Roma youth to complete their secondary education, their transition to secondary education and on to the labour market. Lifelong guidance counsellors, those who should be in the vanguard for enabling citizens to enter the workforce, lack knowledge about the Roma, some

¹⁶ European Commission (2016), Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Assessing the implementation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies and the Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States —COM (2016) 424, 27 June 2016, available at <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/1/2016/EN/1-2016-424-EN-F1-1.PDF>

¹⁷ (European Council 2008, p.2)

¹⁸ (European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network 2015, p.8)

of the most at risk of never being employed in their lifetimes. Roma issues are not included sufficiently in the training of guidance counsellors who must become aware and more sensitive to Roma-related issues.

The results showed that when Roma youth are attending guidance-counselling classes in school they do not see the lesson as being intended for them. Additionally, they are unaware of the professions and occupations in society other than common ones such as plumbers, electricians, doctors or lawyers. They are unaware of the jobs to be done in society. The guidance counsellors, on the other hand, lack sufficient knowledge of Roma culture and the ability to speak Finnish with the Roma youth in a way that the Roma understand. As in the situation with social workers, the Roma have a lower level of Finnish competency, which causes difficulties in learning situations, social-work situations, and guidance counselling situations, among others. Professionals working with Roma should be aware of this and be able to adapt their communication styles to fit the situation.

Intervention 2 had many parts. An in-depth interview was conducted with Kirsi Florin, a Roma worker who is not a guidance counsellor by training but was asked by Child Protective Services to assist a 16-year-old Roma boy in completing his schoolwork. She developed her own style of guidance counselling to work with this young Roma boy. Consultation with Raimo Vuorinen, an international expert in lifelong guidance, also for persons at risk of under- or unemployment, was conducted to analyse the PAR data on lifelong guidance with the Rainer students and the interview with Kirsi Florin. Finally, the intervention included collaboration with the Ohjaamo One-Stop Centre, open to the general youth population. The centre includes the services of guidance counsellors, social services representatives and a person from social security who processes unemployment benefits. There are also workshops run at Ohjaamo, which is an integrating factor and adds more education in various areas. The counsellors at Ohjaamo have no special training regarding Roma culture.

Picture 2. Roma youth Natasia Lideman and Jasmi Florin together with Roma Worker Kirsi Florin at the One-Stop Centre



Source: LERI field expert, 2016

Lessons learned about Lifelong Guidance for the Roma

The result of the guidance intervention is that the Roma youth are now visiting the Ohjaamo programme in small groups with Kirsi Florin in order to become acquainted with the services offered. Additionally, the two workers from the Rainer programme will give a presentation at Ohjaamo about the Rainer programme and the Roma. After this, workers from the Ohjaamo programme will go to the Rainer programme to become more acquainted with the Roma youth to better understand their needs and challenges. Know-how on Roma issues existing in Jyväskylä should be transferred to other localities. Furthermore, the standard of guidance counselling offered by schools needs to be developed. An important part of the performance of this type of special service is coordinated research and development effort in this area.

Intervention 3: Improving Sustained Social Services for the Roma via KOSKE: the Centre of Excellence on Social Welfare, specialising in Roma Affairs

The Central Finland Centre of Excellence on Social Welfare¹⁹ is part of a network of nine centres established by governmental decree to develop social welfare services in Finland.²⁰ It is responsible for a wide range of services including child protection, drug abuse and mental health services, prevention and care of those with gambling addiction, geriatric care, and the reduction of discrimination. Additionally, it is the only centre in Finland that has been designated to include Roma issues as a special priority area. Its goal is that by 2017 Finland will be at the forefront of Europe in the equality and participation of Roma.

The goal of the intervention was to create a framework for the dissemination and promotion of good practice in Roma services by making use of the existing social welfare and multi-professional networks at local, regional and national level. The inclusion of the Nationwide Centre of Excellence network in the Roma network will, in the long term, increase the level of expertise in Roma issues among the social welfare professionals. The goal of KOSKE is to improve the standard of the basic services available to the Roma population offered by the municipalities and promote equality and non-discrimination. An important part of the performance of this type of special service is the coordinated research and development effort in this area. A major problem in realising this important goal is that, thus far, no funding has been allocated for the additional special Roma focus in KOSKE, while funding has been granted for the other areas obligated by the centre. Only 10 % of the KOSKE director's time was allocated for Roma issues, specifically in the Rainer project.

Social welfare professionals lack sufficient knowledge about the Roma in the training of social workers or in their professional development. Professionals in the social welfare sector need to get more acquainted and be more sensitive to Roma-related issues. Since social worker know-how on Roma issues is much greater in Jyväskylä than in other areas in Central Finland, the KOSKE centre will use its channels to transfer this know-how to other localities in Central Finland and beyond to the rest of Finland. The standard of the basic services available to

¹⁹ <http://koskeverkko.fi/etusivu/>

²⁰ www.socca.fi/in_english

the Roma population offered by the municipalities needs to be developed. An important part of the performance of this type of special service is coordinated research and development effort in this area.

The reason for this is that, even though the Kale are Finnish citizens, eligible for all social services, they have difficulties accessing them. They are either unaware of the services they are eligible for or, if they are aware, they have difficulties communicating their needs due to the inability of the social welfare professionals to speak in a style of Finnish that is understood by the Roma. Additionally, in questions regarding child services, the Kale fear that their children would be more readily be removed to foster care than non-Roma children. For these reasons the local Roma, civil society representatives, local activists and researchers, as well as some other local representatives, consider employment to be crucial in regards to everyday well-being and participation in life in Jyväskylä.

Participatory Action Research for KOSKE

For the LERI intervention, a theme meeting on how to develop KOSKE was held at the RWG with a special invitation to the wider Roma community and its stakeholders. In attendance were all the stakeholders of the RWG, including the Roma members of the RWG, and additional Roma participants who were invited in a general invitation. These included the workers of the Roma NGO Valoa Huomiseen (A Light for the Future).

The themes were, 'What is the role of KOSKE in the future of enabling the Finnish Roma and how would it be best to organise the social welfare services for the Roma community in the future? How should KOSKE fulfil its mandate as the Centre of Excellence on Social Welfare, specialising in Roma affairs? How does the local Roma community envision the functioning of KOSKE? In what areas should their services be improved and how? What changes in training, manpower, funding, time allocations would affect their results? What changes in the pre- and professional development of social workers are needed in Roma issues?'

The director of KOSKE presented her thoughts on the national centre, the Centre of Excellence on Social Welfare, specialised in Roma Affairs. The purpose of this discussion was to evaluate the plan and get input from the Roma community and other stakeholders to enable KOSKE to best serve the Roma community and on how continuity could be achieved to promote sustained improvement of social services for the Roma. After her presentation an open consultation with all the stakeholders took place. The meeting audio-taped.

Picture 3. Meeting with Roma activists and stakeholders to discuss the Centre of Excellence on Social Welfare, specialised in Roma Affairs



Source: LERI Field expert, 2016

A separate written data collection and taped interview also took place with Raili Haaki, current director of KOSKE and an interview with Kati Turtiainen, Senior Researcher at the Chydenius Institute whose teaching focus is on multicultural social work.

Lessons learned about the development of KOSKE

On the nature of the Centre of Excellence on Social Welfare, specialised in Roma Affairs, the LERI research identified the following.

- The primary task for the centre is to act as a mediator, as a 'translator of culture', between the Roma and the other actors in society, such as professional workers in social services and clients, researchers and other professionals so that a spectrum of views can be discussed.
- Familiarity with the Roma culture is important. It should also be noted that the Roma culture is constantly changing.
- It would be good if workers representing both the general population and the Roma were employed at the centre.
- In its own activities, the centre would implement the goal of integration.
- Integration begins with attitudes and is realised by working together for common goals!
- Jyväskylä is justifiably the right location for such nationwide activity. Years of effort have already been invested and an open and confidential approach has been created making a solid foundation for a nationwide development unit. It would be a good idea to describe and collate the work carried out over the years for background documentation.
- The Roma population has not been the object of sufficient research. Among the important tasks for the centre would be to chart research data, the Roma research carried out in our country, identifying any gaps, that is, needs for research, and begin to put together collaborative research. There would be a need for multidisciplinary and multiple types of research and development entities.
The future development centre could bring together good practice developed in Finland and further refine and support them for export to other countries (e.g. the Turom training model).

In summation, the LERI findings showed that for the success of the KOSKE Centre of Excellence on Social Welfare, specialised in Roma affairs, a genuine cooperation between the general population and the Roma is essential: it is based on real trust, working together and networking. For this reason, it is important that the Roma centre is included in the developmental structure of social and health affairs as a whole and does not stand as an isolated entity exclusively for the Roma. Similarities between the Roma and other Finns should be emphasised rather than differences. The centre should act as a forum for different people to meet, focusing on the development of permanent cooperation.

Intervention 4: Using International Roma Day to Affect Change in Attitudes towards Roma in the General Community

The main goals of the celebration of International Roma Day (8 April) in Jyväskylä is to build bridges between the Roma and non-Roma Finnish community, to enable opportunities to meet and to get to know the other members of the Finnish community as individuals. It is meant to provide an opportunity to bring the topic of the Roma to the forefront for positive exposure, for personal contact and in the media. The added visibility on International Roma Day is useful for bringing issues such as Roma human rights and social justice to public attention. An additional goal has been to strengthen pride in the Roma identity.

The International Roma Day celebration has been organised in Jyväskylä by the RWG since 2006. Media have been contacted each year and posters and beautiful, appropriate flyers made by a Finnish Roma artist have been made and distributed each year and a good programme including Roma entertainers, suitable for the purpose has been performed. The difficulty has been that while there has been wide attendance by the Roma population, local politicians and officials, the non-Roma Finnish public has not attended. Local radio and television news media and newspapers were contacted. Before the celebration Suur-Jyväskylän Lehti (the local free newspaper) and the staff newspaper for the workers of the City of Jyväskylä ran an article about Kirsi Florin alongside an invitation to the International Roma Day. The local radio station ran interviews during the Roma Day event. With each subsequent year, we have had better media coverage.

Picture 4. The Kale Music Group from Helsinki, Amengo Drom, received praise from all participants



Source: Kinnunen, 2016.

The International Roma Day celebration 2016 was held at the Multicultural Centre in Jyväskylä. The theme of the celebration was the presentation of the different Roma projects that are currently running in Jyväskylä. The idea was that the youth involved in the programme would present the projects; however, they were all too shy. A presentation was made on the LERI research and the Rainer project; this included a brief description of activities carried out as part of the LERI fieldwork implementation (e.g. PAR techniques applied, meetings held, progress in the research implementation and outcomes of any fieldwork activities).

The preparations for the day this year were carried out by the RWG, representatives of the KOSKE Centre of Excellence, the Rainer project and local authorities. The purpose of this event was to combat anti-Roma discrimination, as mentioned above, and to tighten the cooperation and understanding between the Roma and different actors involved in LERI. The RWG, the Rainer project, LERI and KOSKE were made more visible.

Picture 5. Participants at the International Roma Day celebration in Jyväskylä, 2016



Source: Kinnunen, 2016

There was a significant difference in the number of non-Roma participants attending the 2016 International Roma Day celebration compared to all previous years. While earlier there were no non-Roma who were not members of the RWG or their friends, local politicians or students from the Finnish Roma at the university, this year there were 28 non-Roma participants out of a total number of 78. That is, 36 % of those attending were non-Roma compared to 64% Roma. This is a great improvement compared with the handful of non-Roma in previous years. Having university students present in previous years was a great plus. Last year a journalism student, for example, wrote an article about the event as part of her class tasks. Student participation in this event should be expanded and their talents put to use in future celebrations.

An interview was conducted with a non-Roma participant to identify her knowledge about the event, her interest in attending and her thoughts on the programme. The respondent was a 54-year-old researcher at the university in the area of education. She reported that she had childhood friends who were Roma. When asked how she became aware of the event she was unsure but believed that she had seen an ad in the local newspaper. She was interested in diversity issues in general but she realised that she needed to know more. This was a good opportunity to know what happens with minorities in Jyväskylä. She knew that it was hard for the Roma even though they were born here and speak the Finnish language. The location of the International Roma Day celebration at the Multicultural Centre was known to her, and she decided to go and bring along another. The respondent's comments on the programme showed that she felt that the programme that we had in previous years and what was planned for this year was what she wanted. That is, hearing more of the Roma voice. In previous years there was more music and more Roma in the programme. This year the youth participating in the Rainer programme and LERI were to present their

programme but they felt too shy. Instead the programme coordinators and the LERI field expert presented Rainer and LERI. The respondent thought the Roma music performed was excellent.

Picture 6. Participants at the International Roma Day celebration in Jyväskylä, 2016



Source: Kinnunen, 2016

Picture 7. Participants at the International Roma Day celebration in Jyväskylä, 2016



Source: Kinnunen, 2016

Lessons learned about reducing prejudice via International Roma Day

International Roma Day is an excellent opportunity to bring the Roma to the forefront and for them to be seen in a positive light in the media. In the future, more active participation for students of all kinds from the university, the University of Applied Sciences and other institutions of learning such as those learning how to organise events and youth work should be brought in and involved as part of their studies. They, in the process, will become more aware of issues concerning the Roma, they will have an opportunity to meet the Roma and ponder how to implement aggressive marketing strategies in presenting the Finnish Roma in a positive light.

Intervention 5: Visiting Romani Mediators and Mother Tongue Teachers in Romani – ‘the Södertörn Model’

The fifth LERI intervention was based on a study visit to the Södertörn University in Sweden, where LERI participants from Jyväskylä were able to gain more knowledge about Roma education models in Sweden and visit Romani mediators and mother tongue teachers in Romanes. Visiting a variety of different Roma communities, familiarising oneself with their cultural values and attitudes towards education, and gaining more knowledge of Roma education models to be shared among the Finnish Roma can open one’s eyes to a wider understanding.

In Sweden the concept of who is Roma includes all the Roma living in Sweden from around the world. In 2012 the Swedish Government adopted a strategy for Roma inclusion 2012–2032²¹,

“Five pilot municipalities were chosen to collaborate to define ‘best strategies’, which could be disseminated across Sweden. ... a pilot project included the training of ‘bridge builders’, health communicators and increased knowledge on the extent of support given to Roma children in school”.

A two-day study visit was made to the Romani Mediators and Mother Tongue Teachers Programme at Södertörn University in Stockholm, Sweden in May 2016, by three members of the RWG, all of whom have been involved in LERI interventions, plus the LERI field expert, Kimmo Granqvist, from Helsinki University and the LERI field expert from Jyväskylä, Margaret Trotta Tuomi. It was intended that the visit to the programme be used to develop the KOSKE Centre of Excellence and to spread knowledge among the Jyväskylä Roma community, but due to the small percentage of time budgeted for Roma issues, the director was unable to take part in the study visit. The idea of the trip was to better understand the ‘big picture’ of Roma identity and inclusion. The visit to Södertörn raised discussions about the relationship with Kale Roma with the other Roma in Europe.

²¹ www.regeringen.se/informationmaterial/2014/09/a14.015 (www.government.se)

Picture 8. The LERI delegation from Finland (Tuomi, Kiiskilä, Granqvist, Florin) with Programme Co-director Christina Rodell Olgaç



Source: LERI Field expert, 2016

Christina Rodell Olgaç, co-director of the Södertörn programme, gave us a lecture on the background of the two-year programme and how the students were chosen for participation. Additionally, the LERI group was able to attend the classes and graduation of the students.

Picture 9. The students becoming Roma Mother Tongue Teachers in the higher education programme at Södertörn University, Sweden



Source: LERI Field expert, 2016

In order to be chosen for the programme the applicant had to be employed by a municipality. This encouraged the municipalities to employ Roma. Fifty per cent of the employees' time could be used for study in this programme and this time was paid for by the State of Sweden. Application to the programme was not organised according to common channels since the majority of the students had not completed secondary education. One of the goals of the programme was to put the Roma mediators on an equal footing with other professionals. During the two-year programme the course provided: 1) improved knowledge about the

Roma and Travellers, both now and in the past, along with the other national minority groups; 2) an understanding of the Swedish school system, its history, curricula, assessment and education for those with disabilities; 3) learning the minority perspective, socialisation, language, informal and formal learning; 4) specific school-related issues related to Romani children; and 5) presentation skills, among many other topics. According to the course participants, the results of the mediators' interventions in the schools showed a significant positive effect.

Lessons learned from the visit to Södertörn

The visit to Södertörn opened the question regarding the relationship of the Kale with other Roma in Europe. Just opening up the question is a significant step. While it is International Roma Day that is celebrated in Jyväskylä, very little attention has been given in the celebration of Roma other than the Kale Roma. This sentiment came through in an interview with a Roma participant. When asked what she had learned, she replied *"That all the Roma, from all the different parts of the world, all have the same problems"* and *"Earlier we were doing more in Finland but now there is good work going on in Sweden that we could learn from and possibly implement in Finland"*. When asked if she identified with the Roma students there, her answer was surprising. *"It was good to meet the Roma from other parts of Europe but I did not feel in any way 'akin' to them"*. This opened up a very interesting discussion about who she, as a Finnish Roma woman, felt akin to, other Finns, other Roma in Finland? She explained that the Roma in Finland live according to groups of certain families in different parts of Finland. Around the city of Oulu in the northern part of Finland you will find two or three Roma families, in other cities it will be other families, also in Jyväskylä. Each group has small differences in how they apply or interpret Kale culture. This division may be as a result of a feature of Finnish Roma culture: that if there have been problems between two families, one of the families must move away; they cannot live in close proximity. The majority of Roma who are religious are members of one of two churches in Finland that have not had a history of discrimination against the Roma. When one of these churches has a national event, there greater comradery seen among the Kale.

This description of who is 'kin' to the Finnish Roma opens up a new understanding of the sense of isolation felt by the Roma in Finland. For those in Jyväskylä, identity centres around the 400 Kale found in Central Finland.

As already mentioned, since the number of non-Finnish Roma in Jyväskylä is unknown to the city authorities or the local Kale Roma and no outreach to foreign Roma has been made, a common Roma identity has never even been considered. Based on the experiences of the LERI intervention participants, many possible outcomes could occur within the Roma community and in the RWG. Could this be part of a step towards the widening of the identity of Kale Roma to see themselves as part of a wider whole? Will this have an effect on how the RWG identify who is included in the Roma Community of Jyväskylä? A presentation on the visit to the Södertörn programme was given to the RWG by the LERI field expert. The RWG made a decision to include non-Kale Roma in the next International Roma Day celebration. It will be interesting to see the full impact the Södertörn trip will have on Jyväskylä, Finland in the Future.

What was good and how to make it better

A synthesis of what was learned through the LERI research and a way forward is illustrated in Figure 3. It includes the LERI local interventions that were initially investigated and the two new interventions that were either completely new or were not completely new initially.

Positive Self-Identity

Starting with Intervention 1, here described as Positive Self-Identity, it can be noted that the barriers for school completion and success in an appropriate occupation are both internal and external. The trauma that Roma youth feel about their inadequacy to succeed in school, work and life in general was apparent. They greeted the support groups, with tutors to help them understand the assignments and to liaise with schools, with a sense of relief; they wanted to complete school and, when they realised that this was the purpose of the support groups, they readily participated.²² Home visits by their tutors added the support that they needed from home. This, however, was not enough; LERI showed that the feelings of inadequacy are limited to the level of today's school assignment. Their responses showed multi-levelled feelings of inadequacy.

5. Analysis, discussion, lessons learned

The external discrimination of the Roma is not the only problem. Not only a feeling of insecurity or low self-esteem, or the common impatience with delayed gratification found in many youth, but the pernicious effects of prejudice, the results of which present as a multi-levelled, self-defeating inner voice gnawing away at the self-respect of the Roma. It showed the multileveled feelings of inadequacy experienced by the Roma youth, feelings that need to be dealt with at each and every level. Prejudice works in a malicious way on the mind of the person being discriminated. The self-fulfilling prophecy, that what you are told you are is what you will become, was discussed with the Rainer students. The 'Blue-Eyes/Brown-Eyes Experiment' by Jane Elliott is an excellent example of materials which would be excellent to use with the Rainer youth and their parents.

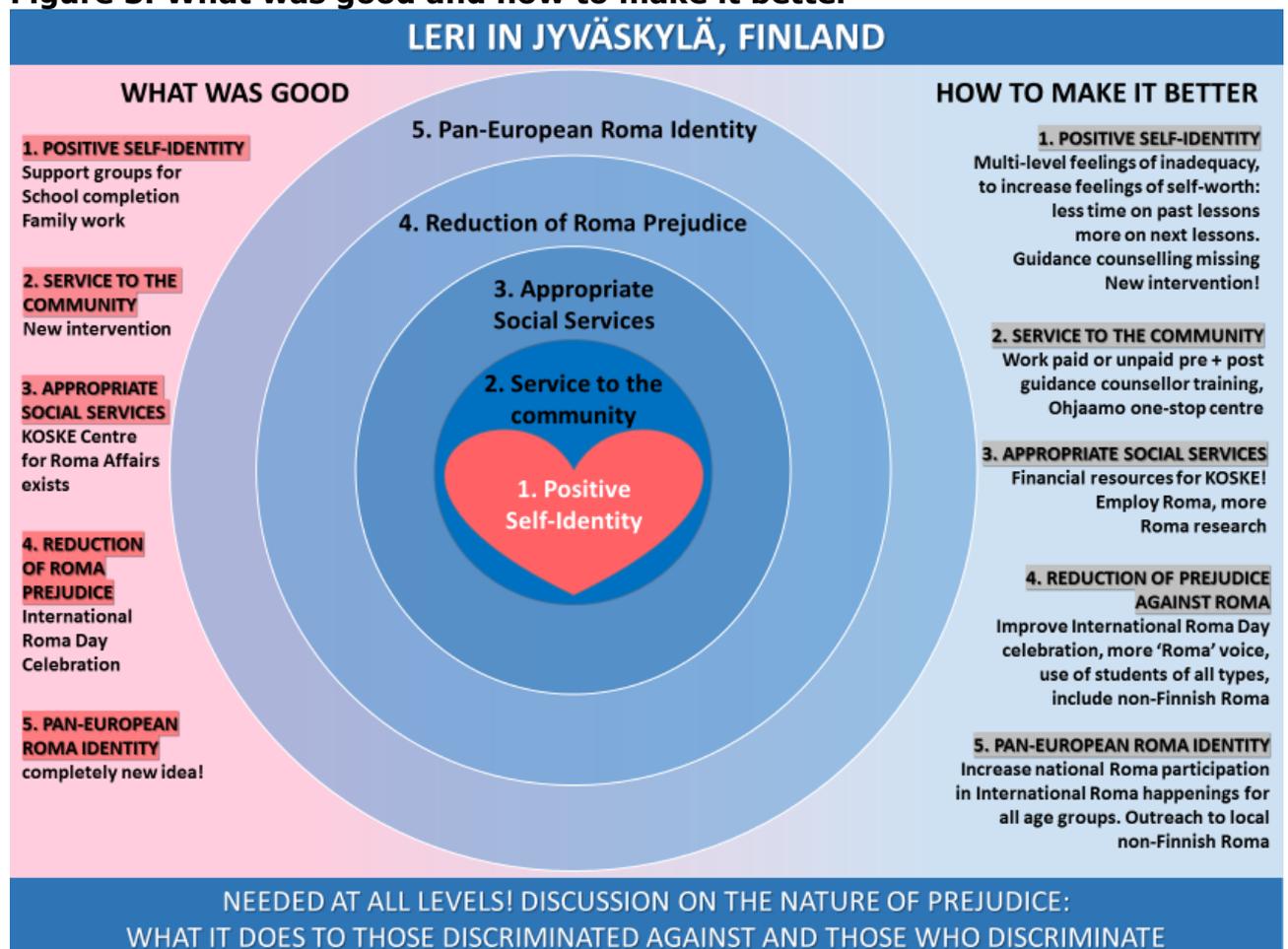
Jane Elliott was a third-grade school teacher in a small town in Iowa, USA. The day after the assassination of Dr Martin Luther King she decided to undertake an exercise with her students to teach them about prejudice. She divided the students into those who had blue eyes and those who had brown. During the first week of lessons the blue-eyed children were given extra privileges and constantly told in front of the whole class that they were smarter, nicer, more energetic and better than the brown-eyed children. The brown-eyed children were told in front of the class that they were lazy, stupid and bad children.²³ At the end of the first week the blue-eyed children were tested and obtained high scores. The brown-eyed children took the same test and achieved very low scores. At the beginning of the second week, the teacher said that she had lied and it was actually the brown-eyed children who were smart, good and respectable children worthy of special privileges and it was the blue-eyed

²² Roma young man age, 17.

²³ See the documentary film 'Blue-Eyes/Brown-Eyes Experiment' featuring Jane Elliot.

children who were lazy, ignorant and naughty. It was the blue-eyed children who were the brunt of criticism for the entire second week. At the end of the second week, the blue-eyed children scored very poorly and the brown-eyed children achieved high scores. Elliott conducted this experiment each year with her third-grade class and had similar results. A documentary film was made of the experiment. This exercise is quite often used now in workplace diversity training. Indeed, any programme that focuses on a reduction of prejudice, such as the five levels of LERI interventions shown here, should include a better understanding of what prejudice is and how it affects both those discriminated against and those who discriminate.

Figure 3. What was good and how to make it better



Source: LERI Field expert, 2016

Service to the Community Lifelong guidance was not initially identified as an area of need. It was only through the LERI PAR consultation with the 15–25 year-old youth that there is a great need for development in the training of guidance counsellors at both the pre-professional and professional development level. Surprisingly – or sadly, perhaps not surprisingly – Roma youth in occupational guidance counselling classes do not recognise the discussion of future occupations as being intended for them. They do not envision themselves ever getting a job. They also lack awareness of what occupations exist in society beyond the basics. Guidance counsellors lack cultural competence regarding the Roma, and the ability to speak in a way with Roma youth that they understand.

Visits by the Rainer participants to the One-stop Ohjaamo programme, and other programmes for the youth of the general population that are intended to enhance guidance counselling for the general public are valuable. Know-how on Roma issues existent in Jyväskylä should be transferred to other localities. The standard of guidance counselling offered by schools needs to be developed. An important part of the performance of this type of special service is the coordinated research and development effort in this area.

The development of lifelong guidance standards on an international level is essential. The training of guidance counsellors needs to include both theoretical and hand-on experience in working with Roma youth and adults, to learn how to adapt their communication to a Finnish that the Roma youth and adults understand and to open up an awareness of occupations available in society at large, an area that is as yet unknown to the Roma. The standards of guidance counselling offered in schools should be developed to include the needs of Roma youth.

Appropriate Social Services

Years of effort have been invested in Jyväskylä in the RWG to create a solid foundation of collaboration with Finnish Roma, justifying Jyväskylä as the best place for a nationwide development unit in Roma affairs. It would be valuable to document this process, which has taken place over the years, for background documentation. A primary task for the KOSKE centre for Roma is to act as a mediator, as a translator of culture, between the Roma and the other actors in society, such as professional workers in social services, researchers and other professionals, so that a spectrum of views can be discussed. Genuine cooperation between the general population and the Roma based on trust, collaboration and networking is key. Similarities between the Roma and other Finns should be emphasised rather than the differences. The centre should act as a forum for different people to meet, focusing on the development of permanent cooperation. The Roma centre should not be a separate entity exclusive for the Roma but included in the developmental structure of social and health affairs as a whole.

Familiarity by the non-Roma Finns with the Roma culture is essential. This is especially true for social work professionals who are obligated to provide services for all Finns, including the Roma. This is an ongoing process since the Roma culture is constantly changing. Members of both the Finnish general population and the Roma would be employed in the centre and implement the goal of integration. Integration begins with attitudes and is realised by working together for common goals. Sufficient research has not taken place on the Finnish Roma population. Among the important tasks for the centre would be to chart research data on the Kale, identify research needs and initiate collaborative research. Multidisciplinary and a variety of research methodology would be useful. In the future, the development centre could bring together good practices developed in Finland, and further refine and support them for export to other countries (e.g. the Turom training model).

Lack of funding has had a significant impact on the functioning of the centre. The director saw what needed to be done but did not have the time to do it. She could not take part in all meetings of the RWG or the trip to Södertörn University, both of which would have been very useful. More resources need to be allocated to the Roma centre if it is meant to work properly.

Reduction of Prejudice against Roma

International Roma Day is an excellent opportunity to bring the Roma to the forefront, to make contact with others in the community and to gain positive media attention. In the future this opportunity should be exploited by the University of Applied Sciences and other institutions of learning such as those teaching how to organise events. Those studying to become youth workers should be involved as part of their studies as an opportunity to learn. Media students will become more aware of issues concerning the Roma, will have an opportunity to meet the Roma and ponder how to implement aggressive marketing strategies in presenting the Finnish Roma in a positive light. Additionally, it is an excellent opportunity to strengthen a positive Roma identity. In the future Roma other than Kale Roma could be invited to take part in International Roma Day.

Developing a Pan-European Roma Identity

When the LERI research started, an intervention to visit Sweden's Romani Mediators and Mother Tongue Teachers in Romani in the higher education programme at Södertörn University was planned in order to learn more in the development of KOSKE. In reality, the visit to Södertörn was very thought-provoking because the two-year programme included representatives of all the Roma groups found in Sweden. Also, the fact that Sweden's government set a goal of 20 years to achieve Roma inclusion in their country showed that it realises how much time and effort is involved in the process.

It is not known how the programme in Sweden will affect Jyväskylä, Finland, but if this impact does realise itself it could be a slow and lengthy process. "Who am I?" and "What is my reference group?" are questions each of us asks ourselves. The answer is that there is not one reference group but rather a multitude of reference groups at all levels from the level of the individual, the family, the neighbourhood, ethnic group, nationality(-ies), the list can go on and on. Feelings of safety and identity are intertwined in these questions. It is a process that only the Roma, and each of us, must undertake for ourselves. More trips, more visitors and more exchanges would be valuable in the future.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

Across Europe all Roma suffer from the same problems: discrimination, lack of education, unemployment, poverty and over incarceration to name a few. Yet these external results of discrimination are not the most debilitating. Those are the insidious effects that creep inside your head telling you, confirming to you that you are nothing, that you are bad. These voices are somehow passed down from generation to generation, keeping generation after generation stuck in the thick mire of mud; these voices affect not only thoughts but actions.

The results can be seen in failures in education, employment, following the law and in life. Education, guidance, social services and media professionals need to understand the multileveled challenges which face their Roma clients and adjust and hone their skills appropriately. The surrounding Finnish culture needs to significantly change to see with joy how lucky we are to have some Roma spice

in our midst. Indeed, we can all learn so much from the experiences and the talents of the Roma.

These internal voices must be stilled by both internal and external forces. Stilled by support groups, positive media from Roma events, understanding the nature of prejudice, getting a foothold on an appropriate job with suitable guidance counselling, having appropriate social services and getting out of your own environment to see other Roma and what solutions they have created in their endeavours. Often when we see others with low self-esteem we can recognise that it is unjustified much more easily than in ourselves. This can perhaps be the first step in self-awareness.

7. Additional Information

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