

Local engagement for Roma inclusion

Locality study Strasbourg (France), 2016

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1. Executive summary

The LERI local research in Strasbourg¹ focused on strengthening the capacity of the Roma EU citizens living in France, residing in temporary integration areas², to engage and take an active role in developing, implementing and evaluating projects, hence to give them “a voice”. Implemented in cooperation with the Roma Mission of the City Council and active NGOs in the field, the project combined capacity-building activities, such as expression and discussion groups, with participatory workshops of social theatre, cooking, photography and music, some of which targeted Roma children while others Roma adults.

The project sought to build communication between the local authorities, the NGOs and the Roma communities in order to make participation meaningful. In particular, the LERI research promoted closer integration of the Roma people in Strasbourg by supporting them in expressing themselves and in improving their level of French language. The latter is a pre-requisite for accessing the labour market and housing or social benefits in France. Most of the activities targeted residents of the two integration areas in Strasbourg, both Roma and non-Roma, most of whom originate from Romania.

The results of the locality study show that it is possible to set up activities and projects with the Roma community, not just for them. These projects contribute to their progress towards autonomy and accompany their integration process in the French society and the recognition of their equal rights as EU citizens. While a fully participatory process was difficult to implement, the key recommendation of the study is to put the focus in Roma inclusion projects on laying the foundation for empowerment of Roma people so that they can fully participate in developing projects in the future.

Keywords/Tags: Temporary integration areas; Roma community; social theatre; participatory workshops; empowerment of Roma; expression groups; City Council.

¹ The LERI research in Strasbourg has been implemented in two phases. The first phase took place in 2015 under the direction of the previous local field expert (who unfortunately had to withdraw from the project due to health problems). The second phase of the LERI research started in April 2016 and was carried out by the local field expert, Myriam Niss. Therefore, the present case study presents a comprehensive analysis of both the activities implemented in the first phase of the LERI research and findings from the second phase of the research project implemented in May-July 2016 and which continued during August-September 2016. Given that the local field expert, Myriam Niss, was not involved in the first phase of the project, this report is based on findings from interviews she carried out with participants and key stakeholders of the LERI research.

² Known as ‘insertion spaces’ [*espaces d’insertion*], which is how they are called by the City Council of Strasbourg.

2. Description of the local context

Roma communities in Strasbourg

In 2013, Strasbourg had 280,114 inhabitants and the *Eurométropole de Strasbourg* (Greater Strasbourg) had 483,194 *inhabitants*³. Strasbourg has been classified as the 3rd city of France for its quality of living⁴. On the other hand, Strasbourg is one of the ten cities in France with the highest inequality⁵. A thorough diagnostic has been produced by the municipality of Strasbourg in June 2011⁶. This diagnostic shows that although Strasbourg has a relatively high level of welfare on average, the number of mono-parental families is increasing and so is the average price of rent as well as the deteriorating unemployment rate that weighs especially heavily on young people, on foreigners and on unqualified people. This leads to severe gaps between different groups of the population: the Roma people in particular often cumulate different challenges and, as a result, find themselves at risk of social exclusion or poverty.

Strasbourg has been, throughout its history, a city of crossings. It is also imbued with Rhine humanism, which makes it an open city for foreigners and visitors. Located on the border with Germany, Strasbourg is a cosmopolitan town, with 45,000 students and the presence of European institutions (Council of Europe, European Parliament, Court of Human Rights).

In relation to immigration, the present municipality of Strasbourg has assessed in a recurrent way its values of inclusion, its willingness to reduce inequities and its commitment to fight discrimination. There are plenty of associations and NGO that work specifically to improve the situation of immigrants.

The French law does not allow for collecting statistics of population based on ethnicity. This is why there are no official estimates of the number of Roma people in France. All estimates are based on self-declared reports and according to the spoken languages. This being said, it is estimated that there are about 5,000 Roma people living in Strasbourg. Among them, about 3,000 are Manush (since 1424), about 500 Gypsies from the south of France (settled in the region 50 years ago), and about 500 Yenish. They are all French citizens. About 1,000 Roma have recently arrived from Eastern European countries, mostly from Romania while some come from Hungary and Bulgaria. This number includes all the Roma EU citizens who have been living in Strasbourg for some time and those who are living in flats or houses with their families, hence already being integrated as citizens of Strasbourg. On average, the Roma EU citizens living in Strasbourg are rather poor and have low education levels.

³ Insee (Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques) (2013). *Recensement de la population [Population census]*. Available at: <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/2021173?geo=COM-67482>

⁴ European Commission (2015). *Quality of life in European cities*. Available at :

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/studies/pdf/urban/survey2015_en.pdf

⁵ Observatoire des inégalités (2011). *Qui sont les pauvres en France? [Who are the poor in France?]* Available at : http://www.inegalites.fr/spip.php?page=comprendre_outilspourcomprendre&id_article=1372&id_rubrique=207

⁶ Direction des Solidarités et de la Santé (2011). *Les inégalités à Strasbourg. Synthèse du diagnostic [Inequalities in Strasbourg: A synthesis of the diagnostic]*. Available at:

<http://media.strasbourg.eu/alfresco/d/d/workspace/SpacesStore/9490a298-c9c7-48b3-a4b7-9225438366dc/synthese-diagnostic-inegalites-strasbourg.pdf>

From the 5,000 Roma living in Strasbourg, about 250 reside in “temporary integration areas” (in Espace 16 and Espace Hoche) while about other 50 Roma people live in “tolerated” camps, that is they are allowed to stay there but do not benefit of any specific social help on the area.

Description of the local context

The presence of illicit camps where Roma EU citizens reside in the territory of Strasbourg dates back to the early 1990s, when the migration of Roma populations to the city began to be perceived⁷. This phenomenon increased in 2007 with the enlargement of the EU to include the Central and Eastern European countries, with significant numbers of poor Roma willing to migrate in search for a better life. At the same time, the former President of France, Nicolas Sarkozy, implemented the initiative known as „l’aide au retour”⁸ („help to return”), which consisted of EUR 300 per adult and EUR 100 per child proposed to unemployed foreign EU nationals⁹ if they returned to their native country.

This problem was mainly addressed by seeking to increase the reception capacity and the number of settlement areas, and thereby to reduce the need for illicit camps. The change of local governance in 2008 allowed a new dynamic to emerge. The Deputy Mayor remembers „to have discovered lawless areas, Roma settlements along the highway...”¹⁰ The City Council then decided to have a “humanitarian policy but step by step, not to awaken extremism”. This means that the municipality considered measures to improve the life conditions of the Roma EU citizens living in slums: this decision led to the implementation of the two “temporary integration areas”. After Sarkozy’s speech about immigrants and the Roma¹¹, the municipality of Strasbourg wanted to take an opposing view and develop a strong Roma inclusion policy.

In September 2011, the Mayors’ Summit, in cooperation with the representative of the general secretary of the Council of Europe for Roma issues, brought together all representatives from the municipalities and regions of Strasbourg, European institutions and Roma organisations, in order to exchange experiences and practices to support the integration of the Roma population¹². The debates were mainly focused on the relation between local and regional authorities and the Roma community. They highlighted the necessity of implementing active policies to fight against exclusion and discrimination.

⁷ Personal interview with a representative of the Roma Mission, 6 May, 2016.

⁸ Government of France (2006). Order N° DPM/ACI3/2006/522 of 7 Decembre 2006. Available at: http://www.gisti.org/IMG/pdf/circ_dpmaci32006522.pdf

⁹ In practice, it was mostly Roma EU citizens who were affected.

¹⁰ Liberation (2011). Roms : quand les mairies expérimentent des solutions concrètes [Roma : when the Mayors experiment concrete solutions]. Available at: http://www.liberation.fr/societe/2013/06/11/roms-quand-les-mairies-experimentent-des-solutions-concretes_909584

¹¹ Liberation (2010). Sarkozy dégage les clichés et cible les immigrés [Sarkozy releases clichés and targets immigrants]. Available at: http://www.liberation.fr/france/2010/07/31/sarkozy-degaine-les-cliches-et-cible-les-immigres_669574

¹² Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (2011). Summit of Mayors on Roma in Strasbourg ‘Building mutual trust at the grassroots’ on September 22, 2011. Note available at: http://www.coe.int/t/congress/Sessions/20110922-Roma-Summit/default_en.asp

Roma integration strategy in Strasbourg

In 2011, the City of Strasbourg established the first 'temporary integration area' called „Espace 16“, a site located behind the railway station, very close to the city centre. Espace 16 was set up as a result of a complex social analysis done by the City Council concerning the Roma population and their integration needs. It was meant to provide a temporary solution to an emergency situation, namely the evacuation of various illegal settings which were considered unsafe due to risks from insalubrity and fire¹³. The main purpose of these municipal 'temporary integration areas' is to integrate the Roma population and improve their housing conditions. The rationale of the municipality was to offer a temporary housing solution response as a way to improve living conditions over longer term. The idea was to implement a step-by-step process of integration, with social workers monitoring the progresses and helping in the process:

1. to help Roma people learn the French language,
2. to help them find a job, *and*
3. to help them get access to housing in an apartment and, therefore, leave the integration area.

This step-by-step process of integration starting with the temporary solution of the integration area was designed as a sustainable improvement of the living conditions of the Roma.

Espace 16 accommodates a constant number of people (about 140 people, living in families). This consistency however, conceals some significant fluctuations over time. For example, the closure of the 'small forest' slum in early 2015 resulted in 11 families (45 people) being relocated to Espace 16. Espace 16 provides a safer area and is guarded during the night. The association Horizon Amitié, in an agreement with the City Council, has an on-site office that monitors these communities for sustainable integration. Horizon Amitié's social team focuses on social integration, children's education for community life and the integration of the different social codes of France.

In January 2013, the City Council set up a new administrative department, the Roma Mission. The objective was *„to have a real strategical framework for the inclusion of Roma, according to the orientations and values of the French State, of the European Union and the Council of Europe, with innovating and co-built answers to issues of security, health, education, employment“*¹⁴.

The Roma Mission has multiple aims such as:

- To improve collaboration between stakeholders in the area of Roma integration,
- To promote the employability of the Roma population,
- To monitor the housing conditions and eliminate slums.

¹³ Personal interview with Deputy Mayor, March 2015.

¹⁴ Extract of the official text by the Deputy Mayor before the Roma Mission was implemented.

The outcome of the 2014 local elections and 2015 national elections provided the political stability needed for Strasbourg to continue with the implementation of Roma inclusion projects, including the local LERI interventions.

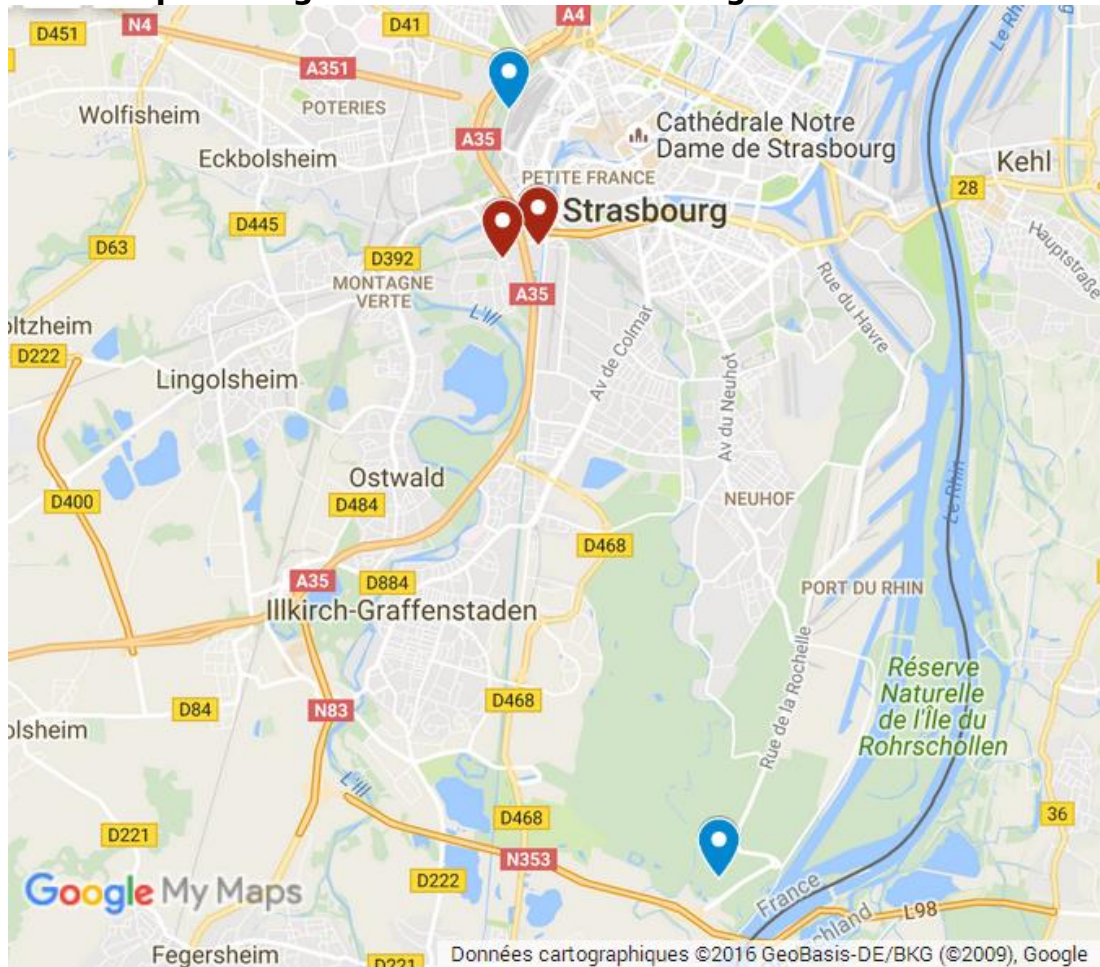
In December 2013, the Roma Mission installed the second temporary village, l'Espace Hoche, in a military field, to replace the illegal encampment of 'St Gall', located in the quarter of Montagne Verte, 2 km west of the city centre. L'Espace Hoche, distant from the city (15km) has approximately twenty (20) caravans housing 108 people and receives continuous social support from the Red Cross and the Roma Mission. The Red Cross is permanently on-site and there is a permanent guard in place. The Roma Mission is also on site almost daily. Sanitary facilities, washing machines, a communal relaxing area, an activity room for children, and waste management facilities have all been installed on the site. However, the site is temporary and was motivated by the urgency for a solution to the conditions of the St Gall camp. Such circumstances made it difficult to develop social work assessments. The entire population of the St Gall camp, without exception, was transferred to l'Espace Hoche.

This area was not chosen by the municipality, but it was the only emergency possibility of finding a more adequate space for Roma to relocate from the slums where they were living in St Gall, in precarious tree houses and in tents. It makes it complicated for the Red Cross to manage this distance (to school, to work, to down town) because there is no public transport going there. In 2016, a ground located closer to the city has been bought by the municipality, with better accessibility to public transport. It is now being prepared and developed with the perspective of moving the residents of Espace Hoche to this new Espace Villette (Strasbourg-Cronembourg) in summer 2017.

There are currently (as of June 2016) only two 'tolerated' camps left, which are informal settlements, not administered or overseen by the municipality, but which have not yet been subject to forced evictions: Impasse de l'Ecluse and Bretelle de l'Elsau. The residents of these camps have contracts with the City Council: they are expected to move in December 2016, some of them to flats in the city, while the rest of them to one of the temporary integration areas. The small camp of Hungarians, rue de Rothau, (5 families) is now empty, as some of its residents found apartments while others had the opportunity to move to Espace 16¹⁵.

¹⁵ Personal interview with representative of Roma Mission, 5 April, 2016.

Figure 1. Map of integration areas in Strasbourg



Source: Google maps 2016

- 📍 Espace 16
- 📍 Impasse de l'Écluse
- 📍 Elsau
- 📍 Espace Hoche

Legend:

- 📍 Blue: integration areas
- 📍 Red: "tolerated" camps.

In these 'temporary integration areas', Roma people live in a close-knit community, rather segregated from the rest of the city. Except for the children who go to school, they have few contacts with the other residents of Strasbourg. In Espace 16, though, they live close to the Strasbourg train station and they walk in the streets and parks nearby and accompany their children to school. In Espace Hoche, where the community is far from Strasbourg City, Roma people only have contacts with the members of that local community, the social workers and the guards.

In these integration areas, Roma people, as a rule, stay only two years because *"this is the necessary time to understand the codes of the host society"*, as the City of Strasbourg wants to *"involve people in the answers to their requests"*¹⁶. The Roma Mission applies these objectives to the areas of integration: *"The idea is that people have to work together. For example, even if people are not used to*

¹⁶ Personal interview with representative of Roma Mission, 5 April, 2016.

the collective, there are no employees for the cleaning, they have to do it themselves, collectively ¹⁷.

Contracts are signed between the residents of both spaces and the City Council with some strict requirements being stipulated. They apply a few requirements for living in the integration area: a fee of 30 Euro rent for the caravan, which is lent to them; the requirement to send their children to school; and to live „a quiet and peaceful social life on the site“.

Development of the LERI research in Strasbourg

Strasbourg joined the LERI research at a later stage than the other municipalities. The City Council of Strasbourg found out about the research initiated by FRA in 2014. As it was introduced to them, LERI aimed at *"putting in network cities which have interesting practices on the question of the Roma populations"*¹⁸. The link was established by the LERI field expert in Lille, who was aware that good practices were taking place in Strasbourg concerning the active policy of the municipality towards Roma integration. As a LERI contact point of FRA in France, he was looking for such good practices in other cities in the country.

The policy officer in charge of the Roma Mission in Strasbourg, a committed activist, explained how the Roma Mission became interested in collaborating in FRA's LERI research:

*"I have always defended, in my commitments, the idea that it was necessary to associate the people with their future and with their fate. And I was very curious to see how other countries approached the problem of the Roma migrants"*¹⁹.

This policy officer was committed to pushing the issue forward. With the support of the Deputy Mayor in charge of social issues, he managed to convince the municipality to develop a strong local policy for Roma integration. As a result, the Roma Mission was created.

The Roma Mission has brought a valuable contribution to the LERI research. To this day, it is the key promoter of ideas and projects aimed at the Roma living on the temporary integration areas (and those who have already left the integration areas and are living in apartments) in Strasbourg. This mind-set has facilitated the collaboration in the LERI research in Strasbourg.

The promoters of the LERI research were interested in what was already going on in Strasbourg²⁰. Thus, it is important to note that the entry of Strasbourg into the LERI research is linked, in addition to developing activities and having a participatory, active and research-based approach, to an expectation of exchanges between cities and countries concerned by the programme.

Retrospectively, the person in charge of the Roma Mission reported: *"The LERI research and the project of the City of Strasbourg were on the same wave*

¹⁷ Personal interview with representative of Roma Mission, 5 April, 2016.

¹⁸ Personal interview with representative of Roma Mission, 5 April, 2016.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

length: the strong interest in improving the lives of the Roma people was at the core".²¹ Besides, artistic projects with associations had already been started. The LERI research could also give the opportunity, by its financial participation, to implement more activities aimed at developing Roma people's empowerment, expression and self-consciousness.

Mapping of stakeholders and institutions in the local LERI research

A well-established network of local stakeholders in Strasbourg contributed to designing, implementing, evaluating and managing the LERI research. The stakeholders and their roles are summarised in the table below, as per corresponding area of integration.

Table 1. Overview of stakeholders and their roles in the LERI research in Strasbourg

Role in the local LERI research	Stakeholders in Integration area 1 'Espace 16'	Stakeholders in Integration area 2 'Espace Hoche'
Management	LERI local team + Roma Mission of the City Council	
Design of activities	LERI local team Roma Mission	
Implementation of activities	Horizon Amitié: mediation, social worker helping to recruit participants to the LERI activities	Red Cross: mediation, help with the recruitment of the participants, social workers participating in the LERI activities
Evaluation of activities	LERI local team	LERI local team

Source: LERI Field expert, 2016

The key stakeholders involved in the implementation of the LERI research in Strasbourg are:

- The Roma Mission who is the main funder and implementing body of the integration actions in the two integration areas.
- NGOs, including:
 - the **Red Cross**, managing Espace Hoche,
 - the humanitarian, self-help and social action association **Horizon Amitié**, managing Espace 16,
 - **Lupovino** (Lutte Pour une VI Normale), an association which "assists settled travellers" as its main objective, and organises French classes for the Roma EU citizens,
 - **AMSED**, Association Migration Solidarité et Echanges pour le Développement, assists people having social and professional problems of integration. Amsed managed the LERI's local research fund for interventions in the LERI research in Strasbourg,
 - The theatre company **La Companie Villathéâtre**, which organizes a theatre workshop in Espace Hoche. Since May 2016, the theatre

²¹ Ibid.

company **La Compagnie Les Foirades** has also become a partner of the LERI research by organising a theatre workshop with children, from mid-July to mid-August. So have the Direction de la Culture de la Ville de Strasbourg and the Theatre Espace K., which put at disposal free spaces for the rehearsals.

- The Roma communities themselves, which consist largely of migrants from Romania, from different families and groups, with some very recent arrivals among them. For reasons that reflect the precarious situation of the Roma communities in the two integration areas, few individuals living in these communities participate actively in the local governance structures.

Roma lack representation and input in local projects. The main local partner identified in 2015 was the city of Strasbourg (Roma Mission). However, in May 2016, the AMSED NGO agreed to take on the role of local partner in the LERI research and manage the budget for the local LERI interventions. AMSED is one of the main non-profit organisations working in the integration areas (the NGO has taken over the music workshop for children).

The local LERI research team

The LERI research in Strasbourg has been implemented in two phases. The first phase took place in 2015 under the direction of a local field expert. As it was necessary to have a local correspondent to help the City Council to implement activities, a field expert was selected between two proposals emanating from the Roma Mission. The selected field expert was a Romanian law graduate. She had already made a course (internship) at the City of Strasbourg. She started to work in interaction with the LERI local field expert in Lille. However, she unfortunately had to withdraw from the research due to health issues. Another field expert, Myriam Niss, continued to facilitate the LERI implementation as from April 2016, which corresponds thus to the second phase of the local LERI research that was implemented under the guidance of this new local field expert and assistance from a consultant on behalf of ICF Consulting Services²². The continuity of the project and of activities was ensured by the permanent involvement of the Roma Mission from the City Council. Nonetheless, the change of local field expert constituted a challenge in terms of transfer of acquired know-how and connecting the dots between the past and new activities of the LERI research. For this reason, the second phase of the local LERI research was a fresh start in many ways rather than a smooth continuation of past activities.

To support the Roma communities to engage and take an active role in studying the problems and the strategies for change, hence giving them 'a voice' in developing, implementing and evaluating the project that is meant for them, two members of the Roma communities – one living in a temporary integration area, the other having worked on the other space– were involved as 'co-researchers'. The aim was to ensure a collaborative fieldwork research that could feed into the monitoring and evaluation of the project activities. This helped to advance the purpose of LERI, which was to help to transcend existing power relations by

²² ICF Consulting Services is the contracting partner for the LERI locality studies, responsible for the implementation of the LERI framework contract. The consultant in charge of offering support on behalf of ICF for the Strasbourg Locality Study has been Bianca Faragau-Tavares.

creating opportunities, and providing means, for the Roma to become more actively involved in the design and implementation of the integration actions they are concerned with.

Main needs of the Roma population in Strasbourg and selection of the main focus of intervention

Preliminary needs assessment

The project began by listing and mapping the needs of the community in the key thematic areas of interest, in particular education, employment, housing and health. This mapping was then followed by and confirmed through a participatory needs assessment process. In a nutshell, what the LERI research did was to firstly identify the main needs of the Roma people living in areas of integration. On the basis of this participatory action research (PAR) needs assessment, the interventions were later implemented and confirmed the identified needs.

According to the preliminary PAR needs assessment carried out in 2015 based on stakeholder interviews²³, the main needs of the Roma communities in the two inclusion spaces are two-fold: need to access education and the need to access employment.

Need 1: access to education – focusing on young people

This is an area where progress has been made in recent years. Social workers within the Municipal Centre for Social Welfare, Mother and Child Protection, and from the Roma Mission, are on hand to promote the education of children living in the two integration areas. Together with the school inspectorate, school directors and teachers, they have achieved almost full school enrolment for all Roma children in Strasbourg. This registration is not only formal: the children have to attend school because this is a compulsory requirement in the contract with the municipality to be able to live in the integration areas.

Children and teenagers have easier access to the French language, because they go to school where they meet other children and have the opportunity to speak to them in French. Going to school is compulsory in France until the age of 16. This is also one of the requirements included in the contract which residents of the integration areas. However, Roma children experience educational difficulties because of their poor language and due to the lack of help from their parents. Hence, it was also important to them to have more opportunities and openings, such as the workshops proposed by the LERI research.

However, there is one important gap, the education of college-age students (16-18 years old). Very few places are available in the special pedagogical units that have been set up for non-French speaking students over 16 years of age (it should also be noted that school enrolment is not a requirement for this age group). Notwithstanding the improvements in recent years, additional support is still required for children from all age groups to succeed at school.

²³ The preliminary needs assessment was carried out in 2015 by the first local field-expert and consisted of a series of face-to-face interviews with stakeholders, including the City Council and the social workers on site.

Need 2: access to employment

The Roma Mission has given priority to the labour market integration of the Roma communities in the two integration areas. Access to work was improved after 1st of January 2014, when employment restrictions on Bulgarian and Romanian nationals were removed. Further steps were taken to strengthen this aspect of integration with the Sapin Decree²⁴, which facilitated access to the labour market for people living in illegal camps, including language lessons and professional integration. Progress has also been made in this area in recent years with language training and professional training courses provided to groups of persons selected in the two integration areas. The Association Lupovino in connection with the public employment services (DIRECTTE, Pôle Emploi) and partner companies (including insertion companies, like Emi-Inter, Emmaus, La Cité Relais, Au Port'Unes, etc.) have been actively involved in this work. Eighty (80) Roma persons were still in employment in April 2016. This was considered a big achievement by the City Council given the deeply rooted prejudices that were manifest among employers at the initiation of the action plan for employment of Roma. Access to employment is a key condition to access housing; 95 Roma persons moved from the integration areas into apartments over the last two years because they were able to find work and thus to afford living in apartments.

Confirmation of the needs assessment

Looking at the broader picture, access to education and employment are both conditioned by the very limited (in some cases non-existent) knowledge of the French language by the Roma people living in temporary areas of integration. Through improvements in both of these areas, the final goal was to improve life conditions and increase participation, autonomy and integration of the Roma people living in the integration areas. This was confirmed at the stakeholder meetings held during the FRA visit to Strasbourg in April 2016. One example is given by the representative of an insertion enterprise, 'Banque Alimentaire'²⁵, who insisted on the fact that the improvement of the French language knowledge through training courses offered by Lupovino and also due to motivation of Roma based on the positive experiences at workplace multiplying in the community, was crucial.

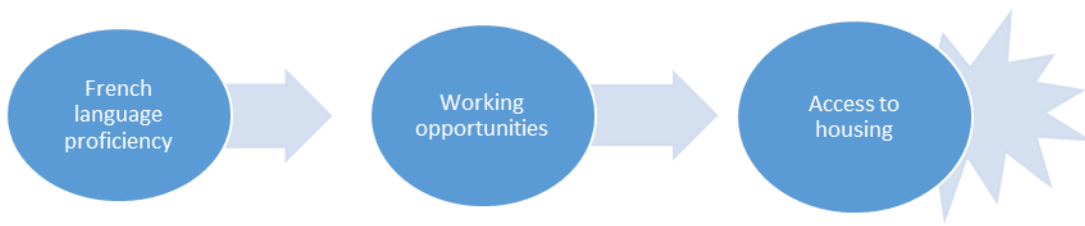
The local LERI research chose to address some of these priority needs. Its activities were implemented through the PAR needs assessment, which confirmed the already identified needs.

It identified a chain of integration: with language proficiency, one can reach employment (although it does not guarantee to find work). Later with employment, it becomes possible to obtain housing and thus to move out of the integration area into apartments.

²⁴ Government of France (2012). Arrêté du 1er octobre 2012. NOR: ETSD1235742A. [Ministerial Order of 1 October 2012.] Available at: <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000026483654&categorieLien=id>

²⁵The Banque alimentaire (Food bank) collects surplus of food in supermarkets to distribute them to organizations that work with needy persons. Banque alimentaire is also an "entreprise d'insertion", that is a place where disadvantaged people, with difficulties of professional integration, can find a temporary work (2 years maximum).

Figure 2. Chain of factors of integration



Source: LERI Field expert, 2016

This chain is illustrated by recent data: among the people who have been living in these two temporary integration areas, 45 Roma families have found social housing in apartments between 2014 and 2016. 80 Roma persons have found employment during the same period and are still at work at the time of the research.²⁶

To achieve integration into the French society and obtain equal rights, language proficiency is a necessity. Speaking the language of the host country facilitates the search for employment, as Roma families in Strasbourg often face heavy economic insecurity. Strasbourg hosts many very poor families who were forced to leave Romania because they could not have a decent life there. Some Roma people reported *"We came because we hoped to have a chance to improve our lives. It is less difficult than in Romania because there are associations that help us. But without work, it is hard"*.²⁷ To have a job in order to dispose of financial resources is a priority for the majority of Roma present in the integration areas. And employment is also an absolute need to have social rights and to have an access to social and healthcare.

However, living in a temporary integration area does not facilitate the immersion into a "normal everyday life". It is of course reassuring to be living close to people speaking the same language, but it also prevents people from having relations to the outside, the basic needs being met on the space, "inside". This observation, shared by all the local stakeholders and especially by the Roma Mission of the municipality, led to the conclusion of the importance of giving Roma people an opportunity to open themselves to other experiences and to meet different people and different situations. This area being temporary, the families have to prepare themselves to become true citizens of Strasbourg and to live in an apartment, with French and multicultural neighbours²⁸.

These needs had already been identified by the local stakeholders to be the main needs of Roma people living in the areas of integration. Some activities, initiated and coordinated by the Roma Mission, had already taken place to meet these needs: one example is the first theatre workshop in Espace Hoche, which had already started at the beginning of 2014. They have therefore been identified and confirmed through the PAR needs assessment phase.

²⁶ Personal interview with representative of Roma Mission, 15 May, 2016.

²⁷ Expression group of women in Espace Hoche, 25 June, 2016.

²⁸ Group interview of representatives of the areas Espace 16 and Espace Hoche, 17 May, 2016.

The PAR needs assessment implemented through targeted stakeholder interviews revealed a general agreement among the local stakeholders that the first step in the chain of integration and thus the basic need for Roma people was to improve their ability to speak the language, which could then help them in searching for a job. The decision was taken that the LERI interventions would focus mainly on improving the French language of residents of the integration areas in different and innovative ways.

In order to address these French language needs, a series of cultural activities were designed as part of the LERI intervention, including theatre, music and photography workshops.

The first theatre workshop in Espace Hoche, which had already started before the beginning of LERI, in 2014, corresponded exactly to these needs and these expectations²⁹. The following workshop (in 2015) was built on the same perspective, as the previous workshop proved that it was a real lever of expression. The workshop carried out in 2016 also established a continuity, though not with the same participants, since the residents of Espace Hoche are changing regularly.

The logic is the same as far as the music and the photography workshops were concerned. Although they might deal to a lesser extent with spoken and written language, these workshops dedicated to Roma children were aimed at encouraging their capacity of learning and at developing their memory (music and songs), their attention (photography and songs), their motivation for learning French and their self-esteem. These criteria are important for ensuring well-being in school.³⁰

3. PAR methodology employed

The aim of the LERI research in Strasbourg was to examine how the beneficiaries of these projects perceive that these interventions are being implemented, and whether the local communities (in particular the Roma) are involved in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The aim was to build communication and interaction between the local authorities, the NGOs and the Roma communities through PAR in order to make participation meaningful, and to learn what is working well and why.

To summarise, the following PAR techniques were used to carry out the LERI research in Strasbourg:

1. A series of face-to-face interviews with local stakeholders – local authority, NGOs and service providers working with Roma to identify what they consider to be the main issues;
2. Participatory activities that involve local Roma – residents of the two temporary integration areas – to promote closer integration, cohesion and mutual understanding between different sections of the local community:

²⁹ Group interviews with the representative of Roma Mission and with the theatre director, 15 May, 2016.

³⁰ Personal interview with school teacher (8 March, 2015) and with the photographer involved in the workshop (7 June, 2016)

- Capacity building activities, such as expression and discussion groups,
 - Participatory workshops aimed to increase the communication and dialogue between Roma, the local authority and the active NGOs;
3. For the monitoring and evaluation part of the project, focus groups, targeted interviews and participatory evaluation were applied. The rationale was to give the opportunity to Roma community members and local stakeholders to provide feedback on the planned/realized interventions.

The first PAR technique was implemented starting with the PAR needs assessment phase under the facilitation of the initial local LERI field expert. Participatory workshops were also implemented throughout the research in both phases. On the other hand, capacity-building activities (within PAR technique 2) and the third PAR technique were added only for the second phase and were implemented only after the second LERI field expert took over.

Therefore, the local integration activities took place in the form of participatory workshops: photography workshops for children, theatre workshops for teenagers and adults as well as song and music workshop for children. A cooking workshop was also organised in the framework of a large event in October 2015, themed "Roma families welcome you". This event was the highlight of the year 2015. Two theatre workshops and a group of expression have started in May 2016.

The participatory workshops, initiated by the Roma Mission, have been "adopted" by the LERI research. Concretely, this means that some project ideas which had been developed by the Roma Mission before the start of the LERI research, and the implementation of which showed initial success, were included in LERI with the agreement of all stakeholders. This is the case for the theatre workshops in Espace Hoche: the first session took place in 2014, before the LERI research kicked off in Strasbourg. It was implemented with the help of the social workers from the temporary integration area, who were able to identify participants and to inform them. The following theatre workshops in 2015-2016 took place in the local LERI research in the continuity of the first workshop initiated by the Roma Mission. They used the same methodology and had the help of the social workers to recruit participants from among volunteer residents, children and adults. Overall, all LERI interventions, with the exception of the expression groups, are a continuation of the activities that had been initiated by the Roma Mission.

The participatory methodology was partly effective during the workshops: on the one hand, it did call for improvisation and creativity from the side of participants, but on the other hand, the participatory approach did not apply to the initial decision about proposing the workshops, about its content and about the recruitment of its participants. This is because it proved not to be feasible to have a fully participatory methodology given the context of Roma people who are not used to proposing activities and whose priority is not to access cultural workshops, although the workshops may be beneficial for their needs of learning French.

As for the expression groups, or rather for the intent to implement them, the initial idea was to organize, with Roma co-researchers, thematic collective

discussions. This methodology could only be applied in Espace Hoche, with a spontaneous participation of members of the Roma community. In Espace 16, this methodology could not be implemented due to the reluctance of the administration of the area to having collective discussions led by a young Roma resident. The Roma co-researcher himself decided that it was not suitable in his position to invite the Roma residents to collective discussions. This is why a choice was made to conducting individual interviews instead of collective discussions in an expression group.

The rationale behind choosing some PAR methods and not others, has been to maximize the potential for Roma community members to engage and take an active role in the research, this being actually the main goal of the whole LERI research. However, for reasons that reflect the precarious situation of the Roma communities in the two integration areas, few individuals living in these communities participate actively in the local governance structures. Roma usually lack representation and input in local projects. For this reason, the PAR methods used in the LERI research were designed to be participatory and to ensure a collaborative fieldwork research that will feed into the monitoring and evaluation of the project activities. This was meant to help to transcend existing power relations by creating opportunities, and providing means, for the Roma to become more actively involved in the design and implementation of the integration actions they are concerned with.

The PAR methods chosen for the implementation of the LERI activities allowed for a qualitative rather than for a quantitative analysis. It is therefore difficult to evaluate, at this stage, their impact on the empowerment of Roma people. It could take some time after LERI research is finalised to be able to assess the real impact.

Ethical considerations

The LERI research in Strasbourg was targeted at helping to improve the situation of Roma residents of the two temporary integration areas, some of whom being in vulnerable situations. The implementation of the LERI research in Strasbourg took account of privacy issues, such as biographical and sensitive family information. The data gathered was managed and analysed exclusively by the members of the research project. All data from interviews, workshops and discussion groups was anonymised.

The potential adverse effects of the interventions had been carefully considered before the start of the research. From the stakeholder interviews carried out at the very beginning of the research, it was clear that in France it is not well perceived or legal to identify individuals by their ethnicity. It also became evident that the term 'insertion camps' has a negative connotation and thus should be replaced with 'integration areas'. This is meant to avoid discriminatory divisions since they target Roma people. For this reason, it was decided to make LERI activities inclusive and open to all residents of the temporary integration areas – whether Roma or migrant Romanians – so as to meet the needs of both those communities.

The activities were conducted in accordance with standard ethical procedures of informed consent for data protection, voluntary participation, anonymity and the right to withdraw at any point. For example, taking of photographs was not

systematically included among the methods for documenting the project because some residents of the temporary integration areas expressed uneasiness with having their photographs seen by others. Nevertheless, some pictures have been taken, with informed consent, and could be added to the documenting material. Moreover, the video filmed at the social theatre workshops asked for informed consent from participants and their parents before it was conducted.

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

Goals of the LERI research overall

The activities carried out in the framework of the LERI research aimed at enhancing the social inclusion of Roma people and improving their integration in four ways:

1. by improving the level of French language of adults, which in turn, can lead to better access to education and employment opportunities;
2. by providing thematic activities for young people and adults to improve their skills, learn about the traditions and customs in France as well as showcase their own traditions (i.e. their traditional music and dances, cooking etc.):
 - music,
 - theatre,
 - photography,
 - cooking
3. by increasing ties between Roma and non-Roma in the local community. The activities culminated in a series of cultural events designed to increase community cohesion and mutual understanding between Roma and non-Roma population. For example, the activities (PAR cycles 2-5) implemented in 2015 were presented at the cultural event organized by the City Council on October 18, 2015. A similar event was also organized on the 9th October 2016 where the results of the social theatre workshops were presented. About 300 people attended this event, which was very successful as far as the active participation was concerned. The partnership between the actors in both integration areas, the NGOs and the artists, proved to be smooth and fruitful. The music was provided by Papyros'n, whose young musicians had started a workshop in Espace Hoche: some Roma residents played and sang with them. During this festive afternoon, the outcomes of the different workshops organised in the framework of the LERI research were presented to the public: songs, theatre and the video "Il était un petit théâtre" [There was once a small theatre], which had been filmed at the end of the theatre workshop in Espace 16.
4. by empowering Roma to speak about their problems and share their views and opinions. This is expected to enhance their self-confidence and self-esteem, which is essential in their learning of the French language and of accessing further education and employment.

The timeline of activities implemented in the LERI research between May 2014 and August 2016 is illustrated in Figure 2 below. An overview of the LERI activities in each integration area is then presented in the Table 2 below.

Figure 3. Timeline of Activities implemented in the local LERI research



Source: LERI Field expert, 2016

Table 2. Overview of activities implemented in each integration area

Integration area 1 'Esp. 16'		Integration area 2 'Esp. Hoche'	
Activity	PAR method	Activity	PAR method
Music	Participatory workshop	Theatre	Participatory workshops
Cooking	Participatory workshop	Photography	Participatory workshop
Theatre	Participatory workshop	Cooking	Participatory workshop
Monitoring	Face-to-face interviews by local field expert	Monitoring	Face-to-face interviews by local field expert
Expression	Face-to-face interviews by co-researcher	Expression	Discussion group

Source: LERI Field Expert 2016

The implementation of the workshops was helped by some multipliers or facilitators, who were essentially the social workers who work for the NGOs present in the integration areas. This helped the project as these multipliers are known by the Roma community as a part of their everyday life. It takes times to

gain trust and to enter the codes of the community: the help of those multipliers was therefore very useful.³¹

No requests, neither about the activities which have been implemented nor about other interventions to implement eventually, have been expressed by the Roma residents themselves. This happened neither at the start of the LERI research in 2014-2015, nor during the second phase of the project initiated in April 2016. Some meetings and individual discussions were organised in both areas, to discuss the content of what activities could be carried out and what the expectations were. Roma residents expressed some ideas about what they saw as necessary for the activities to address: to help them improve their French language and to help them find work. These objectives had been defined in the needs assessments, according to the expectations of the beneficiaries.

When they were asked about their suggestions of activities that they could benefit from, some Roma people answered "*they enjoy what is proposed by the team*"³². The social workers of both areas and the Roma Mission confirmed: "*Roma people never come to an activity just to make us happy, they only come when they enjoy it*"³³. In the course of the workshops, there were recurrent discussions to adapt the schedules and the contents to participants' needs and expressed wishes.

The main objective of the LERI research being the participation of all stakeholders, including the Roma participants, in the planning and implementation of the activities, this may sound disappointing and not really satisfactory. However, the contextual situation should be noted: Roma are not used to participating as equal partners in projects and are not accustomed to being asked for their opinion, which makes their attitude explainable and understandable. Their political and social participation is limited. As they have not had opportunities in the past to participate in this way (with more equalized power relations), they have not acquired the capacity to do so. For this reason, it was first necessary to design interventions that allow for slowly building up the participatory capacity of the community as well as to empower them to share their voice. This new approach could have the potential for the future to enable Roma to also participate in other areas of political and civic life in a more meaningful and empowered way. On this basis and with more time and specific tools of empowerment, Roma people's capacity for participation could probably be improved in the years to come.

It should be noted that the key challenge for the LERI research in Strasbourg was to link the activities that were done under the previous fieldwork expert and the current one. For this reason, there is little knowledge of how the previously planned activities were changed or adapted, or at which stage they had to be changed in the process.

³¹ Observations of the local field-expert.

³² Personal interview with a participant of the social theatre workshop, Female, 35, May 18, 2016.

³³ Personal interview with representative of the Roma Mission, June 5, 2016

Interventions in the LERI research

Theatre workshops

At Espace Hoche:

1st workshop : May-June 2014

2nd workshop : 7 Sept-18 Oct 2015

3rd workshop: from June to October 2016 (still on-going)

At Espace 16:

Workshop: 11 July-11 August 2016

Objective

The theatre workshops aimed at improving participants' French language. Their objective was also to give more self-confidence and self-esteem to the participants. Another ambition of the theatre workshops, especially for those implemented in 2016, was to develop a collective voice among the participants.

Implementation

This activity was first organized by the Roma Mission. In early 2014, the Roma Mission had already recruited a professional theatre director, after becoming aware of a project with women migrants which had been publicly presented in a Strasbourg theatre. At Espace Hoche, many of the Roma men and women did not speak French at all, while others already spoke some French. The idea was to use theatrical work to learn and improve French language, by encouraging participants to tell their stories, where they come from, where they go and what their projects are. The activity concerned 15 men and women, who were invited by the Red Cross director of the integration area. The participants were not selected from a group, but only informed about the workshop and whoever wanted to participate was welcome. *"To understand each other, we used a mixture of French, Italian and Spanish, with reciprocal translations"*³⁴. The persons were speaking by showing objects and by involving them in the playing. *"It is a practice that works well, one learns at the same time the sounds of the language and the everyday vocabulary"*³⁵.

They presented this work to the public, at the very place where rehearsals were held, in a hangar a little apart from the living space with the caravans, in front of about 300 people coming from inside and also outside the integration area. There was an enthusiastic response from the spectators and the play ended in celebration.

The workshop was created by the persons who had been contacted initially, with the help of social workers on the site, and they mentioned: *"There was a kind of contract, to get an idea of who would come and who would not come"*³⁶. The theatre workshop took place in late afternoons, at the time when most people are present on the site and when it is convenient for most of them.

The main difficulty was the irregularity of the participants' presence at the workshop: "Even if they like to come to the workshop, it is never their priority if

¹⁷ Personal interview with stage director, May 25, 2016

³⁴ Personal interview with stage director, May 25, 2016.

³⁵ Personal interview with stage director, May 25, 2016

³⁶ Personal interview with stage director, May 25, 2016

they have other problems to solve, such as when they have to go to the doctor or when they deal with an administrative problem, when they travel to Romania even for a short time... they leave suddenly, sometimes without any warning."³⁷ Nevertheless, a core group of participants was created and only few dropped out from the workshop. About 10 people attended the workshop until the end.

The stage director also highlights the necessity of having some permanent person from the settlement, who could accompany the workshop from the beginning to the end. "One of the problems is also the organization of the activity, to gather people, to open the gate. Social workers are not numerous enough on the site and they have a lot to do. They do not have enough availability for the workshop"³⁸.

Outcomes

One of the key results of this experimental activity was that the participants enjoyed to come to this workshop within the integration area, which became a different place because "*it was no longer just a place to sleep*"³⁹. One of the participants reported that it was a great diversion for her to take part in the workshop because she had no other entertainment and that she was happy to join the group every week⁴⁰. "*The theatre, together with the French class, really helped me to have enough confidence to speak French*".⁴¹ In consequence, she found an internship as a cleaner and later she found a job. At the time of writing the study, she was about to leave Espace Hoche and to move into an apartment.

Another key aspect was the fact that the enthusiasm of the professionals leading the workshops was able to "transport" people out of their everyday routine and problems, by having them participate in a project that gives them a new dimension. The interventions valued the people and, even if participation can also at times bring some difficulties, the emphasis was on the positive aspects and this is what remains afterwards. The workshop also brought people together: theatrical activity has created links in the community, because the participants were doing something together.

Regarding language and employment, it is impossible to extrapolate the direct impact of the theatrical workshop. Although, some participants expressed it clearly and seem to have understood the "logic of the chain". "*I didn't speak French at all; it is in this workshop that I started everything*"⁴².

The second workshop, conducted by the same theatre director, was also open to children and teenagers, who were 8 (out of a total of 12 participants). "*It is a little more complicated to find the balance when there is a mixture of adults and children*".⁴³ Some adults did not like the fact that they were mixed with children and they did not want to participate in the workshop anymore. Yet, this way of mixing was chosen by Espace Hoche because the children living on the place

²⁰ Personal interview with stage director, May 25, 2016

³⁸ Personal interview with stage director, May 25, 2016

³⁹ Personal interview with a participant to the theatre workshop, Female 28, May 2016

⁴⁰ Personal interview with a participant to the theatre workshop, Female 35, April 2016.

⁴¹ Personal interview with a participant to the theatre workshop, Female 28, May 2016

⁴² Personal interview with a participant to the theatre workshop, Female 35, June 17, 2016.

⁴³ Personal interview with the stage director, June 17, 2016.

were experiencing educational difficulties. The social workers thought it would be useful to have them attending the workshop in order to make them more at ease with the French language.

The group was generally constant, with 2 or 3 persons dropping out, and the final show was presented outside the space, during a festive afternoon which took place on October 18 in a Cultural Centre of Strasbourg: *"It was a great experience to be on the stage, even if this caused technical problems with the microphone"*⁴⁴.

The experience of the stage had some impact on the participants' self-esteem; some of the participants even considered that they had become stars!⁴⁵

18 October 2015 has been a very important day for the participants of the various workshops because of a large cultural event being organised. The event was proposed and organized by the Roma Mission in the context of the **World Day to Overcome Extreme Poverty**, with the help of the former LERI field expert and of the stakeholders involved in the local LERI research. The slogan of the event was *"The Roma families invite the citizens of Strasbourg"*. Both the Roma population and the other citizens of Strasbourg were *"invited to a friendly and mutually inspiring day"*⁴⁶. It was a festive event, aimed at meeting each other, discovering Roma culture and showing the way to integration. It also gave the opportunity to showcase the LERI activities and their results.

At Espace Hoche, in 2016, the third workshop led by Compagnie Villathéâtre was first composed of 12 adults and teenagers, "recruited" on a voluntary basis. It was based on collective voice and movements. *"We want to put all these voices in unison"*, reported the stage director who was conducting the workshop together with two theatre actors. She also aimed at giving more autonomy to the participants and, for this purpose, she even assigned homework for them to take their responsibilities and to be able to work together on their text even when the professional team is not present. The ideal situation, according to the stage director, would have been *"to have someone, a facilitator, on site in Espace Hoche to work with them on their homework, but this was not possible"*⁴⁷.

The progress of this workshop led to mitigated conclusions. It highlighted some of the difficulties that can be faced in such an intervention. Espace Hoche underwent many changes during summer 2016: many families left the area, some of them due to conflicts or personal reasons. In the meantime, new families arrived on the site, *"and they had to settle in and to be made aware of the procedures they have to follow before getting into special activities"*⁴⁸. As a result, the workshop suffered: at the end of the summer holidays, end of August, there was almost nobody left in the theatre group. The social workers were overwhelmed with all these movements and were neither available nor eager to help. Nevertheless, one of the social workers, who was resigning her job at the end of August, accompanied the group willingly to help in recruiting new people

⁴⁴ Personal interview with the theatre director, May 25, 2016.

⁴⁵ Collective interviews with participants to the theatre workshop, Age 11-40, May-June 2016.

⁴⁶ Leaflet of invitation, October 2015.

⁴⁷ Personal interview with the stage director of La Compagnie Villathéâtre, June 17, 2016.

⁴⁸ Personal discussion with the manager of Espace Hoche, Red Cross, September 19, 2016.

to go to rehearsals. This resulted in a small group of 5 people -2 adults, 3 teenagers- who went on, but with a lesser enthusiasm, with the feeling that it was not considered as an important thing within the community and among the social workers (except the volunteer one). Due to this lack of consideration, it was a complicated task for the theatre team to motivate the group.

The presentation of the workshop to the community, on the rehearsal area, close to the settlement, took place on September 16. Although it showed a touching involvement of the few "actors" left, it was disappointing since only a few children came to see the performance while the adults of the area - only 50 meters away - decided that it was not worth to watch it. A teenager girl, involved in the workshop from the beginning, was very sad. *"I don't see why I should do it if there are only small children watching"*.⁴⁹ The "official" performance took place on October 9, in front of about 300 people and was modest but successful: it was organised as a series of sketches. However, it can be concluded that it was a difficult workshop that has not completely reached its aims as it did in the previous sessions.

In addition to this unpredictable turnover of residents, some other aspects can be put forward to explain these mixed results. For example, the theatre team had organized a calendar, which was not suitable, with a one-month break in the middle of the period. This proves that the availability of the professionals has to be taken into account in advance, when it comes to organizing such activities since it is, in some cases, incompatible with the movements of the participants.

In addition, having social workers involved on the site is essential. In this case, the general situation of the area being complicated, the theatre has become a secondary issue to them (or even a burden). If the social workers with whom the participants are in contact during their everyday activities do not express interest and do not support the motivation, the participants find it difficult to be motivated in what they do.

During a meeting held at the beginning of September with the social workers, the theatre team, the Roma Mission and the LERI field expert, it was decided to structure the workshop and to have the participants sign an attendance sheet. However, this was never applied as this kind of procedure should have been decided from the beginning, because the situation was too loose at this stage.

Nevertheless, these issues also demonstrated the necessity of taking caution when the same activity is repeated from one period of time to another; even if the objective of the successive workshops are similar, the context may change. This highlighted again the importance of adapting projects, with their schedules, organization and procedures, to the updated situations and real conditions.

At Espace 16, the theatrical project led by the Compagnie Les Foirades started on 11 July 2016 while the preparatory meetings with the children and their families took place in May and June 2016. The workshops involved Roma children of Espace 16 during their summer school holidays. Although the social workers had announced that there would be no more than two children available, 12 to

⁴⁹ Personal interview with a participant to the theatre workshop, Female, 12, September 16, 2016.

14 children participated finally in this workshop. There was no selection, all children aged 7-14 years and living on the area were invited.

The aim was for them to learn or improve speech and language, oral and written, practising different artistic languages (music, body, design, painting etc.), creating a group cohesion and collective work, taking initiatives, expressing to right to speak and bringing this speech onto a stage, in front of spectators. The workshop also included a series of cultural visits to the theatre (Taps Gare, 5 performances), to museums (Fondation Tomi Ungerer and Musée d'art moderne et contemporain) and to the library (médiathèque Olympe de Gouges). Each visit was especially prepared and accompanied by a cultural mediator. This was aimed at opening the children to different cultures and to familiarize them with cultural venues of Strasbourg. These visits and theatre performances exercised a great impression on the participants: most of them had never entered such a place (but some of them had been at the theatre in the school context). They were very participative, curious and answered positively to the proposals of the museums' guides. For instance, they were eager to draw pictures or to find details in the pictures. Overall, they adopted a very enthusiastic approach. After the theatre performances, they always had the opportunity to have a chat with the actors and the technicians; and they had many questions to ask. This "opening" was a very important finding of this workshop as well as the capacity of concentration during the performances. It is therefore important to focus on the utility of giving access to settings and venues that the Roma families are usually unable or unlikely to frequent.

Picture 1. At the Tomi Ungerer Museum



Source: LERI Field expert, 2016

The workshop took place from July 11 to August 13, 2016, every morning (3 hours a day from 9 A.M to 12 A.M), from Monday to Sunday. It took place in two theatres (both situated at La Friche Laiterie, which is a complex of cultural

places) situated nearby Espace 16, about 10 minutes walking. The theatre team (theatre director together with another person, for instance LERI field expert or representative of the Roma mission, etc.) came every morning to collect the children at Espace 16 and accompanied them on the way to the theatre. The same procedure was adopted after the workshop, at 1 PM, when the children went back for lunch.

This allowed the families to be confident with the workshop proceedings, since they could meet the persons responsible for looking after their children every day. It happened that a parent came to accompany the child sometimes, but this was an exception, although they knew about this possibility. In general, the parents were well informed, but did not want to be involved themselves, apart from allowing their children to come to the workshop. It happened that some children could not attend the workshop at times because the parents took them to do some administrative formality or to do some shopping. Every morning, it took about 30-45 minutes to gather all the children and leave for the theatre. On the first day only, a social worker accompanied the group.

The five weeks of the workshop were described by the theatre director who conducted it as *"very rich and intense moments, every day being different and unpredictable"*⁵⁰. This included sporadic difficulties managing the crew, with some conflicts appearing here and there and some misunderstandings. It was overall difficult when there was no other adult accompanying the stage director, as the children sometimes became difficult to control and to keep "in the frame" of the workshop.

To draw this "frame", maintain a coherence within the group and prepare the children for a collective work of acting, some rituals were implemented. After discovering that most of the children had not had breakfast before coming to the workshop, the stage director organized a collective breakfast every morning. Within the group, each child had a specific function: L. opened the door with the keys, S. was responsible for the drinks, M. had to count the pencils, etc. There was much work of reading, writing, drawing, inventing tales.

The last week was dedicated to the shooting of a fictional film, by the theatre director, a professional filmmaker and a sound technician, together with the children. Called *"Once upon a time, there was a little theatre"*, the film (26 minutes long) summarized the dynamic of the workshop: rituals, storytelling, theatre of shadows etc. The shooting of the film was actually the outcome of the whole preparatory work the children practised in the first weeks, with the application of concentration and of this notion of "frame" which, during the shooting of the film, was becoming very concrete: *"Quiet everybody! Rolling! Action! The words of the cinema have punctuated all the sessions and it helped the group to find the limits and to experience the role of constraints in the search of joy"*⁵¹.

⁵⁰ Personal interview with theatre director, workshop Espace 16, September 5, 2016.

⁵¹ Personal interview with stage director, workshop Espace 16, September 5, 2016.

Outcomes

It is not exaggerated to assert that the workshop has created links between "inside" and "outside" of the integration area. The convenient location and schedules increased the chances for the group of children to feel motivated to attend regularly the workshop. They appreciated very much the fact that they had access to "real" theatres, like professionals. They have expressed in many ways their wonder to discover new universes, works of art, costumes, lightings etc. They also have been good ambassadors of cultural places with respect to their living area. For example, every time they went to some cultural place, they insisted on bringing back leaflets and catalogues to show to their family.

To experiment acting on a real stage was quite an experience, which was possible thanks to the links existing between cultural partners, the municipality, the Roma mission and the director of the theatre company. It constituted a fruitful and necessary partnership, therein lies the condition of conducting this workshop. For the participants, it contributed to creating concrete scenarios and feeling proud of having good conditions: it was a real-life professional situation.

For some children, who do not yet speak French because they have arrived recently in France, the workshop helped developing their language skills and especially their confidence in daring to speak. This was an obvious outcome of this workshop: two twin sisters, not speaking at all at school, began to speak French during the workshop. Some others, with better levels of French language, have much developed their skills at storytelling, which has also helped to improve their French.

The workshop also gave the opportunity to spot some specific problems that children have with reading and writing. Some children have been identified as needing speech therapy help and this information has been transmitted to the social workers.

Music and CD recording workshop (Sep 2014 – Oct 2015)

Objective

The idea of conducting a workshop about music with children at Espace 16 preceded the LERI research. A classical and jazz musician was the instigator of this workshop: *"It is in June 2013 that it happened, at a concert given by the group Lubenica within the confines of Espace 16, an authorized Roma camp in the city of Strasbourg. I met the educators. I told them about my project"*⁵².

The objective of the music workshop was to help Roma children overcome difficulties in learning the French language through songs (in Romani, Romanian and French) that were familiar to them.

Implementation

Prior to the kick off of the LERI research in Strasbourg, the Roma Mission and the manager of the integration area working for Horizon Amitié decided to collaborate with the jazz musician in implementing a music workshop for Roma

⁵² Le Yéti, 'Clara Weil, de la musique tzigane à la cause des Roms', *L'Obs avec Rue 89*, October 14, 2013

children of Espace 16. The children were recruited during a printing workshop, which was held at Papier Gâchette, an association of artists located in front of Espace 16. The music workshop was already in place when it became part of the LERI local research in September 2014, as a project corresponding closely to the objectives of the local LERI research about education and expression. LERI supported the implementation of the activity, while the funding for the workshop was provided by the municipality and Horizon Amitié.

The music workshop was still going on at the time of the writing of the study, even beyond the scope of to the LERI research since October 2015.

Outcomes

The music workshop resulted in the recording of an audio CD of songs in three languages: French, Romani and Romanian, with the participation of children attending the workshop and the musicians of Lubenica.

According to the participants and the social workers of the space, a dozen children took part in the workshop with much enthusiasm. It resulted in a concert on 18th October, 2015, at the same festive afternoon, with a significant public audience.

For the purpose of the present study, the field expert tried to carry out an interview with the musician in charge of the workshop, but due to the fact that she had moved abroad, it was not possible. She also declined to answer any questions, either by phone or in written form. For this reason, it is difficult to estimate in which way the skills of the children were developed through the workshop and how the targeted needs were reached. However, the children themselves reported that they were proud of their performance and of the fact that they could participate in the recording. They were happy that their families as well as other people, whom they did not know before, had come to listen to them. They were impressed by the musicians and some said that they would like to become musicians when they grow up⁵³.

Based on its success, this workshop was extended with a new workshop, conducted in partnership with the NGO AMSED and led by another young musician who was studying at the University of Strasbourg. However, this extension was not functioning at the time of the end of the LERI research.

Photography workshop (Jun-Jul 2014; Jun-Jul 2015)

Objective

The workshop aimed at motivating the children living in Espace 16 to take pictures. The approach was to give them the possibility to explore their own and family universe and to select what they would like to show through their photos.

Implementation

A photographer was invited to take pictures at the rehearsals and the representations of social theatre workshops in summer 2014. This is how he met the Roma people residing at Espace Hoche and started taking pictures of

⁵³ Collective interview of children participating to the music workshop in Espace 16, 6-12, May 14, 2016.

families, at their requests. This is also how he gained their trust. He managed to establish a good relationship with some of them. *"I think they understood that I didn't just want to "take" their pictures but that my aim was to give them the technical possibility to explore their own universe and to look at themselves"*⁵⁴. He noticed that all the children were going to school together by bus every morning and he decided that this would be his subject, because for him they represent a transition between past and future. He was reasoning that through children it was easier to change the perceptions about the Roma people. *"The children have more contacts to the society, they go to school, they speak French... They constitute a bridge between the communities"*.⁵⁵

His proposal of activity was welcome by the Roma children, by their parents and by the Red Cross, who manages the Espace 16. He accompanied the children to school for a few days. He then prepared a slideshow of the pictures he had taken, which he presented in Espace Hoche. His pictures were exhibited during the event of October 18. Later, in March 2016, 10 pictures, in huge formats, were exhibited in Lieu d'Europe, which is an official place dedicated to information about Europe.

The exhibitions were not planned in the context of the LERI research. It was the photographer's initiative, who worked on it voluntarily. The financial expenses (for prints) were entirely supported by the municipality and the Red Cross. Nevertheless, the activity may still be taken into account in the context of LERI because it was an extension of the planned activity, and a very important subject of pride and self-esteem for the children on the photos.

The same photographer proposed a workshop to the children whom he had met when he was going to school with them. *"I felt that I had to transfer something, instead of just watching and making my pictures. I wanted to give these children the possibility of watching themselves too"*⁵⁶. It was not a theoretical workshop but a very practical one. Nevertheless, he introduced some light technical notions and gave them cameras to take their own pictures.

Outcomes

Ten Roma children were at first interested, but *"most of them had difficulties to concentrate and were more interested in playing"*⁵⁷. After a few days, only three were left. The photographer soon realised that *"one of the girls had a very interesting approach"*. She took many pictures from original perspectives and some of them were also exhibited at Lieu d'Europe⁵⁸, which is seen as a "prestigious" place in Strasbourg. She was especially interested in taking pictures of people and of families. There was a camera at the office of the Red Cross, which she could have used; but she did not want to do so in the absence of the photographer, and seemed to be more concerned when there was a clear instruction coming from someone else. The photographer considered her to be a real talent. Unfortunately, as a benevolent stakeholder, he had no time to visit

⁵⁴ Personal interview with the photographer, June 2016.

⁵⁵ Personal interview with the photographer, June 2016.

⁵⁶ Personal interview of the photographer, June 2016.

⁵⁷ Personal interview with a participant to the photography workshop, Female12, June 5, 2016

⁵⁸ Lieu d'Europe is a house for education to European citizenship, initiated by the City of Strasbourg, in partnership with the Department, the Region, the French State, the European Parliament and the Council of Europe.

the integration area later on. This interruption unintentionally damaged the girl's motivation, and she did not take the initiative to continue taking pictures by herself. The two other children who had been active in the workshop did not continue either. This raised the problem of discontinuous workshops that did not allow to strengthen and deepen motivation, with the risk of creating frustrations.

Cooking workshop (18 October 2015)

Objective

The main action was to give Roma families the opportunity of introducing some Romanian dishes to the citizens of Strasbourg. The objective of the intervention was to facilitate exchanges among all participants during this day.

Implementation

The cooking activity was directly linked to the event of October 18, which was a culminating day for all activities carried out with Roma people in Strasbourg as part of the LERI research as well as other activities, i.e. the French classes, implemented by other associations and financed by the Roma Mission. The cooking workshop was organised only once by the local field expert, the Roma Mission and Lupovino, which coordinated this workshop. Gastronomy was very important in this perspective, with the idea of presenting Romanian dishes and of being proud of them. The buffet being the place where everybody meets, this activity also took on the symbolic status of the "exchange".

A few days earlier, the French teacher discussed with some of the Roma women participating in the French class which dishes they wanted to present. The cooking session seemed to be too complicated, because it had to take place in the kitchen of the cultural centre that was not duly equipped, the material was not suitable, and there was a lack of workforce. Nobody knew how many guests could be expected and the organization in the kitchen seemed to be challenging. The service was difficult because there were more people coming than expected, with some stress occurring at the moment of the distribution.

The French teacher had a rather negative opinion on the events of this day. „*This experience has not contributed to the gain of self-esteem of the women participating*”⁵⁹, because of the lack of organization that did not allow them to feel appreciated. She was very severe about the way things took place and would not accept to play the role of the "cooking coordinator" again. She even added that she would not find any woman willing to help again.

Given, that participants relied on the organisers to a high extent and that they can be easily discouraged if they notice a breach in the system, such experimental workshops involve a lot of organisation. Planning (and even cooking) in advance should help in preventing such stressful and frustrating experiences on the day of the event.

Outcomes

Seen from the perspective of the guests, the buffet was appreciated and there were very positive feedbacks on this day and afterwards. The Roma community

⁵⁹ Personal interview with French teacher of Lupovino, June 6, 2016.

and the other people attending this festive afternoon seemed to be satisfied with the dishes that they enjoyed free-of-charge as the Banque alimentaire had supplied the. In the queue to the buffet, some Roma and Romanians were explaining the recipes to the French public and gave explanations about the way the dishes had to be cooked and about the way their own mothers used to cook them. It was definitely a place of exchanging and sharing.

On October 9, 2016, the second festive day was organized a bit differently as far as the food preparation was concerned: there was a barbecue, managed by the Roma residents –mostly men, but also some women. The rest of the buffet – salads and fruit salads, cakes- was prepared in a collective “workshop” (mostly with women and children) in the afternoon just before the event, as it did not need any sophisticated cooking. This preparation was an opportunity for residents of both integration sites to meet, together with other citizens of Strasbourg who also wished to give a hand. Most people were very satisfied with this way of organising the festive day (much laughter and happy discussions).

Expression groups (Jun-Jul 2016)

Objective

The general objective of the expression group, or discussion group, was to give Roma people living in both integration areas the opportunity for collective discussion. A discussion group serves to exchange ideas, information on needs, problems and subjects of mutual interest. It is also a place and a moment to search collectively the answers to those common needs and the solutions to the shared problems. Discussion groups should develop the capacity to work with others towards a common goal and to make shared proposals for further improvement.

CVS (social life councils) are organised by the manager of the integration areas, usually once a month. They aim at giving the opportunity to speak about the everyday life in the area and all events and problems that can occur, to try to find collective solutions and to elaborate suggestions. However, in practice *“the collective council works only for complaining. When things are positive, people express it privately, within the family, but not in front of their neighbours of the area!”*⁶⁰ These councils cannot be considered as expression groups. First of all, because expression is not the objective of these meetings. These aim at improving the social life of the area and at solving problems but not, as a main objective, at empowering people. To implement expression groups, the social workers of the area that organise these groups should be trained. This option was considered, but was discarded, because of the lack of time and the assumed absence of interest from the social workers working in the area. The manager of the area stated: *“Of course, we would like to train our staff to conduct expression groups... But we do not even have enough time to assume the everyday tasks: when do you think we could do this training?”*⁶¹

This is why some co-researchers were brought in to help experiment alternative ways of implementing such groups of discussion and expression.

⁶⁰ Personal interview with manager of Espace 16, May 18, 2016.

⁶¹ Personal interview with manager of Espace 16, June 6, 2016.

Implementation

The implementation of the expression group had some difficulties in the context of the LERI research. The first task was to find some facilitators or mediators, able to establish contacts, to bring people together and to encourage these discussions in the native language and in French. Then it came to defining, together with them, the objectives and the contents of the discussions. Finally, it was necessary to organize meetings, to take some time between meetings to think, to participate, to analyse the contents and expressions.

Three co-researchers were hired for these expression groups financed through the local fund under the LERI research. They were a young Roma man and two young Roma women, aged about 25, two of them living in Espace 16 while the third one living in an apartment with her husband and her two children. All of them studied at university in Romania, either in the areas of social work (in the case of both young women) or in the field of law (in the case of the young man). All three were interested in contributing to the expression of the people living in both integration areas and, possibly, also of Roma people already living in apartments.

Their interest was motivated by their respective commitments in the acknowledgement of the Roma.

F.⁶² is a social worker who had been studying in Romania. She spent some time in a slum after she had arrived in France. She was discriminated in various jobs and was fired once for being Roma. She is married now and has two children. She has been working for two years at Espace Hoche but was, at the time of writing the study, on maternity leave. She was interested in discussing about Roma traditions and the compromises Roma have to do in order to find work. She knew all the Roma families coming from Romania.

At the time of writing the study, A. was a half-time student. She was pursuing a diploma in social work. She was also working for the NGO AMSED part-time. In September 2017, she is going to start a new contract at AMSED and work on projects dedicated to Roma inclusion. She insisted on being a very modern Roma woman and said that she had discovered her own culture when arriving in France and starting to live in Espace 16. Her parents had been staying there before her arrival. At the time of the research, her parents were living in an apartment, but A. was still staying in their caravan, until a social housing will be awarded to them.

V. had been studying law and could have been a lawyer in Romania. However, he came to France to re-join a part of his family as well as his partner. Since V.'s diploma is not recognized in France, he should study all over again if he wanted to work as a jurist. At the time of the writing of the study, he worked all day washing cars. He was ready to commit to the cause of Roma inclusion and wanted to create an association or NGO dedicated to this cause, but he found it to be difficult.

⁶² Names and personal details have been anonymized for data protection reasons.

All three received remuneration for being co-researchers in the LERI research, which was also significant for them. It was important to implement the research with the help of Roma co-researchers from the community, because they had experienced the situation "from the inside" and they knew what the key issues of Roma people were. They also had the trust of the Roma people living in the integration areas. Speaking Romanian but also some French was also useful for the project. They were not prepared, though, to this kind of exercise and it was the first time they experienced it.

However, during the first meeting proposed by the field expert to discuss the possibility to implement these groups of expression, all three facilitators asserted that it would be difficult, they would even say impossible, to arouse a spontaneous interest for discussions. "*People would not know what to discuss about*" was the recurrent response given by the three co-researchers. After a long discussion with the field expert, who argued that even if it seemed to them difficult, they could at least try, they decided that it would be much more relevant to organize a survey, and therefore, they proposed to elaborate a question grid and to submit it orally to the residents. All three found it very important to give people the opportunity to share experiences and to recall their past life: they asserted that Roma people were not used to speak about their past life and that it could be a very stimulating practice.

This collective survey was not conceivable in both integration areas. It was a possible option in Espace Hoche, where the facilitator and co-researcher knew well all residents, because she had been working there for two years. She estimated that she would be able to be able to gather people. It was done individually in Espace 16 where, on the contrary, it was assessed as inefficient by the co-researcher to gather all residents, as people would not accept to speak in front of each other⁶³. The other reason why approaching people individually was chosen for Espace 16, was that the manager of the area was not in favour of the implementation of the groups of expression, especially if they are introduced by young Roma people living on the site. Her argument was that: "*It does not correspond to the operating mode of the site, where the „clan leaders” are older people who would look with suspicion at young people asking them to answer questions and to discuss*"⁶⁴.

This guide of questioning was developed jointly by the three young facilitators and by the local field expert. It aimed at making Roma people to talk about their pasts, of their presents, of their difficulties and their expectations, whether they arrived in France recently or had been there for a longer time.

Interview guide elaborated by the co-researchers jointly with the local field expert in Strasbourg:

1. Can you describe the life you had in Romania?
2. For which reason did you come to France?
3. What are you looking for today?
4. What are your activities here? (work, other occupations...)
5. What are your projects?
6. Do you have problems, difficulties? Which ones?

⁶³ Collective meeting with the three co-researchers, June 4, 2016.

⁶⁴ Interview with representative of Espace 16, June 2016.

7. What has changed in your life since you arrived in France?
8. Do you think that these changes are positive?
9. What kind of other changes would you like?
10. Where do you think you will be in 10 or 20 years?

Therefore, different methodological approaches were used and adapted in the different areas of integration. In one area, Espace 16, individual interviews were conducted based on the questionnaire designed and presented above.

On the other hand, in Espace Hoche, an expression group with a group of Roma women took place by the end of June 2016. It was composed of women (about 12 in total), in the presence of the co-researcher and of the field expert. The discussion within the group of women was introduced by the co-researcher who started by asking questions. At the beginning, the "conversation" sounded more like an interview than a discussion, women answering each question separately. But a real desire to speak and much mutual listening was noticed, which was the main objective of this initial session.

The discussion then diverted to issues related to work (or rather to lack of work), traditions, wearing of trousers and respective roles of men and women. The women were more and more encouraged to speak and share. Unfortunately, the discussion ended with the arrival of a person who disturbed the group by monopolizing the discussion.

The co-researcher tried to organise another session of discussion, but only two persons agreed to answer, separately, to the questions (one woman and one man). They related to their youth, their life in Romania, their hopes and expectations in France. The co-researcher left Strasbourg to Romania at the end of June, and this was the end of her experiment.

Outcomes

To encourage Roma people to express themselves, developing "speech areas" and "discussion moments" was a key step. In the case of this LERI research in Strasbourg, the constraints of schedules permitted only a limited experiment. However, it contributed to a feeling of Roma people of being taken into account and of being acknowledged as "having a personal story". *"It is the first time I tell about my childhood in front of people who do not belong to my family... We were so poor, it is not a funny memory"*⁶⁵.

To establish trust and concrete, gradual but lasting outcomes, this approach could (or should) be continued, in collaboration with motivated, available and trained co-researchers. This is also conditioned by the will of the NGOs managing the areas of integration to accept that these groups take place in the area and to give priority to these meetings.

Monitoring and evaluation activities

The approach employed was of a participatory monitoring and evaluation. It took the form of a collaborative action-research exercise in order to monitor the results of the LERI interventions in a participatory manner. For this reason, the

⁶⁵ Listened by the field expert in the expression group in Espace Hoche, Female 30, June 18, 2016

Roma community was actively involved in the monitoring and evaluation process. The local field expert carried out in-depth interviews and focus groups with the stakeholders involved in the local interventions, including members of the Roma communities.

As part of the monitoring and evaluation activity, 12 interviews were conducted in May-June and other 8 were still to be conducted in July and August, with the participants of the interventions, representatives of the local authority and the Roma communities themselves. The aim was to find out how they perceive the results of the interventions:

- In relation to the social theatre workshop: one Roma participant from Espace Hoche was interviewed as well as some spectators of the final presentation, the stage director of the workshop and one social worker from Espace Hoche;
- In relation to the music workshop: children and parents who had been involved in the workshop were interviewed;
- In relation to the photography workshop: one participant and the photographer were interviewed;
- In relation to the cooking workshop: the French teacher who coordinated the workshop was interviewed. This workshop had been displayed in a participatory final event on October 18th 2015, and for this reason some people who attended this event were also interviewed;
- Interviews with the Roma Mission and the partner NGOs and 'Chef de Service' in Espace Hoche and Espace 16 were conducted to gather the stakeholders' views and perspectives regarding the activities which have taken place, and about their involvement, their analysis of successes and failures, and their suggestions on how to improve activities planned for the future.

The aim was to identify the main results and successes and failures of the past activities (the music workshop, cooking workshop, photography workshop and social theatre workshops carried out in 2015), as well as the underlying reasons and what can be improved. In addition, expectations from the new activities (expression group and social theatre workshops implemented over summer 2016) were also collected from the Roma community and the local stakeholders. The findings are presented in the sections below.

Relevance of past activities planned in the LERI research

The activities achieved in the LERI research had been mostly planned by the Roma Mission of the City Council of Strasbourg, before the kick-off of LERI in Strasbourg in 2014. They have then been included into the LERI research and realised in partnership between the Roma Mission and the LERI research team.

The principles that have prevailed in choosing these interventions derived from the will of the Roma Mission, and especially of the Head of Roma Mission and of the Deputy Mayor in charge of solidarity and health, that is to propose new openings and new ways of expression to the Roma people living in the temporary integration areas. They estimated that such activities could contribute to reveal unknown talents, liberate expression and consolidate self-esteem, the final goal

being autonomy and inclusion of Roma people in the French society, “*with the people’s life project to the very heart*”.⁶⁶

The relevance of these activities can also be measured by the number of participants and by their continued presence.

The choice of these interventions was also linked to the presence of a strong network in Strasbourg, made of NGOs, associations, cultural activists, social workers and social enterprises that have had opportunities to work with the municipality. This network was recognized by the Roma Mission to be efficient on Roma issues.

Results of the past activities and identifying whether and how they have made a difference

It is quite difficult to affirm that those Roma who participated in activities have begun to behave differently than the Roma who have not participated at all. No such data was reported by the various stakeholders responsible for the workshops. Nor do the interviews, which were conducted one to two years after the workshops, give much information about such sustainable impact and evident signs of changes. Therefore, according to the interviews and to the available data, there is little quantitative evidence of the impact of the LERI activities on the behaviour of the participants, on their course to employment or on their improving of the French language. However, the data that was possible to be collected, qualitative by nature, is presented in the remainder of this section.

According to the needs assessment focussing on education and also according to the local stakeholders’ proposals and to the possibilities of organizing activities, the focus of activities was on children, except the theatre workshop at Espace Hoche which had a joint participation of adults, children and teenagers and the groups of expression.

Children (6-14) are learning French faster than their parents and a relevant part of them came to the workshops with a good level of French. When asked about the changes brought by the activities, which they have followed, the Roma participants answered: “*to attend such workshops had been useful for their French*”. Some said that this was important on their path to obtain work, but pointing that it was only complementary to the French classes they followed at the association Lupovino⁶⁷. One girl (aged 9) said: “*When we learn to sing, we have to learn the words and if we understand the words, we remember them*”⁶⁸.

Furthermore, the LERI activities enlarged the limits of the integration areas and opened wider horizons to their residents. The theatre director involved in the workshop of Espace 16 noted: “*The workshop aimed at taking the children out of the area and from their usual environment to immerse them into a cultural environment where they have but small opportunities to go by themselves*”⁶⁹.

⁶⁶ Personal interview with representative of Roma Mission, May 17, 2016.

⁶⁷ Various interviews with participants to the theatre workshop, April 15, 2016.

⁶⁸ Personal interview with participant to the music-song workshop, Female 9, April 9, 2016.

⁶⁹ Assessment by the director of the theatre company Les Foirades during an evaluation meeting of the workshop, September 6, 2016.

This workshop was supplemented by visits to museums, to the library, to theatre performances, to which the group of children has been very receptive and creative.

By giving access to activities, which the Roma children and adults had not have access to, the interventions gave them a glimpse of something different from their everyday lives. It made them shift their patterns and move towards new persons and new situations.

It made them discover "new themselves": a recurrent finding in interviews and discussion groups was that participants were proud of succeeding in an area that they did not even think of before: "*I didn't know what theatre was and suddenly I was myself becoming an actress*"⁷⁰ or "*I ignored that I could have some talent in taking photographs*"⁷¹. These examples showed that such workshops can contribute to the development of self-esteem and self-confidence, which are a catalyst for improving competences and motivation for integration in society.

The overall findings per each activity are presented below:

- Social theatre workshop (PAR cycle 2) was attended by 15 persons in 2014 and 12 in 2015. A part of them (about half) participated in both workshops. Most reported that "*it was useful for their French*" and that they enjoyed to take part.
- Music workshop (PAR cycle 3) was attended by 12 children. Those who have been asked to report on the benefits of their participation say that they learned "new words". This workshop also developed some cohesion among the children living in the temporary integration areas.
- Cookery workshop (PAR cycle 4) was attended by 6 women. It was a prompt workshop to prepare an event. The conditions were complicated, and their feeling of success was mixed.
- The photography workshop (PAR cycle 5) was attended at first by 10 children. The majority left the workshop rapidly and only three were left. In the end, only one was really active. She has gained self-esteem and is proud of her discovered talent in the area.
- Social theatre workshop at Espace Hoche (PAR cycle 8) was attended, at first, by 12 people. The number has already been fluctuating in the first rehearsals, children having come to re-join the adults, and the latter seeming not to be so willing to participate anymore. Only 5 people continued the workshop until September.
- Theatre workshop at Espace 16 (PAR cycle 8) was attended by 12 children aged 8-13. The composition of the group has been fluctuating as the workshop progressed but the children were still 12 at the end. 2 children left and were replaced.
- Discussion groups (PAR cycle 7) were attended by about 10 people in each area of integration. The questions raised concern everyday life and difficulties, family life, the role of men and women, expectations.

⁷⁰ Personal interview with participant to the theatre workshop, Female 12, April 6, 2016.

⁷¹ Personal interview with participant to the photography workshop, Female 11, May 18, 2016

5. Analysis, discussion, lessons learned

Factors influencing the effectiveness of the LERI interventions

Some facilitating factors have been identified. Firstly, the pre-existence of a strong Roma integration strategy in Strasbourg led by a dedicated Roma Mission established as a fully-fledged department within the City Council facilitated the implementation of the local LERI research (see narrative p. 7). Some cultural activities (the first theatre workshop, music workshop) had already been started by the Roma Mission before the LERI research and was logically taken over in the context of LERI. This coherence was revealed in all activities implemented in the LERI research. It was clear from the very beginning that the municipality was supporting this research, since LERI was going in the same direction as the general goals defined by the Roma Mission.

A very good collaboration between local authorities and NGOs in Roma integration actions was also an important facilitating factor. The existence of an important network of associations in Strasbourg, activists and NGOs working towards Roma integration proved to be helpful as well. In particular, it made it really easier to organize activities, find reception areas (for the theatre workshop, for instance), have access to materials, free tickets for performances and museums, etc. Furthermore, the partnership with NGO AMSED, made it possible in 2016 to work with co-researchers and theatre companies.

The support of the social workers in the integration areas, who played the key roles of mediators, facilitated contacts with the Roma residents. Their role within the community is quite powerful because they have an "everyday relationship" with the residents, who need daily assistance with their basic needs and rely on the social workers to resolve their administrative problems. This support helped to build trust between the stakeholders coming from "outside" (local LERI research team) and the residents of the integration areas; it facilitated relationships and participation. The time it takes to gain the trust of the Roma community is also a hindering factor when there is little time for the implementation of the actions in general.

However, it is crucial that the social workers understand the added value of the proposed activities, which is not always the case. If they feel overloaded by this additional workload or if they do not adhere to the initiatives or find it useless or futile, it can happen that they hinder or complicate access to the residents because they would communicate their doubts and lack of enthusiasm. This is why it is essential to be very clear about the respective roles of all the stakeholders, even by means of a written 'mission statement' (briefing on the project).

Time needed to implement sustainable and participatory workshops constitutes a constraint and can be a hindering factor. The implementation and the monitoring of new activities was done slowly, step by step, because it was necessary to take into account all stakeholders and to compose with all of them in order to be really participatory. This included the time and the availability to set up meetings and a common way to foresee the organization of the activities. It also took time (and diplomacy) to adjust all stakeholders' schedules and constraints. The situation was even more complex because the schedules of the persons leading

the workshop did not correspond to the schedules of the LERI research. It proved to be difficult at times to ensure the continuity of an activity because many factors could interfere with the presence at the workshops of the Roma: administrative procedures, frequent trips to Romania, children, among others.

Lessons learned and suggestions for the future

Project design

The LERI research found a strong partnership with the City Council and the Roma Mission in Strasbourg, which proved to be very helpful. This was a very satisfactory outcome since partnership is a key to success in implementing activities. Nevertheless, it also implied some difficulties, specific to Strasbourg, since it was very difficult to disentangle where the respective roles of LERI and the City ended and began. The action of the Roma Mission – already described above – had already been underway when the LERI research started, implemented in collaboration with various stakeholders (e.g. theatre directors and social workers etc.). The objectives of the LERI research and the differences between this and what the City Council was already doing was not clear to all stakeholders. When the second LERI field expert started her work in April 2016, it was even less clear, since there had been an interruption of six months in the implementation of the local LERI research. The local LERI field expert had to explain the rationale of the LERI research in various meetings; even so, it was not understood by all and the biggest part of the project had already been done by that time. This difficulty could be best illustrated by an anecdote: at the last evaluation meeting of one of the workshops, a social worker was still thinking that the LERI field expert was a teacher. Some activities, which started before the LERI (e.g. 1st theatre workshop, music workshop) have been included in the research, the decisions having been taken upstream. And furthermore, the field expert having changed in the middle of the course, the “roots of decision” are difficult to discern. This made it sometimes difficult for the field expert to be legitimized as a decision taker. The suggestion would be to be extremely clear from the beginning and decide all issues with all stakeholders. It would be useful to establish written agreements between the different stakeholders, in order to be able to go back to all decisions.

The LERI field expert had several functions and roles: to design and develop activities, to implement them, as well as to evaluate and analyse them. This combination of roles complicated her work as well as the way she was perceived by the stakeholders and the beneficiaries of the activities. The specific situation of Strasbourg led to some misunderstandings as far as the respective roles were concerned. Some stakeholders had difficulties in understanding and accepting that the local field expert was coordinating the local LERI research and, therefore, had to observe and monitor the progress of the workshops. Therefore, the local field expert could be seen as a person who had to control other people’s work and this feeling could lead to incomprehension. The suggestion is to be very precise from the beginning and to describe, even in a written document if necessary, who is doing what. It would also be useful to have sufficient time for any necessary on-going adjustments.

The LERI interventions cannot be seen as entirely separate from the activities implemented by the City of Strasbourg and the Roma Mission. Notably, during the six months when there was no representative of the LERI research after the

resignation of the first field expert, the activities continued and were fully financially supported by the City Council. This situation is specific to Strasbourg. The lesson learned is that it would have helped to assert more clearly what the LERI research implies, so that all stakeholders understand its constraints (schedules, deadlines, shooting of the film, etc.) and for them to be ready to adjust to them.

Personal commitments within the local authorities are primordial in carrying out projects and ensure their success and it is important to recognise and spot them. This means that it is necessary to identify and rely on the right persons to carry out a good project. It may take time to find out who are these "right persons", but it is worth taking this time and exploring the networks.

Projects always need to be adjusted to the situation on the ground. Given that projects are often theoretical and conceived with optimistic objectives and points of view, they are confronted with realities that do not always fit with the initial goals. The risk would be to want to adjust reality to this theory, which is doomed to failure. This refers, for instance, to simple and material problems like schedules. However, it can also imply deeper discrepancies, such as the fact that Roma people do not necessarily understand or accept the value of participation in cultural activities, that they have other priorities, such as finding employment, and that they do not see the utility to spend time in activities that seem "futile" to them. One has to be aware of all these limitations and be able to work in spite of them. The stakeholders must be aware that it is difficult to apply a project exactly as it was written. The field experts on the ground should take into account that changes are possible in order to find compromises with human and material realities. It is important not to feel guilty if plans turn out a bit differently in reality. This may imply compromises and adjustments, without losing sight of the initial objectives.

Activities implemented and their progress

During workshops and activities, the presence of participants was uncertain and it was often difficult to establish a regular attendance. The workshops, even when the people were motivated to participate, were not their priority and any material or family issue would generally occupy the first place. Sometimes stakeholders tried to overcome this absenteeism by ensuring commitment with the signature of an attendance sheet. This was the case during the first theatre workshop in 2014 and the theatre director would have liked to do it again. However, the social workers did not approve this approach: *"If people do not feel like coming to the workshop, they are free not to participate and we are not going to push them"*⁷². It would also be possible to adopt an attitude of "give and take", through the convention for temporary occupation: the presence in the integration area would depend on the participation in activities. This was the case for example for attendance at French classes (which were not part of the local LERI research). But this has been assessed as being too restrictive when it comes to workshops, the constraint appearing as counterproductive way to give

⁷² Personal interview with social worker at Espace Hoche, August 25, 2016.

people autonomy: *"Nobody can change the fact that when people need to struggle to survive, they do not think of going to their theatre workshop."*⁷³

The presence of a social worker of the integration area in some workshops proved to be very helpful. They could help to ensure a favourable climate and regulate the problems of dissipation (with children and teenagers).

It is important to be able to adapt to any new situation, for instance when the participants were not showing up to a rehearsal, when they lacked motivation, when there was a change of schedule, when they did not agree to play, etc. One has also to be patient when things do not go ahead as quickly as one wishes or not exactly in the direction one wishes.

The implementation of groups of expression demands to have much time ahead. It can be estimated that the whole process, if the aim is to lead to autonomous projects, would need at least one full year, which was not available in the case of the LERI research in Strasbourg in its second phase (that with the new field expert). The objective of the expression groups was to discuss until project ideas are formed and developed, which was thus a goal for the future, to build capacity beyond LERI. This can only be done gradually, by finding co-researchers or mediators who understand, agree and believe in these goals, then by gathering the groups and convincing people that it can be useful and interesting.

The most complex task was to motivate Roma people to take part in the initiatives and in developing spontaneous requests. With this objective being central to the LERI research, there could have been a dissemination of the successful examples in all the cities of the programme, in order to develop an innovative methodology of empowerment.

Relations between the various stakeholders

The support of the team working with the Roma residents in the temporary integration areas was essential, as it was the link between the residents and the professionals coming from outside. To implement a project in a Roma community, which has its own culture, way of living, habits and operating modes requires open-mindedness, patience and common sense. It is useful (and even essential) to rely on people who have been in contact with the Roma community residing on the sites for a longer period of time, such as the NGOs present on site or the social workers in the temporary integration areas. An external stakeholder of a project may not be completely in tune with the operating modes and the rules established by the organisations managing the integration areas. Discussion and an open mind proved useful, in general, to resolve these discrepancies.

On the same project, the various stakeholders may not have exactly the same point of view about autonomy and empowerment of Roma people. This was an important point, raised in Espace 16 when it came to organizing groups of expression, considered as irrelevant by the manager of that temporary integration area. The points of views may differ, as far as motivation of the participants is concerned

⁷³ Personal interview with representative of the Red Cross, Espace Hoche, September 19, 2016.

The focus on outcomes of the project should be balanced with an emphasis on the process. For example, during the theatre workshops, the art professionals might have been tempted by the production of “good results” in terms of a successful final performance rather than by the establishment of a process, which could gradually lead to more empowerment. It was therefore necessary to balance the desired “outcomes” with a process-oriented approach and to try to find a compromise.

Future plans

The event that had been organised by the Roma Mission on 18 October 2015 - in partnership with the LERI research, was renewed successfully in 2016, on 9th October. The participants of the various workshops had, on this festive day, the opportunity to present their achievements in front of the Roma community and also in front of 200 citizens of Strasbourg, who were motivated to re-join the event at the invitation of the Roma residents (see more description p. 26). It was an opportunity to see precisely what had been done within the LERI workshops and during other activities. The LERI research contributed to the diversity of the proposals for activities.



Source: City of Strasbourg, 2016

From now on, this festive day might become an annual event of exchange and sharing in Strasbourg, which contributes to the mutual acknowledgement of the inhabitants of the city.

In addition, different workshops were scheduled to take place in 2016, in order to continue the “tradition” now well established by the Roma Mission and its

partners. The music workshop in Espace 16 was going on, aiming at attracting new children. The implementation of a circus workshop was also planned as a future project based on the idea formulated at the end of the theatre workshop, the children having shown that they needed to express themselves through movements.

In Espace Hoche, the association Ballade, together with the music group Papyros'N, started a music workshop to teach basics of guitar and percussions to a few young residents, in August 2016. It also involved two musicians who were living in the area.

6. Conclusions and recommendations:

The interest of this research was to show the strengths as well as the weaknesses and limitations of the complex task of developing actions for and with Roma people. The task of the LERI research was complex by nature: to observe and to analyse the implementation of activities and its impacts and to gather diverse stakeholders as well as to cooperate with existing structures, which already had their operational modes. Confronted with this profusion, the recommendation is to think upstream about every phase of the project – not to act in rush – by explaining the 'ins' and 'outs' to all stakeholders, including to the beneficiaries, namely the members of the Roma community.

This case study shows that it is possible and fruitful in many ways to set up, with the Roma community, activities and projects that contribute to their progress towards autonomy and accompany their integration process in the French society and the recognition of their equal rights as EU citizens. It also shows the limits and the way that lies ahead for them to "have a real voice" and to make it heard. The key challenge identified is that Roma people are not accustomed to participate in designing activities for themselves, this is why a fully participatory process could not be implemented, but it can lay the foundation for empowerment so that Roma people will be able to express their 'voices' in the future. The immediate outcomes of the expression groups, for instance, may be modest, but the experiment has shown that it could be possible, with more time and more available co-researchers, to "plant some seeds" of empowerment.

A great part of the local LERI research's activities in Strasbourg has concerned children. They all go to school and, therefore, are integrated in the French system of education, together with other French and migrant children. They represent a new generation of Roma, who will probably live in the future in a very different way than their parents. As they have disadvantaged backgrounds and they live in vulnerable conditions, with parents speaking no French and having a low level of education, it is very important for them to benefit from some extra-school cultural activities, which could stimulate their integration. A theatre or a music workshop, for example, can give, in a different way than school, the necessary impulse to develop their capacities and their motivation for learning.

At local, regional, national and at the European level, the story of such experiences can help other authorities, associations and NGOs to initiate Roma inclusion projects. They will need to take into account all the difficulties in order to improve the interventions on the field and to find new and innovative ways to

work on Roma integration. The experiences, which compose this case study may not exactly be transferable models due to the particular context in Strasbourg. However, they can serve as a useful contribution to an orientation guide for any upcoming Roma integration actions.

As the general goal is the empowerment of the Roma, it is also very important, if not crucial, to look beyond immediate and visible results, and accept the idea that there is a long way to go and that this empowerment might be “disguised” in unexpected ways.

The local field expert’s main recommendation would be that this type of projects should be handled with an open mind and without imposing ways on the beneficiaries (Roma community) or on other stakeholders. This certainly asks to accept to challenge views and methodologies, but it also allows progress in a better and stimulating climate.

7. Additional Information

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