**International conference**

**The report, Slovenia, 9 - 10 October 2019**

# The preparation phase

## Development of the program of conference 2019

* We began to plan the concept of conference during the 6th project meeting, the programme was mainly finalised beginning of September. All project countries were involved in planning/ conceptualising the programme of the conference.
* Programme and invitation is available through



## Invited target groups

* Representatives of policymakers in education, international/national/regional level
* academics, researchers
* educators in kindergartens and teachers, cultural mediators, Roma assistants ….
* Youth - volunteers
* representatives from Roma communities, migrants
* general public and media

## PPT materials from the event

* PPT presentations from the conference are available at the link <https://e-platform.romigsc.eu/seminars/>

# Delivery of the event

* **9 October 2019** (two study visits related to the practice on relevant topics of the project):

o Kindergarten Romano, Roma settlement Pušča, Murska Sobota

o Center of Intercultural dialogue and Multigenerational centre Planet, Velenje

* **10 October 2019** - presentations of the concepts, results of the project: best practices and

policy recommendations

# Short summary of event

**Day 1 (9.10)**

Visit of Kindergarten Romano, Roma Settlement and IRŠIK

Romano is unit of Kindergarten Murska Sobota, located in Roma settlement Pušča.

Established in 1957, Romano is first Roma Kindergarten in Slovenia, with the aim of early inclusion of Roma children in preschool education. Until 2011 only Roma children were enrolled in the unit. Kindergarten Romano is now recognised as multicultural kindergarten, attended by Roma and non- Roma children. Participants also visited Roma settlement and the seat of IRŠIK.

Visit of Center of Intercultural dialogue and Multigenerational centre Planet, Velenje

Participants were very interested about presentation of the project, ‘Centre of intercultural dialogue. The main objective of the project is to create an environment that will accept and support the integration of foreigners, the focus is on measures that encourage the local population to accept foreigners, main activities:

* *activities for local population: activities, that help local population to understand what means to be a foreigner in an unknown environment, and what kind of problems and challenges foreigners face in the integration process.*
* *activities for foreigners include: assistance in overcoming linguistic and cultural barriers, helping to get acquainted with the environment, culture and society, advising and assisting in the integration into educational processes, legal counselling and various motivational workshops that promote education and employment ).*

Very interesting was also presentation of Multigenerational Centre - Planet of Generations. *Planet of Generations has important intercultural dimension: it joints ‘old’ generation, that is particular Slovenian, and young generation, of mainly migrant background - old ‘generation’ helps young migrant people to learn Slovenian, helps migrant children with homework …; while also young migrants act as volunteers: they offer help to old’ disabled’ people .*

At Adult education centre were held also volunteering activities in the frame of project RoMigSc. In 2019 (in the period from February to June/July), eight volunteers delivered help to Roma/migrant children, and the experiences were in general excellent.

**Day 2 (10.10)**

Presentations of the concepts, results of the project: best practices and policy recommendations

Structure of the programme:

1. 1st part of the session (introductory part: concepts, policies, trends and current situation in the area)
2. Session on social inclusion in schools
3. Session on Volunteering and activation of youth
4. ROUNDTABLE: Global education - schools in multicultural societies
5. Presentation of good practices from Slovenia, Italy, Spain, Turkey, North Macedonia, Germany: 14 practices from partners in form of posters
6. Presentations of participants’ own contributions from the area (5 papers)

**1st part of the session (introductory part: concepts, policies, trends and current situation in the area)**

**Alexander Krauss**, from partner organisation ISOB- Germany was speaking about *Pedagogical and social aspects of multicultural vs transcultural dimension in schools*. Germany is faced with a continual issues of migration society, where there is a need to have a mental model to include them in the education system. They first start teaching the language, and are focused on reconsideration of the previous experiences. Family has to have a big role in the issue of inclusion of pupils in schools. He also presented general principles of multicultural schools and policy recommendation at local, national, and EU level. For more see ppt, available through: [https://elearning.romigsc.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Alexander-Krauss\_Trasnscultural-Pedagogy.pdf](https://elearning.romigsc.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Alexander-Krauss_Trasnscultural-Pedagogy.pdf%20)

**dr. Stanka Lunder Verlič**, from Ministry of Education, Science and Sport was speaking about *Between theories and policies vs practice of multiculturalism, looking for benefits*

*of the kids*. She presented current situation regarding inclusion of migrant children in Slovenian schools, and main challenges in the area, which are:

* a rather large consensus that learning of the official language of the host country is significant for successful participation of migrants in the education process;
* defining strategies in the educational process in the light of assuring equal educational opportunities for all;
* it is essential to intensify the teacher practical training in teaching strategies tailored for different students (empowering teachers- social and emotional support);
* raising awareness of multicultural education, which should become one of pedagogic and didactic principles and regular part of education;

For more see ppt, available through: <https://elearning.romigsc.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/MIZS_Stanka-Lunder-Verlič_Migrant-students-integration-and-education-in-Slovenia-October-2019.pdf>

**Jožek Horvat - Muc**, from partner organisation IRŠIK, was speaking about *Roma communities represent one of the most significant ethnic minorities in the EU*. During his speech he stressed, that the high problem is still discrimination toward Roma population. Regarding inclusion in schools he stressed that children in general like to go to school, but a lot of work is still needed with parents (many parents of Roma children do not see education as value, also because many children have difficulties to find work when they finish schools).

He also stressed that schools have key role for improving social inclusion of children, and also Roma culture shall be more promoted/presented in schools (non-Roma peers shall also learn about Roma culture…).

**Session on social inclusion in schools:**

**Damijana Pestner**, Roma assistant was speaking about her experience as assistant, presenting main activities with children and parents; help is based on specific individual needs of a child. She stressed that Roma mother is very important element, trust needs to be build between Roma mother and school. During her speech she emphasized that parents of roma children offer shift ‘school responsibilities’ on Roma assistants. One of high problems is non-regular attendance of schools, due to non- regular attendance, children are often transferred to schools with lower educational standards. She also stressed that Roma children shall more learn about own culture, which is slowly disappearing.

**Fernando Lopez from Alicante** is working with children in social and exclusion risk, among them mostly migrant and Roma children

**Youssaf Faitah**, Cultural mediator from Medi Hospes, Taranto, Italy. He was explaining his experience of being a cultural mediator in second reception centers of SPRAR. First reception centers are mainly focused on accommodation, language issues, and in process of getting documents – and status. After receiving a legal status, migrants are accommodated in second reception centers, where focus is paid to social inclusion, intercultural issues, preparations for independent life,. For migrants of 25 years and over, the main aim is to find a job and to send the money back to their families; and in many cases also children want to work to send money back to families.

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**Session on Volunteering and activation of youth:**

**Sibel Bajram, from Skopje, North Macedonia** is teacher, director of NGO- Sumnal Early Childhood Development Centre, and volunteer. She was explaining volunteering how volunteering activities for Roma children are being held at NGO. She also stress that they carefully monitor progress of children, beneficiaries of volunteering; and if needed, coordination meetings are called with volunteer, parent, child and teachers.

**Selma Osmanović**, volunteer, was speaking about here experience of being a volunteer in frame of project RoMigSc in the period from February to July 2019, at Centre of Intercultural dialogue and Multigenerational centre Planet, Velenje, Slovenia

**Johanna Bräu,** Coordinator for the education of Migrants of the City Hall Regensburg, Germany. She is coordinator of the needs of foreigners, in the Regensburg municipality, with main focus on refugees and their inclusion in education system. She also stressed, that more trust between municipality and volunteers is needed.

**Tjaša Arko**, Head of volunteering programme, Slovene Philanthropy, Slovenia was speaking about purpose of volunteering activities. She was speaking about importance of being volunteer – when you give, you also ’get’. Volunteers have important role in supporting progress of vulnerable children in schools.

# Evaluation of the conference and policy recommendations

## Letter of thanks and evaluation questionnaire

A week after the training we sent to the speakers and all the participants the *Letter of thanks*, for their contribution and participation. We asked them for feedback through evaluation questionnaires and we promised them to keep them informed about other activities in the future.

## Evaluation analysis

**General data**

Evaluation sheet was filled out 62 respondents, most of them were coming from Slovenia (90%). Regarding structure of respondents most of them were students from ISSBS (at postgraduate level), main age structure of respondents was 19- 24 years (13 respondents), and 37- 42 years (13 respondents). Most of respondents were females (68 %).

**Content specific responses**

On the question if they are involved in any of the area of activities related to (I Roma children; II migrant children; III Volunteering), responses are:

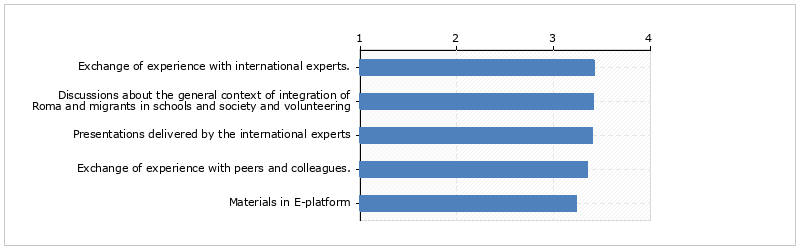
* 60% of respondents have not been involved in any of the area
* 24% respondents have been involved in activities related to Roma children
* 24% respondents have been involved in activities related to Migrant children
* 16% respondents have been involved in activities related to volunteering

37 % of respondents had previous experience with specific methods to integrate Roma and migrant children into learning environment.

**Responses related to the event**

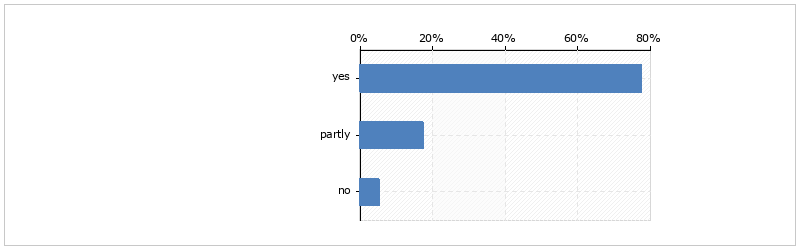
* On the question what was the reason to participate in the event, the main responses are: study visit (i.e. to enhance my knowledge as student) – 54%; personal growth and development – 20%; content – 10%, opportunity to present my experience (via posters or presentations)- 10%, opportunity of networking – 7%.
* Figure 1 shows, that the respondents were in general very satisfied with the event - on the scale from 1 to 4, satisfaction was 3,3.
* From Figure 2 it is evident that most respondents were satisfied with opportunities to express suggestions and opinions (78%), however 18% of respondents claimed that they had only partly opportunity to express suggestions and opinions, and 4% claimed that did not have opportunity to express suggestions and opinions. On the question if participants obtained new knowledge in the event 80% respondents claimed that they obtained new knowledge; 18% that they obtained new knowledge only partly, and 2% that they did not obtain any knowledge.

*Figure 1: Assessment of activities of the conference (grades from 1 to 4):*

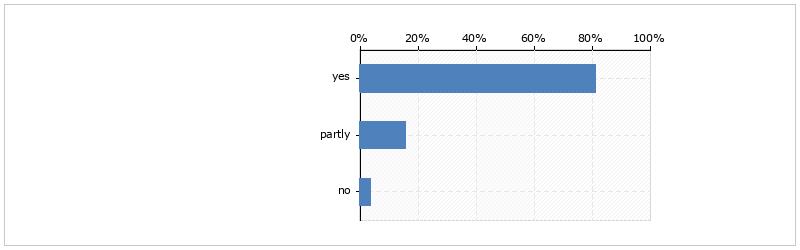


*Figure 2: Learning and discussion (frequency in %):*

1. *Had opportunities to express suggestions and opinions*



1. *Had obtained new knowledge in the event*



**Most valuable “lessons learned” in the event (repondents' answers)**

* we are all the same and all we need is to be treated equal as other persons no mater what nationality we came from
* all countries have similar problems
* interesting were experiences from different project countries
* meeting new people, engaged in Roma/migration and learning about experiences
* hearing new information about the different situations and positions of the Roma and migrant children in Europe
* good practices of Roma and migrant children integration in schools
* presentation of Dr. Jožek Muc on challenges of Roma community, Roma children …
* future activities of such/similar projects shall be more focused on ‘week areas’; e.g in Slovenia activities shall be more focused on Roma in Dolenjska region (comparing to other regions where Roma population lives, Dolenjska region faces more problems of social inclusion of Roma, including inclusion in schools)
* that hard work of volunteers can change many children lives

**Comments on the overall quality and usability of the project results, presented at the event (policy recommendations/material + E-platform/study insights/ /approaches/ training formats**

* it is very useful to hear experiences from people who work in that field every day
* the presentations were good
* good selection of speakers
* e-platform material is very useful for teachers
* good sight visits of kindergarten Romano and Velenje Intergenerational and intercultural centre, learning through experiences
* all people involved in social inclusion should be connected and work together and share their practices and ideas. in most cases we are more or less thrown into water and have to do how we know best. sometimes the big picture is lost and we deal with day to day problems what is not good for neither.

**In your opinion, what could be improved (policies, activities, etc.) in the area of social inclusion in schools and in the area of volunteering in your country?**

* the policies - more studies, a review of education mechanisms, new activities and practises at school.
* more activities for primary school children in terms of accepting immigrants would be in place. this could enlarge the lever of acceptance for immigrant children, so those children could be integrated more easily
* inclusion of many young people (15-19) in order to be more familiar with volunteering, to be more sensitive on topics connected to Roma people as well as migrants, and most of all to learn new things and socialize with peers from other countries and nationalities.
* there should be more lectures about including Roma children into our society
* national strategies for integration of Roma and migrant children to be implemented seriously
* more events like this in primary and high schools
* better coordination between schools and volunteers
* more should be done for the education of teachers in order to get competences needed to work in multicultural environment
* connection with social institutions
* volunteers can not replace the work of school counsellors or professional mediators

**Do you in general agree with the study results and policy recommendations as presented? Which recommendation would you add**

Respondents in general agreed with study results and policy recommendations as presented. Some recommendations to be added/ or some comments:

in each country the process is different because history, culture etc.

policy makers/officers shall do field visits – to meet real day situation, to meet practioners who know the problems and deal with problems on everyday basis

**Photos from the conference**

Kindergarten Romano, Roma settlement Pušča, Murska Sobota – 9.10

Center of Intercultural dialogue and Multigenerational centre Planet, Velenje – 9.10

Conference- 10.10

