**OVERALL SUMMARY of VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITY-WP4 2019 (SPAIN, NORTH MACEDONIA, SLOVENIA, ITALY): Summarizing the facts and recommendations from national reports**

1. **GENERAL**

**Main aim of the volunteering activity was:**

* To provide opportunity for volunteers to identify needs of community, develop program in working with youth, increase participation and raise awareness for benefits of volunteering in community
* Provide venue for volunteers who have gone through the training for volunteers to put in place their competence, skills and values when volunteering
* Awareness raising of social responsibility in the community for sustainability and promotion of diversity
* Help in promoting inclusiveness as value for all and in building sustainable communities

**General characteristic:**

Volunteering activity schedule had been designed to take place after delivery of training for volunteers, which all partner countries had delivered in the beginning of 2019 but not late than March 2019. Therefore, project partner countries Spain, North Macedonia, Italy and Slovenia responsible for volunteering activity as specified under WP4 monitored the volunteering activity during period of March 2019 until later September 2019 with some partner country running in two phases or cohorts while others had spread out the whole period. As the time schedule of delivery of volunteering activity differs, number of volunteers per country shows some variations as well due to local conditions. However while project partners doubled number of volunteers in 2019 going over yearly indicator of 80 volunteers per year. Below number of volunteers per country is provided.

* Slovenia - 32
* Italy - 16
* North Macedonia - 27
* Spain - 12

Total number of volunteers in 2019 is 87 active volunteers delivering of 10220 volunteering hours-working with mentors in reporting their volunteering hours-with impact of around 1200 beneficiaries including, parents, community actors, school teachers, children, and other volunteers.

The volunteers in all partner countries worked closely with institutions, organizations, and community centers while enlarging their network of host institutions for volunteers. Host institutions for volunteers have been kinder gardens, primary schools, high schools, community centers, NGOs and special schools/centers for integration of migrant or Roma.

Number of mentors overseeing the work of volunteers has been 38 in all partner countries whose work as mentors had been recognized with delivery of certificates for mentorship.

1. **SHORT OVERAL ANALYSIS OF VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITIES DELIVERED IN ALL 4 PROJECT PARTNER COUNTRIES**

Participants going through the training for volunteers organized prior to volunteering activity were trained in gaining knowledge for volunterism, developing skills and recognizing values in contributing to improving conditions for vulnerable groups in society. Main aim of volunteering activity has been to ease inclusion of vulnerable groups namely, migrants and Roma children or adults. During volunteering activity in all 4 partner countries volunteers has covered wide range of areas identified based on the needs of target groups while the country and local social conditions imposed areas for the volunteering. Below we provide common areas and country specific areas of volunteering covered by 88 volunteers during period of March-September 2019.

***Common areas of volunteering activity***

* Creative workshops for interconnecting, socializing and spending quality spare time-cooking workshops, learning something new about other cultures, work in garden.
* Participation in the performance of sports and cultural days and other activities in intercultural environment.
* Socializing with Roma children during morning care, drawing, telling stories etc.

***Specific areas of volunteering by partner country***

***SPAIN***

* Homework assistance
* Participating in school dropout prevention activities and collating absenteeism data for subsequent analysis.
* Promoting healthy habits and feeding time
* Conflict management and emotional intelligence capacity training.
* Providing support to school management.
* Teaching Spanish language to children and families (mostly mothers).
* Teaching new volunteers

***SLOVENIA***

* Learning assistance to pupils in Slovene and other subjects.
* Learning Slovenian language for parents.
* Participation in the performance of sports and cultural days and other activities.
* Participating in organizing events with an overview of the characteristics, culture and traditions of migrant states.

***ITALY***

* supporting learning process for pupils (mainly supporting their process of learning Italian)
* organizing social & cultural events that can make a significant contribution to integrating into peers’ society and social environment

***NORTH MACEDONIA***

* Learning assistance to pupils in Macedonian language, math and other subjects.
* Visiting parents of the children with problems in schools.
* Preparing high school pupils for the state Matura exam.

1. **Summary of reflections and learning outcomes from the volunteering activity in all 4 partner countries:**

Volunteers each delivering over 100 hours work in volunteering activity or total of 10020 hours covering wide range of areas had observed and learned many issues when dealing with children at risk of exclusion and migrants with cultural backgrounds other than the host society. Below is some important extracts of national reports based on reflections of volunteers and beneficiaries happened during volunteering activity.

* The volunteer had contributed with conflict management in a primary school by assisting to solve many small conflicts simply by earning the trust of the children.
* When you share your time with Roma children, you realize that they need a lot of understanding, they find it difficult to express their feelings and maybe it is because society should know their history better.”
* Reflection of a volunteer at an after school activity center-working with children and understanding their needs, getting their attention on things that make them feel more engaging, working together in helping them to build their confidence and appreciate values of inclusion.
* Reflection of Principal of a school with Roma children (as mentor): “For our educational center, having been able to count on a person with specific training in children at risk in social exclusion of Roma children has been a success, since it has improved co-living in the center. We have also improved and corrected our actions regarding school absenteeism thanks to all the work she has done with us”.
* One NGO contact said the work of volunteers is irreplaceable because the way they interact with the children is closer, on a person-to-person basis.
* Volunteers are very engaged in the work, they are also very well accepted by beneficiaries – migrant children. Volunteering has positive impact on children- examples:; volunteering helps them to make progress in school (they have better grades; some corrected bad grades), children see volunteers as friends; volunteers also help them to extend their social network.
* School with Roma children: In this school year, we remained without additional staff who worked with Roma children. When we got invitation for the project, we immediately started with recruitment of volunteers. 6 volunteers are currently involved in volunteering activities of our school.
* The help of volunteers is more than welcome for Roma children; they are more motivated for schoolwork, for engaging in activities during classes and for informal socialisation with classmates. When volunteers are present, children have more self-confidence, and they easier engage in different activities. In general, children and volunteers catch up very well; relationship is built on trust and friendships. In the presence of volunteer, some children show less disturbing behaviour during classes and breaks. With the help of volunteers, some children have partial improved their learning achievement, and are more motivated for work.
* Participants of the seminar gained the knowledge of social responsibility, volunteering, and learned strategies for working in a multicultural environment.
* Statistics from evaluation survey show, that most respondents (more than 80 %) gained new knowledge at the seminar.
* Participants that were further on involved in volunteering with Roma/migrant children, in general agreed, that the participation at the training was very useful for their work.

1. **IMPACT OF VOLUNTEERING**

* Volunteering activity increased awareness in the community on how much volunteers can help in building solidarity in community while effectively dealing with solving the problems with their own resources
* It is evident that active work of volunteers in working with children and disadvantaged groups benefits both the volunteers and the community. This cooperation has proved to be well appreciated from both parties.
* Volunteers going through training for volunteers were able to develop skills and knowledge in working as volunteers while working actively engaged in volunteering activity helped them in gaining valuable experiences.
* Volunteering work made provided more comfort for Roma children and migrants in learning experience, share more with volunteers which increased their capability in socialising in new environment or cultural setting and helped them in building self-confidence.
* Had great impact in making socialisation easier in learning the language of the community by a committed volunteer.
* Beneficiaries of volunteering activity especially schools recognized intervention of volunteers in accelerating of learning very powerful tool and complimentary for schooling of Roma children and migrants.

1. **POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

From national reports of partners, we can extract the **following (policy) recommendations:**

* There is a need for inclusion of more volunteers, debates, trainings for the integration of Roma children in schools.
* Systemic and continuous long-term solution should be initiated to support inclusion and better learning opportunities for Roma and migrant children.
* More intensive work with the parents of Roma children is needed.
* Prejudices, stereotypes, not enough understanding of the diversities in the society are considered also as an obstacle for inclusion of Roma children in schools.
* Roma children need to learn Roma language as a course in primary schools.
* Special programs are needed and applied in some cases for pupils who cannot write and read.
* Enrichment/informal activities for mixed groups of children (Roma, migrants, host nationals) shall be widely promoted
* Volunteering is important aspect of non-formal learning (increases references, knowledge, skills and competencies of volunteers)
* Volunteering is more and more needed in schools (due to more and more diversity society), and shall be embedded in school system
* Volunteering shall start already at the beginning of school year
* Teaching children (of 'mainstream population' ) about the Roma culture and the culture of migrant children
* The Ministry should provide more hours for learning the national language –particular in the first year of enrolment of migrant children in national schools; since it is extremely difficult for them to follow the lessons
* Volunteers shall be trained for work in multicultural environment
* Volunteering shall be supported at local/regional/national level, and well-coordinated by institution that host volunteers
* Important is to include migrant volunteers into volunteering activities
* Volunteering activities needs to be well coordinated, progress in beneficiaries of volunteering (children) carefully monitored
* School inclusion activities are under budgeted and under recognised.
* Some schools are ghettos: a policy of no-isolation is a must.
* More support to programs in secondary school (dropout danger zone: when passing from primary to secondary school).