

Positive Practices for Child Participation in the EU: Roma Children

Child participation in all aspects of modern society is extremely important for the good development of children. Furthermore it is extremely important that children belonging to vulnerable groups that are already marginalized in society have an increased opportunity to participate in society and have their voices heard. This report is based on the EU Commission's report "Evaluation of legislation, policy and practice of child participation in the European Union."¹ Which examines the participation levels of children from vulnerable groups.

Roma children have been identified as a group of children that experiences lower levels of participation in comparison to other groups of children. Roma children face social exclusion, discrimination and low levels of participation in education. All this negatively impacts their ability to participate in society and other decision-making processes.

Certain legislative steps, institutions and strategies have been used with the hope of increasing the level of participation of Roma children in their wider societies. Countries such as Greece and Hungary have established specific strategic objectives that are in place to address the integration of the Roma. Also, a law in Hungary from 2011 allows children from national minority groups to select the language in which they want to be educated, increasing the accessibility of education to Roma children.

A collection of good practices includes projects such as: *Having our say*, *All about you*, and *Travelling Ahead*. These projects were developed by Save The Children and carried out in Scotland and England, respectively. These project allowed Roma and Traveller children to express their opinions on their local areas and neighbourhoods, how to improve the quality of their lives, and to generally have their say. The children were enabled to give their opinions through different platforms such as: video production, talking, painting, clay modelling, photography and Internet comments. Additionally, *Associazione 21 Luglio*², in Italy, provides training for activists so that they can become advocates for their own community.

Written by Kareem Korayem, for Child Protection Hub for South East Europe, 2016.

¹ <http://childhub.org/child-protection-online-library/evaluation-legislation-policy-and-practice-child-participation-0>

² <http://www.21luglio.org/associazione-21-luglio>