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“Working together  
for Roma Inclusive  
Education”

## Working together for Roma Inclusive education

**Final project conference, Agia Varvara, Greece, 11 December 2017**

**Newsletter #6  
December 2017**

The final conference of the project “Working together for Roma Inclusive Education” was held on 11 December 2017 to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Gymnasio of Agia Varvara. Representatives of the project’s partners as well as of stakeholders actively engaged in the field of Roma inclusion and in particular in education, participated in the conference and had the opportunity to present and discuss on the project activities and results.

In the beginning of the conference, the Headmistress of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Gymnasio of Agia Varvara welcomed the participants and noted that Roma and non Roma have been living in a harmonic way in Agia Varvara for years. Yet, despite the fact that Roma people in Agia Varvara are well integrated, more efforts are needed in the area of education as the educational attainment of Roma children is low compared to non Roma. She stated that this is the reason why the current project is so important: it will promote tools which can contribute significantly in dealing in the long term with the low educational attainment of Roma children.



Mr. Parcharidis, Managing Director of Bolt International Consulting and Project Manager noted that the project was innovative as it brought together Roma and non Roma children,



which is one of the elements that can facilitate the Roma inclusion, as well as it piloted good practices for the promotion of Roma inclusive education from very different localities and achieved positive results. In particular he emphasized the fact that Agia Varvara is an urban area and that Roma people are well integrated, while in the other localities in Bulgaria and Romania Roma people live in rural areas, not integrated.

Following, Mr. Pantzos, President of ELLAN PASSE, stressed that the members of the Panhellenic Confederation acknowledged the need to organize the Roma community and assist in the design and implementation of interventions which will promote Roma social inclusion, including in the area of education.



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Afterwards, Mr. Dimitris Ntontis, Technical Coordinator of the project, presented briefly the project activities and the outputs of the project emphasizing the role of the pilot activity in the exchange of experiences among the partner organisations, He described then objective and the process of designing the pilot activity, giving the ground for the presentation of the pilot activity in the 3 countries.



Initially, Mrs Potiropoulou and Mrs. Kolokouri from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Gymnasio of Agia Varvara presented the pilot implementation of the practice in Greece, highlighting the application of the focus group technique as well as the role of Roma mediators in the implementation of the practice and their role in facilitating such activities.

Following, Mrs Nedelcheva, representative of Bacho Kiro Secondary school presented the pilot activity in Bulgaria. She gave particular emphasis on the dissemination of the project activities. In particular, representatives of Bacho Kiro secondary school presented the project in the National Scientific conference: “Intercultural education - Good Pedagogical Practices in the Implementation of Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities”, while information about the applied pedagogical practice in the context of the pilot activity were disseminated to the Ministry of Education.



Mrs. Tontz, representative of Ialomita County School Inspectorate presented the pilot activity in Romania. She noted the cooperation among students, teachers and the school administration for the successful implementation of the pilot activity in the 3 schools in Ialomita county and the need to enroll as many Roma children as possible to the education system.

Finally Mrs. Ovedenie (AEVB) and Mrs. Ivanova presented the conclusions and recommendations derived from the implementation of the pilot activity in all 3 countries.

In particular, Mrs. Ovedenie highlighted the fact that there are numerous promising practices already implemented by schools for promoting Roma inclusive education, most of which are not part of a wider strategy but rather individual efforts of school administrations and teachers. Such practices can indeed achieve positive results, while some of these practices could be transferred and applied to localities with different socioeconomic conditions, with small methodological adjustments.



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Following, Mrs. Ivanova stressed that in order to achieve positive results, it is required a close cooperation among teachers, students, school administration and the local community and a strong commitment in order to make more efforts for promoting the inclusion of Roma children to education. She noted that the participation of Roma mediators is significant as they can facilitate the participation of the local community and boost, thus, the effectiveness of the practices applied. The local actors’ participation can be increased if Roma mediators are involved in all phases of the application/implementation of the tool, method or practice.



Following the end of the presentations, a fruitful discussion took place among the participants on the differences and similarities of the education systems in the 3 countries. The discussion focused also on the school curricula; the structure and the responsibilities of the municipalities in designing, implementing and funding interventions in the area of education; and the reaction of the parents and of the students in Bulgaria regarding the translation of poems in the Romani language, taking into consideration that only the Bulgarian language is allowed to be used within the school environment.



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