

ENGAGE - USING CONTACT INTERVENTIONS TO PROMOTE ENGAGEMENT AND MOBILISATION FOR SOCIAL CHANGE



ENGAGE: Roma activism and allyship

Project closing event

Time: 16th November 2022 (10am - 1pm, online)

[Please register for the event here.](#)

Zoom link: <https://ppk-elte->

[hu.zoom.us/j/96556761727?pwd=aWREdHIDNW11NjZZWGE5Yyt2QXBjUT09](https://ppk-elte-hu.zoom.us/j/96556761727?pwd=aWREdHIDNW11NjZZWGE5Yyt2QXBjUT09)

Meeting ID: 965 5676 1727, passcode: 899631

Introduction

Despite the great advances made by decades of social scientific enquiry into developing effective methods of prejudice reduction and conflict resolution, and despite EU policies and mandates promoting Roma inclusion, we fail to see the substantial societal changes in the situation of Roma people across Europe, and the mobilisation of European citizens (Roma and non-Roma alike) to promote their rights.

Previous studies identified anti-Gypsyism and the predominantly hostile normative political context as the main obstacles to the success of Roma inclusion policies. These studies have found that both top-down (EU and state policies) and bottom-up efforts (NGOs, local efforts by municipalities) fail to achieve their goals, because the non-Roma majority population finds ways to sabotage the implementation of these policies (e.g., school integration efforts often fail due to the flight of non-Roma pupils from integrated schools) based on individual level attitudes that are embedded in institutional practices and political processes enabling a normative context in which anti-Gypsyism prevails. Furthermore, the main characteristic of the attitudes of the non-Roma majority population was not one of active hatred and hostility, but rather the lack of empathy and a high level of indifference. Therefore, the failure to achieve change has less to do with open conflict, fear, and hatred than with neglect that may hinder social change efforts.

Programs aiming to reduce prejudice among the majority population through positive intergroup contact (mainly focusing on similarities and harmony) can have a demobilising effect among members of disadvantaged groups and negative consequences for equality. Therefore, interventions must be mindful about what kind of allyship they promote, one that includes Roma voices in bringing about change and acknowledges their agency, taking into account the heterogeneity and intersectional identities of European Roma people, or simply one of short term helping without effectively changing the social structure.

ENGAGE addresses the discrimination of Roma people in Europe building on the assumption that anti-Gypsyism and a hostile normative political context create obstacles to Roma inclusion and the social engagement of Roma and non-Roma people alike. The project aims to address the problem of anti-Gypsyism and indifference among members of the non-Roma majority: (1) by increasing Roma activism and engagement, and (2) by mobilizing the non-Roma population as allies for social change.

ENGAGE focuses mainly on three countries (Hungary, Slovakia, and Spain), with recommendations for Europe overall. We conducted and assessed contact-based intervention programs using action research, conducted interviews with Roma activists concerning topics of activist identity and allyship, identified best practices, furthermore, we conducted randomized controlled lab experiment and a survey among both Roma and non-Roma participants, analyzed data from large European surveys (e.g. ESS, EVS) and used meta-analysis of previous research.

The innovative aspect of the project is that based on our findings we **identified effective interventions** to improve attitudes toward the Roma, promote allyship among the non-Roma and enhance Roma engagement and activism. We developed a **toolkit to be used in making policy decisions and developing effective interventions** especially concerning Roma and non-Roma engagement.

Project participants:

- Department of Social Psychology, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest
- UCCU Roma Informal Education Foundation
- Institute for Research in Social Communication, Slovak Academy of Sciences
- Centre for Migration Studies and Intercultural Relations, University of Almería, Spain

Project Closing Event

The final event will be co-organized by the ENGAGE project team (led by Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest) consisting of three universities and research institutions and one NGO and hosted by Anna Donath (MEP). On the final event, we will:

1. Present the main findings concerning interventions based on action research, secondary analysis of international data, experiments, and best practices
2. Present the challenges of Roma activism
3. Critically examine allyship and non-Roma engagement

The event will address anti-Gypsyism and indifference among members of the non-Roma majority. We will further present how to increase Roma activism and engagement. Equally importantly it will present results on mobilization the non-Roma population as allies for social change. The event will reflect on the importance of collaboration between different partners and outline areas of co-operation between researchers, policy makers, NGOs on both local and European levels.

AGENDA

- 10:00 -10:25** Welcome & Keynote speaker: Romeo Franz (MEP)
- 10:25 -10:50** Keynote speaker: Local and European Roma activism - Judit Ignácz (UCCU)
- 10:55 -11:55** ENGAGE results:
- Short film on Roma activism and allyship
 - Best practices (Ana Urbiola, University of Almería)
 - Toolkit for interventions to promote Roma and non-Roma engagement (Anna Kende, Eötvös Loránd University)
 - Roma activism (Lucia Hargašová, Slovak Academy of Sciences)
- 12:00 - 13:00** Roundtable discussion about Roma activism and allyship
- Moderator: Barbara Láštiová, Slovak Academy of Sciences
- Participants: Bettina Pocsai, Roma activist (UCCU); Hungary
Sara López Olvera, Roma activist, Spain
Stanislav Daniel, Roma rights activist, advocate, researcher, and trainer; Slovakia

For more information about the project visit <https://polrom.eu/engage/>

This research was funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) Programme (2014-2020) (Grant. No. 963122 – ENGAGE – REC-AG-2020 / REC-RDIS-DISC-AG-2020). The content of this report represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

