



Inclusion4Schools

Event Report for Milestone 11

**Start of the Awareness Raising Events**



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101004653

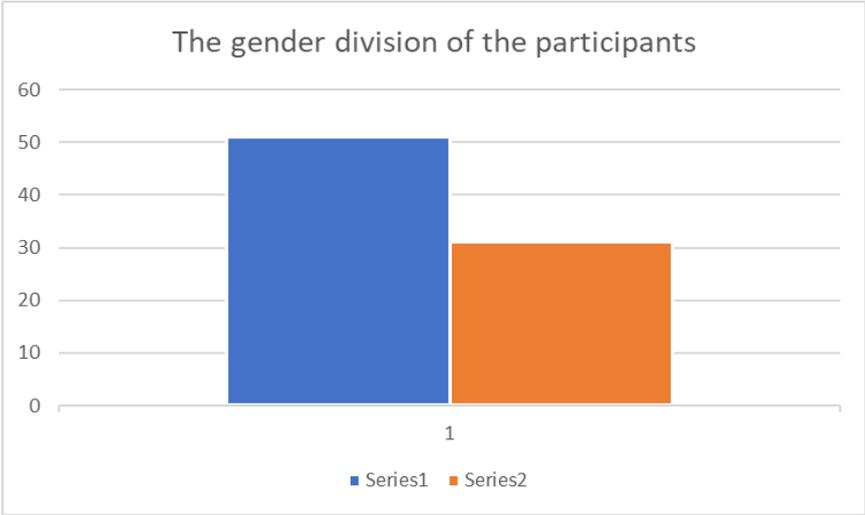
<b>Related WP number and name</b>	WP4 Evaluation & Exchange of Transformative Practices
<b>Related Task Number and Title</b>	WT 4.4 Clustering with existing programmes & initiatives
<b>Partner Responsible</b>	RCISD
<b>Event Title</b>	National Conference Inclusive Education "Raising Awareness on Inclusive Education – Good practices in Increasing Access and Inclusion of Marginalized Groups in Education "
<b>Main author= Event Leader</b>	Envina Xhemi
<b>Contributors</b>	Béla Kardon

H2020            Horizon2020  
I4S                Inclusion for Schools  
M                  Month  
PIONEERED    Pioneering policies and practices tackling educational inequalities in Europe  
RIA                Research and Innovation Action  
SMOOTH        Educational Common Spaces Passing through enclosures and reversing inequalities

# Scope of the Event

## Participants:

82 physical participants Around 50 were present online.  
In the present participants there were 51 women and 31 men.



Participants in the event fall into the following categories:

- Public and private Higher Education Institutions
- Public and private pre-university institutions
- Education experts
- Local Government Representatives
- Representatives from the first Open School Classes
- Ministry of Education and Sports
- Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
- Commissioner for Protection Against Discrimination
- Kindergarten
- Albanian Parliamentary Commission of Education
- Local Education Office

Project partners also attended from RCISD, Wesley, Oltalom and CEGA.

## Venue:

Tirana, Albania

The venue chosen is the Hotel Tirana International.

That is the most familiar spot in Tirana and very central to everyone.

The location is host to many conferences and provides the necessary standards for the number of people planned to come and technical requirements to best achieve the results of the event.

## Outcomes of the event with conclusions:

Moderator: Eriola Shingjergji , **ANOA** expert

**Welcoming and Presentation** – Ms. Envina Zavalani, Team Leader of the Project in Albania. Welcomes the present participants and extends the greetings to the panel. She stated the aims and objectives of this event and did not go further into details of the project since a proper presentation is going to be carried out by Mr. Bela Kardon.

**Inclusive Education in Albania-** Ms. Nina Guga, Deputy Minister of Education and Sports. She greets everyone, and states that she accepted this invitation with great pleasure since it covers a very sensitive topic as inclusive education. She stated that the inclusion of marginalized groups in education is in total coherence with the policies of the Ministry of Education and Sports. Inclusion implies increase of participation starting with the early childhood. Since 2016 the MOES has approved the document “Teacher Training and Education on Inclusive Education”. - The profile of the Inclusive Teacher

We have already started the implementation of the National Education Strategy which main focus is inclusiveness. This has brought about a raised awareness on the need of increased participation of disadvantaged groups in education. Raised numbers of supporting teachers for the SNE is one of the measures.

MoES is working on establishing a Protocol on school level to address issues of extremism, bullying, violence.

The work on empowering schools’ networks as Community Centers, continues from the previous Strategy, and aims at involving the local communities and other actors around schools as community centers. Offering after school courses aims at attracting and keeping disadvantaged students in school.

Expansion of sports provision aims at giving the possibility to pupils to find their own interest. She thanks again the organizers of the conference and welcomes the future collaboration for the benefit of the target group students.

**Comments from the participants:** Congratulates on the achievement of SNE schools as resource schools.

**National Action Plan for Roma and Egyptian Integration (positive experience) –** Ms. Irena Mitro, representative of Ministry of Health and Social Protection- Basis of the National Strategy is Equality, Inclusion and Participation for Roma & Egyptian Communities. The above principles are well set out in the relevant action plan which focuses on:

- Access to Justice
- Employment
- Housing
- Social Protection
- Antigypsism
- Education and Cultural Dialogue

The Action Plan is the output of the common work with all the Ministries and other relevant stakeholders and Civil Society Organizations. All the measures and provisions for this group are listed in the plan. There is a common declaration of all the Prime Ministers of the region, in Poznan, which shows the importance that this issue has been given.

Creating equal opportunities for Roma and Egyptians is the core element between the policy dialogue among the Albanian Government and the EU.

We have a very good data system ROMALB.

In the last 3 budget plans we have managed to put a specific budget line for Roma.

**Nina Guga intervention:** the Albanian Government is providing scholarships for disadvantaged groups, economic, Roma and Egyptians for continuing their education after the mandatory school. We are working to put the Roma history module in the school curricula.

Presentation of three parallel projects of Horizon 2020 funds that aim at overcoming inequalities in education - **Inclusion4Schools Project, PIONEERED Project, SMOOTH Project**- Mr. Béla Kardon, Project Scientific Supervisor of the project, RCSID, Hungary  
The presentation will be attached to this report as **an Annex and to the drive specific for the event.**

**Vildana Bushati, Representative, Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination** – Segregation topics and their addressing.

Introduced the institution of the Commissioner for Protection Against Discrimination The institution was established in 2010 as an independent body based on the same law on protection against discrimination in the republic of Albania. The philosophy of the institution is that not everybody should be treated equally if they are coming from different life circumstances.

The core work is addressing individual complaints with a premise of discrimination and sometimes issues coming from trustworthy sources. The law provides protection for private and public entities. The commissioner reaches administrative decisions and these decisions are obligator in case the accused party does not follow the case in the court.

The concrete cases with the basis race as discriminatory element.

The case showcased was related to the right of a group of individuals that required enrollment in preschool education institutions. The accused party was the municipality of Tirana. The individuals asked to be exempted by the fee, considering themselves as an entitled category. The municipality through a decision of communal council included Roma and Egyptians in the categories that benefited from free preschool education and the case was solved.

Very often the Commissioner warns the schools at risk of segregation to pay close attention to the children distribution in the first grade.

Another popular case, that was started by the Commissioner was related to one segregated school in Korca Albania as follows:

The European Court of Human Rights found the Albanian state guilty of violating anti-discrimination measures in the European Convention on Human Rights by segregating children from the Roma and Egyptian minorities at the Naim Frasheri primary school in the south-eastern city of Korca.

The court ordered the Albanian government to pay compensation of 4,500 euros to five families, who filed a lawsuit in 2017 through the European Centre for Roma Rights.

“The applicants are 18 Albanian nationals of Roma and Egyptian ethnicity who together make up six households. They live in Korca (Albania),” the ruling said.

It said the applicants complained that the section of the European Convention on Human Rights prohibiting discrimination was being violated “owing to the over-representation of Egyptian and Roma pupils in Naim Frasheri school”.

In an average year, Roma and Egyptian pupils make up between 89 to 100 per cent of the enrolled children at the Naim Frasheri school, according to the plaintiffs, even though these communities are a minority in Korca.

The court said that the Albanian authorities failed to take steps to avoid the concentration of Roma and Egyptian children in the school, despite the decision of the Commissioner for Protection against Discrimination for the Ministry of Education and Sports to take immediate steps to improve the situation.

Conference debate: The problem of insufficient numbers of assistant teachers for Children with disability, and the lack of training of the existing ones.

**Bledi Taho, Executive Director IRCA, (Institute of Romani Culture in Albania)-** Empowerment of vulnerable groups in problem solving.

Mr Taho presented the case of a project named: Roma Girls & Women Education. Towards Integration

As per statistics accumulated by a survey involving 1000 Roma individuals across Albania in 2020, 30.5% have never been to school out of which 20.5% were women. Over 60% of the interviewed sample said that they have faced difficulties in the education system and some of them are related to discrimination and functional illiteracy.

After this research, we have drafted many recommendations, and one that I will be addressing today relates to increasing literacy among Roma women and girls. Usually, education policies and initiatives address children, but we think that we should tackle the parents as well.

We started with 100 women and girls, with 6 activities ranging from curricula design, ToT, podcasts, happy hours to develop initial literacy skills and other related soft skills, and have carried out all the activities successfully with: 100 trained Roma girls and women and 5 ToT Roma trainers.

He closed the presentation, by stating that probably the issue of Roma and Egyptian community has been extensively discussed, but the continuous support is necessary

for these groups, since there is every day the need to support this population. And it should be done with the support of everyone.

**Presentation in English will be in the specific folder.**

**Herolinda Shkullaku, Director of** Nehemiah Gateway Foundation, - Case of "Amaro Tan" School

Herolinda , starts by saying that she has carefully listened to all problems and issues addressed in the conference so far and their work is the response to the issues raised in Pogradec.

She introduced herself as the executive director of Nehemiah Gateway Albania, which celebrated the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. They are a humanitarian non-for-profit Organization. Initially they have come to Albania in the first years of transitions and supported poor families with meal supplies. They noticed that there was a high degree of illiteracy among young people and children so they thought to start with what were called the hope classes and later on a school.

Amaro Tan is one of the projects this NPO is implementing for years.

She then passes the word to Marin Piqoni (Amaro Tan, School Director) to give a presentation on the school.

**Dr. Albina Pajo, Head of the Department of Education, Arjan Kamburi Department of Education from "Fan Noli" University, Korça** - Continuous training of teachers on inclusion, as a necessity for respecting children's rights to education.

Dr Albina Pajo started by posing some critiques to the Ministry of Education Representative on not approving some of the branches in relation to inclusive education in the University of Korca, especially for in service teacher training.

The second speaker Arjan Kamburi gave an insight of how work has started in integrating the notion. He stated that the first fight started within the university colleagues, because initially the idea of inclusive education seemed to evoke only measures related to special education. He stated that inclusive education implies every student in the classroom. "The profile of one class is made of 30 profiles, if there are 30 different students: Working with teachers on inclusive education first implied to change their attitudes first.

If we want to do something well, we should do them right. The teachers need to have workshops and not typical trainings through modules. What is seen as a need is that the teachers require to address day to day case studies and that's from where we start out trainings.

In our initial training we work with our students in developing a through philosophy on inclusive education.

We have two research lines in our university:

Inclusive education

And one competency-based training

We focus our work on PAY Plan which has been developed by Save the Children Albania, University Fan Noli, Korca, University of Bologna and University of Elbasan.

For us what is important is to have a comprehensive understanding of inclusive education and also the specific trainings which start with the attitudes and behaviors of the teachers and also of the whole education actors' cycle.

**Ervin Muço, Municipality of Elbasan-** Involvement of vulnerable groups in local government.

He starts with an anecdote, to illustrate that behaviors are inherited sometimes without knowing the initial reason why a certain practice is in place.

He states that 2 weeks before the event the mayor of Elbasan received, the prize “the most Roma Friendly mayor” in the region by the European Council.

This is to show that most of the things start from leadership and the approach a leader has towards solving an issue.

The political will is also very important in bringing about important changes, but the will alone is not enough, if it is not translated into vision and concrete steps/

The first step is the Local Action plan for Roma and Egyptian community. The action plans provide for issues and challenges and actors to be involved that need to be addressed.

However, what is of greatest importance is the dedicated budget. If we do not have the budget, we can achieve nothing. The partnership is also important, and we have a very good partnership in Elbasan.

However, if we take a certain issue as separated, like a problem belonging to only one community we have solved nothing. Like the education for Roma and Egyptian community has to put into discussion the whole education system in Albania.

For example, we have worked with children in street situation in the municipality. There are parents who use them in the street who are under investigation. However, if the majority population provides them with money, they are contributing the same to keep these children in the street.

To my opinion our challenge is even bigger than the education system. Our challenge is to change the society’s mindset at large.

The event was concluded with signing a MoU between the Municipality of Elbasan and the project representative in Albania Ms, Envina Xhemi on common activities to be delivered in Elbasan in the frame of the project.