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PEER

Participation, Experiences and
Empowerment for Roma Youth



uclan
University of Central Lancashire

The Magic 6

Participatory Action and Learning Experiences
with Roma Youth

Training Manual



A collaborative learning resource written with Roma young people and professionals working with PEER Youth in Romania, Bulgaria, Cyprus, England, France, Lithuania, Ireland, Italy, Scotland, Spain and Wales.

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This is the final public edition of this training manual.

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1. Background



This section tells you more about:

The PEER Project

PEER Participation & Empowerment Experiences for Roma youth has worked in 9 countries supporting children and young people to participate in making positive changes for themselves & their communities.

Why learning to support Roma Children's Participatory Action is important

What's in this Manual?

- ✓ What participatory action is
- ✓ How to work with others
- ✓ Activities that worked for us
- ✓ Training plans and resources

How to learn about Roma youth action and evaluation from our other manuals

1.1 What is the PEER Project?

The PEER project (Participation and Empowerment Experiences for Roma youth) involved partners in nine countries working with Roma¹ children and young people aged from 8-18 to

¹ The EU definition of the term Roma includes the ethnic groups Travellers, Gens du voyage, Kalé, Sinti and others. In this manual we use the EU term Roma. In each country and community we use the words that people choose to use to describe themselves, their ethnicity and their nationality. For example, some young people involved in PEER in the UK describe themselves as Welsh Gypsies, Romany Gypsies, or Scottish Travellers.

build capacity and opportunities to engage in participatory action with them. It was funded through an EU Fundamental Rights and Citizenship grant JUST/2013/FRAC/AG/6230.

PEER has enabled Roma children and young people to co-lead and take part in participatory action and learning together. By the end of our first year working together some Roma young people in PEER said they had:

- Changed their own confidence and skills.
- Changed the way they were seen by workers and teachers.
- Changed some things in their communities and sometimes influenced policy makers.

Roma young people and community members have led or co-led every part of this process.

This manual for professionals, tell you what worked for us in supporting participatory action by Roma children and young people. Ideas should be adapted to your context.

It is also useful as a guide for working with other children and young people who face discrimination, as the concept has also been tested with disabled children, children in care, young carers and refugee children.

1.2 Why Promote Roma Youth Participation and Action?

All citizens, including children, have the right to actively express their opinion and take part in decisions regarding all aspects of their lives. For children this right is stated in Article 12 of the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*. The EU Commission (2011) *Roma Integration Strategy* seeks to tackle the structures and systems which marginalise and exclude Roma communities from social, economic and political integration. The Council of Europe (2012) *Recommendation on Participation* underlines that children's participation should be facilitated in all aspects of public life, including policy making, services delivery and schooling.

Although progress has been made in some countries, and Roma children and young people contribute all the time through their participation in aspects of family and community life, Roma children and youth are excluded from effective public participation, due not only to their age, but to a major part because of their economic status, social exclusion and ethnic prejudices. In countries across the European Union, Roma children are subject to many social disadvantages that reduce their chances to influence processes, decisions and activities that affect them.

By involving Roma young people and professionals working with them, you can help to create an effective environment for promoting their participation and the capacity of organisations to work in participatory ways.

1.3 What is this training manual?

The training manual provides resources and guidance used by Roma young people and adults who facilitated the participative action research during the PEER project. We hope that the

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manual will be a source of ideas, materials and reflections on the values and practices we built into our work.

We have tried to build on the many examples of innovative practice taking place across the countries involved. Our aim is to encourage innovation in enabling participation and provide the framework on which we built our activities in the PEER project. We are offering a framework of six steps of direct work with groups. This needs to be supported by four further steps of background work that enable adaptation to meet local circumstances.

Roma young people and professionals working with them helped write the contents of this manual [we include contact details for more information]. We have trialled the training with Roma young people and professionals in each of the nine countries and made changes to the manual and resources based on what we learned together through this process.

Section 2 explains why participation is important and the sort of participation this training manual will help you facilitate with groups of Roma children and young people.

Section 3 covers ideas on how to be ready for working with other people, young people in the group and other people outside of it

Section 4 contains examples of the activities we have used that worked for our PEER groups, but you can also find lots of new ideas to try out on line – we are always trying new things.

Section 5 gives an introduction to ideas about action and evaluation, but these will be covered in more detail in separate publications (December 2016).

Section 6 Gives examples of training programmes we used, to understand the contents of this manual, and some suggested further resources.

1.4 How else can we learn about Roma youth participation?

Learning from each other, especially learning from young people and community members, is vital. In the groups we have run we have learned from Roma young people who are experienced in participatory activities and often involved them in providing training for adults and Roma young people who went on to lead their own groups. This young Roma led approach was very successful and we encourage the development of training using this model. Seeing Roma young people taking a leadership role has provided a powerful message about what is possible. It demonstrates how to value Roma young people as facilitators and leaders. This has helped adults who have less experience of participative approaches to gain confidence in their ability to support Roma young people to decide upon and take action on issues that matter to them.

There is a separate multi-media guide www.PEERaction.eu made directly by Roma children and young people for Roma children and young people. Further guidance for professionals and advice on evaluation can be found on our project website www.peeryouth.eu

2. Participation and Action



This section tells you more about:

What is Participation?

Participation is about children having the opportunity to express their views, influence decision-making and achieve change.

Children's Rights

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child promises all children the same rights. It says what countries must do so that all children grow as healthy as possible, can learn at school, are protected, have their views listened to, and are treated fairly.

The Magic 6



Goals for Change



2.1 What is Participation?


Participation can be understood in different ways.


"Participation is about children having the opportunity to express their views, influence decision-making and achieve change." (Save the Children 2010 p.4).

"“participation” is about individuals and groups of individuals having the right, the means, the space, the opportunity and, where necessary, the support to freely express their views, to be heard and to contribute to decision making on matters affecting them." (Council of Europe 2012 p.6)

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Participation is a fundamental element of children's rights and guiding principles for our work in the PEER project are drawn from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC). Participation is relevant to the exercise of all other rights, within the family, the school and the larger community context (UNICEF) .

The Council of Europe (2012) Recommendation on Participation and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2009) guidance on Article 12  make it clear that:

- All children have the right to express their views regardless of age.
- Special attention needs to be given to ensuring participation opportunities are provided to people who face discrimination, such as Roma children and young people.
- Children should have opportunities to influence policy, services, school life and be provided with the necessary information and support to enable this.


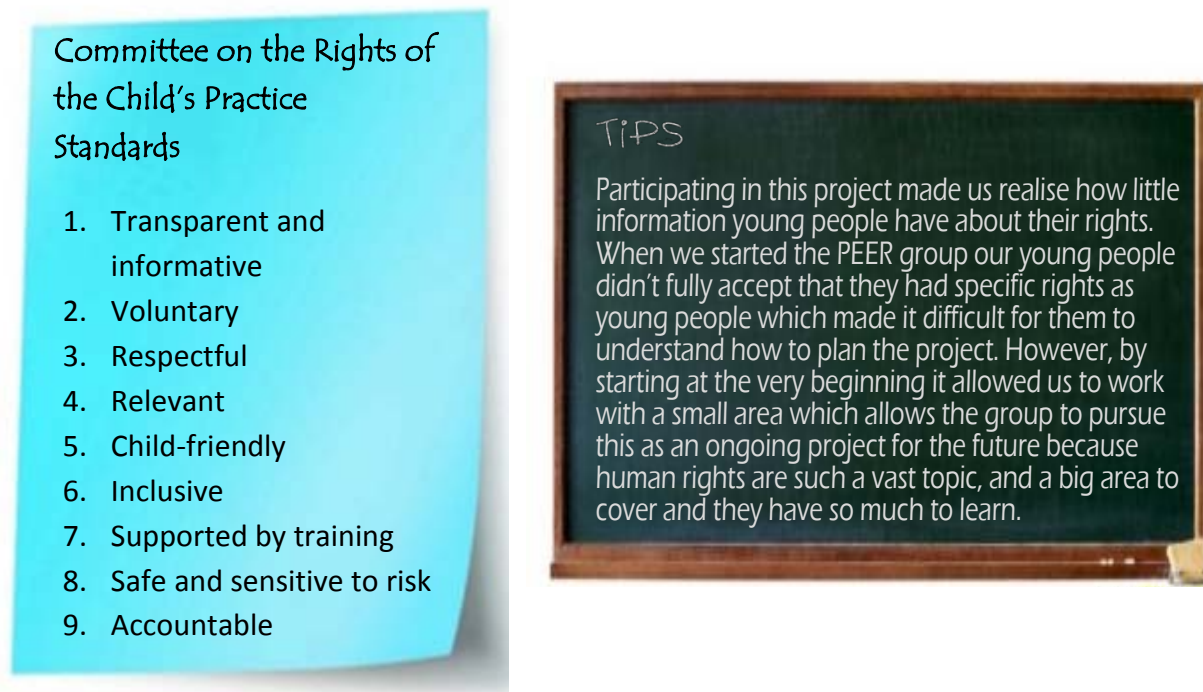
The 9 practice standards to ensure consistent high quality participation in work with children (CRC 2009 paragraph 134 ) are listed in Figure 2. Importantly, participation by children should be something that happens routinely in everyday life and not a one-off event. In terms of the PEER approach, this underlines the importance of working with organisations who have long term contact with Roma children and young people, to embed this participatory model of working.

Figure 1: Practice Standards for participation 



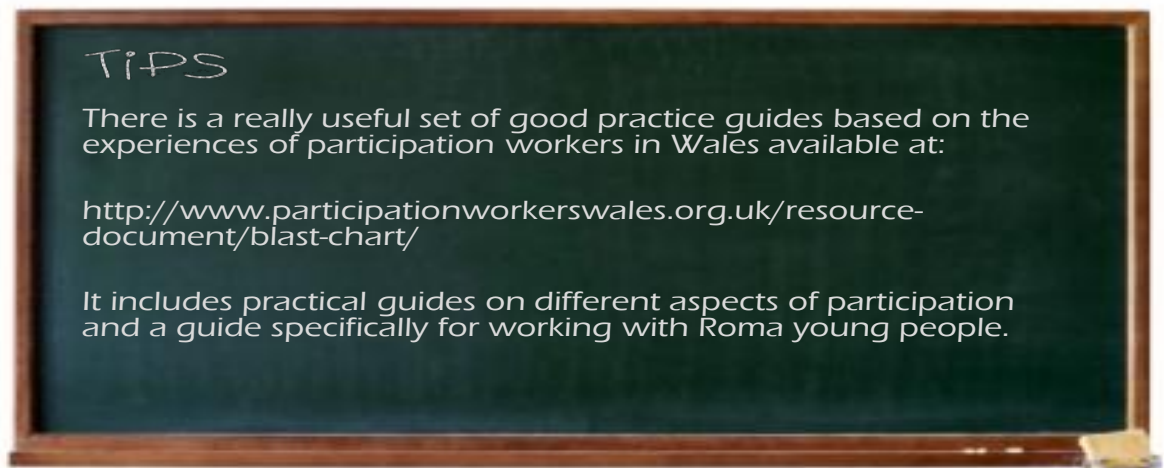
2.2 Self-Advocacy and Participation through Dialogue

Participation can take a number of forms, each useful in different circumstances (Figure 1) and working in dialogue with adults is very effective. Children participating in activities that adults have designed should be always be informed, heard and have their views respected. Children and adults can be involved on an equal basis in joint decision making and here the influence children have is higher. Finally children may lead and initiate their own projects having control over all aspects of them, including how resources are used. The Council of Europe (2012) recommendation stresses that support for self-advocacy and adequate resources should be provided in ways that are appropriate to children and young people's age and circumstances.

Figure 2: Degrees of Involvement in Participation



Thanks to funding by a EU Fundamental Rights and Citizenship Action grant, PEER projects and activities with Roma children and young people operated at all of these levels and moved between them over time.



2.3 Our goal: Participation as dialogue, action and change

In the PEER project we see supporting participation as trying to help children not only to have their say but also to bring about change.

When participation is focussed on action for change, not just having a say, it is a lot like action learning, as shown in Figure 3. This does not make it a formal research project –just a way of taking action and learning together.




Figure 3: Action Research

In action research we work together as a group to learn how to try and change something important to us.

We:

- ✓ Agree on something we want to change
- ✓ Find out about it together/hear each other's stories/consider different perspectives
- ✓ Consider different ways we could respond
- ✓ Put our ideas into action
- ✓ Reflect on how our situation has changed

Whether or not children and young people achieve the change that they seek, we can still learn from the changes they are trying to make, or the barriers they face. This will help, us and them, to understand how to make changes in the future. Together we can share these ideas, locally and across Europe, to try to bring about change on different levels .

2.4 The Magic 6

Participation focussed on action to bring about change can be done in lots of different ways. In PEER we used a model of six stages, in which children and young people identify an issue which they wish to learn about and change and then they influence the ways in which they reflect on and learn about the issue and act to try to make the change happen. We called it the Magic 6.

The Magic 6 is a framework for participatory action and learning drawing on the ideas of Paolo Freire and developed by Cath Larkins (2016) with groups of children and young people in Wales and France². We piloted it with Roma young people in nine countries. It provided a framework of six steps for running a participatory action group.

Figure 4: The Magic 6 Framework

The six steps are:

1. Learn participatory methods and identify issues and things they want to make happen
2. Use these methods to choose how to find out more about their issue(s) and making things happen
3. Investigate to find out other people's ideas (own group, other peers, community)
4. Analyse ideas and plan action for making something happen
5. Act for change using the plan
6. Share understanding further (evaluate, revise, continue)



This framework was used in the majority of the PEER projects and was adapted to fit the particular circumstances in which the group was run. The six steps, in some cases, fitted into six sessions of group work – but some steps were faster or slower, or two things happened at the same time, depending on what we were trying to achieve and our starting points. The advice of young people involved in PEER www.peeraction.eu shows it is good to think about the action stage as involving standing up for yourself, communicating and running activities for your own group and for other people.

To learn about this way of working it is best to experience it. We used the structure of the Magic 6 for our training so that the Roma and adult facilitators had an experience of it whilst learning about the approach. They then worked together for up to a further 12 sessions to try to achieve deeper levels of understanding and change.

1. Do you want to know who? – Gypsy, Traveller and Roma children and young people more than any other group, but also migrant children and children in contact with social welfare services.

Box 1 gives an example of issues identified by children during the PEER project.

Box 1 Issues identified by children during the PEER project.

Children and Roma facilitators in Lithuania suggested collecting and publishing Roma folklore, i.e., fairy tales, proverbs, sayings, traditions, etc., through the “Living Library” method. The latter would entail sharing it with the community. We plan to do it in 2016. This would enable us to better understand Roma history and culture.

In England, a PEER group chose education as the topic they wanted to work with. The group discussed in length about education and felt it was a big issue within their community. They looked at the issues and barriers faced, the positives and negatives about it, how they thought it could be improved, who they would need to work with and what steps they would need to take to improve education and make positive changes towards it. (Box 2 tells you what we did)



In Romania, the groups focused on:

- Changing the negative image of the school (where Roma children attend) in the public perception.
- Advocating to public authorities for a school in the community
- Improving communication skills

In Cyprus, Roma children in a primary school identified violent behaviour as something that made them feel sad/uncomfortable.

In Ireland, Traveller children identified discrimination in the local community and poor housing conditions as the key issues for them.

With the Magic 6 approach, participation does not stop after children identify what they want to change. Instead, as shown in Box 2, the action continues by learning from others and trying to bring about changes, thinking about what works and what to do next.

Box 1 Example of Participation and Action in England

The England PEER group working with young people outside of education, learned that as young people, they had certain rights. They identified that one of these rights was the right to education. They felt that Gypsy and Travellers right to access education was not being met in their community.

They chose education as their issue to work on and looked into the different ways Gypsy/Travellers accessed education, and how successful it was and what barriers prevented them from accessing it.

They learned from others by sharing their views and also interviewing other people about their educational experiences to create a bigger picture of issues effecting education within the Travelling community. The group worked on activities and visited educational establishments to gain more understanding of the barriers facing education and how they could improve things.

They created a video sharing opinions and interviews of each other and other people from the community about their experiences and opinions of education. Once they could establish the problems they planned to raise awareness to professionals in education at an Outcomes Based Accountability event with the municipality.

One young person helped to deliver the presentation at this event and also read out her own personal experiences of education. Three young people got involved to give their feedback and experiences within group discussions with the professionals to achieve some possible outcomes which will be followed up. The video was shown to people from the City council's children's services, EHE team and other professionals and organisations working with Gypsy and Travellers living in the city and across the UK.

They changed people's understanding of the barriers they face and some professionals said they would use the video to train teachers.

3. Working with Others



This section tells you more about:

How to prepare for the Group?

- ✓ Who to involve and how?
- ✓ Where and When to meet
- ✓ Promoting safety
- ✓ Preparing yourself for leadership

Understanding Roma children and communities

Get to know the children and young people you are working with. Learn about their communities and the other people working with them. Listen to what they tell and show you about the people and places who are important to them.

Building working links and understanding with people outside of your group

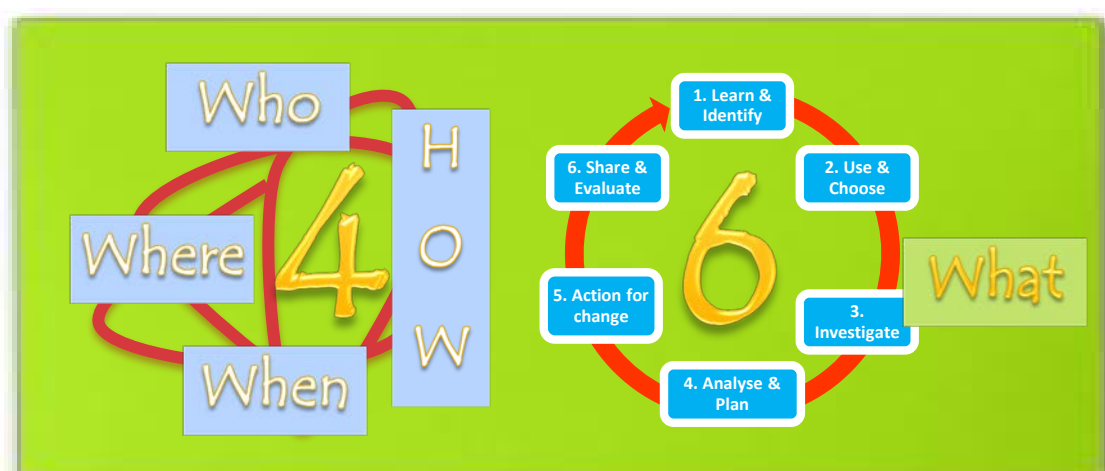
Keeping people active in your group



3.1 Preparing for and recruiting the group

There are many things to do in preparing for your group. When working with young facilitators we found it helpful to think of these as the Hidden 4 steps, behind the Magic Six (Figure 5). It is important to allow enough preparation time for this, as we found out in PEER that it can take a long to set up contact with some groups of Roma children, especially those who are not in education or in a different area, but that this effort is really important in order to provide inclusive participation opportunities.

Figure 5: The Hidden 4 alongside the Magic 6



Before you can start to think in detail about what you are going to do with a group (and while you are working with them), you need to work out **who** you want to work with, **where** and **when**. While you are deciding on this, you have to answer a lot of questions about **how** you can achieve this. These four steps are a bit messier, as you have to think about them all at the same time.

Box 3 gives you some examples of the questions we used in the UK to help young Roma facilitators think through the steps they needed to take to set up a group.

Box 3: Examples of the things we thought about during the Hidden 4

<p>WHO</p> <p>Which children What ages, genders? All Roma? Those we can contact easily or those it is hard to meet?</p> <p>Which adults How many facilitators? Teachers too? Who else can help us achieve the goals the group has set?</p>	<p>How Can We</p> <p>Get them interested?</p> <p>Get their permission – from parents too?</p> <p>Get their support?</p> <p>Keep everyone safe?</p>
<p>WHERE</p> <p>Near where they live? In schools? In a community building?</p> <p>Outside? Can they travel?</p> <p>Where adults / older children are already participating?</p> <p>Where I have support or where people need support?</p>	<p>Get permission to use this space?</p> <p>Get to know, understand and support the communities where we are working?</p> <p>Get over any barriers?</p>
<p>WHEN</p> <p>Do they have other commitments – school, work, caring? Do they travel at certain times of the year? Every day for a week? In holidays and evenings?</p>	<p>Get information from children and communities about when is a good time?</p> <p>Get the time we need to suit their schedules?</p>

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Other groups chose to think through check lists of the practical things you have to think about, like how to recruit children and finding a good place to work and ensuring that no one is harmed because they have been involved in the group (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Preparing for your group

Recruiting Children
Key questions to consider include:

- ✓ Who do we want to involve in the group? (Roma children, how many, what age, where from ...)
- ✓ How can we engage with them? Through their community, youth clubs, schools, clubs, our contacts, on the street, word of mouth ...
- ✓ Who can help us? (Parents, community leaders, teachers, youth workers ...)
- ✓ Whose permission do we need? (The children, parents, community leaders, gatekeepers such as teachers or residential care staff ...)
- ✓ How can we make it attractive? (Developing trust, food, activities, transport, good information, Involving Roma Facilitators ...)

Finding a good place to work
Some key questions include:


- ✓ Somewhere familiar? In local community, ...
- ✓ Doesn't have bad associations? School, gangs, safe for all the children ...
- ✓ What do we need there? A good room for group work, kitchen? A safe outdoor space? toilets, privacy ...
- ✓ Easy to get to? Nearby, transport, travel time, travel costs ...
- ✓ Accessible? If children have disabilities ...

Making sure no-one is harmed
Sometimes expression of views may be risky

- ✓ Facilitators have a responsibility and must take precautions
- ✓ Develop a clear child protection strategy
- ✓ Children must be aware of their right to be protected from harm and know where to go for help if needed
- ✓ Work with families and communities is important in order to build understanding and reduce risks
- ✓ Ensuring children are not stigmatised during selection or by participation

Sharing our values
Key things to discuss include:

- ✓ Participation must be inclusive
- ✓ Children's views have to be treated with respect
- ✓ Participation is voluntary
- ✓ Children should never be coerced into expressing views
- ✓ Children have the right to be protected from manipulation, violence, abuse and exploitation
- ✓ Facilitators need to understand the specific context and environments where the children live, so that we can give them appropriate support

Promoting participation with Roma can be achieved using the same underlying principals as for other groups. According to Horder and Davies (2012 page 12 ) what is different is the way of working. They suggest:

- Developing a plan, which needs to address any specific difficulties of access etc.
- Address specific barriers to involvement of this group of children and young people.

Many of the young people will have the attitude that their involvement has not helped in the past or that anyone will really be listening. It may take time and engagement to convince young people that your service is serious about their inclusion.

Thinking about gender issues is important. In Box 4 we reflect on how we created a space for exploring gender in two groups.

Box 4: Gender, single sex working and safety to reflect

In one group in Bulgaria, and another in the UK, the children and young people talked a lot about gender issues. They reflected on the importance of family life but also how expectations and responsibilities can be restrictive and limiting on young people. They talked about problems such as early marriage and not having a choice and reduced freedom within for young women, once they are in a relationship.

Things that made it possible for the girls and young women to feel free to talk about sensitive such issues were:

- ✓ They were in a single-gender group,
- ✓ They had female facilitators who more easily created a trustful atmosphere
- ✓ The girls came from a very similar background (all Roma, from one suburb, from one school, families with similar SES and education)
- ✓ Trust was built up with the group over time and facilitators were supportive of girls' own choices and respectful of cultural norms, whilst allowing children and young people space in which they could reflect on changes they would like to see.

Using an exercise which aimed at opening a space for sharing personal stories and moments (see River of Life in section 4) made it possible to raise sensitive issues concerning young Roma girls and to explore transitions from childhood into the role of wife and mother. It was a ground breaking point when they reached the moment of “present” in the “river of life” because it opened the question about the near future.



In PEER, recruiting Roma children and young people to participation groups worked for us when:

- **A facilitator from the same community led the activities**
- **Older young people inspired younger children to take part**
- **We worked with a smaller group to start, so that they could get used to it**
- **We worked with organisations already active in Roma communities**
- **We worked with Roma children in schools**
- **We took time to build up relationships**
- **Roma young people gave presentations or made posters to recruit other Roma children**
- **Contact one of the other PEER projects to find out what they are doing**

It was also important to consider the numbers of children and young people we recruited. Large group sizes (8-10) were workable for children who were used to working in groups, but smaller groups (3-5) were better for those with less experience. For some groups, particularly where NGOs were not involved, it was important to run activities near where children lived, and just work with any (1 or 10) who turned up or who could be found. These smaller groups sometime later reached out to larger numbers of Roma children and young people.

Box 5 gives some examples of how children were recruited during the PEER project.

Box 5: Examples of how we recruited children and young people to PEER

In Lithuania most of young people were identified and recruited by a Siauliai University graduate who happened to be of Roma descent. It would have been much more difficult to establish a relationship without someone “who knows the culture from inside”.

- We recruited young people for the PEER work by initially explaining about the work and what was expected of the project. We decided to recruit the older members (+16 years) and then they could re-deliver the sessions to the younger audience to spread their learning and ideas. We felt that having a slightly older group would allow the members to act as positive peers to the younger ones to set a good example and raise aspirations for their younger peers.
- Re-delivering the sessions to a younger group was beneficial for engaging a bigger audience and spreading their learning further, however some of the older ones did not feel comfortable doing this and felt a little embarrassed where as others felt more confident so could have allowed some young people not to get as involved in some of the sessions.

In Ireland we contacted primary schools that had a good proportion of Traveller children and worked in collaboration with Teachers, school principals and parents to

obtain their consent to participate in the PEER project. This worked very well because the children loved doing the work during the school day and we were also able to work with Teachers on the participatory activities.

In the UK, we made a presentation and then went round our college asking people to join in and explain the project.



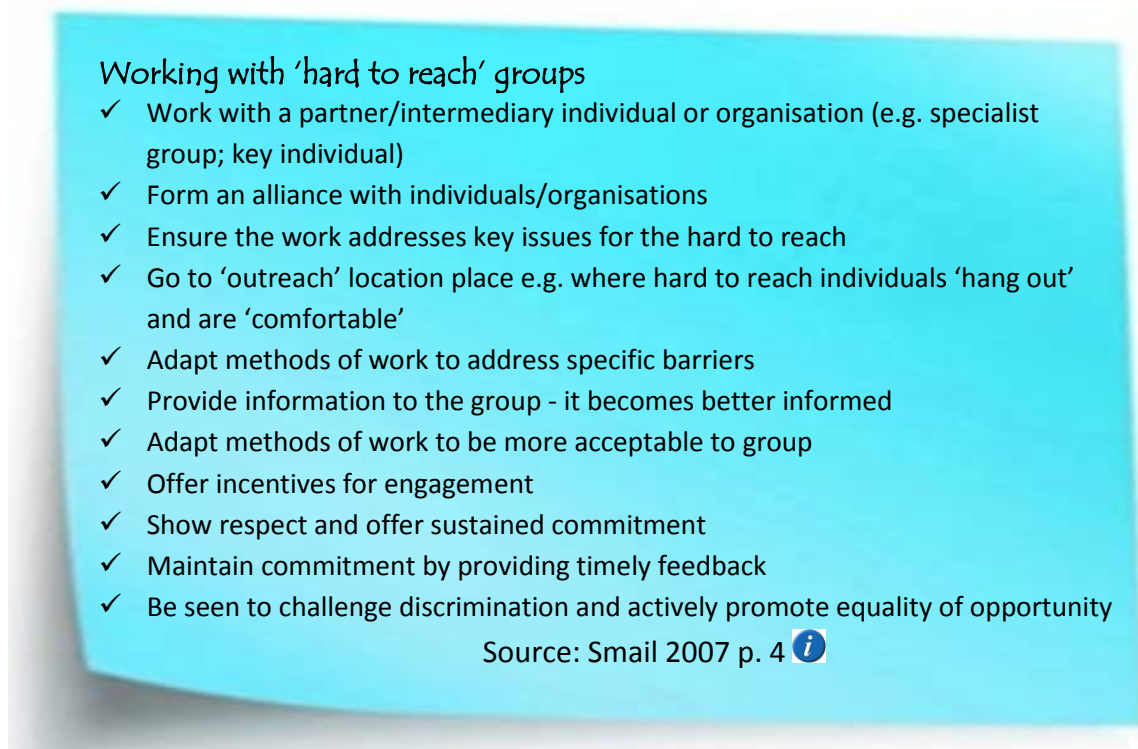
Two recruiting strategies were used in Romania:

1. **Involving an NGO already active in the Roma community** – this was the most successful one as children already knew the professionals, they already had the trusting relationship with them, and the meetings went with no big problems. We acknowledged it is important that the persons working with these children to be recognized by the community as a professional.
2. **Involving the school setting** – it was the strategy employed for Cluj-Napoca (one big city). By signing a collaboration agreement with the school manager, they refer us Roma children who were then assigned to the two groups. This was an easy way to recruit children, but more difficult to work as we did not have any control of the participants, the location of the meeting was not suitable (classroom), and the time frame was restricted to the daily time table.

In Cyprus, Roma children were recruited through a local primary school with a high percentage of Roma students. A meeting took place with the school's principal to inform and discuss possibilities of collaborating, as well as the formal procedures we needed to follow. We also set up a table in an area where Roma live, with someone known to the community, and we offer activities and information about the project to children and their parents.

The things that worked for us also work with other groups of young people that are thought to be 'hard to reach' (see Figure 7).

Figure 7: Working with 'hard to reach' groups



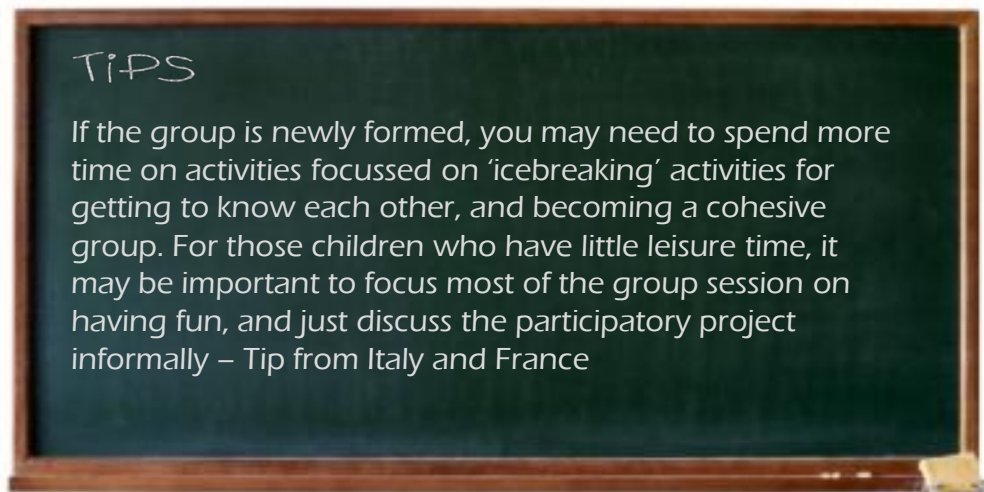
3.2 Preparing to listen, mentor and facilitate

To carry out effective participation work with any group you also need to prepare yourself, to be someone that Roma children and young people can trust. Where children and young people are more reluctant to engage this can take some time. One of the best ways of building up trust is to listen effectively, ask questions that allow children and young people to tell you about their own experiences and what they want to achieve.

To be able to engage with others you will need to think about your own values and experiences and how they may have an impact on the way you mentor other people.

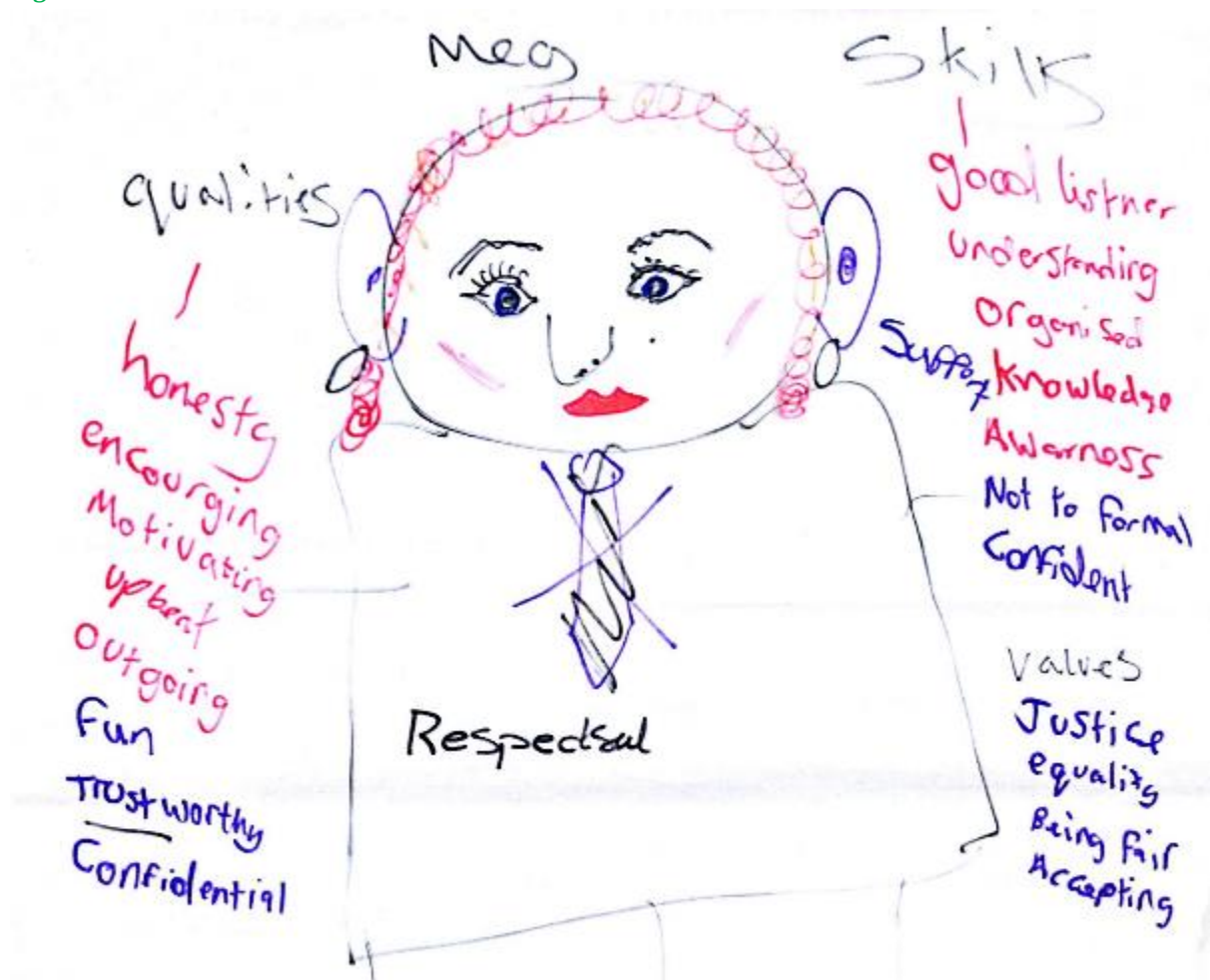
Here are some tips on listening and letting young people lead the decision making:

- 1. Show you are listening to them using body language.**
- 2. Give people time to pause and think about how to answer.**
- 3. Reflect back to people the things they have said, to check you have understood**
- 4. Use positive responses and questions**
- 5. Watch how people are acting and feeling, and change your activities to meet their needs.**



Roma young facilitators from Scotland show the skills that you need in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Facilitators skills




Mentoring groups of young people involves helping people recognise their achievements and enabling them to decide what to develop further. Mentoring is not about judging a person, it is about supporting development. In PEER we have encouraged people to recognise their achievements and choose what to develop by:

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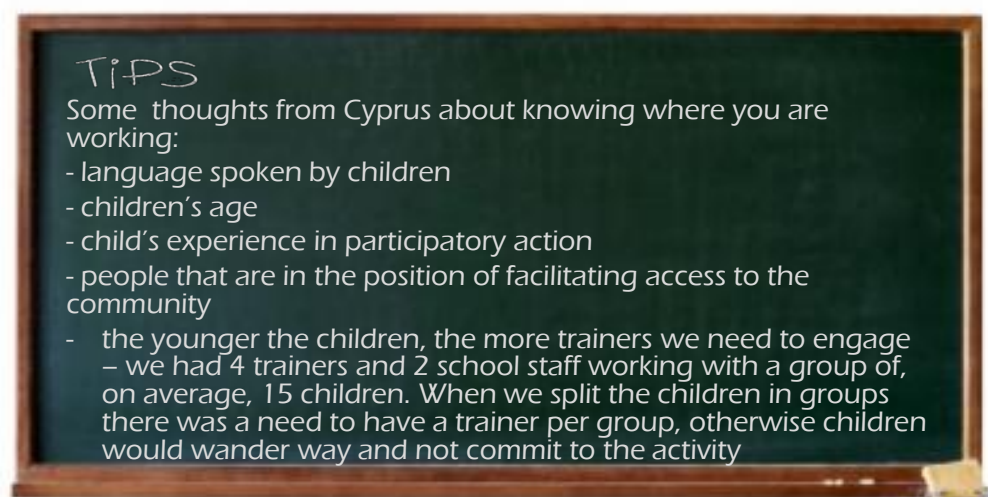
- Asking questions, making films or drawing journeys to show what we have achieved, enjoyed or learned.
- Focusing on what has gone well and what has helped things go well
- Identifying people's achievements (even where they have not recognised them themselves) by saying positive things, giving certificates and holding celebration events.
- Asking people to choose their own next steps (as individuals or as a whole group)
- Providing children and young people with extra resources where we can (worker time, access to internet, and information about opportunities).

Some other issues that you may need to think about in preparing to facilitate a group include (see also Lyford Jones 2010 p. 26 ):

- Have you explained the aims of the session clearly to the children and young people and the workers who will be coming with them? How will the children be given the opportunity to consider if they want to be involved? Is it possible for the children to help plan the group?
- Are you aware of the ages, abilities and any additional needs of the children and young people you will be working with? How can you tailor your sessions accordingly?
- How much time do you have for group sessions, and can this be flexible? If you run over time will the children be able to stay longer?
- Have you agreed clear roles and responsibilities amongst facilitators and with other adults involved?
- How will the children and young people travel to the venue? Do they have enough time, and will the costs be covered in advance? Have you given clear directions?
- Are you providing refreshments? Are they suitable for everyone's dietary needs?
- Have you assessed the risk of the activity and got any necessary approval?
- Have you obtained parental consent and media consent?
- Is the venue suitable and accessible? Have you checked the booking is still in place?

3.3 Understanding the young people and communities you are working with

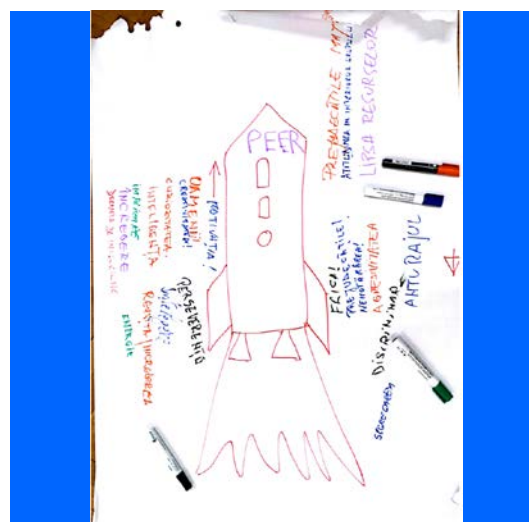
To have useful information and ideas to supply to children and young people, and to understand what sort of support they may need, try to gather information. This will include knowing about where you are working, the environment where the children you are working with live and any organisations they run or services already available to them.



Work with local community members, organisations, children and young people in the group you recruit so that they can help you understand their community. Box 6 gives examples of how we did this in PEER.

Box 6: Examples of how we learned about the communities where we work

In Romania (and some other countries), community NGO leaders attended our training day and spoke about the discrimination community members faced and the support they provide. An academic who had worked with the community also spoke to us, and explained the need to offer support as well as participation opportunities, and to not make age based assumptions. Together we drew a rocket and (to the right) we wrote what was holding down Roma children and young people's participation and what could help them take off (to the left).



In the UK (and some other countries), we spoke to Roma young people and NGO leaders and asked their ideas to fill in a grid, about the scope, quality and impact of children's participation. We also found out information about community history, population sizes and ethnicities, employment and education opportunities, services and facilities in the areas we were working.

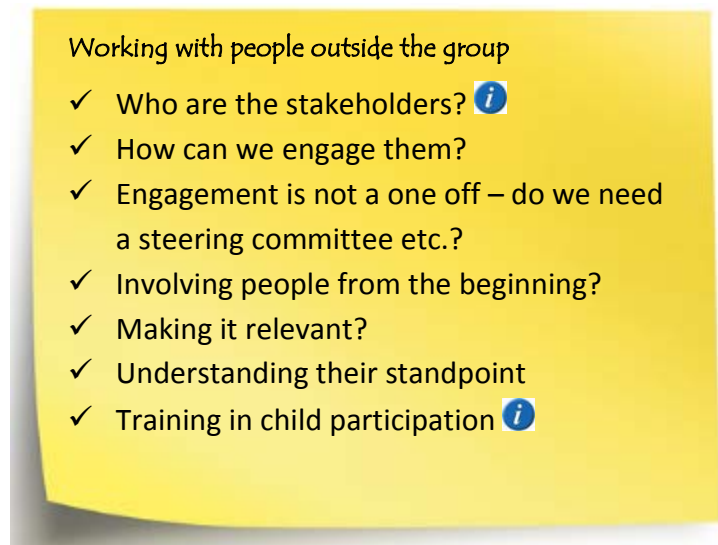
Details of the tools we used to gather this information can be found on our website

www.PEERyouth.eu

3.4 Working with people outside of the group

Building trust with parents and other adults in the community and policy makers is vital. This is the same, but perhaps even more so, as when engaging any groups of children and young people as parents and communities want to protect their children from negative experiences. Your team might want to reflect on the questions shown in figure 9 that have helped other people.

Figure 9: Working with people outside the group



Box 7 gives examples of how wider members of the community were engaged with our projects.

Box 7: Examples of engaging people outside of our group

In Spain, in Fundacio Pere Closa we have spent years building relationships with community members and politicians by promoting the Roma approach to inclusion policies. This has helped us in the PEER project because the initiatives of youngsters will be taken account by policy makers in the forthcoming youth policies design.

In France, when working outside in Roma camps, parents were able to get involved by dropping by and seeing what we were doing and asking us questions.

In the UK, one group worked with parents and people within their community to gain information from them of their experiences of education to gather a clear picture of what was happening as well as sharing their own experiences with each other. Our organisation works with adults and has good relationships with the municipality, so this helped young people's views be heard.

In Cyprus, the involvement of school teachers was crucial in accessing the children, in obtaining consent from their legal guardians and, above all, in facilitating communication in Gurbetche, the dialect spoken by the children whose knowledge of Greek was limited.

3.5 Ways to keep people engaged in the group

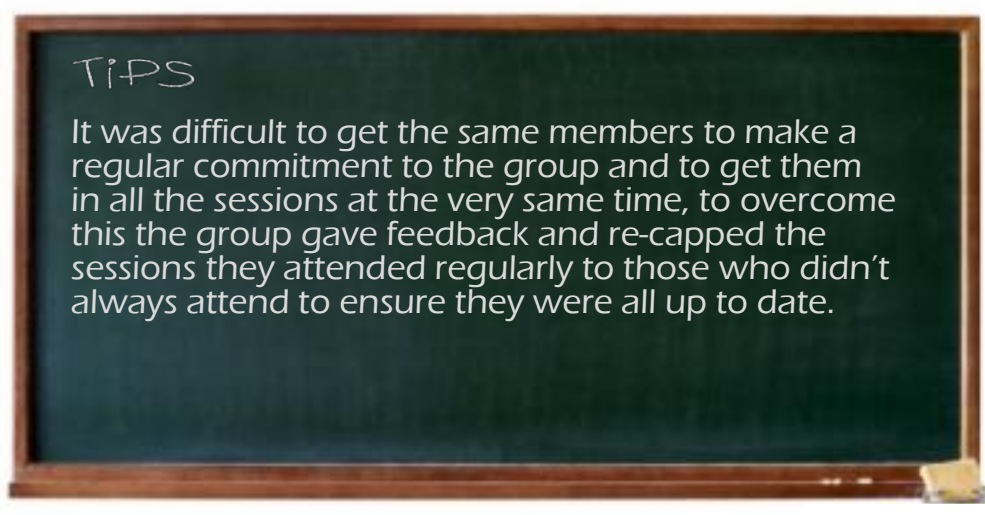



Running a group means you have to always be ready with a plan, and ready to change it.

Don't get caught with your trousers down!

We found that the best ways of making sure that we are ready to do what it takes to keep children and young people engaged were to:

- ✓ Encourage children and young people to choose an issue to work on that they really cared about – this could be organising their own leisure activities, it doesn't *have* to be about things like changing government policy or social attitudes.
- ✓ Make sure it was fun – taking a break to play a game for 5 minutes can help people concentrate again on harder tasks
- ✓ Find out the barriers to people's involvement and try to do things about this - meeting in times and places that suit young people even if facilitators have to travel or work late.
- ✓ Make links between groups so that they can encourage each other – young facilitators from different areas meeting face to face was great. Talking online with video worked really well too.
- ✓ Carry on even if people drop out – sometimes people drop back in again, or new people join.
- ✓ Work in the places (camps or settled communities) where young people live – this may mean working outside if no community indoor facilities exist.




Horder and Davies (2012 p. 14 ) in their toolkit for working with Roma children and young people say:

One of the most effective ways is to work closely with those adults who already have a good relationship with the children and young people. Some useful things to bear in mind:

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- a) *Manage the expectations of the young people with whom you're working. Attitudes can be difficult to change through small interventions and changes to policy can take time.*
- b) *Establish agreed collaborative 'rules of working' so both parties know what is expected of one another.*
- c) *Ensure that single sex groups have at least one worker of the same sex working with them.*
- d) *Be aware of the language that some Roma use i.e. gorgor/gadje means anyone who is not Roma.*
- e) *Working in any community facilities on site will increase your chances of having young people attend and participate.* 

Even where communities have no facilities, where community centres or cafes have been closed (for example) we still found ways of working locally so that children could take part, as shown in Box 8.

Box 8: Example of working without a building

Running a group in the open air may be a suitable alternative to using a room. This can be a



good option due to the locations where people are living, a lack of links with NGOs, a lack of suitable community facilities or unfamiliarity/discomfort with enclosed spaces.

For the teams in France, working outside to run Magic 6 sessions worked best with 8-15 year olds. But being ready for open air conditions requires resource.

Recommendations for working outside

- Use the tables available in public parks or bring folding table and adhesive tape to make sure that sheets of paper do not fly away!
- Bring string to tie things to railings.
- Take photos during the different workshops, to help remember what took place. The photos act as a reminder of what the group is trying to achieve.
- Being in an informal place means it is necessary to regularly restate the purpose of the group, to underline how serious and credible the workshops are.

Always meet at the same time, in the same established meeting point (for example next to a caravan or shelter). Sometimes it is necessary to do a tour of houses or caravans to gather the young people together.

Involve other people

Touring round the site to gather young people is also a chance to give information to other family and community members about what we are aiming to do in our sessions, and to check out their agreement to this. Community support for what you are doing is vital, especially when you are working in their home. When running open air sessions, there are often many more people around, (older and younger than the age group of children or

young people we are trying to work with). As these others are floating around the edge of the group, we found it important to think about how to enable them to participate in some way. For children under the age of eight, the creative and fun sides of our work were the most appealing, but through these many interesting ideas emerged in an informal way. With a bit more effort, they could be included into the older group of Roma children or an intervention targeted at their age group would be possible.

Keeping young people engaged

Older young people, were more likely to test out the group dynamics, as the workshops seemed like a place where freedom could be experienced. We gave them responsibilities, to take on spokesperson roles. They made banners and placards. These were made using simple direct questions like: Are you struggling – what are the challenges? What makes you angry? The question has to be simple, but allow polemic answers. As they are mobile, banners and placards can be displayed publicly, when a question is displayed it invites more responses and publicly displaying the young people's banners next to the question is a way of valuing what they have said.

For more information : http://www.paroles-partagees.org/le_porteur_de_paroles_277.php



Source photo : <http://www.piedsdanslepaf.org/2014/06/porteur-de-paroles/>

Being Creative and Flexible

Being flexible and creative is really important, whether you are working inside or outside, especially when you are working with people who may have had difficult or no experiences in formal education. Being creative can mean using things like games, art/modelling, drama/poetry, music and technology. To help people feel more relaxed, take part and try things out, communicate things they may not be able to write or say and build relationships and groups.

In some groups we stopped every 10 minutes to play a game involving movement.

Being flexible means responding to the group and individuals, following the things that they tell you they want to do, seeing what works for which people and learning from the things that do not work so well. By reviewing how the group is working at the end of each session you can think about exactly what sort of activities and ways of working to use to make sure everyone feels included.

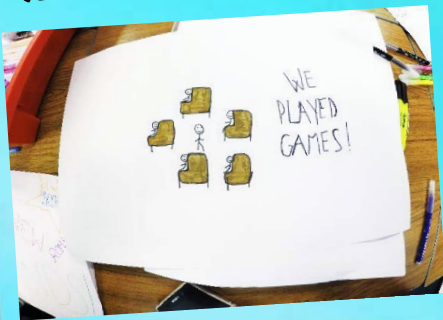
Section 4 is full of examples of inclusive activities used in PEER groups.

4. Putting Plans into Practice



This section tells you more about:

Planning and getting
to know each other



Ideas on how to
think about and
choosing the
things we want to
achieve

Building working
links and
understanding
with people
outside of your
group

Steps to Action

- ✓ Action grids
- ✓ Knowing who can help

4.1 Planning your sessions

Once you have your basic idea of who you are going to work with and the place you will work, the next stage is to start planning how you will work with your groups. This involves thinking about the aims you are trying to achieve in each session and then planning some activities

through which you can achieve these aims. The rest of this section of the manual give you ideas to choose from, but there are lots of other guides out there that you could use.

4.2 Ice-breakers, Introductions, Energisers and Group Contracts

4.3 Identifying Issues

4.4 Choosing and reviewing

4.5 Doing Research on your topic

4.6 Planning for Action

An example of content a group programme used in the PEER project is shown in Box 9.

Box 9: An example of a group programme

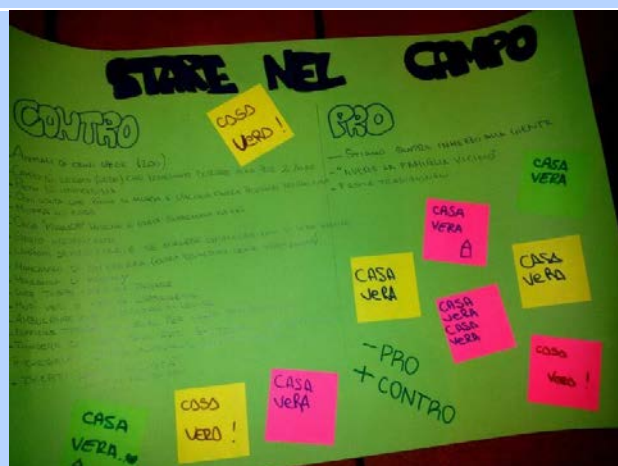
In Italy, we involved 17-18 youth aged between 14 and 21 years old. The group met in a library. Every meeting was planned with the 2 Roma Facilitators (1 male and 1 female), both youth living in a camp.

1st° session

Aim: To present the project and to help people in the group to get to know each other.

Programme:

- Introduce the library;
- Introduce PEER project;
- Ice-breakers: (a) presentation in pairs and (b) attach compliment (by post-it) to the other participants
- *Break – snack (Italian and Romani food)*
- Agree/disagree (encouraging members of the group to position themselves on the imaginary line as to whether they agree/disagree in relation to many statements);
- Questions in poster: why did you come here? What issues are you interested in?



2nd session

Aim: To identify issues and start to discuss them.

Programme:

- Ice breakers; names and adjectives;
- Works in group using the poster prepared in the last session and identify key issues
- *Break – snack*
- Work in 3 groups about 3 issues related to the camp

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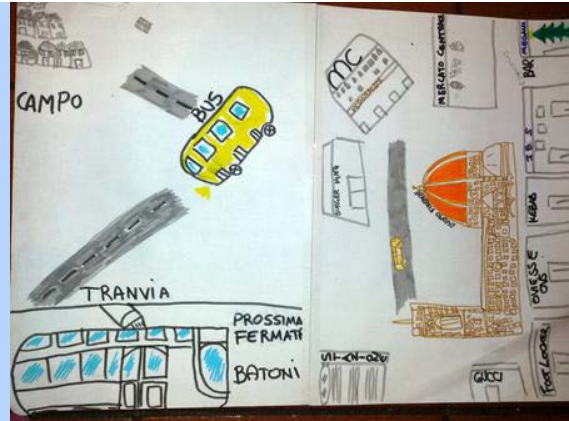
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3rd session

Aim: To review the last sessions and analyse the relationship with city and the problems outside the camps

Programme:

- Reviewing the poster of the last sessions;
- *Break – snack*
- Community mapping (see 4.3 below)



4th session

Aim: To identify key issues from the community mapping activity ready for planned action through meeting the President of the local district.

Programme:

- Reviewing the map from the last session;
- ice-breakers activities;
- Further mapping activity (Participants are split in 4 groups and put in a map of Florence post it where they wrote the things they don't like and the things that they feel are missing from their community)
- *Break – snack*
- Finishing the mapping activities and prepare for the meeting with the President of the local district.



5th session

Aim: To make the President of the district aware of the key issues the group had identified.

Programme:

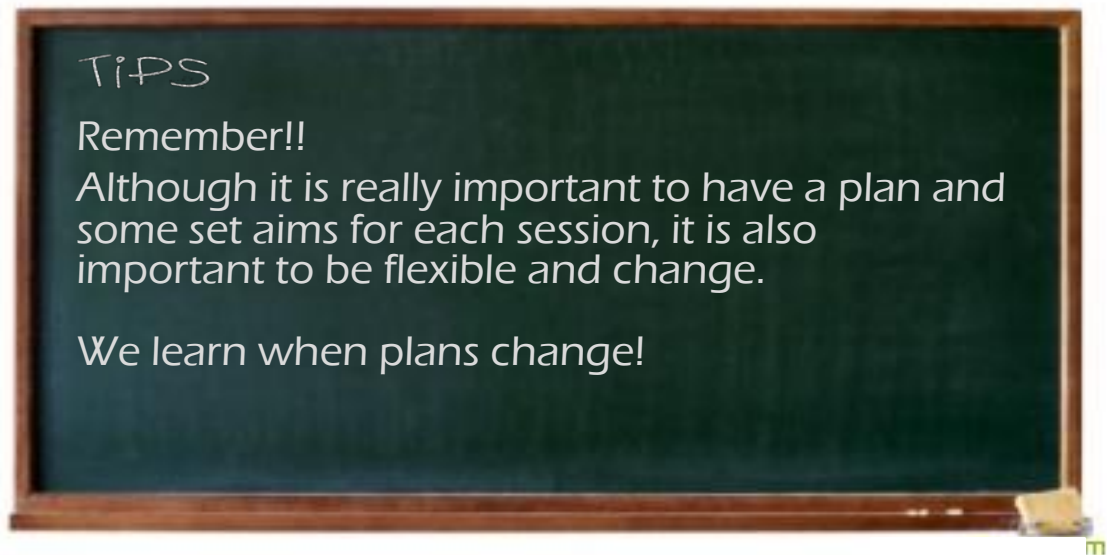
- Reviewing the last session and the map;
- *Break – snack*
- Meeting with President of district. The children/youth presented the activities developed in the previous sessions and discussed with President about the key problems of the community and their lives. Especially the young people presented difficulties of living in a *camp*.

6th session

Aim: To review the process and to identify the issues and the priorities for a future group.

Programme:

- Reviewing all sessions;
- Discussing the meeting with the President of local district
- *Break – snack*
- Identifying the priority for next year



4.2 Ice-breakers, Introductions, Energisers and Group Contracts

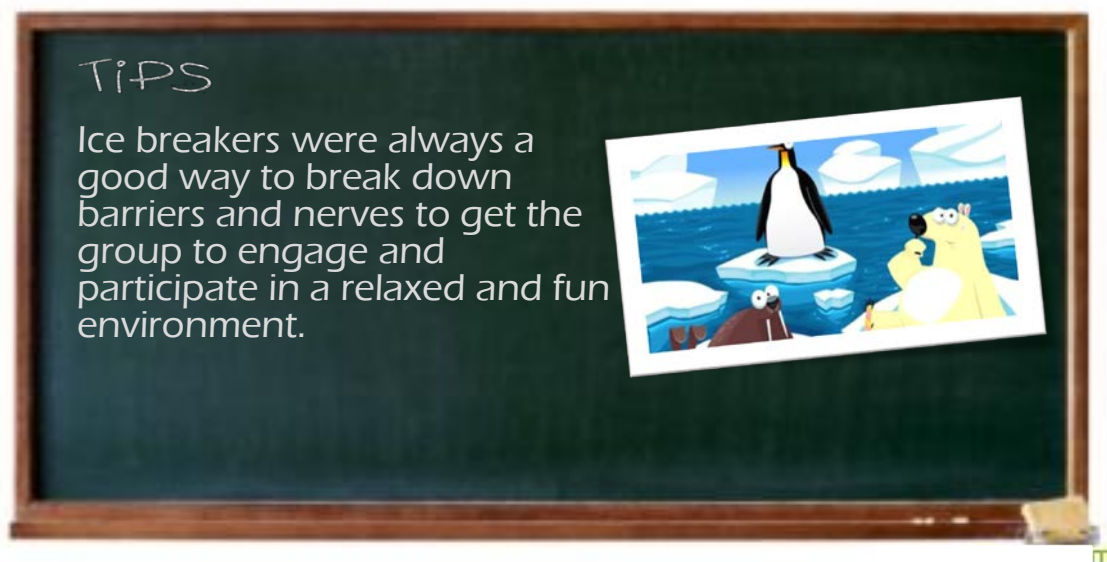
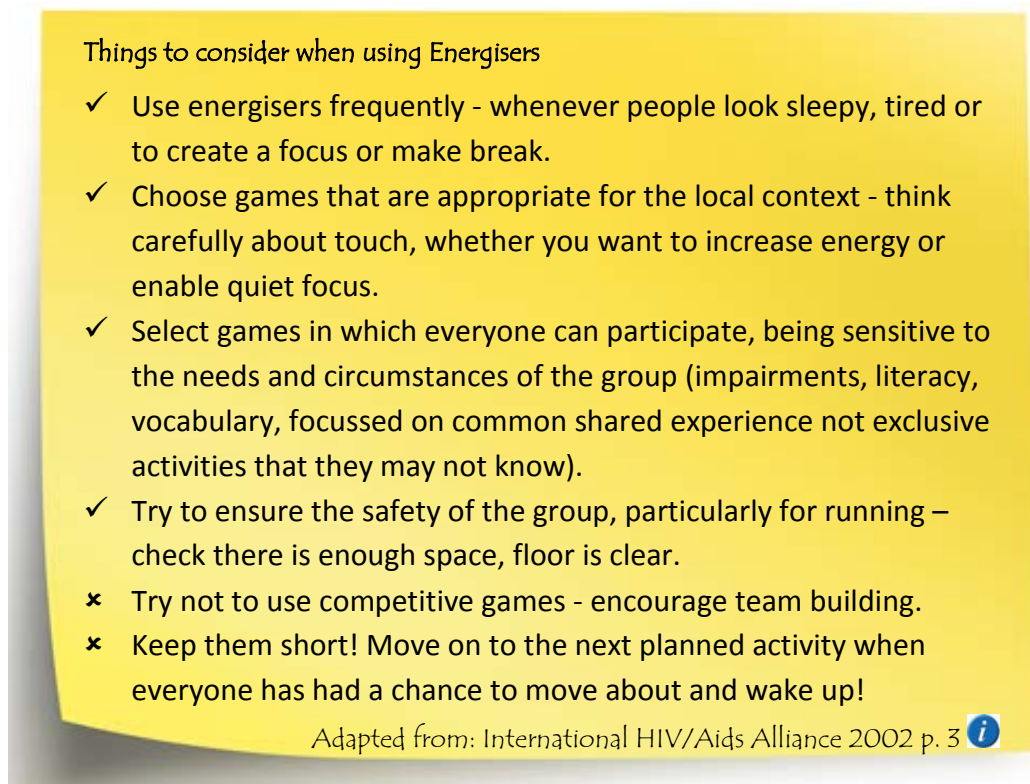


Figure 10 gives some tips for using ice-breakers. Examples include:

a) Objects

Participants bring to the session an object that is important to them. Participants are split into smaller groups. Facilitator begins by choosing an object that someone else has brought and asks who it belongs to and the meaning behind it. That person then chooses another in the same way and so on until all the group have introduced themselves, their object and the meaning as to why it is important to them. [Jill@Article12.org]

Figure 10: Things to consider when using Energisers



b) Names and Qs

Participants pass a ball round the group and the person with the ball says their name and the name. Pass the ball round a second time and you say the name of the person to your right. Think of a question (we used Qs like: favourite colour, number of brothers and sisters, something you like). The first time the ball comes to you give your answer to that question. The second time, you say the answer given by the person to your right.

c) Agree/Disagree

Participants are asked to imagine a line and at each end are 'Agree' and 'Disagree' [and in the middle for unsure!]. Facilitators then read out statements to encourage members of the group to position themselves on the imaginary line as to whether they agree/disagree or are unsure. Start with funny statements and then you can introduce serious statements about your work together. Facilitators should generate discussion during this exercise to ensure the group can have their say but must also ensure they share facts with the group to 'myth bust'. [Jill@Article12.org]

d) Would you Rather

Write 1 and 2 on two pieces of paper and put them in opposite corners of the room. Everyone stands in the middle of the room and then the facilitator asks would you rather 1...(e.g. Chocolate) or 2...(e.g. Vegetables). When people have moved to stand by the number they prefer, you can ask them why this is.

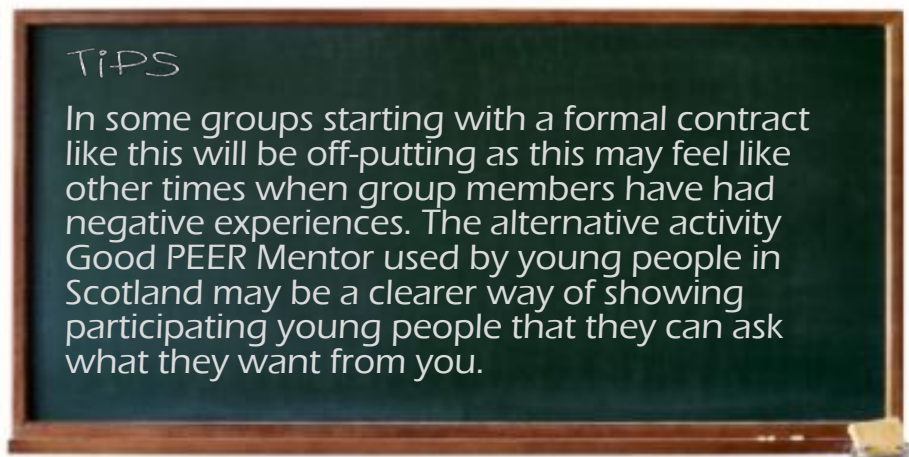
This was written by young people who are part of @voiceequal1 for their visit to meet Roma young people at another school.

Would you rather ...

...1 Visit a Doctor or	...2. Visit a Dentist?			
...1 snow or	...2. Rain	...1. Maths or	...2 English	
...1. Be good looking and stupid or	...2. Ugly and clever	...1. Be a good singer or	...2 a good dancer	
... 1 Boxing or	...2. Football	... 1. Hunting or	...2 Fishing	
....1 Adidas or	...2. Nike	...1. Popular or	...2. Brainy	
... 1. Heels or	...2. Trainers	...1. live in a trailer/caravan or	...2. A house	

e) Good Contract

Young people, in a whole group, are asked to imagine the best group situation they have ever been in and tell stories about this. The facilitator then asks everyone to say one or two things about how they need to work together in this PEER group to make it successful. The facilitator should only add in extra 'ground rules' if they are necessary for group safety or to comply with the organisations' responsibilities. Explain these.



f) Good PEER Mentor

Ask one young person to lie on the floor as other people draw around them to create a silhouette on a large piece of paper. Onto the paper ask everyone to draw or write the things that would make a good PEER Mentor, what would they like you to be like as the group facilitator. As they add things, tell them that is what you will do. If they ask for things you can't do, explain why. Make suggestions if you need them to think about any responsibilities you have, for example around keeping people safe or including everyone.

g) Reporters

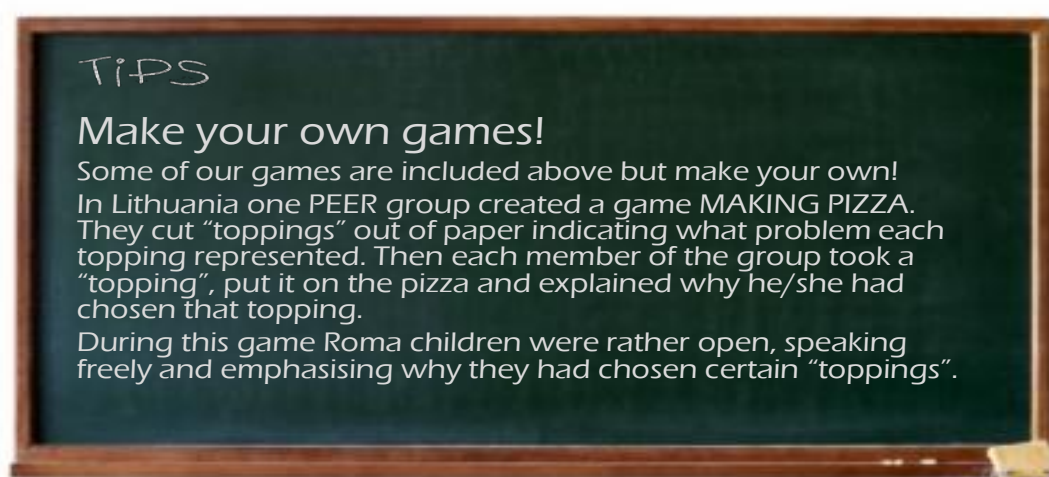
Participants get in pairs to find out information from their partner that they feed back to the group. It can be used as an introduction for example, person's name, aim for the workshop, where they are from, something they like doing, one thing that no-one knows about them.

h) **Tall stories (and other games can be found here [i](#))**

The leader starts a story with a sentence that ends in SUDDENLY. The next person then has to add to the story with his own sentence that ends in SUDDENLY. Continue the story until everyone has contributed. The story becomes crazier as each young person adds their sentence. Tape it and play it back. For example; 'Yesterday I went to the zoo and was passing the elephant enclosure when SUDDENLY.....'

4.3 Identifying Issues

Games can be used to help the group to identify or work on issues. Save the Children have a set of tools they have used in conflict situations that can easily be adopted for use in the PEER project [i](#). The activities and games that were most useful in the groups we have run are in this section.



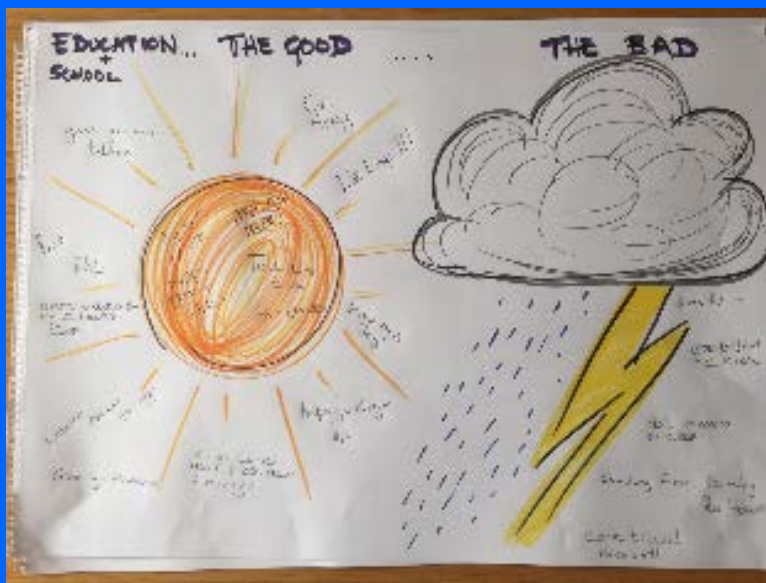
a) **Community mapping:**

This was our most popular activity, it worked with groups in all sorts of situations and ages. Participants are split into smaller groups to draw a map of their community with all the services, housing, places of worship, shops, places to eat etc. They will then write on pink 'post its' the things they like about their community and stick this to their map. On yellow 'post its' they will write the things they don't like and the things that they feel are missing from their community and stick these to the map. Group discussion and feedback matching strengths to challenges: Participants are asked, one by one, to share a positive place or experience that they have mapped



and to say how these things help them to feel happy, healthy and safe in their community. After each example, facilitators ask if anyone has a challenge around a related issue. If so, this is shared with the group, if not another challenge is discussed. The group then helps identify what we can learn from the positive experience to improve the challenging situation. At the end, the group as a whole will have heard each other's community experiences both positive and negative. (@Article12)

Box 10: Examples of activities PEER groups adapted to suit their own ways of working



In Cyprus, the group enjoyed using the training manual as a tool for some of the activities such as the site mapping and the hot air balloon. These activities then inspired them to create their own activities for example using illustrations of sunshine and grey clouds to demonstrate the positives and negatives of the issue. Through this work they were able to have purposeful discussions and constructive debates.

MAP YOUR SURROUNDINGS

Children were divided in 3 groups and asked to create a map of their surroundings, including significant places. Children were given a flipchart sheet, pens, illustrations (school, houses, beach, playground, church) and emoticons (happy, sad, angry) to express their feelings in relation to the geographic area. One group representative presented their map and explained the choices.



b) The Cake

Each of us has desires, pleasures, lives and wants to relieve the joyful moments and sometimes we want to change something around us. On a piece of paper shaped as a cake participant complete the sentences: "I want...", "I am happy every day because...", "The most beautiful day in my life was when...", "I would change around me..." Group participants share their cakes and discuss their answers. This activity was used in Romania where:



"The activity helped us understand what participants think about the world and about themselves and offered us a starting point in discussing problems and how we can change a problem into something good."

c) Giant puzzle

Each group member received a piece of a puzzle made of paper on which he/she wrote an issue he/she considers important. We all gathered together and put all the pieces of the puzzle together. We then had a complete image about what is of interest for all the group members. Participants were able to see that although they are different and come from different contexts with different experiences, they see similar issues and that strengthens the group. This activity helped us choose the problem of interest for the entire group. Another version of this activity used t-shirts instead of puzzle pieces.



d) The Respect Walk

In a small group, take a walk around your community building, school, neighbourhood or town. As you walk, record significant places with photos or video. Make sure you start somewhere

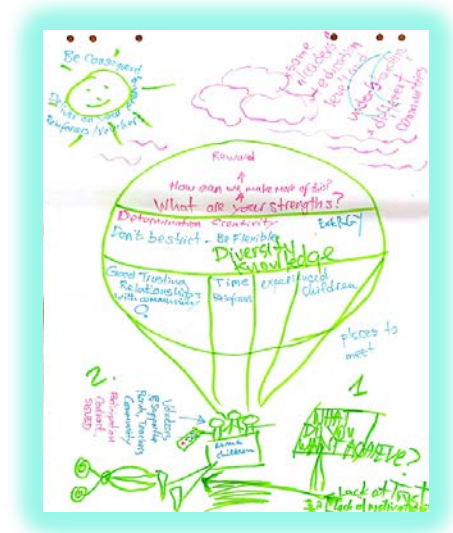
you all feel respected and end somewhere you all feel respected.

Everywhere you go ask yourselves:

- ✓ Do I get respected here?
 - ✓ Do my rights get respected here?
 - ✓ Where and who helps me feel respected?
 - ✓ What needs to change here, so that I feel respected?
- [@O_Lark @TravellingAhead]

e) The Balloon Game

Ask the group to draw a hot air balloon. They should make it large enough to write on and include the balloon, basket and ropes tethering it to the ground, the sun in the sky and winds that might blow them off course. Write in the sun the issue that children want to work on. In the basket, they should write or draw the people who need to be working together to help children and families living in their community. On the tethering ropes, write the restrictions that are keeping the balloon from flying. What are the challenges faced, and what might new challenges be? Inside the balloon, write what must be in place for the balloon to really fly and for the situation to improve for children and their families. Once the balloon has been drawn use it to have a discussion about how they might plan to achieve their goal.



f) Photography Voice

In Ireland, three groups of traveller children aged 10 – 12 years, from two primary schools (25 children) have been involved in PAI activities, piloting the PAI. During the activities, the children were each given a disposable camera and asked to take photographs of what was good in their lives/made them happy, and things they would like to change/made them feel sad. We developed ground rules for taking the photographs and wrote these down and the children took photographs over one weekend. In total we had over 500 photographs! We worked with each child in private to go through their photographs and chose 5 of things that were good in their lives and 5 of things they would like to change and that they were comfortable sharing with the rest of the group³. The children then used these photographs to share their understanding and experiences and to make a poster for the themes they had selected.

³ This method draws on the work of Luttrell, W (2010) A camera is a big responsibility – a lens for analyzing children's visual voices' *Visual Studies*, vol 25, Issue 3, 224-237



g) Rivers of life experience

This is an approach for capturing (young) people's experiences visually and in ways that ensures experiences and perspectives are understood in real life contexts. This visual reflective narrative tool is best used in individual one to one interactions.

Materials required: Large piece of flip sheet paper, coloured pens.

The process starts by the researcher and the young person starting to talk about the issue in question. For example the researcher may ask the young person about their current situation (e.g. being looked after in alternative care) and how they feel about their current

situation. The young person might start to record this information on the flip sheet. The researcher might then ask the young person about why they came into care and again the young person records what they feel is most relevant on the river of experience. For example, they might say that their mum was having problems with their behaviour. The researcher may then explore some of these reasons further for example by asking when this starting happening and exploring underlying causes. The process continues with the researcher continually seeking to understand reasons for why things happened.

What if the young person does not want to record anything on the flip sheet?

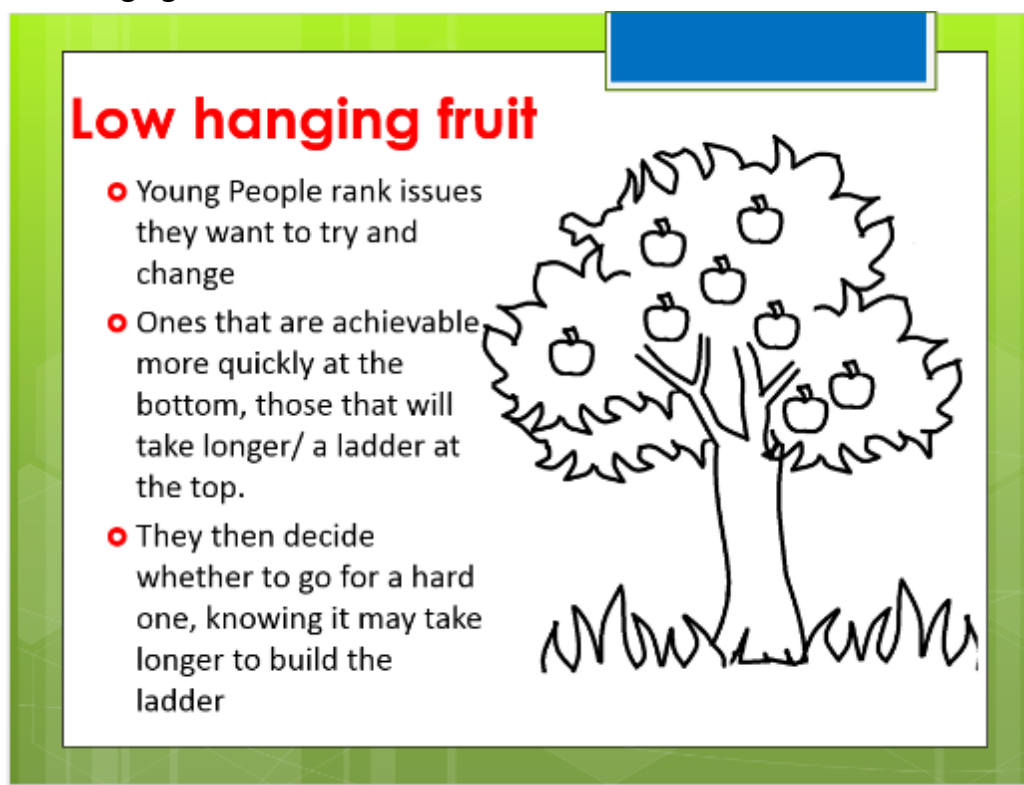
This often happens as young people are often more focused on telling their story than wanting to record it. In these cases the researcher can record the information by asking the young person. Eventually the story will have reached its beginning, (the start of the river) which may be when the young person is born or maybe at a particular age when the issue or difficulty started. It is important to include emotions on the river of experience, for example, using smiley, sad or angry faces.

The researcher or facilitator's role is to invite the young person to tell their story with open ended questions such as: tell me more about why that happened, how you felt about that etc. This method is also useful in enabling the young person to reflect on their situation and understand it holistically. It is useful for the researcher to invite the young person to reflect on their whole river of experience for example by asking "How does that feel looking back on your experiences during these years?" or "What are you seeing here that has brought you to where you are now?" And perhaps: "If you were helping another young person at the beginning of this journey what would you do to support them or make different?" (See Percy-Smith and Walsh, 2006).


4.4 Choosing and reviewing

The following tools were useful for visualization and movement to prioritize, review or make decisions. Box 11 then gives examples of how we used these in practice.

a) **Low Hanging Fruit**



b) **Yes, No, Maybe**

Place mats around the room which have the words 'yes', 'no' and 'maybe' written on them. Ask the children any closed question then ask them to say questions themselves with suggestions of activities/themes. Get them to go and stand on the mat that represents their view. Quickly record how they are distributed around the room and then use a pretend (or real) microphone to gather their opinions. Write those opinions down, preferably in a place where everyone can see your notes. (Burton, Stephens and Dow 2010 p. 108 )

c) **Dot voting**

To prioritise between the ideas that the group has already had, use anything they have already created or write these ideas down on different cards. Spread the ideas around the room and give everyone three stickers/ three counters. Ask them to vote for the three most important things to take forward. Then discuss with the group how to do the most popular ones.

You can use a range of tools and activities to review an issue in more depth. It is sometimes better to use physical or visual ranking before discussion. Examples include:

a) **The Discussion Line**

The facilitator marks out a physical line from one end where people stand if they really agree and the other end where a person would stand who really disagrees. The facilitator explains that individuals are to place themselves on the line relative to these ends of the continuum line. The facilitator then reads out the issues from the last

session. Individuals can be asked to describe where they are and what made them choose to be there. The exercise can be extended into a discussion of how the group could change to bring everyone together, or to understand why people have different priorities.

Box 11 part 1: Examples of how PEER groups prioritised and made decisions

WHERE DO WE STAND?

Young facilitators used this continuum activity to work with a large group of 25 young people in England. They liked it as people could show what they thought without having to speak. It also helped people move their ideas closer together.

In the end, they chose four issues to work on because they could not agree, but the discussion line helped them get into teams. Each team then planned a peer research investigation on the four separate issues.

Barrier Wall

This is a picture from the work in Bulgaria where we worked with a group of 13 girls aged 12. In the picture you can see the Barrier Wall. In a combination with the “River of Life”, it helped the young girls identify, agree on and prioritize obstacles for them to feel more included and accepted in the town they live in, by writing the most important obstacles in the centre of the wall.

These exercises helped not only to name and arrange such obstacles but also opened up space for sharing sensitive issues for the young people because some of the things they put in the bricks were their own feelings that were preventing them from being more active in their society (fear and shame, for example).



h) An Ideas Storm

Briefly remind the group of what they did the week before, encourage individuals to tell the group what they saw, what they did, what they felt and what they heard. If you made any recordings or photographs of the work you have done so far look at these. Then, in small groups if appropriate, ask young people to put what they learned about their priority theme on post-it notes or to draw it: Difficulties they learned about, in blue or grey like rain; Good ideas that can help make change, in orange; Other information on

white. Get the group to feedback their ideas to the bigger group and together make a collage of the sun coming out through a storm.

Box 11 part 2: Examples of how PEER groups prioritised and made decisions

SUN THROUGH THE STORM

Based on these ideas, a group in Cyprus developed their own way of reviewing. They divided in 3 groups of children (each group had 5 or 6 children) talked about the locations they identified in the previous session and the feelings they expressed using the emoticons. School, street and home were associated more with feelings of sadness and anger.

Each group chose one of this locations and using colourful *post-it* they analysed the obstacles and the solutions for each problematic issue that was identified.

Using the ideas storming technique all kind of solutions were placed on a piece of flipchart on the sun's rays. The discussion in each group was facilitated by different trainers. A group representative then talked about the drawing and choices they made.



i) Anyone who agreesMove!

This is a game a bit like musical chairs⁴ (adapted form a game called where the wind blows). It can help a group hear and see each other's' ideas, while keeping them moving. It can also be used just for fun. Form a circle with everyone in it, then one person moves into the middle. Take one chair away. Give some guidance on what the group is going to discuss e.g. priorities for what we want to change/ solutions we think will work, but it can also be used to discuss people who can help/ things we like to do.

The person standing in the middle then says '**anyone who agrees ... [and says what they think about the subject]...Move!**' And everyone who agrees changes places. For example, '**Anyone who agrees ...we need better food at school... MOVE!**' The person who is left standing in the middle then says their own idea and the game continues. NB If anyone looks uncomfortable having to be in the middle, ask for a volunteer to swap.

⁴ You can also do it with a parachute/tarpaulin/sheet outside, make everyone hold the edge of the sheet and then throw it up and run under. The last person to be back holding the edge is the person who speaks next.

4.5 Doing Research on your topic

In some PEER projects, Roma children or young people have chosen research as a way of finding out other young people's experience on the issues they are concerned with.

We have:

- Walked around and interviewed people
- Given out questionnaires for people to fill in
- Made videos interviewing people we know
- Interviewed other young people through Skype

We thought about five things it helps to think about when doing research:

1. Who to ask?

We asked questions to:

- Children and Young People
- Parents and Community Members
- Supportive workers and organisations
- People who make decisions that affect us

Think about how to contact these people and whose permission you need

2. What information to give?

We told people taking part about:

- Who we are, our research aims and how we will use their ideas
- How to give us consent and how they can change their minds about taking part – you may need parental consent for younger children to take part
- How we will protect them – to keep their answers confidential or report concerns to other people if someone is in an unsafe situation

Give information first, then get consent

3. What questions to ask?

We asked about things like:

- experiences
- overcoming challenges
- solutions or advice

Try out questions in your group first, then choose the ones that work well

4. How to ask?

We asked people to:

- take part on their own, with a friend or in a group
- Share their ideas by talking, drawing, playing games or writing.
- Meet face to face or online

It can help to ask people about themselves, and positive experience, so that they feel comfortable

5. How to share the answers?

You can share answers:

- In your group, by talking, watching or listening to recordings or reading
- With people who took part, by making a summary or going back to see them
- With anyone who can help make that changes you want

Change things like names, place or other details if you have promised confidentiality

Remember, any of the activities in Section 4 of this manual can be used as part of research. We also found that strengths based interviewing was really useful, and these questions are in Box 12.

Box 12: Questions for strengths based interviewing

- What have you done that you are proud of to... [E.g. *help young people achieve the goal we are trying to achieve*]?
- What did you do that worked well to ... [e.g. *support young people to bring about change*]?
- Who did what?
- What have you learned?
- What would you do differently?
- What messages would you like to give about this to help other young people?

More advice about involving young people in research is here:

http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/So_you_want_to_involve_childr_en_in_research_SC_2004_1.pdf

4.6 Planning for Action

Many examples of activities for planning action (Step 4 of the Magic 6) have been used in PEER. A separate multi media guide to taking action (Step 5) is available at www.PEERaaction.eu.

The activities we found that worked for planning action include:

a) Action Grids

Goal: To reviews the possible solutions they have thought of or learned about from other people, to identify where they think they can take realistic and achievable actions.

The group listen to each other talk about what they think it is realistic to achieve, based on the information they have gathered. They then decide as a whole on one action to plan. In small groups, an action grid is produced to show the small steps (little whats) they will do to bring about the action they are planning on this issue, how to achieve it, who needs to be involved and when. Participants then take a tour round the room to see each other's ideas. If there are too many ideas for the time you have, vote on which ones to take forward first.

- Example: Young People NAME the action they want to take: A community talent show. They then think about smaller steps as in the grid below.

Little WHATs	HOW	WHO	When
Book venue	Ask for community hall		Today
Advertise	Facebook	By Ryan	Next week
Invitations	Handmade posters and flyers	By Chloe To Community Members	Next week
Food	Ask parents	Everyone	This week


[Jill@Article12.org, @O_Lark]

b) Footsteps



Goal: To review a whole group or focus on specific areas and to consider what further action is needed.

Before introducing the activity to the children, cut some paper or a chart into the shape of a footstep. The tool may need 10–15 such footsteps.

Introduce the activity to the children. Ask them to consider the group's main action goal and to write this on a sheet of paper. This sheet is placed on the ground at a spot far away from the children. The children will now have to lay the footsteps one at a time, with each footstep corresponding to a stage in their path to reach their goal. Ask children what practical steps they could take to work towards the goal. As each footstep is laid on the floor the group discusses what the step represents, what needs to be done, how progress can be achieved, who will do what and so on. After you have taken action, this activity can also be used to review what you achieved, what steps were or were not taken and what you would do differently next time or how far is left to travel. (Adapted from Lansdown and O'Kane, 2014 p. 22 )

c) Picture who can help

Goal: To identify the external people and resources that can help them in identifying the optimal solution and in the same time to contribute to their path of change.

Practical tasks: Look at the posters prepared in the previous session, review the issues. On the flip-chart make a list of people that we will encounter along the Path of Change (those who will be able to help; those who will be an obstacle). Ask children, in groups, to choose and draw one of these persons in a poster and prepare 3 questions they'll like to ask them.

The super-hero teacher



d) ROLE-PLAY/DRAMA

Goal: Identifying and practicing solutions using drama.

Get the group to think about or write scenarios inspired by the real life problem they are trying to change.

- Defining main characters (the 'who') and the main stakeholders that they discovered in the previous session
- Have a short discussion about alternative ways they would like to behave, or behaviour they would like to change in others.
- Write a short text for dialogues or make it up as you go along.
- Anyone who does not want to take part can shout, watch and advise.
- Anyone who wants the acting to stop can shout freeze.
- When someone shouts freeze, discuss what is going well and what could help things go even better. Who needs to change what? Does someone need to ask for the change?
- When they are ready someone shouts action and they act out the steps to make the change they want to see occur.
- When the group have finished, write down a short summary of who needs to do what.

5. Action, Evaluation, Sharing Learning and Follow Up



~~will~~ This section tell you more about:

We have created more detailed written and multi-media guides

✓ To Action – (step 5 of the Magic 6) see www.PEERaction.eu

And

✓ To Evaluation – (step 6)
These guides are being produced from the shared learning in the second year of PEER.

This section introduces what we learned about action & evaluation in year 1.

5.1 Action

The children, young people and adults involved in PEER in its first year took action in lots of ways. Most importantly, this was a training year, so we acted on our understanding of what participation is and the communities that we are working in. Some young people reported increasing their skills and confidence. Some group members got to know each other better and learned how to work as teams.

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Beyond their own teams, some PEER groups also took action to try to bring about change in their own actions, in their schools, in the actions of service providers and in government policy. Box 13 gives some examples of this action.


Box 13: Examples of actions taken in year 1

In the UK, PEER group members have used research reports to lobby their college about catering, vending machines, laptops and bus passes. PEER group members report that the catering has now improved. Also, young members of the long established Gypsy and Traveller communities decided to learn more about and support recently arrived Roma. They took action by making links, through workers, with other individuals and groups of children and young people. Finding out about their needs and writing about this to the national government.

In Spain, in site 1, the aim was to set up a Community Leisure Club that involved both acquiring the official leisure monitor training degree and setting up a formal youth organisation. In site 2, young Roma women aimed to set up a face-painting and T-shirt design organisation that may offer their services in community festivals as well as at private parties (wedding, etc.). In site 3, young Roma aim to actively participate in the neighbourhood's festival (Festa Major) ornamenting their street and offering cultural and children programmes (in August 2016).

See www.PEERaction.eu for further videos and stories of the actions completed in the PEER project.

5.2 Evaluation

We started PEER by using an evaluation framework and tools drawn from Lansdown and O'Kane (2014 p. 20 ) , additional materials on group work recording and individual progress suggested by young Roma facilitators and the evaluation team.

Box 14 shows examples of PEER groups evaluating their progress, including using some of the activities covered in Section 4 of this manual.

Box 14: PEER groups evaluating progress

In the UK, one PEER group evaluated their progress by discussing objectives and giving feedback regularly. They also gathered information about outcomes at an event with other professionals. They compared their ideas about outcomes, and then worked out what actions needed to be taken in order to develop the outcomes into actions.

In Romania, evaluation of the first meetings with children revealed the following opinions:

- *I learnt to communicate better*
- *I learnt how to act as one*
- *I learnt that we must respect people around us, no matter what their situation is*
- *I learnt how to work together and how to respect each other*
- *I learnt how to work in teams and how to trust ourselves*
- *We socialized, we had fun during the activities*

EVALUATION: FOOTSTEPS

Children think about what they've learned in the sessions and write their thoughts about it on a drawing of a footstep given to them, then place the footstep on the floor in relation to how close/far they are in reaching the sessions' goal.



All of these tools are useful in some contexts and some facilitators and children engaged with them really happily. But, for children and young people less used to group work, being asked their personal details at a first session was really off putting. Also, as PEER groups were often run by Roma young facilitators who were taking on youth group leadership roles for the first time, filling in complicated forms was again off putting.

We have now created a simplified framework, of six questions to be thought about at the end of every session:

1. What have you done?
2. What worked well?
3. What presented difficulties?
4. What did you learn?
5. How could we improve the session? How would you do it differently?
6. How could we include ANYONE who was left out or remained inactive / bored?

At the same time, facilitators should reflect on what they could do to help the group overcome any difficulties in achieving their goals.

And six questions that children and young people gather information on as they go along, through using creative group activities, making a film or using a multi-media app we have developed for the project.

1. **PEOPLE:** Who are the key people involved with our group?
2. **GOAL:** What have we been working on? What are we proud of?
3. **CHANGE:** Where have we managed to make any of the changes we wanted? What helped this work?
4. **DIFFICULTIES:** When were things difficult? How did we get over this? What would we do differently?
5. **ADVICE:** How would we recommend other people go about trying to achieve similar things?
6. **WHY:** Why should people be involved in a group like this in the future? What did you have fun doing? What did you learn?

We try to make sure that each individual contributes their personal ideas to this, especially regarding what they have learned.

As we reflect on progress and barriers experienced, throughout the project, we have identified the events and hidden mechanisms that may be enabling or constraining any changes the groups seek. This involves drawing learning together from across the groups so that we can make links to wide patterns of discrimination and more distant levels of government and influence, such as the EU.

A user friendly guide to evaluation with Roma children and young people is available at [insert link](#).

5.3 Sharing learning

These are some of the ways that PEER groups have been sharing their learning:

- *Social Media:* sharing learning on-line through Twitter or Facebook
- *Videos:* this has included interviews with group members, demonstrations of key activities and advocacy films.
- *Written Media:* creating Powerpoint presentations, posters, letters and reports.
- *Virtual Discussion:* Skype between young people in different PEER projects in different partner countries

6. Training and other Resources



This section tells you more about:

How we trained people in the Magic 6

- ✓ Involve young Roma as trainers
- ✓ Learning by doing, trying and reflecting
- ✓ And doing again!

Group Reflection

- How could you use this exercise with young people?
- What would you do differently?
- What information would you need to give them?
- Who might be change makers who could help support them?

Training on the Hidden 4



Resources we think are useful

6.1 Training on the Magic 6

We delivered the Magic 6 training to people who had never done participatory group work before, and to people who had a lot of participatory experience. The training worked best when it was led by Roma young people who have participatory experience. These young people inspire others by talking about their own first hand experiences (as members and

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leaders of groups). It was very important to value the experience of everyone in the room, and to work together sharing knowledge, and considering how activities could be adapted to local context. Young Roma facilitators showed people what activities and approaches worked for them, and other Roma and non-Roma trainees discussed what activities and approaches would be needed to achieve the same goals in their own contexts.

The training was effective for people who wanted to set up a PEER group and for those who wanted to find out what might be achieved through PEER groups and Roma children's participation, including facilitators and municipality or government officers. The training worked less well for people with a general interest in Roma young people or participation, but who had responsibility for individual children's participation or who lacked a clear link with a PEER project. For many, one day of training was not enough.

Our plan for PEER training was to learn through experience:

- In one day, to introduce PEER and the Magic 6 approach to cycles of participatory action by experiencing activities and reflecting on how to adapt them.
- On a second day, to give a further day of training (on the hidden four) to people wishing to run PEER groups, and local ways of working with children and youth.
- During six sessions of contact with young Roma, to provide intensive support and monitoring enable learning to develop through experience of running the Magic 6.
- To foster a learning environment, encouraging reflection on successes and attention to inclusion through group reflection after each direct contact session.

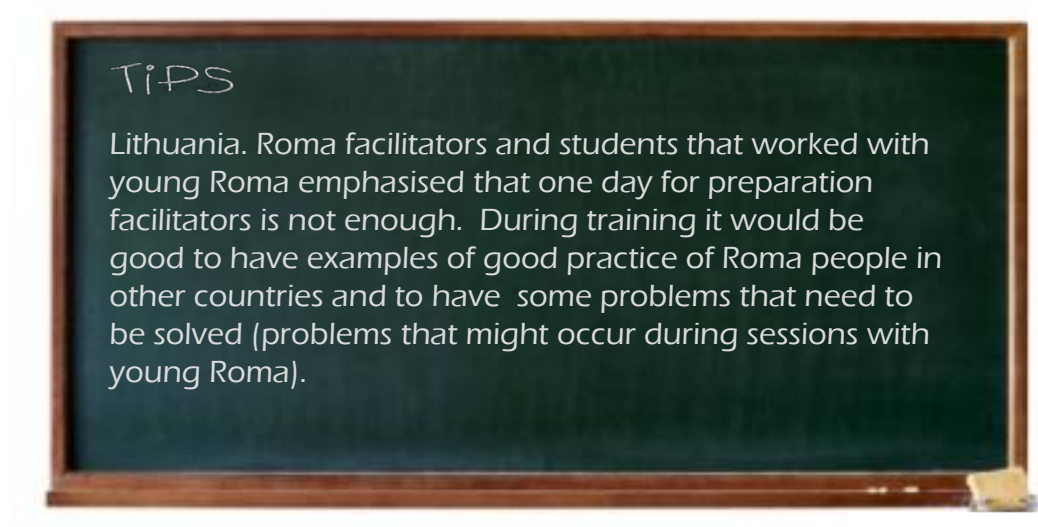
An example of the PEER Magic 6 one day introductory training is given in Box 15.

Box 15: An example programme of Magic 6 Introductory training

Activity Timing and Description	Equivalent Magic 6 Step
9:00 Welcomes and what is this about Name game, questions, hopes for the day, Consent forms and evaluation documents. Stress that today is to learn by doing and reflecting.	Magic 1 - Identify Issue
10:00 Agree/Disagree Participants are asked to imagine a line and at each end are 'Agree' and 'Disagree' [and in the middle for unsure!]. Facilitators then read out statements – start with funny ones - to encourage members of the group to position themselves on the imaginary line as to whether they agree/disagree or are unsure. Start with funny statements and then you can introduce serious statements about participation and PEER. Facilitators should generate discussion during this exercise to ensure the group can have their say but must also ensure they share facts with the group to 'myth bust'.	

10:15 Mapping Activity (see manual) <i>Participants are split into smaller groups to draw a map of where they live. They may draw things like homes, services, housing, places of worship, shops, and places to eat etc. They will write on pink 'post its' the things they like about their community and stick this to their map. On green 'post its' they will write the things they don't like and the things that they feel are missing from their community and stick these to the map.</i>	Magic 1 or 2
10:45 Break – Visit other people's maps	
11 Group feedback about the activity in your own context <i>Whole group discussion.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How could you use this exercise with children and young people? ● What would you do differently? ● How else could young Roma identify issues they want to change? 	
11:30 Ranking - Choosing priority themes for action (see manual - low hanging fruit) Each group now rank issues (chosen from the Maps) from short to long term achievable goals. Having heard from each other the group must decide as a whole one priority issue from each group that can be used as the focus of the Magic 3 session (and the rest of today).	Magic 2- Choosing Focus
11.50 Group Reflection on the Activity <i>Whole group discussion.</i> How else could young people you work with make choices about priorities and what is achievable? How would we respond to any difficulties?	Reflection
12.15 Lunch	
1.15 Ice –breaker 'Objects' Participants bring to the session an object that is important to them. Participants are split into smaller groups. Facilitator begins by choosing an object that someone else has brought and asks who it belongs to and the meaning behind it. That person then chooses another in the same way and so on until all the group have introduced themselves, their object and the meaning as to why it is important to them.	
1.30 pm Investigate today's focus issue with other people Either: Someone volunteers to run an activity they know. They run it with other people in this group to look at one of the issues. Or: Interviewing young people and community leaders (see manual) In small groups, participants <i>think of or write questions</i> to ask other people that will help them investigate how to address the chosen issue. Focus this on where they have succeeded in making a change for their communities or in their own lives on the issue chosen as a focus. Look at Box 12 for example questions.	Magic 3 - Investigate with others
2.10pm Group reflection – what worked? What would we do again? Introduce session recording sheets	Reflection
2.20 Break	
2.35 pm Action Planning Grid (see manual) In small groups again, an action grid is produced (see 4.6 a.) in the training manual).	Magic 4 – Analyse and Plan
2.50 Group Reflection How could you use this exercise with young people? What would you do differently? What information would you need to give them? Who might be change makers who could help support them?	Reflection

3.00 pm - Visualising action In a big group, explain that in real life, action would now be taken. Discuss the different sorts of actions they can think of. Ask the group to imagine that they were doing one of the planned actions. Imagine it succeeding. Identify one thing each that will help it succeed, Write these on a post it and stick it on a success wall.	Magic 5 – Take Action
3.20 pm Fire in your step activity. (see Manual)	Magic 6 – Reflect and Share
3.45 pm Evaluation – using individual forms or closing web of wool.	



6.2 Training on the Hidden Four

To have an effective team of facilitators you have to spend time together and ensure you share values and know how to work together. In the PEER project we found that it was important for facilitators, both adults and Roma children and young people, to have the experience of trying the approach and the activities.

As well as the Magic 6 training day (see Section 6), we ran one day training programmes wherever possible facilitated by PEER staff alongside Roma young people.

A minimum content of this training day includes building understanding of:

- participation and the aims of your project
- the community and young people you are working with
- the administrative and safety issues that must be fulfilled

Box 16 shows a programme used in one of these training sessions and ideas for understanding Roma children and their communities is in Section 3.3.

Depending on facilitator's own experience, it may also be useful to think about training in listening skills and working with groups, this is covered in Section 3.4.

Box 16: Example of a training programme from Romania


Activity	Methods	Resources
Introducing participants Introducing the content of the training session The right to participate in international documents – CRC The right to participate in national documents Importance of participation in children and youth's lives	Debate Explanation Lecture	Attendance list Hart's participation's scale Ppt presentation
PEER project– objectives PEER project – proposed activities Magic 6 program (principles, steps)	Explanation Demonstration Debate	Ppt presentation Worksheets PEER manual (translated version)
Recruiting the group of children Prior activities with children Reflections about the prior experience of working with Roma children/youth	Explanation Role play Discussion	Ppt presentation Worksheets
Administrative issues regarding the project	Explanation	Evaluation tools

6.3 Reflection


After every six sessions, or thereabouts, we are also suggesting that facilitators, host organisations or partner NGOs and those children and young people who wish to join in, should reflect on what they have learned about participation. This is to enable them to feed what they have learned into developing a culture of participation.

- What has been learned about **what participation and empowerment means for young Roma?**
- **What makes a difference** in enhancing the participation / empowerment? (including the role of adults / workers in supporting participation, what structures and practices are beneficial for supporting participation? etc.)
- **What forms of participation and empowerment** are most effective/attractive/worthwhile for young Roma?
- **Examples of what you see as good practice**
- **What needs to happen to consolidate/sustain/embed participation of young Roma as a norm in society?** How can we extend good practice?
- **How can we contribute to this?**

6.4 References to useful resources


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