***SLOVAKIA***

***Building trust and connecting pre-school with different actors within the local community***

**Bystanders**

***Summary***

This is a “mapping” activity which looks at the role of the non-Roma population during the time of the Roma Genocide. Participants consider the contribution of racist attitudes to such terrible events.

***Time:***

90 minutes

***Objectives***

• To raise awareness of the Roma Genocide

• To consider the responsibilities of “bystanders” for terrible events

• To explore some of the consequences of widespread racist attitudes

***Materials***

• Flipchart paper and marker pens for each small group

***Preparation***

• If participants are unfamiliar with the Roma Genocide and the way the Roma suffered, it is recommended that you either allow more time for this activity, or run it as a follow-up activity.

• Make copies of the Handout. You will need at least 1 copy for each small group.

***Instructions***

Optional: if participants are not familiar with the Roma Genocide

1. Ask participants to recall what they know about the Roma Genocide. Use some of the information from the background material on page 66 if necessary.

***Main activity***

2. Ask whether participants think that such an event could happen today. How do they imagine the non-Roma population might react if the government announced that all Roma were to be deported and then killed?

3. Read aloud or give participants copies of Handout 1 at the end of this activity Ask them to name a few of the non-Roma people ‘mentioned’ in this passage who knew about what was happening and did nothing. You could draw attention to the few train passengers who threw packages of food into the camp.

4. Collect two or three examples from the group; then ask participants to work in small groups to expand the list, using information from the text or other knowledge they may have about what happened. They should think about people who would need to have “known”.

TIPS:

Encourage participants to think widely, imagining that such a terrible thing was happening today, and how they might come to hear about it.

Their lists might include some of the following:

• Journalists on the newspapers

• All the newspaper readers

• Psychologists who undertook the research, and those others who must have read it

• Eye-witnesses to the visits by psychologists, including neighbours

• The train drivers

• All the passengers who did not throw food to camp inmates

• Guards at the camp, and other camp personnel

• Those who arrested the inmates and accompanied them to the camp

• Those who witnessed the arrests or the journey

• Those who saw the empty houses of Roma, or who noticed their absence

• The families and friends of anyone listed above

•... and so on.

5. Ask groups to present their results in the form of a “map” of the community: a large image of the different observers, indicating how they came to know.

6. Give groups about 20-30 minutes for the task; then gather the groups back together to compare results.

7. Display the “maps” around the room and invite participants to walk around and look

at them.

***Debriefing***

Use some of the following questions to debrief the activity.

General questions on the activity

Briefly discuss the maps drawn up by groups, and any differences between them.

• How easy was it to come up with people who “must have known”?

• Were there more or less than you expected?

Questions related to the Genocide

• What do you think would have happened if all of the people you listed had refused to take part in the Genocide, or had objected to what was being done?

• Why do you think more people did not object?

• Do you think more people would have objected if the group had not been the Roma but

had been “all short people” or “everyone whose surname begins with a ‘B’”?

• How do you think you would have behaved if you had been alive while the Genocide was going on?

You could read the second Handout to participants to illustrate that some members of the population did protest and actively support the Roma. There are many other examples documented.

Questions related to antigypsyism today

• How would you behave if such a programme was announced today? Would you do anything to protest?

• How do you think that Roma today must feel, knowing that their families were persecuted in this way?

• Do you think enough has been done by the non-Roma community to acknowledge the wrongs that were done?

• Can you think of any examples of mass discrimination against the Roma today which you know about or have witnessed directly?

• Did you object or protest? Why or why not?

Suggestions for follow-up

• Suggest that participants imagine themselves 100 years into the future, carrying out the

same activity to look at how the non-Roma population responded to racism against the

Roma today. What examples can they find that future generations would regard as unacceptable? Who would they identify as having responsibility to protest against the violations?

Use some of the activities in the handbook ‘Right to Remember’

(<http://enter.coe.int/roma/Media/Files/Right-to-Remember-A-Handbook-for-Education-with-Young-People-on-the-Roma-Genocide> ) to deepen knowledge on the Roma Genocide.

•Suggest that the group organises their own remembrance event to bring this event to wider public attention.

Further information

• See the background material ‘Roma Genocide: key facts’ (page 66) for some basic information about the Roma Genocide.

• See the background material ‘After the Roma Genocide’ for information about the lack of recognition and compensation for crimes committed against the Roma.

• See the handbook ‘Right to Remember’ for more information, resources and activities on the Roma Genocide. This is available at

<http://enter.coe.int/roma/Media/Files/Right-to-Remember-A-Handbook-for-Education-with-Young-People-on-the-Roma-Genocide>

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