

Working towards Roma Inclusion in the Western Balkans: a learning trajectory methodology

The Learning Trajectory is a learning journey which supports peers within an organization to reflect on their own work and learn from each other.

This learning approach usually begins with a workshop, at which learning topics are identified and agreed by the group of peers who will participate in the process.

It was agreed that the 2015 Roma Inclusion seminar in Bucharest (already planned by SDC) offered an ideal space to begin a Learning Trajectory on Roma Inclusion. The process would begin and end with a regional seminar. Between these seminars IDS would provide support and facilitation using learning methods of greater or lesser intensity, according to the modalities that peers preferred. Two key methods were selected at the 2015 Bucharest Seminar:

1. Action Learning Sets

An Action Learning Set (ALS) is created for each theme. This group of no more than 6-8 people will meet on Skype 4-6 times over a year, until the next face-to-face workshop. The learning that emerges over the ALS meetings is presented in the face-to-face workshop. Action learning brings together people who are peers - who work on similar issues, with a similar level of responsibility, but who do not work together on a daily basis.

The action learning group or 'set' is a space in which people can share experience, recognise that others experience similar challenges and concerns, and learn from each other. It is a safe space in which to share worries, admit failures and test out new ideas. Outside of the ALS group discussions, ALS members engage in their own reading, reflection and action research. They bring these reflections to the next Skype meeting.

2. Group Learning Projects

This is a less intensive approach to creating knowledge together around a key question. Case studies can be selected, to illuminate good practice but also failures. The group decides itself how much time they want to invest into identifying, analysis and writing of these case studies; the "lightest" way is to mandate a moderator/interviewer who asks for the information from "experience carriers" via telephone interviews. A template can be prepared for the case studies to be written up. The case study can then be shared with the experience carriers to ensure accuracy.

The process moderator (who can be one of the group or a consultant) may write a synthesis and extract some operational guidance, which then could be deepened, corrected, extended and appropriated by the group (through e-discussions), to be presented at the next face-to-face meeting.

The Roma Inclusion Learning Groups

Four learning groups were created at the end of the Bucharest seminar. Two chose to work as action learning sets, (one focusing on discrimination, the other on women's empowerment). The other two chose to collect 'good practice' case studies from SDC offices (and potentially also other organisations) across the region; and are currently refining a template to send out.

The learning from these groups will be written up and fed into the next regional seminar. The intention is also that during the learning process, the groups will – if appropriate – identify Roma partners who could be interested in attending the next seminar.

If you would like more information about the Roma Inclusion Learning Trajectory please contact [Jo Howard](mailto:Jo.Howard@ids.ac.uk) at IDS (J.Howard@ids.ac.uk) or Ruedin Laurent at SDC (laurent.ruedin@eda.admin.ch)

This Briefing Note is one of a series produced by the SDC-IDS Collaboration on Poverty, Politics and Participatory Methodologies in SDC. The Collaboration aims to deepen the multidimensional understanding of poverty among SDC staff and improve the quality and effectiveness of SDC processes and operations focused on poverty. It is co-ordinated by SDC's Quality Assurance – Poverty division. For more information contact Anne Moulin at anne.moulin@eda.admin.ch