ABSTRACT

Joint Social Work and Education and Research Conference (JSWEC) 2016

**Celebrating that which unifies us: Global and UK perspectives on generic social work education, research and practice**

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**THE 'LIVED EXPERIENCES' OF THE ROMA MIGRANT COMMUNITY**

**Supporting Roma Voice: a participatory research project**

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**Author keywords:**

**GRASS ROOTS ADVOCACY**

**COMMUNITY ACTIVISM**

This paper will provide an overview of the findings from the research \*‘Supporting Roma Voice’ and discuss some of the implications for policy and practice.

It is widely acknowledged that Roma remain one of the most socially excluded communities across Europe, experiencing routine exclusion in relation to key areas of daily life; for example, employment (Hyde, 2006; ERRC, 2007), education (Bartlett, Benini and Gordon, 2011; CoE, 2011; Scullion and Brown, 2013), health (Fundación Secretariado Gitano, 2009; CoE, 2011) and housing (ERRC, 2010; Phillips, 2010; Amnesty International, 2011) Recent media coverage has shown that the dominant voices about Roma tend to be those of politicians or local non Roma populations and most draw on and perpetuate stereotypes from which many Roma have attempted to escape.

Roma, arriving in the UK from CEE Member States, are a growing population within the UK who are often deeply socially excluded within their country of origin and have significantly varied and complex needs. To date there has been limited local support, which encourages active inclusion which has been attributed to a lack of understanding as to the specific needs and how best to respond to them, a lack of capacity within the CEE Roma communities, and a lack of funding for participatory inclusion initiatives.

The overall aim of this paper is to share with you findings emerging from an innovative project focused on the inclusion and integration of Roma migrant in the UK. This project has sought to both provide an evidence base about the experiences of settlement of Roma migrants in the UK and provide a framework for the development of grassroots advocacy led by Roma. This project has been funded by Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (JRCT) and Metropolitan Migration Foundation (MMF).

Key findings emerging from the project encompass issues of:

Education

Work

Community relations

Housing

Poverty

This paper will provide an overview of the findings from the research and discuss some of the implications for policy and practice.

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