

OSCE HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING

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Figen Kelemer/Turkey

ROMA IN TURKEY

Roma in Turkey do not have a legal status of ethnic minority. There are officially about 500,000 Roma in Turkey. By different Turkish and Non-Turkish estimates the number of Roma is up to 5,000,000 .

The Roma rights movement in Turkey, starting a few years ago with the courageous efforts of a small number of pioneering activists in a few towns, is a new phenomenon for Turkey, which has received a justifiable welcome within the human rights community.

WHO WE ARE ?

Çika (Gypsy women) which has been established as the first Roma Woman Network in Turkey aims to reach an ideal state in which all Roma woman citizens are represented as equally as the other individuals in the society in frame of the “Empowerment Campaign for Roma Women” . Our general aim to create a space for Roma women in which they express themselves comfortably and they discussed their common issues. As we all know, Roma women are subjected to non-systematic and unreasonable but a harmful ethnic discrimination. It affects us in terms of maintaining our life. We have troubles in reaching the employment, education and health services. Governmental authorities ignore Roma communities and in the general society there are severe biases towards the Roma groups. People tend to label Roma groups as thieves, liars and lazy people. Roma woman are dealing with constant unemployment. So our women cannot find a global salvation to their problem due to their desperate situation.

WHAT ARE OUR AIMS

As Çika we aim to increase the young educated Roma women’s capacities to gain self-confidence and skills to discuss their problems and also changing the stereotyping about Roma women so that they can do effective lobbying and advocacy and also to have a respected place in the society through the campaigning .

WHAT IS OUR ACTIVITIES ?

In frame of the “Empowerment Campaign for Roma women” (our place-our space-our case)

- Creating Network Meetings , in order to meet young educated Roma womens we organized meetings and we involved young Romani womens from Edirne, İstanbul , İzmir, Hatay, Mersin, Tekirdağ and Adana cities .
- Trainings for capacity building , to increase the self capacity of the Turkish Roma women on the various topics as Leadership and activism, gender equality, voluntarism etc.. we organized trainings ,
- Street actions , in order to attract public attention on the current issues as early marriages , prejudices and discrimination we organizing street actions (flashmob, distributing soap to nonroma to wipe out their prejudices against Roma)

WHAT WE WILL DO IN THE FUTURE ?

We are as young Turkish Roma women will work on the decrease the early marriage in the Roma society and also we will continue to help majority to wipe out their prejudices against Roma .

In this process we need that Turkish government will collaborate with us to elaborate a strategy plan for the Roma women's futures in Turkey . To help us to continue our activities, enlarge our base and empower many women as possible to become and equal citizens....

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