

# Gender and Cultural Perspective in Adult Education and Community Work in Bulgaria

Tatyana Kmetova, Roza Dimova, Tsveta Petkova  
Centre of Women's Studies and Policies Foundation  
Sofia 2018



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[www.cwps.bg](http://www.cwps.bg)

[cwsp@cwsp.bg](mailto:cwsp@cwsp.bg)

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## Introduction

The report aims to highlight the situation of migrants, refugees and minorities in Bulgaria in general as well as in adult education. Particular attention is paid to the situation of women.

This report is part of an Erasmus+ project called „EQUAL SPACE - innovative gender and diversity strategies in adult education“. EQUAL SPACE brings together four partners from different fields, PERIPHERIE as gender research institute from Austria, ELAN INTERCULTUREL as education organization focusing diversity from France, REDE as education organization for young people and women from Portugal and CWSP as women's organization from Bulgaria.

The idea for EQUAL SPACE derives from the joint observation among the partners of the role adult education can play for intersection of gender and cultural diversity and for the inclusion of disadvantaged groups to society and education.

The main objectives of this project are:

- to increase the knowledge about intersection in the partner countries and on EU level;
- to enforce gender and diversity equality and social inclusion through a community education approach in the field of intersection of gender and cultural diversity;
- to support the integration and social inclusion of migrants, refugees and minorities in lifelong learning by training CEFs in the field of intersection;
- to enhance the quality and relevance of learning offers in adult education, using digital tools and resources;
- to develop research-based recommendation for regional, national and EU level;
- to develop a transfer model for Equal Space for other fields of education, to promote the access and motivation for education of different target groups;
- to promote the importance of cross-sectoral and cross-country cooperation for the development of a curricula, training material and online tools for training CEFs in the field of intersection.

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To achieve this, the project aims to develop a research-based Community Education approach focusing the intersection between gender and diversity. Community education promotes learning and social development work with individuals and groups in their communities using a range of formal and informal methods. Our experience in community education have shown that community education processes need actors – community educator facilitator (CEF), who initiate local or regional learning processes, which would anchor community education in the field of gender and cultural diversity (intersection) as a central task.

Currently there is no curriculum or training program for CEFs in this field. There are community development courses, but education and learning are a by-product in them and there are concepts of outreach learning and embedded learning. Our approach is to train CEFs in the field of intersection (gender and cultural diversity) connected with strategies which change the structure of education systems.

The fact that the partners involved come from different sectors and countries gives added value to this project, as they offer their own expertise, views and experiences and will be able to create a product that is relevant not only to each country specifically but to a wider European context.

The methods that will be used in this project are diverse and aim to increase the quality and its outcomes, as well as to wider and successful dissemination of the projects' results. Such methods include extensive research, needs analysis, development and assessment of a curriculum for CEFs, non-formal face to face and virtual learning tools and methods, a transfer model, monitoring, evaluation and disseminations strategies.

EQUAL SPACE is expected to have a great and long-term impact affecting not only the immediate participants as community workers, staff of education organizations, regional actors, civil institutions and NGOs in its activities, but also thousands of people, educators, trainers and adult education organizations, as well as other interested stakeholders all over Europe, by providing tools that can contribute to the improvement of the quality of offered lifelong learning services all over Europe, the building of the capacity of so called CEFs, especially in regards to intersection in their daily work. The project will show an approach, how disadvantaged people can be included in lifelong learning. The long-term impact of this project will be encouraged by a research-based transfer model.

More information about the project and its products may be found at the project official website: [www.equalspace.eu](http://www.equalspace.eu).

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## History of Immigration

The immigration of ethnic non-Bulgarians to Bulgaria can be considered after the country's liberation from Ottoman rule and the restoration of the Bulgarian state in 1878. Following the Berlin Congress, the Russian Empire was forced to withdraw its troops from Bulgaria but left many specialists. Almost all of them, however, left Bulgaria after the break-up of relations with Russia in 1886. The first larger compact group of non-Bulgarian immigrants in Bulgarian history to settle in the country were the Armenian refugees fleeing the persecutions in the Ottoman Empire (1915-17: 20.000 Armenians). A large wave of Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians and other nationals of the Russian Empire settled temporarily in Bulgaria following the demise of Wrangel's army in Crimea in 1920. A smaller wave of new immigrants arrived in Bulgaria during the socialist regime (1944–1989), where foreign students came to study in Bulgarian universities and some of them remained.

Bulgaria had never guest workers, with one exception. According to an agreement between the Bulgarian and the Vietnamese governments, from 1972 to 1989 in Bulgaria studied and worked about 28.000 Vietnamese citizens, predominantly men, who left the country between 1990 and 1993.

The fall of communism at the end of 1989 saw a new wave of migration to Bulgaria, when groups of Chinese, Arabs, Russians, Ukrainians, Turks, Vietnamese, Albanians, Armenians from the Republic of Armenia, some Africans, and an increasing number of EU nationals established themselves permanently in Bulgaria.

Economic immigration to Bulgaria after the democratic transition emerged not as much as a result of purposeful state policy but more as a spontaneous phenomenon, based on migrants' own migration projects. The three major pull factors were the transition to market economy, the existence of numerous free niches and the opportunity to start a business with a relative small amount of initial capital. Economic immigration in the beginning of the 90s had two main sources. The first was the transformation of education migration into economic. Many citizens of the Near and Middle East who graduated in Bulgarian universities during the communist regime, chose to settle in the country and work as businessmen, doctors, journalists. The second source was new migrants who came from completely new destinations such as China, as well as individuals from the same countries from the Near and Middle East whose relatives and acquaintances had already settled in Bulgaria. They started their own small or medium business or found jobs in trade or the restaurant business, primarily in the companies of other immigrants.

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Gradually an invisible change took place on a symbolic and political level: the numerous Russian communities, which during communism has never been analysed neither as a minority, nor as migration, began to be perceived as a migrant community (Krasteva 2005). Russian immigration is both family and labour: its representatives are spouses in mixed marriages and are well integrated into the Bulgarian labour market.<sup>1</sup>

## Current situation

### Migrants

According to the last census as of 1st February 2011, 36,723 persons with foreign citizenship live in Bulgaria representing 0.5% of the country population. Fifty percent of persons with foreign citizenship, living permanently in the country, were from European country outside the European Union. Russians dominate - 65.1%, followed by citizens of Turkey, Syria, Ukraine (16.6%), Republic of Macedonia (5.9%), Moldova (4.8%) and Serbia (3.1%). In 2011 23% of all foreign citizens who live permanently in the country are EU citizens (mainly from UK, Greece, Germany, Spain, Romania, Italy etc.). Persons who declare double citizenship – Bulgarian and other, are about 0.3% of the country population.

According to the UN data the international migrant stock in Bulgaria in mid-2015 was 102.1 thousands / 1.4% of total population.

According to the UN estimations female migrants in Bulgaria were 57.9% in 1990 and their number has been diminishing being 53.5% in 2015. This is due to the fact that majority of them are settling in the country because of marriage, other family issues or education. These women in their majority are employed, due to the fact that they are well educated.

In 2016 11,987 immigrants enter in the country of whom 1,310 with EU citizenship, and 10,677 non-EU (third countries nationals, stateless and with unknown citizenship). Highest is the share of immigrants from Turkey (22.5%), the Russian Federation (15.3%) and Ukraine (7.4%). This numbers do not include immigrants who have already obtained Bulgarian citizenship.

According to the Ministry of justice in 2001-2015, 185,447 people applied for Bulgarian citizenship and 116,222 were provided with. 113,647 were granted on grounds of proven

1 Krasteva A. Bulgarian migration profile.- Medved, Felicita. Proliferation of migration transition. Selected new EU member states. European liberal Forum, 2014, 189 – 211, available online at: <https://annakrasteva.wordpress.com/2013/03/21/bulgarian-migration-profile/> (13/05/2018)

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Bulgarian ancestry or other grounds provided by the law, including 59,968 citizens of the Republic of Macedonia, 29,218 citizens of Moldova, 5,930 Ukrainians, 5,374 Serbians, 5,194 Russians, 3,840 Israeli, 2192 Albanians, 692 Turks and others. In 2016, 12,880 foreigners were naturalized, including 6,196 citizens of the Republic of Macedonia.

Many migrants' groups are self-organised in community clubs, mainly to communicate and organised cultural or other events.

## Refugees

The State Agency on Refugees is responsible to provide protection of those who ask for it, including asylum. Evidence from the official statistics of the Agency shows that from 1993 to 2018 83,155 persons seek for protection, 13,171 of them received refugee status, and 11,280 received humanitarian status. Other applications were rejected.

Refugees and others of concern to UNHCR in mid-2015 were about 18,953. At least 17,527 were the applications of refugees of the Syrian Civil War. The Syrian migrant community tripled in size since 2011, however it is still less than 10 thousand people. In 2017 3,700 persons, mainly from Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria, applied for protection, of them - 2,748 men and 952 women.

Integration Centres for Refugees (ICR) support the integration of refugees living in Bulgaria. This work includes the planning and organisation of Bulgarian language courses for permanently settled refugees and asylum seekers or referring people to relevant training. Integration Centres have their own language teachers and facilities for running courses; they also have the capacity and capability to offer vocation qualification and re-qualification.

State Agency on Refugees work closely with international and national non-governmental organisations in providing social and psychological support to those in need. In this it cooperates with the office of the UN High Commissioner on Refugees, International Organisation for Migration, Bulgarian Red Cross, Caritas, Council of Refugee Women in Bulgaria, etc.

According to the Labour State Agency there is a special Programme for training and employment of refugees. In 2015, 106 persons were involved, and in 2016, 119. 48 of them worked in 2016, and 49 in 2015.

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## Minorities

Bulgaria adhered to the concept that the protection of minorities was ensured through the protection of individual rights and freedoms. The principles, guiding the efforts of the state in respect to the persons belonging to the ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities within its borders, are mainly of acceptance and of equal treatment. Each minority group and community are free to define to which extent it will participate in the public life, contribute to society, and use its constitutionally defined liberties to express its cultural heritage. In accordance with the rights defined in the respective conventions and treaties of the UN, CoE and EU the Bulgarian laws provide the framework, within which these liberties can be exercised. Bulgaria ratified the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in May 1999. According to the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria from 1991, the state is prohibited from forcefully assimilating the minority groups present on its territory. Each community can choose the level at which it shall accept the values, common for the Bulgarian society, and the measure at which it shall preserve its own traditions, beliefs and way of life, as long as the latter do not breach the law.

Throughout the years, some of its minorities have reached a very high level of integration with men and women publicly visible and active in political, social and economic life, while the process for other minorities has been much more difficult. In the latter case, the country created special measures in order to aid and improve the desired level of integration, which is an ongoing process. In 1997 the government established a consultative body on minority issues, the National Council on Ethnic and Demographic Questions, later re-named on Ethnic and Integration Issues. In 1999 the government adopted a Framework Programme for Equal Integration of Roma.

By law, public broadcasting is to be available in languages other than Bulgarian, but in practice currently, such public television and radio programming is only available to a limited extent in Turkish.

The last national census had been conducted in 2011<sup>2</sup>. Information on ethnic and racial affiliation as well as on religion had been provided purely voluntarily<sup>3</sup>. According to three important criteria of ethnicity - self-ascription, mother tongue, and religion - there is considerable overlap of group boundaries which show the complexity of the ethnic situation in Bulgaria.

2 If it is not specifically noted, the statistical data in the report is from the 17th Population and housing census, held in February 2011, available online at [http://www.nsi.bg/census2011/PDOCS2/Census2011final\\_en.pdf](http://www.nsi.bg/census2011/PDOCS2/Census2011final_en.pdf) .

3 According to the Law on Statistics, Art. 21 (2): Natural persons shall not be obliged to provide the statistical authorities with data concerning their race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion, health status, private life, party affiliation, committed legal offences, philosophical and political views, available online at: [http://www.nsi.bg/sites/default/files/files/pages/StatisticsAct\\_en.pdf](http://www.nsi.bg/sites/default/files/files/pages/StatisticsAct_en.pdf) .

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Bulgarian is the official language of the country, and it is the native language for over 85.2% of the country's residents. Bulgaria is a secular country, however, its constitution names Orthodox Christianity as a traditional religion and one that was followed by almost 60% of the population as of 2011.

Approximately 84.8% of the population is Bulgarian, with other major ethnic groups being Turkish (8.8%), Roma (4.9%) and about 40 small minority groups totalling 0.7%. The persons who do not identified themselves to a given ethnic group are 0.8%. Among them, the share of the youngest people under 19 years of age is 51.7%.

The Turkish minority in Bulgaria emerged gradually as an isolated community after the war between Russia and Turkey in 1877–1878 and the end of five centuries long Ottoman rule in Bulgarian territory. After its end, the new Bulgarian state was obliged by international treaties to recognise and respect the major civil and political rights of the Turkish and other Muslim minorities.

Different Romani groups settled in Bulgarian territory in different historical periods, starting from 11 - 12th until 19th century, however there are scholars who attributed their arrival to 9th century. The situation of the Roma is especially complex. Roma tend to identify themselves differently, depending on the belonging to a particular group, on their religion (Orthodox, Muslim, Catholic, Protestant) and language they consider mother tongue (Romani, Bulgarian, Turkish). Most Roma are bi- or tri-lingual. The number of Roma people in Bulgaria make it the country with highest percentage of Romani in Europe.

Jews are settled since 2nd century, but majority arrived during the Middle Ages, while the Armenians are settled between 6th and 11th century, and over 20,000 sought refuge after the genocide in Turkey in 1915-1917.

## Current Situation

The population with Bulgarian ethnicity identity is significantly more urbanized in comparison to the other two major ethnic groups - Turks and Roma. 77.5% of Bulgarians live in urban areas, compared to 37.7% of Turks and 55.4% of Roma. The persons who identify themselves to the Turkish ethnicity are located in several districts – Kardzhali, Razgrad, Targovishte, Shumen, Silistra, Dobrich, Ruse, Burgas, where 63.7% of the population of this ethnic group lives. The persons from the Roma ethnic group are distributed in all districts. The biggest share of Roma ethnicity is in districts Montana - 12.7%, and Sliven - 11.8%, followed by Dobrich - 8.8% and Yambol - 8.5%, compared to the total for the country - 4.9%.

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## Rights

All persons who belong to minorities are Bulgarian citizens and have full political and civic rights. According to the Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey (2017), for Roma respondents, in the countries in which they were surveyed, discrimination rates based on ethnic origin are highest in Portugal (61%), and lowest in Bulgaria (19%). In Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Spain, no gender differences are observed. However, the survey shows that the majority (62%) of the respondents are not aware of any equality body in their country, and the level of awareness at this matter is higher among males than among the females. In Bulgaria 47% of men, and only 27% of women are aware about the existence of at least one equality body in the country. The National Strategy for Integration of Roma (2012 - 2020) clearly emphasizes the need to involve actively citizens of Roma origin, in particular women, in its implementation.

However, the social exclusion and poverty of Roma is quite visible in particular settlements or town quarters. Many national and international organisations and bodies under different occasions expressed concern about the continued unsatisfactory access of Roma to education, health and adequate housing, as well as to the labour market.

## Education

Free public education in primary and secondary schools in the country has contributed to the literacy rate of 98.6% in 2003 (98.2% in 2013). According to the Census in 2011 19.6% of population (22.3% of women and 16.7% of men) had tertiary and 43.4% had secondary education. 71.6% of urban population had at least secondary education.

The Pre-school and School Public Education Act stipulates that full-time education is mandatory for all children at the age between 7 and 16, and the public education system includes kindergartens, schools and servicing units. The Act recognises the right to education for all children; guarantees equal treatment regardless of their ethnic or social background and residential locality, etc. No restrictions or privileges based on race, nationality, gender, ethnic or social origin, faith, or social status are admissible.

The mandatory two years of pre-primary education is compulsory either at kindergarten or in preparatory groups at primary schools aiming at providing an equal start for every child and contributes to developing the skills being necessary upon admission to the first grade. In preparatory class, children are evaluated through conversation or respective tests on their

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level of command of Bulgarian (for those children whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian) and for their general preparation for school.

The Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria is guaranteeing the right of Bulgarian citizens belonging to ethnic minority groups to learn and use their own language. The Pre-school and School Public Education Act states that “pupils, for whom Bulgarian is not their mother tongue, are entitled to learn their mother tongue as well, pursuant to the provisions of this Act and under the care and supervision of the State.” It is important to note that the law gives the Bulgarian citizens, belonging to a minority group, the opportunity to study their mother tongue, but does not impose an obligation on them to exercise this constitutional right. The ratio of the law rests upon the premise that each person has the sole discretion concerning the level at which they wish to preserve their cultural heritage and mother tongue. Therefore, Armenian, Hebrew, Romani, and Turkish can be studied as mother tongue in Bulgarian schools, as elective subjects. According to the National Electronic Information System for Preschool and School Education (NEISPSE), the number of students who has chosen to study their mother tongue at school in 2017, were as follows: Turkish: 6,967; Hebrew: 278; Armenian: 128; Romani: 0. In 2017 the syllabi from the first until seventh grade education for Armenian, Hebrew, Romani, and Turkish language were updated by the Ministry of education and broadly discussed with the regional education authorities, school and university specialists in the respective languages, representatives from ethnic communities, and representatives of non-governmental organisations.

According to the National Statistical Institute the net enrolment rate in primary education (I-IV grade, ISCED-1) was 93,2% in 2015/2016, and 92.1% in 2016/2017 school year. Drop-outs at this level of education were about 2.5% in 2015/2016, and over 53% of them went abroad with their families. In order to overcome this situation, the Government has adopted a Strategy for educational integration of children and students from ethnic minorities (2015-2020) and a Strategy for reducing the share of early school leavers from the educational system (2013-2020).

According to the 2011 census 1.2% of the population is illiterate, among them 0.5% of Bulgarians, 14.5% of Roma, 5.2% of Turks. Those never attended and drop outs of school are 23.2% Roma, 11.9% Turks, and 5.6% Bulgarians.

Gender disparities in literacy can be detected among Roma over the age of 50, but also in the youngest age group. While majority of Turkish minority girls receives secondary and tertiary education, it is not a case with Roma girls who drop from school in primary school after 4th or 6th grade.

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The National strategy on promoting and increasing of literacy (2014-2020) also contributes to improve the working opportunities and access to the labour market of inactive minority population as well as to overcome the social exclusion. There have been a number of educational initiatives in recent years designed to improve the literacy skills of adults needing to re-enter or improve their position in the labour market, or for adults who did not complete compulsory education. For example, the “New Chance for Success” programme developed an overall model for adult literacy education including training methodology (training schemes, curricula, learning packages), training process, tests and certification. Training was conducted in courses for literacy provision and in master courses envisaged for pre-secondary level grades of basic education

The educational integration of children and young people from disadvantaged groups features prominently in several recently adopted strategies and legislative acts, primarily the Strategy for Educational Integration of Children from Ethnic Minorities (2015-2020), which sets out four strategic aims: (i) the comprehensive socialisation of children and pupils from ethnic minorities; (ii) ensuring equal access to quality education for children and students from ethnic minorities; (iii) promoting intercultural education as an integral part of the process of modernising the Bulgarian educational system; and (iv) preserving and developing the cultural identity of children and students from ethnic minorities.

The Ministry of education promotes good educational practices on educational integration of ethnic minority children, on prevention of dropping out of school, etc.

## Work situation

In order to improve access to the labour market for economically inactive people of Roma origin, including discouraged workers, Roma labour mediators are engaged. These are persons identifying themselves as Roma and employed at the Labour Office Directorates under the National Programme to „Activate the Inactive“. They motivate the economically inactive people of Roma origin to sign up at the Labour Offices in order to use their employment and training intermediation services. In that regard, the mediators conduct awareness raising campaigns, as well as outreach individual and group meetings with the inactive and with discouraged workers in the districts and locations with highly concentrated Roma population served by the Labour Office Directorates. The number of Roma mediators was 57 in 2014 and 87 in 2015. In 2016, 92 Roma mediators have activated and motivated 11,946 inactive persons, including discouraged workers from the Roma minority, to register with the Labour Offices, of whom 2,795 have been included in training and employment.

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Minorities are self-organised in national or community cultural clubs or non-governmental organisations, which are mainly focused on keeping their ethnic identity and preserving their culture and language. Many other non-governmental organisations, including organisations of minority people, provide different types of awareness raising, informational, educational and other community activities at project base level on different issues - literacy, health, citizenship, etc.- among different ethnic communities in different parts of the country. Some of them are organised in networks which helps to follow the same aims, principles and guiding rules of operation.

## Empirical research

### Insights of Community education in Bulgaria

A *chitalishte* (Community club) is a typical Bulgarian public institution and building which fulfils several functions at once, such as a community centre, library and a theatre, and represents specific Bulgarian tradition of self-organisation at community level. It is also used as an educational institution, where people of all ages can enrol in foreign language, dance, music and other courses. The word *chitalishte* in translation means „reading room,“ a place where books are kept for public use. The first institutions of this kind emerged in the 1850s, later, the *chitalishte* became an important multi-purpose institution in villages and smaller towns. Today, *chitalishta* are less widespread and their role is critically decreased. This type of Community clubs exists nowadays as independent non-profit organizations to provide locally classes to children with interests in learning culture, traditions, music, national holidays and history. They additionally provide extracurricular dancing, singing and acting lessons to children, students and adults, and organize show performances with Holiday themes. In 2012 existed 3,075 clubs with over 230 thousand members.

The Ministry of Education and Science acts as a National Coordinator for Adult Learning in Bulgaria. There is a strong focus in national policy on vocational education and training, on providing access to work-related training for unemployed people, and on expanding access to vocational education for all citizens. Adult learning and adult literacy are important components of the Bulgarian National Strategy for Lifelong Learning (2014-2020), which includes formal, non-formal, and informal learning for improving basics skills, obtaining new qualifications, up-skilling or re-skilling for employment of adults.

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Adult participation in lifelong learning is the second lowest in the EU (2% in 2015 compared to the EU average of 10.7%). It has increased by 0.4 percentage points since 2011.

According to the National Statistical Institute, 891,100 persons (22.5%) aged 25 - 64 participated in at least one non-formal training in 2016. The number of women involved is a little bit less than the number of men, while the number of women involved in the informal education is higher - 52.5%. In 2016, 223,500 (5.7%) aged 25 - 64 had searched information on education and training possibilities. Women were more active than men respectively - 6.7% and 4.6%.

Project-based continuous vocational education and training (CVET) is provided through the European Social Fund and active labour market policies, but it is rather fragmented. The annual action plans of the Lifelong Learning Strategy (2014-2020) lays down concrete measures to increase the adult participation rate to 7% by 2020 and to widen the coverage of the provision, including a focus on disadvantaged groups.

Adult education as a professional field is underdeveloped in Bulgaria. There are national regulations regarding qualifications for those working as teachers in compulsory education and vocational schools, but no information could be found on specific qualifications and specialised training routes for those working in the field of adult literacy and education.

## Methodology

The common guideline for the interviews was adapted to the national situation as well as all guideline-oriented qualitative surveys. We also adapted the questions that were asked during the interviews making them more open and giving opportunity to interviewees to describe their own experiences and ideas on intersectionality to better understand and identify their needs and priority topics for further trainings.

The selection of the interviewees was made by first identifying those organizations and experts in Bulgaria (working in the capital city and outside of it) who are directly involved in adult education activities or trainings for refugees, migrants and minorities. As we did not identify any previous national research work on intersection between gender and diversity in formal and informal adult education, we oriented our research towards experience of people who might have real examples of tackling intersectionality between gender and diversity from their everyday work.

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We identified the most relevant interviewees among NGOs representatives, who are working directly with refugees in Integration centers for refugees, and among experts from the National Network of Health Mediators, working with Roma minority communities. Our approach to contact these people was led by the expectations that they will give us more realistic ideas about the existing and missing opportunities in Bulgaria to integrate gender and diversity aspects in adult educational activities and offers. We also benefited of additional contacts and directions, provided by them to other possible informants.

This approach in our opinion gave us a lot of information on the realities concerning the existing approaches, the theoretical and most importantly practical knowledge and skills in national organizations to consider gender and diversity in work with migrants, refugees and minorities. In addition to contacted people from NGOs, we also searched for possibilities to interview experts from academia, universities and other researchers' institutions and organisations, who are working on the topic of community work with ethnic minorities and communities to complete the picture of our study with their long-term observations about the process of integration of gender in intercultural work at community level. As a result, we conducted 20 interviews – 10 with experts working with refugees and migrants, and 10 with experts working with Roma.

### Fields of action of the interviewees

In the following table and attachment (list of interviewed persons) are presented interviewees and their main activity field.

	Facilitators/Trainer/ Teacher/Social Worker/ Volunteers	Researchers
NGO	18	0
Academia or researchers	0	2
Women	15	2
Men	3	0
Migrant/Roma background	4	0
Autochthonous	14	2

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Our interviewees were researchers, coordinators of training programs to NGOs, working directly with migrants and refugees; trainers, educators and mediators in programs, specifically dedicated to inclusion and education of Roma ethnic minority, provided by the municipalities and/or through various EU projects/programs; volunteers in inclusion and educational programs for migrants and refugees, provided by NGOs; social workers, lawyers and psychologists in mobile teams, working directly with refugees in Integration centers for refugees in the country; facilitators of discussions or focus groups (refugees) and self - help groups (Roma) and researchers on minorities.

## **Analysis of the results of the interviews**

The interviews showed that the topic of inclusion of intersection between gender and diversity as presented in our project seems to be innovative and there is expressed interest to specific training materials for trainers/educators and facilitators/mediators, working with women and men migrants, refugees and minorities.

Most of the interviewees, however proved to understand well the term „ intersectionality „ as an approach, which considers the ethnic origin, the religion, the language, the social status, the culture and the traditions and the gender. Although not defined specifically as an intersection between gender and diversity, most of the interviewed people understand the connection and could give variety of examples on how they see and apply it in their everyday work. Almost all of interviewees clearly identified implications of intersectionality in communication, education and facilitation work and spoke about what they miss to further improve it in their everyday work.

For example, those working with Roma and refugees have identified lack of sustainable methodology to implement intersectionality between gender and diversity (18, I 20). They shared that they adopted and adapted some approaches of intersection between gender and cultural diversity and apply them as they understand them, or their practical experience showed it is relevant for their work.

Thus, we identified the first milestone to be considered in our study - what kind of trainings for trainers and facilitators on intersectionality were held before the project; what kind of internal guidelines trainers and facilitators use to consider intersectionality between gender and diversity.

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## Learning how to consider intersectionality between gender and diversity

The trainers, facilitators and social workers from NGOs, working with refugees, shared that they learned about how to consider intersectionality mainly through their practical work. Some of the main organizations working with refugees (IOM and Caritas, Bulgarian Red Cross) have seen the need to develop more sustainable guidelines for their staff and volunteers, based on the experiences of their practical work. Therefore, basic internal instructions and platforms with guidelines were developed (I1, I2, I3, I4, I5 and I8) built on the mutual understanding of the staff, program coordinators and members of mobile teams, working on field, on the most important aspect of the intercultural work considering also gender.

Besides these instructions through the interviews we identified through I 5, existence of one specialized gender and diversity training for the NGOs staff, working in the UN family, like IOM. The training, however is very limited in time duration (only 1-2 hours long) and provides general theoretical knowledge on gender mainstreaming in work with migrants and refugees, which is not enough to build solid theoretical grounds for the field work. We did not identify special training on intersection between gender and diversity for educators and trainers working in Roma community.

Our observations from these interviews are that **specific trainings for trainers and facilitators on intersection between gender and diversity are very much missing in Bulgarian national context, and that the internal guidelines, developed by organizations, are not enough for staff to build solid competence on the topic.** Some of the interviewees shared that they are interested to be included in our project training activities or offered cooperation in developing of the training material (I 5 and I 8) based on their practical experience. All of them confirmed that they need more developed methodology, which is tested or used in other countries, and would be happy to participate in more advanced trainings on the intersection between gender and diversity in communities' work.

## Challenges and lessons learnt from practical work on field

On the other hand, the interviewees working directly with refugees and Roma minority shared during the interviews that they have every day practical experiences on dealing with gender and cultural and religious differences which they handle intuitively as they consider appropriate (I 1 - I 8 and I 13- I 17).

Some of the challenges in this type of direct work are related with basic issues at the beginning of the communication. For example, shaking of hands when meeting people or touching people during conversation, gestures and mimics, expressing emotions, were very fast iden-

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tified by interviewees as being initial challenges in intercultural work. Most of them have gender dimension especially in communication with women and men from Muslim communities. According to all interviewees, who are directly involved in facilitating activities and social work, communication gestures often turned to be very important for the topic of intersectionality as a starting point for building trust and further joint work with target groups, (I 1, I 2, I 3, I 4, I 5, I 6, I 7 and I 8).

Other challenges the interviewees connected to emergency issues that they were tackled on place without being prepared for them. For example, in I 9 a man social worker shared with us:

*“I remember a case with a colleague from another NGO who faced difficulties...a woman in a refugee camp felt down because of a health condition. He instinctively grabbed her and run carrying her in hands to the doctor’s cabinet to help her, and even did not think that her community will be angry on him, because he touched her. In reality he thought he is helping the woman in this moment, but he also realized later that he embarrassed her and caused some problems with her community. There were rumours he was in a relationship with her, which was not true, but the way he acted was interpreted like that... We have many situations like this in the refugee centers, when we feel we are not really prepared for them. In his place I would do probably the same, and I would have same problems. These are the situations we discussed about in teams to prevent cultural misunderstandings”.*

Other interviewees shared with us other examples also relevant to illustrate how people on field consider and take into account gender and diversity in their everyday work:

*“We had to organize a cooking multicultural event. We asked a male mediator to phone a woman from his community to give him a recipe. He denied doing this, because her husband was not at home, and it was considered not appropriate to speak with her directly.”* (I 3)

*“We learned that we have to change ourselves and to accept some communication gestures that are not typical for our culture but will open the door to fruitful connection with people with whom we work on daily basis. We know and accept that some women might not talk with us directly and will not look us in the eyes, and also we know that instead of shaking hands, it is more appropriate to put our hand on our hearth and say hello this way, not to touch people as we are used to.”* (I 9)

All these aspects are considered in the practical work when social workers or volunteers meet and make connections with their target groups. The most important for them was to build trustful relationship at the beginning, and firstly to make people believe them and open for communication. After establishing these types of relationships, the social workers and

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trainers/facilitators can think about how to mobilize their target groups in any kind of activities including in educational ones. Sometimes newcomers in the profession turned to be not prepared enough and hesitant how to act. They learn in process what is a must, where are the limits, what are the cultural differences and how to overcome them. **There are no learning materials on intersection of gender and diversity to teach newcomers (professionals or volunteers) in advance before they have started their work in the community**, except internal trainings and instructions developed on organizational level. However, as it was expressed, it is most important to begin the professional training with the gender and diversity intersection, because it is a basic of their work (I 5 and I 8).

Next steps that the interviewees found relevant for improving their work on cultural diversity is to search for help from social mediators (people from the community) who might ease the communication and work with the target groups. The organizations which had long lasting experience in direct work with refugees established the practice to hire social / cultural mediators, who are speaking English or Bulgarian and who can assist in the communication. Translators are also very much involved in easing the communication and in connecting the Bulgarian staff with the refugees.

However, sometimes the help of mediators is not enough, because in practice educators see that they personally lack a lot of information and knowledge, especially when they gain more and more the confidence of people they work with (I 2 and I 15). In these cases, they have to learn about the cultural practices of communities they work with by themselves, in order to be relevant to the needs:

*“For example, I worked with women from specific communities - the Yazidis who came in Bulgaria from Syria. I did not know anything about Yazidis but learned that they are not Muslims and are very closed community in Syria, who marry each other only in the community. The tradition is to have many children and they are organizing their family life and childrearing in a very different way, comparing to us. When I started to work with women Yazidis and to educate them about children nutrition, it was very difficult for myself to understand some practices. I saw many differences on parenting with my own views, but I learned to differ what is a cultural practice and not to blame them immediately for lack of parental skills. For example, it is a normal practice to breastfeeding Yazidis boys until they reach 7 years of age. In these communities they are considered to be very precious and traditionally are breastfeed for a long period of time. This is a tradition which is same in Iraqi and Kurdish communities. As educators we cannot just ignore this long-lasting tradition and need to adapt our work to them “. (I 2)*

“When we worked with women from Tunis and Morocco we organized special sessions where women talked about their cultural practices. This was very useful for us to be informed

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about the similarities and the differences in our cultural practices, and to have them in mind when design trainings for them. It was really important to know what is common in the culture of different groups, and to organize participants according to similarities, not to divide them in groups without knowing anything about them. We must show respect to cultural differences, this is the shortest way to be effective”. (I 15)

Other examples for the practical learning process of educators was on how educators are really reaching and influencing their target groups and especially women:

*“Very often we do not take into account something very important when we work with women (migrants), and this is the fact that they are not really empowered to take decisions by themselves. We give them advices to do this or that, but we do not take into account that they can't do it, because in their community decisions are taken by their husbands or by the community (collectively), and sometimes by the leader of the community (the man who brought them to Bulgaria). If we don't know this, we cannot really reach the women, we are not relevant to them”. (I 2)*

The help of health mediators in Roma communities is also very valuable in order to establish close and trustful connection with the target group. By definition, a “health mediator” is an intermediary facilitating the access of disadvantaged people and groups to health and social services. In Bulgaria, the “health mediator” model was launched by the team of the Ethnic Minorities Health Problems Foundation in 2001 – the first five health mediators were trained and employed under the “Introduction of a system of Roma mediators – an efficient model for the improvement of the access of Roma to health and social services” project. The main objective of this pilot program was to address established negative health tendencies among Roma groups in the country, such as low life expectancy, high prevalence of chronic diseases, exclusion from the health and social system, poor living conditions, etc. The program was also aiming to contribute to overcoming the cultural barriers in the communication between the Roma communities and the local medical staff; to overcome possible discriminatory attitudes against the Roma people in the field of local health services; to optimize the implementation of prevention programmes and to improve the vaccination coverage among the Roma population; to provide health education and active social work in the Roma community.

The interviews with professionalists and health mediators, working in Roma communities showed that intersectionality between gender and diversity has many various aspects (I 13, I 14, I 15, I 16, I 17, I 18, I 19 and I 20). Roma community is not homogeneous. There are several subgroups which differ in language, religion, group identity, social and educational status, which makes the intersection even more complicated. Methodological tools on the topic, which might be part of a common standard, are also not developed, so interviewees

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found for themselves that if they want to do well their work, they have to find their own ways to get connected with the communities they work in and to understand needs of their members.

Some of the ways mentioned are work with the community using discussions/focus groups (female and male, organized separately) on acute topics such as sexual and reproductive health, domestic violence, youth unemployment, youth empowerment (different approach for Roma women and men is usually applied because of different needs of boys and girls in the community). Other approaches to get connected with the needs of the community members is to understand the family relations. Interview 16 gave us very clear picture on methods that were used:

*“In our trainings for health mediators in Roma communities we teach them to take into account the families’ situations and the role of women in the family. To be able to reach a family and solve a problem or influence the change, mediators first must to inform themselves which voice is heard the most in the families. Normally the voice of the men is most important, but also and most often the voice of the mothers in law is even more important for some issues. So, the aim is to get connected with the right person in the family who is influential for the issues you want to work on. Normally Roma families are big – women and men with different roles and positions, and trainers must know whom to approach.” (I14)*

## **Educational offers**

Educational offers for migrants, refugees and minorities in Bulgaria are very different, dependent on their status.

Migrants in Bulgaria are predominately from Russian and post-Soviet space origin. Interviews with NGOs, working with them (I 3 and I 12), confirmed that most often people, especially women, coming to Bulgaria from these countries, have higher educational degrees, integrate themselves fast and well into the Bulgarian society and do not need any special educational offers. Most often they need and receive only classes in Bulgarian language, or they ask for legal counselling, related to social insurances and taxes.

Educational offers for refugees are predominantly related to Bulgarian language classes and computer skills for children (in very rare cases for adults). Refugees in the country receive mainly humanitarian aid and live in refugee centers for the period of seeking of protection or asylum. In some refugee centers are organized art ateliers and workshops for women, dance classes and mothers’ groups socializing aiming to ease their socialization and integ-

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ration and overcoming psychological trauma, but these offers are far from real educational activities. Out of these activities are not offered much other possibilities, even though a very evident need for professional and vocational education courses was identified by many of the interviewees. (I 7 and I 8).

For Roma minority we identified some specific educational programs, financed via the European social fund aiming at providing basic literacy to those who left very early school. Roma women are also a special target group in the sexual and reproductive health awareness raising programs, provided mainly by different NGOs.

## **Barriers for women migrants, refugees and Roma to participate in educational projects**

All interviewees comment a lot upon the situation of Roma and of the refugee women from the point of view of exclusion/inclusion in the society, and upon the access of these women to the educational programs in Bulgaria. Our observations from the interviews are that there are some major external (community barriers) and internal (personal barriers) to have more active female participation in the existing educational offers.

### **1. Women refugees**

According to the interviews there are a number of barriers for developing sustainable educational initiatives for refugees - women and men.

First, the refugee flow in Bulgaria is very fluctuant, and numbers of refugees who stay permanently as a final destination or who stay in Bulgaria temporarily as a transition country is significantly diminishing from year to year. In the past two years the number of refugees in Bulgaria has decreased from 20,391 people seeking protection in 2015 to 3,700 in 2017. According to the Ministry of Interior in 2017 a total number of 2,104 people were accommodated in the refugee centers, 562 in the centers of the Migration Directorate of the Ministry of Interior, while 462 were staying in accommodation elsewhere. These numbers could be explained by the fact that most of the refugees do not stay in Bulgaria, but rather continue their way to other European countries once they receive their legal status. Those who stay in the country receive support predominately by NGOs.

The interviewees commented that there is no substantial state support for the integration of refugees who want to stay in the country (I 5 and I 8). The only support they receive is from the NGOs which are organizing project-based activities and some educational courses. For

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example, some NGOs (IOM, Bulgarian Red Cross and Caritas and Council of Women Refugees) organize Bulgarian language courses and also work on field in the refugee centers. There they provide humanitarian aid (food and cloths), psychological support and some of them organize specific activities for women – art/ handcraft workshops, sport/dance classes, and special women groups on developing parental skills. For example, one such group was identified and described in (I 2). The aim of the group is to ease the integration and the socialization of women mothers and to prepare them for the realities in the EU countries where they will face many cultural differences with regards to parenting and children nutrition.

NGOs are organizing also mentoring programs, and in rare cases they try to find opportunities for job trainings for limited groups of women. Other from these, we did not identify special educational offers for refugee women.

Some of the personal barriers for women refugees to participate in educational activities that we have identified are: 1) the language barriers, which starts with the alphabet (the Cyrillic), which is totally unknown and very difficult; and 2) the level of their education, which is not high.

*“The lower the level of education of these women is, the more they feel excluded from the society and prefer to stay behind the walls of their communities. Those, who are really motivated to study and to develop themselves, are not many, and I have noticed that in the last 3-4 years they are less and less. I am surprised that the younger generations of women are seeing themselves only as housewives and do not want to communicate with Bulgarians, to integrate and to develop. Women from these communities are not speaking much when their husbands are around, they do not share anything and do not take any decisions without the consent of their husbands.” (I 8).*

In I 8 was mentioned the possibility to get a course in English language and of computer literacy with the opportunity to find a job after the graduation, where no single woman qualified because there was an admission test which they could not pass. The reason was the very low educational level.

The interviewees commented also that women refugees are limited to be involved in any kind of educational programs by their own communities. For example, women are not allowed to visit courses in mixed groups with men who are not from their families. When there are people from different communities, as for example from Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan, parents most often don't allow their daughters to visit the Bulgarian language courses, because they do not think it is safe.

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Women with children have no time, neither possibilities to share their caring responsibilities with other family members and are not attending any educational programs except those, organized in parallel with some activities for their children, held at the same time and close place.

The age of the women might also be a barrier to attend classes, as they are considered by themselves and by the community to be too old to study even if they are 42- 45 years of age.

Some barriers for attending workshops appeared to be very gender related, because of the gender regime in their communities and the gender order in their families. For example, refraining from the workshops on domestic violence, organized by NGOs (I 8).

*“Seminars and focus groups, which we organize on domestic violence, were modified by us, because we saw that working in mixed groups is not a good approach. They were held in a very formal way. People come, listen and then leave. They don't discuss anything, when men and women are together. We saw this and organized next seminar only for women from different communities, and it was a success. Women from Iraq, Syria and Iran sit together and talk about domestic violence...the discussion started ...We do not invite men on these seminars anymore...”*

Other example why sole women groups are sometimes more efficient and workable was given also in I 1 to explain how the staff met challenges related to gender and diversity: “When we organized dance classes in one of the refugee centers, women denied to come to a place, where men could have access. They wanted to take off their scarfs during the classes. We took this into account and changed the place, where men were not allowed to come. We ask women about their needs, this is the way to work with them in reality. “

Last, but not least we identified not only barriers, but also opportunities for women refugees to gain higher status and opportunities for development. I 2 gave us one interesting example about women working as translators in the refugee centers. They are very fast gaining higher status then the other women in the centers, who are not working, because they can earn some money and the community approves this fact in these concrete circumstances.

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## 2. Roma women

In general Roma girls and boys are supposed to attend regular Bulgarian schools. However, Roma drop outs of school are very high - 23.2%. Gender disparities in literacy as stated above is detected among Roma over 50, but also in the youngest age group. Roma girls drop from school in primary school after 4th or 6th grade. Therefore, a number of educational initiatives in recent years were designed to improve the literacy skills of Roma adults who did not complete compulsory education. For example, the “New Chance for Success” programme mentioned in the introductory part of the report is such opportunity. We included two interviews of teachers in municipality of Pazardjik in our study, who provided literacy classes under the above-mentioned programme. The interviewees (I 10 and I 11) shared that participants involved were predominantly women.

*“The program was not designed to attract only women, but men in the Pazardjik Roma community did not show interest to participate, they were busy with making money for the families and not interested in education. The program is very good option for Roma women if they want and can study. It lasts only four months and is based on the educational school material from 1 to 4 grades. On one hand, the program provides good opportunity to those women who decided to participate and who were let to attend it by their husbands/fathers. This was a good reason for them to go out of their houses and quarters, where they feel very isolated and overburdened with domestic work and children. On the other hand, only a small group of those women graduated the program at the end. Some of them left because the program was organized in summer and some other opportunities to earn money appeared for them – seasonal work in agriculture in Pazardjik and abroad etc. Some left because they did not attend the program regularly and, following to the program rules, were expelled. Those, who wanted to learn, had progress, unfortunately they were not many. Some reasons not to finish the program were financial, these women are living in extreme poverty, exclusion and violence.”*

Interview I 15 provides more light on the situation of the Roma women in some communities the trainer worked in:

*“Roma women (especially in Millet – the Turkish Roma community) do not have voice in their community. They cannot say what and when will happen, except for the oldest woman in the family. Roma women are excluded from decision making in and outside of the community. When some of them feel powerful it is because someone outside the community believe in them, someone like us (the health mediators) gave them hope that they can take decisions, they are intelligent and can change their lives.”*

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Interview I 20 continued in this sense:

*“Most important thing that an educator must do is to create self-confidence in Roma women. Every woman who does not feel self-confident will not start to change neither herself, nor the community. Women who are not self-confident prefer to stay on her own old isolated position. Therefore, the first and most important thing that should be done when someone is working with Roma women is to give them confidence that women can do it, they are important and precious, because they rarely believe in this. Otherwise the educator will lose them, they will continue to be in isolation and will believe it is normal to be maltreated financially and physically. For me the most important work of the educator is to empower the women.”*

In interview 15 we identified some practical advices on how to overcome barriers that Roma women face in their communities. One example was given about the power of the peer education method:

*“We work with women in the community. We choose those who are more open, and we prepare them to influence the community. They are our role models, who have changed themselves and who change their community from inside too. If the educator is respectful to them, the effect of the training program is bigger. Also, in mixed groups in Roma community (men and women or people with different social status), we recommend all participants to be taken out of the comfort and of the advantages of their social status and gender, and all to be treated equally in order to give them opportunities to act from different perspectives. This approach is very much dependent on the professionalism of the educator, but very powerful.”*

As a conclusion the interviewees (I 15 and I 20) gave us advice on the effective ways to reach women in Roma communities more successfully:

*“When some educational activities are organized, it is important to held them in places where these women live in or in a place in their neighbourhood - a café, or in some of the women's houses as a start, because Roma women have some problems to leave the community without saying where they are going and for what reason. They need to have important reason to leave the community. Therefore, when we organize the initial trainings we do them close to their homes, they are more relaxed and willing to participate.”*

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## Conclusions

Based on the analysis of the interviews the study identified that trainers/facilitators and social workers who work with refugees and Roma communities in Bulgaria need more systematic methodology to address intersectionality between gender and diversity.

In the past 20 years in Bulgaria is acquired extensive knowledge and practical experiences on social and educative work in Roma communities which is taking into account gender and diversity. These knowledge and experience need to be systemized and best practices examples and lessons learned to be collected and made accessible for the new generations of educators and facilitators.

Other possible beneficiaries of a methodology on gender and diversity intersection in Bulgaria are also the experts in municipalities, who are responsible for the integration and social inclusion of minorities, migrants and refugees. They receive some trainings, organized by the state or by the NGOs, but a coherent training methodology for municipal servants has never been developed and is very much needed, especially on the acquired knowledge of the NGOs of work with women and men from the targeted communities, and on the issues of intersection of gender and diversity.

On the level of content of the future training programs for trainers and educators we identified some important messages:

1. The programs should be designed to teach how community educators and facilitators (CEFs) should act so they do not stigmatize participants and, at the same time, not to be too weak-willed to them. This balance is very important, because on one hand it gives to participants opportunity to go out of their comfort zone and, on the other, make them reconsider their opportunities for change without being blamed or ashamed. Women who are approached should be very well informed by community educators and facilitators about the aims of the trainings. Trainers are those who are responsible to motivate them and find what are their needs and interests, so one aim of our future training is to give some examples how this could be done.
2. The training methodology that we are going to develop should be focused on how CEFs are identifying the needs of the women's target groups. Some successful examples on organizing focus/discussion groups on mutual learning about cultural practices of both - target groups and educators - could be outlined, with the aim to show that key for success for CEFs is to connect with trainees and gain their confidence at a very early stage. That means that the CEFs must know about similarities and differences of their cultural practices and try to find a common language from the beginning of the communication.

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3. Very important aspect and a topic that should be included in the methodology of the trainings in our project is how gender and diversity relate to family relationships. CEFs should be given examples of successful practices to connect with family members and ease the change that they want to achieve through families, where most of the traditional and cultural practices are kept and transferred from generation to generation.

4. Training methodology should consider also organizational aspects of the trainings for women from Roma and refugee communities, which are important for reaching the participants. These groups are very closed, and women are very much dependent of community decisions and opinions. The training program should be focused on approaches to make them open and connected, without causing any problems to them with the community. The interviews that we collected gave a lot of such examples and could be used as illustration and tips.

5. The training program should be focused on methods to change the community from inside, working for empowerment of women to change themselves and thus influence their communities and change their own status through education and personal development. No one methodology imported from outside is working well without being internalized and made own strategy, based on personal values.

6. Finally, we must conclude that many of the experienced trainers that we interviewed shared that the most important for their target groups is to find common solutions about possibilities for increasing their economic independence. Many examples were given in the interviews about such practices (work from home, cooperatives, community bazaars etc). The female refugee and Roma communities target groups should be activated through appropriate training to search for opportunities to become economically independent, to earn money for themselves and for the family. This is a basic for successful empowerment of women and are important to be taken into account. Our interviews suggested that trainings for the professionals are also necessary and wanted, and exchange of knowledge during the courses could be an important illustration material for the training modules that we are planning to prepare for Bulgaria.

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The health mediation in Bulgaria, ASSET project, available online at: <http://www.asset-sciencesociety.eu/outputs/best-practice-platform/health-mediation-bulgaria>

United Nations Guide for Minorities <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Minorities/Pages/MinoritiesGuide.aspx>

### List of interviewed persons

- I 1 Coordinator of trainings for the volunteers in the NGO Caritas
- I 2 Psychologist, leading a special program for women refugees in the refugees' centres, International Organization of Migration (IOM)
- I 3 Coordinator of the educational programs of the IOM and programs of the Ministry of Education for refugees, which are implemented by the IOM
- I 4 Ex-volunteer in the refugee centers of the NGO Caritas in Sofia, facilitator of women's and men's groups
- I 5 Psychologist, working on field with refugees in the specialized refugees' centers, IOM
- I 6 Psychologist in a mobile team working in the refugee centers, IOM
- I 7 Lawyer at the IOM
- I 8 Manager of the refugees' service to the Bulgarian Red Cross
- I 9 Social worker, working in a mobile team in the refugees' centers, IOM
- I 10 Teacher in educational programs for Roma women in municipality of Pazardjik
- I 11 Teacher in educational programs for Roma women in municipality of Pazardjik
- I 12 Researcher on minorities in the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, and certified facilitator in community leadership programs
- I 13 Program coordinator in Medecins du Monde Foundation
- I 14 Trainer in National Network of Health Mediators

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- I 15 Trainer in Roma communities, developer of training programs for teachers and parents
- I 16 Facilitator of self-help groups of Roma women
- I 17 Psychologist in a family center in Roma community
- I 18 Trainer in the Romaact and Romamed projects
- I 19 Researcher on Roma communities
- I 20 Mediator in Roma community in Blagoevgrad

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