



Roma Networks

Roma Network's vision is to network, connect, and research for the sake of sharing the gospel and seeing transformation in Roma communities throughout Europe.

We really want to see equipped and empowered Roma leaders and holistic transformation in Roma communities all over Europe and beyond.



Real change at grassroots level

Roma Networks is run by a board of 6 people who are all involved in different Roma ministries in different countries. Since 2014, RN has been strategically at work in Europe, establishing relationships and promoting collaboration among Roma and non-Roma ministries in various contexts. This foundational relationship building was critical for the next step: The Second European Conference in 2016 which brought key Roma leaders together and empowered them to return to their contexts to influence their networks. 190 Roma and non-Roma leaders from 29 different countries assembled. One of the most important steps established during the conference was the election of individuals from each country to serve as country representatives—44 in all—to broaden the networking platform of Roma Networks. Thus, RN's vision is that growth will be both organic and dynamic— a relational movement through existing networks rather than a static program or top-down organization.

Today, with an estimated population of 10-12 million in Europe, the Roma are the largest ethnic minority. Although there are Roma in every occupation and segment of society, many have higher rates of unemployment, illiteracy, substandard housing, and health issues compared to the majority populations. Often, they face severe social exclusion, discrimination, and prejudice.

In the last twenty years, many international and national initiatives have focused on trying to alleviate poverty, raising education levels, and enforcing human rights violations. Such initiatives have only been marginally successful, and one reason is because there is a gap between policy and the reality at the grassroots. Roma churches, however, have been key in numerous contexts to facilitate gradual transformation, encouraging education, and building better relationships with the majority cultures. This led to a conviction that although policies are important, real change will happen working at the grassroots level. In addition, accurate information enables wider vision and more strategic planning. In fact, a lot of knowledge, tools, and resources already exist in various communities, but what was needed was a platform to connect knowledge with need. Thus, Roma Networks envisions that the complicated challenges existing in many Roma communities today can be addressed through a broad network of people working together, sharing their skills and knowledge.



Areas of focus:

1. Identify and disciple present and future Roma leaders (Mentoring young leaders; -Investing in Roma women)
2. Holistic education for healthy Roma families/ communities
3. Bridge building between Roma and non-Roma (Offer trainings for the (non-Roma) churches; Introduce Roma mission to non-Roma leaders/ ministries/ churches)
4. Development of work ethic amongst Roma (Developing Christian business and social work; Encourage micro-business for churches to be self-sustainable)

There is a movement of God's spirit among Roma communities in Europe. With growth comes a lot of opportunities for ministry as well as a lot of needs. During our regional country representatives' meetings, leaders determined the primary obstacles hindering growth and transformation as well as important focus areas.

Some of the areas that the representatives agreed upon were:

1. Developing job opportunities and opening micro businesses in Roma communities (JOB CREATION)
2. Identifying and discipling Roma leaders (done through ROMA BIBLE SCHOOL and YOUTH MEETINGS)

For the last decade Roma people have become a popular mission field. People, teams and organizations often have come with a patronizing attitude "we know it all". These types of behavior have often put Roma leaders down as they have nothing to contribute.

The main aim of the projects we are working on is to involve Roma leaders and to give them places where they can feel as equals and contribute the talents and knowledge that they have.

Also, conducting such projects confirmed the need for a networking platform such as Roma Networks where different ministries can come and work together. It gives participants the opportunity to share good examples and learning experiences, and influence others from similar contexts.

Empowering Roma leaders and their communities will have an impact on the wider society. Seeing the change among the marginalised people is the evidence of the power of God, both to the Roma themselves and to the watching world.



Contact

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