

Gender Sensitive Theatre

The Inequality Challenge. Innovative Solutions to a Global Issue

The Challenge

In Serbia, many different laws, strategies and programmes address gender inequality. However, there is still a lack of political will and opportunities to address traditional and often harmful gender roles.

Traditional gender roles are particularly dominant among Roma youth and Roma returnees due to the replication of cultural patterns that traditionally marginalise the woman's role. The high number of child marriages among Roma communities strongly perpetuates gender-based violence and has detrimental effects on women's life experiences.

The Objective

The project encourages the youth from vulnerable population groups in Serbia, especially Roma and returnee populations, to challenge and question traditional gender roles, attitudes, expectations, norms and behavioural patterns. It aims to bring people closer together to eventually overcome power relations and to enhance non-stereotypical, non-discriminatory and non-violent relations.

Project title	Tackling gender inequality through theatre-based education among most vulnerable groups in Serbia
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Country	Serbia
Implementing Organisation	Serbian Association for Sexual and Reproductive Rights (SRH)
Partner Organisations	Roma Association Zaječar, Association Ternipe Pirot, Humanitarian Centre Rom Obrenovac, Alternative Centre for Girls Kruševac and Research and Educational Centre Vršac
Duration	August 2018 to September 2019

The Target Group

The main target group of the project are Roma youth between 14 and 27 years of both genders.

SRH Serbia works directly with Roma youth in 4 cities across Serbia (Vršac, Kruševac, Zaječar, Pirot) as well as in the capital Belgrade, covering most of its administrative territory. It reaches out to young Roma people through an existing network of civil society organisations and individuals that SRH Serbia worked with before. It reaches a variety of Roma settlements and communities with different cultural patterns, different traditions, religious denominations and family structures.

The project also involves Albanian youth, young people from Hungarian and Croatian minorities as well as other vulnerable population groups.



◀ Location of the Inequality Challenge's project:
● Serbia



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The Approach

The project engages young people in a guided discussion about gender roles through participatory theatre. It uses an original stage play and scenarios produced by SRH Serbia in cooperation with an experienced professional playwright. The storyline follows real-life situations and problems and directly allows participants to express deep emotions and actively involves them in the process of learning and empowerment. To boost this effect, men act female roles and women act male roles. The role reversal allows the young audience to better understand and question existing gender roles and norms.

Trained professionals moderate discussions on gender roles and the gender mainstreaming approach for the entire duration of the plays. They also measure the impact of participatory theatre on gender role perception as well as on reproductive health and sexual practices knowledge. Furthermore, the subsequent guided discussions about the plays and the video recording of these discussions allow further exploration of gender roles and responsibilities for both immediate participants and future viewers.

The Results

- The project involved 6,000 young people through online platforms and conveyed messages to improve understanding of gender-related issues.
- In the period from August to October 2018, 8 stage plays were performed in 6 towns.
- The project team made a short movie composed of a substantial body of collected reactions, feedback and attitudes of young people discussing gender roles.
- SHR Serbia developed an evaluation tool to measure the project's impact. The project increased knowledge and changed notions of 'others' in terms of genders, ethnicity and cultures.
- The project increased capacity of local NGOs by partnering with them and introducing them to the theatre concept and its methodology in a seminar.

About the Inequality Challenge

The Inequality Challenge supports innovative approaches that tackle inequality and the 'leave no one behind' principle of the 2030 Agenda with the ultimate goal to integrate these approaches into German Development Cooperation's portfolio. Initiated by the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), it supports ten projects in India, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Mongolia, Jordan, Serbia, Nigeria, Mauritania, Brazil and Mexico with up to 100,000 EUR.

GIZ manages the Inequality Challenge. For further information, please visit www.poverty-inequality.com/inequality-challenge-projects or contact Maria Krisch, fundmanagement@giz.de.

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