## EURODIACONIA GUIDELINES ON TACKLING ANTI-GYPSYISM

## Introduction

On 6-7 October 2016, Eurodiaconia held its annual Network Meeting on Roma Inclusion, hosted by the Church of Sweden in Uppsala. The meeting explored the topic of Anti-Gypsyism, which is increasingly recognised as a core obstacle to achieving sustainable societal inclusion for Roma. The term refers to the structural pattern of tacit prejudice, overt discrimination and violence which Roma people are facing across Europe. The aim of the meeting was to explore which role diaconal actors could play in tackling Anti-Gypsyism as churches and service providers. On the basis of the manifold discussions, Eurodiaconia members developed Guidelines on tackling Anti-Gypsyism as diaconia, for internal and external use.

## What works?

* **Changing the narrative**
* Refrain from **victimising Roma**, which can disempower communities and undermine their role as agents of change.
* Monitor and engage with the portrayal of Roma in the media in order to identify and address prejudices and stereotypes. **Promote direct Roma participation in public debates**.
* Strengthen public knowledge about Roma by raising awareness about concrete instances of discrimination against Roma and by giving a voice both to Roma and non-Roma citizens.

Project example: [……..]

* **Conviviality / Living together in diversity**
* **Promote universal human dignity and mutual respect** as a precondition for the development of inclusive societies.
* **Share stories** and use storytelling in both directions. Encourage church communities to bridge the divide between Roma and non-Roma and develop partnerships with (pro-)Roma civil society organisations.
* **Emphasise the value of diversity** as an enrichment of society. Challenge the perception of ‘dominance’ of societal majorities.

Project example: [……..]

* **Promoting Christian values of dignity**
* Challenge the discrimination of Roma within and beyond the church environment through the Gospel message, emphasising the principle that **all human beings were created in God’s image and are therefore equal**.
* Raise awareness about the heterogeneity of Roma culture and emphasise the individuality of its representatives. Avoid painting a monolithic picture of Roma to prevent stereotypes.

Project example: [……..]

* **Empowering Roma communities through responsibility**
* **Promote employment opportunities for Roma** to tackle stereotypes and better enable full societal participation.
* Encourage organisations promoting Roma integration to hire Roma with higher education degrees for managerial positions, according to the principle **“nothing about us without us”**. Roma project managers can serve as positive role models. Moreover, Roma social workers can serve as mediators and improve the relation between Roma communities and public authorities.

Project example: [……..]

* **Promoting knowledge of Roma culture and Roma history**
* Promoteknowledge about Roma culture through conferences, exhibitions, campaigns and in schools.
* Increase public awareness of the systematic segregation, discrimination and persecution which Roma have experienced in the past, and often continue to experience in the present. Emphasise the importance of **learning from the past** in order to avoid repeating it.

Project example: [……..]

* **Encouraging potential**
* **Promote equality in education** to bridge the gap between Roma and non-Roma and to safeguard equal opportunities for children.
* **Invest into capacity-building of stakeholders** such as government bodies, other civil society organisations and churches working with Roma people to ensure they’re addressing existing needs sensibly and effectively

Project example: [……..]

* **Coordinating advocacy action**
* Incorporate a **law enforcement** angle into advocacy by systematically reporting abuses against Roma by law enforcement officials.
* Monitor relevant policies and provide critical input, for example through shadow reporting on the situation of Roma in local and/or national contexts.
* **Identify and engage relevant stakeholders**. Establishing alliances with other actors involved in Roma inclusion and human rights promotion is important to achieve greater advocacy impact.

Project example: [……..]