

Sussex research project to improve access to higher education for Roma

On 8th April - the 15th annual International Roma Day - the Department of Education at the University of Sussex announces a new three-year research project focused on the Roma community's opportunities and access to higher education in the context of internationalization.

The project, which focuses on capacity-building alongside research, will include reciprocal international secondments between the partners, with a group of Roma early stage researchers from eastern and central European countries to visit Sussex in June for participation in a programme of advanced research training organised by the Sussex Doctoral School.

Funded by Horizon 2020 Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions and led by the Director of the Centre for Higher Education and Equity Research, Professor Louise Morley, the Sussex team will work with partners Professor Nafsika Alexiadou from Umea University, Sweden, and Dr Maria-Teresa Padilla-Carmona from the University of Seville, Spain, alongside the Roma Education Fund in Budapest.

Director of Roma Education Fund, Judit Szira, said:

“It is crucial that the work we do to address the serious gap in access to education for Roma children and young people is underpinned by evidence from academic research. Working on this project allows us all to learn from each other to work towards a future in which Roma children and young people are fully included and able to benefit from the opportunities of higher education.”

Describing the project, Professor Louise Morley said:

“The HEIM (Higher Education Internationalisation and Mobility: Inclusion, Equalities and Innovations) project addresses how the Roma Community, a transnational group who are amongst the most excluded people within Europe, interacts with opportunity

structures in higher education. It will examine policies, practices and interventions for participation, produce journal articles and policy briefs, training materials, guidelines and resources and build research capacity.”

International Roma Day celebrates Roma culture, as well as highlighting the persecution and discrimination experienced by Europe’s largest and most marginalised minority. Currently, 70-80 per cent of Roma populations have less than a primary school education, and less than one per cent continue on to higher education.

The interdisciplinary team from the University of Sussex includes CHEER members Professor John Pryor, Dr Barbara Coussaard and Dr Tamsin Hinton-Smith (Education); Dr Alison Phipps (Sociology), and Paul Roberts (Doctoral School), as well as PhD researchers Tanja Jovanovic, Emily Danvers and Koroush Kouchakour.