

Romanian and Roma Cultural Webinar

**MODERN
SLAVERY**
**ORGANISED
IMMIGRATION
CRIME**



Introductions/background to project

- MSOICU
- Guest speakers:
 - DC Simona Zetu, Staffordshire Police
 - Lia Husarciuc, Social Services and Criminal Justice Liaison, IJM
 - Dr. Alina Dolea, Associate Professor in Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy, Deputy Head of Department in Humanities & Law, Bournemouth University
- Reasoning behind the project
- Methodology
- Handouts
- Next steps



What stereotypes have you heard in relation to the
Romanian and Roma cultures?

(please answer in the chat function)

Romanian and Roma historical background

Dr. Alina Dolea – inferiority complex, distance to power

Romania:

- Dissolution of the Ottoman, Russian and Austria-Hungarian empires
- Late modernization and institutionalisation
- 46% rural population
- Latin culture
- 2nd language
- Fall of communism

Roma:

- Largest ethnic group in Europe
- Originated from Punjab and Rajasthan areas of India 46% rural population
- Nomadic lifestyle
- Embedded discrimination
- WW2 Holocaust

Greetings

DC Simona Zetu

Being able to speak a few phrases will support initial engagement and show an interest in the culture.

- Ce Faci? **Hi, how are you?**
- Numele meu este... - **"My name is..."**
- Cum vă numiți? - **"What is your name?" (formal)**
- Nu trebuie să vă fie frică. - **"You don't need to be scared."**
- Sunteți bine? - **"Are you okay?" (formal)**
- Ești bine? - **"Are you okay?" (informal)**
- Cum te numești? - **"What is your name?" (informal)**

Greetings continued

Lia Husarciuc – etiquette, politeness vs bluntness differences, impact of communism.



- Tone of voice
- Be patient - trust takes time to build. **DC Simona Zetu** – case study
- Use the person's name or more formal context
- Body Language
- Treating the victim with respect; acknowledging the particular context/experience
- Use of interpreters

Key cultural elements

Dr. Alina Dolea

Romania:

- Language
- Orthodox religion
- Family ties
- Hospitality, music and dance



Roma:

- Family at the core
- Language
- Storytelling, music and crafts/trades
- Resilience
- Portraying of wealth

Main reasons for migration

Dr. Alina Dolea

- Economic but more complex
- Abandonment and rejection, corruption and bribery
- Discrimination and social exclusion
- Blame of migrants
- Migration as the last resort; feeling of shame.
- Migrants returning to Romania
- Stigmatisation of Roma and women
- Media images

Taboo subjects

DC Simona Zetu

- A distinction between Romanians and Roma
- Domestic abuse and alcohol consumption
- The LGBTQ+ plus community
- Those working in the sex industry; sexual exploitation as shameful, labour exploitation as a trade
- Mental health issues and those with disabilities
- Roma and health issues

[The Struggle for Survival of the Roma People: Europe's Most Hated – YouTube](#)

Family structure/gender dynamics

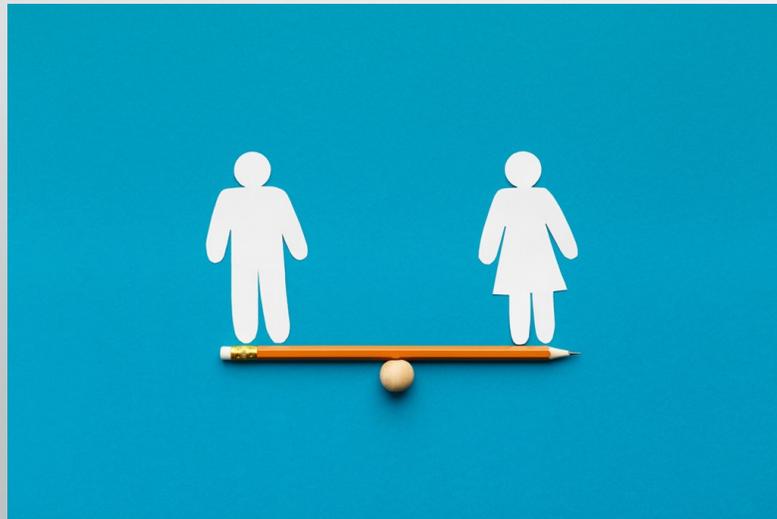
Lia Husarciuc

Romania:

- Patriarchal, heavily imbedded in religious values.
- Men are seen as the pillar of the family.
- Urban and rural area differences
- Parents and children as the family nucleus.
- Extended family

Roma:

- Very hierarchical
- Male dominance
- Role of females
- Close-knit, often large families
- Extended family – need to check relationships*
- Influence of religion
- Marrying young**
- Family ties



Education/career prospects

Lia Husarciuc

Romania:

- Pathway to better opportunities
- A mark of prestige
- Opportunities for women
- Rural areas



Roma:

- Stigmatisation and discrimination –
- Time spent in school as a threat on family time
- Higher rates of unemployment
- Prioritisation of immediate economic needs and family time
- Withdraw as children reach puberty.
- Sex education

Religion

DC Simona Zetu

- The Eastern Orthodox Church as a strong influence.
- Others identify but not regularly attend place of worship.
- Religious groups generally coexist peacefully.
- Easter (Pasti) - scheduling of interviewing for investigation
- Christmas (Crăciun)
- Saint Nicholas' Day (Sfântul Nicolae)
- Epiphany (Boboteaza) - January 7th
- St George's Day (Sfântul Gheorghe) April 23rd
- Mother's Day March 8th
- Nate December 21 - Case study
- A civil marriage ceremony required
- Roma religious beliefs vary

Food

DC Simona Zetu



- Fasting prior to Easter and Christmas.
- Diverse and hearty cuisine:
 - sarmale (cabbage rolls stuffed with meat, rice and spices, eaten at Easter and Christmas),
 - mămăligă (a polenta-like dish)
 - mititei (grilled meat rolls eaten at outside gatherings)
 - cozonac (a sweet bread with walnuts, poppy seeds and Turkish delight, baked during Easter and Christmas).
- Roma taboo of sitting on a dining table; upper and lower body separation. Refraining from food prep during cycle

Interaction with authority

- Overall respect for authority but fear a factor. **Dr Alina Dolea**
- Trust in institutions varies – **Dr Alina Dolea**
- Roma communities - complex relationship with authority; history of discrimination and social exclusion, interactions marked by mistrust and fear. - **Dr Alina Dolea**
- A kris or court to resolve conflict - **DC Simona Zetu**
- Trust in law enforcement authorities is low – Communist era - **DC Simona Zetu**
- NGO's – lack of victim services in Romania, can be lack of trust - **Lia Husarciuc**

Do's & Don'ts

Do's	Don'ts
Be respectful and patient DC Simona Zetu	Stereotype Dr Alina Dolea
Offer continued reassurance their safety is of utmost concern DC Simona Zetu	Make assumptions Dr Alina Dolea
Keep language simple, be aware of potential learning difficulties DC Simona Zetu	Overlook non-verbal communication Dr Alina Dolea
Be empathetic of their situation - Dr Alina Dolea	Use victim terminology – Dr Alina Dolea
Explain that differences exist between the Romanian and British systems, to attempt to alleviate fear and mistrust – Lia Husarciuc	Use jokes – can be taken as mocking them, taps into this complex of inferiority that is common to both Roma and Romanians – Dr Alina Dolea
Explain they have rights - Lia Husarciuc	
Compliment their culture - Lia Husarciuc	

- Gain as many address and contact details for victim; these can be different to those on ID documents. Mobile phone numbers are also changed regularly in an attempt to reduce costs. [Lia Husarciuc](#)



Thank you for listening

Q&A Session