

Roma integration and evidence-based policy-making (RIEP)

Exploring how community-based academic research can feed into evidence-based practice and policy-making.

To be held on Thursday, June 26th 2014 at the Romanian Cultural Centre, 1, Belgrave Square, London. W1H 6EQ. (nearest tube: Oxford Street/Bond Street). 10am – 5pm.

This event is led by Dr. Annabel Tremlett of the University of Portsmouth. For further information please contact Annabel: annabel.tremlett@port.ac.uk

Programme

Roma integration and evidence-based policy-making (RIEP) is a unique opportunity for a focused dialogue between researchers and professionals from different knowledge areas to progress understanding of effective evidence-based practice and policy-making.

10am: Welcome and introductions

10.15am – 11.15am: The challenges of researching Roma minorities and evidence-based practice.

Dr Annabel Tremlett (University of Portsmouth)

Dr Jon Fox (University of Bristol)

Violeta Vajda (University of Sussex and Institute of Development Studies)

11.15am: Tea & coffee break

11.30am: Dr Viktor Leggio (University of Manchester) will introduce the research carried out on MigRom, an extensive European-funded research project on Romanian Roma and their recent migration routes and experiences in the UK (the MigRom project is led by Professor Yaron Matras, further details can be read on the website:

<http://romani.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/migrom/>)

12.15pm – 1.30pm: Lunch (we will eat together at a local restaurant – this is funded)

1.30pm: Round-table: How to use research in effective evidence-based policy-making & practice.

The discussion will be informal and open to all. Delegates are invited to consider the following questions to help stimulate the discussion:

1. How are delegates currently working with policy-makers/how are policy-makers working with community, academia, activists? What can we learn from this?
2. What kind of evidence do you (policymakers/practitioners) need/want for 'evidence-based' policymaking? (more broadly, what counts as 'evidence'?)

3. When is it useful to focus policy on 'the Roma'? Or when should we consider directing our attention to other groups defined in terms of their socio-economic position, immigration status, or in other ways?
4. What UK experience of working with Travellers/Gypsies is now being utilised for new Roma migrants? What are the challenges, pitfalls and successes?
5. Who are Roma migrants' allies in the UK (e.g. churches, artists, theatre groups, other minority or social movements, support networks...). Are there any good examples we can learn from?

3 pm: Tea & coffee break

3.15pm-5pm: Discussion – steps forward & future collaborations.

Background to the event

Aim & objectives: The event will showcase good research practice already occurring in the UK to key practitioners and policy-makers. The over-arching aim of the event is to build an understanding of how to effectively use academic research in evidence-based practice and policy-making. The event will be held as a workshop in which research approaches and findings are first presented. We will then move on to discussing the practitioner and third sector experience of working with Roma minorities, which will further bring to light the challenges and gaps in existing policy approaches. This will then lead to a round-table discussion on the potential for using evidence-based approaches, led by policy-makers and stakeholders themselves.

Anticipated outcomes:

- (1) To contribute an academic/policy-making element to an existing exhibition 'From 'Extra' to 'Ordinary'' running at the Romanian Cultural Centre (from June 19th). The date of the meeting also coincides with Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month in the UK.
- (2) To make policy-makers aware of the extent of recent research and knowledge, as well as enabling a deeper understanding of the policy-making process for researchers and practitioners.
- (3) To build connections between academics, practitioners and policy-makers that can lead to collaborations on other projects.
- (4) To consider a working-paper to summarise the discussions of the meeting, that has the potential to turn into an academic paper.

Rationale

The recent post-EU accession migration, including people of Roma heritage, has resulted in a new situation of diversity in UK society. Political debates and media representations have often succumbed to or instigated negative portrayals of these minorities, frequently reverting to old stereotypes of 'Gypsies'. Such discourses have detracted from understanding the contribution that such migration has to UK society, and have left practitioners feeling alone in the challenges that

new, frequently poor and persecuted minorities might have when integrating into a new society. Most importantly, the people at the heart of the debates, from Roma backgrounds, are often left out of discussions, making any attempts at integration strategies meaningless or tokenistic. RIEP aims to highlight the research being currently carried out at the heart of Roma community and family or individual lives to show how academic research can build an understanding of the everyday struggles and successes that Roma people face.

Moving forward: evidence-based practice and policy-making

RIEP is building on connections made at 'Romaphobia and the media' held at King's College London on January 20th 2014, that brought academics, journalists and activists together to discuss recent negative reporting and the damaging political discourse about Roma minorities across Europe¹. RIEP takes this collaboration forward by introducing policy-makers and practitioners to establish what and how we can utilise academic research to create a better outlook for Roma integration. RIEP will be held at the Romanian Cultural Centre in London at the same time as Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month and also an exhibition that will be held at the centre on the everyday lives of Roma minorities, entitled *From 'Extra' to 'Ordinary'* (from June 19th for two weeks). This backdrop provides a stimulating atmosphere for the RIEP event (for more information please visit the Romanian Cultural Centre website: <http://www.romanianculturalcentre.org.uk/rcc-events/2014/06/rcc-presents-the-roma-from-extra-to-ordinary-project/>).

¹ For more information please see:

<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/sspp/departments/education/news/events/events-files/Romaphobia-Jan-20th-2014-FINAL-programme---Ben-Rampton.pdf>

List of delegates

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