

CAPACITY-BUILDING TRAINING FOR SELF-ADVOCACY OF ROMA WOMEN AND GIRLS IN NORTH MACEDONIA

TRAINING REPORT

Skopje, 22 – 25 March 2022



CONTENTS

- 2 About the Capacity-Building Training for Self-Advocacy
- 3 Core principles of the design of Capacity-Building Training for Self-Advocacy
- 4 Why OSCE/ODIHR focuses on Roma women?
- 4 Training agenda
- 6 Trainers and Participants
- 6 Trainer profiles
- 6 Participant profiles
- 7 Participants' expectations
- 9 Overall outcomes of the training and evaluation
- 12 Participants' pre- and post- training self-assessment highlights
- 13 Participant evaluation
- 16 Conclusions and recommendations

ABOUT THE CAPACITY-BUILDING TRAINING FOR SELF-ADVOCACY

ODIHR held a four-day Capacity-Building Training on Self-Advocacy for Roma Girls, Women and Feminist Activists from North Macedonia on March 22 – 25, 2022. The training was conceptualized as **innovative** because: a) it borrowed from the disability movement to address discrimination in a broader context and by women from different groups; and b) it sought to empower individual women and build solidarity among them through a shared learning process and shared experiences.

In the context of this training, self-advocacy was understood as **a woman's ability to speak up for herself and other women facing similar issues**, which are not visible enough or not urgent enough for policy and decision-making. Whereas the training in Skopje specifically targeted Roma girls, women and feminist activists, the capacity-building for self-advocates training is available in adaptations for other groups of under-represented women in other OSCE participating States. The capacity-building training for self-advocacy seeks to:

- 1 Promote, expand and protect civic space across all domains, including online to support the efforts of women to eliminate barriers to feminist action in all its diversity;
- 2 Increase the meaningful participation, leadership and decision-making power of Roma girls, women, and feminist activists through building self-advocacy skills, including self-awareness, own and group needs and interests to be equally involved in public life and decision-making processes;
- 3 Build capacities of Roma women for dialogue with governments; and share effective and innovative strategies to address gender stereotypes;
- 4 Enhance the capacities and empower Roma women in mainstreaming Roma gender equality within Roma communities and beyond.



Capacity-building for self-advocacy training participants, trainers, and OSCE/ODIHR staff members

CORE PRINCIPLES OF THE DESIGN OF CAPACITY-BUILDING TRAINING FOR SELF-ADVOCACY

- We, the course trainers and participants, acknowledge that women's empowerment is multi-dimensional and context specific. We reflect this reality in the training design.
- We draw upon effective practice and specialist knowledge from within the OSCE and beyond, building on constructive solutions and trying new and innovative approaches.¹
- We use evidence and data to make decisions – both during the programme and when planning.
- We pursue an inclusive, intersectional approach, placing a particular emphasis on the rights of women from under-represented groups and/or women in politics.
- We hold ourselves accountable.
- We strive to do no harm.

¹ Some of the materials contained in the toolkit draw directly on effective practice shared by organisations. Specifically, some exercises and approaches by Just Associates (JASS), International Women's Development Agency (IWDA), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Protection International and UN Women have been adapted and included as part of the I-CHANGE CBT programme.



Why OSCE/ODIHR focuses on Roma women?

The 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality sets out OSCE priorities in promoting gender equality in the Organization and in all 57 participating States. The Action Plan mandates ODIHR to “assist participating States in promoting women’s political participation” and “assist in the development and implementation of specific programmes and activities to promote women’s rights, to increase the role of women at all levels of decision-making, and to promote equality between women and men throughout the OSCE area, particularly through education in gender awareness”². The OSCE Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area (2003)³, acknowledges the particular situation of Roma and Sinti women; calls for women’s participation in consultative policy-making processes; systematic mainstreaming of Roma women’s issues; providing Roma and Sinti girls with equal opportunities for education and social inclusion; and urges for promoting women’s participation in public and political life.

Also, OSCE Ministerial Council Decision 4/2013 calls for active measures to support the empowerment of Roma and Sinti women, including by promoting their participation in public and political life. At the same time, it also calls for effective and equal participation of Roma and Sinti women in public and political life, including through the promotion of women’s access to public office⁴, public administration and decision-making positions.



TRAINING AGENDA

Monday, March 21, 2022

Arrival to Skopje of participants from outside the capital who are staying at the Hotel

Tuesday, March 22, 2022

09:00 – 10:00

Arrival of participants and Antigen testing

10:00 – 11:30

Welcome, Training opening, introductions of participants

Pre-Training self-assessment, and overview of the programme and the Training objectives and the OSCE/ODIHR context for the training

Sanja Nikolin, Project Officer, ODIHR

Beata Bislim Olahova, Adviser on Roma and Sinti Issues, Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues, ODIHR

Tatjana Stoimenovska, Senior Programme Assistant, Human Dimension Department, OSCE – Mission to Skopje

Justyna Szarwacka, Administrative Assistant, ODIHR

Kate Walker, trainer, ODIHR consultant

Alexandra Raykova, trainer, ODIHR consultant

TRAINING DAY 1

² Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, The 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, Sofia, 7 December 2004, available at: <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/7/d/23295.pdf>

³ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, OSCE Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area, Maastricht, the Netherlands, 2 December 2003, available at: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/17554>

⁴ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Ministerial Council Decision no.4/13 Enhancing OSCE efforts to implement the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti Within the OSCE Area, with a particular focus on Roma and Sinti women, youth and children, Kyiv, 6 December 2013, available at: <https://www.osce.org/mc/109340>

- 11:30 – 11:50** Coffee/tea break
- 11:50 – 13:00** Participant's expectations, needs and self-advocacy issues
- 13:00 – 14:00** Lunch break
- 14:00 – 15:30** Role models and participants' positions
- 15:30 – 15:50** Coffee/tea break
- 15:50 – 17:15** The role of mentors
- 17:15 – 17:30** Wrap up Day 1

Wednesday, March 23, 2022

TRAINING DAY 2

- 09:00 – 09:15** Recap of Training day 1
- 09:15 – 10:45** Exploring different sources of power
- 10:45 – 11:05** Coffee/tea break
- 11:05 – 12:30** The concepts of 'power' and 'powerlessness'
- 12:30 – 13:30** Lunch break
- 13:30 – 15:00** Transforming 'power over' to 'power to'
- 15:00 – 15:20** Coffee/tea break
- 15:20 - 16:45** What is an empowered woman?
- 16:45 – 17:00** Wrap up Day 2

Thursday, March 24, 2022

TRAINING DAY 3

- 09:00 – 09:15** Recap Day 2
- 09:15 – 10:45** Building alliances for self-advocacy
- 10:45 – 11:05** Coffee/tea break
- 11:05 – 12:30** Traversing from problems to solutions in self-advocacy
- 12:30 – 13:30** Lunch Break
- 13:30 – 15:00** Prioritizing self-advocacy activities in participants' contexts
- 15:00 – 15:20** Coffee/tea break
- 15:20 – 16:45** Methods and activities for self-advocacy
- 16:45 – 17:00** Wrap up Day 3

Friday, March 25, 2022

TRAINING DAY 4

- 09:00 – 09:15** Recap Day 3
- 09:15 – 10:45** The why and how of the dialogue process in self-advocacy
- 10:45 – 11:05** Coffee/tea break
- 11:05 – 12:30** How to deal with supporters, the apathetic and opponents to participants' self-advocacy issues
- 12:30 – 14:00** Follow-up, post-training self-assessment, training evaluation and closing certificate ceremony
- 14:00 – 15:00** Lunch
- 15:00** Departure of participants.

TRAINERS AND PARTICIPANTS

Trainers' profiles

The self-advocacy training of Roma women and girls in North Macedonia trainers were Kate Walker and Alexandra Raykova.



KATE WALKER has been working in education and training since 2009. She mostly designs and delivers training programmes for female activists, diplomats and civil servants to support participation in decision-making processes. To date, Kate has worked with women from more than 45 countries. Among other experiences, she has created and delivered training on behalf of the Ban Ki Moon Centre for Global Citizens for 95 young women. Participants have since implemented projects in their communities in support of the Sustainable Development Goals.



ALEXANDRA RAYKOVA has 25 years of experience in working as a trainer and with Roma on a daily basis. She has also participated in policymaking processes for Roma and Roma youth issues, from local to European levels. Among other experiences, Alexandra has also been a director of a local youth non-governmental organization (NGO) and president of an international one - the Forum of European Roma Young People. Since 1997, she has worked mostly on diversity and inclusion, participation, human rights, generic youth work and organizational management issues, training trainers, etc. Alexandra has implemented numerous training sessions with the Council of Europe, SALTO, National Agencies of the Youth in Action program and various other international and local NGOs. She is a part of the Roma community and lives in Bulgaria.

Participants' profiles

The Call for Applications included the following eligibility requirements:

- Roma girls, women, and feminist activists who are actively working/volunteering in organizations on Roma issues;
- Young gender activists who are interested to enhance their skills to work on gender equality;
- Motivated and willing to initiate follow-up activities in their home/local communities and organizations;
- Aged between 18 and 35 years;
- Able to attend the session for its full duration.

Participants' bios are included in the Self-Advocacy Training Handbook.

The **participant selection** resulted in the selection of the cohort of 13 women:

- Nine of them were aged 18-22, and two from 23 – 27 and 28+ respectively;
- Seven participants were from Skopje's Shuto Orizari municipality and 6 from other cities in North Macedonia: Bitola, Kavadarci and Berovo;
- Five participants graduated from or are currently attending higher education, and eight participants completed secondary education;
- Some participants were mothers and/or married, while others were not;
- Diversity in terms of previous experience in training and advocacy activities;
- Also, the group included one mentor, or an experienced Roma activist.

This age, education, experience and geographic coverage mix proved fruitful and stimulating, and it is recommended to follow a similar group composition in future trainings. The training content delivery can also be adjusted to a more diverse educational mix of participants. A small total number of participants (13) allowed for intense interactions, both through individual and group work. It is worth noting that the participants had a preference for small group work because it provided a sense of safety, solidarity and encouragement, while still allowing for individual contributions and expression of diversity of opinions and experiences.

Participants' expectations

Based on general training design described in the trainers' handbook, trainers constructed a programme tailored to the criteria and the participants' profiles. It was centered on one theme per day: **voice, power, strategies and empowerment**. At the outset, the trainers led the participants through an exercise to gauge their expectations, fears and what they could contribute. Responses are captured below.

Word cloud 1, What the participants hope to gain from training



Word cloud 2, What the participants hope to avoid during training in one word

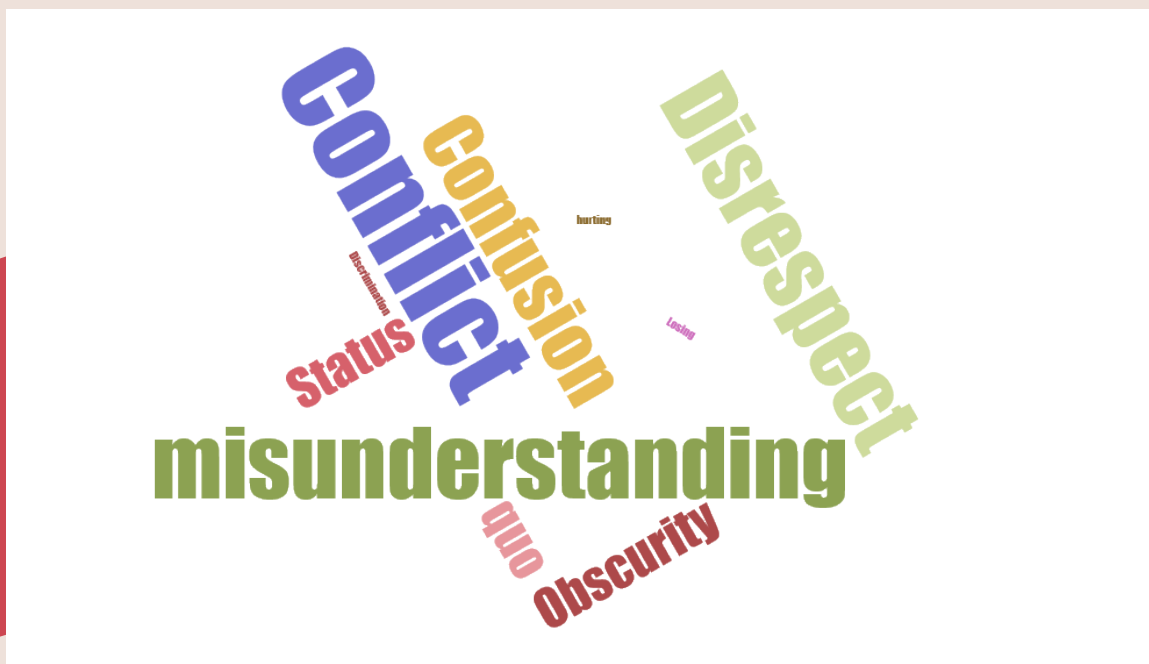


Table 1

What the participants can contribute to the training

Number of mentions

previous personal experiences and the experiences faced by other Roma women	8
real life examples	3
my own knowledge and expertise	3
help and support	2
ideas and arguments	2
opinions	2
successes by Roma women and their engagement	1
active listening	1
open mindset	1
communication skills	1
capacity for self-advocacy in the area of women’s human rights	1
commitment to my community so that I can fight together with everyone else for equal rights of Roma people	1



OVERALL OUTCOMES OF THE TRAINING AND EVALUATION



ODIHR captured the immediate training outcomes in three different ways: 1. pre- and post-training self-assessment forms that were filled in by the participants before training and immediately after training; 2. training evaluation form at the end of the training; and 3. daily participatory rapid assessments and informal feedback from both trainers and participants.

Based on all three types of verification, the training has been successful in achieving the key training objectives and key learning outcomes presented in the Table below.

Table 2 Level of achievement of training objectives and key	Status
Objective 1 To familiarize the participants with the concept of power, different types of power and gender power relations.	Fully achieved
Key learning outcomes	
Compare different types of power and outline the ways in which gender influences the distribution of power in participants' contexts.	Fully achieved
Identify current resources, risks, barriers, and opportunities with regards to encountering power, both for themselves as individuals and participants' community/ies.	Fully achieved
Describe what women's empowerment means in participants' contexts and provide indicators of what it might look like.	Fully achieved
Objective 2 To acquire knowledge and skills for self-advocacy.	Fully achieved
Key learning outcomes	
Identify and summarise the key components of self-advocacy.	Fully achieved
Recognize participants' own personal characteristics and explain what role these characteristics play in alliance-building.	Fully achieved
Identify and summarize the key components of the dialogue process.	Fully achieved
Apply the principles of the dialogue process as a tool to host inclusive conversations about acute problems facing self-advocates.	Mostly achieved
Objective 3 Participants have identified areas for future self-advocacy work.	Mostly achieved
Key learning outcomes	
Develop and define a self-advocacy aim and undertake self-advocacy steps.	Mostly achieved
Identify any areas of synergy among themselves and other participants and call upon the network formed for future support.	Fully achieved

The training objectives and key learning outcomes were for the most part 'fully achieved' (two out of three training objectives and seven out of nine key learning outcomes). One training objective and two learning outcomes were marked as 'mostly achieved'. This mark pertains to training areas that need to be strengthened in design, so that the learning outcomes are reinforced and more directly addressed, based on ODIHR staff and trainers' observation of training delivery and how participants responded to training content. The specific remedies and improvements proposed are listed in the section titled Conclusions, under point 2. Room for improvement of training design and tailoring of curriculum to different groups of under-represented women.

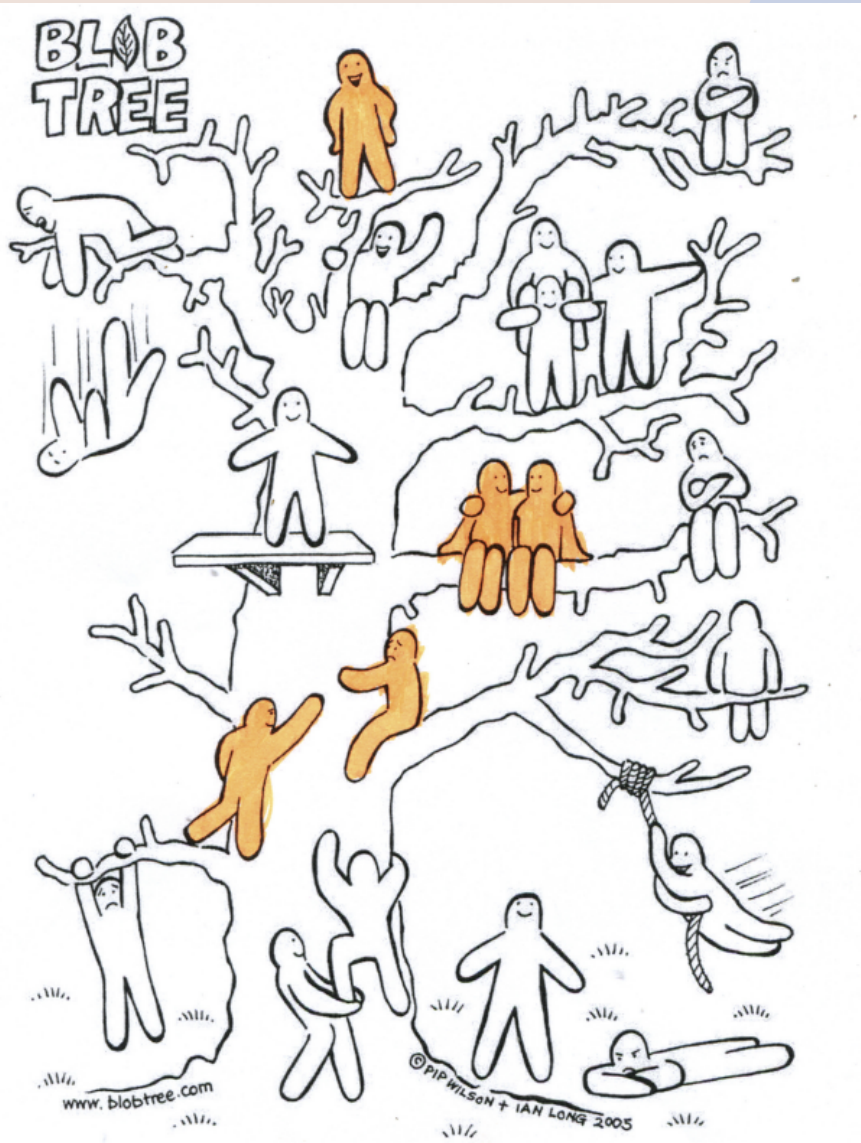
Based on trainers' observations and formative activities, the participants' expectations for the programme and capacities to contribute were largely accommodated. In particular:

- A positive atmosphere was established during the training and participants felt comfortable and safe to work on self-advocacy issues;
- Participants have a common understanding of the training background and principles;
- Participants are informed about the key elements of the self-advocacy process and can put it into practice;
- Participants are prepared to act as self-advocates, have concrete ideas for action, and will follow-up with implementation.

The trainers conducted informal evaluations every day. For instance, on Day 1, they asked all participants for one word to describe their day. All words were positive, and examples included 'magical', 'energy', 'inspiring', and 'fun'. On Day 3, the trainers used “The Tree of Blobs⁵” to ascertain participants’ feelings. At this point, the participants were fatigued; some also felt unwell or homesick.

Nevertheless, as the example presented below illustrates, a consistent theme in the Tree of Blobs was a sense of togetherness. On Day 4, participants reflected on the additional skills they felt they needed. These mostly focused on communication skills – a factor reflected in the programme redesign based on the pilot.

Example of participant’s “Tree of Blobs” showing feelings at the end of Day 3.



⁵The tree represents a setting, such as a group of participants in training, members in a community, a group, or an organization, and the blobs represent different emotions and feelings. Trainers can use this as a self-reflection tool for the participants by getting them to observe the blob characters on the tree and select which one expresses how they currently feel. The Tree of Blobs was designed by Pip Wilson, a behavioural psychologist. The blob tree includes a number of “treemen” all of whom express a broad range of emotions and feelings – but without words. In the example presented, emotions of togetherness, support and feeling good are evident. The test can also be conducted in two parts. First, participants can be asked to find the blob-figure that resembles them the most at the moment; after that, they can be asked to find one that they would like to resemble. Other ways in which the Tree of Blob can be used include different questions: 1: ... do you feel like

when presenting in public? 2:.... is most like your mother/father? 3: ...is most like your leader? 4:.... is when you get angry? 5:.... is when someone points out your mistakes? 6... is the Blob you’ve never been?

Participants' pre- and post- training self-assessment highlights

According to the pre- and post- training self-assessment comparison, all participants improved their knowledge, capacities and skills for self- advocacy as a result of the training. Most notably, all participants stated that they **now know how to do self-advocacy**. This is an **improvement of 31% against the baseline result for the group** and it confirms usefulness of the practical and interactive orientation of the training.

Six out of thirteen participants (**46% of the group**) emphasized newly acquired knowledge and skills regarding **strategies to use when people try to 'put them in a box of stereotypes'**, whereas seven already knew how to address this issue. Thirdly, training participants' **awareness of the resources available for self-**

advocates increased by 31%. This is a very important advancement because self-advocates often need to rely on their communities and peer support networks and awareness of resources at hand is key. Beyond individual change, the training contributed to **solidarity between** participating girls and women.

Improvements were also noted with regards to the skillset contributing to change-making; positive self-identification as feminists; taking public stand for women from other under-represented groups; and awareness of the different types of power (15% respectively).

During the training, participants explored and pursued four specific (self-)advocacy ideas as a group and generated the following objectives statements:

1. As of 2023, two additional Roma students enroll at the Medical School in North Macedonia every year
2. Encouraging Roma women to report violence and provision of direct support.
3. A gynaecologist to start working at the medical facility in Shuto Orizari in the period 2022-2023 and Roma nurse to be employed
4. To assist 10% of uneducated and unemployed Roma women in the Bair Bitola Roma settlement to complete primary education and rapid courses for skills/qualifications.

These statements indicate that participants are ambitious vis-à-vis planned advocacy work. However, the self-advocacy nature of projects is less clear as the participants are still deciding on the way forward. The issue of safety came up in this context and a need to provide more concrete guidance on how self-advocacy is distinct from other forms of advocacy was revealed.

Participants referred to the following self-advocacy objectives:

- Fight against discrimination, fight for a better future and for myself and all Roma women
- Never stop fighting! If not now, when?
- Not just let others do the advocacy for me.
- To improve myself and then to help other people.
- To contribute to positive changes.
- I am still defining one.
- I need to digest what I've learned during training to be able to define one objective.
- I am here to define one.
- To improve the wellbeing of my community.
- To resolve the issues that the community is facing (specifically with regards to sexual and reproductive health).
- To be familiar with women's rights and to help Roma women.
- To express my objective and what I strongly desire and to independently fight for my rights and my community, regardless of the response from 'the other side', and also to point out how useful that will be for all.

PARTICIPANTS' EVALUATION

The training evaluation provides evidence that the training **contributed to an increase in participants' interest in gender equality and self-advocacy** as shown in the table

Table 3, Before and after average scores for interest in gender equality and self-advocacy

Before this training, how interested are you in gender equality?	4,38
After the training, how interested are you in gender equality?	4,92
Before the training, how interested are you in self-advocacy?	4,33
After the training, how interested are you in self-advocacy?	4,77

At the end of the training, all 13 participants positively responded to the question “Do you see yourself as an advocate for Roma rights?” and 12 out of 13 participants said ‘yes’ to the question “Do you see yourself as an advocate for women’s rights?”

This training was designed as individual level change training. The table below confirms that the participants **primarily noted individual gains and described⁶ the training as ‘useful’ and ‘motivating’ for them personally, but also highly ‘inspiring’ and ‘relevant’**. When asked to pick from the same multiple choice options regarding professional level, ‘motivating’ came on top, followed by ‘useful’, ‘inspiring’ and ‘relevant’.

Table 4, Attributes of the training from a personal and professional perspective

Personal vs. professional	Number of picks in a multiple choice question
For you personally, the Training was	Useful 12 Motivating 11 Inspiring 8 Relevant 3
For you professionally, the training was	Motivating 8 Useful 7 Inspiring 5 Relevant 5

The participants were further asked to evaluate different aspects of the training, including trainers, training content, other participants, and alignment with expectations. A standard rating scale from 1 to 5, with 1 as the lowest and 5 as the highest grade was applied. The participants rated all aspects very highly in the ranges from 4,69 to 5. In addition, the participants unanimously agreed that the co-trainers worked well together, that the length of the training was adequate, and that they would attend a follow-up session in the future.

⁶ Based on a multiple choice, with ‘other’ or none of the above also offered

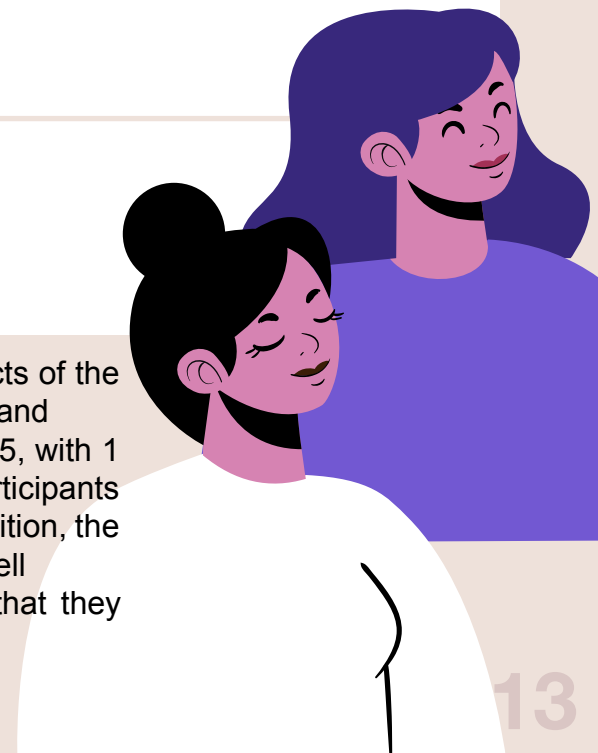


Table 5, Participants' average rating for different aspects of the training

The Co-Trainer, Kate Walker was knowledgeable and well prepared.	5,00
The Co-Trainer, Alexandra Raykova was knowledgeable and well prepared.	5,00
The Co-Trainers Kate Walker and Alexandra Raykova worked well together and complemented each other.	100% of answers 'Yes'
The training content was new and clearly presented.	4,84
The other participants provided valuable contributions to training.	4,69
Would you attend a follow-up session in the future?	100% of answers 'Yes'
Overall the training met my expectations	4,91
The length of the training was	100% of answers 'just right'

All other aspects of the training were also rated highly as shown in Table 6. The only score under 5 (without decimal points) pertains to availability of time off to talk to other participants. Indeed, this four-day long training is very intense but also highly interactive. This could be the reason why the score for this category is as high as it is and not lower. In future training, however, it is advised to leave more time during the lunch break on training Day 3 and work later in the afternoon, or to start later, in order to change the pattern and allow the participants more time for informal activities.

Table 6, Participants' rating of training support services and availability of networking time

Please rate the following aspects of training	Average grade on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 lowest, 5 highest)
Logistics	4,75
Hotel accommodation	5,00
Food	4,90
Interpretation services	4,72
Availability of time off to talk to other participants informally	4,41

In an open-ended reflection on the training overall, the participants noted:

- This is one of the best courses I have attended, exceptional quality trainers, very effective group, super organization
- I feel inspired and I gained certain level of knowledge and skills. However, I think that bigger and direct support is needed for Roma women and Roma women activism.
- I feel great, and also sad that we have to leave. I do hope we will be able to meet at a similar training
- Motivated, fulfilled
- Courageous
- Everything was great and I hope we will be able to meet and spend time together again
- Fulfilled, courageous, happy

The participants provided the following responses to the question regarding their first step after the training:

- To transfer the newly acquired knowledge to my community;
- I will transfer this knowledge in my environment and the NGO I work for;
- Using power within and power with, as example in working with new people;
- To encourage Roma women;
- To share what I have learnt and start thinking about self-advocacy
- I will do self-advocacy
- I will continue doing self-advocacy
- I will try to realize my idea for a project
- To communicate and learn Romani language
- To use what I learned in my work

Table 7 presents an overview of the three most important takeaways from the training, and an overview of how the participants described what they felt at the end of the training.

Table 7, Overview of the three most important takeaways and feeling after training

The three most important things that I've learnt from this training are	At the end of the training, in one word, I feel
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fight, Courage, Communication • The power of the individual in society • Listen to others with a similar problem. • Self-advocacy, resolving problems of Roma women, having power and examples for the future of the youth. • Pointing to the knowledge one has and advancing that knowledge. • Cooperation, friendship, new skills, more knowledge. • It encouraged and motivated me, advocacy. • Importance of self-knowledge, advocacy and power of being vocal and making changes. • Advocacy at least at medium level • Power/disempowerment; empowered woman; models. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Magical • Excellent • Wonderful and I love you all! • Grateful • Fantastic • Happy • Encouraged • Fulfilled • Happy • Grateful • Thank you for selecting me for the training

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Training model design and curriculum were piloted successfully. The main conclusion is that the training model design for the capacity-building training for self-advocacy, and the curriculum developed are broadly adequate and can be used for self-advocacy training with various groups of women. Based on the daily feedback, participants' pre- and post-training self-assessments and training evaluation, it is concluded that the training objectives and key learning outcomes have been achieved, and that the participants felt safe, empowered, and in solidarity with each other. OSCE/ODIHR and the trainers conclude that the four-part programme flow was logical, and the methods selected from the curriculum and used with this group were appropriate.

The training curriculum has different sections with a variety of methods. Although the core elements will remain the same for different courses, the trainers using them in future should have the capability to compose their own training programme by choosing the elements a-la-carte in accordance with the profile of their participants, context of their training and specific objectives set for the training.

2. Room for improvement of training design and tailoring of curriculum to different groups of under-represented women. Although the design was piloted successfully, the training curriculum needs to be revised to integrate:

- Clearer initial introduction to a self-advocacy model.
- A greater variety of concrete examples of self-advocacy, ideally from the participants' contexts.
- An even stronger focus on self-advocacy skills development.
- A stronger emphasis on safety of self-advocates and ways in which self-advocates' and HRD networks can help to ensure mutual safety in community and in the broader context.
- Designing and introducing possible follow-up support measures (even if informal) or as peer exchange networks.
- There is a need to promote successful Roma women, including Roma and other feminist self-advocates. There is very little readily available information in this regard in North Macedonia. One of the ways to strengthen the position of human rights defenders and self-advocates is to make their stories of success more broadly available. For example, the quotes from training participants published on ODIHR social media have generated significant interest and engagement and it is important to build on this interest.

As post-training follow up, OSCE/ODIHR and the trainers will attend to the above concerns in the programme fine-tuning. This will include the following varieties of the core training adjusted to different target groups and countries:

- a. redesign of the capacity-building training for self-advocacy targeting under-represented women in North Macedonia, including Roma women and girls, women and girls with disabilities and other under-represented groups;
- b. redesign adjusted to under-represented women in male-dominated environments, especially at decision-making level (e.g., justice and/or security sector); and
- c. under-represented women in other country contexts (such as Cyprus, Georgia, Poland and Uzbekistan).

3. Some of the training methods should be improved in parts. For example:

- “The good women vs. bad women” exercise when reviewing the participants’ choices. The participants were asked to reflect on a set of given characteristics and behaviours, and to assign them to what their community would consider as a “good” or “bad” woman. Each woman was given the same set of 16 characteristics. While this had the benefit of highlighting commonalities and some differences, it also took time to compile the findings. Participants were highly engaged and different groups provided valuable inputs, but the time allocated to this activity did not allow for a thorough wrap-up. Specifically, there was limited scope to discuss the influence of gender norms, stereotypes, gender regimes and patriarchal hierarchies on the position of women of different ages and backgrounds, and how these changing norms can and do have a strong - often negative - influence on the wellbeing of women and girls, and the entire community. For example, the particularly vulnerable position of young Roma women was touched upon but not sufficiently addressed during the exercise. In future training events, more time should be set aside for a guided discussion and trainer’s summative input. In addition, trainers might consider different ways to compile the results. For instance, rather than pulling each characteristic out of the box turn-by-turn, they might set up two flipcharts - one for “good” and one for “bad” women - and ask participants to post their contributions.

- “Methods and activities” should introduce additional practical examples, case studies and methods for self-advocacy used.

As a result of the pilot training, ODIHR will develop a collection of self-advocacy examples and self-advocates’ bios to be used in future trainings for different groups of women from under-represented groups. These examples were contributed spontaneously by ODIHR staff and trainers and they triggered a very positive reaction from the participants. Seeing that other women just like them have succeeded and knowing what methods they used and how inspires confidence and motivates the participants. Furthermore, real-world examples provide clarity around how self-advocacy differs from other forms of advocacy work. ODIHR will maintain contact with the training participants and encourage sharing of their own examples of application of new knowledge and skills. Under an ideal scenario, the training participants will become case study examples enriching the pool of methods for self-advocacy out of their own practice of self-advocacy in different contexts.

- The final day should conclude with the showcasing of a concrete skill developed during the course.

In the pilot training agenda, the last training day concludes with ways to deal with supporters, the

apathetic and opponents to participants' self-advocacy issues. It is followed by the issuance of training certificates and participants post-training assessment and training evaluation. In the redesign, the last segment ought to focus on showcasing of a skill developed during the training. Illustrative examples include: applying the principles of the dialogue process, laying out a plan to use transformative power for a self-advocacy cause, putting a personal characteristic/strength to use for alliance-building, presenting a self-advocacy objective, or standing up for other under-represented women in a similar position.

4. Duration of the training is optimal. Overall, the length of the training as implemented (4 days) was optimal. However, participants and trainers flagged a need for a shorter working day or a longer break on Day 3 to combat a dip in energy specific to that day and to maximize efficiency and participation.

5. Potential for post-training follow up. There is significant potential for follow-up initiatives with this group: further training on (self-) advocacy skills development, mentoring support for their initiatives and project ideas' implementation, peer-to-peer education and/or multiplication of their knowledge and experience on the theme.

6. The selection of participants proved effective, and it is recommended to retain the “mentor” role. However, such participants need to be chosen with care to ensure their presence supports rather than hinders the group. In addition, the earlier provision of the participant profiles would support the tailoring of the programme. The training is likely to have an even stronger impact on under-represented women who are new entrants to activism.

7. The OSCE⁷ / ODIHR⁸ team's value-added during activities and exercises was recognized by trainers and participants. The specific roles for the team include provision of knowledge-specific inputs regarding the OSCE commitments, operating environment, national policy context and dialogue with institutions. Equally as active participants in the training, the OSCE/ODIHR team can be valuable in providing feedback in simulation exercises and role plays. Finally in follow up the OSCE/ODIHR team can help to facilitate peer exchanges at national and international levels. It should also be noted that this training requires a safe space that can be guaranteed only in presence of a small group of gender competent staff members.

⁷ Tatjana Stoimenovska, Senior Programme Assistant, Human Dimension Department, OSCE – Mission to Skopje joined the training on day 1

⁸ Sanja Nikolin, Project Officer, Beata Bislim Olahova, Adviser on Roma and Sinti Issues, Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues, and Justyna Szarwacka, Project Assistant

8. External motivational support of accomplished self-advocates is part of the design and welcome, especially during the informal gathering over the celebratory dinner, after basic trust was established within the group.

9. Whereas relationships with **institutional level representatives** are very important for self-advocates, it is advised to facilitate them either at the end of the training, for the certification ceremony, or as follow up.

