



*The immigration of Romanian Roma to Western Europe:
Causes, effects, and future engagement strategies
(MigRom)*

**REPORT ON
THE PILOT SURVEY**



The University of Manchester

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March 2014*

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The research leading to these results comes from MIGROM, "Dealing with diversity and cohesion: the case of the Roma in the European Union", a project funded by the European Union under the 7th Framework Programme (GA319901)

Pilot Survey Report

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1. Introduction

Romanian Roma migrants in the Greater Manchester Metropolitan County live mostly in the Gorton/Levenshulme/Longsight area (South Manchester). Some families related to the ones in Gorton/Levenshulme/Longsight live in North Manchester, mostly in Oldham although other families can also be found in Moston, Blackley and Cheetham Hill, Salford and Bolton. Finally a single extended family, unrelated to the above families, lives in Moss Side (South Manchester).

Since the pilot survey has been carried out among families who took advantage of the outreach services provided by the project team (see 1.3, 2.1 and 2.2), this report will focus mostly on families based in Gorton/Levenshulme/Longsight, although some families from North Manchester will also be included. The family in Moss Side has never accessed the outreach services and so far not been included in the study.

1.1.1 General profile of the community

The bulk of the Romanian Roma originate from Țândărei, in the Romanian province of Ialomița, roughly half way between Constanța on the Black Sea coast and Bucharest. Socio-economic changes after the fall of the Ceaușescu regime in 1990 led to economic gaps and thus to conflicts between family networks, resulting in the dispersion of the community across neighbouring towns like Fetești. This group refers to themselves as *Khangljari/Peptenari*.

A minority, referring to themselves as *Ardžintari* or *Čurari*, originates from Cluj, Bistrița and Zalau (Transilvania). One family is even more precise and define themselves as *Piculesti*. Some families, referring to themselves as *Ardžintari* or *Kokalari*, originate from Bucharest. Finally, a few families, referring to themselves as *Lingurari* or *Rudari* originate from Mărășesti, and although they have only a passive knowledge of Romani and are less traditional in certain features (e.g. female dress code) they consider themselves to be Roma. Some individuals among all the groups refer to themselves as *Ursari*.

All segments of the community share a similar migration history. Many families first sought refugee status in Germany in the early 1990s. Once this route became unfeasible due to the wholesale rejection of asylum applications of Romanian Roma they returned to Romania. From there they then moved to Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, Belgium, Ireland or

the UK (often moving from one country to the other or periodically returning to Romania) during the late 1990s and early 2000s. At this stage, families who did not previously migrate joined them. Individuals in various *Ardžintari* and *Lingurari* families also mentioned travelling to Russia, Serbia, Turkey and Czech Republic for trade/work purposes or having relatives there.

The first families who settled in Manchester arrived around 2001-2003 and were then joined, starting from 2007, by relatives coming from all the Western European countries mentioned so far. The most recent arrivals are some of the *Lingurari*, who arrived in Manchester during summer 2012.

With the exception of some *Ardžintari* families, everyone attends the meetings of a Pentecostal church run by a Romanian Romani pastor from Țandarei who has permanently settled in Manchester.

1.1.2 Access to housing

Families live in privately rented terraced houses, with a few exceptions. Although old, the houses are generally in good condition and families that have been living for some years in the same house have also redecorated them and made some small improvements. Generally no more than two generations live in the same house, although in some cases young couples with one or two children still live with the groom's parents.

The exceptions to this pattern are the recently arrived *Lingurari*, who still share the house with relatives, some *Ardžintari* living in flats located on the upper floor of terraces hosting shops on the ground floor and a *Khangljari* family living in social housing (still a terraced house).

Related families constantly attempt to locate and secure properties in close proximity in order to maintain ties across the extended family.

Rent is paid monthly and ranges from £450 to £600 while utility costs are generally around £100 a month. Various families have applied for housing benefits, however many have seen their claims rejected, as they were deemed not eligible for the benefits. The relatively high rate of rejections seems due to the opaque presentation of eligibility criteria. On the paper and on-line forms provided by Manchester City Council (MCC) there is a generic mention of 'low income' as a criterion, however such 'low income' is not openly quantified. Similarly, the on-line calculator¹ requires users to provide various information

¹<https://manchesterclaims.teamnetsol.com/index.jsp>

(family income, number of family members, currently paid rent, length of stay in the UK, etc.) and informs them of how much in benefits, if any, they can receive, but does not inform users on how this calculation is done. Furthermore, on occasion the results provided by the on-line calculator do not match the outcome of the actual application procedure. At the moment, a single mother living alone confirmed receiving housing benefits covering her full rent. Around 10 more families also receive some housing benefits, generally partially covering their rent. Families who do not receive benefits are usually able to pay their rent, utility bills and Council Tax regularly. On occasion, lack of understanding of payment procedures or periods of low work-generated income (see 1.1.5 and section 3) means payments are delayed.

1.1.3 Access to health care

Registration with the publicly run National Health System (NHS) is tied to proof of address, which generally means nuclear families are able to register only once they have a rent contract, utility bill or similar document in one parent's name. This results in new arrivals temporarily settling with relatives delaying registration with the NHS until they locate a house for themselves. Save for these temporary issues, all families are registered with the NHS, which is a free, state-run health coverage for all UK residents. No participant in the survey mentioned having any form of private health insurance.

Pre-natal and maternity care, dentist and specialist treatment are accessed through the NHS, if accessed at all. Dentist and specialist treatment requires a small payment, therefore families that access them generally also receive tax breaks or some other benefits, which always include exemptions from additional NHS charges.

In general, when individuals require some treatment or surgery, they tend to go back to Romania where they can skip waiting times by paying for treatment in Pounds Sterling.

Usage of emergency care is often limited by the difficulties, both real and perceived, of accessing interpreters at emergency units. Therefore, when needed, people that are confident in English access emergency care more easily. People with lower English skills tend to bring along an available relative who can interpret for them. This option, however, is unfeasible in cases where, due to privacy or health and safety regulations, the relative is not allowed to see the doctor together with the patient.

1.1.4 Access to education

Although all families are now eager to send their children to school, it took some time before early arrived families felt settled enough in Manchester to send their children to school. Outreach work and interventions in school (see below and 1.3) played no small part in increasing families' sense of stability in Manchester.

Those already settled in Manchester apply for places as soon as children reach school age. In the case of families just moving to Manchester, the International New Arrivals Team directs them to local schools and encourages them to apply for places. In the application process, families regularly apply for free meals. However, as families receiving tax breaks cannot receive free meals or other income related benefits, only a minority of applicants receive them (see below regarding access to benefits and tax breaks).

A common complaint heard from the families relates to the delays in the processing of school applications on the part of the relevant offices. Furthermore, some families are offered places for their children in different schools, often located a considerable distance from each other, creating logistical difficulties in taking children to and from school. On these grounds, families can attempt a single appeal per year in order to have all their children enrolled at the same school. The success rate of such appeals has so far been low because of a widespread lack of school places in Manchester.

Both boys and girls continue education to secondary level and as reported in Manchester City Council's Roma Strategy² the school attendance of Roma currently outstrips that of other communities. A number of young Roma, who generally have attended primary and/or secondary school in Manchester are currently attending college. A single individual has successfully applied to a business course at Manchester Metropolitan University and some of his peers are now voicing similar desires to pursue higher education.

The Black Health Agency³, a health and social care charity active in Manchester since the 1990s, run a now discontinued school support scheme (2011-2012, see 1.3). The scheme enabled some of the Roma youth who currently attend college to work as classroom assistants and mediators, assisting communication between teachers and families. The measure proved extremely successful in that it boosted children's confidence in school, made parents aware of the advantages of education and teachers aware of the specificity of Roma culture. Various participants in the survey voiced a desire to have similar schemes run again in the future. The scheme was launched following a training session for around a dozen young Roma from the

²<http://romani.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/migrom/docs/MCCRomaReport2013.pdf>

³<http://www.thebha.org.uk/aboutus>

community, which was run in 2009-2010, initiated by the Romani Project and the BigLife Group, a regional charity that employed Roma vendors for its publication 'The Big Issue'. The scheme was one of the recommendations of the Romani Project's report from October 2009 on 'Roma in Gorton South'.⁴

Some older individuals of both sexes have expressed an interest in adult education, particularly for English and numeracy skills. However, work and family commitments often means they are unable to attend courses provided by various private and third sector organisations.

1.1.5 Employment

As A2 citizens, Romanian Roma in Manchester have, until January 2014, mostly been limited to self-employment or temporary/seasonal employment in the agricultural and food sectors. Apparently none of the Roma living in Manchester have ever worked in the agricultural or food sectors in the UK, although some had experiences of similar employments in other countries (Italy and Spain in particular).

Self-employment has therefore been the main source of income for nearly all the families. Given the low level skills possessed by working age individuals, self-employment has taken the form of peddling, scrap metal collection and selling the Big Issue, a street newspaper published by the BigLife Group⁵. A clear distinction between the different groups present in Manchester can be seen in this respect. The *Ardžintari* families specialise in peddling (flowers, balloons, toys) and scrap metal collection. In one of the *Čurari* families, settled in Manchester for a longer time than the others (from the late 1990s), men and some women are employed at a car wash. The *Khangljari* on the other hand rely mostly on selling the Big Issue, although one individual also does some scrap metal collection. In one of the *Rudari* families the husband managed to obtain employment as a cleaner in a restaurant while the wife sells the Big Issue.

Almost exclusive reliance on self-employment means that at times the family income is lower than expected. In such cases, as mentioned earlier (1.1.2) housing related payments can be delayed.

In general, these types of self-employment generate a low income, (£5750 per year per person on average), allowing most families to receive income tax breaks. Housing and child

⁴<http://romani.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/downloads/2/report.pdf>

⁵<http://www.thebiglifegroup.com/>

benefits are received by a minority of families. Austerity measures, however, are making accessing even tax breaks increasingly more difficult.

Other work and child related benefits are rarely received as families often do not qualify for them.

As the lifting of employment restrictions in January 2014 approached, various individuals enquired about work possibilities. Some also applied for actual jobs they found advertised at the local Job Centre. In general, older individuals are looking into low-skill jobs like cleaners, kitchen runners, and drivers. The Roma youth attending college are currently looking at various career paths including translation and interpreting, sport trainer, social and youth worker. The university student sees himself in some managerial position and also dreams of setting up his own business. Among children and teenagers attending school, expectations vary from doctor, social worker, interpreter and on to footballer and actor. Parents are generally not clear about what kind of work they wish for their children but hope it would be better than what they have at the moment.

1.2 Public debates

On October 30th, 2013, a Channel 4 report about the Slovak Roma in the Page Hall area of Sheffield⁶ accompanied the release of the University of Salford report **Migrant Roma in the UK**⁷. The claim in the report that about 200,000 Roma live in the UK prompted a public and media debate about migration from European countries, the lifting of restrictions on Romanian and Bulgarians and the problems of Roma integration.

Almost invariably, the problems faced by the Roma were attributed to their ‘peculiar culture’, regularly presented relying almost exclusively on stereotypes. In mid-November, the interventions by David Blunkett⁸ (Labour Member of Parliament, former Home Secretary) and Nick Clegg⁹ (Liberal Democrat Deputy Prime Minister in the coalition government with the Conservatives) in particular raised concerns about the risk of ethnic riots and called for the Roma to change their ‘culture’.

⁶<http://www.channel4.com/news/immigration-roma-migrants-bulgaria-romania-slovakia-uk>

⁷http://www.salford.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/363118/Migrant_Roma_in_the_UK_final_report_October_2013.pdf. For the academic controversy that surrounded the report see the discussion archived at the EANRS newsletter:

http://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/romani_studies_network/search/messages?query=salford%20report log-in needed.

⁸<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-24909979>

⁹<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2013/nov/14/nick-clegg-roma-community-sheffield-migrants-britain;>
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/14/roma-community-sensitive-british-culture-nick-clegg;>
<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2013/nov/14/david-ferman-blunkett-immigration-riots>

At this point, various journalists and columnists entered the debate¹⁰ in order to rebalance the discussion. Members of the Romani Project and other colleagues at the University of Manchester did the same by publishing various on-line interventions¹¹ and offered the Manchester case as an example of successful integration.

Major media became aware of Manchester local authorities' engagement with the Roma community and two extremely positive reports, covering both the activities of the Romani Project and life in Longsight, were broadcasted in December on Channel 4 and BBC¹².

Simultaneously, David Blunkett felt the need to clarify his position in the debate¹³ and also contacted the Romani Project research staff expressing a desire to learn from the project experience and possibly to apply similar methods in other cities. This developed in a public panel discussion involving staff from MigRom, David Blunkett and other academics and professionals working on issues relating to Roma and migration. The panel discussion took place in mid-February and was also attended by various members of the Roma youth.

1.3 Policy and outreach

1.3.1 Local authority engagement

Some information about MCC policy strategies, their outreach activities and co-operation with Romani Project and voluntary sector actors up to April 2013 can be found on the MigRom website.¹⁴

The following time-line offers a summary of major engagements.

- 2007: Roma pupils arrive in schools in the Gorton/Levenshulme/Longsight area;
- June 2008: Gorton Mount Primary School approaches the Romani Project for support and advice; as a result the school is the first to appoint a Romani man from the community to support attendance and engagement with parents, and a member of the Romani Project is recruited as a teacher (September 2009) and later EAL leader at the School.
- spring 2009: City Councillor Simon Ashley, who represented the Gorton South Ward for the opposition party Liberal Democrats, claims to have been presented with a petition signed by 60 residents who complained against the settlement of Roma in the

¹⁰<http://www.politics.co.uk/comment-analysis/2013/11/13/comment-blunkett-attacks-the-roma-so-why-are-only-ukip-calle>; <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2013/nov/17/roma-page-hall-sheffield>; <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/nov/13/david-blunkett-romaphobia-slovak-roma>; <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/nov/17/slandering-roma-isnt-courageous-but-racist>

¹¹<http://www.politics.co.uk/comment-analysis/2013/11/18/comment-the-roma-are-hardworking-people-who-don-t-deserve-to>; <https://theconversation.com/ignore-the-scare-tactics-roma-integration-is-hard-but-worth-it-20982>; <http://www.theguardian.com/local-government-network/2013/dec/09/migrant-roma-communities-integration-uk-manchester>; <http://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/jan-grill/britain%E2%80%99s-gypsy-moral-paranoia>;

¹²<http://www.channel4.com/news/uk-immigrations-migrants-roma-eu>; <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-25559645>

¹³<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/nov/28/we-need-to-talk-about-immigration-not-this-way>

¹⁴<http://romani.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/migrom/report-policy-briefs.html>

area. The complaints alleged that Roma ‘have money but do not work, do not send children to school, are loud and dispose of waste in the streets’. Cllr Ashley approaches the City Council’s Regeneration Department and asks for residents to be given a forum to air their complaints against Roma. Such a forum is set up, chaired by the Regeneration Manager for the area.

- Manchester City Council sets up a ‘Roma Strategy Group’ in response to these residents complaints; the group meets monthly and is initially chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive of MCC, and later by an MCC Regeneration Manager. It comprises representatives of various Council services and the Police, and later incorporates representatives of local schools. Issues raised include school attendance, rubbish disposal, crime, safeguarding of young children and gatherings in the street. Officials from the Regeneration Team and the police continue to hold regular meetings where local residents are offered an opportunity to voice complaints about the neighbourhood. Although formally opened to all residents, Roma do not participate, as they were not informed about the meetings. The meetings turn into a platform for complaints against Roma.
- July 2009: Following the fire-bombing of a Roma residence in Belfast, MCC Regeneration Team and Police are concerned that anti-Roma sentiments might lead to violence in Manchester too. They approach the Romani Project for mediation and advice; MCC commissions Romani Project to carry out a survey and produce a report with recommendations for an Engagement Strategy.
- August 2009: Greater Manchester Police is prompted by the Metropolitan Police in London to extend an investigation into trafficking by Roma (‘Operation Golf’) to Manchester.¹⁵
- September 2009: Romani Project carries out consultations in the community, with a team of four researchers, all Romani speakers (Giuseppe Beluschi Fabeni, Eliška Vránová, Viktor Leggio, Yaron Matras).
- October 2009. The Romani Project at the University of Manchester submits its report on The Romani Community of Gorton South, along with a recommendation for an Engagement Strategy. The strategy is based on 1) training young Roma from the community to serve as role models, 2) engaging the trainees as Roma interpreters for local agencies and as Roma classroom assistants in schools, 3) recruiting short-term support and inspiration for the trainees and support for the community through two full-time positions for Roma outreach workers, to be recruited from outside the community, for a period of one to two years. The model names a ‘pyramid’ strategy, whereby Roma outreach workers recruited outside the community should inspire local role models, these would in turn help raise aspirations among the young generation attending schools, and these in turn would in due course facilitate the community’s social and economic participation.
- November 2009: A small-scale police raid as part of ‘Operation Epee’ takes place on two Romani families in Gorton South but no evidence of trafficking is found and no charges are brought against any members of the Manchester Roma community. Yet Cllr Simon Ashley addresses the local press and praises the police for taking a tough stance against the Roma.
- November-December 2009: MCC Regeneration team notes Romani Project recommendation for a ‘pyramid strategy’ and agrees in principle to hire two Roma

¹⁵ <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/crime/article6806484.ece>

outreach workers from outside the community, to help train a group of young Roma within the community as mediators for the community as a whole and as ‘role models’ for school-age children. The Romani Project is asked to circulate call for expressions of interest among potential applicants among Roma activists and mediators in central and eastern Europe; some 45 responses are received within a short period of time.

- December 2009: MCC Children’s Services (International New Arrivals Team, now merged with Travellers Education Service and Supplementary Schools unit) are made aware of the Romani Project report and discuss the idea of consultations with Roma families.
- January 2010: Yaron Matras meets with MCC Deputy Chief Executive Geoff Little and Deputy Leader Cllr Val Stevens to discuss the Engagement Strategy and ask for support in its implementation. Geoff Little is supportive, but Cllr Stevens says that secondary school attendance rates of Romani girls are worrying, and that the Council should support Roma youth to acquire skills since as A2 nationals they are not likely to join the workforce.
- 01 February 2010: MCC International New Arrivals invite Yaron Matras to discuss the Romani Project’s report and ‘future work/partnerships’.
- February 2010: Acting on behalf of MCC Benefits office, MCC Regeneration Team asks the BigLife Group to exclude Roma from vendor positions of the Big Issue in order to withdraw their basis to claim benefits. MCC refers to ‘research commissioned to the University of Manchester’ claiming that it showed that Roma come to Manchester in order to claim benefits.
- 03 March 2010: Yaron Matras meets with Caroline Price of the Big Life Company and clarifies that the Romani Project report did not claim that Roma come to Manchester to claim benefits, but in fact on p. 35, bottom. that "... most residents articulated a wish to be able to have a broader choice of appropriate jobs and complained about being limited to selling the Big Issue.", and on p. 28, bottom: "They are not ashamed of carrying out manual labour of the most degrading nature and at the lowest pay level, but are helpless to obtain such jobs due to their limited social contacts in British society and their lack of language skills."
- 08 March 2010: Directors of the Big Life Company meet MCC Deputy Chief Executive Geoff Little and with reference to the Romani Project report complain that “the report was being misconstrued in respect of the Roma community seeing the sale of the magazine and benefits as their ultimate aspiration” (message from Caroline Price, Director, Big Issue in the North Ltd, 08.03.2010). Big Life Company proposes a project to support training of young people in the Roma community.
- 11 March 2010: Big Life Company obtains legal advice from Cherie Booth QC, who concludes that “this attempt to use the public order powers of the Council to achieve a reduction in the benefits given to Roma only vendors is both for an improper purpose and discriminatory and therefore void and the Big Issue is entitled to refuse to comply.”
- 15 March 2010: Yaron Matras speaks to MCC International New Arrivals about the Gorton Report and engagement strategy
- 17 March 2010: Yaron Matras meets with Barbara Guest and Abigail Prabhakar from Manchester Advice / Migrant Impact Fund Project to discuss earmarking 2 outreach worker positions for engagement with Roma, and learns that the Migrant Impact Fund outreach positions have been outsourced to Black Health Agency’s Routes project, which so far has no plans to devote resources specifically to work with Roma.

- 06 April 2010: As an outcome of consultations with Jennifer Richardson (Black Health Agency Director), Black Health Agency agrees to appoint two Roma outreach workers. The advertisement text drafted by Yaron Matras is circulated by BHA on 12 April. Sybil Lee, an English Gypsy, is appointed in July 2010, and Marian Guga, a Rom from Romania currently resident in Bulgaria, is appointed in October 2010.
- 10 May 2010: Yaron Matras writes to Abigail Prabakhar and points out the demand for Romani language interpreters, based on conversations with Carolyn Taylor-Score of Cafcass. He suggests: “As far as I understand, the courts have budgets for on-going services of this kind and it might be possible, in cooperation with other agencies, to use this as the basis of a business plan to employ one or two Romani interpreters, to work alongside the position that will hopefully be established within the Routes Project.”
- 25 May 2010: ‘Roma Operational Meeting’ takes place at Gorton Mt School. Yaron Matras is invited and proposes a scheme to train young Roma as interpreters. It is decided to set up a ‘Translation working group’ consisting of Yaron Matras, Jen Richardson of BHA, Julie Davies of MCC New Arrivals (who also works for BHA), Emma Perry and Daniel Achim (Big Life Group) and Cafcass (to join later).
- 07 June 2010: A meeting of the ‘Translation group’ takes place at Yaron Matras’s office at the University of Manchester. A concept is agreed for a training programme for Romani interpreters, which is described in detail in the minutes sent by Yaron Matras on 08 June. It is agreed that the profiles of the trainees and the dissemination of information to clients/agencies would be coordinate together by Julie Davies and Yaron Matras. It is also agreed that training and support would be provided by the Big Life Company, and Emma Perry, Daniel Achim and Yaron Matras are asked to coordinate this.
- 10 June 2010: Emma Perry, Daniel Achim and Yaron Matras meet to coordinate training programme.
- 30 June 2010: MCC New Arrivals release ‘What’s working’ report, with statements from young Roma in the community, at an event in Cedar Mount secondary school.
- 06 August 2010: Julie Davies reports to the ‘Translation group’ that she has identified 7 young Roma who have good English language skills and are interested in training as interpreters.
- 10 September 2010: a Tribunal rules against Manchester City Council in the case of Mircea Scarlat, saying that selling the Big Issue entitles vendors to housing benefits.
- 30 September 2010: Yaron Matras and Charlotte Jones meet with staff at Cedar Mount secondary school and agree an intervention to support Roma pupils with the help of student volunteers, and to provide training to staff on Roma history and culture.
- 08 October 2010: Training course for young Roma sponsored by the Big Life Group with participation of the Romani Project, begins at Sure Start community learning centre in Longsight. The participants are Ion Tanase, Nicolaus Tanase, Daniel Moise, Florin Calin, Ramona Constantin, Vasile Ion, and Traian (Leo) Tanase.
- 12 Oct and 4 Nov 2010: further visits by the Romani Project at Cedar Mount School take place, and a first staff training session is scheduled for 29 Nov but is cancelled due to Yaron Matras’s illness.
- 18 Oct 2010: Photographer and journalist Ciara Leeming, who had previously reported on Roma in Istanbul, publishes an article on Roma in Manchester in the Big Issue in the North, which would launch a prolonged engagement with the subject. She writes to Yaron Matras to say that “I haven’t found my way into the Romanian

community in Gorton just yet”, and is referred to the Big Life Group training programme, where she meets Ramona Constantin, who would later feature in her book ‘Elvira and me’.

- Winter 2010: Cooperation between Black Health Agency, which employs the two Roma outreach workers sponsored by the Council’s Migrant Impact Fund, and MCC’s Children’s services (International New Arrivals Team, Traveller Education Service and Supplementary Schools Unit) intensifies as members of MCC Children Services are moved to part-time positions within BHA, thus creating a personnel overlap. The group facilitates part-time employment for Roma classroom assistants in a number of schools.
- April-Sept 2011: Romani Project in partnership with Gorton Mount Primary School, Graz University Romani Project, and Prague University Romani studies department, apply for funding to LLP programme to support classroom intervention in support of Roma; the application is not successful. A somewhat similar application is made to the same scheme by tBlack Health Agency in partnership with MCC Children’s Services, Pharos (Netherlands) and Secretariado Gitano (Spain), and the grant of €123,000 is awarded for twelve months.¹⁶
- September 2011: Black Health Agency produces a ‘Roma Heritage Teaching Toolkit’ for schools (‘Long Roads’), with information sheets about Roma history¹⁷; Romani Project notes a series of inaccuracies.
- October 2011: The two Roma outreach worker positions at the Black Health Agency come to an end with the end of the Migrant Impact Fund Project. The Romani Project invites Manchester City Council’s Regeneration Team to join a grant application to a call on ‘Dealing with diversity and cohesion: the case of Roma in the European Union’ by the EC Seventh Framework Programme, as a way of securing funding to continue the Roma outreach scheme in Manchester.
- January 2012: MCC Regeneration joins an application submitted by University of Manchester to the EC Seventh Framework Programme, as full partner. The application ‘The immigration of Romanian Roma to Western Europe: Causes, effects, and future engagement strategies (MigRom)’ is for a four-year project, total of €2.5 million, of which around €250,000 is foreseen for outreach work in the Roma community in Manchester.
- Spring 2012: Black Health Agency-led one-year LPP project ‘What’s working’ begins. The project holds four workshops/conferences and publishes a series of reports and support materials for Roma migrants in schools, most of them released during 2013.¹⁸
- July 2012: The MigRom project is approved, with the proviso of extending the involvement of local authorities
- December 2012: BHA commissions a report into the impact of multi-agency work with Roma, which flags Manchester and the work of the Black Health Agency itself as a leading example of good practice.¹⁹
- March 2013: The Black Health Agency What’s Working project commissions a review from Lisa Scullion and Phil Brown from Salford University, whose expertise is in housing policy for Travellers; the report is published in March 2013.²⁰

¹⁶ http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/results_projects/documents/roma_compendium_en.pdf, p. 5

¹⁷ <http://thebha.org.uk/campaigns>

¹⁸ <http://whatsworking.eu/>; <http://www.pharos.nl/documents/doc/presentation-roma-mccbha.pdf>;

¹⁹ http://orca.cf.ac.uk/42241/1/routes_report_030113.pdf

²⁰ http://whatsworking.eu/files/SHUSU_ResearchStudy-Whats_Working_2013.pdf

- March 2013: MCC's Equalities team awards a grant of ca. £30,000 to the Black Health Agency to carry out research on attitudes of young Roma to early marriage and school, with a view toward supporting school progression especially of teenage girls. At the same time Council funding for classroom support is withdrawn.
- March 2013: Romani Project invites a series of third sector agencies and the research team from Salford University to an information session on the MigRom project, and offer cooperation.
- June 2013: MigRom launch event takes place, with participation of local authority representatives from Manchester, Salford and the region. The project appoints Leo Tanase and Ramona Constantin, who trained as part of the joint programme with the Big Life Company, as outreach workers.

1.3.2 Voluntary sector engagement

With the exception of BigLife Group and the Black Health Agency no actors from the voluntary sector have initiated any activity specifically targeting the Roma (for details about their involvement see 1.3.3). However, various Roma families are reducing their living costs by receiving food parcels, toys and clothes from Rainbow Haven and Wood Street Mission, two charities operating across Greater Manchester. Roma youth and children also make up the majority of patrons at the Levenshulme Youth Club, run by volunteers at a local café. In late 2013, a local refugee support group, RAPAR, with close connections to the Socialist Workers Party, began an engagement about Roma, through a public discussion on persecution and a series of meetings to plan International Roma Day 2014; however, there was no notable participation of Roma in these events.

1.3.3 Project links

The co-operation between the Romani Project and MCC, begun in September 2009, originally involved the Regeneration Team and was prompted by complaints from residents about the presence of the Roma in Gorton.

In 2010, following the publication of the Romani Project research report about the Roma in Gorton, BigLife Group, already providing a chance for self-employment to various Roma families as the publisher of the Big Issue, jointly with Romani Project run a training programme for Roma interpreters.

Simultaneously, MCC was developing its Roma strategy involving both public and private sector agencies. Beside the Regeneration Team, the International New Arrivals Team, assisting migrants willing to settle in Manchester, was also involved. Simultaneously, due to funding cuts, the Traveller Education Services, until 2007 offering assistance to English Gypsies and Irish Travellers, was suppressed. In the assumption that Roma migrants would

share cultural and social features with English Gypsies and Irish Travellers, the remit of Traveller Education Services was transferred to International New Arrivals. Further funding cuts forced International New Arrivals to outsource some of its operations to the voluntary sector, leading to the involvement of the Black Health Agency, up to that moment providing help and support for other migrant communities.

Following the advice of the Romani Project and relying on the national Migrant Impact Fund, the Black Health Agency started supporting Roma families through the Routes Project, a programme started around 2002 to support refugees and asylum seekers. The Routes Project deployed the interpreters trained by BigLife Group as classroom assistants and employed two outreach workers of Romani background who supported Roma families in their dealing with various public agencies (2011-2012).

During its life span, the Routes Project has produced the *Roma Heritage Teaching Toolkit*, an education package for schools, and *What's Working*, a good practice guide for schools and other agencies dealing with Roma.²¹ It is currently not clear to what extent the targeted audiences have used these resources.

At the beginning of 2013, the suppression of the Migrant Impact Fund and further cuts to local funding resulted in the discontinuation of the activities carried out by the Routes Project in schools.

With the launch of MigRom (April 2013), the Romani Project hired three outreach workers (also acting as fieldwork assistants, see section 2). In order to guarantee continuity with previous interventions and to coordinate future ones, a steering group, involving representatives of the Romani Project, Regeneration Team and International New Arrivals, was set up. The steering group agreed that the running of weekly drop-in sessions which Roma families can access in order to receive assistance in dealing with various problems (see section 3 for more details) would have been a good way to replace the now discontinued Routes Project.

Starting from September 2013, the outreach workers have held the drop-in sessions at a community centre in Longsight run by BigLife Group. This regular presence has, on one side, offered a considerable help to families. On the other hand, it also meant a strengthening of the co-operation between BigLife Group and Romani Project, which are currently (January 2014) exploring the possibility to jointly work on a health-related project.

²¹<http://www.thebha.org.uk/routes>.

Furthermore, the outreach workers realised many of the issues faced by the Roma were not relevant to the areas covered by International New Arrivals. This is due to the fact that the influx of Romanian Roma has significantly decreased since the peaks in 2007-2009 and the current population is a pretty much stable presence in Manchester. Therefore in January 2014 the steering group agreed that the Equality Team would be better placed than International New Arrivals to take part in the project, although links are maintained in case further Roma move to Manchester. Furthermore, in order to avoid Roma becoming over reliant on the assistance provided by the outreach workers, it was agreed that emphasis should be placed on increasing Roma self-reliance. In order to do so, individuals accessing the drop-in sessions are encouraged to take relatives able to read and write English with them, so that they can be trained on how to deal with issues affecting their families. This decision fits into the more general MCC strategy of reducing dependencies among vulnerable communities and should avoid leaving a vacuum once MigRom comes to its end.

2 The pilot survey: background

2.1 The research team

Dr Daniele Viktor Leggio, Research Associate at the University of Manchester, coordinated the outreach workers during the survey. He has a good knowledge of the Romani language, is closely familiar with Romani traditions and culture and is experienced in carrying out both linguistic and ethnographic fieldwork in Romani communities from Eastern Europe,

The outreach workers, Mirela Sutac, a Romanian teacher, Ramona Constantin, an *Ardžintari* married to a *Khangljari*, and Leo Tanase, a *Khangljari*, acted as fieldwork assistants. Both Ramona Constantin and Leo Tanase were among the youth trained by BigLife Group,

Ms Sutac is an EAL teacher at Chapel Street Primary School, one of the schools attended by Roma children in Gorton/Levenshulme/Longsight. Employed part-time by MigRom, she has continued to teach, providing insight into the situation in schools. Since her recruitment she complemented her knowledge of Romanian by learning Romani. The learning process is still ongoing and relies on the usage of Romaninet²² and both formal and informal exchanges in and about Romani with the rest of the research team.

Following the BigLife Group training, Ms Constantin has worked in various capacities with BigLife Group, Romani Project, the Black Health Agency and as free-lance interpreter.

²² <http://romaninet.com>

Employed full-time by MigRom she has been pivotal in strengthening the links between the project and the other actors interacting with the Romanian Roma.

Mr Tanase has worked with the Black Health Agency's Routes Project as classroom assistant and as free-lance interpreter. Since February 2014, he is also working part-time as a classroom assistant at Cedar Mount, a secondary school in Gorton.

Although Ms Constantin and Mr Tanase have outstanding levels of spoken English and good IT skills, further IT and English literacy training is being provided to them through formal and informal interactions with the rest of the research team. As part of her engagement with BigLife Group, Ms Constantin is also attending a training course on Management & Administration.

Furthermore, Prof Matras and Dr Leggio are providing, again both in formal and informal interactions, training on research practices, data collection, data analysis and ethics to the outreach workers. When needed, the outreach workers and Dr Leggio access further training in more specific fields through the University Staff Training and Development Unit.

2.2 Pilot survey strategy

The survey relied on both participant observation and open interviews with selected individuals coming from all the different Romanian Roma groups present in Manchester (with the exception of the extended family living in Moss Side, see 1.1).

Participant observation, started in September 2013 and was mostly carried out by the outreach workers during their various engagements with the Roma and the agencies they access. Ms Constantin and Mr Tanase also provided information from their daily life with their families. The drop-in sessions, in particular, provided a perfect environment to observe the legal and administrative problems faced by the Roma. Dr Leggio also attended some of the drop-in sessions. Furthermore, Dr Leggio carried out observations during various activities aimed at the Roma youth, including their participation at a roundtable on Balkan Music and Roma migration and at different preparatory meetings for a video documentary project. At least one of the outreach workers was also present during these activities. Through this approach we have so far collected information about 30 extended families.

In order to supplement our observations with the point of view of the Roma themselves we asked members of these families to have interviews. A total of 16 individuals agreed to being interviewed and interviews were carried out between mid October and mid November 2013 by all the outreach workers and Dr Leggio. In some cases, particularly with older informants, interviews took place at the community centre where the drop-in sessions are held,

immediately after people had discussed their issues with the outreach workers. In the rest of the cases interviews were carried out at the house of the participant or at a café regularly attended by the Roma (the same café hosting the Youth Club, see 1.3.2). The following table shows the distribution of interviewees based on age, sex and ethnic self-ascription.

	18-22 years old		25-33 years old		36-45 years old	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
<i>Khangljari</i>	4	0	1	1	0	0
<i>Ardžintari/Čurari/ Kokalari</i>	0	2	1	3	0	2
<i>Lingurari/Rudari</i>	0	0	0	0	1	1

Table 1: Summary of interviewees

As it can be observed from the table, interviewees are not equally distributed. This is due to the recruitment process, which relied on people accepting our invitation.

Interviews, carried out in Romani with the *Khangljari* and *Ardžintari* and in Romanian with the *Lingurari*, lasted on average 20 minutes, with only one lasting for an hour and one for only 6 minutes. In most cases people, particularly in the 36-45 age bracket, seemed to feel not completely comfortable about being recorded. This was even more visible when interviews were conducted in public spaces. We also realised that the set of questions we used to prompt the interviewees, based on the Fieldwork Guidelines, were often answered in a simple yes-no manner. Considering all these elements it might be worth exploring other strategies for the follow-up survey. Selecting a smaller sample (5-6 individuals) and over time recording multiple conversations with them, possibly in the form of life histories, might constitute a valid alternative methodology.

In spite of the problems mentioned, the interviews yielded some extremely rich narratives, particularly those carried out with the younger informants.

3 Pilot survey results

3.1 Sociodemographic data

3.1.1. Place, localization

As mentioned before, the families covered by the pilot survey live mostly in the Gorton/Levenshulme/Longsight area (South Manchester) and Oldham (North Manchester).

Gorton/Levenshulme/Longsight is a residential area under the administrative responsibility of MCC. A historically deprived working-class neighbourhood, the area has always been an attraction pole for migrants (Irish in the late 19th to early 20th century, South Asian 1950s

onwards, East Africans 1980s onwards, Polish 1990s onwards, Romanian Roma and Kurds 2000s onwards).

Oldham, a large town located northeast of Manchester, is the administrative centre of the Oldham Metropolitan Borough. Just as Gorton/Levenshulme/Longsight, Oldham is a dominantly working class residential area with high concentrations of migrants (mostly South Asian and some Afro-Caribbean since the late 1950s).

The other areas where Romanian Roma live share similar socio-economic and ethnic profiles. Moston, Blakeley and Cheetham Hill are neighbourhoods under the administrative responsibility of MCC. A sizable Yiddish speaking community is settled in Cheetham Hill since the late 19th century. Salford is an independent city, governed by its own council, and Bolton is the administrative centre of the Bolton Metropolitan Borough.

3.1.2. Sociodemographic data for each household member

Detailed sociodemographic data have been collected only from the individuals that agreed to be interviewed. They are summarised in Table 2.

3.1.3. Size and structure of households

As mentioned in 1.1.2, generally no more than two generations from the same nuclear family live in the same house. The parental couple is normally in their late 20s to early 40s. Couples in their late teens and early 20s, even with one or two children, still live with the groom's parents.

If the older parental couple (30s-40s) does not live in Manchester, unmarried siblings live with married ones and their nuclear family. Rarely, two married brothers (of all ages) with their children may share the same house, but this is normally a temporary situation.

The exceptions to this pattern are constituted by the recently arrived *Lingurari*, who are still sharing the house with relatives.

Related families constantly attempt to locate and secure properties in close proximity in order to maintain ties across the extended family, leading to meet ups taking place on the streets.

Table 2: Interviewees' demographic data. M = male, F = female

Interviewee	Age	Origin	Ethnic self ascription	Marital status	Children	Education	Work	Siblings	Siblings' children	Relatives' work	House	Relationship to other interviewees
M1	18	Fetești	Khangljari	Married	1 female (2 y.o.)	5 years of school, BigLife Group training, attending college	Big Issue, interpreter	3 sisters, 1 brother	1 (brother's son)	Big Issue, used car trade	Terraced house with parents	Cousin of M2, M3, M4
M2	18	Fetești	Khangljari	Married	No	4 years in Romania, 2 years in UK, BigLife Group training, attending college	Interpreter	3 younger brothers, 1 older brother	???	Parents: Big Issue, older brother interpreter	Terraced house with parents	Cousin of M1, M3, M4
M3	18	Fetești	Khangljari	Married	No	Secondary (UK), BigLife Group training, attending university	Interpreter	Younger brothers and sisters number unknown	N/A	Father: scrap metal	Social housing (terraced) with parents	Cousin of M1, M2, M4
M4	22	Fetești, born in Germany	Khangljari	Married	1 daughter	1.5 years in UK, BigLife Group training	Big Issue, interpreter	???	???	Big Issue	Terraced house with parents	Cousin of M1, M2, M3
M5	27	Țandarei	Khangljari	Married	3 girls (9, 8, 6 y.o.)	4 years in Romania	Big Issue	1 sister, 2 brothers	???	???	Terraced house	Brother-in-law of F1, cousin of F2

Interviewee	Age	Origin	Ethnic self ascription	Marital status	Children	Education	Work	Siblings	Siblings' children	Relatives' work	House	Relationship to other interviewees
F1	22	Buseu	Adžintari	Married to a Khangljari	No	2 years in Romania	Big Issue	Living in Romania	???	Trade jewels in Romania and Russia	Terraced house	Sister-in-law of M5
F2 (moved to Germany in late Nov 2013)	33	Țandarei	Khangljari	Married	1 girl (13 y.o.)	???	Big Issue	???	???	???	Terraced house	Cousin of M5
M6	26	Buchar est	Kokalari	Married	2 sons (5.5 y.o. and 11 months)	5 years in Romania	Scrap metal	???	???	???	Terraced house	Brother-in-law of F3
F3	20	Buchar est	Ardžintari	Married	No	8 years in Romania (Sarau's programme)	None	1 sister	???	???	Terraced house	Sister-in-law of M6
F4	45	Cluj	Piculesti	Married	2 sons, 2 daughters 3 grandchildren	None	Peddler	???	???	Scrap metal, peddler	Terraced house	Mother of F5
F5	25	Cluj	Piculesti	Divorced	1 boy (5 y.o.) 1 girl (6 y.o.)	None	Peddler	2 brothers, 1 sister	???	Scrap metal, peddler	Terraced house on benefits	Daughter of F5
F6	40	Cluj	Čurarja	Married	3 (1 20 y.o. son, 1 bori, 4 grandchildren)	8 years in Romania	Peddler, employed at car wash	1 sister (F7)	See F7	See F7	Terraced house	Sister of F7

Interviewee	Age	Origin	Ethnic self ascription	Marital status	Children	Education	Work	Siblings	Siblings' children	Relatives' work	House	Relationship to other interviewees
F7	30	Zalau	Čurarja	Married	1 15 y.o. girl, 3 boys (13, 12, 1)	2 years in Romania	Peddler	1 sister (F6)	See F6	See F6	Terraced house	Sister of F6
F8	43	Bistrița	Romnji	Unmarried	3 girls (23, 6, 4 y.o.)	6 years in Romania	Peddler	???	???	???	Terraced house	None
M7	36	Mărășești	Rudari/Lingurari	Married	4	7 years in Romania	Kitchen runner	???	???	???	Terraced house	Uncle of F9's husband
F9	40	Mărășești	Rudari/Lingurari	Married	3 girls (12, 10, 5.5 y.o) 1 boy (22 y.o. living in Spain)	10 years in Romania	Big Issue	???	???	???	Terraced house with relatives	Married to M7's nephew

3.1.4. Network of related households

A detailed network of related households is currently not available. See Table 2 for the information currently available about related households.

3.2 Migratory history and experiences

3.2.1. Migration movements and travels

All segments of the community share a similar migration history. Many families first sought refugee status in Germany during the early 1990s. Once this route became unfeasible due to the wholesale rejection of asylum applications of Romanian Roma, they returned to Romania. From there they then moved to Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, Belgium, Ireland or the UK (often moving from one country to another or periodically returning to Romania) during the late 1990s and early 2000s. At this stage, families who did not previously migrate joined them. Individuals in various *Ardžintari* families and M7 also mentioned travelling to Russia, Serbia, Turkey and the Czech Republic for trade/work purposes or having relatives there.

F6 and F7 belong to the first family, which settled in Manchester in the late 1990s. A small number of families, including various components of the extended families to which M1, M2, M3, M4 and M5 belong, settled in Manchester around 2001-2003. M3, M4 and M5 reported their families being deported or voluntarily going back to Romania around 2004 and then returning to Manchester in 2007-2009. At that time, relatives and friends of all families present or having been in Manchester also moved there from all the Western European countries mentioned above. The most recent arrivals are some of the *Rudari*, who arrived in Manchester during summer of 2012.

3.2.2. Motives for migration/Push and pull factors

All interviewees gave similar reasons for migrating from Romania. These involved lack of work opportunities, made even more acute by the discrimination faced by the Rom., This was particularly felt by the women; F2 and F6 clearly connected the two issues, and F2 even pointed out at the gender dimension. Many older interviewees, and some of the younger ones referring to their parents, also pointed out at a desire to offer better educational opportunities to the younger generations.

A common narrative about Western European countries as lands of opportunities emerged from all the interviews. Such narrative was not based on direct knowledge of any particular

country, but rather on hearsay collected from both Roma and Romanians who had migrated before.

The choice of Germany in the early 1990s was clearly influenced by the notion that seeking asylum there was a viable choice when leaving Romania. Following the introduction of the *Agreement establishing an association between the European Economic Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and Romania, of the other part*²³, various countries (for example Italy and Spain) allowed for cheap labour from Romania to enter their borders and many Roma followed Romanians who took on these opportunities.

3.2.3. Migratory experiences

The experiences of the interviewees in these various countries are again remarkably similar. In all countries, the Roma engaged in the same sort of low-income jobs (often unregistered employment), self-employment and begging which they had previously practiced in Romania (see 3.3.1 and 3.3.2).

Housing conditions varied from family to family. In Italy, Spain and France some lived in flats or houses, but many ended up in camps. Unfortunately, we do not presently know, in which exact localities stable or makeshift housing was found.

Interviewees agree that nearly all countries did not match the expectations created by the commonly shared narrative about them. This was particularly the case for the interviewees who had experienced challenging housing conditions. Mentions of racism in Italy and France also emerged from the interviews. In these cases, interviewees reported following more hearsay about other countries, eventually leading them to arrive in the UK.

In a minority of cases (F3, F5 and F9) the migratory experience has been simpler as people moved directly from Romania to the UK in order to join family members already there.

3.2.4. Current perceived needs and aspirations

At the moment, the most pressing issues voiced by interviewees are the availability of easily accessible school places and access to more stable forms of employment.

The most frequent enquiries addressed to the outreach workers during the drop-in sessions show that, beside the above issues, families are also concerned about and facing some difficulties in the following areas:

²³<http://ec.europa.eu/world/agreements/prepareCreateTreatiesWorkspace/treatiesGeneralData.do?step=0&redirect=true&treatyId=742>

- Payments
 - Setting up utility accounts
 - Setting up Council Tax payments
- Tax return
 - On-line tax services
- Employment
 - Obtaining a national insurance number
 - Obtaining a peddler licence
 - Sick-leave for self-employed
 - Documentation for entitlement to work in the UK
 - Access to employment/job offers
- Education and training
 - School applications/school places
 - Adult ESOL classes
 - Adult numeracy classes
- Benefits
 - Child benefits
- Skills
 - Accessing online applications (i.e.: housing benefits, peddler licences)

All these issues are regularly complicated by the general low levels of literacy, and in some cases lack of spoken English, among the older generations.

The lack of familiarity with bureaucratic procedures, both among older and younger generations, results in the need for assistance, but it is also a further complicating factor for the above issues.

3.2.5. Future expectations

All interviewees with children, and even some of those yet to have any, expressed a strong desire for their offspring to complete at least secondary school and possibly some form of vocational training.

In the run-up to the lifting of employment restrictions (1 January 2014) and through the following month an increasing number of men of all ages and youths from both sexes have requested assistance to the outreach workers in order to compile CVs to apply for various jobs.

Some of the older women interviewed are also considering the opportunity of looking into employment (mostly as cleaners) but realising they lack some language skill are willing to access some form of training.

Among the younger interviewees some are not considering going back to Romania, or even maintaining connections with the country by building houses there. Rather, they see themselves as settled in the UK.

3.3 Occupation, work, economic strategies

3.3.1. Economic strategies in Romania before 1990

Where factories were active, some men had jobs there. Men also worked in construction, including some specializing in flooring or woodcraft for house decoration.

Women, besides taking care of the house, occasionally worked as cleaners. If the family owned a small plot of land they also grew vegetables and reared chickens, mostly for family consumption but occasionally selling them.

Both men and women engaged in scrap metal collection and, with the exception of the *Khangljari*, also in peddling and door-to-door trade. Engagement in these trades increased following the reduction in working opportunities after the revolution. At the same time, street cleaning for benefits became an activity common among both men and women.

3.3.2. Economic strategies in different migration phases

As mentioned in 3.2.3, the same economic strategies characterising Roma in Romania were replicated in the migration phases, with the exception of employment in factories.

The collection of scrap metal became the most common form of income generation, shortly followed by windshield cleaning at traffic lights (particularly in France and Italy). Seasonal work in agriculture and construction were also common choices for men. In most cases these forms of employment were unregistered.

M6 and F3 reported that some of their relatives sold street newspapers in Alicante (Spain). It is not clear if selling street newspapers was an activity taken up by the Roma in other localities where they are available (Belgium, France).

Open begging was a common activity among women, particularly in Catholic countries. It is still unclear if and how welfare provisions or charitable support were accessed during the residence in other countries.

3.3.3. Present occupations and strategies

As already mentioned (1.1.5), Romanian Roma in the UK have, until January 2014, mostly been limited to self-employment or temporary/seasonal employment in the agricultural and food sectors, which led them to replicate the same economic strategies engaged in other countries.

Apparently none of the Roma living in Manchester has ever worked in the agricultural or food sectors in the UK, although, as mentioned above, some had experiences of similar employments in other countries.

Self-employment has therefore been the main source of income for nearly all the families. Given the low level skills possessed by working age individuals, self-employment has taken the form of peddling, scrap metal collection and selling the Big Issue. A clear distinction between the different groups present in Manchester, replicating group specialisations in pre-revolution Romania, can be seen in this respect. The *Khangljari*, who hardly engaged in peddling, mostly rely on selling the Big Issue. Families from Transylvania and Bucharest, continue peddling (flowers, balloons, toys). In the *Čurari* family (F6, F7) both men and some women are employed at a car wash. This employment has most likely been achieved as the family is the first to have arrived in Manchester (see 3.2.1) and had thus more opportunities to establish connections with local employers and possibly obtain formal permission for employment (Blue and Yellow Cards). All families integrate income from selling the Big Issue or peddling with scrap metal collection. In a few cases (see for example M7) people have been employed, generally in informal ways, in constructions, restaurants and as cleaners for small businesses.

The youth who attended the BigLife Group training also contributed to family finances through their work as classroom assistant and interpreters for the Black Health Agency, although the cutting of funds has meant a reduction of work (see 1.3).

All families aim to access various benefits, however many have seen their claims rejected, as they were deemed not eligible for the benefits. The relatively high rate of rejections seems due to the opaque presentation of eligibility criteria. On the paper and on-line forms provided by MCC and national agencies there is a generic mention of 'low income' as a criterion, however such 'low income' is often not openly quantified. Similarly, on-line calculators provided by the different agencies require users to provide various information (family income, number of family members, currently paid rent, length of stay in the UK, etc.) and then informs them of how much in benefits, if any, they can receive, but does not inform users how this calculation is done. Furthermore, on occasions the results provided by the on-line calculator do not match the outcome of the actual application procedure. The most commonly received benefits are working tax breaks, while a minority of families receive housing and child benefits.

Austerity measures hurriedly passed by the Government following the public debate about Roma and migration from Europe (see 1.2), are however, making accessing even tax breaks increasingly more difficult. Such measures include tougher checks, requiring the production of more documents, reductions in the length of time certain benefits can be received and in the total amount, as well as an increased period of stay in the UK before claiming (only

applicable to new arrivals). Many such restrictions only apply to EU citizens and are currently being questioned by the left-wing media and in Brussels.

3.3.4. Plans, expectations, dreams

As the lifting of employment restrictions neared in January 2014, various men took an active approach to employment. Older individuals are looking into low-skill jobs like cleaners, kitchen runners, and drivers. The Roma youth attending college are currently looking at various career paths including translation and interpreting, sport trainer, social and youth worker. Both groups are looking for formal employment and have inquired with the outreach workers about the correct procedures to achieve this. However, the pressing needs to support their families mean they are always willing to be employed on an informal basis.

Among children and teenagers attending school, expectations vary from doctor, social worker, interpreter and on to footballer and actor. Parents are generally not clear about what kind of work they dream of for their children but hope it would be better than what they have at the moment.

As mentioned in 3.2.5, some of the older women interviewed are considering the opportunity of looking into employment (mostly as cleaners). They perceive their lack of English skills more keenly than men and thus subordinate the search for employment to access to some form of training. Attendance to training courses is in turn subordinated to family care, which often means employment remains mostly a desire for women.

3.4 Housing

3.4.1. Present housing conditions. House, neighbourhood, locality

In the neighbourhoods where Roma live (see 3.1.1) high numbers of cheap terraced houses are available for rent on the private market. Roma favour this kind of accommodation, like other ethnic groups in these localities. Some *Ardžintari* families opted for flats located on the upper floor of terraces hosting shops on the ground floor, rather than entire terraced houses.

All houses are two-storey and centrally heated. On the ground floor of the bigger houses is a lounge, a dining room and a kitchen. In smaller houses the kitchen and dining room are merged. On the upper floor there is a bathroom and between 2 to 3 bedrooms. The lounge is occasionally turned into a further bedroom and in some houses that have been recently refurbished a toilet might be available on the ground floor. Houses also have a small back yard, which families engaging in scrap metal collection use as a deposit.

Flats, on the other hand, have an open plan living room and kitchen, a bathroom and between one and two bedrooms.

Basic appliances (cooker, fridge, washing machine) are always provided by the landlord and in some cases microwaves, electric kettles and dryers are also be provided. At their own expenses, Roma further equip houses with satellite dishes so that they can watch Romanian TV. TV and stereo sets generally feature prominently in the lounge or dining room. Computers are seldom available in the houses and people tend to access the Internet through smart phones or at nearby Internet cafes, also used by other migrants living in the neighbourhood. Mobile phones have completely replaced land lines and nearly every individual possessing one purchases top-up SIM cards offering cheap international call rates in order to reduce expenses when calling relatives in Romania or other countries.

Rents are paid monthly and range from £450 to £600 while utility (gas, electricity, water) costs are generally around £100 a month. As mentioned in 1.1.2, various families have applied for housing benefits, but only a minority receives them and it is currently not clear how exactly the amounts paid are calculated. The maximum received by a fraction of families is £500, while the majority generally receives an amount ranging between quarter and half of the contracted rent. Families not receiving benefits are generally able to pay their rent, utility bills and Council Tax (see Table 3 for the last five years amounts) regularly.

Amount	Year
£847.99	2008/2009
£877.09	2009/2010
£884.66	2010/2011
£884.66	2011/2012
£884.66	2012/2013
£919.49	2013/2014

The Tax is generally paid in quarterly instalments, but some families are starting to pay by Direct Debit. As all families have minors and/or young people in full-time education they qualify for a 25% discount.

Table 3: MCC Council Tax for terraced houses and flats in terraced houses

On occasion lack of understanding of payment procedures or periods of low work-generated income (see 1.1.5 and 3.3) means payments are delayed.

3.4.2. Background of housing conditions in Romania

The majority of families coming from smaller towns lived in small, detached, single floor houses comprising of an open floor kitchen, one or two bedrooms, a bathroom and a small yard. Occasionally the bathroom was located in a separate hut in the yard.

Normally located in the so-called *țigănie* ‘Gypsy neighbourhoods’ outside the town centre, such houses were not always connected to the water and electricity networks. In such cases, water was fetched from a well using a mechanical pump and electricity was stolen from nearby lampposts. Heating was normally provided by stoves working on gas tanks or wood/coal in the more deprived *țigănie*. Rubbish collection and public transport normally did not cover the *țigănie*.

In Bucharest families mostly lived in socialist era blocks in the city periphery.

3.4.3. History of housing in migration

As mentioned in 3.2.3 housing conditions in previous migratory phases varied from family to family and ranged from makeshift accommodations in camps (Italy, Spain and France) to flats or houses (all countries). Details about locations, conditions, rental agreements, payment arrangements and so on are currently not available.

3.4.4 Plans, investments, expectations in housing

Families are generally satisfied with their current housing condition in Manchester. An exception in this respect was voiced by F9, who is currently sharing the house with relatives as her nuclear family arrived recently. She is looking forward to when she and her husband earn enough to rent their own place.

In terms of plans and investments, the majority of Roma wished to build a house away from the *țigănia* and in the centre of their town of origin. Some families have already started and, in some cases, even finished building such houses, seen as a display of successful upward social mobility. The houses, however, are left empty for most of the year and are only used when the family visit Romania.

This practice is coming under question among some interviewees, particularly those that are not considering going back to Romania as they feel well integrated in the UK. For example, F8, an unmarried mother of three owning an old house in Bistrița, said she is not thinking about investing her money in building more in Romania as life is better in the UK. Similarly, F4 and F5, whose entire extended family is in Manchester, do not feel discriminated as against, in Romania and F4, the mother, is considering buying a house in the UK.

Although during the interviews we heard only older women dismissing the idea of building in Romania, Mr Tanase reported that some young males as well are starting to disregard building in Romania. In these cases, however, some tensions might arise between

fathers and sons, as the older generations consider building a house in Romania as a duty for a successful man.

3.5 Education, learning and training history

3.5.1. Personal and family education/training background

Among the interviewees, members of the older generations (35 and older) generally attended school for around 8 years in pre-revolution Romania.

In the following generation (25-34) some individuals achieved the same level of schooling, while others only attended school for 2 to 4 years. In both cases, members of this generation might have attended school in different countries and experienced some time out of the schooling system as they were migrating with their families.

In some of the more traditional families, for example the *Piculesti* (F4 and F5), women of both generations did not attend school, but this is the only exception to the above pattern.

For the youngest generation (less than 25), years in school vary depending on their length of stay in the UK and age at the time of their arrival. Those that arrived more recently and/or were already teenagers when arriving, generally have fewer years (2-3, often achieved in countries other than the UK) than those who came earlier and/or were younger (5-10, of which at least half continuously in the UK).

Finally, as also reported in the MCC strategy, children born in the UK or who arrived before reaching their teens are attending school regularly and completing secondary education.

In terms of training, it is only the youth (25 and under) who, through participation in the BigLife Group training programme and/or attendance to colleges, have had or are having formal training. Among the older generations skills have been acquired through working experiences and thus mirror the employment trajectories of individuals.

3.5.2. Schooling experience

Personal experiences in schools have not been discussed in details with interviewees, nor were they brought up by individuals accessing the drop-in sessions. The only clear facts at the moment are the generational difference in attendance patterns mentioned above (3.5.1) and that, with the exception of F3, all interviewees who went to school in Romania followed the national Romanian curriculum. F3 is the only informant in the younger generation who attended a Romanian school implementing the Romani curriculum. As a result she is the only one who formally learnt to read and write Romani. Other interviewees either stated that they

cannot read and write in Romani, although they all have at least basic skills in Romanian, or that they learnt to do it by themselves.

3.5.3. Child-rearing practices and gender. Changes in migration

No information currently available.

3.5.4. Attitudes/Expectations about education by gender

All families are eager to send children of both sexes to primary school. Those already settled in Manchester do apply for places as soon as children reach school age. In the case of families just moving in Manchester, the International New Arrivals Team directs them to local schools and encourages them to apply for places.

Concerning high school, some families insist that daughters must attend an all-girls school. Their availability in the UK, and the fact that they are already popular with other migrant groups which like the Roma discourage socialization among teenagers of different genders, is clearly a helping factor in guaranteeing that both boys and girls across the entire Roma population continued education to secondary level.

Education is in general seen as a window of opportunity into the job market. With the exception of F2 saying that she would like her daughter to become a lawyer and F7 wishing her son to become a doctor and daughter to become a social worker, parents are often not clear about what kind of work they dream of for their children. More simply they hope that thanks to education children will have better jobs than those parents have.

Both men and women in the older generation recognise their limited range of skills and, where possible, considering their other commitments, try to access adult education.

3.5.5. Relation with school staff

During the interviews and at the drop-in sessions, no complaint toward school staff emerged, suggesting that relationships with school staff are good.

Observations carried out by Ms Sutac in her capacity as teacher confirm this impression. Furthermore, Ms Sutac noted how families actively participate in school life, particularly when staff make the effort of explaining what the school expectations are. For example, families know that they have to communicate to the school when a child is not able to attend, they attend parents meetings and participate in events organised by the school (i.e.: children performances before holidays) and regularly enquire with staff if they receive some correspondence they do not fully understand. Families are also keenly enquiring about their

children's progression, particularly in literacy, suggesting older generations rely on, or plan to rely on, the younger ones to deal with bureaucratic procedures. In schools that employ Romanian speakers, families also enquire with this particular segment of the staff when needing assistance in matters unrelated to the school.

As families have generally experienced school systems which put more emphasis on homework than the British system does, they often ask school staff why children are not working at home, suspecting their children are not doing well. Again based on their experience with other school systems, newly arrived families are regularly surprised by the fact that they do not have to provide stationery and books for their children. Finally, at least in early stages of the relationship with schools, families are regularly worried when contacted by school staff as in their previous experiences this always happened when their children were in some trouble.

It must be noted that, if the parents of a child are not able to interact with school staff due to low English skills, an uncle, aunt or older sibling will take up this role. While this perfectly fits in with Roma family organisation where duties are shared across the entire extended family, some teachers see parents delegating to their relatives as negligent and have complained about it.

The Black Health Agency intervention in schools (see 1.3) must be considered a crucial factor in fostering such good relationships and various participants in the survey voiced a desire to have similar schemes run again in the future.

3.5.6. Support for children in education. Gender differences

No detailed information about the strategies employed by parents to support children has so far been collected. However, as mentioned above, all parents are extremely supportive and the availability of all-girls high schools is improving school attendance for female teenagers.

3.5.7. Schooling in the countries of migration as experience by Roma

No information currently available.

3.6 Family history and family networks

No detailed information collected yet. See Table 2 for currently held information about family networks.

3.7 Language and communication

3.7.1. Linguistic competences and language biography

Romani is the home language of all families except for the *Rudari/Lingurari*, which instead have Romanian as their home language. Knowledge of Romanian is retained by families who have Romani as their home language. As detailed observations in this regard have not yet been carried out, we speculate that satellite TV might have a crucial role for children acquiring Romanian.

Competence in English varies across generations, with skills progressively increasing as age decreases. At the moment the widest range of skills can be found among the youth that accessed the BigLife Group training and are attending college. Children and teenagers in school have only slightly lower skills, as they have not yet acquired specialist vocabularies, but they look set to surpass their older peers. Older individuals have generally very basic skills.

Competence in other languages acquired during different migration phases has not been tested, but nearly all individuals between 18 and 30 reported speaking at least one language among French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese and German.

3.7.2. Attitudes about Romani and other languages

The *Rudari/Lingurari* see the fact that they have shifted to Romanian as problematic.

Both informants (M7, F9) recall how their parents were already in the process of shifting while their grandparents still spoke Romani. Both however stated they are able to understand some Romani words and simple phrases. The language shift is, in both informants' narratives, related to other differences between them and the Romani speakers, in particular the lack of adherence to female dress codes.

In spite of these differences, they still regard themselves as Roma and mentioned how both in Romania and in the various migratory contexts they were and are still interacting with Romani speakers. Attendance at Pentecostal gatherings was cited as one of the occasions in which they do interact with Romani speakers.

We have also collected some anecdotal evidence from Romani speakers about their astonishment at realising that they share words with people of Asian backgrounds. F7 even claimed to be able to have basic exchanges with her Asian neighbours in their language.

All interviewees mentioned their difficulties with English when first arriving. However they all eventually acquired some English and stressed the importance of contacts with English speakers through work or school in achieving that. Emphasis on this learning

trajectory and on English knowledge as a necessary skill to acquire or improve employment shows a practical attitude toward English.

Attitudes toward other languages acquired in different countries have not been investigated yet. Again, anecdotal evidence, this time from F3, suggests that individuals who have been in Spain might have come in contact with Gitanos and noticed lexical similarities between their variety of Spanish and Romani.

3.7.3. Communication in the migration experience

No information currently available.

3.7.4. Communication technologies and transnational experiences

As mentioned in 3.4.1, computers are seldom available in the houses and people tend to access the Internet at nearby Internet cafes or through smart phones. Mobile phones have completely replaced landlines and nearly every individual possessing one purchases top-up SIM cards offering cheap international call rates.

Some preliminary observations about usage of Facebook among Roma youth showed that Romani speakers use Romanian and occasionally English, although they are able to understand messages in Romani.

Some schoolchildren and youth are also Facebook friends with council officials and Black Health Agency staff members with whom they worked.

3.8 Health and healthcare

8.1. Self-perceived state of health and health problems. Diseases and accidents

No systematic observation has been carried out in this respect. F2 spontaneously mentioned her diabetes and high blood pressure problems. Similarly, F3 reported her mother needed an unspecified surgery.

8.2. Health limitations to daily life activities. Dependency and informal care

F2 attributed her difficulties in working to her health problems, but did not provide details nor was prompted to do so.

8.3. Access to health care

Registration with the publicly run National Health System (NHS) is tied to proof of address, which generally means nuclear families are able to register only once they have a rent

contract, utility bill or similar document in one parent's name. This results in new arrivals temporarily settling with relatives and delaying registration with the NHS until they locate a house for themselves. Save for these temporary issues, all families are registered with the NHS. No participant in the survey mentioned having any form of private health insurance.

Because of this, pre-natal and maternity care, dentist and specialist treatment are accessed through the NHS, if accessed at all. Dentist and specialist treatment require some small payment, therefore families that access them generally also receive tax breaks or some other benefits, which always include exemptions from additional NHS charges.

In general, when individuals require some treatment or a surgery, they tended to go back to Romania where they can skip waiting times by paying for treatment in Pound Sterling.

Usage of emergency care is often limited by the difficulties, both real and perceived, of accessing interpreters at emergency units. Normally it is only people confident in English that access emergency care. Alternatively, a relative that could interpret is brought along if available. This option is however unfeasible in cases where, due to privacy or health and safety regulations, the relative is not allowed to see the doctor together with the patient.

F2 accessed treatment for her condition at a local hospital when in Manchester, as she received benefits and was therefore not required to pay the extra charges.

8.4. Food, nutrition

No information currently available.

8.5. Lifestyles and un/healthy habits. Use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs

No detailed information currently available. The Pentecostal Church encourages a strict conduct, banning the consumption of alcohol, tobacco and drugs but it is not clear at the moment to what degree this conduct is adhered to.

8.6. Reproductive health

No information currently available.

3.9 Social and political relations

9.1. Relations with institutions

Most individuals, when not asking for assistance from the project outreach workers, interact with the authorities through contacts with the Black Health Agency and International New Arrivals staff with whom they are familiar due to the various interventions for the Roma

carried out by these actors. The community centre run by BigLife Group (where the drop-in sessions take place) is also accessed, particularly for the nursery services they offer. Enquiries with the police almost exclusively relate to scrap metal collection and peddling licencing, as they are areas dealt with by the police. Interviewees are satisfied with the services they receive, overall. Furthermore, they generally find that clerks and civil servants are not racist and that Roma are not discriminated against.

Some frustration arises when people are not able to understand why they are denied certain services or access to benefits. However, this is generally attributed not to the responsibility of the institution but to one's own lack of understanding of English or bureaucratic procedures. However, some complaints have been voiced in regard to particular individuals, especially police clerks.

The Roma youth have participated in various activities organised by the project, such as a roundtable on Balkan Music and Roma Migration, peer-to-peer training led by student volunteers and the panel discussion with David Blunkett. The same young people are also taking part in the activities run at Inspire, a local community centre. Inspire also has a cafe, where Roma men of all ages often go to socialise.

9.2. Political organisation and participation

No information currently available.

9.3. Internal community politics

No information currently available.

9.4. Social networks and ethnic borders

No detailed information currently available. However, all interviewees agree that relationships with their neighbours are generally good. Roma do not feel they are treated with disrespect, as they often felt in Romania and in some of the other migration countries.

Only M6 complained about one neighbour reporting his family to the authorities, accusing M6 and his family of being noisy and living in overcrowded conditions. No action was taken once authorities investigated the claim.

Some interviewees complained about rubbish collection in their neighbourhood. Interestingly, mirroring the widespread media and popular claim that Roma are responsible for littering, these interviewees blamed either the *Gadže* or the Pakistani for littering.

9.5. Leisure and entertainment in new countries

No information currently available.

3.10 Beliefs and practices

10.1. Religious background of family

With the exception of some *Ardžintari* families, everyone attends the meeting of the Pentecostal church. The attendance of the *Rudari/Lingurari* to the services and adherence to religious norms of conduct seems to function as a way to affirm their Romani identity even if they do not speak Romani and do not follow other cultural norms.

10.2. Religious experiences: changes during migration

No information currently available.

10.3. Roma cosmologies, world-views and beliefs

No detailed information currently available.

10.4. Being Roma: values, norms, constructs of difference

With the exception of the problems mentioned by the *Rudari/Lingurari* in connection with language (see 3.7.2), no information was collected.

10.5. Gender ideologies

No information currently available.