

DREAM TO GROW

JOB/
EMPLOYMENT



UNIVERSITY/
GRADUATION



SECOND-CHANCE
EDUCATION

HIGH
SCHOOL



PRIMARY AND
SECONDARY SCHOOL



PRESCHOOL/
KINDERGARTEN

FATIME'S
STORY

THERE ARE ABOUT 40 ROMA PROFESSIONALS IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT FIELD.



I am Fatima. Starting with where I am now, and going back to my early years, I will walk you through my journey to become the person I am today. I will share notable moments in my life – exploring the events that made me strong and introducing you to the individuals who supported me throughout the many challenges I faced on my journey. **I am proud to be Roma, of who I am now, and of my dream to grow.**

I work as family support professional in Belgium. During my induction, I attended specific training, where I learned how to use my own experience of social exclusion to strengthen families.

I am the only Roma support professional at an agency called Kind en Gezin. My work is highly appreciated in the Roma community, and it breaks the traditional gender norms for me to work in this role.

ALMOST 80 FAMILY SUPPORTERS, FROM DIFFERENT CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS WORK AT KIND EN GEZIN.

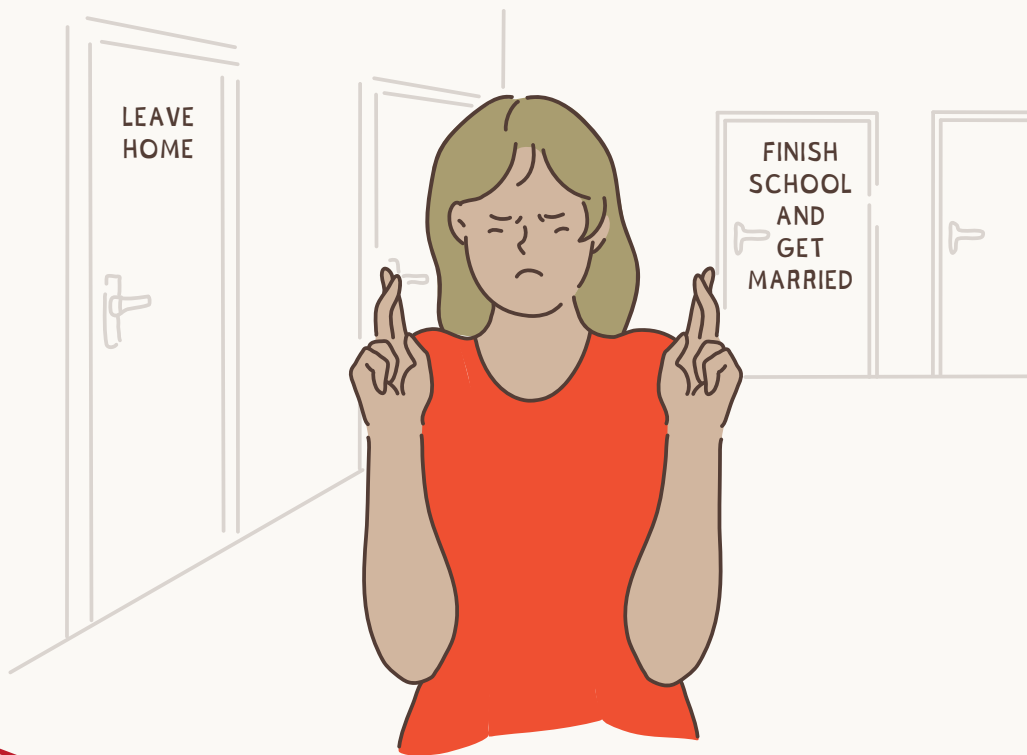
I want to continue studying for my bachelor's degree in family sciences or social work so that I can have more professional career opportunities.



When I was 18, I lived on my own and received a living wage from the public support agency. In the meantime, I met a new boyfriend, stopped studying, and slipped into depression.

But after a few years, I decided to enter a second-chance education program and successfully received my diploma in care for young people and children with special needs. I completed my study without anyone's support — not from my boyfriend, nor my parents.





THERE IS NO OFFICIAL DATA, BUT EARLY DROP-OUT AMONG ROMA STUDENTS IS VERY COMMON.

I wanted to become a lawyer, but I ended up in a social-technical science school. Though I had a study stipend, it was not enough to cover the costs of school trips or school supplies she needed.

My parents wanted me to finish school and get married. At 14 years old, I was a rebellious teenager, and I left my home. I stayed with two foster families and in orphanages.



**COMPULSORY
EDUCATION APPLIES
TO ALL CHILDREN
FROM 5 TO 18
YEARS OF AGE.**

**ROMA CHILDREN
ARE OVERREPRE-
SENTED IN SPECIAL
EDUCATION.
THIS IS MOST
OFTEN RELATED TO
LANGUAGE ISSUES,
LOW LEVEL OF
EARLY EDUCATION,
IRREGULAR
ATTENDANCE
OR PRECARIOUS
STATUS.**

Due to the war in Kosovo, my family immigrated to Belgium when I was seven years old. Once I arrived, my uncle helped my family enroll my siblings and me in school and apply for social benefits.

I started attending primary school. Day by day, I tried to prove I was well integrated, even though there was no homework assistance or support for me to learn Dutch. After a year, I mastered Dutch as if it were my mother tongue. This made me the go-between for my parents and the school.



While attending kindergarten in Kosovo, I had no friends. Other children kept their distance. It was as if they were not allowed to play with me. The teachers were friendly, but during breaks, I was always alone.

LESS THAN
60% OF
ROMA CHILDREN
PARTICIPATE IN
EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION.



REYN BELGIUM IS ESTABLISHED IN 2018 AND IS A NETWORK OF EARLY YEARS PROFESSIONALS THAT ARE STRIVING TO ENSURE EQUITY FOR ROMANI AND TRAVELER FAMILIES AND CHILDREN IN ACCESSING HIGH-QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES. OUR OBJECTIVES ARE:

- BUILDING A STRONG INCLUSIVE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY AMONG ROMANI AND NON-ROMANI ECECE PRACTITIONERS WORKING WITH ROMANI AND TRAVELLERS FAMILIES.
- SUPPORT EXCHANGE OF EXPERTISE AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
- DEVELOP STRATEGIES TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF ROMANI AND TRAVELLER PROFESSIONALS AND PARA-PROFESSIONALS (SUPPORT STAFF) INVOLVED IN THE EARLY YEARS SERVICES.
- ADVOCATING FOR INCLUSIVE POLICIES AND PRACTICES, BY IDENTIFYING AND SIGNAL STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS CONCERNING ACCESSIBILITY OF ECEC FOR ROMANI AND TRAVELLER FAMILIES.



vbjk

Vernieuwing in de
Basisvoorzieningen
voor Jonge Kinderen

Innovation for VBJK means working continuously on quality. We keep track of evolutions on the workforce and in research, we follow-up in national and international changes and keep moving so that basic provision for young children can keep on growing. VBJK is committed to support, improve, deepen and fine-tune the daily work of so many professionals.

We do this by connecting all involved parties: children, parents, practitioners, researchers, policymakers and all possible relevant organisations. We also do this in our coaching projects, our product development and our research. VBJK always looks for work on the crossroads between practice, policy and research.

The data presented are the result of research and monitoring done by REYN Belgium and its hosting organization VBJK.