

WHAT and HOW?



What do the Roma activists and non-Roma allies do? And how do they do it?

ENGAGE

As an activist and an ally, you can engage in many **different forms of action**. For example, you can act in everyday situations whenever there is prejudice and discrimination, by sharing information that you have learned about Roma people, engaging in conversations about stereotypes and prejudice, responding to problematic comments or micro discrimination (such as jokes), even when it feels uncomfortable. This can help create non-prejudiced **social norms** in **your closest environment**. Also, you can **volunteer** or start working for an organization that advocates for Roma rights or you can financially **support** such an organization or actions. Moreover, you can sign or start a **petition** to support a specific cause related to Roma rights. Or you can engage in a **protest** to support the Roma and convince your close ones to join too.

Roma activists

Sustainable activism is **collective**. Find **hope** and **empowerment** in joining others and finding **alliances within** the Roma community (or beyond). This can help you transform negative experiences into activism and can give you great **pride** in your identity as a Roma person and in your identity as an activist.

You are a member of many groups and social categories. Being Roma is important, but only one of your identities. **Reflect on your other identities** when engaging in activism. Use your **privileges** to help your cause, but also understand that not everyone within the Roma community has these privileges. **Be a good ally to Roma people with less privileges.**

Involve your community to gather more support for change and to have a stronger voice. Also, **find allies** in the majority or other disadvantaged groups who will amplify your voice.

Consider the **costs and risks** of activism as you might be facing obstacles, failures or even physical attacks as an activist. Not considering the costs might lead to disappointment, frustration, disillusionment and eventually demobilization.

Direct the attention to the **structural causes** of anti-Gypsyism. Focusing on prejudice as an individual trait does not lead to change at the societal level.

When engaging in contact with non-Roma people, **it can be difficult to bring up the topic of discrimination and injustices**. Both of you may feel more comfortable to all together avoid this topic and focus on nice things. It is always your choice if you prefer to focus on the positive or discuss social injustices. **The most effective way to bring up the topic of discrimination and social injustices is by sharing stories** that induce empathy in the listener.

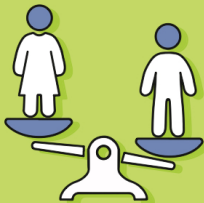


Non-Roma allies

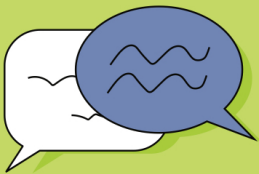
As an ally, you need to identify **your role and position** in the movement. Don't try to figure it out by yourself, get engaged with Roma people and find out how your engagement can be useful.



Recognize the **value of allyship** and use it **responsibly**. Sometimes your voice will be heard by authorities before the voice of Roma people is heard. This gives allies the responsibility to speak up, but also to create the space for Roma people to speak up for themselves.



Beware of your own **privilege** (and be willing to reduce your comfort) and **prejudices**. Don't be in the cause only for the direct rewards of activism or for your personal gain. Especially do not get engaged only to solidify your high status and privilege.



When you are in contact with Roma people, you may be motivated to avoid the topic of discrimination and injustices. This avoidance can create a nice atmosphere for both of you, but it can have a devastating effect for Roma activism. You need to **show openness to conversations about social injustices**.



Educate yourself and acknowledge your group's past and present wrongdoings and how it may still cause pain and suffering for Roma people. If past or present grievances are discussed, do not get defensive, but listen and respond with empathy. Be **open to feedback** from Roma people on your past and current actions. This is important to build partnership and trust.

Non-Roma allies

Consider the **costs and risks** of allyship and take on only as much as you can offer sustainably. Temporary allyship can be important at particular events, but it can also lead to disappointment and may even cause damage to communities and for social change in the long run. However, also consider that activism may be less risky for non-Roma allies than for Roma activists, and identify your responsibility accordingly.



To make allyship sustainable, have long term and **larger goals** that include Roma issues, rather than focusing on single events only. For example, when insisting on school inclusion as a value you also insist on the inclusion of Roma pupils, or in advocating for more positions in elected offices for women you advocate for the Roma women too. Effective allyship means that you consistently speak up against discrimination and injustice whenever you encounter it.



Good allyship must be based on mutual **acceptance**, and not based on deservingness. As an ally, you should not have expectations about what and how Roma activists should do, but you can always engage in conversations about good and effective forms of activism as partners.



You need to think in **terms of what the Roma community really needs and not** in terms of what you think is good for them. **Do not patronize Roma people in general and Roma activists in particular.** As an ally, focus on empowering Roma people, not disempowering them.



Know when to **listen and affirm**, use your allyship to amplify Roma voices.

