



## Theory of Change

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## PREFACE

Throughout Europe, 10-12 million Roma people are living with the effects of chronic political, social and economic marginalisation. Structural, institutional and organisational inequalities continue impede their full participation in society

In March 2023, Kuumba Imani, a Liverpool-based charity began working with Liverpool Hope University to understand ways to promote community development, education, health and social care outreach activities with Roma children and families living in the L8 region of Liverpool. As plans for collaboration grew, the partnership extended to include the Lauda project, St Luke in the City, The Life Rooms Community Inclusion Team, and Edge Hill University.

Recognising that community development and outreach activities with Roma people should be first foregrounded in community consultation, planning and review, the collation of organisations agreed that work should be undertaken to speak to Roma people and service providers. The method selected for community consultation was a Theory of Change workshop, facilitated with service leads and Roma parents and cares.

Theory of Change workshops were chosen as the most appropriate method to work with the Roma community and key stakeholders in education, health and social care, including Edge Hill University, to model what community development and outreach activities might be required.

The Theory of Change workshops were particularly useful in considering complex community interventions and allowed for the exploration of why and how outreach projects could and should work. Thus, the workshop attempted to bring any latent assumptions to the surface listing only outreach activities and objectives that were wanted and important, establishing key performance indicators and a framework for community development, project investment and enhancement. For this reason, the Theory of Change presented in this short report is intended to help structure and inform community development activities that could be funded in the future.

The inclusion of the Roma people and key stakeholders from education, health and social care in the development of this Theory of Change gives a broader perspective to community development and outreach activities. By bringing into consideration the issues that are important from a public perspective, it is hoped that the involvement of Roma people will increase public accountability, and improve education, health and social care community development in the future.

Dr Dan Allen  
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## **SUMMARY**

The Theory of Change for Shucar Glasso (Beautiful Voices) has been developed to help and inform community development and outreach opportunities that can deliver changes and improvements to education, health and social care services for Roma young people living in Liverpool. To shape, guide and inform this ambition, this document presents a Theory of Change devised by education, health and social care professionals and Roma parents and carers living in Liverpool.

This summary report details the changes Shucar Glasso could bring about, in what way, and for whom. The Theory of Change presented herein could also provide a basis for future funding, project development and evaluation, implemented with the support of a Special Interest Group, to help shape its direction, reach, purpose and function in the future.

## **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights recognise that Roma, Europe largest and most marginalised ethnic minority group, are among the people who are most vulnerable to human rights violations. In response to the centuries of persecution and oppression that has been experienced, The Council of Europe have devised a Strategic Action Plan on Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020). Recognising the need for targeted support for equality, democratic participation, public trust and accountability, The Action Plan places a firm focus on the need for social action that centres on employment, education, health and housing.

As a member of the Council of Europe (CoE), the United Kingdom was invited to develop a National Roma Integration Strategy in line with the Strasbourg Declaration of Roma (CoE, 2010). Instead, the British Government argued that existing domestic equality legislation and duties provided sufficient safeguards to promote equal access to employment, education, health and housing without adding this further layer of bureaucracy (Lane, Spencer and Jones, 2014).

Yet despite these assurances, research by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA, 2019) shows that Roma populations living in the United Kingdom continue to experience deep inequality, racism, social injustice and economic marginalisation. These findings show that the existing domestic equality legislation and duties are ineffective at breaking the cycle of social exclusion, discrimination and poverty that lock Roma people in a cycle of deprivation and disadvantage and the situation facing Roma people in Liverpool is no different.

Despite the commendable efforts of local services working across Liverpool (see Collins and Harrison, 2019), knowledge of how to promote and sustain community development and outreach services that can centre on employment, education, health and housing has not been advanced in equal depth.

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As a result, the way that community action groups can achieve contemporary civil targets of equality, democratic participation, public trust and accountability with Roma communities, as required by the Council of Europe, is unclear.

The unique contribution of Shucar Galssso aims to strengthen this knowledge base focusing on the experiences and challenges faced by Roma parents and carers and education, health and social care professionals in Liverpool, presenting a framework for community development and outreach.

### **THE UNDERLYING HYPOTHESIS**

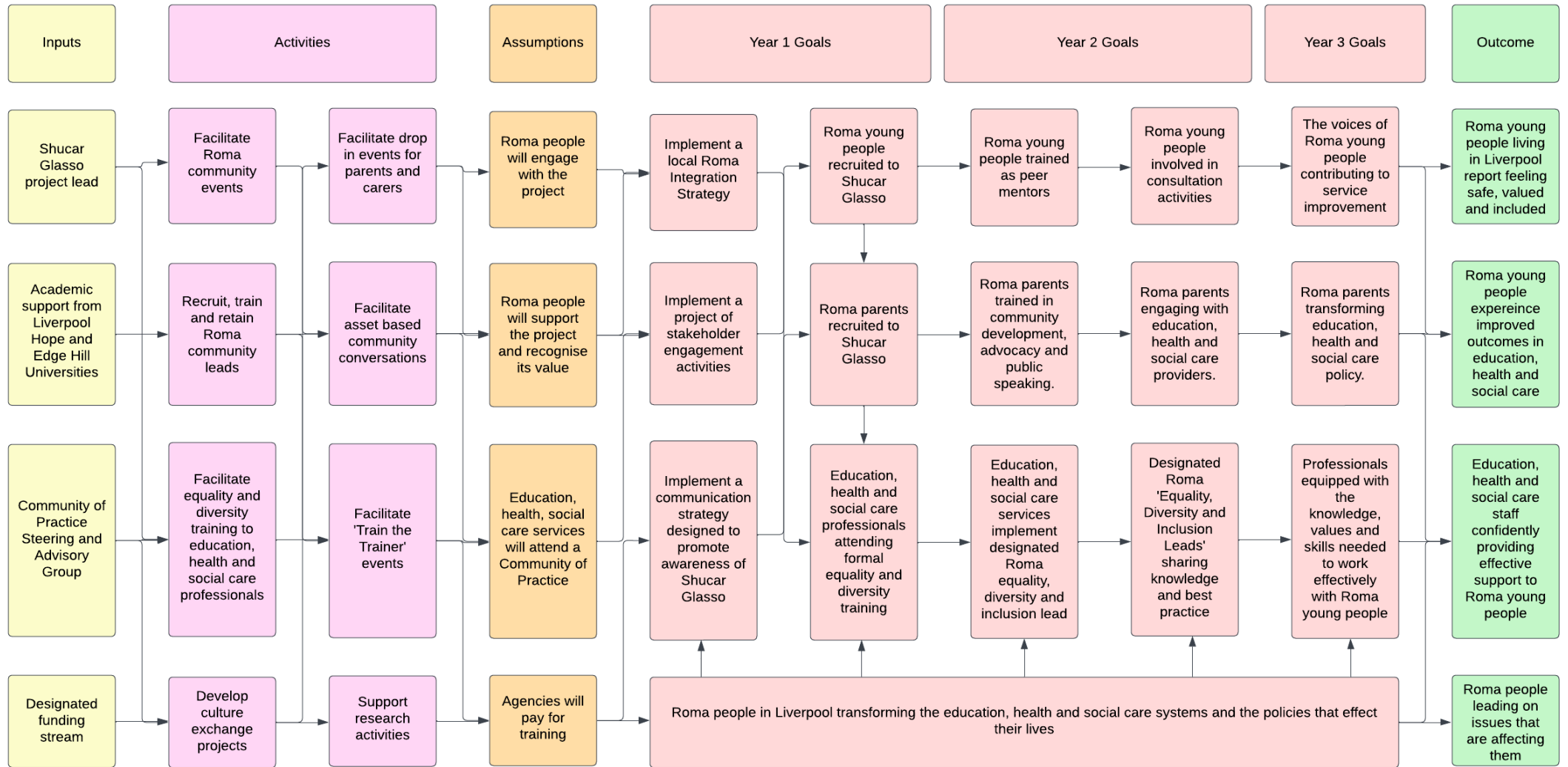
- Shucar Galssso can help to implement and evaluate a local Roma Integration Strategy in Liverpool.
- Shucar Galssso can build a Community of Practice that can achieve the healing of the social divisions caused by racism.
- Shucar Galssso can support Roma people to lead on identifying solutions to issues that are affecting them.
- Shucar Galssso can provide training and support to education, health and social care professionals working in Liverpool.

### **THE WORKPLAN**

The workplan for Shucar Galssso is presented as a Theory of Change that details the changes the project will bring about, in what way, and for whom (see Box 1 below). The Theory of Change will also provide a basis for funding and evaluation in the future. Once implemented, a Community of Practice will review and monitor the workplan. The initial Theory of Change may therefore be refined as evidence is applied to it.

A Theory of Change describes the mid-level theory as it relates to a particular programme or policy. Mid-level theories do not describe the intricate workings of a policy or programme (e.g. organisational processes), nor do they attempt to describe grand theories of how policies function in society. Rather, as their name suggests, they sit somewhere between the two and attempt to reconcile individual, organisational and social systems.

Box 1: The Shucar Glasso Theory of Change



The Theory of Change illustrates how individuals and systems (e.g., the structure of the Shucar Glasso) will interact to produce outcomes. To achieve this, the Theory of Change must use a set of assumptions about the choices the programme will make when travelling along each impact pathway. Along with a focus on context and mechanisms, the Theory of Change goes beyond a logic model and becomes a framework through which the evaluators can construct a narrative of the process of implementation and the resulting consequences.

Using a Theory of Change in a process that is as complex as Shucar Galsso helps to better articulate what the project is trying to achieve, and why and for this reason, a simplified version of the process has been devised. Rather than including all possible connections and feedback loops, the diagram shows only those which are currently theorised to be instrumental in bringing about the changes anticipated by the implementation of the programme. This mid-level theory is shown in Box 2.

#### **WHAT DIFFERENCES DOES SHUCAR GALSSO SEEK TO MAKE?**

*Box 2: Mid-level theory for the SIG*

Shucar Glasso represents a community-led community development and outreach project that works to engage Roma people alongside education, health and social care practitioners to secure improved outcomes for young Roma people living in Liverpool.

Working in partnership with Roma people living in Liverpool, Shucar Glasso will facilitate community events, talking libraries cultural exchange projects and asset-based community conversations. By establishing a platform to build a pro-Roma rights-based movement that can achieve the healing of the social divisions caused by racism, the project will work with young Roma people and their families to transform education, health and social care systems and the policies that affect their lives. By training community mentors and advocates, Shucar Galsso will work closely with education, health and social care providers to develop equality, diversity and inclusion strategies and the sharing of best practices. By enabling young people to contribute to service improvement, Shucar Galsso will help transform existing services and equip professionals with the knowledge needed to work effectively with Roma people living in Liverpool.

As a project that is committed to anti-racism, Shucar Glasso will continually shine a light on the scale and nature of racism, standing in solidarity with Roma people so that they feel safe, valued and included in Liverpool. The project will also serve as a beacon for best practice, supporting national and international initiatives needed to provide targeted support for equality, democratic participation, public trust and accountability as required by the Council of Europe's Strategic Action Plan on Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020).

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The mid-level theory shown in Box 2 is based on the Theory of Change model shown in Box 1 and hypothesises how Shucar Glasso interacts with key stakeholders to produce outcomes. As such, the Theory of Change includes a set of assumptions about the choices that Shucar Glasso might make when travelling along each pathway toward the intended goal.

Rather than including all possible connections and feedback loops, the diagram shows only those which are currently theorised to be instrumental in bringing about the changes anticipated by the implementation of the relevant activities.

### **THEORY OF CHANGE**

The Theory of Change includes inputs and their associated outputs (i.e. activities), short-term outcomes, long-term outcomes, mechanisms, contextual information and assumptions.

- Inputs are the activities associated with Shucar Glasso. As the Theory of Change is not a detailed description of the operation of the programme not all activities are represented. Instead, it includes only those that have been theorised to be associated with the short-term outcome chains identified.
- Activities are what happen to make Shucar Galsso work.
- Outputs describe what comes from the inputs and activities. These can be intentional or unintentional.
- Outcomes are logically consequent to outputs. They are the outcomes which are expected to be observed during the initial operation of Shucar Galsso, and which can therefore be measured or understood in a subsequent evaluation.
- Mechanisms describe the interaction between individuals and an organisational or social system. As such, they often resist simple definition and observation but are critical to the success of the SIG. Mechanisms are always understood to be present but vary in their degree of activation and consequent effect on outcomes.

### **MECHANISMS**

The Theory of Change helps to identify key themes that have impact for Shucar Glasso and for Roma young people living in Liverpool. These themes are known as mechanisms. Mechanisms are difficult to observe but could help to explain how the implementation of Shucar Galsso leads to its outcomes. They describe the interaction between Shucar Galsso, policy and practice itself. This includes individual beliefs, attitudes and decisions, and the resources and opportunities afforded to individuals, families and communities by Shucar Galsso. There are three mechanisms, which may be associated with this project

1. **Shucar Glasso will promote the recruitment and training of Roma community advocates to promote peer support, stakeholder engagement activities and Continuous Professional Development activities for GPs, teachers, social care professionals and police.**

Shucar Glasso believes partnership with Roma people is essential to agree on joint aims and outcomes. Partnership enables the work of Shucar Glasso to be driven by active and meaningful collaboration, rather than externally imposed assumptions. This partnership aims to ensure that Roma people living in Liverpool experience improved outcomes in education, health and social care.

2. **A newly Community of Practice (Special Interest Group) made up of Roma people and representatives from education, health, social care, housing, police will raise awareness of oppression and the various ways that racism is limiting the choices that are available to some young people.** Shucar Glasso recognises that many Roma people experience racism, bias, stereotyping or cultural misunderstanding as they grow up. It might happen at an individual, institutional, or societal level and might be displayed consciously or unconsciously. Shucar Glasso will consider these experiences and develop strategies so that Roma young people experience only the most effective support from education, health and social care professionals.

3. **Shucar Glasso will facilitate community action drop-in events that enable Roma people to come together with representatives from education, health, social care, housing and police in Liverpool.** Shucar Glasso believes that knowledge exchange creates an essential bridge between Roma communities and education, health and social care services. By encouraging the sharing of ideas, data, experience and expertise, which is mutually beneficial to all parties involved, the Shucar Glasso will generate new ideas, creating opportunities to explore new avenues for improvement as expected by the Council of Europe.

These outcomes could be measured through a range of research measures, service evaluations and feedback mechanisms. Now that the outputs and outcomes of Shucar Glasso have been identified, funding streams can be considered within specific or connected workstreams to bring about and develop evidence of change.

### **Next steps**

While actions, education, training and improved communication might provide knowledge exchange opportunities for education, health and social care professionals working to engage Roma young people in Liverpool, Shucar Glasso must have the full support of the Roma community living in Liverpool. To verify the need and accuracy for the actions laid out herein, information about this Theory of Change will be shared with Roma people for their comments and feedback.

**‘Shucar Glasso will generate new ideas, creating opportunities to explore new avenues for the improvement as expected by the Council of Europe.’**



## References

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