

## **The Impact of Volunteering on the Education and Lives of Romanian Students in Leeds, UK**

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**Abstract :** Romanians are the second largest group of non-British nationals in the UK, following the Poles; over one million were reported in 2021. This follows the rapid growth in the number of Eastern Europeans settling in the UK for work which is linked to the expansion of the European Union. A recent report suggests that the growing numbers of Eastern European pupils have heightened concerns about their impact on the education of native English speakers, but little has been done to focus on the challenges faced by these students and their educational and life experiences. The pilot study presented in this paper focuses on six Romanian students aged between 14 and 19 from two schools and a college in the local area and includes data from interviews with headteachers, teachers, students, and parents. The paper highlights key findings which point to barriers and support Romanian children encounter in mainstream education, their homes, and community and the extent to which a volunteering program offered at a local charity called Community Action to Create Hope (CATCH) impacts their education and lives. The study has implications for supporting the inclusion of immigrant children.

**Keywords :** Romanian, Eastern European, inclusion, volunteering programme

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