

Student handout 2.1

Vesna's story

Vesna, a Roma woman, tells what happened to her:

“I saw a job for a sales assistant advertised in the window of a clothes shop. They wanted someone between 18 and 23. I’m 19, so I went in and asked the manager about the job. She told me to come back in two days because not enough people had applied.

I returned twice, and was always told the same thing. Nearly a week later I went back to the shop. The job advertisement was still in the window. The manager was too busy to see me, but I was told that the vacancy had been filled.

After I left the shop, I was so upset that I asked a non-Roma friend if she would go in and ask about the job. When she came out she said that she had been asked to come for an interview on Monday.”

Questions

1. How would you feel if what happened to Vesna had happened to you? How would you react if your friend told you that she was invited for an interview?
2. Why, do you think, did the shop manager behave in this way? Do you consider this a form of discrimination? Why (or why not)?
3. What could Vesna do about it? Do you think that she could change the situation? What could other people have done on her behalf?
4. Do you expect the law to do something about such a situation? What should the law say?
5. Could this also happen in your own country? If so, which groups would be affected?