

EU projects in favour of the Roma community

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

EDUCATION, CULTURE, YOUTH
BEST PRACTICES

CONFERENCE
BRUSSELS
10-11 MARCH 2010



2010
European Year
for Combating
Poverty and
Social Exclusion



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2010

ISBN: 978-92-79-15020-3

DOI: 10.2766/6272

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Printed in Spain

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Introduction

The Roma constitute one of the largest ethnic minorities in the EU, with millions living in many Member States. They face persistent discrimination, social exclusion and a very high risk of poverty and unemployment. Surveys show that many Europeans have negative views about Roma and these views are often based on stereotypes and prejudice.

Boosting the inclusion of Roma - through education, employment, social and health services, gender equality and infrastructure and urban planning - is mainly a national responsibility, but the European Commission is committed to supporting Member States' policies to help the Roma.

2010 is the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. Designating a European year is an effective way of helping to meet challenges by raising public awareness, disseminating good practices, and promoting policy debate and change. The main objective of the European Year is to increase ownership of social inclusion policies, emphasising our individual responsibility in tackling poverty and marginalisation.

This brochure gathers 30 best practice projects for Roma inclusion that have been financially supported by the EU in recent years. Successful educational, cultural, youth and civil society projects have been carried out by NGOs and other bodies at local, national and European level. These projects have helped social inclusion, access to employment and a better quality of life for Europe's largest minority. They have also raised awareness about Roma history, heritage and culture and helped to address the challenges faced by Roma across Europe.

Through such projects, the European Commission is also highlighting core EU values such as intercultural dialogue, equality, active citizenship and human rights. I am convinced that by promoting these values through the concrete actions of EU programmes and funds we can significantly support Member States in securing a better future for our fellow Europeans of Roma origin.



Androulla Vassiliou
Commissioner for Education, Culture,
Multilingualism and Youth





EU Projects and Best Practices



EU Values: the Roma Migration Challenge

Programme: Civil society
Country: Bulgaria
Partner countries: Belgium, Hungary, Italy and Romania

Promoter: International Society for Sustainable Development and Cooperation (ISSDC)
Address: 23 Serdica Street
1202 Sofia, Bulgaria
Tel.: +359 2 983 96 22 / +359 878 903 353
Fax: +359 2 983 96 22
Website: <http://www.issdc.net>
E-mail: issdc@abv.bg



Description

EU Values: the Roma Migration Challenge was a civil society project that examined reactions to Roma migration prompted by the enlargement of the European Union and the new migratory flows from new to older Member States.

The project ran from August 2008 to July 2009 and involved eight partner associations from Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Italy and Belgium. Civil society organisations and policy-makers from countries across the EU (both new and old Member States) were engaged in dialogue on core European values. These values include human rights, tolerance, non-discrimination and the fight against racism and xenophobia.

At the heart of the project was a debate on how these values are being put to the test by Roma migration. In addition to generating discussion, the project presented examples of successful approaches that have been made in relation to Roma migration and that could inspire and influence European social conscience.

Three international focus group events were held with civil society organisations and policy-makers: one in Brussels on 24 October 2008, one in Sofia from 4-6 February 2009, and one in Naples on 16 March 2009. All three meetings addressed the concept of European citizenship, EU values and development. The Treaty of Lisbon was also discussed as an instrument for promoting a climate of tolerance towards the Roma and in the fight against racism and xenophobia in new Member States and Europe in general. The meetings also included the presentation of good practices and recommendations regarding Roma migration.

Roma migration presents challenges, but also opportunities to strengthen commitment to core values within the EU, especially relevant in light of the Treaty of Lisbon and brought into effect in December 2009 shortly after the culmination of this project.

EU Values: the Roma Migration Challenge looked closely at the risks of isolation and marginalisation faced by European Roma communities and addressed possible solutions. Recommendations were made

on how to enhance interaction between Roma communities and mainstream society in EU countries and how to encourage Roma participation.

With the objective of enhancing European diversity and unity, the project also focused on building closer ties between citizens of existing EU Member States and the three newest countries to join: Hungary, which joined in 2004, and Bulgaria and Romania, which joined in 2007.

Main aims of the project

EU Values: the Roma Migration Challenge sought to generate interest in the subject among associations, NGOs and representatives of public authorities in Bulgaria and other EU Member States, both old and new.

Its principal aims included discussing and developing recommendations on how to enhance participation among the Roma population.

International events were planned as a platform to promote European diversity and unity by making a specific contribution to building closer ties between citizens from the older EU Member States and citizens of the three countries that joined in 2004 (Hungary) and 2007 (Bulgaria and Romania).

Through these events, EU Values: the Roma Migration Challenge sought to encourage understanding about the Romani situation, culture and tradition and to promote action to enhance European values such as respect for human rights, cultural diversity and tolerance.

The project also aimed to assist policy-makers in the implementation of policies for the Roma, promote European values and positively improve attitudes towards the Roma in European societies.

Project activities

Over the course of the project, three international events were held in Sofia and Brussels.

Good practice guidelines were published in written and DVD format and information was published and managed on the project website.



The Forgotten among the Forgotten

Programme: Civil society
Country: Italy
Partner countries: Romania and Italy

Promoter: SCI Italy
Address: Via G. Cardano, 135
I-00146 Rome, Italy
Tel.: +39 065 580 661
Fax: +39 065 580 644
Website: <http://www.theforgotten.eu/>
E-mail: e.cavassa@sci-italia.it



Description

The Forgotten among the Forgotten was a year-long civil society project that rediscovered the forgotten history of victims of Nazi persecutions. Up to 1.5 million Roma and Sinti individuals and up to 15,000 homosexuals were killed during the Nazi Holocaust, yet they seldom appear in official statistics and Holocaust victim commemoration events.

The project examined the current situation of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals (LGBT) and the Roma, thus contributing to building future cohesion.

It has been difficult to document the persecution of gays and lesbians during the Nazi Holocaust accurately. In Italy and Germany, research into the issue did not begin until 60 years after the first persecutions.

It has been similarly challenging to compile written documentation from the Porrajmos, Roma and Sinti Holocausts, as Roma traditions are, for the most part, oral and testimonies are passed down through generations in the form of story-telling.

The Forgotten among the Forgotten collected and published witness accounts, interviews and information from survivors and relatives of the Roma and homosexuals who perished during the Nazi persecutions.

Both communities continued to suffer displacement and discrimination long after the end of the Second World War, and this project sought to commemorate their struggle while simultaneously combating ongoing discrimination.

The Forgotten among the Forgotten promoted awareness and protection of the rights of Roma, homosexuals and other minorities with a view to creating a more compassionate, tolerant and understanding future.

Main aims of the project

The Forgotten among the Forgotten project focused on remembrance of the Nazi Fascist persecution of the Roma and LGBT.

The aim of this project was to help remember what happened to those who were persecuted but rarely

mentioned as victims of Nazi Fascism by documenting information and witness accounts from survivors. This information will be made available in the form of a written publication and via a website.

The goal of the project was also to help reflect on the current situation of discrimination against LGBT and the Roma, thus helping to build future cohesion.

The project sought to foster links between the two communities and gather the expertise and knowledge of specific organisations working in the field of protection of the rights of homosexual and the Roma. This included collaboration with the European Centre of Studies on Discrimination (CESD) in Bologna.

As part of this project, three events were organised: one in Bologna in April, focusing on the LGBT issue, one in Bucharest in May, focusing on the Roma and Sinti population, and one in Rome in September, representing the final event of the project. All of these events were organised to honour the history, future and potential collaboration of these two communities.

Project activities

The project centred on three international events on issues facing LGBT and Roma communities which were held in 2009. Each event included seminars, presentations and discussions on the two communities and how to forge links between them for future social cohesion.

An event focusing on LGBT issues and challenges past and present was held from 22 to 26 April 2009 in Bologna. During the event, historians, authors and members of the LGBT community spoke out on LGBT rights. It also featured debates, workshops, seminars and video projections on the persecution of homosexuals during the Nazi Fascist era.

A second event focusing on Roma remembrance and current issues was held from 6 to 10 May 2009 in Bucharest. It included seminars and debates on the Nazi persecution of the Roma and the discrimination they face today. Meetings took place with representatives of the Directorate General for Social Welfare of the Municipality of Bucharest, and discussions were held on school integration of

Roma children. As part of the event, a study visit was organised to the Roma community of Ferentari on the outskirts of Bucharest.

The concluding event was held from 8 to 13 September 2009 in Rome. It included seminars, debates, presentations, videos and films related to protecting the rights of the Roma and homosexuals in the past, present and future. Workshops and public seminars were held on LGBT and Roma discrimination and European legislation on the issue. A public exhibition and video projections about history of the Nazi persecution of LGBT and the Roma were also presented.

Three work camps were organised to run in parallel with each of these international events. Volunteers who had helped organise the events were invited to attend these work camps in order to further their knowledge on the current situation and discrimination of LGBT and the Roma.

The participating work camp volunteers also took part in a theatre workshop, which led to a theatre performance by the Theatre of the Oppressed (TDO). The workshop was given by experienced actors and the resulting performance dealt with past and present LGBT and Roma persecution. Intensive training led to final performances for audiences at the parallel international events.

A written publication and CD-Rom were produced, along with a website that provides access to relevant news and information for the Roma and LGBT.



The Forgotten Roma Holocaust

Programme: Civil society

Country: Hungary

Promoter: Roma Press Center Association

Address: Nefelejcs utca 39

1078 Budapest, Hungary

Tel.: +36 1 3211 801

Fax: +36 1 3211 810

Website: <http://www.rroma.hu>

E-mail: romapres@t-online.hu

Description

The Forgotten Roma Holocaust is a Hungarian civil society project that seeks to uncover, document and digitalise testimonies and information in order to raise awareness about the Porrajmos, the Roma Holocaust. Historians often call the Porrajmos “the forgotten Holocaust”, as it remains a relatively unknown and unacknowledged event in Hungarian society, even within the Roma community. Between 500,000 and 1,500,000 Roma and Sinti from Central and Eastern Europe are believed to have died in mass shootings and Nazi gas chambers during World War 2¹.

The term Porrajmos is widely used throughout Central and Eastern Europe to refer to the Roma Holocaust, and literally means “devouring” in some dialects of the Romani language. This is hauntingly fitting of a people whose history has had little remembrance or discussion. Romani scholar and activist Ian Hancock introduced the term in the 1990s as members of the Roma community increasingly began to demand acknowledgement as victims of the Nazi regime².

Recent studies have brought more of their suffering to public attention but, to this day, little is known about the Roma persecuted and exterminated by the allies of the Third Reich on the Eastern Front.

There are few existing written accounts of the Roma who died in the Porrajmos because the Roma culture is traditionally oral, as opposed to literary. For the survivors of the Nazi-orchestrated Holocaust, liberation at the end of World War II created the condition of uprootedness, meaning that the Roma became not only the forgotten victims of this most ferocious of historical events, but also continued to be regarded as superfluous, as if they did not belong to the world at all.

In 1971, a Hungarian national Roma survey was conducted which endorsed the strength of Roma identity and memory. The survey revealed the disadvantages experienced by non-Hungarian speaking Roma, especially in schools, and uncovered other valuable information that stimulated further research on the nature and scope of Roma “difference”³.

In 1982, the German Government acknowledged the genocide against Sinti and Roma during the National Socialist era, by which time many of the survivors had



died. In 1998, Roma organisations in Hungary asked the German Government to establish a museum, research and documentation centre, at which it would be possible to conduct further research and show newer generations what happened to the Roma⁴. On 23 October 2007, Romanian President Traian Băsescu became the first Romanian leader to publicly apologise for his nation's role in the Porrajmos.

When such a catastrophe creates a chasm between the past and future, historical narratives become vital to constituting a sense of cultural identity.

The aim of the Forgotten Roma Holocaust is to re-discover the forgotten memories of Roma victims of Nazi persecutions who rarely appear in official statistics and events. Recovered testimonies and information on victims, unexplored murder scenes and mass graves will be converted into digitalised archives, a chronology, virtual map and website. Throughout the year-long duration of the project, extensive recovery and preservation efforts will ensure that this vital part of Roma history and cultural identity is never again forgotten.

Main aims of the project

The objective of the Forgotten Roma Holocaust project is to find Roma Porrajmos survivors who are still alive today and interview them. Their testimonies will be used to reveal information about the unexplored scenes of mass murder and unmarked mass graves of Roma Holocaust victims.

Once this research has been completed, a virtual map and chronology will be constructed and made available to the victims and those seeking information on the whereabouts of missing Roma from the Holocaust.

Relevant data from the 1971 national Roma survey are also being digitalised in order to preserve them and use them as valuable sources of information.

In 2008, the Roma Press Center published the fourth edition of "Porrajmos: Recollections of Roma Holocaust Survivors". This compilation led to the creation of a network of Porrajmos survivors who are still alive today, which will serve as the basis for

conducting interviews, finding information and creating the virtual map and chronology.

All of the information collected and compiled throughout the course of the project will be used as essential Roma history and culture teaching material.

Project activities

The main project activities include workshops for 25-30 history teachers at mixed schools attended by Roma and non-Roma pupils.

Research, interviews, reports and a workshop for authors and publishers of schoolbooks on the Roma also form part of the project agenda. A website has been created, providing access to news, information and research on the Porrajmos and current Roma issues.



Sources

¹ The Historiography of the Holocaust, Palgrave-Macmillan, New York 2004, pp. 383-396.

² On the Interpretation of a Word: Porrajmos as Holocaust, Ian Hancock, 2006.

³ Kemény 1974: 63-72.

⁴ Roma Holocaust - Facts and Denial, Dr János Bársony & Ágnes Daróczi, September 1998.

INSETROM: Teacher In-Service Training for Roma Inclusion

Programme: Comenius
Country: Cyprus
Partner countries: Austria, Greece, Italy, Romania, Slovakia, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

Promoter: European University Cyprus
Address: 6, Diogenes Street Engomi
P.O. Box 22006
1516 Nicosia, Cyprus
Tel.: +357 227 13 178
Fax: +357 225 90 539
Website: <http://www.iaie.org/insetrom/>
E-mail: L.Symeou@euc.ac.cy

Description

The INSETROM: Teacher In-Service Training for Roma Inclusion project ran from 1 December 2007 to 30 November 2009 and aimed to use teacher training to narrow the gap between Roma families and European schools. The project sought to build bridges for collaboration between teachers and Roma parents and establish mutual goals for children's education.

Extensive population mobility throughout Europe has resulted in the formation of much more diverse and multicultural societies. European citizens are being prompted to accept cultural, ethnic and religious differences. However, racism and xenophobia are major issues that take their toll on social stability and coherence.

The Roma form the largest ethnic minority group in Europe. They are often seen as having a distinct culture at odds with the dominant culture of the countries in which they live.

This divide seems to reinforce the fears of Roma parents regarding mainstream education. It is also a known fact that members of the Roma community frequently regard schooling as a threat to their cultural values and needs and their children's wellbeing.

School attendance rates among Roma children are low, which threatens their education, participation in the labour market and ability to participate in democratic society.

At the same time, schools and teachers are often held accountable for their failure to contribute to the inclusion of Roma children in schools and society at large.

The project acknowledged that the lack of interaction between educational institutions and the Roma community is frequently the result of poor information, misconceptions and stereotypes regarding the role of education and Roma culture.



Main aims of the project

The INSETROM: Teacher In-Service Training for Roma Inclusion project focused on fostering school and Roma family partnerships in order to establish an environment of cooperation and shared goals for children's education.

Teacher awareness about the Roma culture and perspectives was enhanced in order to encourage the participation of Roma parents in their children's education and consequently keep Roma children in mainstream education and ensure their participation in the broader community.

This was achieved through teacher training in methods to actively involve Roma parents in their children's education. The training was carried out at target primary and secondary schools attended by Roma pupils or in areas with traditional Roma communities in Cyprus and the partner countries (Austria, Greece, Italy, Romania, Slovakia, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom).

The enhancement of teacher awareness about the Roma culture and the involvement of Roma parents in their children's education were expected to have a positive impact on the inclusion of the Roma in the broader community. The objective was to allay Roma parents' fears about education as a threat to their cultural values and requirements. The ultimate goal was to increase school attendance among Roma children and foster their inclusion in mainstream education in order to open more doors for them in the future.

Project activities

An assessment of the needs of the teachers and Roma families in the target schools was conducted and, based on the findings, a common curriculum was designed by the project partners to enhance teacher awareness about the Roma culture. The curriculum encompassed common objectives, but was specifically designed to meet local needs.

It included the basic components of Roma culture and recommended ways to connect schools and Roma families, develop class and school action plans, and



implement communication strategies to facilitate home-school relations.

Teacher training seminars were held for the teachers, school psychologists and other professionals, and intervention programmes were launched following the training.

These programmes and the training modules themselves were evaluated, and a closing international conference was held in Turin in November 2009 to disseminate the results of the project.

The conference was presented by participating teachers who shared their work with other teachers, members of the Roma community and policy-makers in order to enhance awareness about the needs of the Roma in schools in the participating countries.

Junior Inventors

Programme: Comenius
Country: Romania
Partner countries: Poland and Turkey

Promoter: Scoala cu cls. I-VIII Vasile Alecsandri
Address: Str. Pasunii nr. 2A
430352 Baia Mare, Romania
Tel.: +40 262 278 881 / +40 724 214 510
Fax: +40 262 278 881
Website:
<http://www.junior-inventors.blogspot.com>
E-mail: daniela.buda@hotmail.com



Description

Junior Inventors was a two-year project designed to uncover, research and collect games and toys invented by European children, especially those from underprivileged backgrounds. Information about the toys and games was compiled in a book, which was published in English, as well as in Romanian, Turkish and Polish, the languages of the participating countries.

The project was coordinated by Scoala cu clasele I-VIII Vasile Alecsandri, a school in Romania.

The games were researched by teacher and student teams from the coordinating school and two other schools, one in each of the two partner countries, Turkey and Poland. These teams included members of the Roma community.

Participating pupils discovered the value of their creative potential, increased their cultural awareness and understanding and developed speaking, listening and literacy skills in English.

The project involved working in partnership with peers in other countries and learning about their customs and cultures, and also contributed to combating racism and xenophobia and promoting intercultural understanding. It opened the pupils' minds and expanded their vision as European citizens.

Once the research on the kinds of games and toys children invent in the different countries had been completed and compared, the participants concluded that there is little difference between the way in which Romanian, Turkish, Polish and Roma children play.

This initiative also encouraged the participating teachers to incorporate the project activities into their curricula and use their creativity to enrich teaching methods. They were also able to share their experiences, information and good practices with other colleagues and engage in dialogue with teachers and school staff from partnering countries.

Junior Inventors received considerable acclaim in Romania, winning several prizes in Made for Europe, a national contest organised by the Romanian Ministry for Education. The project also earned Scoala cu cls. I-VIII Vasile Alecsandri the national title of European School.

Main aims of the project

One of the principal objectives of the Junior Inventors project was to highlight and encourage children's creativity and inventiveness and to involve them in research teamwork. The project also sought to motivate students to learn foreign languages in order to communicate with their peers from other countries and to encourage them to use modern information and communications technologies.

A further Junior Inventors priority was to encourage intercultural exchange among the pupils and teachers through fun and games. The project was designed to enhance solidarity among economically disadvantaged children by helping them to see that creativity is priceless and that toys and games can be so much more enjoyable when shared, regardless of their cost.

The project also sought to provide teachers and educational communities with valuable information to enable them to advise and guide pupils according to their interests and skills.

The long-term goal was to benefit the local communities in each target country by increasing understanding about children's needs when it comes to communicating with adults.

Project activities

Target groups were selected for the research, and consisted of children within two age ranges: 6-7 years and 14-15 years. The groups included Roma students and teachers. For example, at the Romanian school, 150 pupils and 20 teachers of Romanian and Roma origin were selected. The Romanian school mediator was also of Roma ethnicity.

The end product was a book containing the games compiled over the course of the project. The book was published in English, Romanian, Turkish and Polish. A CD containing a video presentation of the project was also produced and distributed.

A blog and website were created and maintained, and news and updates were also disseminated through the local media and at local and regional teachers' meetings in the partner countries.

Four project meetings were held, two for each year of the project, in the partnering countries. Teachers and children from all three participating schools attended the meetings and shared ideas and experiences.

In 2007, as the first year of the project drew to a close, two international art exhibitions were organised to display the children's games, findings and photos. The first, which was held in April, coincided with the International Day of the Roma People, and the second was held in June to commemorate International Children's Day. These exhibitions were such a success that they were repeated a second time in 2008 and a third time in 2009, following the end of the project.



WISEUS: Virtually Connected Language Workshops at European Schools

Programme: Comenius
Country: Germany
Partner countries: Austria and Italy

Promoter: University of Osnabrück
Address: Heger-Tor-Wall 9
49069 Osnabrück, Germany
Tel.: +49 541 969 4981
Website: <http://www.viseus.eu>
E-mail: ikunze@uos.de, susamuel@uos.de

Description

WISEUS has brought academic and technical innovations in language learning and multilingualism to classrooms across the continent. The project developed virtually connected language workshops at European schools as an academically sound concept for advanced training on language acquisition, multilingualism and creative language learning. The concept was based on teachers' personal experience and the application of the principles of progressive education.

The project involved primary and/or secondary schools from six European countries, as well as an academic institution from each country that was involved in initial and/or further teacher training. It provided effective support for the teaching and learning of additional languages as early as primary level and facilitated the development of intercultural skills among students of all ages.

Particular emphasis was placed on students who already spoke more than one language (in some participating schools, up to 80% of student populations were migrant, or there was a high percentage of minority groups, such as the Roma). This language diversity is highly valuable and needed to be understood and used as a resource. Tried and tested methods such as VISEUS facilitate creative work in language classes and enhance pupils' motivation for language acquisition.

Progressive education is based on ideas and practices to make schools more effective agencies of a democratic society. Progressive educators adopt numerous different styles and principles while sharing the conviction that democracy means active participation by all citizens in social, political and economic decisions that will affect their lives.

The progressive education of engaged citizens, be they teachers, students or parents, involves two essential elements. The first is respect for diversity, meaning that each individual should be recognised for his or her own abilities, interests, ideas, needs and cultural identity. The second is the development of critical, socially engaged intelligence, which enables individuals to understand and participate effectively in the affairs



of their community in a collaborative effort to achieve a common good¹.

All activities in the field of language learning and multilingualism help to increase the importance attributed to the linguistic and cultural diversity that exists in Europe today.

Main aims of the project

The principal objective of VISEUS was to encourage the learning of foreign languages and to increase interest in linguistic diversity. Participating learners communicated in the languages of the project.

This project sought to provide adequate instruments for teaching and learning foreign languages and promoted the development of innovative, ICT-based curricular content, services, pedagogical ideas and teaching methods that promote life-long learning. It encouraged the best possible implementation of results, innovative products and processes and an exchange of reliable methods in fields covered by the programme for life-long learning in order to enhance the quality of general education and vocational training.

VISEUS adopted a holistic approach to the teaching of foreign languages. It sought to disseminate knowledge and insight on the diversity of European cultures and languages, and to help young people and teachers acknowledge their value. A further objective was to develop concepts to support teachers in their efforts to use new methods that help motivate their students.

Project activities

VISEUS organised and orchestrated language workshops in all participating schools, using a virtual communication platform to connect them. This enabled participants to communicate with each other and share material and experience.

The main activity in the language workshops consisted of working with Euroklex, the interactive children's encyclopaedia. As part of the project, the software for Euroklex was produced in eight languages (Dutch, English, Finnish, German, Hungarian, Italian, Romani and Turkish). The pupils themselves developed the software for the language programme in groups.

Meetings and conferences were held during and after the project in participating countries to assess progress and future objectives. The concluding VISEUS conference was held at the University of Osnabrück on 11 and 12 November 2009.

In October 2009, VISEUS was awarded the European Language Label for innovative projects in language teaching and learning in Bonn.



Sources

¹ A Brief Overview of Progressive Education - The University of Vermont, 30 January 2002.

EU-ROMA: European Roma Mapping

Programme: Culture
Country: Italy
Partner countries: Greece, Romania and the United Kingdom

Promoter: LAN (Laboratorio Architettura Nomade)

Address: Piazza Enrico De Nicola, 46
80139 Naples, Italy

Tel.: +39 3405 110 735

Fax: +39 0812 141 322

Website: <http://www.lanhub.org>
<http://www.eu-roma.net>

E-mail: alex@lanhub.org

Description

EU-ROMA: European Roma Mapping was a 20-month project that launched a European debate on Roma housing issues and public space. It mobilised and disseminated knowledge and experience from fields such as the urban arts, architecture, the humanities, sociology and human rights. A prototype for successful Roma housing solutions was compiled, shared and finally implemented.

Through the project, knowledge about the Roma housing and living situation in all four participating countries was enhanced, and recommendations were put forward for successful inclusive housing solutions for the Roma.

Through a detailed analysis of existing Roma housing, EU-ROMA investigated potential improvements to Roma social integration through better quality, sustainable living conditions. A best practice exchange website and database were created, along with demonstrative modular and flexible urban interventions, a catalogue and handbooks, maps and events including intensive workshops in four European cities.

The short-term target audience comprised architecture, humanities and art undergraduate students who were encouraged to assess and develop sustainable Roma housing solutions. Roma NGOs, communities, leaders and representatives formed part of the project working teams and participated in project implementation.

As the project drew to a close, social and cultural authorities, cultural intermediaries, the European Commission, policy-makers, urban planners and architecture professionals in participating countries were called upon to promote the implementation of Roma housing solutions.

Finally, Roma housing was constructed in Belgrade based on the solutions developed through the EU-ROMA project.



Main aims of the project

EU-ROMA aimed to promote transnational mobility among people working in and for the Roma cultural sector.

The project encouraged the dissemination of sustainable and inclusive housing solutions tailored to meet Roma needs while simultaneously preserving their cultural diversity and creativity.

It also encouraged intercultural dialogue and the active inclusion of the Roma within the European social and urban space.

Project activities

The project began with a detailed analysis of Roma living and housing conditions. Research was carried out into allocation and the need for improved Roma social integration through better quality living conditions.

This research included mapping activities to study, record and classify Roma housing needs, settlements, territorial distribution and typologies. A multilingual database was created, along with videos and interactive maps to raise awareness and present the research results.

Retrofitting solutions and low-cost methods for the energy-efficient refurbishment of social housing were developed and adapted to local, cultural and economic needs.

Good practices in building and the information from the stakeholders already involved in the issue were shared in order to improve the living conditions and standards of the Roma. A multilingual publication and DVD containing examples of successful inclusive

housing solutions tailored to the needs of the Roma were created and distributed. A website and online forum were also created and maintained.

Four intensive eight-day workshops were held in May 2008 in Rome, Bucharest, Athens and London. The workshops aimed to promote exchange and disseminate diverse knowledge on Roma social housing in the EU through inter-cultural dialogue and collaboration. They targeted young students as future advocates for a shift in urban planning and social housing policy in favour of minorities. Each workshop included field research and hands-on activities in selected Roma locations and was designed to promote adaptable methodologies and the removal of social barriers and foster new methods and approaches.

These workshops also featured presentations and debates between Roma communities and civil society and policy-makers. The debates focused on the potential of new building techniques through innovative, functional, constructive, energy-saving solutions and via social networking. The EU-ROMA workshops resulted in concrete action plans and suggestions for retrofitting and upgrading Roma housing.

The EU-ROMA project concluded with a research trip to Belgrade, where two examples of high-quality, sustainable Roma housing could be seen. Recycled and waste material had been transformed into adequate, sustainable and affordable housing.



The Khamoro World Roma Festival

Programme: Culture
Country: Czech Republic
Partner countries: Poland and the Netherlands

Promoter: Slovo 21 NGO
Address: Francouzská 2
120 00 Prague, Czech Republic
Tel.: +420 222 518 554 / +420 777 154 843
Fax: +420 222 520 037
Website: <http://www.khamoro.cz>
<http://www.slovo21.cz>
E-mail: slovo21@centrum.cz
festivalkhamoro@gmail.com



Description

The Khamoro festival is a celebration of Roma culture, the Roma community and all those who are interested in their culture.

Founded in Prague in 1999, this week-long festival celebrates the diversity and wealth of Roma culture around the world. Each year, in May, it brings together professional artists, experts, researchers and audiences, inviting them to experience Roma music, art and film and to participate in an academic conference and seminars.

The festival consists of three parts. Its cultural programme includes live concerts, a parade through the centre of Prague, film screenings and photographic exhibitions, all of which explore past and present Roma culture. Workshops are also held, and members of the public with an interest in Roma traditions and customs are welcome to attend them.

The Khamoro Expert Section draws attention to important issues for Roma communities across Europe through conferences and seminars. An international media campaign also runs year-round in support of the festival.

Since it began, the festival has featured over 20 jazz bands and 90 traditional Roma bands. 20 exhibitions and 27 expert seminars and panel discussions have been held on Roma culture, issues and challenges. Khamoro has received support from eminent national personalities such as the former Czech president, Vaclav Havel, and the former prime minister, Mirek Topolánek, and has been attended by over 60,000 visitors.

Main aims of the project

The main aim of Khamoro is to present high-quality Roma cultural activities from around the world along with up-to-date academic research on current Roma issues. The festival seeks to celebrate and discuss the wealth of past, present and future Roma cultural heritage in Europe and around the world.

It also endeavours to contribute to Roma integration into mainstream Czech society and improve

intercultural understanding and relations among communities.

By drawing the world's attention to the ongoing difficulties faced by the Roma, the festival also seeks to combat racism and intolerance against them.

Project activities

Khamoro presents leading Roma artists from around the world. Popular traditional Roma gypsy music is showcased in the cultural programme alongside gypsy jazz and more modern forms of Roma music. Parallel events include exhibitions, film screenings and dance workshops.

One of the most popular elements of the festival is a traditional parade of artists through Prague's city centre, culminating in the Old Square. The objective is to present Roma culture to the general public in commonly used public places.

Expert seminars and conferences are an integral part of the festival and highlight issues such as Roma culture, integration and challenges. Each year, the festival hosts one major conference and several seminars, including youth workshops.

The media campaign in support of the festival aims to attract audiences, publicise relevant Roma issues and promote synergies between Roma minorities and society at large. It has created partnerships with the Czech media such as Czech Television and Czech Radio. Khamoro has also been featured in European and international media such as CNN, BBC, Reuters and Deutsche Welle.

In 2004, the European Commission lent its support to the festival. The programme that year included music groups from 11 European countries and Russia, an accompanying exhibition on the *Polish Roma*, a presentation of the expert proceedings, *Romani Music at the Turn of the Millennium* and *Genocide of Roma during the Second World War*, a presentation of collected poems, *Children of the Sun*, and a musical street parade through the centre of Prague.

Four expert seminars were organised in relation to the following topics: *Socially excluded Roma communities*



and the European Social Fund, The upcoming Roma generation and its visions, Roma youth between tradition and present, and Being Romani: a disadvantage factor?

The 2009 edition of the Khamoro Festival featured more than 110 artists and experts from 16 countries. In addition to the signature music acts, parades and workshops, it included the *Dutch Roma Days* section, offering visitors an insight into the closed world of Dutch Roma and Sinti.

Various acts from the Netherlands performed alongside other international Roma acts, both traditional and modern. The festival headliners, the Rosenberg Trio from the Netherlands, are one of the most internationally renowned gypsy jazz bands. Parallel activities for the Dutch Roma Days included a series of screenings of documentary films by distinguished Dutch filmmaker Bob Entrop.

Khamoro 2009 included traditional performances by Italy's Acquaragia Drom, the Nadara band from Romania and the Šutka brass band from Macedonia. The final gala concert featured seven traditional music groups and special guests, violinist Pavel Šporcl and Slovak band Romano Stilo.

An international expert seminar entitled *Roma culture as part of European culture* united world-renowned experts in the field of Roma culture. A series of youth workshops, entitled *We have a long road before us*, ran all week for young people from four European countries, and covered Roma history, culture and traditions.

2010 will mark the 12th edition of the festival, which will take place from 24-29 May.

The Other Europeans

Programme: Culture
Country: Germany
Partner countries: Austria and Poland

Promoter: other music e.V.
Address: Ernst-Kohl-Str. 23
99423 Weimar, Germany
Tel.: +49 (0) 364 385 8310
Fax: +49 (0) 364 349 8604
Website: <http://www.the-other-europeans.eu>
<http://www.other-europeans-band.eu>
<http://www.other-music.net>
E-mail: alan.bern@othermusic.eu

Description

The Other Europeans was a two-year cultural project that explored the historical and contemporary relationships between the Ashkenazi Jewish (Yiddish) and Roma cultures through music.

In 2008 and 2009, three participating cultural festivals, the Yiddish Summer Weimar Festival (organised by other music e.V. in Germany), the KlezMORE Festival in Vienna (Austria), and the Jewish Culture Festival of Krakow (Poland), presented a range of activities to promote intercultural understanding about the Yiddish and Roma cultures through the arts.

The core activity of the project was the creation and presentation of two new bands, one Yiddish and one Roma, made up of 14 outstanding Yiddish (Klezmer) and Roma (Lautari) musicians from seven countries, now based in Europe.

In 2008, each band developed and performed separate repertoires and, in 2009, the two bands fused to become a super-group known as The Other Europeans. Together, they combined their different styles to create a crossover genre of music. In addition to performances, the festivals also comprised symposia, workshops on instrumental music, vocal music, dance and language, and a film series on the two cultures.

For many centuries, the Jewish and the Roma have played important but ambivalent economic, political, and cultural roles within European societies. Subordinate to and only provisionally accepted by the dominant cultures among which they lived, both developed complex cultural identities. While they maintained their own traditions, they also had to constantly adapt to and interact with those of their neighbours.

European Jews and Roma were involved in a successful intercultural exchange across linguistic, political and cultural borders. Following the Nazi extermination of European Jews, it was often Roma musicians, who had played in pre-war Jewish ensembles, who preserved and performed Yiddish music repertoires that would otherwise have been lost forever.



Although Jews and Roma are transcultural, there are profound differences between the cultures. These are anchored in their separate histories and traditions, and in the politics, economies, histories and cultures of the different societies with which they interacted.

One of the main research focuses of this project was to explore the fascinating similarities between the roles played by professional musicians in both cultures, particularly in places in which they lived side by side.

The Other Europeans examined Roma and Yiddish cultural crossroads from past to present. It set out to discover the deeper relationship between the two types of music and the cultures from which they blossomed. It explored the common roots of Yiddish and Roma music in Moldavia, Walachia, and as far as Istanbul in the early 20th century.

Main aims of the project

The Other Europeans aimed to explore and raise awareness about the rich cultural vibrancy of Jewish and Roma cultures and their historical and contemporary relationships through the arts.

Today, the transcultural character of Yiddish and Roma music is often romanticised and embraced by the contemporary world music pop culture. A popular wave of Roma and pseudo-Roma music and a similar wave of post-Klezmer-inspired New Jewish Music brought these music styles to the fore. However, modern encounters between Roma and Yiddish musicians tend to be promoted by the commercial music industry.

The project aimed to promote Roma and Yiddish music that may have received little support or access to an audience.

Project activities

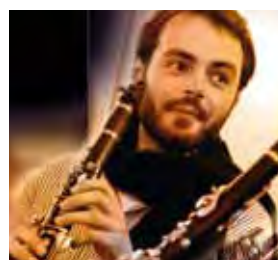
An opening conference and first working session for the project was held in Krakow on 23 and 24 November 2007. Chaired by Dr. Alan Bern, the event was attended by all three partner organisations and a group of guest expert consultants drawn from a very wide range of professions, including musicians, musicologists, historians, producers and journalists.

In 2008, the two bands chose a common Moldo-Walachian repertoire, which they played separately; focusing on what distinguishes Yiddish and Roma styles from one another. Concerts were held in July 2008 in Krakow, Vienna and Weimar. To coincide with the performance season, films on Roma and Yiddish culture were shown in Vienna and Weimar in July 2008.

A three-day symposium on Yiddish and Roma music and cultures also took place from 12-14 July 2008. It featured talks by renowned anthropologists, historians, musicologists, and musicians, and was open to anyone interested in Yiddish or Roma cultures, or in issues of national and transnational identities in Europe.

In 2009, the two bands joined forces and created new music combining both styles and going beyond the traditional repertoire. In July, they returned to the three cities to perform once again.

The Other Europeans will continue its mission and perform concerts and participate in world music festivals. In June 2010, the group will appear at the 12th International Klezmer Festival in Fürth. The Other Europeans continuously strives to build new cultural relationships between two peoples who are often marginalised in Europe, but have played a major role in creating and transmitting European music traditions.



Cultural Heritage from People to a United Europe

Programme: Grundtvig
Country: Romania
Partner countries: Italy, Romania and Spain

Promoter: AMV (Association of Aspirations and Motivation for the Future)

Address: L. Patrascanu Street, Bl.Mc18,
Apt.10, Sector 3
Bucharest, Romania

Tel.: +40 213 406 976

Website: <http://culturalheritage.altervista.org>

E-mail: amv_association@yahoo.com

Description

Cultural Heritage from People to a United Europe was a three-year project that focused on enhancing knowledge of different forms of cultural heritage as a tool to encourage better self-understanding and intercultural awareness and acceptance. The project explored the similarities and differences between cultures within the framework of a united Europe.

The beneficiaries of the project were young 16- to 25-year-olds from underprivileged backgrounds, including members of the Roma community. These participating teenagers and young adults came from the St Nicolas Social Centre in Bucharest and poor or immigrant families living in Spain and Italy.

A partnership was created among four organisations in the three participating countries, Romania, Italy and Spain, which supported the social integration of young people through disadvantaged groups that shared cultural elements.

Activities such as workshops, exhibitions, performances and foreign exchange programmes were designed and coordinated to enable young people from diverse backgrounds to connect with and share their culture and heritage. At the same time, they were introduced to other cultures, which they were able to explore, compare and contrast with their own, broadening their global perspectives and facilitating social integration.

The participants and coordinators worked in mixed teams, including natives and immigrants, in order to promote mutual understanding and acceptance and combat negative elements such as xenophobia and racism.



Main aims of the project

The main aim of Cultural Heritage from People to a United Europe was to enhance intercultural understanding and dialogue. It sought to revive young people's interest in their own traditions and culture, improve their self-confidence and make them proud of themselves.

Support was encouraged for young socially disadvantaged people wishing to discover and understand the social norms, values and unwritten laws specific to the ethnic group or people to which they belong.

The project also sought to promote the culture and traditions of each partner country and support social integration for disadvantaged people by exploring similar and diverse cultural aspects. The aim was to create vehicles and networks that would enable the participants to get in touch with other cultures at local and European level in order to dispel xenophobia and social exclusion.

Project activities

The partner organisations promoted the project in Romania, Spain and Italy by disseminating leaflets through specialised organisations working with disadvantaged people. Cultural activities were organised and coordinated by the partner organisations; some activities were developed at the Social Centre in Bucharest, some within the partner organisations and others at cultural venues such as museums and fairs.

The participants explored local and ethnic folklore by creating traditional art objects and collecting photos, poems and songs. Craft workshops were organised for the creation of jewellery and ornaments, traditional cuisine, painting and sewing.

The young people were also encouraged to delve into their cultures and interview members of their communities. They created collective art and photo exhibitions, gave music and poetry performances and prepared PowerPoint presentations.

Intercultural visits to other European countries were also organised to enable the participants to meet other young people from different cultures.

These visits were organised to coincide with the partners' meetings in Castelldefels (Barcelona) in April and September 2008, Treviso in February 2009, and Bucharest in June 2009. The participants organised exhibitions and performances and visited museums and fairs.

During the concluding partner meetings, the winners of the contests organised through the project gave music and poetry performances. The audience comprised meeting participants, beneficiaries, staff and other guests from the three partner countries.



GRESE: Grundtvig Experiences in Supporting Entrepreneurial Training to Disadvantaged Groups

Programme: Grundtvig
Country: Estonia
Partner countries: Finland, Norway, Romania and the Netherlands

Promoter: GRESE Kodukant Training Centre
Address: Väike Ameerika 19-220
10219 Tallinn, Estonia
Tel.: +372 519 415 37
Website: <http://www.grese.org>
<http://www.kodukant.ee>
E-mail: mai.kolnes@mail.ee



Description

GRESE was a two-year Grundtvig adult training project that offered support in acquiring entrepreneurial knowledge to disadvantaged groups in Romania (especially the Roma community), Finland, the Netherlands and Norway.

The project promoted equal opportunities for immigrants, the unemployed and those in rural areas at risk of social exclusion. GRESE used entrepreneurship as a key tool to integrate disadvantaged groups in society. It also highlighted the existing skills of these groups and therefore promoted their employability.

GRESE actively encouraged an exchange of ideas and information among teachers, trainers and counsellors about entrepreneurship. This stimulated cooperation among advantaged and disadvantaged groups and individuals from diverse backgrounds who shared the objective of social inclusion for everyone. It also promoted intercultural dialogue and helped to combat misconceptions and discrimination.

Teachers and trainers from partner organisations attended local and international seminars in order to obtain information about the methods used in different countries to teach entrepreneurial skills to adults.

Main aims of the project

The main aim of GRESE was to exchange experience in adult training methods to enable trainers and counsellors to improve their skills in promoting disadvantaged learners.

It also focused on using entrepreneurship as a method for helping immigrants to learn a second language and acquire knowledge about the societies in which they live.

The project sought to develop and maintain cooperation between partners and create new partnerships and better opportunities for disadvantaged people to seek and receive assistance, counselling and support from counsellors. Counsellors were invited to compare their experience and knowledge with partners from different cultural backgrounds.

Project activities

During the first year of the project, trainers from GRESE partner countries participated in three three-day seminars. The first took place in Tallinn in October 2005, and included a visit to Estonian adult education and vocational schools that offer entrepreneurship education. Seminars and lectures were held by organisations that deal with adult learners and centred on the Estonian labour market and how to prevent unemployment through entrepreneurship education.

The second meeting took place in Jyväskylä, Finland, in January 2006 and provided an overview of the Finnish education system and policy towards immigrants, including success stories by employees who have succeeded thanks to the Finnish system. Participants visited Finnish companies and presentations were given on the apprenticeship education of immigrants and immigrants as a human and development resource in the Jyväskylä region.

In May 2006, the GRESE team of trainers and teachers met for the third time in Trondheim, Norway, to mark the conclusion of the first year of the project. Participants attended seminars on learning through practical work and the different aspect of guidance in adult training, what it means to be disadvantaged and the concept of entrepreneurship. Examples of good practices in Norwegian entrepreneurship as a method for enhancing employment and improving social integration were also showcased.

Three further international meetings also took place during the second year of the project. The first took place in Arad, Romania, from 9 to 10 October 2006. It included an overview of the successes and challenges of the first year of the project and planning for the

second. The Arad County School Inspectorate was welcomed into the project and the meeting focused on maximising the potential of this new partnership that included members of the Roma community.

In January 2007, the project partners met in the Netherlands for a four-day meeting. Successful initiatives, best practices and success stories were showcased and new projects were developed.

The third and final GRESE international meeting took place in Tallinn, Estonia, from 9 to 12 May 2007. The Estonian Kodukant Village Movement introduced successful projects and activities that have supported entrepreneurial skills and knowledge development for disadvantaged adults. This concluding seminar enabled all of the partner organisations to exchange results, impacts and experiences. New projects and agreements for ongoing activities were also discussed.

Local seminars were also held in each participating country throughout the duration of the project. Disadvantaged groups were invited to participate and were introduced to successful systems and practices implemented in partnering countries. As a result, these groups acquired and developed entrepreneurial skills.

GRESE motivated and inspired all of the partner countries to continue and further develop learning and entrepreneurial methods for adults from disadvantaged groups.



MODEL: Motivating the Disadvantaged through Empowering Learners

Programme: Grundtvig
Country: United Kingdom
Partner countries: Italy, Romania, Scotland, Spain and the Czech Republic

Promoter: MODEL (Orpington College)
Address: The Walnuts
Orpington, Kent, BR6 0TE
United Kingdom
Tel.: +44 0168 989 9700
Fax: +44 0168 987 7949
Website: <http://www.orpington.ac.uk>
E-mail: jkent@orpington.ac.uk



Description

MODEL: Motivating the Disadvantaged through Empowering Learners was a four-year project designed to develop new and innovative strategies for engaging disadvantaged groups in learning.

Each partner organisation identified a target group and worked with it to define and investigate specific conditions, difficulties and educational needs. This made it possible to develop and implement good practices.

The target groups included the unemployed, ethnic minorities (including the Roma), single and other disadvantaged parents, and socially disadvantaged young adults.

Main aims of the project

The principal objectives of MODEL included identifying the conditions, difficulties and specific educational needs of the target groups in order to then investigate specific and alternative strategies for involving, motivating and empowering disadvantaged learners within these target groups.

MODEL encouraged cooperation with agencies working with the target groups.

These agencies were chosen for their specialist knowledge and worked alongside representatives from the target groups with the project partners to develop strategies and material in order to promote positive attitudes towards learning and provide pathways to further opportunities.

Project activities

Each partner organisation implemented its own framework of strategies for empowering disadvantaged learners within one or several target groups, sharing good practices with other partners. As an example of the different activities carried out by MODEL, Orpington College in England focused on disadvantaged learners in the UK's largest traveller community in the Cray Valley, in the London borough of Bromley.

This community had all the indicators of social deprivation, a situation compounded by various other factors. These included labelling and stigmatisation, the different Roma lifestyle and culture, negative role models, engagement in anti-social behaviour, teenage pregnancy, low self-esteem and lack of motivation.

The MODEL project sought to improve community relations between the Cray Valley traveller community and education providers by overcoming distrust and cultural barriers. The aim was to develop confidence and self-esteem so as to engage the traveller community in learning and encourage the learners to progress into further education, training or employment.

Learners from the traveller community included adults with no or low basic skills, single parents, unemployed adults, young adults between the ages of 16 and 19 who were not in education, and excluded or self-excluded travellers between the ages of 13 and 16.

Within the MODEL programme, members of the traveller community were involved from the start and asked not just if, but also what, they wanted to learn. The first step was a type of audit, which gave ownership of the project to the community.

A flat was rented in the middle of the community from the local housing association and was designated the centre of operations of the project. This created a much more informal setting than a school, enabling the members of the community to feel more relaxed and meaning that they did not have to travel far.



The project worked closely with the Bromley Gypsy/ Traveller Project (BGTP) and shared premises. Travellers who needed their letters to be read to them could be directed to the classrooms and, if the learners had any personal problems, they could be directed to the BGTP.

A small-step, first-rung programme was created and the first learning opportunities organised were gentle taster courses (based on the audit that identified what the community would like). These were fun and created familiarity within the team. Activities included line dancing, handbag making, flower arranging and weekly coffee mornings and diet clubs.

Every learner was given an individual learning plan (ILP) to determine his/her objectives through negotiation and how these would be achieved. MODEL worked with other agencies that were able to offer support, including local Education and Welfare Officers (EWOs) and secondary schools. In many cases, when it came to young people, shared education schemes were created until these people were ready to go back to school full time or on to other training.

Successful outcomes of the Cray Valley MODEL programme include improved social skills such as self-control and self-confidence among the young members of the traveller community.

Social integration between traveller and non-traveller communities also improved and relationships and links between parents and local schools were enhanced.

As a result of the project, the learners' skill base was visibly enlarged: 21% of project participants were employed in the company or organisation in which they had been training, 28% of project participants found jobs, and 16% of project participants progressed to education, training or employment.

Vocational Integration of Travelling People in Europe

Programme: Grundtvig
Country: Spain
Partner countries: France, Greece, Lithuania, Romania and the Czech Republic

Promoter: CEA de Olmedo
Address: Plaza de Santa Maria s/n
47410 Olmedo, Spain
Tel.: +34 983 623 128 / 34 690 342 439
Fax: +34 983 623 128
Website: <http://www.euro-via.org>
E-mail: 47007422@educa.jcyl.es



Description

The travellers' way of life is frequently an obstacle to their social and professional inclusion, as well as their vocational and educational training. The education system is not adapted to the irregular attendance of gypsy children. High levels of absenteeism, as well as postponed starts and early finishes to the school year due to seasonal work, mean that a special educational approach is required for the young people who are part of this minority.

The Vocational Integration of Travelling People in Europe was a three-year project to improve the social and professional inclusion of travelling populations, including the Roma. It encompassed research, needs analysis and the application of successful European practices.

The project sought to increase the percentage of students who stay at school after compulsory education, mainly in vocational training, and the percentage of gypsy girls in vocational training. It also focused on improving the image of gypsy women through education and their inclusion in the labour market.

A network of vocational training partner organisations was formed in Spain, France, Lithuania, Greece, Romania and the Czech Republic to compare and contrast existing and potential vocational training and exchange best practices.

Main aims of the project

The ultimate objective of the project was to find new methods through which to increase the proportion of young people from traveller communities who receive training beyond the minimum school leaving-age (notably in terms of vocational training).

The project also sought to foster participation in further vocational training initiatives among adults, particularly young adults between the ages of 16 and 25 with basic schooling.

Project activities

In 2005, the project partners conducted and published country-specific surveys, studies and analyses on the specific needs of travelling people in relation to the organisation of the educational and training system. They included interviews with travelling people and employees from institutions that work with travelling communities.

The studies, surveys and analyses conducted revealed that, while the majority had received basic education, few community members had received higher education or vocational training. It revealed the aspiration of many travelling people to better their situation through education, and also highlighted obstacles such as xenophobia and illiteracy. The findings were published in a report and shared among the partner countries.

A guidebook was produced in digital and printed format, featuring good practices that have improved vocational training and the professional integration of travelling people within the partner countries.

The good practices included Lithuania's Russian-speaking Sauletekio secondary school, which established a special class for Roma children to improve their skills in Lithuanian and increase their motivation for learning.

Greece's Hellenic Agency for Local Development was mentioned for its training programme for those who wish to work as mediators between mainstream and Roma communities or in organisations that inform and advise Roma citizens.

GRETA, in Aurillac (France), trains young travellers to help them to prepare for the driving test.

Living Together is an association based in Ostrava (the Czech Republic) that helps Romany mothers prepare their children to start school and be successful in the first year.

The Adult Training Centre in Peñafiel, near Valladolid (Spain), organises special training for young gypsy women who have left school at an early age and who find themselves responsible for their families.

These practices and others formed the basis of the guidebook, which included proposals and practical recommendations on how to implement support structures for travelling community members with social workers and mediators. The resulting publication became a valuable tool for improving the education, vocational training and professional and social integration of travelling families.

The third year of the project was devoted to studying the specific situation and needs of travelling women. Interviews were conducted with travelling women in each of the partner countries. The findings revealed that many wished to educate themselves in order to achieve a better quality of life. As a result, discussions were held with relevant stakeholders and project partners to discuss innovative methods and tools that could improve the vocational training and professional integration of travelling women.



Romfashion: Training Roma Women in Traditional Fashion

Programme: Leonardo da Vinci
Country: Greece
Partner countries: Slovakia, Spain, the Czech Republic and Turkey

Promoter: Region of Attica, Municipality of Zefyri

Address: Heroon Plytehniou Square
13461 Athens, Greece

Tel.: +302 132 038 834 / +302 132 038 816

Fax: +302 102 319 026

Website: <http://www.romfashion.eu/romfa/>

E-mail: gserbis@zefyri.net



Description

Romfashion is a two-year project to improve the quality of life for Roma women. It trains groups of 15-20 Roma women in partner countries in modern, home-based methods of design, sewing and marketing for traditional Roma clothing.

Europe's Roma population suffers discrimination and social exclusion, high unemployment and low quality of life.

Roma women are especially affected as they traditionally rely on men for the household income. In some communities, unemployment among Roma women stands at 90%. Their cultural specificity is threatened as they are led to live under increasingly worse conditions that undermine their traditional customs.

The Romfashion project seeks to improve the lives of Roma women by providing them with the necessary training and support in developing sustainable household or communal production of traditional clothing.

A cycle of vocational training, tailored specifically to the requirements of the Roma community, is taking place in each partner country (Greece, Spain, Slovakia, Turkey and the Czech Republic). The training focuses on the design, production and promotion of traditional Roma clothing, and is conducted in an educational environment similar to a residential or communal production unit.

The innovative action plan for the project includes the development of professional Roma skills through a combination of modern educational methods and traditional organisation and production practices. These reflect the cultural identity of the Roma community. During the training, the groups of Roma women develop skills and knowledge that they can pass on to others within their communities.

A complete training and production pack (guide, manual, production methodology, designs, marketing guide and educational material) has been made widely available through existing Roma organisations and networks in partnering countries and beyond. The project will culminate in fashion shows at which

traditional clothing produced by the trainees will be presented.

Romfashion seeks to improve social conditions for Roma women, combat intolerance, racism and discrimination and contribute to the preservation and elevation of an important aspect of Roma culture: traditional clothing.

Main aims of the project

The principal goals of the Romfashion project include motivating the Roma women by providing them with opportunities to actively take part in training programmes that will enhance their quality of life. It seeks to improve their skills with a view to facilitating their integration into the labour market.

The aim of the project is to develop good practices that will facilitate access by the Roma to vocational training. This includes the creation of a guide to the production procedure of traditional Roma clothing and educational material about training Roma and non-Roma mediators.

Romfashion seeks to contribute to the gradual establishment of Roma women as household or communal producers in the market; this should change their image in society and improve their social and economic situation. Household or communal production can encompass extended family, a structural element of Roma communities.

The project also seeks to raise awareness about the Roma culture by introducing an important aspect of it: Roma clothing as modern “ethnic” fashion in partnering countries. This will be promoted through exhibitions and a website and by motivating the Roma community to distribute its products.

Project activities

Four months were devoted to the application process, setting out minimum standards for applicants, such as having a primary school certificate, previous relevant work experience, etc.

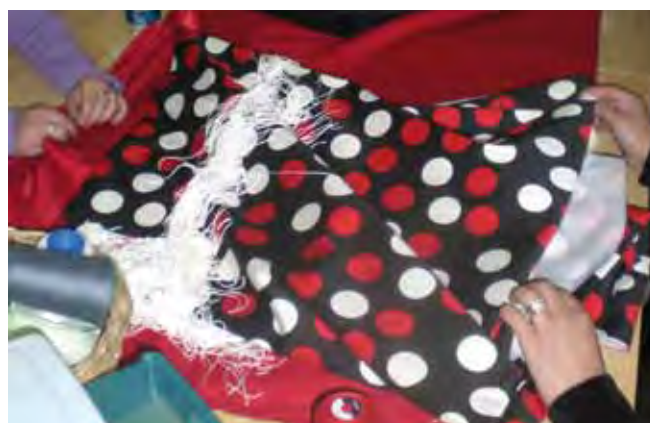
The training procedure was planned over eight months and included the creation and dissemination of a guide to setting up a household or communal production

unit, schedules and training methodology. Publicity actions were orchestrated and trainers were trained in the specific characteristics of their target groups. Training spaces and material for the design classes were designated and organised. Mentors were assigned and trained to oversee and monitor the training process and intervened, when necessary, to enhance communication between the trainers and trainees. Local communities and authorities were invited to attend an opening event, at which the project was presented.

The training of the Roma women during the first year involved the implementation and assimilation of household production and design, marketing and sales techniques. The process was periodically evaluated by the trainers and trainees themselves, as well as by an external evaluator. The results were disseminated and discussed among the partners.

A website was created in all five partner languages for the entire duration of the project, which will end in October 2010, and it is being constantly updated. Printed and digital guides to household production and a guide to the vocational training methodology specifically designed for Roma women have also been produced.

The second year of the project has involved preparations for a one-day Roma fashion show in each of the partner countries. These fashion shows will take place in late March or early April 2010 in Istanbul (Turkey), Nitra (Slovakia), Ostrava (the Czech Republic), and Madrid (Spain). A final show for the project will take place in October in Athens.



Programme: Leonardo da Vinci
Country: Spain
Partner countries: Portugal, Romania and the Czech Republic

Promoter: Instituto de Enseñanza Secundaria Ribeira Do Louro

Address: Ribeira, s/n - Torneiros
36410 Porriño, Spain

Tel.: + 34 986 333 956

Fax: +34 986 333 784

Website: <http://www.trainingtravellers.com>

E-mail: info@trainingtraveller.com
iesribeiralouro@terra.es

Description

TRAVELCOM implemented training and skills programmes to improve access to and integration into the labour market for the Roma in Spain, the Czech Republic, Portugal and Romania.

The project focused on training and employment for members of the Roma community in order to address some of their most important needs, such as living standards and social integration. It adapted educational courses and vocational training to suit their lifestyles, educational level and aspirations. These courses and training models were then disseminated through organisations in partner countries.

TRAVELCOM targeted young and adult members of the Roma community with no professional qualifications or compulsory secondary school certificates and helped them to improve their skills in order to seek or maintain employment or improve their employment prospects.

The aim of the TRAVELCOM project was to raise the skill levels of the Roma in the fields of commerce and marketing, capitalising on individual interests and aptitudes to establish a foothold in education and the labour market, and increasing individual opportunity in the face of growing competition in the retail sector.

Unemployed Roma youths were provided with training and support to optimise their chances of finding and keeping work. Employed Roma traders were assisted in improving their professional skills to help them face the tough challenges currently existing in the labour market, such as saturation and increased competition.

TRAVELCOM worked with organisations offering professional training courses in the fields of commerce and marketing for unemployed and employed members of the Roma community.



Main aims of the project

The main aim of the project was to improve the abilities of the travelling communities in their most important professional outlet: trade.

It sought to place young people in employment and help maintain and improve the existing employment of travelling tradesmen, encouraging their social inclusion.

The idea was to provide both young and adult members of the Roma community with training adapted to their needs and interests within the fields of commerce and marketing and international trade.

An additional objective was to improve the professional skills of Roma traders in order to overcome their increasingly difficult situation as a result of changes in market circumstances and market saturation. Roma traders are increasingly being pushed out of the market by large companies and department stores with active marketing policies that supply traditional products, particularly textiles, at very low prices.

TRAVELCOM aimed to produce and coordinate a training programme and multimedia educational material, and to disseminate it among associations and organisations that offer training courses for Roma communities.

The final training products were promoted via mailing lists and direct contact with associations representing or supporting Roma interests and with public, private and non-profit training providers, especially commerce and marketing schools.

The project also sought to provide important educational material tailored to Roma needs to training centres and other professional training organisations via the project website. The material would not only satisfy the needs of a particular community, but could also be used as a basis for the development of similar material for other communities with special needs.

Project activities

Following an initial needs assessment, those involved in the project designed, evaluated and introduced a specially tailored training programme and multimedia tool kit for use by the training providers.

Primary project outcomes included a report on the nature and extent of the disparity between training needs in commerce and marketing and provision for the Roma; a training programme and support methodology suited to class-based or distance learning; a tool kit in the form of an interactive CD-Rom; and a project website to be used as a permanent resource.

Information and training material on sales techniques, marketing, storage of products and international commerce were disseminated through the project website, which was launched, maintained and constantly updated during and after the project. The material was web-based and downloadable in all partner languages, with additional teaching resources provided in the Roma language.

Progress and best practice reports were produced and disseminated throughout the course of the project. The concluding TRAVELCOM report, produced at the end of the project in 2005, included a summary of the professional skills that traders, as managers of a commercial company, must possess to face present market challenges. It also included a dossier on training needs and recommendations specifically relating to Roma traders. This report forms a basis for the development of future training and skills programmes and material for Roma traders and jobseekers across Europe.



Youngbusiness.net.3: the Development and Promotion of Youth Enterprise Services in Central Europe

Programme: Leonardo da Vinci

Country: United Kingdom

Promoter: Wandsworth Youth Enterprise (WYE)

Address: Enterprise Development Worldwide
International Head Office
Trident Business Centre
89 Bickersteth Road
London SW17 9SH, England

Tel.: +44 0208 516 7700

Fax: +44 0208 355 3429

Website: <http://www.edworldwide.org/youngbusiness-net-3/>

E-mail: ajolly@ukonline.co.uk
mmp@wyec.org.uk

Description

Youngbusiness.net (YBN) is a collaborative, three-phase programme that offers business support to young people, including Roma students and other members of the Roma community, in the UK and Central Europe. The YBN programme has been operating successfully for over ten years. It aims specifically to help young people set up sustainable businesses.

YBN.3 represents the third in the series of Youngbusiness.net programmes designed to tackle youth unemployment in Central Europe. Like its predecessors, YBN1 and YBN2, YBN 3, which ran from 2007 to 2009, adapted and transferred business education tools and services to Central European countries. YBN3 extended its programme to new areas in existing countries, Hungary and Slovakia, and branched into a new country, Romania.

The Youngbusiness.net programme uses a holistic model of support to engage with and help young people decide if self-employment is right for them. It also provides practical assistance to those who wish to set up their own businesses.

The programme is designed to tackle unemployment and under-employment, social exclusion and lack of opportunity for young people. It effectively offers solutions to the socio-economic barriers preventing young people from integrating with local or regional labour markets through self-employment.

All YBN programmes have helped a range of Central European organisations including business agencies, educational institutions, regional development agencies and non-governmental organisations set up their youth enterprise initiatives.

Over the past two decades, the once state-controlled economies of Central Europe have been transformed into vibrant and innovative free markets. To sustain the rate of development, an enterprise culture must be nurtured at grass roots level to support continued economic growth. What better place to start than with the first generation of young people to grow up entirely under this new liberal regime?



Main aims of the project

YBN3 incorporated three work packages applicable in each partnering country in order to achieve its objectives. These objectives included encouraging young people to set up businesses both before and after they leave school, improving entrepreneurial skills among young people, and providing a comprehensive support infrastructure for young entrepreneurs in their respective countries.

To accomplish this aim, the innovative enterprise learning processes and methods developed in the youngbusiness.net 1 and 2 projects were transferred to new areas in Hungary, Slovakia and Romania.

YBN3 also promoted accreditation standards for youth enterprise and by setting up a Central European Society for Youth Enterprise Development to promote youth enterprise in the region. This entity is the first of its kind and has the potential to drive forward the development, innovation and dissemination of this model of support for the foreseeable future.

The principal objectives also included providing 800 young people with awareness training; training or counselling a further 150 in enterprise skills; setting up 50 new youth enterprises; and supporting 200 young people with disabilities or from minority ethnic communities, mostly Roma.



Project activities

Over the course of the two-year project, YBN 3 established four new youth enterprise centres and developed a framework of core competencies for newly developing centres. It also created a Central European Society for the Promotion of Youth Enterprise.

The YBN 3 programme consisted of a wide range of services for application in partnering countries. These included intensive outreach activities, dedicated one-to-one counselling (using a specific methodology), business skills workshops and training courses, office services and subsidised business premises. This comprehensive all-in-one package of support for young Central European entrepreneurs increased the chances of their businesses surviving during the critical first two to three years of trading.

An interactive Internet platform was created and maintained in order to provide advisory services on matters such as setting up an enterprise, business planning and taxation.

Lessons learned and good practices from Youngbusiness.net 1, 2 and 3 were shared through events and conferences held in partnering countries. Target audiences included policy-makers, business people, educational professionals and potential service providers.

2 Regions, 2 Continents: Discover Different Realities, Encounter a Common Spirit

Programme: Youth
Country: Hungary
Partner countries: Austria, Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Poland, Slovakia and Uruguay

Promoter: Fekete Sereg Youth Association
Address: Petőfi u. 2.
8291 Nagyvázsony, Hungary
Tel.: +36 8 8264 464
Fax: +36 8 8264 228
Website: <http://www.fekete-sereg.hu>
E-mail: info@fekete-sereg.hu
karita@fekete-sereg.hu



Description

2 Regions, 2 Continents: Discover Different Realities, Encounter a Common Spirit, was a collaborative international youth project that brought together NGOs from Mercosur (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay) and Central European countries (Austria, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia). Together, the two regions and continents established a sustainable partnership for the exchange of good practices for the inclusion of disadvantaged young people.

The project was based on four international events and eight regional training courses for volunteer youth workers, which reflected on the present situation of minorities in both regions and provided best practice examples of successfully implemented projects.

To follow each event, the partner countries implemented a series of training courses at national or regional level. Each training course focused on cultural diversity, inclusion, empowerment of minorities and gender issues. The target group included young youth workers and people from disadvantaged backgrounds, such as the Roma, who could go on to act as peer-educators, peer-coaches and project promoters in follow-up projects.

A website was created and maintained in order to inform all of the participants about the latest project news and events. The 2 Regions, 2 Continents project was documented on video to accompany the final report of the project.

Main aims of the project

The aim of 2 Regions, 2 Continents was to exchange best practices to facilitate the integration of minority groups in Mercosur and Central European countries. This involved supporting the implementation of internationally transmitted methods at local and regional levels.

The project objective was to encourage reflection on the situation of ethnic minorities and immigrants and to foster local youth work with minorities in each partner country by adapting tried and tested methodology. Good examples of the development of minority and immigrant integration projects would be used as a tool

for adding innovation and inspiration to future youth initiatives.

It also sought to enhance cooperation between Mercosur and Central European countries. The events and training courses were designed to enable volunteers and organisations to share similarities and differences in inclusion methodologies.

2 Regions, 2 Continents also sought to motivate and encourage young people from minority groups to actively participate in society by showing them success stories from other parts of the world.

Project activities

All the project activities targeted youth workers in order to provide a platform for common learning and development of youth projects in both regions.

2 Regions, 2 Continents kicked off with a seminar on cultural diversity and integration that was held in Uruguay in March 2009, followed by a study visit to Argentina to compare the Mercosur and European

realities of minority inclusion. Following the Latin American events, the partner countries in both regions implemented training courses at national or regional level to disseminate the outcomes and achievements among youth workers and organisations.

Two further international events took place in Central Europe and focused on improving the social inclusion of young disadvantaged minorities, including the Roma.

A four-day seminar was organised for Roma volunteers in Pécsely, Hungary from November 5th - 10th, 2009. It highlighted the present Central European situation regarding youth work and the status of minority groups such as the Roma. This event was supported by the National Association of Romologues in order to involve young Roma youth workers and community members in the process. The 20 participating youth workers were engaged in workshops, project visits and presentations of successful intercultural minority dialogue projects.

Follow-up training courses and ongoing support and coaching were offered to enable participants to adapt their newly obtained knowledge and skills to their local environments. All participants returned to their respective project areas, which included orphanages, settlements and suburbs, and carried out local projects using the skills acquired during the seminar.

A concluding seminar took place in Sittendorf, Austria from November 10th - 15th, 2009. Progress achieved in both regions and on both continents was reviewed, and objectives were set for future youth initiatives to improve minority inclusion in each partner country.

Throughout the project, participants created video material, and a video clip was produced to accompany the final report, which included examples of best practices. 200 copies were distributed among interested partners and regional bodies involved in youth work. Selected elements of the video and the published report were also made available through the project website.



Cultural Blue Sky without Difference

Programme: Youth
Country: Macedonia
Partner countries: Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Serbia

Promoter: Progress Association for the Protection and Education of Children and Young Roma

Address: Vietnamska Br. 60
1000 Skopje, Macedonia

Tel.: +38 971 376 260

Website: <http://romaprogress.webs.com/>

E-mail: roma.progress@yahoo.com

Description

Cultural Blue Sky without Difference was a youth exchange programme that focused on facilitating interaction among young people to promote multiculturalism in Europe.

The project was promoted by the Progress Association for the Protection and Education of Children and Young Roma, which is located in Skopje, Macedonia's largest Roma municipality, home to around 4,000 Roma youths. The project engaged partner youth associations in Macedonia, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania in coordinating an event for 32 young people from diverse backgrounds, including Roma.

Cultural Blue Sky without Difference included a 10-day event comprising seminars, workshops and cultural activities for young participants and facilitators from each of the partner countries. The participating students were encouraged to prepare and share magazines and texts, exhibitions, songs, dances, music, cuisine and films that portrayed their culture with other members of the group. These activities promoted European values such as cultural diversity, social inclusion and tolerance.



Main aims of the project

Cultural Blue Sky without Difference invited young people from a range of different cultures and backgrounds to explore their own cultures and discover new ones. The project sought to introduce cultural diversity and motivate future cooperation among the young participants from the five partner countries.

A 10-day event was organised in Skopje, Macedonia, from 1 to 10 January 2008. It encompassed activities to enable all 32 participants to learn from each other's cultures. All participants were encouraged to delve into their own cultures and prepare material that showcased the traditions and customs of their heritage. The event itself encouraged the participants to take part in a range of interactive, proactive cultural activities to instil a sense of cultural pride and broaden their horizons.

The objective was to promote European cultural values and pave the way for a community of open-minded, multi-culturally aware European citizens.

Project activities

The event activities were designed so that each group or country was given the opportunity to present prominent characteristics of its culture. These included language, traditional dance and dress, traditional music and cuisine. The event also included academic elements such as lectures on the value of intercultural dialogue and education.

The groups were invited to present the history of their people, territory and language in historical workshops. These led on to language lessons, during which the participants were taught a few key phrases in each of the participating languages.

Traditional workshops showcased a variety of national folklore, songs, dances, and dress. These were followed by dance lessons. Food and art workshops were also held, focusing on cultural similarities and differences, and were followed by exhibitions and tasting sessions.

As part of the event, participants also attended classes focused on cultural diversity within Europe. Within these classes, they learned about youth rights and policy in different countries, and within Europe as a whole. Sessions were also held on the importance of combating negative attitudes such as xenophobia and racism. The young participants were invited to exchange views and experience on youth organisations within their countries. As a result of the classes, school partnerships were formed with a view to facilitating further exchange programmes.

A one-day trip was also organised for all participants to the historical Macedonian city of Ohrid.



Helping Roma Children in Transcarpathia: Reflection and Motivation regarding the Fight against Discrimination

Programme: Youth
Country: Hungary
Partner countries: Ukraine

Promoter: ODE (Önkéntes Diakóniai Év Programiroda)
Address: Hungária krt. 200
1146 Budapest, Hungary
Tel.: +36 1 4600 706
Fax: +36 1 4600 707
Website: www.odeprogramiroda.net
E-mail: ode@zsinatiroda.hu

Description

Helping Roma Children in Transcarpathia: Reflection and Motivation regarding the Fight against Discrimination is a Hungarian youth project under way in the Ukrainian region of Transcarpathia. The project began in August 2009 and will conclude in July 2010, and focuses on enhancing primary school education to improve the quality of life and prospects of Roma children in the region.

As part of the Transcarpathia project, three volunteers have been enlisted to assist local Roma children in two of the region's villages: Nagydobrony and Szürte. The volunteers are associated with local churches and have been specifically chosen for their experience and interest in working with minorities and promoting human rights, values and equal opportunities for the Roma. These volunteers have joined forces with two Transcarpathian Reform Church primary schools, which are attended by a significant number of Roma pupils.

Roma children often fall behind at school because of their disadvantaged situation, social exclusion and discrimination. They also tend to find it difficult to complete homework assignments because of their home environment.

During morning classes, the volunteers work on a one-to-one basis with the Roma pupils to help improve their knowledge, skills, social integration and self-esteem.

They also assist the Roma pupils with their homework in the afternoons and design and implement creative activities, which include the participation of other students. This helps the Roma children interact with their peers and develop stronger social, personal and group identities.

The volunteers also inspire and encourage the Roma pupils to participate in volunteer activities.



Main aims of the project

The primary objective of the project is to improve the situation and future for local Roma youth.

The aim of the project is to encourage Roma children to attend secondary school, which means first reintegrating them into the primary education system.

By promoting the interaction of diverse social groups with different cultural identities, the project seeks to reduce discrimination against and segregation of the Roma.

Many Roma adults and children who live in Transcarpathia are not legally registered and therefore do not receive basic human rights such as healthcare.

The project seeks to encourage in-depth reflection on the Roma situation in the Ukraine and Europe as a whole. It aims to promote the values of respect and acceptance among mainstream society through closer contact with minorities such as the Roma, as opposed to prejudice and discrimination.

Project activities

The volunteers assist the pupils in two main ways. The first involves participation in morning classes, during which the volunteers offer support to the pupils, particularly those who require special attention. This helps the Roma pupils to focus and improve their knowledge and skills, and fosters integration in the class. The volunteers work jointly with the teachers in order to identify and support pupils who are falling behind in class. They are also invited to teach their own classes that focus on cultural aspects including language, music and art.

During the afternoons, the volunteers run a day-care programme, through which they help the Roma pupils to do their homework and organise recreational activities to promote integration and cooperation. They also run enrichment programmes, which focus on helping the Roma children to develop individual and collective skills that are of use at school and in their home communities.

Two afternoons a week, the volunteers coordinate a pre-school group that helps students between the ages of three and six develop basic knowledge and life skills, such as mathematics and interpersonal skills.

During the summer months, the volunteers participate in children's summer camps organised by the village Reform Churches. They also take part in extracurricular weekend activities such as sports days, excursions and cultural celebrations.



Inclusion for Active Citizenship

Programme: Youth
Country: Albania
Partner countries: Germany, Italy, Kosovo
Macedonia, Serbia and Slovenia

Promoter: Roma Active Albania
Address: Rr. Myslym Shyri 117/2
Tirana, Albania
Tel.: + 355 692 058 782
E-mail: raa@albaniaonline.net
a.hasantari@gmail.com



Description

Inclusion for Active Citizenship was a six-day training course on minority inclusion and active citizenship for young people from six European countries. The course was held in Albania from 7 to 13 September 2007 and involved 29 youth workers from Albania, Macedonia, Serbia, Kosovo, Italy, Germany and Slovenia. It focused on the fundamental role that youth organisations and workers can play in integrating young members of ethnic, religious, linguistic and national minority communities such as the Roma.

The Inclusion for Active Citizenship training course enhanced the participants' knowledge and skills in order to work with young people from minority groups. It was conducted within the framework of the Youth in Action Programme and featured other initiatives that raise awareness about the situation and status of European citizens.

The course built on existing support given to minorities through governmental and non-governmental institutions across Europe. It provided a platform for the exchange of best practice and created a partnership network of youth workers.

The training course equipped the participants with specific tools for individual and collaborative youth activities. It encouraged them to develop new skills with which to improve the social integration and active citizenship of the new generation of Europeans.

The Inclusion for Active Citizenship course promoted European values that directly affect minorities, such as democracy, human rights, tolerance and equal opportunities.

Main aims of the project

The aim of Inclusion for Active Citizenship was to provide participating youth organisations and workers with specific tools to enhance their work with young people from minority groups and consequently facilitate the integration of these young people into the communities in which they live.

The project sought to promote the inclusion and active citizenship of young members of minority communities, including Roma, by exchanging knowledge on minority issues. It also aimed to empower youth organisations and young people through the transfer of knowledge and assisted skill development.

A further objective was the creation of a network of trainers and youth workers that work with minorities. Based on the tools provided by the training course, this network could then initiate and exchange best practices on youth activities at national, regional and European levels.

Project activities

All of the project activities that formed part of the six-day training course focused on the promotion of equal opportunities, human rights, democracy and intercultural understanding.

The first day was spent on team-building activities in order to sow the seeds for future partnerships. On the second day, which ended with an educational workshop, each participating organisation was invited to present and share best practices on working with young people.

The third and fourth days of the course were devoted entirely to parallel workshops on national and European citizenship, human rights and intercultural education.

The Youth in Action programme was presented on the fifth day of the course, during which methods and tools for working with minority groups were highlighted. On the sixth and final day of the course, the participants were invited to work in groups and propose new ideas for projects developed during the course that would enhance minority inclusion and active citizenship for all.



Intercult 2008

Programme: Youth
Country: Germany
Partner countries: Bulgaria, France, Hungary, Latvia, Norway, Poland, Romania, Sweden and the United Kingdom

Promoter: Bürgermedienzentrum Bennohaus
Address: Bennostr. 5
48155 Münster, Germany
Tel.: +49 025 160 9673
Fax: +49 025 160 9677
Website: www.bennohaus.info
E-mail: tv-muenster2@bennohaus.info



Description

Intercult was large-scale European youth project designed to promote intercultural dialogue as a process through which young citizens between the ages of 16 and 25 from diverse backgrounds could increase their understanding of a multicultural European environment and society.

Throughout 2008, Intercult united young European people from mainstream and minority groups, using music and media as tools to break down barriers in communication and understanding.

The project brought together young participants from minority groups across Europe, such as the Roma, in youth team activities within a network of 10 partner countries (Germany, France, Poland, Norway, the United Kingdom, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Latvia and Sweden).

Intercult was promoted by Bürgermedienzentrum Bennohaus, a German socio-cultural and media pedagogical institution encompassing an NGO, and partnered by 12 organisations that specialise in youth and culture from the 10 participating countries.

The project promoted intercultural communication through activities involving media, debate, intercultural, political and creative education, film, dance, art and music. These activities were shared through the network of partners via Internet television broadcasts and showcased in a festival at the end of the project.

Intercult was based on the belief that culture has an important role to play in the creation of economic and educational opportunities for young European citizens. Increasing intercultural communication and education is a vital part of building a common European community.

The project raised awareness about the importance of active European citizenship, which entails respect for cultural diversity and is based on common European values.

Main aims of the project

Differences in fundamental values, culture and religion make civil society dialogue and intercultural communication vital tools for enhancing inclusion and tolerance. The project used public and citizen media sources (television, Internet television and video) as the ideal tools through which to foster dialogue, strengthen the dissemination of information and stimulate public debate on intercultural issues.

The partner countries selected young participants from local minority groups, such as the Roma, to take part in these activities and develop their skills in intercultural awareness and important technologies. The Hungarian and Romanian partners concentrated specifically on Roma youth, while the Latvian partner worked with young people from the Russian minority group.

The aim of Intercult was to involve the young participants in youth initiatives and projects at local level. These included film and television productions focusing on intercultural traditions and customs such as music and dance.

Regular live television and Internet television broadcasting were planned in order to present the results and debate relevant issues. A final broadcast to present the project results was planned to take place in Germany.

An Intercult festival was also planned, at which the young participants, including the Roma, could showcase their creative intercultural endeavours.

Project activities

During 2008, the Intercult project partners conducted activities, training seminars, workshops and youth initiatives that focused on intercultural communication, media and musical creativity, traditional dance and public debate.

The young participants, including the Roma, were engaged in youth meetings, local youth initiatives and youth exchanges. They produced films and television shows focusing on intercultural issues, as well as intercultural events. These included music, songs and dance within the scope of the seminars and local workshops. As part of the project, participants also took part in local voluntary services. Ten project presentations were organised at local and European level, and focused on intercultural dialogue and understanding.

The project concluded with the Intercult 2008 festival, which took place from 23 to 26 October 2008 in Münster, Germany, and was organised by the Bennohaus citizens' house. During this three-day event, participants from all the partner countries presented songs, dance and films representing their culture live on stage. Production teams made up of young people from the participating European countries discussed their work, and collaborated on a broadcast series for television and Internet television.

The local and European events that took place during the course of the project were broadcast publicly by NGO TV all over Europe during and after the project. (www.ngotv.eu, www.owtv.de).



Reunion 2009: Young Europeans in Southeast Europe

Programme: Youth
Country: Serbia
Partner countries: Germany, Poland and Serbia

Promoter: Remizijana Scout Group
Address: Krupac Scout Centre, Cara lazara bb
18310 Bela Palanka, Serbia
Tel.: +381 64 3555 413 / +381 64 1981 683
E-mail: milosbp@ptt.rs



Description

Reunion 2009: Young Europeans in Southeast Europe, as its name suggests, was a project that reunited 32 young people from seven European countries in July 2009 in Serbia. The young people came from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Germany, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Poland and Serbia, and first met on a youth camp in Germany in 2008.

The 16-day meeting was partially self-organised, as the group spent the first ten days living and working in an outdoor camp near Bela Palanka, which they organised and ran themselves with the support of professionals from the Remizijana Scout Group.

While in Bela Palanka, the Reunion 2009: Young Europeans in Southeast Europe project group also worked with the local Roma population, a minority group in Southern Serbia. In an effort to integrate minorities in the local community and promote active citizenship, the group worked with Roma youths to build park facilities for the local nursery school.

Physical activities were preceded by theory workshops on the topics of human and minority rights which were co-hosted by the Roma Djurdjevan NGO from Bela Palanka.

The second part of the Reunion 2009: Young Europeans in Southeast Europe project took place in Subotica in the Serbian Vojvodina region. The Subotica community has successfully implemented a number of positive examples of social inclusion of minorities. These good practices and tried and tested methods became the topics of workshops held for the Reunion group, jointly run by representatives of the Subotica Scout Association and members of different ethnic groups living in Subotica.

The results were documented and formed the basis of media projects that reflected and recorded the group's experiences.

Main aims of the project

The Reunion 2009 project aimed to contribute to the personal development of all of the participants, as well as the local communities and the Roma who live in them.

It also focused heavily on teamwork, intercultural dialogue, integration of minorities and overcoming xenophobia, racism and social exclusion.

The self-organised activities were designed to encourage the participants to consider environmental issues and their responsibility and role in protecting the environment.

Project activities

The thematic workshops held in Bela Palanka focused on intercultural awareness and the issues that minorities, including the Roma, face in their day-to-day lives.

On 29 July, a workshop was held for the Scout groups by the Roma Djurdjevdan NGO and members of the local Roma community, and focused on Roma issues such as exclusion. The following day, a second workshop was held, which centred on broadening perspectives and overcoming racial and cultural stereotypes and prejudice.

The scout groups spent the time outside the workshops getting to know the local Bela Palanka Roma community. They worked together at the local nursery school and in the scout centre and spent time socialising, having a barbecue and

taking part in the Water Olympics, which were held at a nearby lake.

Further cultural awareness and minority integration workshops were held during the second leg of the meetings, which took place in Subotica, a city with a proven track record in minority inclusion. More fun was also had when participating scouts and local minorities visited the city centre, cathedral and synagogue.

The results were documented and formed the basis of subsequent media projects, including newspaper, video and radio projects. These reflected the experience and documented the progress and outcome of the collective work undertaken during Reunion 2009 by the scout groups and local communities.



RGDTS: Roma-Gadje Dialogue through Service

Programme: Youth
Country: Hungary
Partner countries: Albania, Denmark, the Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Ukraine.

Promoter: ODE (Önkéntes Diakóniai Év Programiroda)

Address: Hungária krt. 200
1146 Budapest, Hungary

Tel.: +36 1 4600 706

Fax: +36 1 4600 707

Website: <http://www.rgdts.net>

E-mail: info@rgdts.net
ode@zsinatiroda.hu

Description

The RGDTS: Roma-Gadje Dialogue through Service project brought together Roma and non-Roma (Gadje) youth in voluntary service activities in Western, Central and Eastern Europe. The project united 23 voluntary service organisations, youth organisations and Roma cultural and social centres for their first ever collaboration.

RGDTS provided young Roma and Gadje adults between the ages of 18 and 30 from communities in Central and Eastern Europe with opportunities to travel outside their own communities. It created and developed volunteering opportunities in social, environmental and cultural projects in Eastern, Central and Western Europe. These enabled participants to broaden their knowledge and skills and contribute to the further development of their communities and the situation of the Roma.

RGDTS was originally launched in 2003 and was expanded to include a sister project with Russia and the Ukraine from 2006 to 2009. Together, these parallel projects involved a total of 75 young people from Albania, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and the Ukraine, 50% of whom came from the Roma community. These young people took part in voluntary programmes around Europe which were tailored to their specific backgrounds.

Long-term (9-12 months), mid-term (3-6 months) and short-term voluntary service activities were offered. The shorter-term projects were adapted for young Roma from economically disadvantaged families, children's homes or isolated areas or with limited formal education. Young Roma and non-Roma participants from diverse backgrounds worked together and supported each other through these projects.

Following their voluntary service, the Gadje volunteers were also invited to participate in local community projects involving Roma volunteers in their own countries and regions.

The project also trained both Roma and Gadje mentors to enable them to guide young volunteers as they worked through issues such as racism, xenophobia and social exclusion.



Main aims of the project

The primary goals of RGDTS included providing long-, mid- and short-term service opportunities to young Roma and Gadge, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

It also sought to develop Roma leadership as part of the initiative and to develop and expand cooperation between Roma organisations and Gadge voluntary service organisations and youth organisations.

RGDTS endorsed and extended the achievements of the 2006 European Voluntary Service initiative, furthering the dialogue commenced and branching out to involve organisations from Southeast Europe (Albania).

Project activities

The project activities included placements for Roma and Gadge volunteers. One such placement was at the Gypsy Women's Association in Timisoara, Romania.

Timisoara is a city of 450,000 inhabitants in Western Romania, near the Hungarian/Serbian border. Colonia Strand is a poor area on the outskirts of the city, with a large Roma population of 100 families and 90% unemployment.

In 1997, the Gypsy Women's Association was formed in Colonia Strand to work with Roma women and children. It addresses unemployment and improves educational opportunities for children. Adults often leave Timisoara to find work and children either fail to complete their schooling or have problems at school.

For this reason, the GWA established a nursery school for Roma children and the Gypsy Women's House was also created to accommodate 14 girls during school hours. The school emphasises Roma history and values and the

situation of the Roma, helps Roma individuals get involved in education and supports them in applying for social benefits and grants.

The association promotes the socio-political life of the Romanian Roma community with pride and without prejudice. It advocates access by Roma women and girls to education and organises conferences, discussions and seminars to combat racism. At the same time, it preserves the cultural identity of the Roma through Romany language classes, theatre, music, dance, traditions and customs, and promotes a positive image of the Roma in the mass media.

RGDTS volunteers took part in all of the activities at the Gypsy Women's Association. These included assisting the nursery school teacher in a variety of activities for young children, helping children with their homework, providing elementary knowledge of English and some IT knowledge, helping to organise events such as International Roma Day (April 8), the Festival of Ethnic Groups, Children's Day, the summer camp and taking children to the theatre. The volunteers also lent a hand at the Programme Club by participating in activities including theatre, music, dance and painting.



RomTv project

Programme: Youth
Country: Sweden

Promoters: Mälarföreningen/Romano Pasos Research Centre
Address: Mälarföreningen: Friggagatan 10, 114 27 Stockholm, Sweden
Romano Pasos Research Centre: Sibeliushöjden 26 7 tr., 164 77 Kista, Sweden
Tel.: Mälarföreningen: +46 08 20 82 75
Romano Pasos Research Centre: +46 0 704 711 189
Fax: Mälarföreningen: +46 08 20 82 75
Website: www.malarforeningen.org
www.romanopaso.org
E-mail: info@malarforeningen.org
romanopaso@hotmail.com

Description

The RomTv project was a 15-month initiative that used public access television in Stockholm as a platform to inform the general public about Romany news, events, culture, history, language and current affairs. Each week, two informative 30-minute programmes were aired on Stockholm's Öppna Kanalen TV channel.

Four young members of Stockholm's Kelderash, Lovari and Resende Roma groups were selected to produce the programmes, which included coverage of Roma concerts, seminars, conferences, debates and educational initiatives.

In 2008, the four young Roma participants completed 96 hours of training over the course of 12 weeks under the guidance of a coach and staff from the television channel. Once they had completed the training, they went on to spend a year filming and editing a wide range of Roma material for broadcast on Öppna Kanalen.

The young participants were introduced to the world of media and trained to use this as a platform to disseminate Roma cultural information. This promoted their education and integration into mainstream society while simultaneously raising public awareness of Roma culture, heritage and traditions.

The participants were deliberately selected from different Romany groups and backgrounds in order to foster class and gender interaction within the Roma community.

Main aims of the project

The principal aim of the RomTv project was to teach the young participants the power of the media as a democratic tool.

They were taught editing and recording methods, how to handle equipment and technology, and how to research and obtain information on events. They also learned about the legal implications of airing material, such as copyright regulations, permission, defining public material and what can be recorded freely without authorisation.



The aim of the project was to bring Romany culture into the public eye in Sweden, enhancing intercultural understanding, generating interest and breaking down barriers such as xenophobia and discrimination. It sought to reveal social aspects of Roma culture that are either unknown or largely misunderstood, thereby enlightening viewers and empowering local Roma communities.

Project activities

The 12-week training included a short course in ethnology, democratic values, ethics, rules for filming and broadcasting, how media can better society, how to handle technical equipment, editing raw material and correct delivery formats for recorded material.

The first stage began by introducing the participants to the equipment and assisting them in shooting and editing their material. They then participated in courses and received hands-on training in copyright regulations, contact-building, how to find information on upcoming events, and how to deliver material to the television station.

The second stage of the project consisted of individual assignments. Each participant prepared and filmed an event and edited it under supervision. Following this,

the participants were taught how to organise and create a schedule for filming, editing, and submitting material. Finally, each participant was assigned an editing programme and raw footage for practice editing, which was handed in for assessment.

During the final stage of the course, the participants were invited to attend a two-week course in ethnology and how the media can influence society.

Once the 12-week course was completed, the young Roma participants began shooting the material for the programmes. They prepared, filmed and edited a wide variety of material covering Roma holidays, weddings, lectures by Roma academics, protests against antagonism, performances, and interviews with Roma community members and the Catholic priest working with the Roma in the Stockholm diocese.

Special programmes were made on celebrations and commemorations such as International Romany Day, International Women's Day and International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

The main aim of the project, which was to promote Roma integration by educating the young participants in communication, was echoed in a special programme about the Swedish delegation for the Youth Forum of European Universities, an EU project for university students. 75% of this delegation comprised members of the Roma community.

The participants were able to show Roma culture, heritage, history and current affairs subjectively, portraying a different image to those typically provided by mainstream media. As such, they were each able to contribute to combating racism and xenophobia and promoting integration between Roma and non-Roma societies.



Together on the Road

Programme: Youth
Country: Slovenia
Partner countries: France, Kosovo and Serbia

Promoter: DZHP
Address: Cesta 4, julija 58
8270 Krsko, Slovenia
Tel.: +386 031 276 275
Website: <http://www.drustvo-dzmp.si>
E-mail: drustvo.dzmp@guest.arnes.si



Description

Together on the Road was a year-long youth project for which a group of young Roma individuals took to the road and created a video montage on Roma culture in Europe.

The project brought together partners from Slovenia, France, Serbia and Kosovo who contributed a range of different skills and experience.

Together, the young Roma film crew researched, shot and edited a series of short documentaries about Roma culture and Roma issues. During 2008, the team travelled to Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer in France (May), Mundi Romani in Budapest (June), Novi Sad in Serbia (July), and Krsko in Slovenia (August) to document Roma life in these countries.

The final product was six short documentaries, which were shown at Slovenian festivals, broadcast on national television, distributed on DVD and screened at public seminars and debates in schools and youth centres.

Video is an innovative and original way of depicting the Roma situation. Discrimination comes from ignorance and misunderstanding and this contemporary medium is a key tool for raising awareness and disseminating information.

The Roma community is the biggest minority group in Europe but remains largely unknown and marginalised. By travelling to France, Hungary and Serbia, the young film crew gained first-hand experience of how the Roma population lives in different parts of Europe.

Main aims of the project

The main aim of Together on the Road was to enable young Roma to witness and portray Roma life across Europe and to equip them with the necessary skills to do so.

The project also sought to establish and develop partnerships between Roma and non-Roma filmmakers from around Europe.

Visually documenting Roma traditions that are usually passed on through stories and legends was seen as a

way of preserving Roma heritage while simultaneously overcoming barriers such as illiteracy.

Together on the Road sought to improve knowledge of the Roma culture while offering a fresh and original perspective through the eyes of young members of the community. It also aimed to create potential career opportunities in television for young Roma individuals.

Project activities

Four participants from Slovenia, Kosovo, Italy and France travelled by caravan to France and spent five days shooting a documentary about the Holy Saint Sara Pilgrimage in Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer.

The team returned to Slovenia to edit the work before taking a train to Budapest in June to spend four days shooting a short documentary, *Mundi Romani*, with Roma activist and film director Katalin Bársony.

In August, the young people headed to Serbia, where they got together with local Roma to make a documentary about the life of Roma women on the outskirts of Novi Sad, where many Roma from Kosovo emigrated after 1999.

During the same month, young Roma from Kosovo went to Slovenia to participate in a video workshop. During the week-long workshop in Krško, they created a docu-fiction film with the local Roma population.

The following six short video documentaries emerged from this project:

Journalists and Roma, documentary, 7'45"
Author: Martina Hudorovič, Cécile Horreau
Roma journalists present the challenges of their work and reflect on their attitudes towards social engagement.

Little Ladies, fiction-documentary, 5'
Author: Martina Hudorovič
Young Roma talks about their teenage lives.

Holy Saint Sarah Pilgrimage, 10'09"
A report from Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer: the traditional pilgrimage in honour of Saint Sarah, patron saint of the Roma.

Mundi Romani, documentary, 8'23"
Authors: Martina Hudorovič, Massimo Mucchiut, Cécile Horreau.

A visit to the TV newsroom of the Hungarian Roma, where journalistic and documentary approaches intertwine with social activism.

Life of Roma Women, documentary, 6'42"
Authors: Martina Hudorovič, Katarina Rešek
An investigation into the position of women living in Roma settlements in Novi Sad.

Mangipe, fiction-documentary, 14'
Authors: Sami Mustafa, Avdilj Mustafa, Avni Mustafa, and Faton Mustafa
A Roma from Kosovo comes to Slovenia to find a bride. He ends up in the Roma settlement near Krško.

The documentaries were screened at the Kinodvor Art Cinema in Ljubljana. As a result, young director Martina Hudorovič was offered a job as a freelance TV journalist for a Roma television programme at Slovenian National Radio and Television.

The final works also featured at several Slovenian festivals, including the 5th Isola Cinema Festival, the 5th DokMa Film Festival in Maribor, the Luksuz Film Festival in Krško, and the 5th TRAKulja film festival in Cerklje ob Krki. They were also screened at the Rolling Film Festival in Priština (Kosovo) and the 7th European Youth Film Festival in Warsaw. The documentary entitled *Little Ladies* was screened at the Stranger Film Festival in Amsterdam.



Programme: ESF (DG EMPL)

Country: Spain

Promoter: Secretariado Gitano

Address: c/ Ahijones, s/n
28018 Madrid, Spain

Tel.: +34 914 220 960

Fax: +34 914 220 961

Website: www.gitanos.org/acceder/

E-mail: acceder@gitanos.org
belensanchez@gitanos.org

Description

Acceder is a multi-regional programme to help Spain's Roma population gain access to employment. It was designed to improve social inclusion and equality for members of the Roma community by opening gateways to the labour market. The project consists of two phases: the first ran from 2000 to 2007, and the second runs from 2008 to 2013.

There are approximately 700,000 Spanish Roma in Spain's total population of almost 45 million inhabitants. Like elsewhere in Europe, the Roma community in Spain suffers from direct and indirect discrimination and a negative social image. Mainstream Spanish society knows relatively little about the Roma culture and the issues faced by Europe's largest minority.

The principal challenges faced by the Roma include housing, education and employment, all of which are interlinked.

Acceder's priority is to give the Roma population greater access to the labour market through integration actions such as individual employment pathways and the development and enhancement of human resources.

It adapts vocational training to the demands of the labour market and establishes direct links between the Roma and companies by promoting a partnership network with administrations and companies. The project has also raised awareness about prejudice and discrimination and standardised proactive policies targeting the Roma population.

Acceder creates valuable intercultural dialogue among Spain's Roma population and its other citizens, NGOs, employers, training entities and government associations. It has changed Roma employment prospects within the Roma community and in mainstream society.

Main aims of the project

The principal objective of Acceder is to apply an integrated, multi-dimensional and individualised approach to finding jobs for Roma applicants in Spain's mainstream job market.



It seeks to adapt vocational training to help enhance the professional skills of Roma jobseekers. The aim is to create greater access for the Roma to paid employment and simultaneously meet the demand for workers from private companies.

Acceder aims to establish a direct link between Roma jobseekers and employment service providers, enabling Roma jobseekers equal access to these services.

Raising awareness about prejudices and discriminatory practices against the Roma community has helped to improve their image in society.

The programme also seeks to standardise proactive policies targeting the Roma population in order to improve living standards and guarantee equal opportunities and equal access to public goods and services.

Project activities

A total of 48 integrated employment centres have been established throughout Spain for the implementation of Acceder.

These centres are staffed by 260 intercultural and multi-disciplinary work teams made up of Roma and non-Roma workers with diverse skills and backgrounds. Each team assigns four to seven people (including coordinators, labour counsellors, enterprise mediators and social technicians) to execute programmes at local level.

These nationwide employment centres are fully equipped with technical tools and material resources, and each is in a location that is easily accessible to the local Roma population.

The work teams conduct an initial diagnosis of each individual's employability. This is followed by a plan of appropriate measures and recommended steps to enhance access to employment. This process includes counselling, training and assistance in labour market integration. Reception and information actions include an introduction to Acceder's services and general information on employment and training.

Tutoring and monitoring of the individualised employment plans include referrals to mainstream

training resources and follow up. Pre-training and vocational training have been specifically tailored to the Roma population.

Jobseekers are also offered extensive support in analysing and looking for employment. A mediation system is offered to companies in order to match demand with suitable potential Roma employees.

Support is offered for the engagement of workers, with follow-up for those who have found and commenced employment. Consultancy services and support are also made available to those Roma wishing to start their own businesses.

Proactive policies targeting the Roma population have included debates and forums on training for social intervention professionals. Technical assistance is offered to public administrations and social organisations to design plans and measures for the inclusion of the Roma. Studies and research have been conducted to broaden knowledge of the Spanish Roma population. An observatory has been created on Roma labour market integration to compile information on progress made through Acceder.

By 20 June 2009, a total of 47,778 people had attended Acceder integrated work centres and 33,827 jobs had been found in Spain as a result of the programme. 72% of these successful jobseekers were Roma.



Further Education on Marginalised Groups for Teachers and Teaching Assistants

Programme: ESF (DG EMPL)

Country: Slovakia

Promoter: Civic Association for Dignified Life
(Občianske Združenie Dôstojný Život)

Address: Kocel'ova 27/10
05201, Spisska Nova Ves, Slovakia

Tel: +421 534 412 339 / +421 910 573 178

Fax: +421 534 414 061

E-mail: vladimirklein@post.sk



Description

Further Education on Marginalised Groups for Teachers and Teaching Assistants was a two-year project to train 98 primary school teachers and teaching assistants in the Prešov and Košice regions of the Slovak Republic. Participants developed skills and acquired knowledge for better teaching and interaction with pupils from marginalised groups, including the Roma.

From October 2004 to October 2006, teacher training courses and seminars were carried out in local schools and universities in the two regions. These not only provided information and insight, but also enhanced the teachers' and assistants' skills in applying knowledge, particularly in the field of language education.

All participating teaching assistants were members of the Roma community. Their main role was to help Roma children at school to break the language barrier, as most of the pupils spoke Romany and little or no Slovak. These assistants played a key role in comprehension and language development and acted as mediators between Roma parents and the school, helping to increase parents' interest and confidence.

Further Education on Marginalised Groups for Teachers and Teaching Assistants also enhanced cooperation and communication between teachers and assistant teachers and Roma pupils and their parents.

Main aims of the project

The principal objective of the project was to provide ongoing education for teachers and teaching staff in order to optimise their capabilities and adaptability when working with minorities.

It also sought to improve the skills and knowledge of those entering the profession as teachers or teaching assistants.

Three project seminars were held to share results, experience and best practices with other participants, experts, teachers, parents and members of the general public. During these events, the participating teachers and assistants created partnerships with other schools

in the region to disseminate best practices when working with minorities.

The direct beneficiaries of the project were primary school and nursery school teachers and teaching assistants. Indirectly, the project reached 1,200 pupils and 6,000 teaching staff at primary schools and nursery schools in which the trained participants worked.

Project activities

Further Education on Marginalised Groups for Teachers and Teaching Assistants kicked off with a training course for 75 teachers and teaching assistants from primary schools in the Prešov and Košice regions. It focused on new educational trends and information on the specificities of teaching pupils from minority communities, especially the Roma.

A preparation course was implemented for 15 Roma teaching assistants at two schools to help them pass the school-leaving exam. Roma teaching assistants do not often complete their secondary education or acquire university degrees, so this activity was designed to support and encourage them to sit and pass their school-leaving exam.

A further course prepared eight teaching assistants, already working in schools, for higher education studies in collaboration with two participating regional universities. As a direct result, all the participating teaching assistants, as well as eleven more from the region, are now in their second year at university.

Three dissemination seminars were organised in September and October 2006 to inform the general public and education experts about the project results. The final project seminar invited participants and partner organisations to evaluate the results and impact of the project. Reports were distributed among all of participants and sent to the Slovak Ministry of Education.

A book entitled “Current Trends in Socio-Educational Work with Roma Pupils” by Vladimír Klein and Vlasta Fabianová was published as part of the project.



Giving Roma Children the Chance to Study at Secondary Schools and Vocational Training Centres

Programme: ESF (DG EMPL)

Country: Slovakia

Promoter: Šumiac

Address: Kráľ'ovohol'ská 413
97671, Šumiac, Slovakia

Tel.: + 421 904 490 823

Website: <http://zssumiac.edupage.org/>

E-mail: zssumiac@centrum.sk

Description

Giving Roma Children the Chance to Study at Secondary Schools and Vocational Training Centres was a 26-month project that helped integrate year 8 and 9 Roma primary school children in the Slovak education system.

The project placed specific emphasis on preparing and coaching Roma pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds in order to motivate them and improve their chances of entering secondary schools and vocational training centres.

A total of 20 Roma pupils and two experienced teachers were selected from each of the four participating schools, which were located in small towns in the Brezno region of Slovakia. The pupils were offered coaching and support in principal subjects and invited to attend weekend stays at the European Educational Centre for Society and Careers in the Slovakian village of Zavadka nad Hronom.

School attendance and performance levels among Roma pupils are notably low in Slovakia, and the project offered additional coaching to help combat this by encouraging participating pupils to develop their abilities and become enthusiastic about education.

All coaching and homework assistance took place under professional pedagogical supervision. This helped to motivate and inspire the participating pupils to carry on studying and continue into higher education. It also improved relationships among Roma pupils, other minorities and mainstream communities.

A further integral element of the programme involved inviting the pupils to attend leisure stays at the European Educational Centre for Society and Careers. Pupils and participating teachers participated in educational and creative activities at the centre and were offered comfortable, safe and clean accommodation with families from the local community.



Main aims of the project

Giving Roma Children the Chance to Study at Secondary Schools and Vocational Training Centres was designed to improve Roma school results, compulsory school attendance and self-discipline, and emphasised social inclusion.

The project also sought to enhance communication between Roma and non-Roma pupils and teachers and improve the Roma pupils' speaking skills in Slovak. The coaching was intended to open doors to careers and opportunities for Roma pupils and improves their self-esteem and confidence.

The weekend trips into the countryside to the picturesque village of Zavadka nad Hronom were designed to be both educational and recreational. They were intended to encourage Roma pupils to interact with the local community and nature and participate in educational and creative activities, enabling them to relax and enjoy themselves while simultaneously broadening their perspectives on education, interaction and participation.

Project activities

The project comprised two core activities. Additional coaching was provided for Roma participants in three principal school subjects: Slovak, German and mathematics. This took place in the afternoons at Šumiac Primary School. The selected teachers explained and clarified challenging topics and helped the Roma pupils to develop study and revision skills. The Roma participants were also offered help with their homework and encouraged to see the positive side of education as a gateway to a brighter future.

Weekend placements were offered at the European Educational Centre for Society and Careers in the village of Zavadka nad Hronom. These trips included accommodation for the Roma participants and teachers with families from the local communities, promoting intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding.

Daily activities at the centre included didactic games to encourage the pupils' cognitive and logical skills. Being so close to nature also enabled them to develop positive attitudes towards protecting the environment. Sports, dance, and singing were also part of the weekend curriculum.

As a result of this project, seven year 9 pupils were inspired to further their education and now attend secondary school. The Roma participants' grades, attendance, language skills and communication with peers improved across the board.



Roma for Society

Programme: ESF (DG EMPL)
Country: Slovakia

Promoter: ACEC (Association for Culture, Education and Communication)

Address: Laurinská 2
81101, Bratislava, Slovakia

Tel.: + 421 254 417 212

Fax: + 421 254 419 069

Website: www.acec.sk

E-mail: lubomiras@gmail.com



Description

Roma for Society is the first ever community development project to focus on better integration for Roma settlements in the Prešov region of Slovakia.

For seven years, the project has addressed Roma issues and challenges and created opportunities for Prešov's self-governing Roma community to actively participate in improving its situation and standard of living.

The Roma population in Prešov's settlements suffers from discrimination, poverty and limited educational, vocational and employment opportunities. Roma for Society has created community education centres and implemented training courses and community meetings to raise awareness about the Roma situation and create a more positive future for the region's Roma population.

The project has established seven community education centres and enlists support and guidance for Prešov's Roma community. The centres are in areas of the region with a strong Roma presence (Olejníkov, Kežmarok, Krížová Ves, Spišská Belá, Ľubica, Toporec and Veľká Lomnica). Intercultural interaction between Roma and non-Roma communities has been promoted in these areas and throughout the Prešov region.

Roma for Society has taken place in five operational phases since its launch in 2002. The fifth stage, which started in June 2008, involves continued monitoring and promotion of the project.

Main aims of the project

Roma for Society seeks to increase the competence potential of long-term unemployed Roma from 11 selected settlements in the Prešov region by increasing their adaptability when entering the labour market.

The aim of the project is to provide a quality education programme for the Roma. This programme focuses on systematic education in the development of basic skills for the whole target group, the establishment of seven community education centres in Roma settlements and specific training for centre coordinators selected from within the Roma community.

Roma for Society also seeks to establish long-term collaboration between education centres and

institutions at local level (self-government), regional level (self-governing region), and regional government level (Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family).

Emphasis has been placed on self-governance and training members of the Roma community to run the centres, thus creating immediate employment and facilitating ownership to the Roma.

During each of the five operational stages of the project, Roma for Society has implemented activities to better integrate the Prešov Roma community in mainstream society and overcome barriers such as social exclusion, xenophobia and discrimination.

The continual promotion of the project through presentations and positive media coverage is an ongoing objective.

Project activities

The first phase of the Roma for Society project ran from March to December 2002 and involved a detailed analysis of the existing situation, issues and challenges facing Roma inhabitants in 11 selected Prešov settlements.

From January to December 2003, the second phase of the project established seven education centres in areas of the region comprising the highest populations of the Roma. An application and selection process for Roma coordinators and participants was launched within the chosen settlements.

During the third stage of the project, which ran from June 2006 to May 2007, coordinators, counsellors and assistants were trained in management skills and how to implement education and awareness activities. Altogether, 30 Roma were employed to run the centres, including ten centre coordinators and assistants, eight general coordinators, eight coordinating assistants and four volunteers.

All of the Roma participants, whether they were coordinators or trainees, received specific tasks that they fulfilled individually in their respective communities. These involved communicating with local self-governments, doctors and members of the

settlements, elevating the trainees to a position of trust and approachability and improving community life.

Of the 30 Roma coordinators and assistants who completed the third stage of the programme, 21 went on to obtain positions as community centre coordinators, assistant coordinators, town council employees, health education workers and extra-curricula educators.

Stage four of the project ran from June 2007 to May 2008 and focused on conducting vocational training courses and assisting members of the Roma community in seeking and applying for jobs and entering the labour market. It also encouraged community development and enhanced the social integration of Prešov's Roma population into mainstream society.

The fifth stage of the project, which has run since June 2008, involves continued support, monitoring, evaluation and promotion of the initiative.

All of the graduates have gained greater qualifications and competence and increased their adaptability when entering the labour market. Since completing their training, some Roma graduates from the training programmes have gone on to apply the knowledge and skills they have developed in community projects and fieldwork. A total of 16 graduates have since joined the Healthy Communities project to improve health conditions within 67 Roma communities.



Renovation of the Svět Roma Cultural Centre

Programme: Joint Regional Operational Programme (DG REGIO)

Country: Czech Republic

Promoter: City of Most

Address: Radnici 1

434 69 Most, Czech Republic

Tel.: +420 476 703 162 / +420 476 448 265

Website: <http://www.mesto-most.cz>

E-mail: karel.borecky@mesto-most.cz

Description

The Renovation of the Svět Roma Cultural Centre was a year-long investment and construction project to restore a 30-year-old building in the Chanov area of Most, in the Czech Republic.

Chanov is a poor area, predominantly inhabited by a Roma population. The Renovation of the Svět Roma Cultural Centre project overhauled this formerly run-down building through extensive exterior and interior renovations.

The new centre invites members of the local Roma community to take part in social, cultural, educational and leisure activities. It is a meeting and information point that provides information, services, counselling and assistance to the local Roma population. The newly renovated centre has also been made available to NGOs for the launch and coordination of pro-Roma initiatives.

Besides physical renovations, investments were made to promote and coordinate educational courses and cultural events at the Svět Roma Cultural Centre

The municipality of Most was selected for the improvement of social housing for disadvantaged groups and the Svět Roma Cultural Centre project was followed by other local projects, including one to renovate Roma housing estates. The Renovation of the Svět Roma Cultural Centre project was the first in a series of initiatives to improve Roma housing conditions and standards of living.



Main aims of the project

The main aim of the Renovation of the Svět Roma Cultural Centre project was to create an appropriate and appealing space in which members of the Most Roma community could participate in social, cultural, educational and leisure activities.

The aim, through renovating the building, was also to encourage members of the local Roma community to see the new cultural centre as a place in which they could take part in training and vocational courses. The Svět Roma Cultural Centre project also sought to offer individual counselling, coaching and assistance to the local Roma population in a safe and friendly environment.

A further operational objective of the renovation was to create a location in which non-profit organisations that provide social and other services specific to the Roma community could meet and conduct activities.

For the construction and renovation work, the intention was to employ Roma workers from the local area, thus creating new jobs and boosting morale. The refurbishment of the centre was also to foster a more positive image of the Roma community, combating racism and xenophobia and heralding positive changes for Most's Roma population.



Project activities

Extensive construction took place on the cultural centre over the course of 12 months. The floors were reconstructed and new windows and roofing were fitted. Pipes, wiring, lighting and plastering were repaired and air-conditioning and heating were installed.

The restoration provided facilities such as a multipurpose hall, classrooms, tutorial rooms and administrative offices on the premises.

The Svět Roma Cultural Centre offers members of the Roma community 14 re-training courses, as well as counselling and information services. It provides a selection of training, educational and leisure activities and development projects and offers job-seeking facilities.

The result is a pleasant and welcoming cultural community centre in which the Roma population, NGOs and anyone interested in the Roma culture, heritage and progress are made to feel welcome.



This brochure forms part of DG EAC's contribution to the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. It represents a key method employed by DG EAC to make better use of and disseminate the results of its programmes on Roma inclusion. The brochure describes 30 best practice projects for Roma inclusion that have been supported by EU programmes in recent years.

2010
European Year
for Combating
Poverty and
Social Exclusion



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

ISBN 978-92-79-15020-3



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