

WELCOME TO PLANET PAPRIKA

PHIREN AMENCA INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER SEMINAR

From April 15-21, 2012, nineteen Roma and non-Roma volunteers from across Europe and North America came to Budapest, Hungary for a special seminar supporting their voluntary service work in challenging stereotypes and racism. The participants are doing their voluntary service in Ukraine, Romania, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Kosovo.

Each spring and fall Phiren Amenca hosts in cooperation with member organizations a one week seminar for current volunteers from around Europe focusing on the exchange of experience and on Roma history, discrimination, stigmatization, xenophobia, identity and culture; globalization and migration; as well as youth engagement and Roma initiatives in Europe.

Over the course of this week long seminar, several themes relevant to the volunteers' work discussed in depth, including:

- Narratives of Roma history, labels and identity, the Romani Holocaust
- Stereotypes and romanticism in the public image and mass media
- Poverty and Marginalization
- Diversity in Romani cultures
- Various organizations, stakeholders and actors relevant in the field of Roma inclusion
- Platforms for youth engagement in challenging discrimination, xenophobia, and racism

In addition to the Phiren Amenca Coordination team, the seminar program featured special guests from

- Open Society Institute – Youth Initiative,
- ternYpe Magyarország - International Roma Youth Network, Hungary,
- Romaversitas,
- Holokauszt Emlékközpont – Budapest Holocaust Memorial Center,
- Szemétálmok – Garbage Dreams
- Hungarian Roma dance instructors and artists

DEVELOPING THE PLATFORM OF VOLUNTEERS

Phiren Amenca seminars utilize a variety of non-formal education methods, avoiding frontal education pedagogy, rather creating a space for active learning and room to shape the methods to fit the group needs. Through theatre-based team-building exercises led by special trainer *Károly Óvári (FAÁG BARÁTI KÖR EGYESÜLET)* a positive and open group dynamic developed over the course of the week. Working with Budapest artists' group *Szemétálmok – Garbage Dreams*, the participants worked together to create an impressive street action.

This positive group dynamic encouraged an open exchange of experience and networking among the volunteers.

KEY EVENTS:

SZEMÉTÁLMOK – GARBAGE DREAMS

Interviews and Art Material Collection

Participants traveled to Budapest's 10th District to collect reclaimed art supplies and make interviews with residents, onlookers, and *lomizás* (people who make their living by reselling items reclaimed from garbage). The reports written by seminar participants addressed head-on many of the themes discussed earlier in the seminar including marginalization, poverty, stereotypes, and racism.

STREET ACTION

Flashmob Dance and Art Installation

During the course of the seminar, participants worked together to create a dance choreography to the song 'Citizen of Planet Paprika', the lyrics of which make fun of 'exotic' and 'spicy' stereotypes. Using found materials the volunteers also collaborated to create an art sculpture Planet Paprika, which "is the ideal society, the kind of world in which we hope to live." On Friday April 20th, the volunteers performed their flashmob dance at Széll Kálmán tér, Budapest and presented their Planet Paprika to the world.

For further details on **Welcome to Planet Paprika** as well as photos, videos, and reports by the volunteers visit www.rgds.net!

