



# Phiren Amenca

ROMA-GADJE DIALOGUE THROUGH SERVICE

annual report 2013







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## members

**Amaro Drom**, Germany  
**CSD Diaconia Valdese**, Italy  
**Diakoniåret**, Denmark  
**Roma Education Centre (Osvetové centrum Rómov)**, Slovakia  
**Roma-Gadje Dialogue Through Service**, Hungary  
**Romà Onlus**, Italy  
**Terno Drom**, Germany  
**Together**, Netherlands  
**TOUCH Project Charitable Foundation**, Ukraine  
**VISA (L'Année diaconale)**, France

## board

**Astrid Oelpenich**, director  
**Yves Klopfenstein**, secretary  
**Zita Batori-Tartsis**, treasurer  
**Judit Ignacz**

## coordination office

**Richard Otterness**, managing director  
**Marietta Herfort**, program manager  
**Jonathan Mack**, program manager  
**Quintin Bart**, communications

## Phiren Amenca

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# 1. network developments

Although Phiren Amenca can look back on more than 10 years of experience with the name Roma Gadje Dialogue Through Service, our network is still young and in a dynamic process based on a new strategy and membership basis since 2012.

In the last two years we have strengthened the involvement of Roma organizations in voluntary service, established new placements, and built new partnerships. The partnerships between member organizations are growing and are characterized by trust, reliability, and a strong commitment to our common mission.

All our member organizations are engaged in long-term voluntary service programs, while new short-term programs have been established to increase the accessibility and equal opportunities for young Roma.

The organizational capacity of the members is developing and we are proud that some of our members are probably the first Roma self-organizations that became Coordinating Organizations of the Youth in Action/Erasmus+ program in Europe. New organizations are joining our activities and have expressed interest in joining the network.

The network exchanged over 40 Roma and non-Roma long-term volunteers in 2013 and offers a number of non-formal education programs. These developments and the experiences of our volunteers show the uniqueness of the Phiren Amenca network with its mission to challenge stereotypes and racism through voluntary service and that it is necessary and possible to volunteer for social change.

**February 2014,  
The Phiren Amenca Board of Directors**

## 2. voluntary service

### the volunteer program

We believe that volunteering is a powerful tool for social change, as volunteers dedicate their time and energy to contribute to society. Based on national and international voluntary service programs, the Phiren Amenca network creates opportunities for young Roma and non-Roma to live and engage in local communities and projects for up to one year contributing to the daily work of organizations in any social field. Placement themes may include youth and sport activities, social inclusion, arts and culture, environment and human rights. In exchange for their engagement, the volunteers can benefit from an unforgettable life experience, intercultural learning, non-formal education, and new language skills.

### voluntary service with Phiren Amenca

Phiren Amenca voluntary service placements offer various learning and service opportunities with the aim to challenge stereotypes and racism as the root causes of social exclusion and marginalization



*The most useful thing I've found in the Phiren Amenca seminars is the idea to give the opportunity to young people that work in the same direction to meet, and to exchange with each other, and to have this feeling that we are not alone. This feeling is really great.*

**Georgi from Bulgaria**  
volunteer 2012 in Germany

of Roma. As Roma and non-Roma, we want to create a mutual dialogue and equal opportunities for all young people in our societies, especially through giving equal access to voluntary service.

Phiren Amenca network supports and encourages volunteers in this learning experience through seminars on intercultural learning, Roma

history and cultures, civil rights activism and empowerment, as well as discrimination, mechanisms of exclusion, antigypsyism and racism today. Voluntary service organizations in the Phiren Amenca network are European and North American non-profit bodies sending and/or hosting these young adults, and providing support such as mentoring, on-arrival, mid-term and pre-departure seminars, pocket money, room, board, language support and insurance.



*I am amazed now as I look back to see how much I have grown personally in the last year. Being put in difficult cross-cultural situations with the added barrier of language issues, proved to be a refining test for me. The lessons I have learned about open and clear communication, about not giving up, and about persevering through difficulties will stick with me as I move forward in life back here in Hungary.*

**Attila from Hungary**

volunteer 2012-2013 in Germany

## the program in 2013

In 2013 over 40 volunteers, half Roma and non-Roma from 12 countries, participated in the Phiren Amenca program in placements in 10 countries. While the program is based on a stable number of hosting placements of our member organizations, each year a few specific projects allow young people to realize their services with new partners, e.g. in the United States. The projects are mainly financed by

the European Voluntary Service of the European Commission, by the French "service civique", by the German voluntary service program, or by self-financed programs.

## PA voluntary service guide

As a result of the "capacity-building program for Roma organizations in voluntary service", in December 2013 Phiren Amenca published a new information guide for partner organizations of voluntary

service programs in the Phiren Amenca network. This guide shall serve especially new organizations to get an overview of the program, and the roles and responsibilities of the partner organizations. It also represents a first step towards establishing quality guidelines for voluntary service. The guide includes the following chapters:

- Why voluntary service?
- Various funding programs for voluntary service
- The partners and their roles
- Hosting volunteers and quality guidelines
- Sending volunteers, selection and preparation
- The finances and management
- What does Phiren Amenca offer?
- How to start a voluntary service program

## pilot project: national voluntary service in Germany

For the first time, Phiren Amenca member organizations Amaro

*EVS changed my view on the current values of life and helped me find myself. The most important thing that EVS gave me is that I recognized how I could make myself happy...and if I am happy I can make other people happy. Thx EVS!*

**Martin from Czech Republic**  
volunteer 2013-2014 in Portugal

Drom/Amaro Foro started, in Berlin in 2013, to host a young Roma with a migrant background in a national voluntary service program. The project allows the volunteer to support the local youth and educational work, as well as to develop new skills and capacities in non-formal education and youth work.

## new placements for volunteers

Phiren Amenca continuously develops new hosting placements that strengthen the dialogue between Roma and non-Roma and support to challenge stereotypes and racism, which invest into the capacity-building of young Roma, or which focus on remembrance of the Roma genocide.

### capacity-building

**Education & Training Centre: Maiberg House**, Germany  
**Federation of Roma organizations in Catalonia (FAGIC)**, Spain

### remembrance

**Documentation Centre of German Sinti and Roma**, Germany  
**Roma Active Albania**, Albania

### dialogue

**Nevo Parudimos**, Romania  
**TOUCH Project Charitable Foundation**, Ukraine



# 3. education & training

## volunteer seminar concept

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

Additionally Phiren Amenca organizes preparatory seminars and small-scale weekend seminars for volunteers and young people.

## educational publication

### The European Boogie Man Complex: challenging antigypsyism through non-formal education

Phiren Amenca published together with the Youth Department of the Council of Europe an educational toolkit on challenging antigypsyism through non-formal education in the context of the Roma Youth Action Plan. The toolkit raises key issues such as the concept of antigypsyism, history and narratives about Roma, migration issues, and the challenge of comic books for Roma people.

Moreover, it provides several educational activities to challenge antigypsyism, for instance a resource-based workshop on Roma

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printed copies available  
from Phiren Amenca



history narratives, a role-play of a stakeholders' conference on the migration issue, and a discussion on minority strategies based on the X-Men comics/movie drawing parallels to Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X in the U.S. civil rights movement.

## Roma Youth Action Plan

**Roma Youth Action Plan** was born in 2011 as a response of the Council of Europe to two types of challenges: the ones faced by Roma young people in European society and to the absence of Roma youth issues and concerns in the policies and programs of the European institutions. The plan aims to increase the capacity of Roma youth organizations, to strengthen the identity of young Roma, human rights and human rights education, and to combat discrimination and antigypsyism. Phiren Amenca organized between 2012 and 2014 three seminars and study sessions in cooperation with the Council of Europe in the framework of the Roma Youth Action Plan.



## video: The European Boogie Man Complex

The video reflects the Phiren Amenca Study Session on Challenging Antigypsyism, which took place in October 2012 in the European Youth Centre Budapest, and it presents perspectives and experiences of Roma and non-Roma volunteers that engage to challenge stereotypes and racism.

short version: 6:09 min | long version: 13:09 min | realized by Kristyna Balaban and Quintin Bart

<http://phirenamenca.eu/videos-challenging-antigypsyism/>



challenging antigypsyism

the European  
“Boogie Man” complex



## demystifying Roma: challenging stereotypes and narratives about Roma

The annual spring Phiren Amenca Volunteer Seminar took place May 12-19, 2013 in Florence, Italy, focusing on the theme, "Demystifying Roma: Challenging Stereotypes and Narratives about Roma". 40 Roma and non-Roma volunteers, volunteer candidates and youth leaders came together to explore this theme and to engage in a public campaign for Roma rights with creative street actions. The seminar encouraged youth activism to challenge stereotypes and antigypsyism, and supported the work of young Roma and non-Roma volunteers as they engage to tackle discrimination and promote inclusion in diverse voluntary service placements all over Europe.

Phiren Amenca organized this seminar with its member organizations Romà Onlus and CSD Diaconia Valdese. It was co-financed by the European Youth Foundation.

### from stereotypes to social change: the development of a public campaign action

The main seminar topics were stereotypes and narratives about Roma, with antigypsyism as a result of it. The discussion went beyond discussing only the symptoms of discrimination as social phenomena, but examined antigypsyism as a root cause for exclusion. The seminar offered the space to the volunteers to exchange thoughts and

experiences about the topic and gain new knowledge. Then it went further to focus on developing creative actions that they can use in their activism for social movement and campaigning. The seminar strengthened the development of critical thinking and awareness of participants regarding antigypsyism and the situation of Roma in Europe, specifically focusing on the Italian context, by engaging in a discussion with inhabitants of the "Campi Nomadi" and participating in the Civil Society festival "Terra Futura" in Florence.

## volunteering for change

On May 18, 2013, within the program of the festival, Phiren Amenca members CSD Diaconia Valdese and Romà Onlus organized a conference entitled "**Volunteering for Change**" on international volunteering as a means for inclusion and social change. After the meeting, more than 70 volunteers held a big public action (flashmob) on the festival site promoting international volunteering with particular attention to the "**Equal opportunities for the Roma community**".

In the afternoon the flashmob was presented outside, in the middle of Piazza della Signoria, Florence, reaching hundreds of people.

## national seminar in Germany: Phiren Amenca volunteering workshop within the Amaro Drom Autumn Academy

In November 2013, current and former volunteers and the team of the Amaro Drom volunteers working group took part in the first Phiren Amenca workshop on volunteering in the framework of the Amaro Drom Autumn Academy for young Roma and non-Roma in Hamburg, Germany. The volunteers shared their experiences on how to fight stereotypes and antigypsyism together, and to stand up for dialogue between Roma and non-Roma, reflect on the competences they gained during their year, and to plan individual or common projects such as a weekend seminar about the Roma Holocaust or an interactive homepage for volunteers.

## two regional seminars on challenging stereotypes and antigypsyism

In September 2013 five ELCA young adult volunteers arrived from the USA and Canada to spend a volunteer year in separate locations across Hungary, all related to Romani populations and projects. After about one month of service in their communities, the volunteers spent time with the Phiren Amenca coordination team to reflect about antigypsyism.

In November, seven volunteers from Hungary and Ukraine gathered at the Phiren Amenca coordination office. This seminar introduced models about the construction of stereotypes and prejudices, and examined social mechanisms in society that make it difficult to break down the stereotypes. The volunteers also realized more of the importance of their work as volunteers in Roma communities.

## preparatory seminar for volunteers

The Phiren Amenca coordination team organized their first international volunteer preparation seminar in September 2013. Ten Roma volunteers who would be starting their service soon in France, Germany and Italy, came together to get information about EVS and the support system, to discuss practical questions, and to focus on intercultural learning, conflict resolution and future opportunities. Discussion included fighting antigypsyism with the Phiren Amenca network.



## 4. projects

### capacity-building of Roma organizations in voluntary service

Phiren Amenca offers a platform of learning and quality development through various means, including the annual network meeting, the volunteer seminars, and the coordination office based in Budapest. This includes capacity-building resourcing and advice to partner organizations to set-up voluntary service programs, to access the EU Erasmus+ program, to get EVS accreditation and manage the administrative requirements of the EU program, to develop a quality support plan for volunteers, and a long-term voluntary service strategy for the organization.



*I volunteer because I feel good when I do something without a profit, something that society and young people benefit from, and with this you can change the future.*

**Igbal from Macedonia**  
volunteer 2013 in Germany

The PA coordination office undertakes regular site visits with its member and partner organizations in order to strengthen cooperation within the network, giving support and services to both organizations and volunteers directly. In 2013 Phiren Amenca implemented the yearlong project, "Capacity-building of Roma organizations in Voluntary Service" with the support of Open Society Foundations.

## Roma youth empowerment for active citizenship

Supported by the Grundtvig Learning Partnership program of the European Commission, Phiren Amenca invested in the capacity building of its staff, trainers and young adults regarding concepts, methods and strategies of adult education through tools of international mobilities. Among other activities, the project included the training-course **“Roma Youth Empowerment for Active Citizenship”** in Berlin in May 2013.

This course brought together twelve young Roma and non-Roma adult learners for nine days with the aim to strengthen their social and civic skills

to combat racism and xenophobia through creative actions and campaigns. The course targeted youth leaders and active multipliers working with new methods of artistic and intercultural dialogue between European countries, between Roma and non-Roma.

*Doing voluntary service gave me the great chance to be engaged in a way that conventional education and work structures normally wouldn't allow. That provides a lot of opportunities but it also goes along with big challenges. It can help you learn about yourself, what you want and, sometimes even more important, what you don't want. For sure my work in Albania opened up a new and exciting world to me and made me meet impressive people that I probably never would have known otherwise.*

**Sarah from Germany**

volunteer 2013-2014 in Albania

## Roma youth inclusion in EVS in Slovakia

Our partner organization KERIC, with the support of IUVENTA (Slovak National Agency), brought together Roma and non-Roma organizations from Slovakia in 2-day seminars in September and December 2013 in order to learn about the European Voluntary Service program, and to discuss about inclusion of Roma youth in the Youth in Action program. The Phiren Amenca network participated as well by sharing experiences, and it continues to support the involvement of the organizations in the EVS program.

## international conference on volunteering in Uzhgorod, Ukraine

The Phiren Amenca Network shared its experiences and perspectives on international voluntary service as a tool for social change during an international conference in September 2013, organized by its Ukrainian member organization, TOUCH Project Charitable Foundation. The annual conference is held in cooperation with the Social Work Department in the Uzhgorod National University and addresses relevant social issues and innovative practices.

### remembrance

## Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative 2013

Phiren Amenca held a workshop during the "DIK I NA BISTAR – Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative 2013" Conference and Commemoration, organized by ternYpe International Roma Youth Network, with 430 young people from 20 countries around August 2nd, 2013 in Krakow, Poland. In this workshop we discussed with participants how voluntary service can be a tool for combining remembrance of the Roma Holocaust with social activism. In September 2013 Phiren Amenca supported the ternYpe study session on campaigning for the recognition of the Roma Genocide.



## the Roma genocide

The Roma were among the primary victims of the Holocaust based on the Nazi ideology of "racial purity", leading to severe discrimination, persecution and genocide in concentration camps, mass shootings and other forms. An estimated 500.000 Roma were killed during the Roma Genocide of World War II. As on August 2, 1944 the Nazis killed the remaining 2897 Roma women, men and children in the "Gypsy Family Camp" in Auschwitz, we remember this day as the remembrance day of the Roma Genocide.

### dialogue

## creative summer youth camp in Slovakia

In July 2013 young Hungarian Roma and non-Roma from Phiren Amencia participated in a summer camp in Slovakia. The summer camp was a continuation of the previous year's camp, called "Ne je Róm ako Róm, ne je Gadžo ako Gadžo" ("Not every Roma with Roma, not every Gadjo with Gadjo"). The group also included young Roma and non-Roma from Slovakia (Roma Institute) and Romania (Nevo Parudimos) and Czech Republic (IQ Roma Servis).

## workshops on challenging stereotypes and racism with high school students

In February 2013 Hungarian youth leaders organized workshops in Árpád Fejedelem High School, in Kistelek, Hungary, to discuss with the students in the 10th and 11th class about stereotypes and prejudices and how they can challenge stereotypes and racism in their local environment.

# 5. structures

## general assembly

Statutory meeting for member organizations, that follows the statutory responsibilities, election of the board, financial report, approval of budget, membership questions, and strategic decisions.

## networking meeting

Each spring Phiren Amenca hosts a 3-4 day "Phiren Amenca Annual Platform Meeting" bringing together member organizations, former volunteers and partner organizations in order to share experiences and practices, and to address annual thematic priorities and quality questions of our work. Content side of the Phiren Amenca work, priority questions e.g. quality, inclusion, new Erasmus+ program, new partners and placements, members and other partner organizations.

*One day, I would like to be a human rights lawyer and I want to focus on international issues, and migrations laws are something that interests me a lot. I see this opportunity to work with refugee families as a big advantage, because I can learn a lot of things, more than I could learn just at university from a book.*

**Denisa from Slovakia**

volunteer 2013-2014 in France

## board

The board has five members representing the equal partnership between Roma and non-Roma and striving for gender balance and participation of former volunteers. The Board is entitled to set up a coordination office in order to carry out the ongoing business of the association. The Board is responsible for all matters of the association not specifically assigned by law or the statutes of the association to the General Assembly.

## coordination office

Phiren Amenca maintains a coordination office and resource centre for the volunteers and member organizations in Budapest (which is currently the home of RGDTs non-profit kft.).



coordination office 2013

## platform of former volunteers

The volunteers are encouraged to continue their engagement even after the service in the platform of volunteers. The self-organized platform of volunteers and former volunteers creates further opportunities for non-formal education, dialogue, and engagement, and strengthens the role of the volunteers as multipliers and promoters of voluntary service. Phiren Amenca builds the capacity of young Roma and non-Roma former volunteers to become trainers of human rights education in its structures.

Phiren Amenca gives a high priority to youth participation and the rights of volunteers within its own structures and work. The platform will meet in the framework of the annual meeting, including the General Assembly.



# 6. financial report

## summary

In 2013 income doubled from the previous year, staff costs increased by one-third and program and service output doubled. Phiren Amencia concluded the year with a positive balance.

	2012		2013	
	HUF (in thousand)	EURO	HUF (in thousand)	EURO
<b>Income</b>	HUF 12.925	€ 48.083,00	HUF 24.526	€ 85.053,49
<b>Expenses</b>				
<b>Activities and Services</b>	HUF 6.799	€ 22.663,00	HUF 13.894	€ 48.182,11
<b>Salaries</b>	HUF 6.276	€ 20.920,00	HUF 9.762	€ 33.853,48
<b>Misc. Fees &amp; Operating Costs</b>	HUF 220	€ 733,00	HUF 830	€ 2.877,73
<b>Year End Result</b>	<b>-HUF 370</b>	<b>- € 1.233,00</b>	<b>HUF 40.419</b>	<b>€ 140,16</b>

*Note: Phiren Amencia contracts with a professional accountant with official books and financial records submitted to authorities in Hungarian forints (HUF). 2012: € 1 = HUF 291,00 2013: € 1 = HUF 288,37.*

## donors and supporters

European Youth Foundation, Council of Europe  
ICCO-Kerk in Actie  
Lifelong Learning Programme, European Commission  
Myers Foundation  
Open Society Foundations, Roma Initiatives Office  
Otto per Mille, Tavola Valdese  
Presbyterian Church (USA)  
Tempus Közalapítvány  
Youth in Action Programme, European Commission  
and private donors

## audit

Phiren Amencia uses the services of a registered accounting service, **Flexcont BT**, Budapest. Kovács Mária, Budapest, conducts a professional audit. The auditor's report is submitted in May of each year.





a network of Roma and non-Roma  
volunteers and voluntary service  
organizations creating opportunities for

NON-FORMAL  
E D U C A T I O N ,  
D I A L O G U E A N D E N G A G E M E N T ,  
in order to CHALLENGE  
S T E R E O T Y P E S  
A N D R A C I S M

