



# Phiren Amencia

ROMA-GADJE DIALOGUE THROUGH SERVICE

## Volunteer Seminar Report

November 30th - December 4th, 2011

Budapest, Hungary

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## Volunteer Seminar Report

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### Introduction

The Phiren Amenca Volunteer Seminar ran from November 30th to December 4th, 2011 in Budapest, Hungary. 9 volunteers participated, Roma and non-Roma, coming from volunteer placements in Germany, Romania, and Ukraine. The volunteers' countries of origin include Germany, Ukraine, Serbia, Macedonia, USA.

Participating sending & hosting organizations include:

Amaro Drom, DE

Evangelische Freiwilligendienste für junge Menschen FSJ und DJiA gGmbH, DE

Fundatia Crestina Diaconia, RO

KRÖDÉ - Voluntary Program of the Reformed Church of Transcarpathia, UA

Reformed Church in America, USA

TOUCH Project, UA

### The Aims of the Seminar

In the framework of the Phiren Amenca seminars we are dealing with topics which are not necessarily part of the seminars offered by our members.

We are convinced, that with this kind of „knowledge” the volunteers will be more supported and empowered in their placements. If we assume that our volunteers of Roma background have this kind of information about the people they belong to, we will be disappointed. The information offered and sharing experience benefits all.

We provided volunteers with resources including online Romani dictionaries, the report of ERRC (European Roma Right Center) about the attacks against Roma in Hungary from 2008-2011, two different concept papers about the so called „culture of poverty” and a resource list with some online available literature about social justice and responsibility and Roma.

We had some challenges like the different levels of English or the close-knit German part of the group, but these issues were addressed by trying diverse methods in order to



keep everybody at a „comfort-usefulness” level.

Just during the seminar four books have been borrowed from our office library proving that the Phiren Amenca vision of expanding our resource center has demand.

The anonymous evaluations (dropped in to our so-called „feed back box”) showed as well, that the volunteers were satisfied and want to meet us again.



We will have a structured individual follow-up with them: we sent out a registration form and have received some volunteer profiles, which will be used on our website as well as for future development of the platform of current and former volunteers. Next year we plan to continue site visits and spend time with our volunteers in their reality and everyday life, offering our support where possible.

The seminar was financed with the support of Presbyterian Church USA.

# PHIREN AMENCA VOLUNTEER SEMINAR

Programme November 30 - December 4, 2011

30th Wednesday	1st Thursday	2nd Friday	3rd Saturday	4th Sunday
9-10 Breakfast				
10-11:30 Short introduction, welcoming (Richard Otterness) Expectations, Questions about seminar (Stefanie Beyer)	10-11:30 <b>Roma History</b> ((Juli Orsós)	10-11:30 <b>The Global Community &amp; Activism</b>  (Quintin Bart)	10-11:30 <b>Platform and Networking of Volunteers</b> (Jonathan Mack)	10-11:30 <b>Roma image in the media</b> (Marietta Herfort)
11:30-12 Coffee				
12:00-13:00 <b>"Who is Who ?" game</b> (Juli Orsós)	12:00-14:00 <b>Movie: Gadjó Dilo</b> (Stefanie Beyer)	12:00-13:00 <b>Helping vs. Learning: Motivation in Voluntary Service</b>  (Quintin Bart)	12:00-12:45 <b>Platform and Networking continued</b> (Jonathan Mack)	12:00-13:30 <b>Evaluation, expectations/needs</b> for the next seminar (Juli Orsós)
13:00-14:30 Lunch		13:00-14:30 Lunch	12:45-13:45 Lunch	
14:30-15:30 <b>Varosliget – Let's get outside!</b> (Juli Orsós)	14:30-15:30 <b>Culture</b> (Juli Orsós)	14:30-15:30 <b>Youth &amp; Extremism:</b> OSF Youth: Gyorgy Lissauer	14:00-17:00 <b>Mosolykommandó flash mob:</b> Gellérthegy	13:30-15:00 Lunch
15:30-16 Coffee				
16:00-17:30 <b>Placement Stories, Speed Dating</b> (Richard Otterness)	16:00-17:30 <b>Culture continued</b> (Juli Orsós)	16:00-17:30 <b>Antigypsyism in Europe, ERRC</b> (Juli Orsós)		13:30-15:00 Lunch
17:30-18:30 Break				
18:30-19:30 Dinner				
Free Time	<b>Meeting former PA / RGDTS Volunteers:</b> Zalan Kis		<b>Roma Cultural Event:</b> Concert & Exhibition	

# Program Description

Wednesday November 30th, 2011

## “Who is Who?” Game & Varosliget

Led by Juli Orsós

These two workshops were designed to create a sense of open communication and safety with the group of seminar participants. They were successful as ice-breakers where participants (both volunteers and coordination team) became acquainted with each other in order for future conversations to be open and meaningful. The volunteers became reporters, tree huggers and leaf collectors. :)



## Placement Stories, Speed Dating

Led by Richard Otterness

This evening workshop was highly successful. All participants had the opportunity to ‘interview’ each other in a 1-on-1 setting, taking turns asking questions and giving responses. Conversations focused on experiences in the volunteers’ placements, challenges and difficulties relating to culture shock and languages, and motivation for doing a voluntary service term. The conversations were self-directed offering participants room to explore topics of their interest.



Thursday December 1st, 2011

## Roma History

Led by Juli Orsós

This workshop consisted of a brief lecture on the origins and history of Roma based the Fact Sheets of Roma History published by the Council of Europe. During this session questions regarding self-identity, labels, oral history, and “outsider perspectives” were explored. The second half of the workshop featured participants creating short role-play scenes of different aspects of Roma history based on a variety of sources. Following the scenes, participants held a discussion of critical analysis of the sources and explored issues of prejudice, bias, and romanticism.

## Movie: Gadjo Dilo

Discussion led by Stefanie Beyer, former RGDTs intern

The film Gadjo Dilo explores issues of stereotypes and romanticism of both Roma and non-Roma, as well as raising questions of the greater context of anti-Roma violence and xenophobia so prevalent in Europe today. These issues were also discussed in greater detail in workshops later in the seminar.

## Culture

Led by Juli Orsós

This workshop discussed the personal stereotypes and concepts of culture held by the participants. The different concepts about culture from connecting it to nation until behavior have been raised. The concept



of a homogeneous “Roma Identity” was contrasted with examples of diversity of Romani cultures, and their relation to national contexts. This was addressed through examples of traditional and modern music.

### Meeting former Phiren Amenca / RGDTs Volunteers

Guest Zalan Kis, former RGDTs Volunteer

This evening workshop included a discussion with Zalan Kis, former volunteer of RGDTs who worked in a Romani school and church placement in Ukraine. He discussed issues of motivation, his personal history with racism and xenophobia, and his own experiences with non-formal education. An evening of music performance including volunteers and the coordination team followed, further strengthening the sense of community among participants. Sarah Pfeiffer also attended the seminar for several days, a former volunteer of RGDTs who served as a volunteer in Méra, Romania.



## Friday December 2nd, 2011

### The Global Community & Activism, Helping vs. Learning: Motivation in Voluntary Service

Led by Quintin Bart



These two workshops were informal group discussions. In the first session, issues including the positive aspects of ‘global community’, youth and social activism were explored. The video Natalie Warne: Being Young and Making an Impact was shown, which demonstrates youth empowerment to challenge social injustice on an international level. Encouraging social awareness and solidarity was explored through the international musicians’ initiative Playing for Change. Threats to the ‘global community’ including racism, xenophobia, and nationalism promoted by mass media were also discussed.

The second workshop, “Helping vs. Learning: Motivation in Voluntary Service” looked at difficult and sensitive topics relating to motivation of social work, such as religious paternalism, exoticism, and poverty tourism. Examples of paternalistic religious missionary work in the Balkans were discussed.

### Youth & Extremism, Open Society Foundation Youth

Guest György Lissauer

This discussion was moderated by Juli Orsós. György Lissauer described his long history working in social work contexts from around the world, and current initiatives of the Open Society Foundation. Discussion followed on topics of personal motivation, culture shock, and cultural and personal identity.



## Antigypsyism in Europe, European Roma Rights Centre

Led by Juli Orsós

This evening workshop presented detailed and concrete examples of extremist violence in Hungary, relating to this rising trend Europe-wide. Sources offered included Attacks against Roma in Hungary: January 2008-July 2011 published by ERRC. A series of documentary videos on the anti-Roma violence in Gyöngyöspata, Hungary and extremist political groups in Hungary were presented. In this workshop, the need for action of Roma and non-Roma to challenge stereotypes and racism was demonstrated very concretely.



### Saturday December 3rd, 2011

#### Platform and Networking of Volunteers

Led by Jonathan Mack

This workshop looked at issues of empowerment of youth in the context of volunteerism and social activism. TernYpe, International Roma Youth Network, was discussed as a concrete example of creating space for young people to become active citizens through empowerment, mobilisation, self-organisation and participation. The future development of the Phiren Amenca Platform of Volunteers and Former-Volunteers was also discussed with participants. The purpose of such a platform was explored, namely to create further opportunities for non-formal education, dialogue and engagement, and to strengthen their role as multipliers and promoters of voluntary service.

#### Flashmob: Mosolykommandó

Group Activity

Following up on themes of social activism and engagement, the participants of the seminar participated in a flashmob demonstration, protesting current human rights violations in Budapest against homeless and impoverished citizens. One of the new regulations in Hungary targets the homeless people. If they are found in places such as the underground or on a bench in the park, they get a registration number. After three violations they will be arrested and have to pay 150 000 HUF (500 EUR) or work in manual labor camps until they redeem the fine.

A video of the demonstration can be viewed here:  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SwEVywMKt0Q&feature=youtu.be&fb\\_source=message](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SwEVywMKt0Q&feature=youtu.be&fb_source=message)

#### Roma Cultural Event: Concert & Art Exhibition

Seminar participants attended a live music performance of traditional and contemporary Romani music, and art exhibition. This event was a fundraiser for the preservation of a school mostly visited by Roma children in Hungary, threatened with closure.



### Sunday December 4th, 2011

## Roma Image in the Media

Led by Marietta Herfort

In this workshop, journalist Marietta Herfort discussed anti-Roma prejudice and racism in the public media and the effects of biased news reporting on the general public. A video interview with Dr. Thomas Cech was shown exploring a parallel situation with African American representation in public media in the US (link below). A discussion followed on minority-majority dynamics and how to challenge discrimination found in mass media today.



View the video here:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0I5Fl1Qn-Do&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0I5Fl1Qn-Do&feature=player_embedded)



## Movie: Adam's Apples

Discussion Led by Quintin Bart

To close the formal portion of the seminar, the film Adam's Apples was shown. This film explores issues of neo-Nazism, prejudices, racism, and possibilities for social change.

Please feel free to contact the Phiren Amenca staff with any further questions or comments regarding the Volunteer Seminar.



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