

BEST EUROPEAN
ROMA YOUTH PROJECTS 2020



Funded by the European Union's
Rights, Equality and Citizenship
Programme (2014-2020)



Phiren Amenca
ROMA-GADJE DIALOGUE THROUGH SERVICE



ternype

International Roma Youth Network

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Introduction

The Phiren Amenca International Network, together with the ternYpe Roma Youth Network announced their call for applications for the “European Roma Youth Project Award 2020” in late 2019, as part of the Roma Youth Voices project, funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020) of the DG Justice, European Commission.

Phiren Amenca is an international network of Roma and non-Roma volunteers and voluntary service organizations creating opportunities for non-formal education, dialogue and engagement, in order to challenge stereotypes and racism. Phiren Amenca provides opportunities for Roma and non-Roma young people to interact, engage and communicate with each other through short and long-term voluntary service programs both nationally and internationally; non-formal education and advocacy.

ternYpe - International Roma Youth Network was founded in January 2010 and unites different Roma youth organizations from Albania, Bulgaria, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Macedonia, Slovakia, Spain and Poland. ternYpe creates space for young people to become active citizens through empowerment, mobilisation, self-organisation and participation through common efforts for creating trust, and mutual respect between Roma and non-Roma youth.

The “European Roma Youth Project Award 2020” competition was open to projects and initiatives of Roma and non-Roma NGOs and informal groups which ran between January 1, 2018 and December 31, 2019 in the EU, the Western Balkans, Turkey, Ukraine, or Moldova. By the deadline at the end of January the international award committee received over 40 project descriptions from 19 countries, by 33 NGOs and several informal groups. Some of the submitted projects aimed at fostering the integration of young Roma through employment, education and training, or encouraging and supporting young Roma to become active members of social and political life. Many projects took an intersectional approach working with those suffering multiple discrimination and others engaged with different forms of media and art in order to raise awareness about issues concerning Roma youth.

The criteria by which the Committee evaluated the applications were the following:

- Level of involvement of Roma youth in the planning and implementation;
- to what extent it aimed at the empowerment of Roma young people;
- if the project has promoted the participation, the active citizenship,
- the self-organisation of young Roma;
if it has initiated dialogue between Roma and non-Roma;
- and if the project has contributed to the identity-building of Roma young people.

It is important for the organisers to promote and support initiatives which empower Roma youth, and to raise the visibility and recognition for Roma youth work. Therefore, additionally to sharing all the projects which fulfilled the criteria on our platforms, we created this publication containing detailed information about some of the Best European Roma Youth Projects.

FIVE SELECTED

BEST EUROPEAN ROMA YOUTH PROJECTS 2020

The Best European Roma Youth Project: Youth for Youth



By Roma youth organization "Walk with us - Phiren Amenca", Montenegro
Developing skills in Roma youth through trainings, workshops, and partnerships

The Youth for Youth project was implemented between August, 2018 and October, 2019 by the young Roma-led NGO "Walk with us-Phiren Amenca" in six Montenegrin municipalities (Podgorica, Nikšić, Berane, Ulcinj, Herceg Novi and Bar) with the aim of the empowerment and education of young Roma for their participation in social and economic life; taking action and tackling the needs and problems of Roma communities locally and regionally.

During the 14 months several training events and workshops were organized for young Roma and non-Roma where they gained skills and knowledge necessary to identify key challenges in their communities; organize and participate in discussions and public debates with authorities; design and implement advocacy action-plans and policy recommendations. As a result 20 new Roma youth leaders were trained, more than 1000 people were affected by the project, while 20 organizations and institutions were actively involved.

Research was conducted regarding the current context of Roma communities economically, socially and politically, first of its kind in Montenegro. During the six events and conferences which were organized, young Roma and non-Roma got to know each other, shared experiences, and engaged in active discourse with decision makers (high officials of the OSCE, University representatives, Working Group for Local Action Plan in Podgorica, first Roma movement-UPRE, Student President of the Montenegrin University's Faculty of Tourism, etc.).

During the advocacy training and workshops 20 prevalent issues were identified by the participants, for which six action-plans were created and implemented by the young people themselves: In Sokolana (the Roma neighbourhood in Bar) an official letter was drafted and sent to the Municipality urging them to asphalt the main road. In Herceg Novi a training event on mechanisms against peer violence/bullying was held; and participants and interested parties in Ulcinj got to learn about Roma history and culture. Initiatives for cleaning the Riverside in the Roma settlement in Berane were carried out, where the first youth Roma NGO was also established. Informed by the need of young people to spend their free time meaningfully, local Roma and non-Roma youth installed two street-work-out-venues in Podgorica and Nikšić.

Besides the local actions, two advocacy documents were drafted by the participants and regional partnerships were built. The Ministry of Sport, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights showed their interest and willingness to participate in the project implementation, and many local social and educational institutions engaged with and followed-up on the project.

"Youth for Youth" was implemented by the Roma youth organization "Walk with us - Phiren Amenca", Montenegro under the program "Youth Funds for the Western Balkans and Turkey" supported by the European Commission through the IPA CSF program, realized by Ana and Vlade Divac Foundation, in partnership with NGO Prima from Montenegro.



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YOUTH FOR YOUTH



MONTENEGRO

ROMA YOUTH ORGANIZATION "WALK WITH US - PHIREN AMENCA"



Developing skills in Roma youth through trainings,
workshops, and partnerships



Projekat finansira
Evropska unija



FIVE SELECTED

BEST EUROPEAN ROMA YOUTH PROJECTS 2020

Special Prize of the Committee: Develop Yourself to Help Others Develop

By Ani Kovacheva, Bulgaria



The Selection Committee decided to award a special prize to Ani Kovacheva, appreciating her initiative as a young individual. Ani is a 16-year old Romani girl from Kyustendil, Bulgaria. Her passion for education and success, as well as her ambition to help others made her start her own initiative with the support of the LARGO Association, where she volunteers. For three years Ani has been teaching English to children aged 7-13 from her community. Apart from being good at it, she chose to teach English because it is the most widely spoken foreign language in the world and gives a lot of advantages to people who can speak it. However, it is not easy to learn, especially for those Roma children whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian, so in school they already study English through a further second language. She does not only work with children, but she also frequently talks to their parents, in order to help them realise how important education is for their children. Many of these parents have worked or work abroad and have faced language barriers, so they are aware how important it is for their children to know English.

When the group started to form, there were only eight children attending the classes and they were only focusing on English. Today the course covers 10 children and throughout the two years Ani has supported 24 students. It has also become much more than English classes: they read fairy tales, play games and sing songs, they are learning by having fun. She encourages them to think, to read more and learn about the world we build together, by our own actions, day after day”.

They have a one-hour lesson once a week, in LARGO’s office and two or three times during holidays and the kids are always looking forward to the next one. They are also showing enormous progress in their studies.

“

I want to motivate more young people
like me to do the same thing for their communities!

says Ani

”



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DEVELOP YOURSELF, TO HELP OTHERS DEVELOP



BULGARIA

ANI'S ENGLISH LESSONS

Teaching English to Roma children

MOVE Week
bulgaria.moveweek.eu

АЗДВИЖИМ
ТАРИЯ!



Сдружение Ларго – Кюстендил

FIVE SELECTED

BEST EUROPEAN ROMA YOUTH PROJECTS 2020

Dikhen amen! See us!

By Amaro Drom e.V, Germany



Amaro Drom e.V.

Empowering and training young Rom*nja and Sinti*zze
to be able to hold workshops of their own for other young people

Amaro Drom e.V. (Our Way in Romani) is a nationwide youth organization of Roma (gender-sensitive: Rom*nja) in Germany. As a federal association, they offer a network of exchange and mutual support. "Dikhen amen! See us!" ran between April 2015 and December 2019 and had three components:

1. Training of workshop teamers:

During training events young Rom*nja and Sinti*zze learned methods for empowering youth and raising awareness about racism. At the end of the training, the young women were able to hold their own workshops for young people in youth clubs, youth organizations, associations and educational institutions.

After the training the young team members started delivering empowerment workshops for young Rom*nja and Sinti*zze and awareness-raising workshops for young members of the majority population together with the coordinator of the project in youth clubs, youth organizations and associations, as well as in educational institutions. The project also supported the strengthening of the self-confidence, organization and social participation of the young people to make their different realities visible.

Based on the experience of participants, new methods were developed for educational youth work promoting the empowerment of young Rom*nja and Sinti*zze which were published in a manual available to a broad public.

2. Federal Youth Conference

The annual highlight of the project was the Federal Youth Conference: For three days, 100 young people from all over Germany came together to participate and engage in networking and training, and promoting political organizing. During the various workshops young people had the space to discuss topics which are important for them. The Federal Youth Conference is also a perfect platform to connect Roma youth and non-Roma youth. Such events enable them to meet, communicate and establish friendships among each other, which ensure a higher level of solidarity and inclusion for future generations.

3. „Opre Romn*ja“

March 2018, „Opre Romn*ja“ Started a new focus of Amaro Drom's empowerment work: creating a safe space for young women and girls from Roma communities that would be free from racism and sexism so that they could express themselves and share their opinions freely. Eva Adam, the leader of The „Opre Romn*ja!“ project travelled extensively to various German cities such as Düsseldorf, Leipzig, Frankfurt and Dresden to meet women from Roma communities. The main goal was to meet Roma women and encourage them towards active engagement in the activities of the association, and thus successfully implement the female empowerment strategy in Roma communities.

In order to achieve this goal, space is needed in which the young Romn*ja and Sinti*zze can exchange information, protected from racism and sexism and mutual trust and long-term cooperation is necessary. The girls and young women get to know other Romn*ja and Sintizze; they exchange ideas, formulate their own needs and get to know older Romn*ja and Sinti*zze who are already socio-politically active.



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DIKHEN AMEN! SEE US!



GERMANY

AMARO DROM E.V



Empowering and training young Romnja and Sintizze
to be able to hold workshops of their own for other young people



Amaro Drom e.V.



DIKHEN
AMEN!

FIVE SELECTED

BEST EUROPEAN ROMA YOUTH PROJECTS 2020

Opre Roma! Listen to be Heard

By Youth Agency for the Advocacy of Roma Culture (ARCA), Ukraine

Increasing participation and involvement of young Roma through trainings and seminars



The “Opre Roma! Listen to be Heard” project started in 2019, supporting young Roma in their active agency and the protection of their rights. Because knowledge of Roma youngsters in Ukraine about their heritage and culture is sometimes scarce, but also because some Roma youth activists feel that certain aspects of Romani traditions run contrary to the respect of human rights, many of them are no longer confident about their own identity. Moreover, young people don’t have the ability to raise their voices and speak up for their own interests neither in the macro-society, nor in their local communities.

The project is aimed at increasing the ability of Roma youth to participate in public life, represent their community and its culture, advocate and formulate political messages, and understand their possibilities for getting involved in decision-making and policymaking processes. Within the project, the young Roma leaders of ARCA have already worked with young people in three-day trainings in three cities (Kremenchug, Kherson and Kiev) and are continuing it in other regions in 2020.

During these events, participants gained both theoretical knowledge and practical skills in civic activities - filmed anti-discrimination and informational videos, organized flash mobs or held a public commemoration ceremony. The thematic blocks revealed the background and essence of discrimination both externally and within the community, addressing issues of identity, genocide and historical memory, gender equality, antigypsyism, transformation of traditions in the modern world and challenges and opportunities for Roma youth.

The coordinators of the project (who are themselves young Roma) also focused a lot on communicating with the families of the participants: they contacted parents and senior family members. Lively personal communication, alongside a presentation of the organization's activities have helped to overcome the barriers and cautions in many families, which are often afraid to let young people go on educational trips or study tours outside of their hometowns. As a result, most of the participants were able to participate in the final event in Kiev, as well as in "Dikh he na Bister" in Krakow. Due to ARCA's work with Roma families, they were able to involve more girls in seminars than ever before: in 2019, 40% more girls participated in their activities than in the previous year.

This project involved 50 youngsters. Three young people from Kremenchug, after participating in one of the trainings wrote a grant application, with the support of ARCA, for creating a Roma online information platform, and have already received financial support for their project. A group of five participants are working on developing a concept for a theatrical project, and two other participants from Odessa asked ARCA to support the process of establishing their own NGO.

Within the project, ARCA's colleagues initiated the practice of commemorating the Roma victims of Babi Yar. Currently, they are working on establishing a Ukrainian Roma Youth Council which will unite all active Roma youngsters and youth organizations and will represent their interests on a national and international level.



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OPREROMA! LISTEN TO BE HEARD



TIME TO REMEMBER



UKRAINE

YOUTH AGENCY FOR THE ADVOCACY OF ROMA CULTURE (ARCA)

Increasing participation and involvement of young Roma
through trainings and seminars



FIVE SELECTED

BEST EUROPEAN ROMA YOUTH PROJECTS 2020

Roma LGBTQI+ Forum

By Diverse Youth Network Association, Hungary

LGBTQI+ forum for Roma and non-Roma
young people facing discrimination



DIVERSE YOUTH NETWORK

While mainstream antigypsyism creates everyday obstacles and harsh challenges for Roma people all over Europe, depriving them from social inclusion resulting in exclusion from all levels of the political decision making processes, the stigmatization of young women, people with disabilities and Roma people who belong to the LGBTQI+ community is becoming stronger, making it harder for them to exist as minorities within one or more minority groups.

In order to tackle these issues and start an open conversation about them the Diverse Youth Network organized the first Roma LGBTQI+ Forum from May 31 – June 2, 2019 in Pécs, Hungary. The organization set up a Roma LGBTQI+ working group, involving 20 young activists from around Hungary and in parallel with the forum, thematic roundtable discussions were held and involved a big number of audiences each day in the city center of Pécs.

The aim of the forum was to share updates on the workflow of the Roma LGBTQI+ movement; mapping the experiences of the participants, individual and organizational initiatives, good practices in the areas of human rights education and advocacy; as well as creating a common mission, vision, and guidelines in order for the Forum to be effective in the long run.

The thematic parallel discussions were organized around the following topics: hate speech and hate crimes targeted at Roma LGBTQI+ people; access to social rights of young Roma LGBTQI+ and their inclusion; the mechanisms of multiple discrimination; integrating the experiences of the Roma LGBTQI+ community into the working plans of the respective movements; faith and LGBTQI+, rainbow families and strengthening and urging the cooperation between Roma activists and non-Roma LGBTQI+ communities. National media portrayed the event in a positive manner, asking for participants to give interviews, testimonies about their stories.

For many of the participants the meeting was their first encounter to freely express their true identities among a circle of peers that identify similarly. Around 250 people have been educated during the discussions about the issue, and understood that despite being a taboo, there might be a need to talk about issues that are endured by Roma and LGBTQI+ people.

As a result of the Forum, a Strategy outlining the working flow of the working group and its potentials in the international arena was created. In May 2020, the Diverse Youth Network, with the support and participation of their allies engaged during the Forum, organized the one-week-long 'Freedom of my Identity' Festival as a continuation (online – because of the Covid19 outbreak) with roundtable-discussions and debates about gender roles, trans rights, hate-crimes, feminism post-COVID19, Romani resistance, religion and LGBTQ+ communities. It also entailed a concert and an online demonstration.





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ROMA LGBTQI+ FORUM HUNGARY



HUNGARY

DIVERSE YOUTH NETWORK ASSOCIATION

LGBTQI+ forum for Roma and non-Roma young people
facing discrimination



Prezi



INTERNATIONAL YOUTH INITIATIVES

So keres, Europa!?

Changemakers Movement



So Keres, Europa?! (What are you doing, Europe?!- in Romani) is the Roma youth movement and biannual Roma Youth Social Forum organized by the members and partners of the Phiren Amenca Network which aims to raise the voice of Roma youth on a European level; create dialogue, debate, reflection and common engagement of Roma and non-Roma youth activists, and raise the visibility of Roma youth issues, in the framework of the European Youth Capital programme. The European Youth Capital is a title awarded by the European Youth Forum designed to empower young people, boost youth participation and strengthen European identity. Each year, a new European city is given the chance to showcase its innovative ideas, projects and activities.

Every second year, Phiren Amenca brings together 150-350 young Roma and non-Roma activists, volunteers and youth workers in the European Youth Capital for one week. During the week, participants learn together about the history, the mechanisms and the present day manifestations of antigypsyism; topics of human rights, cultural representation, Romani resistance, gender inequalities and intersectionality; and about present day expressions of antigypsyism especially present in the European Youth Capital. They develop different strategies for tackling discrimination and put them into action through workshops, exhibitions, flash-mobs, theatrical performances, music and dance during the “48-hour-actions” and a closing festival, which are organized.

The closing event is always a public festival where participants can exhibit their work, organize public discussions and debates with civil society organizations or policy makers and celebrate diversity and solidarity with local musicians involving the public.

The first So Keres, Europa?! event was organized in Cluj-Napoca, Romania in 2015 and brought together 400 Roma and non-Roma young people from all over Europe. The topics of the actions were Roma super heroes, school segregation, challenging stereotypes and racism through music, theatre, rhythm, graffiti or media, the Roma Genocide and basic Human Rights. As part of the event, a Roma solidarity march „City for the people, not for profit” was organized between Pata Rât (a garbage dump, where a big number of families living after they have been evicted from the center) and Cluj city centre, dedicated to victims of forced evictions.

In 2017, Varna, Bulgaria gave home to the event, where again 150 young people participated in workshops about the contexts, individual experiences of victims and the human rights aspects of forced evictions; the representation of Roma in film history; Romani resistance historically and today; photography as a means of emancipation, self-determination and resistance as well as Roma in popular culture. Romani Resistance hero, Raymond Gureme also participated in the Youth Forum and encouraged young people to resist discrimination and antigypsyism.

Around 150 young people from 10 different countries took part in “So keres, Europa?!” 2019 in Novi Sad, Serbia. During the forum, experts and activists organised workshops about human rights education and community activism, remembrance education and showcased educational tools and presented best practices. They also discussed the diversity of identities and narratives or the situation of minorities in Europe. Participants enlivened the European Youth Capital with community actions, flash mobs and cultural events organised in downtown Novi Sad, in order to build bridges between Roma and non-Roma communities.

SO KERES, EUROPA!? CHANGEMAKERS MOVEMENT



INTERNATIONAL YOUTH INITIATIVES

DIKH HE NA BISTER

Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative



DIKH HE NA BISTER ("Look and don't forget" in Romani) – the Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative mobilizes each year thousands of young Roma and non-Roma all over Europe on the occasion of the 2 August – the European Roma Holocaust Memorial Day – to advance remembrance, recognition and education about the Roma Genocide.

DIKH HE NA BISTER is a space of learning about the past, as well as of reflection about the role of young people in Holocaust remembrance. The initiative creates a dialogue and personal encounter of young people with Holocaust survivors. Their testimonies inspire the participants to address and resist against current challenges of antigypsyism, and other forms of racism in Europe today.

DIKH HE NA BISTER symbolizes for many young Roma the power of youth to write their own history. In the last few years, remembrance and recognition of the Roma genocide have become a key element of the Roma youth movement in order to restore dignity and to strengthen the identity-building of young Roma. On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Roma genocide on 2 August 2014, DIKH HE NA BISTER gathered over 1,000 young Roma and non-Roma from 25 countries in Krakow and Auschwitz-Birkenau. This mobilization greatly contributed to the recognition of 2 August as European Roma Holocaust Memorial Day by the European Parliament in 2015.

DIKH HE NA BISTER empowers young people in their struggle for justice and equality. Remembrance and commemoration activities do not only take place during the international event on 2 August in Auschwitz-Birkenau and Krakow, but also through numerous local initiatives around Europe. In particular, youth groups promote a message of resistance and self-empowerment to mark the “Romani Resistance Day” on May 16th.

DIKH HE NA BISTER was founded by ternYpe International Roma Youth Network and its member and partner organizations in 2010, and is co-organized with the Documentation and Cultural Centre of German Sinti and Roma and in cooperation with the Council of Europe. The event in 2019 was also supported by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020) of the DG Justice, European Commission.

DIKH HE NA BISTER ROMA GENOCIDE REMEMBRANCE INITIATIVE



SELECTION OF UNIQUE AND EMPOWERING EUROPEAN ROMA YOUTH PROJECTS

Roma and Egyptian Youth Congress in Albania

By Ushten, Albania

Local Roma and Egyptian youth delegates' meeting to improve political participation and articulating recommendations of action

JOINT INITIATIVE to **Empower Roma Civil Society** in the Western Balkans & Turkey

Ushten, based on the results of local meetings in ten different Albanian municipalities, organised the third Roma Youth Congress in Tirana (the first two took place in 2011 and 2012) with the participation of 150 young Roma and Egyptian delegates on the 28th of July, 2018. Its aim was to bring the voices of local Roma and Egyptian youth to a national platform and formulate recommendations related to Roma integration and mainstream policies, addressed to the central and local governments.

During the local meetings between January and June, 2018 50-50 young Roma discussed what actions would increase their employability and chose delegates to represent their voice in the Congress. Their political participation was one of the main priorities as a way of ensuring effective policies.

Recommendations articulated by the young Roma during the local meetings were forwarded in the form of a resolution as a result of the Roma Youth Congress. The young staff of Ushten worked closely with the grassroots youth, to define and express their clear opinion in a document that provided guidance to the policy makers on a central and local level, and raised awareness of the wider inclusion of young Roma in drafting and implementing policies on Roma Integration and beyond.

The project was implemented by Ushten and was supported by Roma Active Albania through the project "Joint Initiative to Empower Roma Civil Society on the Western Balkans and Turkey" funded by European Commission DG Near.



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ROMA AND EGYPTIAN YOUTH CONGRESS IN ALBANIA



ALBANIA

USHTEN



Local Roma and Egyptian youth delegates' meeting to improve political participation and articulating recommendations for action

JOINT INITIATIVE to Empower Roma Civil Society in the Western Balkans & Turkey

Yaa Roma Active Albania




SELECTION OF UNIQUE AND EMPOWERING EUROPEAN ROMA YOUTH PROJECTS

E.D.U.C.A.T.E.D Girls

By E-Romnja-Association for Promoting Roma Women Rights,
Romania Mentorship of young Roma girls




E.D.U.C.A.T.E.D. Girls was an initiative that aimed at bringing together young girls to acquire the skills and information necessary for personal development; preventing school drop-outs by promoting the continuation of formal education; and creating an online platform of mentors and mentees. The motto of the project is "Educate a woman, Educate a community". It ran between September 2018 and December 2019.



In this project 18 Roma girls were selected from the local youth groups of E-Romnja in Mizil, Giurgiu and Valea Seaca. The selected girls received a monthly scholarship of 100 Euros and took part in educational activities about human rights, youth participation, feminism and activism. In order to increase self-confidence and to overcome difficult times that girls have in adolescence, each girl was paired up with a „big sister”, as her mentor. Mentors were Roma women with higher education and/or life experience, who can be role models for the young Roma girls who keep in touch with their mentees mostly through modern means of communication.

As a result of the project 18 young girls were mentored by 13 mentors, with the girls and women involved meeting in different formats (mentors with mentees or only mentees with each other), 17 scholarships were awarded, 3 girls completed their secondary school education, one girl continued her studies in post-secondary education and one obtained a driving license, and on top of that, a campaign was run, titled „Educate a Woman, Educate a Community”.





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E.D.U.C.A.T.E.D GIRLS



ROMANIA

E-ROMNJA-ASSOCIATION FOR PROMOTING ROMA WOMEN RIGHTS



Mentorship of young Roma girls

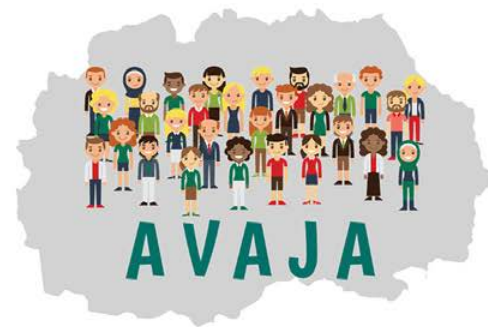


SELECTION OF UNIQUE AND EMPOWERING EUROPEAN ROMA YOUTH PROJECTS

AVAJA-Initiative

By Avaja, North Macedonia

Young Roma activists organizing political dialogue among the Roma community and with politicians and ambassadors



The Civil Movement of Roma - AVAJA is an initiative of young Roma that aims to articulate the needs of the community and to advocate for solutions that are aimed at improving the position of the Roma in front of all stakeholders on the national level.

As part of the “We Vote - We Decide” campaign for the presidential election, they were actively seeking to hear the voice of the Roma people and gained support from the Roma community through a Manifesto with the three priority demands of the Roma community:

1. Equitable representation of the Roma community;
2. The Budget for Implementation of the Roma Strategy to be doubled by 2020;
3. To increase and full realization of the capital investments in Roma settlements.

The Manifesto was supported by 11,450 signatures of Roma in 16 municipalities across the country promoting the turnout of Roma voters and making an informed decision. The manifesto was also presented in the Diplomatic dinner with the Government of the Republic of Northern Macedonia and embassies (Swiss, German, French and EU).

The final event of the campaign was a public hearing where 1200 Roma participated from 16 municipalities and the presidential candidates had the opportunity to present their political programs, whilst simultaneously hearing and engaging with the needs of Roma citizens. The two presidential candidates pledged to work to improve the situation of the Roma community, to include a Roma advisor in the cabinet, and not to sign any legislation that would be against or discriminatory towards the Roma community.



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AVAJA-INITIATIVE



NORTH MACEDONIA

AVAJA



Young Roma activists organizing political dialogue
among the Roma community and with politicians and ambassadors



SELECTION OF UNIQUE AND EMPOWERING EUROPEAN ROMA YOUTH PROJECTS

OPENS 4 ROMA YOUTH

By Serbian Roma Youth Organization, Serbia

Capacity building and increasing participation of Roma youth through trainings and conferences



The project was aiming to increase active participation of Roma youth in the Western Balkans through connecting and capacity building, understanding the regional context and taking part in relevant initiatives.

It was initiated by the Serbian Roma Youth Organization with the support of OPENS (Novi Sad European Youth Capital 2019) in 2018, with planned activities for 2018 – 2020 and the involvement of Roma/youth organisations, national youth councils from six countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia), and regional CSOs, intergovernmental organizations and initiatives. The current political and economic trend in the Western Balkans is regional integration, as a preparatory phase for EU membership. That integration is currently very challenging, however it is also an opportunity for achieving certain goals by joining forces and advocating on a regional level.

In order for the Roma youth of the region to be able to recognise opportunities for policy development and advocacy, be connected, and capacitated to develop policies and advocate, three regional training events with the participation of representatives from more than 20 Roma youth organizations were held, in addition to the 10 national conferences for assessing the needs of Roma youth and to disseminate knowledge to local Roma youth organisations about Roma integration programs.

As a result, cooperation has been established with Regional Youth Cooperation Office and Regional Cooperation Council (key stakeholders influencing decision making processes in the Western Balkans) in order to have Roma youth issues as priorities of national governments during and beyond the national and EU integration processes.





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OPENS 4 ROMA YOUTH



SERBIA

SERBIA ROMA YOUTH ORGANIZATION



Capacity building and increasing participation of Roma youth
through trainings and conferences

OPENS
2019
OHLADINSKA
PRESTONICA
EVROPE
NOVI SAD



SELECTION OF UNIQUE AND EMPOWERING EUROPEAN ROMA YOUTH PROJECTS


Farewell

By Arete Youth Foundation Bulgaria, Bulgaria

Concert organized by young Roma to raise funds for scholarships for young Roma students




The idea of a concert was initiated by the volunteers of the Foundation from Sofia to raise funds for scholarships for Roma high school seniors, who anticipate continuing their education in university. Volunteers discussed the challenges that Roma students face and the possible ways to resolve them. This is how they came up with the idea of a cultural event which would involve various types of art such as theatre, singing, dancing, and music – representing the beauty of the Roma culture as well as expressing their values through art.



Volunteers from all over Bulgaria joined and prepared scripts, scheduled and conducted rehearsals, and created promotional materials together. Through the process they improved their time-management, organizational, and team working skills. Yet, the most important of all was them creating a stronger bond amongst each other. While organizing the concert, they got to know more of the Roma culture through the songs, dances, and plays which were part of the program.

The concert was held on the 8th of April in the National Palace of Culture and was attended by around 100 people including volunteers and their parents, partners, teachers and NGO representatives. A total of 1500 BGN was collected through donations and ticket sales, which was later split into three academic merit scholarships. 21 applications were received and a committee of volunteers and Foundation`s representatives selected three outstanding Roma girls who aim at succeeding in their academic paths. The scholarships were awarded to the girls in an official ceremony resulting in them later joining the Arete Youth Volunteer Network.





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Programme (2014-2020)

FAREWELL

Phiren Amencia
ROMA CARE POLICY AND ETHNIC SERVICE



BULGARIA

ARETE YOUTH FOUNDATION BULGARIA



Concert organized by young Roma to raise funds
for scholarships for young Roma students



TRUST
FOR SOCIAL
ACHIEVEMENT

SELECTION OF UNIQUE AND EMPOWERING EUROPEAN ROMA YOUTH PROJECTS

Book Club Palikerav

By Civic Organisation Dakujem "Palikerav", Slovakia

Young Roma reading, reviewing, and discussing books with authors, publishers, and non-Roma



The Book Club PALIKERAV was created by the civic association Ďakujem - "Palikerav" in Košice, Slovakia in January 2017, to show the majority of the population in Slovakia that the young Roma are not only great dancers, singers or musicians, but also practice other hobbies, like reading.

The idea of the project is that Slovak authors and publishers provide books to the organisation who then give them to young Roma. They then read and review them in a short video which is published on the Facebook page of the NGO. The young reviewers get to keep the books and the authors are happy to have a review of their work. The videos are widely watched by both Roma and non-Roma, even well-known personalities such as the President of the Slovak Republic, the Vice-Chairman of the National Council or the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities. They have more than 1 250 000 views on Facebook and around 4 600 likes.

In addition to reviews, they also organize talks with writers; Living Libraries where the reviewers go to schools and tell their stories to children motivating them to learn and read more; book camps where kids read and talk about books and play out famous fairy tales in Romani language. Ďakujem - "Palikerav" holds Roma recital competitions to highlight the beauty and importance of Romani language; Concerts in the Park featuring Roma musicians; Fairy Tales Days with famous non-Roma who read out books and answer questions of Roma kids in elementary schools.





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Programme (2014-2020)

BOOK CLUB PALIKERAV



Young Roma reading reviewing and discussing books
with authors and publishers



SLOVAKIA

CIVIC ORGANISATION DAKUJEM "PALIKERAV"



SELECTION OF UNIQUE AND EMPOWERING EUROPEAN ROMA YOUTH PROJECTS


Terne Apre - Youth's Turn

By Romanomissio ry, Finland

Encountering, advising,
and helping young Roma on the streets




The Terne Apre – Nuorten vuoro -project (Youth's turn) has been running since 2018 with three employees. The aims of the project are to encounter, advise and help Roma youngsters who spend their time on the streets; increase their inclusion in youth services; prevent their harmful survival methods; strengthen a positive Roma identity; and direct them towards hobbies and studying.



The team approaches young Roma where they spend time, for example in shopping centres or train stations in Helsinki, Vantaa and Espoo and organizes small thematic groups for them, in which subjects and themes are based on the interests and needs of the participants. Between September, 2018 and January 2020, they encountered 878 Roma youngsters in train-stations and in shopping-malls. Terne Apre also reached out to authorities, youth workers, and youth leaders who work closely with the Roma community and train them on issues related to Roma history and culture in order to prevent prejudices and discrimination.

They have directed Roma youth to youth services and to youth-centres, career colleges and basic schools if they have dropped out, and helped them find jobs and internships. They have supported their “right to be young” through different kinds of activities like attending camping trips, excursions or concerts. The Terne Apre team also educates young people on how to report offences.

In 2019, the City of Vantaa acknowledged their work by rewarding one of their workers, Angelica Vironen as a Roma-influencer of 2019 in Vantaa.





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Programme (2014-2020)

TERNE APRE - YOUTH'S TURN



FINLAND



ROMANOMISSIO RY



Encountering, advising, and helping
young Roma on the streets



SOSIAALI- JA
TERVEYSJÄRJESTÖJEN
AVUSTUSKESKUS

SELECTION OF UNIQUE AND EMPOWERING EUROPEAN ROMA YOUTH PROJECTS


Buvero

By Romedica Foundation, Hungary

Media camp to develop digital content skills
for young Roma women




BUVERO is a media summer camp that strives to empower and emancipate a generation of young Roma women through grassroots participation and technical innovation. Participating Roma women are usually ages between 16 and 24, who share a sense of multiple or intersectional discrimination based on their ethnicity, gender and social class.



In 2018 six ambitious Roma women from all over Hungary came together, eager to learn about creating digital media content and exploring their Roma identity. They learnt about filmmaking, Roma identity and media representation from renowned professionals and practitioners. By the end of the camp, participants made critical short films discussing the topic of “hate speech”. The knowledge gained enabled the young women to make their voices heard and challenge discriminatory attitudes and practices. The graduates are capable of critical thinking and are aware of their power to analyse current affairs, shape the media landscape and, ultimately, influence decision-makers for better policies.

With this project Romedia Foundation is also committed to underpin Europe’s democratic principles while shrinking Europe’s digital and cultural divide, on both gender and ethnicity grounds, opening up the space for change and a just depiction in and through the media of the Roma women and their communities. The BUVERO methodology was successfully implemented in Hungary, Serbia, Germany and Macedonia in the past, and Romedia Foundation is eager to engage with more Roma women from other countries as well, particularly from the Balkans.





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Programme (2014-2020)

BUVERO



HUNGARY

ROMEDIA FOUNDATION



Media camp to develop digital content skills
for young Romani women



ROMEDIA

SELECTION OF UNIQUE AND EMPOWERING EUROPEAN ROMA YOUTH PROJECTS

QRTV Europa Pride 24/7. & Radio Shun.es Reconnecting Humans

By László Farkas & friends, Germany

TV channel and radio program representing Roma in the LGBTQI community



QRTV Europa is an entertainment, cultural, lifestyle and music channel. Its mission is to bring the various European communities closer to each other and to help European human rights movements, activists and NGOs create more inclusive societies. The main goals are to provide greater visibility for the members of the Roma LGBTQ community, present the lives of different groups facing similar challenges, and enable a liberated, balanced society supporting diverse identities and cultural backgrounds. QR refers to Queer Roma, broadly speaking the Roma LGBTQI people and it is also an abbreviation for Queer, because the content highly features queer and LGBTQI cultures.

Radio Shun.es is a community radio made by people with different minority backgrounds. 'Shunes' means "Do you listen?" or "Listen!" in Romani language. Shun.es would like to create a common platform of various musical genres, artists and their followers, thus bringing them, their countries and cultures closer to each other. The content is curated with the appreciation of physical and mental health consciousness as well as of vegetarian and vegan life views. They respect different religions, worldviews; and consider the feminist and transfeminist movements their main allies. The interactive earmark of Shun.es is that each aired song can be introduced by anyone who uploads a voice message on the website. The radio can be listened via an iOS (<https://bit.ly/radioshunes>) and an Android (https://bit.ly/shunes_android) smartphone app, too. The creators find it important to strengthen environmental awareness, so their servers back up on 100% renewable, carbon dioxide-free energy.

The creators are open and welcoming to ideas from organizations, bloggers, activists who would contribute to any of these goals, and further colour the QRTV and Radio Shun.es program palette.



qrtv.eu/en



/qrtveu



shun.es/en



/radioshunes



QRTV EUROPA - PRIDE 24/7. & RADIO SHUN.ES RECONNECTING HUMANS



GERMANY

LÁSZLÓ FARKAS & FRIENDS



TV channel representing Roma in the LGBTQI community
and radio program for Roma and non-Roma



SELECTION OF UNIQUE AND EMPOWERING EUROPEAN ROMA YOUTH PROJECTS


Remembrance, Responsibility, Support, and Recognition of the Roma victims of the Holocaust in Republic of North Macedonia



By SUMNAL - Association for Roma community development, North Macedonia

Young Roma assisting elderly Roma and Roma victims of the Holocaust with sharing of stories in Roma history

The project was run in 2018-19 with the goal to support the welfare and social inclusion of approximately 100 elderly Roma and their family members in the Topaana district of Skopje through daily social clubs; legal, social and medical assistance; voluntary work; and the societal recognition of Roma.



The idea of the project came from the organisation's basic research about the needs and constraints of the Roma victims of the Holocaust in Macedonia. The essence of the project is to use already existing support systems within state institutions through education, information-sharing and direct access to the services with the support of young Roma volunteers.

Volunteers were involved in the project on a daily basis: they visited the beneficiaries in their homes and helped them with household maintenance, grocery shopping, accompanied them to the pharmacy or public authorities, read to them, filled out official papers, played social games with them in the daily centre, etc. Through this daily contact the young people got to know the Roma victims of the Holocaust closely, thus keeping remembrance alive. The young Roma became more informed and sensitive to the issues that this project was addressing: they learned about history and in some of the cases they documented the stories of the Roma survivors which is important in order to complete a part of the Roma history still not very much known.

The project was funded by the EVZ Foundation.





Funded by the European Union's
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Programme (2014-2020)

REMEMBRANCE, RESPONSIBILITY, SUPPORT, AND RECOGNITION OF THE ROMA VICTIMS OF THE HOLOCAUST IN REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA



NORTH MACEDONIA

SUMNAL

ASSOCIATION FOR ROMA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Young Roma assisting elderly Roma and Roma victims of the Holocaust
with sharing of stories in Roma history



evz STIFTUNG
ERINNERUNG
VERANTWORTUNG
ZUKUNFT

SELECTION OF UNIQUE AND EMPOWERING EUROPEAN ROMA YOUTH PROJECTS

Romanes Short course for learning Romani language

By Kherson City Association of Young Roma, Ukraine
Mobile Romani language learning app



KHERSON CITY
ASSOCIATION
OF YOUNG ROMA

During their research the Kherson City Association of Young Roma found that learning Romani language is not a priority for the Roma of the XXI. century in Ukraine and as a result they do not have the opportunity to communicate with their peers in their native language, and with Roma representatives at international events. It is important for Roma youth to know their native language, as an opportunity of the culture preservation as well. That is why they came up with the idea of an interactive educational product that would teach or increase the level of knowledge of the Romani language among young people.

Taking stock of the existing Romani language teaching tools they could not find any which fulfilled the needs of young people and Roma youth do not have resources for deepening their knowledge in native language. After talking to foreign colleagues familiar with digital technologies, they decided to create a smartphone app, "Romanes" for iOS and Android. After all, every second Roma teenager in Ukraine has a mobile device and likes to use apps at their leisure time so why not to combine the interesting with the useful!?

The app is available in Romani and in Russian. One day after publication, the app had 100 downloads and now it has more than 500 users in Ukraine, Russia, Moldova and Bulgaria.



Романэс - ромский язык
<https://tinyurl.com/y4fn5e83>



Романэс - ромский язык
<https://tinyurl.com/y5l6dhax>



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Programme (2014-2020)

ROMANES

SHORT COURSE FOR LEARNING ROMANI LANGUAGE



KHERSON CITY ASSOCIATION OF YOUNG ROMA

UKRAINE

Creation of a mobile app for learning Romani language



This publication was realized as part of the Roma Youth Voices Project, coordinated by Phiren Amenca and funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme of the DG Justice, European Commission.



Funded by the European Union's
Rights, Equality and Citizenship
Programme (2014-2020)

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