Second I AM ROMA Newsletter

I AM ROMA

August 2012

In This Issue

Introduction to I AM ROMA project

"I AM ROMA: Changing mindsets" establishes a partnership of 9 partners convinced of the paramount importance of challenging stereotypes against Roma community and willing to campaign and take action locally.

The project has two main aims: to build up capacity and know-how of local actors engaged in anti-discrimination work relating to Roma in general and Roma children in particular, AND support them in developing local/regional campaigns to challenge stereotypes and highlight good practices through a transnational exchange programme.

One of the key elements of the project is the **Local Action Group** (LAG) created by each I AM ROMA partner. This is a small core group responsible for developing the local campaign and a wider network of key actors and organisations working in the territory in relation to Roma issues. Each LAG is led by a LAG Coordinator who is responsible for implementing the action-plan agreed at local level. The LAG consists of three types of actors:

- Those who are well "connected". That is those who have extensive contacts (professional and social). These are people who are connected into different niches and sub-cultures. These are "activists" in the field.

- Those who have "knowledge", who are sources of data. These are researchers, policy makers etc.

- Those who are salespersons -that is people who have the skills to persuade and spread the message. These are people in the media, artists, etc.

Project Data

Lead Partner	Municipality of Sintra
Title of the project	I AM ROMA: Changing mindsets
Main Theme	Combating discrimination against Roma
Partnership	9 partners (3 municipalities and 6 associations)
Duration of the project	From 01/02/2011 to 31/01/2013
Total Cost of the project	870.430,06
Total Grant from the EC	695.425,00

Project Partners

1. Municipality of Sintra, Lead Partner (PT)
2. Local Urban Development European Network, LUDEN (BE)
3. Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (UK)
4. Heraklion Municipality (GR)
5. European Development Agency (CZ)
6. Intercultural Institute of Timisoara (RO)
7. European Roma Employment Agency (SK)
8. Roma Centre for Social Intervention and Studies (RO)
9. Municipality of Dobrich (BG)

'I AM ROMA' project aims to achieve the following key goals:

Maximize impact at a local level and ensure that the local actions have wide ownership.

Facilitate the effective transnational exchange of experience and learning

Increase political participation of Roma

To raise awareness on discrimination and racial violence targeted against Roma community and on discrimination of Roma Children in Educational provision

Second Transnational Workshop: Timisoara 22- 25 May 2012

The workshop organised in Timisoara, Romania on 22-25 May 2012, in collaboration with the Intercultural Institute of Timisoara (IIT), has represented the occasion to engage 'I AM ROMA' partners in a peer review process allowing them to share their local experiences, good practices along with getting feedback from their peers.

With 40 participants, the second Peer Review workshop of I AM ROMA Project focused on the theme of Education and on the peer review of I AM ROMA campaigns by project partners and external evaluators. The workshop addressed the challenges facing Roma children in mainstream education and special schools and sought to foster interaction and experience and knowledge transfer among I AM ROMA Partners.

Following a welcome speech, Mr. Haroon Saad, Director of LUDEN, opened the workshop session on Wednesday 23 May 2012 by setting up the context and the manifold challenges faced by the Roma Community in Europe. He also insisted on the importance of "changing mindsets", not only among the general population but also within the Roma Community itself. He then invited the participants and experts to share their sound and constructive experience during I AM ROMA **'Peer review workshop',** building on the following key elements:

The European perspectives on Roma children in Education, which were presented by Caroline Sykora, Eurochild and World Bank expert. Her presentation emphasized the Roma child perspectives, their limitations and her key recommendations.

Mrs Sykora also gave examples of successful actions in pointing out the importance to foster exemplary initiatives – such as the participation of children for instance – and to scale up and invest the successful projects.

Experience sharing with Roma and non-Roma Students and Teachers. Teachers from mainstream education (Alina Ardelean) and special schools (Camelia Carabas) along with one Roma (Sorinel Dumitru) and non-Roma (Cornelia Kirali) students shared their own experiences with the audience. The teachers reported their difficulties to maintain a good level of education among Roma children and the decision of many localities to send pupils to special schools. Despite several programmes of intervention implemented by School's headmasters, too much miscommunication remains between the population and the Roma Community. Sorinel, a school mediator from Constanza, called for the nomination of an officer, a contact person representing Roma interests in the decision-making process, being also an interface between the school and the Roma Community. He also insisted on the importance for the teachers to get to know the Roma Community, their customs, habits and their vision in order to change mindsets.

🌑 *The Focus on turning strategy into action on the ground:* Ian Poitier reminded the audience the paramount importance of following a strategic methodology in the development of I AM ROMA local campaigns based on 9 key steps. He also insisted on the key challenge of ensuring a long-term impact of their campaigns in order to sustain the impact of the local actions beyond the life of the project.

🌑 *Case studies from the Intercultural Institute of Timisoara.* Daniela Craciun, Romina Matei and Eugen Gherga presented some of the project activities run by IIT (media activities and youth initiatives) aiming at combating discrimination towards Roma people

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🌑 *Working groups and peer review sessions followed by an evaluation of a Jury of Roma and experts.* In order to bring together different visions and explore some key issues more deeply, the participants were divided into groups to exchange on their local campaigns and the challenges they were facing at the local level. A Jury of Roma and experts chaired by Haroon Saad evaluated the Presentations of the 'Progress-Problems-Prospects' reports of the

partners according to a list of agreed criteria (ability to replicate, involvement of Roma, sustainability, innovation and impact). The last day of the Workshop was dedicated to the visit of the district Kuntz and the Resource Centre for Social Entrepreneurship which also seeks to empower Roma community.

🌑 **Study visits in Roma Community.** Two study visits have been organised on Tuesday 22 May 2012 and on Friday 25 May 2012. On arrival day, the group visited the District Freidorf before engaging in an inspiring discussion with the Priest of the District. The last day of the Workshop was dedicated to the visit of the district Kuntz and the Resource Centre for Social Entrepreneurship which also seeks to empower Roma community.

All the preparatory documents, presentations and workshop working documents are available on I AM ROMA website

Focus on the situation of Roma in partner location: Heraklion municipality

In Greece, the greatest concentrations of the settled Roma population are to be found in the major conurbations and in rural regions, where there are most opportunities for employment. According to a study based on a questionnaire sent to local councils in 2008, the total Roma population residing in Greece amounts to 50 000 individuals. The major concentrations of Roma (over 1000 families) are to be found in 4 regions (Eastern Macedonia-Thrace, Thessaly, Western Greece and Central Greece.

In 2011 Heraklion municipality has started to host a camp of Roma people due to a territorial reorganisation of the city, which now comprises the district Nea Alikarnassos. Although the Municipal Strategy is not fully developed and implemented yet, several ongoing projects and measures are demonstrating a strong political will emerging from the local authorities and stakeholders to start planning a long-term strategy towards Roma integration.

Lately, the Municipality has been involved in three European Projects dedicated to Roma: Mile, Roma-Net, and the ongoing **"I am Roma" Project**. Furthermore, Heraklion municipality has recently joined the national municipal net on Roma issues and takes part in the Core Group of the European Alliance on Roma issues, which aims at instigating a European city network focusing on issues facing Roma community.

A tangible outcome of one of the past European Project has been crystallized in 2006 through the creation of a healthcare center dedicated to the integration of Heraklion Roma Community. Since then, the medico-social center, relying also on a strong network of volunteers, is at the forefront of Roma integration actions and supports actively the municipality efforts towards the integration and empowerment of Roma Community.

At the national policy level, the **2012- 2020 strategic framework for Roma,** adopted in December 2011, follows the reasoning set out in the earlier *Integrated Action Plan* for the Social Integration of Greek Gypsies (2001-2008), while taking into account the shortcomings of this preceding programming period. Indeed, although the *2001-2008 Action plan* responded to the urgent necessity of an integrated approach on the basis of the identified needs and problems of Greek Roma, on the operational level the above basic option was not secured (organisational weakness of the Operational Programme, thematic approach prevailing instead of a spatial approach, failure to make resource available on a regular basis and shortage of evaluation and monitoring procedures leading to gradual downgrading of interventions)

To address these gaps, *the National Strategy for Social Integration Roma 2012-2020* has set the following objectives:

• the systematic and comprehensive inventory and description of the current situation

• a review of the rationality of the planning priorities, based on the results of the aforesaid inventory

• a redefinition of the priorities on the short-, medium- and long-term levels, based on the existing needs of the target group and the resources (human and financial) available

• the establishment of an administrative mechanism for the integrated management of the national strategy.

◉ For more information on the Greek National Strategy, please click here
◉ For more information on Heraklion Municipality Strategy, please contact Adamantia Mavromati

Questions to the Local Coordinator of the LAG: Romina Matei

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⊛ **How do you assess the level of discrimination against Roma in Czech Republic? In Europe? What specific challenges do Roma face in your region?**

RM: It is hard to assess the level of discrimination against Roma in Romania or in Europe. In my opinion it is hard to measure discrimination. Research shows that an important part of the population in Romania holds strong negative attitudes about Roma. Such attitudes can also be found in schools and in the media. There is a tendency to blame Roma for the situation of disadvantage and often social exclusion they are facing, while the majority of the population, particularly young people, is not aware of the real situation of the disadvantaged Roma communities and of the vicious circle of exclusion in which they have been constraint for a long time.

Roma communities in our region, as well as throughout the country face challenges related to equal access to a "normal" social life. The members of Roma communities are often caught in a vicious circle - the adults don't have a good education, good status, are facing racial discrimination especially in the labour market, all this leads to the fact that they cannot afford to send the children to (good) school - that means that their children will remain in the same condition and that the model will be passed to the next generation and so on. Also because of this, one of the

highest challenge faced by Roma is access to a proper job.

For example the unemployment for Roma youngsters in our region is 4 times higher that the general youth unemployment rate in Romania. In Romania now the youth unemployment is around 22 % - the Roma youth unemployment is around 86%. Then there is the problem with identification cards - there are people in the communities that don't have any identification cards … if you don't have an ID - that means that you don't exist, you cannot benefit from any of the public services and if you don't have an ID that means that also your children will not be registered, they will not go to school and the circle goes round and round. I cannot say that there are specific challenges faced by Roma communities in our region, I think that the problems that they face are widespread in the entire country.

⊛ **Would you say that the situation of Roma is improving or worsening at your local/ national level? What needs to be done at the national and European level to improve the situation of Roma?**

RM: In many ways the situation of Roma in our region and in general in Romania has improved over the past decade. If before authorities were ignoring this topic and denying that there is a problem and that they should take responsibility for addressing it, now we have various policies and programmes aiming at improving the situation of Roma. Several of these programmes proved to be effective and brought positive change. As examples, we can mention projects focused on promoting an inclusive and intercultural environment in schools or the positive measures that facilitate access of young Roma to high-schools and universities.

However, there are many policies, measures and programmes that were not effective and there is still a lack of coordination between various initiatives and between institutions in different sectors. In practical terms, for most Roma the situation remained very difficult.

A lot of things are still to be done but as a starting point it could be useful to make sure all policies comply with the 10 Common Basic Principles for Roma Inclusion adopted by the European Union and supported also by the Council of Europe and other international organisations

⊛ **Could you introduce briefly the work of IIT on Roma issues? On I AM ROMA Project?**

RM: The IIT started to work on Roma issues since 1996, when it implemented in coordination with Romani CRISS and the Institute of Educational Sciences and with two partners from France, the first national level project on Roma education in Romania - the project piloted the employment of Roma school mediators and initiated the training of teachers working with Roma children. In 1997, I.I.T. initiated the first project in Romania on the image of Roma in the press - press monitoring, workshops with journalists, Roma and public institutions, publication. The work done of the I.I.T. on Roma issues was in the following areas:

- Human Rights Education
- Improving cooperation between Roma an local authorities
- Intercultural education
- Researches
- Civic education

Some of the projects done in the period 1998 - 2012 are: "Integration of Roma culture in school and out-of-school education"; Local projects in Timis County to promote civic participation of young Roma - Support for setting-up

Parudimos Association; Training of teachers on Roma history & culture and intercultural education; Piloting of the European Guide of Roma Mediators developed by the Council of Europe; Action research in schools with high percentage of Roma children in Timisoara; Romanet: Centers for Roma Inclusion in Vojvodina and Timisoara; High-school students suggest solutions for the problems of Roma.

In Timisoara, the IAM ROMA campaign of the Local Action Group is built on the methodology "High-school students suggest solutions for the problems of Roma" and it is based on the following steps:
• Face to face and online training course for teachers from 7 high-schools
• 3 months activity with students for mapping the local situation of the Roma communities, proposing public policy solutions to the problems of the Roma communities and developing an action plan to convince the authorities to implement the public policies
• Local public meetings to present the projects developed
• Regional public presentation of the students' work in the presence of local authorities, NGOs and the media
• Media coverage of the whole process

Why do you think launching I AM ROMA Campaign is necessary? What is the added value of I AM ROMA project to challenge stereotypes on Roma?

RM: It is necessary because it can help to introduce a new perspective in the educational approach towards Roma inclusion, offering the students the possibility to be more active and critical in their judgments, choices and beliefs. Students and teachers can collaborate in order to support a new way of dealing with the perceived otherness. By involving directly the young students it is possible to change their negative mind-set towards Roma, because of their direct participation and involvement with Roma community life. Students, with their new awareness, can positively influence their parents and friends and relatives, starting up a positive process.

What are the challenges you are facing in the implementation of your local campaign?

RM: The campaign in our case is designed based on the methodology "High-school students suggest solutions for the problems of Roma" - a methodology that involves teachers, students, schools, local and regional authorities. In the work done until now, the main challenges were first in finding the schools that would like to join the program.

We managed to have collaboration with the County Schools Inspectorate, and through them we managed to have 7 schools involved. Then the teachers told us that a challenge was to have the students motivated to participate in such a project and the reaction of the others colleagues (teachers). There were cases where the students had difficulties to establish a dialogue with the local authorities. The time of the research done by the students, overlapped with the local and regional elections, so this was another challenge - to interact with the authorities in the same time while elections campaigns were running. This situation made it harder also for the visibility in media of the actions, because in that time the most important headlines were about elections.

One general challenge was also regarding the perception towards Roma communities in the society - which is in most of the cases negative. It is hard to challenge the stereotypes and to promote different realities which are not based on false assumptions. Several positive articles in the regional media about I am Roma campaign triggered negative, racist comments from readers. This is why over the next period we will also focus on countering racist comments posted in online media in relation to articles about Roma.

What contribution can your 'I AM ROMA campaign' make to the improvement of the Roma situation at the local level/in Europe?

RM: The campaign contributes to achieve a more tolerant and positive attitude toward Roma amongst young students and also among teachers. The campaign can be a useful tool in the process of bettering the social perception of Roma people in Romania and in Europe too, due to the active and direct involvement of the participants in the campaigns. Changes in the perceptions and beliefs can be more effective for an actual change in the social fields, promoting new projects and actions

Are the authorities aware of your activities? If so, what do the authorities think of I AM ROMA Campaign?

RM: Yes, the local and regional authorities are aware of our activities, because we are trying to involve the local authorities in all steps of the campaign. The methodology that we decided to use is one that is based on dialogue with the local and regional authorities. We have invited the representatives of the local and regional authorities to the public presentation made by the students in June and after the event, they decided to get more involved in the process. The representatives of the Government in Timis County (Prefect) came with the proposal to organise in September a joint meeting with the students and the representatives from the local authorities from the towns / villages where the project was implemented, in order to facilitate a direct communication between the students and the authorities. "

Questions to a School teacher of the LAG : Amalia Ionita

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🔴 **How do you see your role in I AM ROMA Local Action Group?**

AI: "My role in the project was as a teacher. I've had an important contribution in coordinating the students. I've worked with them in all the process, in finding the problems which are faced by the Roma communities, in coordinating the process of choosing the most important problem. We've discussed and decided everything together during the classes. I've also had my contribution in making the connection with the local authorities and motivating the students to take action and to meet with them. I've also prepared visits in the community and organise the students to have a dialogue with the members of the communities. But overall, my role was in guiding the learning process of the students.

🔴 **What was the catalyst which brought you to your activity? How do people react to your activities?**

AI: My main motivation was that I wanted to do something special for the civic education classes. This methodology means a lot also for my students, because they learn directly about human rights and about the right not to be discriminated because of your origins. I really wanted for my students to understand that we are all

equal and all different. We have the right to live in a harmonious society. One more important element of this methodology is that the students learn that they have an important role in the society. They can interfere where a problem is and they have the power to change it. They can propose solutions that the society can implement and solve the problem.

My colleagues reactions was "why again a program for Roma communities?' - Their first question was why again with Roma? - Because there are so many programs initiatives for them, it is enough. Some of the colleagues said that the Roma are receiving already too many gratuities for someone who does not like to work - this was the reaction of my colleagues.

🔴 **How do you see the implication of the local/ national authorities as regards the issue of Roma in educational provision? What could be done to raise their awareness and to encourage them to take action?**

AI: It is a matter of change the perceptions people has toward 'difference'. Institutions should change their attitude too in order to provide a more tolerant and open system of education. Obviously, local and national authority should do more effort in order to promote education for Roma people but they should focus on their approach toward the perceived problem. If national and local authorities carry out a stereotypical and negative approach toward Roma community, it is impossible to establish an effective inclusive educational system.

What I can say from the experience from this project is that the local authorities (especially from the town where I work - Sannicolau Mare) get involved a lot in the problem faced by the Roma communities. I might say that they are not ignoring the problem, but they interfere a lot in social issues and education is left behind. We should pay more attention to education, because it is a way to work on prevention. In our education system we should include more elements from Roma culture. For example in Sannicolau Mare there is no teacher for Romani language in any of the schools. I think that this might help … I think we should promote more Roma culture in school and in our activities.

🔴 **In what ways the work undertaken in the framework of IIT Campaign on Roma has challenged your position and the position of your colleagues on Roma Community?**

AI: I cannot say that it challenged a lot. Regarding my colleagues - I don't think that changed so much and regarding my own opinion … I have had all the time a positive approach on Roma communities, due also to my childhood, because I was raised with Roma kids and I all the time considered equal.

What I might say that changed this project is the perception of the students involved. I think that this project should last much more than only some months - it should be done at every class of civic education and during all the years when there is in curriculum civic education. The good part is that for implementing this methodology you don't need financing,

it can be done by every teacher and this methodology should be mandatory for civic class education.

🔴 *In your point of view, how the teachers could more efficiently challenge stereotypes against Roma community?*

AI: They should learn more about Roma culture and situation in order to avoid any wrong attitude toward them and they should be trained adequately in order to really work as intercultural mediators and in order to achieve an actual intercultural educational approach. They should raise the curiosity of the student towards 'difference' in order to promote it and to support an open and critical approach.

In school there should be classes that promote more positive examples from Roma people that succeed in life. I think that we should use in classes more interactive teaching methods based on more positive examples regarding Roma culture.

🔴 *In your past experience what was the most effective action that achieved its goal towards challenged stereotypes on Roma? Do you see how implementing such action to successfully tackle discrimination of Roma community? Please give us an example.*

AI: In 2002, I have worked as volunteer at one NGO working with Roma women and children, called Association for Roma Women, where I've worked with the children after school, helping them to do their homework and so … and I believe that this helped a lot. I think that this can help a lot … to create day care for Roma children where they can get help for homework, do different activities and so - increase their self confidence.

🔴 *According to your own experience, what are the 3 key messages you would like to address to I AM ROMA partners to ensure a Long Term impact of their local campaigns?*

*AI: 1. To address the issue of education of Roma communities - because education is one of the most important factor in improving the Roma situation
2. To collaborate with each other in order to be more supportive and open
3. To promote and support in everyday actions tolerance and respect.*

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I AM ROMA Local Campaigns and their status

☀ LC1: Sintra Municipality

*Local project Coordinator: Jorge Miranda*

Overall goals of the local campaign:
1. Create know-how skills and empower local stakeholders committed to tackling Roma discrimination, with a particular focus on children and women.
2. Develop methodologies to create communicational supports that defy Roma stereotypes.
3. Raise awareness in Europe on the issues faced by Roma children in education.

Target groups: Primarily Roma and non Roma children and women

State of Progress: The defined strategy to fight existing stigmas over Roma community remains on two action flags, the creation of a fashion collection and a children´s tune movie.

The first action flag targets the creation of a fashion collection of unique Roma inspired design. A designer, a professional dressmaker were involved in this process as well as a group of seven Roma women that have been receiving training from October 2011 until July 2012. The group would wish to continue to develop their skills in this field, but they consider that with the acquired knowledge they can perform small sewing emends for them and the community. The process of creation has gone through different steps ranging from listening to the Roma and non Roma community, marketing hearing, and eventually adjustments to the final collection in the later stages of production. A display is scheduled in Mira Sintra Parish (September-October).
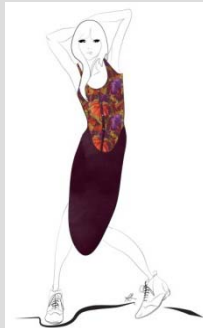
As for the **second action flag, "Cig adventures"**, after the stage of construction and validation involving Roma and non Roma community, the script and story´s characters have been validated and finalised. The process of animation is in progress.

During this process two young Roma musicians were involved, taking music classes, and it is foreseen that on the 20th July they will be recording their own themes together with a professional musician's orchestra.

On July the 28th, a meeting was held with the local action group in order to define the upcoming course of actions:

- Finalising communication plans until the end of July, and contacting the media for the discloser of the project. In this regard the ACIDI will have a key role in mobilizing the several means of communication at its disposal – Tv show "Nós" and the institution's site.

- Regarding the animation movie "Aventuras do Cig", establishing a workgroup involving the 'mediators program' of ACIDI for the integration on Roma *(see Newsletter 1, focus on Sintra)* , for the creation of pedagogical resources package that can be used by mediators in their work with the community, and by all educational community. This process will take place from September to December.

- And eventually developing a portfolio which documents all the process and subjects produced up until December.

Key upcoming event: In September 2012, once the brand developed, a Fashion Show will tour in shopping malls and public spaces within the country and also in Europe if the Portuguese tour is successful. At the same period, once the movie produced, 'Os Amigos do Cig' will be broadcast*ed* on TV.

For more details, please contact **Jorge Miranda**

LC2: Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Local project Coordinators: Alexandra Mc Carry, Stephen Long, Jennifer Yu, Orla Barron, Lindsay Anderson

Overall goals of the local campaign:

1. To address discrimination and social exclusion and challenge perceptions and stereotyping of Roma in Belfast.
2. To lay the foundations for economic stability and independence through the establishment of a social economy programme for Roma women.
3. To promote the integration of Roma youth with local communities through single identity and intercultural programmes based on sports and multimedia.
4. To raise awareness of Roma language and culture by providing training, interactive events and publications.
5. To begin to build the capacity of staff in public, voluntary and community organisations to engage with the Roma community in Belfast.

Target groups: Primarily Roma mothers, Roma children and families.

State of Progress: Belfast Health and social Care Trust organised several flag actions in the last 3 months:

Awareness raising sessions and basic language sessions

In May and June 2012, two awareness raising sessions of Roma culture and traditions as well as Romanian language took place in June. The sessions were directed at senior staff from Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, Belfast Education and Library Board, Belfast City Council and Non- Governmental Organisations.

Know your rights for A2 nationals

On 2 July 2012, a group of Roma mothers and teenagers undertook a session on rights awareness and entitlements in Northern Ireland. The workshop was facilitated by the South Belfast Roundtable and included information on: health, employment, education and welfare.

Publications

Over 1000 cards with basic Romanian phrases were distributed to frontline staff that interacts with Roma including Police (PSNI), Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service, Housing Executive, Health, Education, Belfast City Council, NGOs, Schools

Say a Word of Welcome in Romanian
Bine aţi venit
I AM ROMA
Welcome /bee-neh atz veneet/

The "I AM ROMA" project also utilised the newssheet of the Romanian Roma Community Association to advertise the project. 3000 copies of this bi-lingual newssheet have been circulated to the Roma community and to statutory organisations and NGOs throughout Belfast (see below).

Mapping exercise of Roma activities in Belfast

The "I AM ROMA" Project Team supported Belfast City Council in organising a mapping exercise of all activity that is taking place with the Roma in Belfast. The mapping exercise had representation from all statutory organisations, all NGOs working with Roma and the Romanian Roma Community Association of NI. The final report will be branded with both I am Roma and Belfast City Council logos and will be widely circulated to help shape policy in relation to Roma.

Key upcoming event:

"**7 Days of summer" commences on July 23, 2012**

This week long, joint youth project involves young people from City Church, Fitzroy Presbyterian and Roma young people.

For more details, please contact **Stephen Long**

⚜ LC3:Heraklion Municipality

Local project Coordinators: Zacharenia Drosou, Adamantia Mavromati

Overall goals of the local campaign:

1. To increase the sensitivity and awareness of local children for Roma children.

2. To increase the sensitivity of parents through their children and reduce their discrimination behavior against Roma children.

Target groups: Children in primary schools and their parents.

State of Progress:

Heraklion municipality has delivered their final DVD and TV- Spot with an anti-discrimination social message. In the last months, the local action group presented the dvd in many meetings with Stakeholders of Education.

The Festival **'The celebration of Spring'** took place on the 18th of May 2012 with great success. During this event, Posters, Leaflets and T-shirts with an anti-discrimination message on Roma community were distributed to pupils.

Key upcoming events in "I AM ROMA" local campaign:
- ⚜ Social research event and dissemination of the TV-Spot in local channels, newspapers, websites in August 2012
- ⚜ Presentation of the DVD in primary schools to pupils in September 2012.

🏴 For more details on Heraklion Municipality I AM ROMA campaign, please contact **Adamantia Mavromati**

⚜ LC4: European Development Agency

Local project Coordinator: Eva Benková

Overall goals of the local campaign:

1. To challenge stereotypes amongst children 11-15 years old.
2. To broaden the knowledge of experts and provide them with up-to-date information on Roma issues.
3. To Promote the I Am Roma: project and its local activities in Czech Republic.

Target groups: Both Roma and non-Roma children and their families, experts, Czech citizens and local and national authorities.

State of Progress: Following the organisation of the art contest in May 2012, the jury made up of 6 "I AM ROMA" LAG members awarded 2 pictures in category "Roma history", 2 pictures in category "classmate´s family". Three pictures were awarded with the "special price" of the jury.

On 19th June, 76 participants came for the 3rd campaign day for children to the House of National Minorities in Prague.

During this campaign day, children participated in educative discussion with Mr. Ladislav Goral and Iveta Demeterová, during which they discussed how Roma minority is perceived on the children's pictures. They have also been involved in the art contest by giving them the possibility to vote for one picture, which received the award "of children's jury".

Key upcoming events in "I AM ROMA" local campaign:
- ⚜ During summer and beginning of autumn EDA will be preparing the DVD from the campaign which will disseminate outcomes of the project and provide teachers with teaching and educational material.
- ⚜ The exhibition of pictures of children's drawings remains installed during summer in the House of National Minorities in Prague.
- ⚜ An evaluation of the longer term impact of EDA 'IAM ROMA' Campaign will be organised at the end of summer holidays.

🏴 For more details, please contact **Eva Benková**

LC5: Intercultural Institute of Timisoara

Local project Coordinators: Calin Rus, Romina Matei

Overall goals of the local campaign:
1. To raise awareness on the situation of Roma communities at the local level in Western Romania.
2. To stimulate a constructive attitude of young people, authorities and the society in general, towards the concrete situation of Roma
3. To empower students and teachers to act for human rights for all
4. To provide alternative messages in online media to counter the stereotypes about Roma.

Target groups: Romanian population having access to online media, students, local and regional authorities, parents, teachers and media.

State of Progress: In the last months Teachers from seven schools in Timis County that were trained for this purpose supported groups of students to analyse the problems local Roma communities are facing and to formulate proposals for public policies that can be adopted by local authorities to address these problems. Students presented their proposals during a public event on 13th of June and made plans to organise local events to raise the awareness of the Roma and non-Roma and to advocate for their proposal to be adopted by local authorities.

A special event will be organized in September in Timisoara when representatives of student teams will meet with members of a County Working Group on Roma Issues consisting of representatives of public institutions in various sectors (education, employment, healthcare, social protection, etc), as well of Roma organisations and NGOs working on Roma issues. With the support of media specialists involved in IIT LAG, a good visibility of these events at regional level will be ensured and contribute to changing attitudes towards Roma and to enhanced commitment of public authorities on this topic.

For more details on ITT LAG activities, please contact **Romina Matei** or **Calin Rus**

LC6: European Roma Employment Agency

Local project Coordinator: Roman Kaiser

Overall goals of the local campaign:
1. To get a comprehensive and accurate picture on the state of knowledge, awareness, and prejudices against the Roma community demonstrated by Slovak students, which are potentially the future key players of the country.

2. To communicate the results of the research across the national media in order to measure these attitudes.

3. To deliver CD publication to Universities and Secondary Schools libraries as a tool or resource for teachers and students.

Target groups: Small focus groups of students in Humanities, Social sciences, Medicine Policy and Law; Slovak citizens through national media; Students and teachers in the dissemination phase.

For more details on ERPA Local campaign, please contact **Roman Kaiser**

LC7: Romani CRISS
(Roma Centre for Social Intervention and studies)

Local project Coordinators: Luiza Oana Mihalache, Monica Mincu

Overall goals of the local campaign:

1. To promote Roma identity, in order to persuade Roma people to declare openly their ethnicity.
2. To fight stereotypes and prejudices against Roma.

Target groups: Both Roma and non-Roma Romanian citizens, Roma and non-Roma elite, and local and national authorities.

State of Progress:

Initiated on 28-29 January 2012 during a LAG meeting in Brasov, the second year of ROMANI CRISS local campaign conveys messages on combating discrimination and stereotypes and promoting equal rights for everybody building on similar materials than the ones used for the census implemented during the first year of the campaign.

ROMANI CRISS LAG actions will be focusing on:

1. Door-to-door campaigns
2. Distributing campaign materials: all will have anti-discrimination messages printed on
3. Café-style events will take place in the locations where the campaign will be developed

All activities were planned for the period August – Novembers 2012

For more details, please contact **Cezara David or Oana Mihalache**

LC8: Dobrich Municipality

Local project Coordinators: Genoveva Drumeva, Kameliya Yordanova, Daniela Milkova

Overall goals of the local campaign:

1. To foster active Roma participation in local and national Roma policy.
2. To enhance Roma integration in education.

Target groups: Primarily Roma children and both Roma and non Roma families.

State of Progress: On 19-21 June 2012, a group of representatives of Dobrich Municipality dominated by LAG members of "I AM ROMA" project and Municipal experts, social and educational workers, visited offices of" Romani CRISS" , another "I AM ROMA" partner.

The hosts organized visits in the Bucharest neighborhood school comprising a majority of Roma students in view to present actions related to Roma education.

Romani CRISS is organizing project's activities in 5 schools in the capital which are being replicated in other areas of the country.

The projects provide: additional lessons after regular school classes in the new furnished classrooms, dresses, textbooks and stationeries and special work with physiologist to overcome stress and for achievement of positive attitudes for better educational results.

The project will serve as pilot model for Romanian Ministry of Education in order to further improve the educational system of the country.

For more details on Dobrich local campaign, please contact **Daniela Milkova**

Upcoming key events in "I Am Roma" project

Final Dissemination workshop in January 2013, Brussels

This will be more than a "standard" final event where the project is presented. Our goal here will be to have a workshop where we will also engage with a wider range of participants and get their feedback in respect of the campaigning resource materials that the project will have developed.

Interesting past event for I Am Roma partners

"Good Practices on Roma Integration in Europe" :

On 5 June ERIO hosted a conference on "Good Practices on Roma Integration

in Europe" in the European Economic and Social Committee in Brussels. The

purpose of the conference was to discuss successful practices on Roma integration in Europe, the current status of Roma integration in Belgium, as well as to officially launch the Belgian Roma, Sinti and Travellers Council (RSTC). Over 70 people from various fields, ranging from high level EU officials and Belgian politicians to Roma activists and civil society representatives, participated in the event.

For more information on this event and on forthcoming ERIO's conferences on Roma, please see follow this link

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Updated Resources Guide created by Ian Poitier, July 2012

Our campaign expert, Ian Poitier, updated its Resource guide to provide I AM ROMA partners with successful examples tailored to the needs of I AM ROMA partner. Beyond numerous case studies and successful examples of changing mindsets, which I AM ROMA partners can use to strengthen the impact of their local campaign, this guide also contains key steps and a clear and comprehensive methodology for implementing and developing an advocacy campaign.

To access the guide on I AM ROMA website, please click <u>here</u>

Examples of successful 'Changing mindsets' campaigns

This information campaign works to raise awareness of discrimination and increase understanding of the EU anti-discrimination laws. It also promotes diversity and the benefits that it can bring to European society. Run by the European Commission, the campaign is active in all EU Member States.

To access more info on I AM ROMA website, please click <u>here</u>

REACT (Responsibility, Empowerment, Activism, Citizenship, Transparency) is a pilot awareness raising campaign supported by the European Union which focuses on the concept of active citizenship of Roma and non-Roma. The campaign is developed by three NGOs under the umbrella of the European Roma Grassroots Organisation Network (ERGO).

To access more info on I AM ROMA website, please click <u>here</u>

Projects of interest for "I AM ROMA" Partners

Health and Roma Community : analysis of the situation in Europe

This European initiative was funded by the European Union within the framework of the Public Health Programme in 2007 and subsequently implemented in the countries of our "I AM ROMA" partners (Greece, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Portugal, Romania and Bulgaria).

The aim of the project consisted in analysing the health situation of Europe's Roma community in order to address social inequalities in the area of health and to suggest policies and actions based on reliable knowledge designed to improve the health status of Europe's Roma community

For more information about the project, please follow this link and for the 2009 report, please follow this link

Rom-up! project April 2012 - March 2013

The Rom-up! project originated from the need to improve the educational level and life condition of the Roma. The key to reach these aims is to boost education participation for Roma children. This can be better achieved by raising awareness of the successful educational experiences in promoting Roma education.

The ROM-UP! project will offer concrete successful measures in order to ensure that all Roma children have access to quality education, ensuring primary school completion, reducing the number of early school leavers and promoting the access to the tertiary education.

Visit the website here to learn more about the project

Update on the latest institutional developments

The European calls on Member States to implement national plans for Roma integration, Brussels 23 May 2012

On 23 May 2012, the European Commission called on EU Member States, to implement their national strategies to improve the economic and social integration of Europe's 10 to 12 million Roma. Member States developed these plans in response to the Commission's EU Framework for national Roma integration strategies adopted on 5 April 2011 (see IP/11/400, MEMO/11/216) which was endorsed by EU leaders soon afterwards (IP/11/789).

The EU Framework identifies four pillars where national efforts to improve the integration of Roma are required: access to education, jobs, healthcare and housing. For the first time, all Member States committed to developing an integrated approach across these four policy areas and delivered national strategies to address these priority areas.

The Commission report highlights that much more needs to be done when it comes to securing sufficient funding for Roma inclusion, putting monitoring mechanisms in place and fighting discrimination and segregation.

"It is good news that Member States have delivered on their commitment and presented Roma integration strategies. Presenting national strategies is a first and important step," said **EU Justice Commissioner Viviane Reding, the Commission's Vice-President**. "However, Member States now need to move up a gear and strengthen their efforts with more concrete measures, explicit targets, earmarked funding and sound monitoring and evaluation. […] We need tangible results in national politics that improve the lives of Europe's 10 to 12 million Roma."

For more information about the latest institutional developments on Roma issues, please visit DG Justice Newsroom and **I AM ROMA website**

Thank you for your interest.
We're looking forward to seeing you in Brussels for the final dissemination event!