

### First face-to-face meeting of the DREAM ROAD partnership

Due to COVID restrictions only after one year of the DREAM ROAD implementation project partners had the opportunity to meet in person. The meeting took place at project Lead partner premises in Rakičan, Slovenia. Representatives of 11 project partners attended the meeting as some of the partners still experienced the problems with their travel to Slovenia.

The director of the Research and Education Center Mansion Rakičan, dr. Robert Celec,

and Tamara Muhič greeted the participants and presented the meeting agenda. General remarks were made about the advancement of the project. The most important issue discussed during the meeting was a vision and individual concept of Learning Lab prepared by all PPs. It was concluded that the implementation plans of Learning Labs in all involved countries are going adequately and deemed in satisfactory way in regard for project's long-term sustainability.



# Joint Equal Opportunity Initiative



The ethnocultural diversity is a unique feature of the **Republic of Moldova**; at the same time, unlike other national/ethnic minorities, the Roma community representatives have been marginalized in accessing the social-economic development services, becoming thus a community with a complex profile of vulnerability. The **"Voice of the Roma" Coalition (VRC)** national platform was established in 2016, aiming at the direct involvement of the Roma civil society representatives in the process of monitoring of the implementation of Roma public policies by the competent central and local public administration.

At the initial stage of the project, the Roma NGOs were trained towards developing the following skills: legislative framework review, identifying the social equity gaps and developing recommendations in the political decision-making process focussed on improving the living standards of the Roma ethnics. At the same time, a Secretariat of VRC was set up to conduct lobby and advocacy actions related to the implementation of the institutional commitments set in the "Action Plan to Support



the Roma People in the Republic of Moldova (2016-2020)", from the perspective of the priority areas of intervention: *Education, Labour/Social Protection, Health and Community Mediators*. In order to effectively reach this desideratum, the necessary tools (methodologies, working tools and mechanisms) have been developed for the Roma NGOs to exercise their monitoring, advocacy and counselling role in relation to the decision-makers at the local and central levels.

# Greater participation in politics and society by Romnija and Roma



On September 25th, the annual conference for International Roma Day was rescheduled in the Open House in Oberwart at Burgenland. The organizer, the Roma VHS Burgenland - Roma Adult Education Organization, invited representatives of state and federal politics as well as the ethnic group of the Roma.

The content-related impulse for the conference was provided by the very personal life stories of three representatives of the Roma ethnic group. The speakers were Katharina Graf-Janoska (ORF editor and author), Marion Dworzack (deputy chairwoman of the "Voice of Diversity" association) and Irina Spataru (parliamentary assistant in the EU Parliament). In their stories, the protagonists talked about their personal careers, the challenges they had to master as women and as a Romnija and the ways to their own empowerment.



Following the presentation of those three stories, the participating politicians, who, as expected, are not Roma, had their say in a moderated process. Burgenland State Parliament President Verena Dunst took three points from the event for herself: "Education as the key

to empowerment, making visible to also point out problems and the culture of remembrance so as not to forget the tragic history of Roma." Harald Troch, Member of the National Council of the SPÖ, pointed out the importance of leading figures. State parliament member Elisabeth

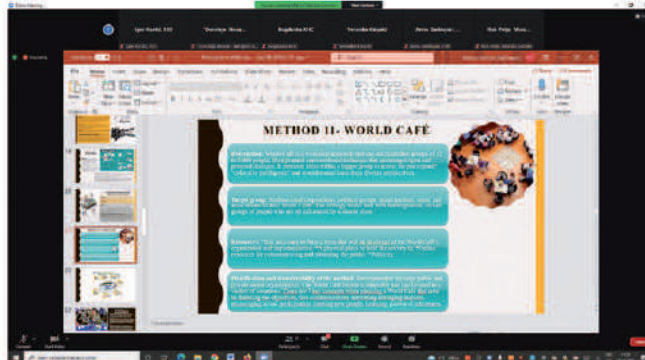
Trummer summarized once again that women from the Roma community have to work twice as hard to achieve their goals.

Following the conference, the "Roma Festival" took place, which was organized together with the HANGO ROMA association.

## Webinar to introduce TOOLBOX for Smart Participatory Methods

The TOOLBOX for Smart Participatory Methods, one of the important deliverables of the DREAM ROAD project, was presented on the webinar led by Mr. Marius Vasiluta, expert of Nevo Parudimos Association at 29<sup>th</sup> October 2021.

The TOOLBOX will support processes of Roma inclusion, motivation, problem-identification and solution-finding. It is aimed as a mechanism of collaboration with stakeholders and end-users to ensure greater participation of Roma



community members. Thus, the TOOLBOX is a special manual that helps engage Roma into social innovation processes. It is designed as an online tool for users at different levels to guide them through the participatory process step-by-step.

## Club "CATCH THE CHANCE"



The project Club "CATCH THE CHANCE" was focused on the improving employability and social activism of young Roma men and women aged 15-30 years at the **municipality of Zabalj** in Serbian autonomous province Vojvodina.

The Catch the Chance Club is based on the idea that the problem of young Roma population labour market activation may be solved through not only measures that directly contribute to employment, but primarily through a whole set of measures aimed at strengthening their capacity through activism, skills improvement, strengthening affiliation and cohesion within the community. The project was based on the strengthening of public-private partnership and active contribution and participation of relevant actors.

Results achieved by the project were:

- Provided space, equipment and developed work program of the CLUB "CATCH THE CHANCE";
- Strengthened knowledge of representatives of the public, private and non-governmental sector for the creation, implementation

and monitoring of local policies in the field of employment of young people from vulnerable groups;

- Provided information and education services aimed at acquiring knowledge, skills and competencies of young Roma people within the program of the CLUB "CATCH THE CHANCE" in order to improve their competitive appearance on the labor market;
- Young members of the Roma and non-Roma population and NGOs involved in the organization and implementation of social, cultural and inclusive activities and events.



# Roma Community Development Centres



The objective of the project implemented by the **Amalipe Center for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance**, Bulgarian DREAM ROAD project partner, was to create innovative approach and structures for effective field work at grass-root level in marginalized and traditional Roma communities. This would happen through mobilizing the inner human resources within the Roma community in close cooperation with the mainstream prevention and protective institutions (such as schools, child protection departments, etc.).

The Roma Community Development Centres are already visible and have credibility among the local Roma communities. People know about their work and there is growing demand for their service – to resolve concrete cases and/or for involvement in the initiatives organized by the centres. In all locations there are already emerging

community groups, activated by the community centres that volunteer and assist the various aspects of the public life within the communities. This is a sign that the centres are growing into community forms of self-organization and have a lot of potential to become community based service and self-help structures.

During the Covid-19 crisis, the Roma Community Development Centers and the mediators have turned to play very important role in a promoting health materials, health information, spreading information about opportunities, being the major messengers for and from the community. But the most important: the centers are accomplishing the role of a bridge between the Roma community and educational system. Thanks to the educational mediators, during the distance learning periods, Roma children have not been excluded from the educational system.



Follow us on the project web site:  
[www.interreg-danube.eu/dream-road](http://www.interreg-danube.eu/dream-road)



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