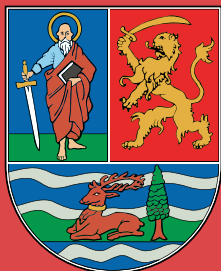
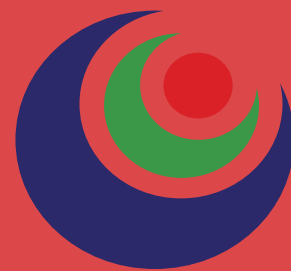


A Monthly Periodical of The Roma Inclusion Office



The Roma Decade in AP Vojvodina



No. 47, march 2015.



Unique handicrafts



Photo of the month: Basic Police Training
Centre in Kamenica

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DEAR READER,

The March issue of our monthly magazine starts with the texts on the topic of education. The first text tells a story of the first Roma woman with a doctoral degree, from the University of Novi Sad. Namely, Slavica Denić defended her doctoral dissertation and made a huge contribution to the Roma community. The importance of preserving Roma traditions and culture through science we talked to the professor dr Trajko Petrovski, the Romani ethnologist at the Institute Marko Cepenkov in Skopje.

Provincial Secretariat for Economy, Employment and Gender Equality announced Calls for awarding grants for the improvement of the position of Roma. All the necessary information and application forms can be found on the website of the Secretariat.

In Pančevo, we talked with Suzana Jovanović, a member of the City Council of Pančevo in charge of Labour, Employment and Social Policy, about the situation of Roma in the municipality of Pančevo, and the procedures that the municipality undertakes to improve that situation.

The *Recruitment* section consists of two texts. One of them presents the project “*Incentives for employment of Roma men/women through affirmative measures,*” and the other one presents a successful entrepreneur, Maja Konfi Horvat, who now has a local where she sells jewelry made of copper, which are hand-made. This was made possible by the funds from the project “Improving the employability of Roma women in five municipalities in Vojvodina”.

We wrote about the International Women’s Day, European Action Week Against Racism, the meeting held in Belgrade dedicated to the asylum seekers, and the lecture on Gandhi, held in Belgrade in the section *Human Rights*.

We would like to remind you that, thanks to the Research and Education Center and Preschool *Teacher Training College “Mihailo Palov”* in Vršac, you can follow our publication in electronic form at www.rec.org/bilten/.

Your editorial board

THE FIRST ROMA WOMAN WITH A DOCTORAL DEGREE

Slavica Denić, Assistant to the Provincial Secretary for Economy, Employment and Gender Equality, on 20 February 2015, defended her doctoral thesis before a five-member committee. Our team has attended this event in order to support the first Roma woman at the University of Novi Sad who has a PhD. Slavica Denić defended her doctoral dissertation before the five-member committee composed of: two mentors, dr Gordana Daša Duhaček and dr Svenka Savić, dr Marija Zotović, dr Jovan Komšić and dr Milica Andevski.

Defense of the dissertation

At the beginning of the defense of the dissertation, Milica Andevski, President of the committee, welcomed everyone present and opened a public and solemn doctoral dissertation titled “Gender identities and multiculturalism. Critical analysis of affirmative actions in higher education institutions in Serbia 2000-2013”. Then the President presented Slavica’s Curriculum Vitae. Slavica Denić is Professor of Philosophy, Master of Science in interdisciplinary field: Management in Education. She was enrolled in doctoral studies and completed them at the University of Novi Sad. She has worked on RTV in the Roma newsroom as a reporter, she was Chairman of the Board of the Office for Roma Inclusion in AP of Vojvodina, a member of the monitoring team for the project of the Provincial Department of Education, mentoring in high schools, a member of the Provincial Council of Education, State Secretary in the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights of the Republic of Serbia, State Secretary in the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Self-Government of the Republic of Serbia and she is currently em-

ployed as the Assistant to the Secretary for Economy, Employment and Gender Equality.

“Magister Slavica Denić created the text as a member of the national community, as an insider who knows its issues well and who is trying to help the Roma community in different ways. She established that the overall process

results can be directly applied in practice in the work with four examined populations of male and female Roma representatives in the institutions of the system in which they have power: in the local community, health and education”, said dr Gordana Daša Duhaček.

What followed was the presentation of the results achieved



Joy upon defending the dissertation

of building and implementing affirmative actions in Serbia during the decade included a significantly larger number of Roma women than Roma men, but the contribution of Roma women has been blurred in this important social, and national identity. Research

and the professors’ questions in connection with the thesis, after which the commission withdrew and made a decision. The President of the commission, Milica Andevski, noted that the doctoral dissertation was successfully defended.

Gratitude and contribution to science

“Today, I received my PhD at the University of Novi Sad on interdisciplinary gender studies, and I want to use this opportunity to firstly thank my mentor, the Professor emeritus, Svena Savić, for patiently working with me for two years to make this possible. Also, I have to thank the people who participated in the survey conducted in my doctoral thesis. Those are the male and female Roma students at the University of Novi Sad, 80 of them, then the male and female Roma coordinators who are employed in the Province of Vojvodina, male and female teaching assistants and health mediators, who cooperated with me. I thank my family and the people who have supported me.

“Then Slavica said that the doctoral dissertation required a lot of work and patience, especially because it is interdisciplinary, i.e. it includes several areas and the research involved 110 people and male and female Roma coordinators (8F and 5M), pedagogi-

cal assistants (8F and 7M), students (54F and 26M) and health mediators (2F).

“The contribution of this work is that it gathered numerous data about Roma men and women, primarily in the area of the

and gender identity. The conclusion is that more Roma women than Roma men are involved in the institutions of the Republic of Serbia, which signifies a new way of thinking in the Roma community and a new identity



Province, but also in the territory of Serbia and all the things that are related to improving the lives of Roma people. It discusses the concept of intercultural relations, as well as the concept of gender

of Roma that is being built. The main objective was to promote Roma women who are educated and who have the power both in Roma and wider community”, said Slavica Denić.

„I am happy that we have the outlines of a quality group that is becoming an emerging Roma elite. What is really important is that Roma women themselves were the material used to turned them into new people and new identities of the Roma community.

Slavica Denić is a gifted young person with a lot of talent, which makes me very happy.“

dr Svena Savić

Conclusion of the doctorate:

- **Affirmative actions in education of Roma children, youth and student population also contributed to the inclusion of Roma men and women in the work of institutions in Serbia over the last decade.**
- **There is an interdependence between language and reality in the sense that the overall process of building and applying the affirmative actions in Serbia includes a larger number of Roma women than Roma men, but the language in which the phenomenon is communicated to the public and the legislative regulation is always in the masculine gender in Serbian language (coordinator, teaching assistant, health mediator). This has ‘blurred’ the contribution of Roma women in social and national (Roma) identity.**



Decision of the Commission

The question remains whether the turnaround made by the educated women of the Roma community in Vojvodina, with the help of affirmative measures, at this moment is a short term thing, or is it a significant step forward in building a different identity of Roma men and women in new social relations.

Ljiljana Maričić

MINISTRY OF INTERIOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA SUPPORTS THE YOUNG ROMA

Rather low pass rate of Roma in the Calls for Basic Police Training is the reason why on March 11, 2015 the first in a series of preparatory workshops for Roma was held in Sremska Kamenica.

The goal of these workshops is for the participants to familiarize themselves with all the parts of the entrance exam, which would help them pass.

The workshops are organized within the project “Inclusion of Roma Men and Women in the Security Sector of the Republic of Serbia”, undertaken by the “European Roma

them for the initiative to organize the workshops and said that such workshops have been organized in Europe for more than ten years. He also added that Roma and the members of other ethnic minori-

Roma and I would like to appeal to all the young and educated Roma, who are primarily physically and mentally eligible, to apply. In addition, the jobs are guaranteed, which is a very rare thing



Policemen Officers” association and the Center for Public Policy Research.

The Director of the Office for Roma Inclusion in AP of Vojvodina, Duško Jovanović, thanked

ties are not included enough in the public sector. “Thanks to the breakthrough that was made with the support of national and international institutions, the Call is opened for the inclusion of young

nowadays”, concluded Jovanović.

Biljana Puškar, the Head of the Center for Basic Police Training, announced that the candidates must be physically and mentally prepared and that a

computer makes a list of accepted candidates, regardless of the connections and acquaintances the candidates may have. As far as the passing the entrance exam is concerned, one of the problems is the fact that more students apply than it is intended by the Call. This year, 15 000 candidates applied to the Call with 630 seats. The test that the candidates take for admission to Basic Police Training has been translated into all the languages of national minorities living in Serbia. Also, checking of the candidates does not involve only them, but also the members of their households. She added that since some Roma children do not have computers at home, and

the psycho-test is done in that way, they are now seeking funds to buy a mobile classroom with laptops. In this way they could go to the areas where Roma children live and prepare them for the entrance exam.

At the beginning of the workshop, Nenad Tairović, presented the project and its organizers before the “European Roma Policemen Officers” association, and shared his personal experiences, as he himself graduated from that school. What followed was the presentation of the Center for Basic Police Training led by Miroslav Mijailović.

Zorka Lovre, in charge of the program of professional informa-

tion, presented the program of the Workshop: how to apply to calls, the conditions for admission and selection of candidates. Then the psycho-test and test of general knowledge were introduced, after which the participants had the opportunity to take the psycho-test.

Then they moved on to other segments of the entrance exams: the spelling of Serbian language and writing reports, as well as physical ability test and interview. At the end of this workshop, they checked the results of the psycho-test and talk about it.

These workshops were not only held in Sremska Kamenica, but also in Belgrade, Bor, Kraljevo, Pirot and Niš.



Organizers of the workshop

ANNOUNCED CALLS FOR AWARDING GRANTS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE POSITION OF ROMA IN VOJVODINA

Provincial Secretariat for Economy, Employment and Gender Equality announced four Calls for awarding grants for the improvement of the position of Roma in Vojvodina. Slavica Denić, Assistant to the Secretary for Economy, Employment and Gender Equality, in charge of the improvement of the position of Roma, and Duško Jovanović, Director of the Office for Roma Inclusion in AP of Vojvodina, talked about these Calls at the press conference.

Seven million dinars are planned to be allocated to these Calls. The Call intended the largest amount, three million dinars, for the advancement of Roma in the housing sector. Two million is provided for co-financing the educational programs for Roma children, who go to higher grades of primary school, while one million dinars is provided for the co-financing of local action plans for improvement of the position of Roma. Municipalities and cities in Vojvodina can apply for these funds. In addition, Roma non-profit association of citizens, with projects in the area of improvement of the position of Roma can apply to another Call, which offers one million dinars.

Slavica Denić has invited representatives of NGOs and representatives of local governments to apply to the Calls, in order to

continue an active policy for improving the situation of the Roma population by using their resources and joint activities.

Director of the Office for Roma Inclusion, Duško Jovanović, commented on the results achieved in the Decade of Roma, which is in its final stage, pointing out that it is only in Vo-



jvodina that some institutions are built, with the support of the provincial government, which should serve as a model of solving Roma problems for the entire country.

“It is only in Vojvodina that we have an Office for Roma integration, the school in Vršac, where teachers are educated in Romani language, the calls of the Provincial Department for Economy, Employment and Gender Equality”, said Jovanović, add-

ing that their goal is to keep the Roma here and to integrate them into society. However, he added that merely seeing the Roma settlement and the conditions they live in to this day is enough. He emphasized that a large number of Roma left Serbia due to economic reasons. “Today, Roma are Europe’s concern and if there

are no joint programs, there will be no significant results”, said Jovanović.

The texts of the Calls can be found on the website of the Provincial Secretariat for Economy, Employment and Gender Equality: www.spriv.vojvodina.gov.rs. For further information you can contact the Secretariat via telephone: 021/487 4277 and 021/487 4255.

www.vojvodina.gov.rs

TOWARDS A NEW STRATEGY FOR IMPROVING THE STATUS OF ROMA

Suzana Paunović, Director of the Office for Human and Minority Rights, addressed the Club Delegates at the conference “Towards a new strategy for improving the status of Roma,” which was organized with the aim of common approaching and pointing out the guidelines for providing relevant basis for making a new Strategy for improving the status of Roma.

As she explained, the Office for Human and Minority Rights of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, in partnership with the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit, supported by “Making the Most of EU Funds for Roma” Open Society Foundations from Budapest and the Fund for an Open Society from Belgrade, prepared the “Initial studies for the development of a new Strategy for Roma Inclusion compatible with the Europe 2020 Strategy”, which presents the reasons and basis for the development of a new strategic document.

Paunović reminded that the Republic of Serbia has clearly opted for economic and social inclusion by joining the Decade of Roma in 2005 and adopting a national strategic framework for improving the status of the Roma community. The state has committed to improving the status of Roma in cooperation with international partner organizations and with the full participation of the Roma minority.

The most important strategic document that should contribute to achieving this goal is the

strategy for improving the status of Roma in the Republic of Serbia and the accompanying Action Plan for the implementation of this strategy, said Paunović.

She added that the Basis for the new Strategy for Roma Inclusion under discussion are made in a wide consultation process with the units of local governments in Serbia, civil society organizations, government institutions, state authorities and independent bodies, in order to gain insight into all aspects of the implementation policies that can contribute to improving the status of Roma



in Serbia, and developed the basis which can help in making a quality strategic document.

Paunović noted that the Government of the Republic of Serbia is committed to resolving the problems faced by the Roma minority, bearing in mind that in a time of severe economic crisis that has affected all citizens, their problem becomes more complex. She referred to the institutional strengthening by establishing the Council for the Advancement of Roma, and to the function of the National Council of the Roma national minority in this process.

Nenad Ivanišević, the President of the Council for the Advancement of Roma Inclusion Decade, said that the Council will intensify its work in the coming period. He said that the state showed the willingness to continue with the activities to improve the status of Roma by signing the Charter on the continuation of the Decade of Roma. According to Ivanišević, together with the in-charge ministry, the Government Council for the Advancement of Roma will endeavor to establish cooperation with neighboring countries, in order to take the best policies that are aimed at resolving the questions related to the position and status of Roma.

Dragoljub Acković, Deputy Director of the Office for Human and Minority Rights, said he was satisfied with the making of Baseline Study, which is the basis for the new Strategy, because it incorporated a wide range of participants and he emphasized that the new Strategy must correct deficiencies of the previous one, both in theoretical and practical approach.

Vitomir Mihajlović, President of the National Council of the Roma National Minority, emphasized the importance of discussing the basics that will serve as an important segment in the development of the new Strategy. Its measures and activities must be more efficient in relation to the Strategy in 2009, in the field of reducing the difference between the Roma and the majority of population, especially the measures to reduce poverty rate.

Osman Balić, Chairman of the Standing Conference of Roma Citizens' Associations - League Roma, commented on the issues that should be part of the initial study, such as the political organization of Roma into parties as a means of fighting for the rights of their community, and then the issue of institutionalization and redefining security issues. He reminded the Roma of the im-

portance of Roma dialogue as a cultural process and urged them to maintain the culture and traditions of the Roma community.

ing the status of Roma. She said that visible results in the implementation of the Strategy were made in the period 2005-2015, which is especially noticeable at the local level, but the activities should be intensified and responsibilities of all relevant stakeholders and participation of the Roma should be clarified.

The conference presented the Basis for a new Strategy for

development, social and cultural potential of the Roma and cultural policy as an instrument of social inclusion of the Roma, in which participants gave their comments during the discussion.

The conference was organized by the Office for Human and Minority Rights of the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the Standing Conference of Roma Citizens' Associations (SKRUG)



Participants of the conference

Jadranka Jelinčić, Executive Director of the Open Society Foundation, said that she was pleased with having the ability to support a consultative dialogue in the process of Starting Points, as well as this conference, attended by a large number of participants, who deal with issues for improv-

portance of Roma dialogue as a cultural process and urged them to maintain the culture and traditions of the Roma community.

Roma Inclusion in Serbia compatible with the Europe 2020 Strategy, Report on the Implementation of Operational conclusions of the Seminar on social inclusion of Roma men and women in the Republic of Serbia, the arguments for the second Decade of Roma, regional cooperation and Roma strategy coordination in Southeast Europe, as well as the problems of poverty from the perspective of human devel-

- League Roma, in cooperation with the Fund for an Open Society from Belgrade. The conference was also attended by representatives of state authorities and institutions, parliamentary committees, local self-governments, international organizations, independent bodies, as well as the representatives of civil society organizations.

TOGETHER WE CAN DO ANYTHING

Interview with Suzana Jovanović, a member of the City Council of Pančevo in charge of Labour, Employment and Social Policy.

- Present your municipality: the features, programs and projects that are being implemented.

Pančevo is traditionally a multinational and multicultural city. At the moment, there are 24 different ethnic groups who live harmoniously, with a lot of tolerance. As for the Roma, we do not deal very much with the statistics, because it oscillates; there is also a permanent statement that a much smaller number of the Roma take the census. They are a part of our population that has specific needs and we are responsible for them. Pančevo is a city with about 127,000 inhabitants. Unfortunately, its population is gradually decreasing. We had a period of mass migrations and forced immigrants, when the number of inhabitants significantly increased, but now we have a slight decline. The city that had a highly developed industry now suffers the consequences of the transition, and opportunities are being reduced. However, thanks to our traditional attitude towards each citizen, the responsibility of local government is focused on meeting the basic needs of citizens. Our goal is to complete the business zone and participate in various international projects to make the city more attractive and desirable, and thus improve its economic status. As for the institutions, there is a good network of primary and secondary schools in the city, as well as kindergar-

tens, and Roma are fully involved in all programs. The first steps were made after the year 2000, by making groups with special programs for Roma children.

However, that is behind us; now they are included in all regular groups. There is one primary school with a higher percentage of Roma children because it is near the largest Roma settlement, but we have Roma children in all schools. Also, the programs of the Roma community are included in the cultural institutions, from the City Library, which cooperates



with the associations concerned with the preservation of culture language, to the Artistic Associations that actively participate in everything. Additionally, when it comes to the Roma, it is important to say that the city of Pančevo is involved in the project implemented by the OSCE and funded by the European Union: "We are here together." We established a mobile team that managed to catch up with what we have done so far. Back in 2008, without the help of

foreign experts and money, the city of Pančevo brought the first strategy for the social integration of Roma with an Action Plan, on its own. This LAP expired in 2013, and it only brought a new action plan because it was necessary to modify the activities, not the goals. Every year, starting from 2008, the budget is used to plan the resources for implementation of activities foreseen in the Action Plan. We are also trying to make money on the side; we apply to variety of domestic and international calls. What causes problems in practice is the health care which defined health mediators and the like, but it also has many limitations in its actions, and eventually we go back to our coordinator who is in direct contact with all institutions and who actually solves problems. We recently brought the City Development Strategy until 2020, therefore, we have entered a cycle of making a strategic plan in accordance with the European Agenda. Of course, social integration of Roma found its place in the development and this is where we set the standards that will hopefully improve the quality of housing.

Assessing the overall situation, we were realistic in the assessment and we took opportunities into account, instead of wishes. The emphasis is on quality of life and education. As for fundamental human rights, we have been dealing with the cases of legally invis-

ible persons for a very long time, so now there are no legally invisible persons on our territory, except for someone who comes from outside. The coordinator could not solve everything on her own, so the Center for Social Work, the Registry Office, courts, etc. were also involved. We insist on stimulative measures, so that the Roma can get new IDs at the expense of the budget. The reason for this is

of cooperation with enterprises. The first steps we made in this area are within the company that manages the waste and has agreements with a certain number of families, who are working on the selection of garbage; but this is all unregulated legally, so these contracts are just symbolic. If we manage to solve this problem in a more qualitative way, it will be considered a great success. As for the serious

doubly marginalized and who need extra attention. Currently LAP to Combat Human Trafficking and this is where good cooperation has been established between the mobile team and the team for fighting human trafficking, and we plan to make joint actions. Also, members of the mobile teams will undergo additional training for combating human trafficking. We believe that this subject should be treated thor-



Suzana Jovanović

to maintain the rhythm of regular renewal of documents, so as to be eligible for other rights.

- What is the last activity in Pančevo related to Roma?

In addition to the project with the OSCE, we have applied to the call for the social inclusion of the European Union with a project for work engagement of the Roma population in our two utilities. We would look for a way to engage both women and men in different occupations that could employ them and lead them into a system

employment, unfortunately, the opportunities are limited, and they cannot cover the entire population. In that sense, we are using our time to produce a new generation that will be educated at least, and able to search for its place in society more seriously. Mobile team additionally has its operational plans, so they spent a lot of time on the site, in direct communication with the population in the settlements.

Also, an Action Plan was adopted for Social Integration and Economic Empowerment of Roma women, who are singled out as

oughly, because Roma are the most vulnerable group. We are hosting workshops in elementary and secondary schools, but there is still a small number of children who attend them, so we want to organize them in the settlements, as well.

- What amount of budget funds were allocated for Roma in the previous year and this year? Are the funds budgeted for the implementation of action plans related to solving the problems of Roma?

Last year, the budget has allocated approximately 3,900,000 for

the LAP, and this year, according to the Budgeting decision, was allocated 3,600,000 funds. The important thing, when it comes to housing, is a study that was made of on the state of all parts of the city inhabited by the Roma. We have a typical unhygienic settlement in the city, Mali Rit, but there are many other parts of the city where there is a large percentage of Roma. In all inhabited towns there is usually at least one area with a larger percentage of Roma, so all of these locations were recorded: the assets and planning documentation, so that we would be ready to act, if there are any vacancies, and try to improve the quality of housing. Large amount of funds need to be allocated in area, and besides, the biggest problem is the financial situation. I must say that, as a city, we have never been supporters of the model of container settlements, because it does not solve

the problem. It is just a replacement of something bad with something less bad. A lot of resources are spent, and without result. Also, in the budget of the city there are positions for the co-financing of European projects.

- What areas of the Decade of Roma Inclusion was the most productive, and which one was the least productive in your municipality?

As far as the Decade of Roma Inclusion in our municipality is concerned, a shift was definitely made in education and in making personal documentation and realization of fundamental rights. A great task for the coordinators and everybody else in the chain, is that the Roma regulate their documentation and engage in the rights and opportunities offered by institutions. I think this is of the greatest value, because in this way

the Roma can enter the system and become equal citizens.

- The biggest problems of the Roma population in the municipality of Pančevo.

In my opinion, the biggest problems are the issue of housing and education, in which we invest a lot, but still not enough. These two things are still very current. I do not think that we were working poorly so far, I rather see it as a long-term process and as long as we believe that it should last, the results will come.

- What is being done to stimulate the education of Roma?

With the system of free textbooks and awards, we try to keep Roma students in the system for as long as possible and for them to receive recognition for their work. However, rising poverty in the society causes dissatisfaction.

*What is your message to the Roma community?

Roma NGOs do not have the capacity to seriously engage in the activities, so the partners are hard to find in the NGO sector. They are currently interested and focused on one project, but they are not working constantly. Not until they start to form associations and deal more seriously with Roma issues, together with us, both in government and non-governmental sector, we will not significantly change the quality of our lives. Therefore, my message is that we should unite.

INCENTIVES FOR EMPLOYMENT OF ROMA

Ethnicity Research Centre, in cooperation with the Commission for examining the life and customs of the Roma in the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, with the support of the Office for Human and Minority Rights of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, is implementing the project “Incentives for employment of Roma men/women through affirmative measures”. Objectives and methods of carrying out the project were presented at the Novi Sad branch of the National Employment Service. The meeting was attended by representatives of the National Employment Service, employers, Centre for Social Welfare and the Office for Roma Inclusion.

Beginning of the conversation

Dušan Marjanović, Head of mediation in employment and career planning in Novi Sad branch of NES, greeted everyone present and opened the conversation. He stressed that Roma belong to the category of less employable persons, thus various affirmative actions must be directed towards them. “We can say that 2014 has not brought significant progress in the employment of Roma in comparison to previous years”, said Marjanović. However, he said that there is good cooperation with provincial and municipal governments, which is a positive and important thing. National Employment Service is always ready to support all proposals and ideas that can lead to improving the position of Roma in the field of employment.

Presentation of the project

Ana Sekulić and Jovana Mastilović, associates at the Ethnicity Research Centre, presented the project and invited everyone present to contribute to its realization by sharing their proposals and experiences.

Since there will be revision of the Strategy for improv-

ing the position of Roma, they are expected to develop a set of principles and measures, based on this research, that would be included in the Strategy in the area of employment. The aim is to examine the main problems in the employment of Roma, as well as the problems in the implementation of affirmative action

for employers, subsidies for self-employment and public works), there is an insufficient number of users of these measures and the report of the Ombudsman, which also shows very low employability of Roma.

They are trying to determine the problems that lead to high unemployment rate of the Roma



Presentation of the project

politics, since there are reports that indicate that these measures do not achieve their goal as they are supposed to. This was exemplified by two reports: the report of the National Employment Service, which shows that despite the three measures of the National Employment (subsidies

population in Serbia through this project. Namely, there are two target groups of the project: branches, i.e. the representatives of NES, for whom they made a questionnaire and who will be interviewed by employers. The employers know the labour market best, and they can share their experi-



ences with recruitment of Roma, which is why their opinions are very important. A questionnaire was made for the employers, as well. The research should cover about 100 employers, and the interviews will be conducted in 10 branches in Serbia, where most of Roma live.

Suggestions for problem solving

The representative of the Centre for Social Work in Novi Sad said that a large number of people receiving social assistance is the consequence of difficult employment of Roma. Such a state of the Roma population has lasted for years, which makes it even harder to break the cycle. The Centre for Social Work proposes to employ some Roma people, in order to give a signal to the Roma that it can be otherwise; they would enter institutions and the system, and most importantly, the workers in the Centre would become familiar with the problems of Roma in a straightforward way,

and consequently, they would react better and more quickly. The final and most desirable result would be a reduced number of Roma receiving social assistance.

Duško Jovanović, director of the Office for Roma Inclusion, emphasized the good coordination with the National Employment Service on the national and provincial level, and that the problem of Roma employment is viewed as having three aspects: employment in public administration, self-employment and new employment. “Employers are not interested enough to hire Roma, so they need extra incentives or even competences. Priority in employment should not be given to the Roma only, but to the ones who have the necessary knowledge and skills”, suggests Jovanović. Director of the Office thinks that the biggest problem is the lack of funds for implementation of the Strategy.

Experiences of the employers present, who employed Roma workers, are positive and without prejudice, and their joint message

was that competence of the employee is much more important than any subsidies the employers would receive. However, subsidies for Roma employment or partial tax exemption would be an additional incentive for employers.

Conclusions

Employment of Roma is problematic in Serbia, but also in many developed countries. The reasons are numerous, but the most important are ignorance, prejudice and lack of funds to support the employment of Roma. However, the main cause is that the state has no systematic solution in this area, which is also a joint conclusion of all participants in the conversation. Although sporadic and individual solutions represent some progress and positive examples, they are insufficient, as they do not contribute to a complete and lasting solution to the problem.

Tijana Čubrilo

UNIQUE HANDICRAFTS

Within the project “Improving the employability of Roma women in five municipalities in AP of Vojvodina”, Maja Konfi Horvat opened a studio in Novi Sad, where she makes very interesting and unusual jewellery. Our team has visited this studio, made in an archaic style, and interviewed the owner.

- How did you start this craft business?

Initially I was making jewellery for myself, and later my colleagues and friends urged me to start making jewellery for the market. Reactions were very good, especially when I walked around the city with the jewellery I made. People used to stop and ask me where I got the jewellery. So I estimated that this could be my hobby, because I already had a job. However, after some time, this hobby turned into a career.

- What materials do you use in jewellery making?

I use only natural materials of this area, such as copper and stone. I usually find the stones in nature, while the copper I buy in stores.

- What does the processing look like from the moment the materials enter the studio?

In most cases, the materials wait for me to feel them, especially the stones, because their shape determines how the jewellery will look. I work continuously every day, 8-10 hours, so something new comes out of the studio every day. When I figure out the way the jewellery should look like, I start buying copper. What follows are filing, polishing and patinating, i.e. certain chemical processes. It



Maja Konfi Horvat - talking to our reporter

is quite a complicated process if you want to create a breathtaking product.

- What kind of jewellery do you make most frequently?

There are no rules; I make everything from necklaces, bracelets, rings and earrings to upper arm bracelets, diadems, rings and nail art jewellery.

- Do you make bespoke jewellery?

I usually use my intuition and my own ideas when I work, but I also make custom-made jewellery, if I have enough space

to improvise and dictate how they would look, because this is an intuitive process. Sometimes customers' ideas are not technically feasible. Customers often mix us up with people who make purchasing components. Their task is to arrange them, while my task is to come up with each component and make it, bearing in mind their individual size and length.

- Have you ever exhibited your jewellery somewhere?

Yes, I have been present on the market for five years now. I exhibit my jewellery at fairs, fes-

tivals and different types of artifacts exhibitions.

- How do people react to your unusual jewellery?

It was difficult at the beginning, before I gained customers, because this jewellery is not commercial and it seeks a different kind of personality and consciousness. You can succeed only if you have a distinctive style and if you're different. Now I have a lot of valuable experience, which is the reason why I am in this business.

- Are the prices acceptable to our market?

The prices are extremely low. I raise prices of some jewellery pieces due to the mathematical calculations, so that I can gain profit. Now I have to pay property taxes, so I had to raise all the prices a little bit. I think I have enough space, because of the quality of my jewellery. The price



well. I am just starting an online store and I have signed a contract in Germany.

- What are your plans for the future?

We plan to launch the sale throughout Europe and overseas, in America. Also, I would like

various items that are thematically the same. The people who stay on the market are the ones who are sustainable and creative and who can keep pace that is very demanding. In addition, only the ones who make everything from beginning to end can become members of the association. If I succeed in this intention, I will make a website. I have a Facebook page and a profile for the time being.

- What does the ability to get a job on your own mean to you?

I had revenues out of this trade even without being employed, but the reason I started thinking about this idea is the certificate that can lawfully be received from the Ministry of Economy. It is a certificate in old and artistic crafts which allows you certain benefits; you become a member of a group of people who pay the least taxes. Also, there is an institution that guarantees that your jewellery is made by hand, from beginning to end. I can apply for the certificate only as an entrepreneur.

***- What do you need to improve your business?**



Results of Maja's work and creativity

of a ring sold in Serbia is 4 Euros, and that same ring costs 25 Euros in Munich. I send jewellery to other countries. The prices of my jewellery are acceptable there, as

to set up an association where I would be surrounded by a few people who seriously deal with this or similar crafts, because it is easier to stay on the market with

I would come in handy if I could invest in the store and the tools that are quite expensive. For example, a press which helps to accelerate the work costs 500 Euros. I was looking for a tool that does not exist in Europe, but then we accidentally found a used one, which is, in fact, a classic wire sharpener. When I make jewellery, I polish every piece at least ten minutes, while with the wire sharpener it takes only two minutes.

- Do you have any other interests?

I also work with wool and I want to get a certificate in this field. If you know the technique, you make your mark simply by organizing shapes and matching the colours. The wool is felted and it consists of unspun wool, soap and warm water. A kilogram of wool in Serbia costs from 450 to 1,200 dinars with the difference in quality and you can make three bags out of a kilogram of wool, costing at least 2000 dinars. Hence, the investments are minimal. As for the dyes, we are still experimenting with them, be-



cause the colours that can be purchased in Serbia tend to fade, so we are looking for a way to import the dyes from Europe. The wool needs to be treated a bit more to fix the colour. Many times when I go to the city people stop and ask me where I had bought my bag. There is a potential market for it.

Anyone who is at least slightly creative can be good at it. I need two entire days to make one bag; therefore it is good to form an association, to make everything go faster. All the women working with wool in Serbia are members of associations. We had a project by the Province, “Felted carpets throughout Vojvodina”, organized by Sofija Levaj and the woman who taught me this craft. We worked in Novi Sad, in Popovica. There were eighteen of us and in six hours we made a fantastic carpet.



- How significant were the funds you got within the project “Improving the employability of Roma women in five municipalities in AP of Vojvodina”?

They were very significant to me. They were my initial driving force, since I did not have savings to lease a commercial property and invest in tools. In general, that was the reason why I decided to start this business.

Ljiljana Maričić

EQUALITY AMONG WOMEN?

This year, the International Women's Day was marked all over the world as part of the struggle for economic, political and social equality between men and women, since women have always been discriminated throughout history.



After many years of struggle for equality between men and women, perhaps it is time to ask the question: is there equality among women? Are all women in the same position? Do all women in the world have equal access to voting rights and opportunities? In the end, did women decrease their chances for equality among themselves in the struggle for equality with men?

Roma women can be viewed as an example of inequality among women. It has been written a lot about their double marginalization and discrimination, which is the real situation, but we will try to substantiate this with specific data that will shed light on this huge problem. The struggles of Roma women begin with their birth, and such conditions accompany them throughout their lives.

The reasons for the unequal position of Roma women

Namely, Roma women live on average 48 years in Serbia, which means that their life expectancy is 25 years shorter than the average of the general female population in the country. The reasons for this are numerous: lack of education, poor living conditions, lack of money, experiencing violence and unemployment.

There is a large number of Roma children who drop out of school, and that number is much higher among Roma women because they are additionally burdened by their position in a patriarchal family and environment. We can also add the fact that Roma women are included in all the housework and they take care of the household from early childhood, which is why education is not in the foreground.

Insufficient care and lack of awareness of the health of Roma women leads to major health problems that shorten their life expectancy. Continuous care

about others leaves no time for taking care of oneself.

Premature marriage, which usually disrupts education, is the most serious form of violation of the reproductive rights of Roma women, with alarming consequences. In Serbia, at least one-third of Roma women aged 15-19 years had already given birth, and about four percent gave birth to a child before their 15th birthday.

According to some research, 75% of Roma women in Serbia have been victims of violence at some point in their lives, but very few of them seek help.

It shows their specific relationship with the men in their community, and their distrust towards official institutions that should protect them.

When it comes to employment of Roma, the situation is further complicated in case of Roma women. Common problems of Roma women, such as lack of education, which entails the lack of competitiveness on the labour market and discrimination by employers, are aggravated by the patriarchal attitude that a woman's place is at home, not at school or at work.

If we take into account all the facts and life circumstances, the question from the title receives its full meaning and extra weight, which triggers a series of new questions and problems. Who is responsible for such situation of Roma women in our society? What we can and must do to change it? When are we going to start taking action?

In the end, can we talk about the progress in the struggle for women's equality, if all women do not have equal access to basic human rights: the right to education, employment, freedom of speech, the right to their own life? Perhaps this is what we should think about next time someone starts a conversation about gender equality.

Tijana Čubrilo

The first International Women's Day was celebrated on 28 February 1909 in the United States, with the Declaration issued by the Socialist Party of America. The reason for this was a quite bad status of women through centuries, especially in the era of industrialization that has led to protests. Such a protest took place in Chicago in 1908, when 15 000 women marched through New York City demanding shorter working hours, higher salaries and voting rights. In 1917, March 8 was officially accepted as the date of the celebration of International Women's Day.

FAKE ASYLUM SEEKERS

A WAY TO SURVIVE WINTER

Within the Project “Support to the Implementation of the Strategies for IDPs, Refugees and Returnees – Legal Aid,” a round table was held in Belgrade on March 16, 2015 on the theme “Asylum seekers from Serbia in Western Europe: assessment of the policies and practices in order to reduce their number. The project is realized by Diadikasia Business Consultants SA, Euromed and Euro Management International, in cooperation with the Office for Kosovo and Metohija. The project is worth over 2,000,000 Euros and it is funded by the European Union. It started in November 2013 and it will last until June 2015.

The aim of this project is to improve the provision of legal assistance and representation of IDPs and refugees in pre-war places of residence in order to assist them in protecting and exercising their rights. Also, the project provides legal assistance to returnees based on the Readmission Agreement. Target groups are internally displaced persons from Kosovo and Metohija, refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, and returnees based on the Readmission Agreement.

Welcoming and opening speech

At the beginning, Massimo Moratti, the project manager, welcomed the audience and presented the data about the work they had done so far. Since December 2012, the Project represented hundreds of cases before the Constitutional Court of Kosovo, it provided legal assistance to more than 1,200 individuals and collected 430 documents for returnees under the Readmission Agreement. By March 2014, the Project of refugees and displaced persons received 5,035 cases, 1,004 of which were closed and 4,031 are still in progress. Also, Project’s lawyers represented their clients in 304 hearings, and resolved 430 out of the 498 requests for obtaining documents for returnees.

Also, the audience was welcomed by Vladislav Petković, Assistant Director of the Office for Kosovo and Metohija and Marzia Pallotti, Program Manager for Refugees and IDPs and Migrations of the EU Delegation to Serbia.

Danilo Rakić, Community Project Officer, said that in one year’s time, from June 2013 to June 2014,

more than 26,000 citizens of Serbia sought asylum in the EU. In the second quarter of 2014, according to the latest Eurostat data, the number of asylum seekers from Serbia was more than 4,000. EU Member States have made decisions for 3,675 applications for asylum from citizens of Serbia, 97% of which were rejected, 2% were granted refugee status, and 1% of refugees were granted protection by the Convention. From January to October 2014, 13,000 citizens of Serbia requested asylum in Germany. In that country, there is only a bigger number of refugees from Syria than from Serbia. It is notable that the number varies during the year and that most asylum seekers come to Western countries before winter. The largest number of asylum requests is submitted by Roma, because they are among the most vulnerable groups in Serbia.

The state's response

Milan Barać, Head of the International Cooperation in the Border Police, spoke in the name of the state. He said that solving the asylum seekers problem is one of the priorities of

the Government of the Republic of Serbia, and that is why all line ministries are activated, the offices, teams and experts, and a commission is established, named the EU Commission for monitoring visa-free travel. The Commission also deals with the issues related to the increase in the number of asylum seekers from the Republic of Serbia, suggests and adopts solutions regarding the problem-solving measures. Activities undertaken to reduce the number of false asylum seekers are: information campaign to raise awareness of the citizens of Serbia; in cooperation with the EU Delegation in Serbia they printed notices about the conditions for legal and safe travel that were published in all daily newspapers, control of the borders are increased, so a border police officer, in addition to regular passport control, can check hotel reservations, confirmation from the travel agency, a letter of guarantee, etc. In case a border policeman estimates that a citizen of the Republic of Serbia, who wants to leave the country, has not fulfilled some of the conditions given by the Regulation, he can give our citizen a deadline to complete its explanation in the technical sense of why he

travels, so somebody would send the required documents via fax. If the conditions are not met, the border police officer has the right and obligation to return the citizen of Serbia to his home country. There are penalties specified by law for those who help illegal asylum seekers, both by providing shelter, hiding them or otherwise falsely reporting vulnerability as present in the Republic of Serbia. This criminal act is punishable by law, from 3 months to 3 years. For abuse of power, the police officer shall be punished with imprisonment from 6 months to 5 years, and the organizer up to 8 years.

Ivan Gerginov, Assistant Commissioner for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia, explained that, when it comes to asylum seekers, he deals with the reintegration of returnees. He added that problems are solved in the best way at the local level, that the local action plans are good, and that the funds are spent in a satisfactory manner. This is corroborated by the fact that they solve five housing issues every day and 70% of the money which enables them to do this is given by the EU Delegation through IPA projects; the state allocates 6,000,000, while other donors allocate 3,000,000 Euros. We have an agreement that we can use the solutions for refugees and IDP's for the

returnees, as well, based on the Re-admission Agreement. In addition to the funds that I mentioned, since last year we have a special Government Program under which we gave 20,000,000 dinars to the local governments to solve the problem of asylum seekers and returnees under the Re-admission Agreement. We planned to use this measure and 27.000.000 dinars in the current year and solve housing issues. At the end of his presentation, John Gerginov said that Belgium, France and the Netherlands are not a problem because our citizens traditionally do not go there. Instead, they mostly go to the Republic of Germany and Bavaria province.

Zoran Panjković, Advisor in the Office of Human and Minority Rights, said that the issue of human rights of asylum seekers is viewed from two perspectives: the issue of human rights of our citizens when they seek asylum in other countries, and on their return to the Republic of Serbia in terms of accessing their rights. They concluded that the rights of asylum seekers, who sought asylum without basis after 2010, are based on the political concept of the authorities in the EU countries. He estimated that the largest number of asylum seekers are members of Roma national minority and he said that there is a number of mechanisms that are try-

ing to help them, such as the Decade of Roma Inclusion, helping them to realize their right to health care and assisting them in education and housing. Through these mechanisms, it is attempted to keep the Roma in the Republic of Serbia and integrate them into society.

Duško Jovanović, director of the Office for Roma Inclusion in AP of Vojvodina, expressed dissatisfaction with the state's measures to keep the Roma and the amount of effort it invested into this issue. He pointed out that it is usually a matter of goodwill, not just the lack of resources and that there is poor coordination from local to republic level, and the mode of operation is not synchronized on all issues related to the Roma community, including the issue of asylum seekers.

Response of the EU Member States

Marija Danić, Migration Assistant at Embassy of Sweden spoke about the fact that Sweden is recognized as a country that receives the largest number of refugees, making the Migration Board overloaded and therefore it takes a long time to process the applications, which makes them enticing for asylum seekers. The majority of our citizens want to go to Sweden to get the opportunity

“The main reason why people leave the country is the difficult economic situation, inability to get a job, and discrimination. In some Western countries, in the asylum procedure, discrimination is estimated to be the basis of giving protection. Even though these are very rare cases, they can encourage someone to seek asylum, but the majority of asylum seekers are motivated by the possibility to spend a few cold months in Western countries and receive monetary compensation during the affirmative asylum process. For this reason, some countries have emerged as popular for asylum seekers from Serbia: Germany, Sweden and Belgium.”

*Danilo Rakić, Community Project Officer
na Projektu*

to work. We informed the public that seeking the asylum is not the solution, but the possibility of so-called regular migration. This campaign managed to reduce the number of applications from 6,500 to 1,500. The big problem we deal with is that the people are not well informed about what the asylum is.

Belma Čoković, the Attaché for the Integration of the Austrian Embassy, drew attention to the biggest problem of Austria, when it comes to Serbian citizens, which are not the fake asylum seekers, but the illegal stays after expiration of the allowed three months, adding that the main reason for migration to Austria is family joining.

Response on the local level

Ninoslav Jovanović, Roma coordinator in municipality of Inđija, spoke about what the state should do in order to keep the citizens of this country in Serbia. He gave an example of a girl who was an excellent student in primary school and who was



Organizers of the round table

enrolled in high school in Serbia, but then went to Germany because the local government has not been able to provide her with a monthly pass, which cost about 3.000 dinars. “Communication between state and local governments should not be in the form of recommendation, but a decision to integrate the Roma,” said Jovanović. He added that we have a significant number of highly educated Roma who do not get the

opportunity to work in the institutions in the system and that it is very important for members of the Roma minority to deal with the Roma issues, because they are know these issues well.

At the end, he concluded that there needs to be a support system in order to keep the Roma in this country.

Siniša Volarević gave his response to this topic before the Group 484 and well as Đuro Toroman, Re-admission Project Officer to the Project “Support to the Implementation of the Strategies for IDPs, Refugees and Returnees – Legal Aid.”

After the presentations of the state representative, EU Member States, local governments, and the people who worked on the Project Project “Support to the Implementation of the Strategies for IDPs, Refugees and Returnees – Legal Aid,” there was a discussion about this problem. After the discussion, Massimo Moratti thanked all the participants and presented the conclusions of the round table.



“The report of the European Commission on the progress of Serbia in 2013 states that a shift was made in the employment of Roma in Vojvodina. Through programs and projects, more than 100 companies were opened, and they were founded by Roma. This is not the only measure. We keep Roma by helping their children by providing them with scholarships, monthly passes and school lunches. Municipality of Inđija does all of this”.

Roma coordinator in municipality of Inđija

EUROPEAN ACTION WEEK AGAINST RACISM

The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is celebrated to commemorate the 21st March 1960, when 69 people were killed during their peaceful demonstration against apartheid pass laws in South Africa.



On this occasion, the Commissioner for Protection of Equality, Nevena Petrušić, said that racism in Serbia is has not been eradi-

we did not succeed to eradicate, which is confirmed by the racially motivated acts of violence, hate speech, segregation of Roma children in schools, and sometimes

litigations last year. One of them is related to the case when Roma families were supposed to move into the village of Sirča, while the other is related to the employer who openly wrote in his recruitment advert that he does not hire Roma people. These are the two extremely alarming situations which clearly illustrate the position of Roma in our society.

This problem should not be merely addressed on certain dates. Instead, the state should find a systemic solution to this problem and make the Roma equal citizens in all segments of society.

In Serbia, the regulations are aligned with international anti-discrimination standards, but still, the Ombudsman, Saša Janković, drew attention to the fact that every day some new circumstances indicate that there is still a lot of space and need to improve the practice of combating discrimination. On March 21, Janković used the occasion to say that Roma are exposed to multiple discrimination.



cated yet, and that in 2014 five criminal charges were filed because of a suspicion that criminal offense of inciting national, racial and religious hatred and intolerance had been committed. “Unfortunately, we have to conclude that racism in Serbia is something

even by expressing open hatred and intolerance against Roma,” said Petrušić. The most alarming thing is that such attitudes are expressed among children and young people. She added that the institution where she is the coordinator launched two strategic

In 1966, the United Nations General Assembly made this day a public holiday, believing that it is necessary for all countries of the world to unite their efforts to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination.

HARROWING PHOTOGRAPHS THE TRAGEDY OF A NATION – ANTE PAVELIĆ WITH THE ROMA WHO WERE EXECUTED ON THE SAME DAY

Forty historical photographs testify about the persecution, torture, humiliation and execution of members of the Roma community immediately preceding and during the World War II in Europe.

There is no other way for the beautiful brown eyes to be implemented into the Nazi eugenics of racial purity but as an example of something negative, racially inferior. There are photographs that show the terrible experiments that were done on Roma children related to eye colour, as well as the photographs showing genetic differences in facial features between Germans, Jews and Roma.

Then there is also a photo of the Ustasha leader, Ante Pavelić, with two Roma men, taken in 1941 at the Main railway station in Zagreb. Both men were allegedly executed on the same day.

Forty harrowing photographs showing the persecution of Roma before and during the Holocaust can be seen in the Jewish religious community Beth Israel, that held the exhibition “Roma in the Holocaust” in Zagreb.

Even today there is a huge gap in the research of Roma victims.

“The Jews and Roma, along with other victims - the disabled, homosexuals and the opponents of the Nazi regime, were victims of Nazi persecution, suffering, humiliation and execution”, said the lawyer, Ivan Rumbak, one of the organizers of the exhibition, a professional sociologist and journalist at the Sorbonne.

The Roma community believes that among the nameless victims of the Holocaust there is an extremely large number of Roma victims.

“I do not want to adduce any known or stated number of executed Roma because it is certainly much, much larger than estimated. The mere fact that 80 percent of the Roma population was executed in

Holocaust Porajmos, Porrajmos or Pharrajimos. Some scientists in the Balkans, as well as Roma themselves, chose the name Samudaripen. However, the Roma had been persecuted over a long period of time. The persecutions began in 1000 BC with the Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni and continued with the penetration of Genghis Khan and



Eva Justin lists Roma in the Roma settlement

various ways in the Holocaust says it all, because the Roma have never been a small population”, said Ivan Rumbak.

Anti-Roma Laws

Romani Holocaust has different names in Romani language:

Alexander the Great on the former territory of India.

“The Roma are leaving their home country, India, and moving to Europe. They have always loved and sought freedom. However, with their migration to European areas, the rulers of that time started to persecute Roma, which contin-

ued to happen throughout history” said Ivan Rumbak.

In 1899, under the leadership of Alfred Dilmann, the Central Office was founded in Munich, collecting all the data on the movement of Roma in every German province. That office was not officially closed until 1970. Bavarian police adopted a special anti-Roma law.

“With the help of the police, Dilmann conducted the identification of more than 3,500 Roma from all over Europe. Then he published a book titled “Zigeuner” with an introduction which sets the arguments for controlling the Roma.

in 1933. From then on, it was strictly prohibited for Roma people to enter Germany. In 1926, the Law on Suppression of Gypsies was passed in Bavaria”, said Ivan Rumbak.

Project of extinction

The Swiss association “Pro Juventute” began its work by “taking into account the theories of eugenics and progress.” They took Roma children and forced them to change their names and sent them to orphanage.

“This program was applied until 1973. The Swiss authorities

ilization and castration and sent to camps in Dachau, Dieselstrasse, Sachsenhausen...

“Then, around 500 Sinti and Roma people were arrested in Germany and they were taken to a concentration camp at Venloer Strasse, near the city of Cologne...” says Ivan Rumbak.

Science and politics were united in the project of extinction

“The studies of professor Ritter and his assistant, Eva Justin, had to prove that 30,000 Sinti and Roma



Concentration camp at Jasenovac

The book consists of 310 pages of index, containing data of more than 5,000 Roma. It is claimed in the book that German people suffered from the “Gypsy Plague”, says Ivan Rumbak.

From 1905 onwards, mobile police brigades were also established in France, called “La brigade des Gitans”, whose mission was to photograph and create files of the Roma living on the French territory.

“The concept “life unworthy of life” was introduced in Germany, suggesting that the Roma should be sterilized and eliminated as people. This concept, with the same name, was built into the Nazi racial theory

did not admit its application until 1980, when Switzerland apologized to the Roma, but rigorously refused to grant access to the files, which Sinti and Roma needed in order to find and raise their own children”, said Ivan Rumbak.

This is when Professor Hans Gunter F. wrote: “It was the Gypsies who introduced foreign blood into Europe.”

Hitler’s persecution of the Roma had already started in 1934, when he sent the first group of people to concentration camps during the Olympic Games in Berlin in 1936. During the same year, other Roma people were selected for ster-

in Germany, approximately 5000 of which were still nomads, are a racial group called “hybrid”, who are therefore intended for elimination” says Rumbak.

Systematic deportation of Roma from the German Reich into the occupied Poland started in early 1940. That same year, a decree prohibited the movement of nomads across the entire territory of France.

“The first mass genocides in Germany followed when 250 Roma children were used for experiments using cyanide gas in Buchenwald concentration camp” said Rumbak.

Thousands of Roma were killed in the Babi Yar valley, and



Ante Pavelić and two Roma men who were executed on the same day

then Einsatzgruppe D burned the bodies of 800 executed Roma in Simferopol. In November 1941, about sixty brothels were already established in the occupied territories, forcing the imprisoned Roma women to work there.

Experiments

In 1941, Jasenovac concentration camp was founded in Croatia. Opposite Jasenovac, between the rivers Sava and Una is the village of Uštica. Between 1942 and 1945 it was the location of an Ustasha concentration camp for Roma - "Gypsy Camp". The camp was used to accommodate deported Roma families for whom there was no room in Camp III Brickworks, due to overcrowding.

"Since the beginning of the World War II, Roma were present in areas of other European countries, those that were occupied or had collaborated with the Nazi regime. About five hundred Roma women with children were brought to Sajmište concentration camp in Serbia" said Rumbak and continued, "Between 1942 and 1945, in Auschwitz-Birkenau, Mauthausen, Ravensbrück, Buchenwald, Chelmo, Lodz, Dachau and Sachsenhausen Lakenbach concentration camps, Sinti and Roma suffered collective

massacres, executions, torture of all kinds, and they were subjected to chemical and medical experiments. There were 20,933 Roma in Auschwitz concentration camp alone, including 360 Roma children who were born in the concentration camp".

The Sinti and Roma from Germany were then transported to Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, where 4000 Sinti and Roma were murdered by poison gas in a single day. "Thirty nine Roma children were moved from St. Josefspflege to an orphanage in Mulfingen in Germany, where thirty five of them were executed during various experiments", said Ivan Rumbak.

The only survivor

When the first Soviet soldiers entered Auschwitz on January 27th, they found only one Roma survivor.

"None of the Sinti and Roma survivors were called as witnesses to the Nuremberg trials" said Ivan Rumbak.

When the persecution of Roma is mentioned in the data on the victims of genocide in the World War II, their victimization is ignored, trivialized, or distorted, according to Rumbak.

"In contrast to Jews, who were mostly killed in gas chambers, Roma

people were murdered or died even outside the concentration camps; they were individually or collectively killed where they were caught or died on their way to concentration camps," said Ivan Rumbak.

Roma were only spared from prosecution in Denmark and Finland, because their government was not willing to cooperate with the Nazis on this point.

"The moral consequences of the Nazi genocide must be recognized and admitted to Roma themselves, because only by acknowledging the past can we understand the threat of transferring the hatred to the present" concludes Rumbak, Croatian soldier who was himself a prisoner of war camp in concentration camps in Serbia.

Dr Salomon, the President of Beth Israel, points out that, when talking about the Holocaust, it is most often referred to the suffering of the Jews.

"That is unjust to the Roma, the people who had been experiencing persecution and distress in Europe for centuries... The Jews and Roma are connected by fate; scattered all over Europe, they have always been the minority and they are symbols of minority community", says Salomon.

IS GANDHI'S SPIRIT STILL ALIVE?

The Great Hall of the Sava Centre hosted a lecture on Mahatma Gandhi, the Indian fighter for human rights and freedom in a contemporary context. The lecture was delivered by Birad Rajaram Yajnik, a lecturer, author, curator and the most eminent expert on Gandhi's teachings and legacy, who was invited by the Indian Embassy to come to Serbia. Before coming to Belgrade, he had the same interactive presentation in London, Johannesburg and New York.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (October 2, 1869 - January 30, 1948), also known as Mahatma Gandhi, was one of the founders of the modern Indian state and an influential advocate of non-violent protest in the pursuit of revolution.

Born in India, in his youth he studied law in the United Kingdom, and later he moved to South Africa, where he started the civil rights movement of Indian immigrants. In 1914, he returned to India, where he joined the Indian National Congress and became one of its leaders, after the World War I.

He helped India to achieve its independence from British rule, and inspired other people under colonial rule to fight for their independence and reject the British Empire completely. Gandhi's principle of non-violent protest has inspired many generations of democratic and anti-racist activists, including Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela. Gandhi often said that his values are simple, taken from traditional Hindu beliefs: truth and non-violence.

Who was Gandhi and does his spirit still live among us?

In the first part of the lecture, the audience at the Sava Centre had the opportunity to get acquainted with Gandhi's life and the principles he advocated. The words that were mentioned most frequently were: non-violent problem solving, equality, persistence, strategy. These are Gandhi's views which led him towards achieving Indian independence.

The path of peace, truth and non-violence is an integral part of Gandhi's teachings. "Our goal is to find Gandhi within and around ourselves, not to become his followers. The world of today needs hundreds of Gandhi to transform it into a peaceful, righteous and civil society. Find Gandhi within

yourself, in both your fellow man and your opponents, we all have that quality. All you need is an open mind; the nature of the mind is such that once expanded, it can never return to its earlier state", said Birad Rajaram Yajnik.

One of the lecture objectives was to show that Gandhi's spirit still lives among the nations, and that it is necessary to find a new Gandhi in the world. Many people blame those who lead their country (politicians) for the failure of the whole society. However, everyone needs to start from themselves and become active, instead of expecting changes to happen on their own. Change is a constant phenom-

enon, but it does not come quickly; it is a process that requires work, effort and planning. Gandhi's commitment to the independence of India is the best example of the changes initiated by actions of an individual, who managed to gain many supporters on his way. Then they all contributed to the realization of the change they wanted to happen.

The other lecture objective was to introduce the philosophy of this legendary fighter for human rights and freedom into the contemporary context. There are people and organizations that follow Gandhi's ideas and spiritual legacy even in today's modern society. This opens the door to future changes that should make this world a better place.



Birad Rajaram Yajnik with the audience

The new Gandhi should be a citizen of the world who unites the basic principles of Gandhi's teachings within himself. These principles are the morals and conscience, strength endurance, strategy and integrity, which include honesty and moral purity, courage and compassion. Citizens of the world are those people who sympathize with others, help the ones who live in misery, and do not allow the conceit or vanity to control their mind.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN FROM NON-FORMAL ROMA SETTLEMENTS IN NOVI SAD

The Know How Center organized a project to provide early childhood development children support through improving parental skills and through direct work with children. We started working in these non-formal Roma settlements in Novi Sad in February, 2015. This project was supported by the Office for Human and Minority Rights of the Government of the Republic of Serbia.

On the territory of Novi Sad there are two big and several small places with substandard forms of life. These families live in non-formal slums, in extreme poverty. They do not have access to health services, education or social welfare system, the children are not enrolled in pre-school, the parents are unemployed, etc. In addition, these groups often suffer systematic dis-

crimination and they lack access to information about their basic human rights. The project pays special attention to parents, because they are both models of behaviour for their children, as well as the most important factor for proper growth and development. General or long-term goal of the project is to create the basis for improving care for children and families from marginalized groups in Novi Sad, by directly giving support to families and educating them. The target group is families with children from marginalized social groups in Novi Sad, where children, aged from 0 to 6 years old, are not included in any existing system.

Why working on the site?

The purpose of work on the site is to reach out to families who are isolated the most and excluded from the system, and the first stage in working with any family is to establish contacts with them in their

living environment. Trained workers on the site visit the settlements and not only do they deliver basic hygienic packages to these families, but they also inform the parents about the importance of early stimulation and teach them simple skills that will help them.

During the two months of



our project of working on the site, the workers on the site established contact with 50 families with children, aged from 0 to 6 years old, in the villages of Veliki Rit, Bangladeš, Adice, Depresija, the settlement near the railway station, and with the families who live in Dože Đerđa street, who have a substantial need for support. This is a problem of the entire community because it implies that there is exclusion of certain social groups and entire generations of children who can not get the opportunity to work together with their peers, to grow, learn and develop into free young people who could then further their education and get out of the economic “gray zone”.

Investment into the support of early childhood development and preschool education really needs to become one of the priorities of our society, so that it can develop into



Fieldwork

*Photo:
CPZV's
Archive*

living environment. Trained workers on the site visit the settlements and not only do they deliver basic hygienic packages to these families, but they also inform the par-

ents about the importance of early stimulation and teach them simple skills that will help them.

an inclusive community, where tolerance, equality and respecting diversity are basic values.

In addition to providing direct support for families with small

children in their settlements by working on the site, in this way we empower parents to take an active role in stimulating the development of their children, to become

examples of good parenting practices to other parents and in the perspective take the initiative in order to involve their children in the educational system at an early age.

TIPS FOR PARENTS

Why is play important for child development?

From its birth, a child explores the world and discovers its own abilities. Play is important because it is the primary way to learn about ourselves, others and the environment; it is universal and familiar to every child. Also, play is instinctive, so it is a very important part of growing up and forming the personality of each child.

A child spends most of its time playing. The development, learning and work will be more successful later if they are acquired through play, or if learning contain elements of a game. Through play, a child learns, develops and discovers itself and the world, through trial and error, experimenting with different materials, sounds, resources, by exploring or in other ways, by role playing. When playing, a child develops a sense of security, independence, self-control, competence and skills in all areas (motor, emotional, cognitive, social and language skills), which boosts its confidence. It is not enough for a child to only watch and listen; it also needs to explore and investigate on its own - to touch, assemble, disassemble, smell and taste, which satisfies its curiosity. These experiences encourage thinking and reasoning, which is the foundation of intellectual development.

Motor skills include strengthening the coordination of movements, fine and gross motor skills. These skills are acquired by doing the motor activities such as crawling, running, jumping, climbing, throwing, kicking a ball, balancing...

Emotional skills are acquired by feeling satisfaction when playing and bonding with others, by building or learning about emotions and how to appropriately express them through playing different roles.

Language skills are developed through child's communication with other children and adults, by saying the words for its favourite toys and activities, reciting, singing songs and nursery rhymes, which builds child's linguistic expression.

Self-confidence is very important for the later development of a child. It develops when a child discovers, builds, concludes, solves problems and accomplish its goals.

What we should know about children's play:

- Children learn better through play
- Play prepares children for learning at school
- Play is healthy – it strengthens the coordination of movement and stimulates the brain (encourages creativity and problem solving)
- Children learn new things when they play, which boosts their confidence
- Every child has the right to play (according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child)
- Through play, children acquire social skills that will learn help them in social interactions and establishing new friendships
- Play gives a context for parents to teach children proper behaviour, codes of conduct, social norms of the community and the appropriate attitude towards other people.



You can contact us via e-mail at: ranirazvojnovisad@gmail.com, or via telephone: 064-41-06-790, and follow our activities on our Facebook page “Rani razvoj dece Novi sad” and our website www.cpzv.org

WE ARE HERE TOGETHER



“We are here together - European Support for Roma inclusion” project is funded by the European Union with 4.8 million Euros and implemented by the OSCE Mission to Serbia in coordination with the Office for Human and Minority Rights of the Government of the Republic of Serbia. There are six different components within the project: access to basic rights, introduction of mobile teams, empowerment of civil society organizations, drop-out prevention programmes, improving housing conditions and sustainable employment opportunities.

Components of the project

Robert Lloyd Tudyk, the project manager, gave us a detailed introduction to the components of this project and the results achieved.

The first component deals with access to basic rights and supports Roma to obtain official documentation and legal aid. This is the only way to enable legally invisible persons to register for health, education and social care services, to enter the system and to access all their rights.

Formation of mobile teams is the second component of the project. Mobile teams comprise of Roma Coordinators, Pedagogical Assistants, Health Mediators and designated individuals in the Centre for Social Work and the National Employment Service. Mobile teams are trained and equipped to work on the site.

Strengthening the capacity of civil society involves training. The final outcome of the training is for the organizations to be trained to recognize their role in the adoption and implementation of local policies for Roma men and women. We talked about this component with Marina Babović, the senior



Robert Lloyd Tudyk, Project Manager

project associate in charge of the civil society. We learned that the first phase of the project mapped the Roma and civil society organizations dealing with Roma inclusion in 20 municipalities. Based on this mapping, a mentored training program has been prepared, involving 30 organizations. In November, the Conference was held on “The role and importance of cooperation between civil society organizations and local governments in implementing policies targeting Roma men and women”,

aiming to enhance cooperation at the local level in relation to the adoption and implementation of policies for Roma men and women in local governments.

Education is very often emphasized as a primary step in solving the problems of Roma population, thus the “We are here together” project has a component that deals with school dropout prevention. Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development provides support to this project. Scholarships are

awarded, mentor and peer support is provided, as well as the training of Pedagogical Assistants.

The fifth component deals with the problems of housing. An analysis of 58 illegal Roma settlements was done, which will serve to create a list of priorities for the development of infrastructure projects. This is also one of the most challenging and the most

complicated areas that the project addresses.

The last component provides equipment, mentoring and training for Roma entrepreneurs and the companies that have potential for Roma employment.

At the end, the project manager told us that he is generally satisfied with the results achieved by this project so far, that there

were difficulties in its implementation, and that he hopes that the project will serve as a model for some future projects, bearing in mind that only 20 pilot municipalities participated in it. It was the first time that some of these municipalities to get this type of support, and the OSCE Mission to Serbia wanted to cover entire Serbia by this project.

The project is being implemented in 20 pilot municipalities: Bela Palanka, Bojnik, Bujanovac, Knjaževac, Koceljeva, Kovin, Kragujevac, Kruševac, Leskovac, Novi Sad, Odžaci, Novi Beograd, Prokuplje, Smederevo, Sombor, Valjevo, Vranje, Žitorađa and Zvezdara.

The results achieved in the first year:

- **509 children were enrolled in preschool institutions;**
- **620 administrative and judicial procedures were initiated, for late registration of births, for determining the date and place of birth as well as determining personal names;**
- **2320 households with completed questionnaires on housing and infrastructure conditions;**
- **30 CSOs involved in training and mentoring for participation in public policies;**
- **181 Pedagogical Assistant participates in the training;**
- **525 scholarships are provided for high school students;**
- **20 mobile teams for Roma inclusion are trained and equipped to work on the site;**
- **17 companies had been chosen to create new jobs and to be supported by receiving equipment.**

ROMED

Mediation is one of the measures used across Europe to tackle the inequalities Roma face in terms of access to employment, healthcare services and quality education. It consists of employing persons with a Roma background, from local Roma communities, or with a good knowledge of Roma issues, to act as mediators between the Roma and the public institutions.

After two years of implementation in 22 countries, and over 100 mediators trained, the ROMED Programme has moved on to another level.

Its second phase, ROMED2, together with a new Council of Europe and European Commission joint initiative – ROMACT, aim to support the partners in 40 cities in 10 countries. The action of the two programmes is complementary - while the ROMED2 Programme focuses on the community and their participation in democratic governance through mediation, the ROMACT Programme works on building local level political commitment and the capacity of policy develop-



ment. The second phase of the ROMED programme will thus work simultaneously on both Roma citizens' ability to partici-

pate and the authority's ability to respond.

In the ROMED2 Programme, participation is not just another strategy or tactic for addressing public concerns of Roma. It is a

ROMED2 interventions therefore intend to support the development of strategic and collaborative capacity through training, facilitating the framework for collaboration and meaningful



means of building social capital, sustaining a democratic society and its institutions and transforming the civic culture of Roma citizens. The ROMED2 approach facilitates constructive dialogue, mutual learning, shared responsibility and meaningful action both by Roma and the local administrations involved.

Our basic belief is simple: if the public officials have the skills and successful framework to engage in constructive collaboration with the mediators and community action groups to identify successful approaches, address challenges and deepen practical understanding of effective collaborative practices, they can win real change, make measurable improvements in the lives of Roma and build trust in the government and democracy.

advocacy actions through grants, while targeting important policy and funding moments in municipality life.

ROMED will adapt its actions and activities to each country and to each selected location within these countries, so as to fit in with the policy cycle and to the dynamics and reality of each municipality, thus bringing an additional input to existing policies and practices for an effective functioning.

One of the leading guidelines in ROMED2 is that participation in local governance can only be effective if it is context-appropriate. Thus, preliminary mapping and research has been done in each selected municipality so as to facilitate the adaptation of the Programme and its support.