



2016 Report

**THE ASSOCIATION FOR PROMOTING ROMA
WOMEN'S RIGHTS**



WHO ARE WE?



- E-Romnja is a non-profit organization founded in July 2012 by a group of Roma and non-Roma feminist activists. Our mission is to act, advance, and build civic engagement among Roma women in their communities and in society.

WHAT DO WE DO?



- We work with and for Roma women to take part in civic engagement and to make our voices, the voices of Roma women within communities and society, heard. We believe that no local or national democracy can exist without the participation and involvement of women.
- We believe in the involvement of the people themselves to nurture and develop the communities they are a part of. We work in a grassroots manner, taking into account the experiences, opinions, and needs of the women involved. We build alliances with other feminist organizations on a national level on issues of gender equality, violence against people of certain genders, social justice, sexual violence, access to social work, political engagement.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART E-ROMNJA



- General assembly
- Board Director
- President
- Departments:
 - ❖ Roma women and participation
 - ❖ Monitoring and advocacy
 - ❖ Finance systems

FUNDING



- Mama Cash Foundation
- Open Society Foundation
- Helsinki Deaconess Institute
- EEA Grants
- Donations and sponsorships from private persons (firms, private persons)
- In 2016 our revenues were 359.395 lei.

THE ACTIVITIES WE LEAD ARE DIVERSE AND COMPLEX AND ARE DIVIDED IN THE FOLLOWING LEVELS



1. Grassroots work— our mission is to amplify and inspire the voices of Roma women in their communities, using community development tools in four Roma communities. Each group of local initiatives are tailored to the needs identified by the women of the respective community. The role of organized activities is to thoroughly inform the groups on issues of violence against women, solidarity and sisterhood, reproductive rights, early marriages, and civic and political engagement.



2. Watchdog, advocacy and monitoring – on issues that affect Roma women locally and also on a national scale, so to make sure that the rights of women Roma are respected, that the portrayals of Roma women are presented in a realistic manner in mass media, in public space, and in political agendas. In the last two years our attention directed at issues relating to violence against women, Roma women, and girls, reproductive rights, and policies that are sensitive to ethnicity and gender.

3. Intersectionality – this concept has become a part of our work, as we recognize that we, Roma women, do not share just one common identity, but are a culmination of many identities with different experiences. We also think that the problems which Roma women encounter can be relatable to problems that all women face, including those related to infrastructure, forced evacuations, identity documents, violence, sexual harassment, reproductive rights, etc. However, since we often do not have the sufficient resources to address all intersectional themes, we have developed informal alliances with different coalitions, NGO's, and activists. In this way we stand in solidarity and contribute to different intersectional issues and causes, such as forced evacuations, the LGBTQI community, and the problems of young Roma people.





- In the following slides we will present a few examples of activities relevant to our work. For more details regarding projects and weekly and monthly activities, we invite to follow our web-site www.E-romnja.Ro or our Facebook page: e-romnja.

Thank you,
The E-romnja Team

MEETINGS WITH INITIATIVE GROUPS



GRASSROOTS WORK: WITH AND ABOUT ROMA WOMEN



- *Development activities of the local initiative groups*
- The organization of workshops on themes identified through the needs of the women, such as: gender roles and gender equality, domestic violence, early marriages, the woman's role in the family, healthy reproductions, access to court and law enforcement, obtaining the order of protection, but also more general issues such as the commemoration of the Roma murdered in the holocaust, and bullying – a phenomenon often met in schools.

WORKSHOPS





- Cooking activities for the children from the “St. Nicolae” school in Mizil. Every year on the 6th of December, the E-Romnja team and the initiative group of the roma women from the Mizil neighborhood organize the collecting of gifts for children in grades I – IV. They prepare a holiday event with poetry, dances, theater, and music, and the group of women also rewards this effort by offering home-made pastries and other packages containing small gifts or school supplies.

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES





GRASSROOTS CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

- "Cristina's Choice" - is a theater play carried out with the support of Mihaela Drăgan, an actress from the feminist theater group, Giuvlipen, and acted out by women of the community. This piece of theater speaks on the options female victims of domestic violence have, the obstacles they face in accessing social services, mobility in the European space and the difficulties they go through, begging, racism, and discrimination.
- <https://www.Youtube.Com/watch?V=ii7ywgeeqnw&t=1544s>

FORUM THEATER





- In the community of *mica Indie* we have sealed a partnership with a team of actors within the framework of the project *pe bune pentru copii*, in which over 70 children of the community have participated in manual work and dance, the theater play being a product of these workshops.
- In September we organized a film screening and cartoons for children from the community with the help of the cinemobil in Cluj. With the occasion of the screenings we held presentations of the activities carried out by the E-Romnja Association in other communities.

FILM SCREENING IN THE COMMUNITY





- The children of the *mica Indie* community were spectators to an open-air puppet theater show. This show was prepared on the occasion of the Christmas holidays. Ana and Smaranda brought smiles to the children's faces with the help of the games and of course, of the puppets. At the end of the event, all of the children received gifts from Santa.

PUPPET THEATER



SOCIAL CAMPAIGNS



- A problem often encountered in the communities we work with is **the lack of identification documents**. Since 2016 E-romnja, with the support of the Helsinki Deaconess Institute, carries out a campaign of facilitating the process of the preperation of identity documents and of support to those without these documents. In the same process, we have benefited from the support of a representative of the local representative: sanitary mediators, local facilitators, etc. We identified cases of people without ID documents in Valea Seaca, Răcăciuni (jud. Bacău), jud. Constanța, București, Bragadiru (jud. Ilfov), țăndărei (jud. Ialomița) etc, We facilitated the preperation of late registrations and ID documents.

CHRISTMAS CAMPAIGNS





- For the Easter and Christmas holidays we organized a campaign “From soul for souls” in the *mica Indie* community, initiated with the support of roma European parliament member Damian Draghici, who donated over 100 packages, those being for each family in the community.
- There was also the opportunity to go to a beauty salon, where they benefited from hairstyling and manicure servies. At the end of the visit, the children received gifts also on behalf of the host.



- The students of "Sf. Nicolae" middle school in Mizil prepared a celebration for the 6th of December through a series of cultural activities. The women in the initiative group prepared pastries and fruit for over 300 students who participated at the event along with professors and parents.
- Fundraising was raised to rehabilitate and maintain the Visan family's house in Mizil, which burnt down. Through the support of those who stay up to date with our activities we managed to refurbish and furnish two rooms.

APRIL 8TH



- **International Roma Day** is an event celebrated annually in every community we work with
- The women in the Giurgiu community took part in the civic Roma march. The participants wore the flag of the roma people and displayed diverse messages relating to the revendication of roma history and culture, and also anti-discrimination.
- In 2016, the initiative group of the women in little India joined the other groups of women for this symbolic day. The women in the group cooked cabbage rolls and had discussions with people of the community, passing around flyers with information detailing the significance of this day.



- As with every year, in Mizil, the International Day of the Roma people was celebrated at the “Saint Nicolae” school where over 90% of children are of Roma ethnicity. The women of the local initiative group baked pastries for over 350 people (children, parents, professors). The children prepared a series of modern, popular, and roma dances, as well as poetry and theater recited in the Romani language. During the activity we listened to the Roma anthem and passed around flags.
- The three groups of women from Valea Seacă organized a march against hate, with placards and messages written by women, the Roma anthem was sung up until the reaching of the meeting place, the Valea Seaca city hall, afterwhich everyone departed to celebrate with traditional stew prepared by the women of the group.

WATCHDOG, ADVOCACY AND MONITORING



- **The monitoring of the agendas of local authorities through participation at sessions of the held by the local council**
- Part of our advocacy actions is also active participation at sessions held by the local council in Mizil, Bucharest (Sector 3), and Giurgiu. Depending on the local needs identified together with the groups of women we have initiated proposals regarding the improvement of dialogue between the authorities and the Roma community, the hiring of staff of Roma ethnicity so to offer counseling for the strategy regarding the improvement of the situation for roma. Also, for the implementation of free programs for cadastre and registration for Roma citizens of the Mizil neighborhood, or the collecting of household waste in Bucharest Sector 3, but also for the improvement of the infrastructure and access to social servies, social housing in Giurgiu, the fight against violence against girls and women, etc.



- Engagement with different networks and coalitions of which we are members for the modification of laws regarding: violence against women, mandatory sexual education in schools, allocation of social housing, social work, release of ID documents, etc.



INITIATIVES IN THE STREET

- Apart from our association's initiatives, in 2016 we showed our solidarity for the rights of the LGBTQI community, people who were forcibly evacuated, etc.
- The protest organized in April at Alba Iulia for the sanctioning of Rares Buglea's hate speech, who himself was an elected local council member who reiterated his speech from 2013 in which he called for the public sterilization of Roma and poor women, as they cannot care for their children. NGO's from Bucharest, Cluj, and Targu-Mures joined this initiative.



PROTESTS





- In May, before the 2016 local elections, we organized a protest to bring awareness to local authorities and inhabitants of the problems that ethnic Roma face in Mizil. The protest took place in front of the city hall and of the local council in the center of the city. The initiative was organized by the women in the local initiative group with the support of E-Romnja. We were happy for the solidarity expressed by the activists in Bucharest neighborhoods such as Ferentari and Vulturiiilor, with which we have relationships of sisterhood and solidarity. The protest was not echo-less, since after the elections, the new administration expressed its interest for the community.

ADVOCACY





- On the 15th of October, together with the network Violence against Women, we were co-organizers together with the network Against the Prevention and the Fight Against Violence Against Women for the **“Togther for the safety of women!” march**. We went out in the street to condemn all forms of violence against women, being also joined by the Mizil initiative group. The march was also arranged on a local level with the support and organization of the groups of women of Valea Seaca and Giurgiu.

ACTIONS DONE IN SOLIDARITY





- There was a critical moment in 2016, one important not only for all women of Europe, but of the whole world, as the Polish government initiated a bill that would ban abortion and incriminate women who interrupt their pregnancies. The E-romnja team, along with other sister organizations gathered in front of the Polish embassy to send messages of solidarity for the women in Poland, and to bring a reminder of the tragic history that women in Romania experienced due to the pro natalist of the Ceausescu regime.

ACTIONS DONE IN SOLIDARITY



ONLINE CAMPAIGNS

- **#Maimuldecatobasma** was a campaign initiated on March 8th, International Women's Day, which aimed to combat prejudices and redefine the image associated with the Roma kerchief, which is worn by Roma women, but not strictly so. Through the campaign, over 85 women sent us photos wearing a kerchief to demonstrate that in spite of the status these women hold in society, they are active citizens of society and within their family.



VINDICTIVE CAMPAIGNS



#maimultdecatobasma



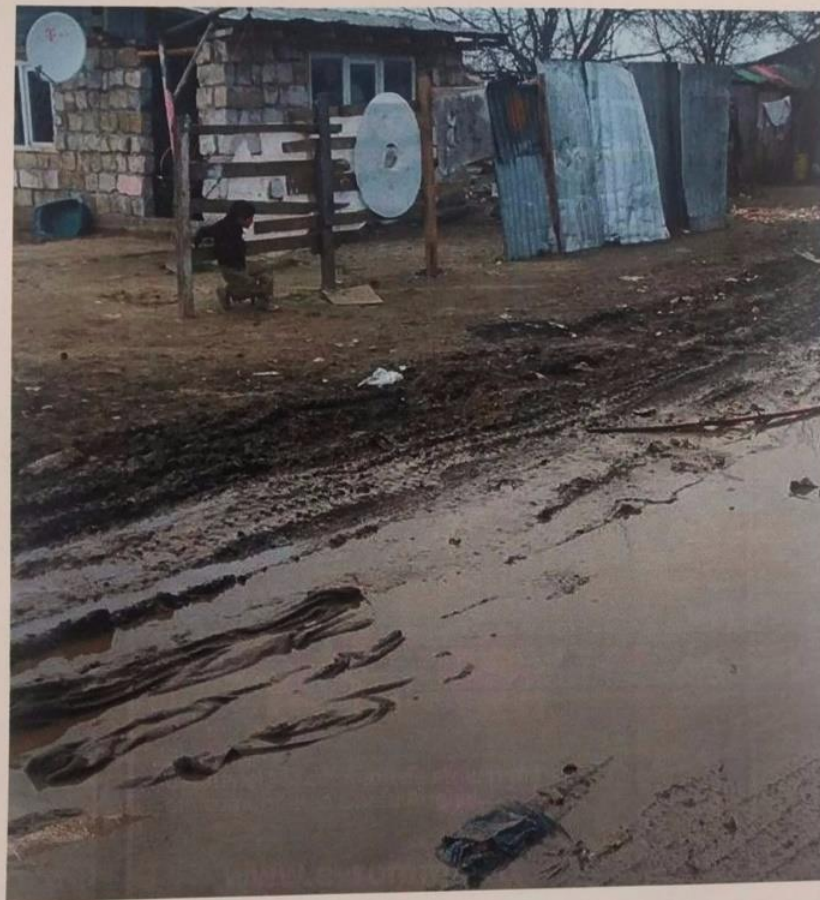
www.e-romnja.ro

foto: Virginia Lupu



- **#Drepturiegaleindiferentdeculoare** - a video campaign with people of the *mica Indie* community through which they could express their dissatisfaction with the public services of Bucharest – Sector 3. Following this campaign, the television channel Prima TV featured a reportage on the conditions in the people of the little India community live in. <https://www.Youtube.Com/watch?V=ccfmlvyp9tu>
- Photo-voice – In the *mica Indie* community, with the help of a camera and the imagination of those in the community, we took several photos which reached all candidates of Sector 3, during the time of the local elections, to show a series of problems and issues found in the neighborhood in which the community lives in.

PHOTOVOICE



Drumurile sunt neasfaltate în Ghețu Anghel în anul 2016. După ce plouă oamenii trebuie să iasă în cizme de cauciuc și nici măcar mașina de Salvare nu poate intra în comunitate. Este timpul să asfaltați și străzile noastre!

Semnat:
Cetățenele și cetățenii de etnie romă
din comunitatea Ghețu Anghel.

www.e-romnja.ro



- Photo-voice was also held in Valea Seaca, touching on the theme of "migration and poverty". This campaign brings awareness to the authorities of the factors which push people to leave and move around Europe, and speaks on begging, about the living conditions in the community and the authorities' lack of implication. This campaign was also done in Finland, carried out by the partners with whom we work with.

CAMPAIGNS RELATING TO MIGRATION AND POVERTY



ADVOCACY WORK



- In the last two years our work has directed itself towards two main issues: violence against women and reproductive rights. Working with such sensitive issues, we have adopted different inclusive and intersectional strategies, through which we could attract more allies in the fight for this cause, not only for Romanian society, but also for the Roma minority. We addressed these causes using different mediums of communication, organizing workshops, debates, collecting data and information, through proposing measures on a local level or through the development of partnerships, coalitions or getting involved in different networks, through participation at different meetings and conferences to propose the modification of legislature, etc.

THE E-ROMNJA TEAM

