

E-ROMNJA -
THE ASSOCIATION FOR PROMOTING
ROMA WOMEN'S RIGHTS



Annual Activity Report

2024



ABOUT US

We are a Roma feminist, a-political, and non-profit organisation that fights for the rights of Roma women and girls. Our approach is **intersectional**, and we believe that no society and/or community can exist without women's participation in society and community.

We believe in the Roma girls and women's involvement in the development of the communities to which they belong.

MISSION



We fight for the **respect**, **integrity**, and **dignity** of Roma women.

We promote narratives, experiences, and histories reflecting the diversity of Roma women's experiences and their lives.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community development and organisation are long-term processes through which our initiative groups are brought together to act in their collective interest. We find this component transversely in all the projects we implement.

What we have learned in the first ten years of activity is that to gain the trust and commitment of the community, we must be consistent, and permanently in touch.

For us, community development comes as an answer to the lack of involvement of the authorities. In the absence of services and support from institutions and authorities, Roma women organise themselves, show solidarity, and create alternative support systems.



@credit photo: E-Romnja archive

STRATEGIC PROJECTS

Ketaniphen - Empowerment and participation: grassroots citizenship led by Roma women

Ketaniphen is a strategic project started in 2015 and is still ongoing. It is financed by **Helsinki Deaconess Institute** and implemented in the community of Valea Seacă in the Bacau County.

Our goal: strengthening the local initiative group of Roma women and girls and empowering them through activities such as:

- Community services organised for women by women: community lunch organised twice a week for 150 vulnerable persons;



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STRATEGIC PROJECTS

- distribution of personal hygiene products, contraceptive pills and rapid tests;
- monitoring of public meetings in the Local Council;
- facilitating the access to social, legal and health services for Roma girls and women;
- thematic workshops for Roma girls and women on subjects of interest such as: healthy and toxic relationships, gender-based violence, maternal and reproductive rights, health and prevention, forced/child marriages, the importance of education and anti-discrimination.

In marginalized communities, where electricity and running water are a luxury, washing clothes is a process that takes place under extremely difficult conditions, especially in the winter.

This year, we managed to purchase two washing machines to ease the domestic work of women in the community.



**ANY ISSUE
SEEN
THROUGH
THE EYES
OF ROMA
WOMEN
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FEMINIST
ISSUE!**



STRATEGIC PROJECTS

Reducing school dropout among Roma girls, through an intersectional approach

The project addresses the issue of school dropout among Roma girls by building a support and intervention system that protects them from various forms of abuse, increases their visibility, understands the challenges they face within the system, and enables them to achieve their own goals.



The project is being implemented over a period of four years, starting in 2023, in the communities of Giurgiu and Valea Seacă, with the financial support of the Kanton of Basel-Stadt, Switzerland

STRATEGIC PROJECTS

Activities carried out during the first year of implementation (2023):

- workshops with police officers to deconstruct prejudices and stereotypes professionals in the system have towards Roma people, to clarify the difference between tradition and abuse, and to discuss when and how to intervene;
- at the community level: thematic workshops for parents and girls, the awareness campaign “What do you wish for your daughter?”, community lunches, the “Roma Girls Speak/ O cheja borizen” Festival, cooking competitions, and a feminist camp for Roma Girls.



In the second year of project, we launched the “Intervention Guide for Cases of Child/Forced Marriages. Methods of intervention and recommendations”, authored by Carmen Gheorghe and Cerasela Banica, available on the E-Romnja website in both Romanian and English.

The qualitative study targets professionals in Social Assistance, Child Protection, education, the judiciary, and court systems, as well as experts in gender equality and child rights, school and health mediators, and anyone interested in or working with this type of gender-based violence.



The guide proposes a new, intersectional perspective focused on the **identification, intervention, protection of victims of forced marriages, and prevention.**

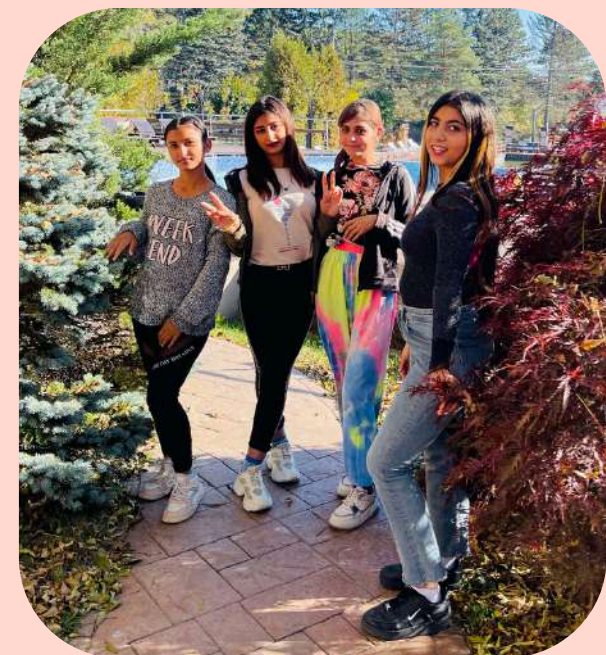
Ignoring, blaming, culturally justifying, or shifting responsibility away from the authorities only distracts from the core issue and perpetuates the cycle of violence against some of the most vulnerable groups.

This year we continued with:

- work sessions with police officers from the Departments of Crime Prevention, Criminal Investigations, and public Order from Bucharest, Bacău, Călărași, Dolj, Galați, Giurgiu, Prahova, Mureș, Vâlcea and Satu-Mare;
- community lunches and thematic workshops with Roma girls and their parents;
- a feminist camp for Roma girls from Mizil, Giurgiu and Valea Seacă;
- the second edition of the “Roma Girls Speak/ O cheja borizen” Festival organised both in Valea Seacă and Giurgiu.







@credit photo: E-Romnja archive

As part of the project “Reducing School Dropout Among Roma Girls Through an Intersectional Approach” we also launched:

- the awareness video campaign on the issue of child/forced marriages entitled “In the Name of Tradition?” addressed to professionals in Social Assistance and Child Protection, Police, education and justice system.



Through this campaign, we aim to bring greater understanding regarding:

- the correct steps to follow to ensure better protection of victims of this type of gender-based violence;
- what should not be done when intervening;
- how to ensure safety and protection of victims;
- how to contribute to the prevention and elimination of child/forced marriages.

The campaign is supported by the Romanian Network for Prevention and Combating Violence Against Women (V.I.F. Network).

We also published a brochure for scaling the feminist intervention method S.O.R.A., (available in Romanian and English at www.e-romnja.ro).

In 2023, we began the process of scaling the S.O.R.A. method in collaboration with 'Stea' Association from Satu-Mare and 'Aici pentru tine' from Braşov, who adopted and adapted our community intervention model as part of their efforts to raise awareness and engage local public authorities in identifying and intervening in crisis situations to protect Roma girls from abuse and violence.

The model also promotes a multidisciplinary and intersectional approach for addressing school dropout and forced marriages as form of gender-based violence and violations of children's rights.

The feminist intervention method S.O.R.A. is not about achieving immediate success, but about reciprocal learning between the organisation/collective and the people they work with and work for. The method does not “save” people but it supports a dynamic, participatory process of development and transformation.



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LOCAL INITIATIVES

As a strategic result of our over 10 years of community development work, the coordinators of the local initiative groups from **Mizil and Valea Seacă** successfully secured two projects focused on education for democracy and community participation. It is important to note that both projects **were written by them, with support from E-Romnja and mentorship provided by the Resource Center for Public Participation.**

The themes addressed by our colleagues at the local level include: the prevention of early marriages and school dropout, violence and structural discrimination against Roma girls, civic participation, and the importance of exercising the right to vote. Both initiatives were co-funded by the European Union, with the support of the PROTEUS Program and the Resource Center for Public Participation.





‘As a Roma girl, I wish for the right to freedom!

I want to learn and not be judged based on my ethnicity or my family’s social status! The color of my hair does not stop me from learning, and the color of my skin should not bother anyone.

I want people to accept me just the way I am!’

This was the closing message of the forum-theatre play written and directed by our colleague Elisa Dinu, as part of the project ‘Preventing Early Marriages and School Dropout’, co-funded by the European Union with the support of the PROETUs Program and the Resource Center for Public Participation. The forum-theatre play was performed by the initiative group of Roma girls from Valea Seacă during the ‘Roma Girls Speak’ Festival.

ROMNJA POWER MONTH

Since 2019, between March 8 and April 8, we have been organising **Romnja Power Month** - an umbrella concept adopted from our Roma feminist sisters at RomaniPhen in Berlin.

This month dedicated to Roma women consists of events, debates, cultural activities, concerts and parties aimed at increasing the visibility of Roma women in various fields such as art, culture, grassroots work, activism, academia and more.



‘Representing the interests of Roma women in politics’ -
debate organised by E-Romnja, with the support of the
European Commission Representation in Romania

April 8, 2024

ROMNJA POWER MONTH



Cultural evening on the occasion of Roma Resistance Day (May 16)

On Roma Resistance Day, we honored the courage and resilience of Roma people who fought against the Nazi Regime during World War II. Together with Roma activists and feminists, we reflected on a largely untold history - a story full of bravery and resistance of people who endured tremendous hardship.



INTERSECTIONALITY

As **Roma women**, we hold identities and experiences shaped by the intersection of gender, class, ethnicity, skin color, religion, language, disability and more. **Intersectionality** is a transversal concept in our feminist work; therefore, we aim to bring an **intersectional feminist perspective into all our interactions** - from local work with groups of women, girls, boys and men, to engagement with civil society and public authorities.



We believe that intersectionality is a tool that **deconstructs** the singular images society often constructs around women and men, Roma and non-Roma, heterosexual and LGBTQ+ individuals.

At the same time, **intersectionality highlights how systems of oppression such as racism, colorism, classism, sexism and others operate against the most vulnerable groups**. Through our actions, we advocate for the integration of intersectionality into anti-discrimination legislation, strategies, measures, projects and programs - ensuring that the most marginalised and invisible voices are no longer excluded and aiming to change narratives and build genuine solidarities.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Together with our colleagues from eLiberare Association, we organised a **good practices exchange** focused on addressing both forced marriages and human trafficking.

We clarified terms and definitions, discussed legislation, the process of identifying victims, intervention models, as well as prevention strategies and the systemic gaps that exist in providing specialised services for victims.



CULTURAL PARTNERSHIPS

The project 'United Against Bullying: educational intervention in schools', co-financed by the National Cultural Fund Administration and implemented by Acting Works Association with the support of E-Romnja, proposes an integrated approach combining cultural intervention and non-formal education to combat bullying and discrimination against Roma Children.

Through the theater performance 'Vi me som rom/ I am also Roma' and follow-up debates, the project created spaces for critical thinking, empathy, solidarity and mutual understanding between Roma and non-Roma students and their teachers. The play was performed in schools and high schools in the communities where E-Romnja works.



@credit photo: Andrei Șerban

CULTURAL PARTNERSHIPS

The project '**In the Streets - The voice of Housing**', co-financed by the National Cultural Fund Administration and implemented by Acting Works Association, the Common Front for Housing Rights, and Quantic Association, with support from E-Romnja, brought forward housing as a fundamental right through a series of performances.

The show shed light on the widespread housing issues faced particularly by vulnerable groups, from precarious rental conditions to forced evictions.



Excerpt from the show performed by the Roma actor Andrei Șerban during the "Roma girls speak/O cheja borizen" Festival in Seacă Valley, August 2024

@credit photo: Bogdan Palici, E-Romnja archive

CAUSES | ACTIONS

The March 'Together for Women's Safety' organised under the umbrella of the Romanian Network for the Prevention and Combating of Violence Against Women (V.I.F. Network), **10th edition.**

This year, together with allied organizations, groups, and coalitions, we took to the streets to raise awareness about sexual violence and to demand:

- The criminalisation of forced marriage as a distinct offense, its recognition as a specific form of sexual violence, and the alignment of national legislation with the provisions of Directive 1385/2024 on violence against women and domestic violence.

- A transparent and clear legal framework for reporting, investigating, and sanctioning sexual harassment within the education system, proportional to the severity of the offense.

- Effective public policies that include monitoring the implementation of existing legislation, sanctioning institutions that fail to comply with the law, funding the national support system for survivors of sexual violence, and amending legislation to encourage the reporting of cases.





The 10th anniversary of the march also marks **10 years since E-Romnja joined the VIF Network** and **10 years of shouting together: 'Violence has no color!'**



Credit photo: Răzvan Marius Paune



Our young girls' groups from Mizil and Giurgiu joined us in Bucharest, chanting: 'Violence has no color!', 'Violence is not cultural!', 'Forced marriage is not a cultural practice!' In Mizil, Roma women from the local initiative group gathered in front of City Hall, while in Valea Seacă, Roma girls demonstrated within their community.



CAUSES | ACTIONS

‘Rent is Too Expensive’ Protest

On November 2, together with the Common Front for Housing Rights, we organized the protest ‘**Rent is Too Expensive**’ to demand the right to decent housing, to denounce landlords' abuses and discrimination, forced evictions, and the increasingly difficult living conditions. Our chants echoed in the streets:

‘Social housing, not empty promises!’ / ‘Everyone deserves public housing!’ / ‘Housing justice for all!’.

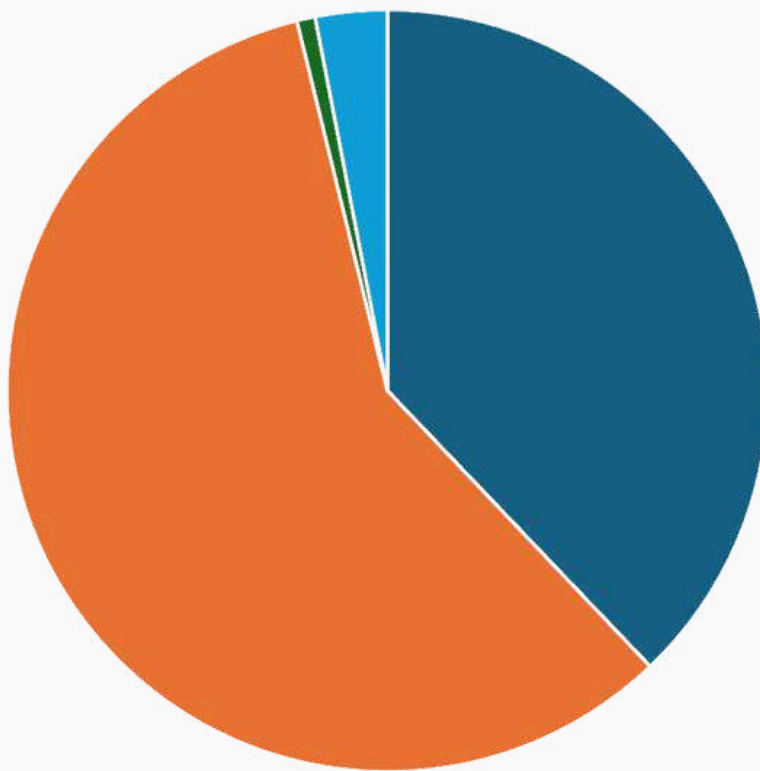


FINANCIAL REPORT:

În 2024, the total income of E-Romnja was **1.994.368,43 lei**, as follows:

- financed projects: **1.892.815,13 lei**
- donations / sponsorships / others: **101.553,30 lei**

Distribution of expenses in 2024:



Local activities: 1.162.682,00 lei

Permanent and auxiliary
staff/collaborators and
contributions to the State:
755.397,72 lei

Transportation: 60.771,29 lei

Administrative costs:
15.517,42 lei

Funders in 2024:

Helsinki Deaconess Institute, Kanton of Basel-Stadt (Switzerland),
Sigrid Rausing Trust, ERASMUS, Terre Solidaire,
3,5% individual donors, in-kind kind donors

E-ROMNJA TEAM

Carmen Gheorghe /// Anca-Georgiana Nica

Roxana-Magdalena Oprea /// Andreea Chiriac /// Carmen Alexe

Anca Constantin /// Ionela Pădure

Estera Gușă /// Luiza Nicolae /// Francisca Vasile /// Laura Voinea

Natalia Căldăraru /// Iuliana Florentina Burdulea

Lucia Dinu /// Elisa Dinu /// Lizuca Dinu /// Lăcrămioara Călin

WE GIVE OUR SPECIAL THANKS TO:

- the Roma women, girls and boys from the local initiative groups in Mizil, Giurgiu and Valea Seacă communities;
- all the volunteers who contributed to our activities;
- all the people who have made individual donations (cash, redirecting 2% or 3,5% of their income, products, equipment etc.);
- our allies in our common fight and to all those who follow and encourage us to continue our mission;
- last but not least, we thank our funders at home and abroad who are constantly supporting our work.

**JOIN OUR MISSION OF EMPOWERING
ROMA GIRLS AND WOMEN, BY DONATING HERE:**

RON ACCOUNT: RO 67 RZBR 0000 0600 1518 6865

EURO ACCOUNT: RO 64 RZBR 0000 0600 1757 0694

DOLLAR ACCOUNT: RO 46 RZBR 0000 0600 1819 7250

PAYPAL.ME/EROMNJA



CONTACT:

**E-Romnja -
The Association for Promoting Roma Women's Rights**

Phone no.: +40 31 425 19 92

E-mail: office@e-romnja.ro

Website: www.e-romnja.ro

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ERomnja>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/eromnja12/>