

### DREAM ROAD project has started

Exclusionary dynamics of social inequality and poverty are mirrored in every aspect of daily life of Europe's 10-12 million Roma people. In recent years, hope of progress has been shattered by hardened political discourse with particularly harsh impact on Roma, living in overwhelmingly poor conditions on the margins of society and facing extreme levels of social exclusion.

The 30-month DREAM ROAD project gathers **15 project partners from 10 countries** of the Danube region. DREAM ROAD, commenced in July 2020, aims to empower members of Roma communities to become agents of change. Through participatory approaches

and engagement of all societal actors, including Roma, the project seeks to reduce seemingly unsurmountable barriers and facilitate greater and lasting impact. Enhancing digital, informational and functional literacy through joint development of novel interventions (learning lab, know-how platform and trainings) and establishment of broad alliances in their implementation are foundational results of the project. Participation, representation and mobilization of Roma on one side and capacity building of public authorities and local communities on the other provide necessary foundations for building healthy communities.

### Infographic presenting Roma situation in Europe



## DREAM ROAD Opening event

The 15-member partnership of the project **DREAM ROAD** launched an online opening event for the public on **Wednesday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> 2020**. The event was open to the public. Originally the event was scheduled to take place in Rakičan, Slovenia and unfortunately, due recent worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, its format had to be shifted into online format. Despite such unfavourable circumstances the DREAM ROAD opening event was attended by more than 60 participants.

## SLOVENIA



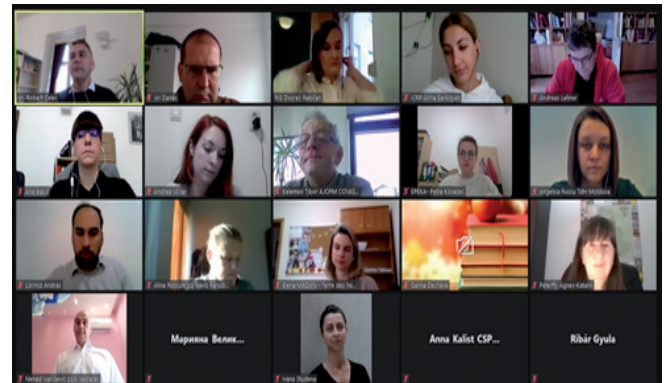
### Lead Partner of the Consortium

Public institution Research and Educational Centre Mansion Rakičan (RIS) from Slovenia founded by the Municipality of Murska Sobota is leader of the consortium implementing the DREAM ROAD project. RIS is implementing numerous social programmes aiming at vulnerable target groups. Three such programmes are intended for the local Roma communities' development:

- The ZZ ROM programme is an information and counselling programme focusing on a higher quality lifestyle for the Roma population in the Pomurje region through promotion of health and improving prospects in areas of employment and entrepreneurship of Roma.
- Project "ROMSKI PROSTORI" objective is to raise awareness among Roma children and young people in the Pomurje region about challenges, difficulties and perils of unregulated living conditions and responsible behaviour regarding housing.
- Project "Zaupaj si - Patja andi tute" is aimed at Roma women exclusively to reduce their social exclusion, enabling their active daily participation in society.



The presenters summarized and detailed project activities and the broader context of the project implementation. From the start, the DREAM ROAD partnership embarked on a collaborative path wanting to highlight achievement and successes in the field of work with Roma across the region. It is essential, that the public shifts from negative portrayals in the media with regard to Roma to highlighting success stories of individuals whose odds were not always in their favour. "It is impossible to work for Roma without including them in all stages of implementation. Doing otherwise causes mistrust and frustration."



### First partnership meeting (held online)

Kick-off meeting of the project took part with the participation of all 15 partners at October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Apart from the information and discussion about the issues related to the project administration, funding, communication etc. the crucial part of the meeting was dedicated to the core activities, target groups, outputs, deliverables, their values and timeframe for their completion. The project partners have started with the preparation of the National status, needs and opportunity assessment and best practices inventory. The analytical part of the DREAM ROAD project will be followed by the pilot interventions focusing on innovative, future-oriented approaches to reduce existing gaps and advancement of digital, information and functional literacy among members of Roma community. Another step of the project implementation will be creation of know-how platform, competence development and formulation of policy recommendation.

# AUSTRIA

## Exhibition Roma 2000

The structures of prejudice against Roma are largely based on information deficits. DREAM ROAD project partner **Roma Volkshochschule Burgenland** is presenting a scientifically developed travelling exhibition about the history and current situation of the Roma in Burgenland,



Austria. The exhibition focuses on three main topics: (1) History, (2) Socio-political developments and (3) Ethno cultural themes. The exhibition ROMA 2000 is set up by means of a modular system consisting of several terminals, each containing a PC with Internet connection, in addition to conventional exhibition materials such as objects, photos, text boards, didactic materials etc., depending on the room situation. As an exhibition, ROMA 2000 has been already presented at more than 15 different locations (e.g. schools, adult education institutions, cultural and art centres, the Austrian Parliament and the EU Parliament in Brussels). All contents are also available on the Internet. It is the first exhibition and website of this kind in Austria.

<http://www.burgenland-roma.at/>

# SLOVAKIA

## Self-help housing construction in marginalized Roma communities

The practice of self-help home construction and reconstruction, utilizing interest free micro-loans has been developed in **Slovakia** by a non-profit, ETP Slovakia - Centre for Sustainable Development, in a partnership with local municipalities and other local partners.

The aim is to improve the quality of housing in marginalized Roma communities and to support the Roma to acquire construction skills, working habits and wider their employment opportunities. The main target group is young low-income families living in segregated locations with deprived housing stock.

The practice aims at renovation and legalization of existing homes and/or construction of new houses through self-help. All constructions and



reconstructions comply with legal requirements, including building permits. The local municipalities are involved in the selection of families. Construction costs are financed by future home-owners through their own families' savings and interest-free micro-loans. The micro-loan for a new house to purchase construction materials, is up to 15.000 EUR. The micro-loan for reconstruction projects is up to 5.000 EUR.

The self-help housing programme reinforces working skills, it improves the communication of young Roma families with Authorities and businesses and enhances their personal responsibility. The programme also includes further training in financial literacy and life skills.



As a result, a majority of the builders have found and kept permanent jobs. They have also become role models, motivating other residents of marginalized Roma communities to improve their living conditions.

## CZECH REPUBLIC

### Roma Business Camp

Pilot Roma Business Camp organized last year by DREAM ROAD project partner **Institute of Social Innovation** at Ostrava, Czech Republic was focused on the creation, promotion and development areas (acceleration & start-up) of individual small business activities of Roma. The aim of the camp was to find, to train and to help participants with their own viable business plans' preparation, evaluate / test them and implement their business plans in the environment of real market. The graduates of the business training were upholding their business plans at the end of the training in front of jury and other business competitors.

The result of such activities should be economic independence and freedom of the Roma, to be a separate businessman, sole trader, small (self) entrepreneur. The essential impact of the project was the promotion of the idea of entrepreneurship as an alternative career

path for Roma, independent on the decision of the others. For the future of to-be Roma entrepreneurs, the important benefits were also the creation and support of the community (participants came up not only with the business ideas addressing their business future and potential income but also solving different needs of their community).



Follow us on the project web site:

[www.interreg-danube.eu/dream-road](http://www.interreg-danube.eu/dream-road)

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