

## TEMPLATE FOR GOOD PRACTICE DESCRIPTION

Please use separate template for every project you try to introduce to the RARE team

### **Project title: Amaro Records**

- Main focus of activity (short description)

Background: A significant majority of services for the Roma population focuses on direct assistance to people in difficult situations. Young people from socially excluded communities (not only) in the city of Brno are often caught in a downward spiral, have little motivation, lack social bonds outside the community and positive role models in it, end up unemployed right after school, have no work experience.

One of a “positive” prejudice about Roma minority is that the Roma have musical talent. In many cases that is really the fact. There are many Roma musicians in Brno and mostly they cannot afford to rent a music studio for practicing and recording. The aim of the project is to take this advantage, and use music *to encourage activity of young Roma and develop their competencies for the future.*

Amaro Records is a social enterprise of association IQ Roma servis z.s., created together with volunteers from the Roma community and general public in place of a former gambling house on the Milady Horakove street in Brno: Amaro Records is located right on the border between the city centre and areas marked by social exclusion populated mainly by Roma.

Project: Social enterprise Amaro Records focuses on providing support to young Roma from socially excluded areas in Brno. Since 2016 it has been serving as a place for cross-cultural exchange which helps change lives, the Roma community, the public and the city itself. It provides space for musicians to meet during regular cultural events, such as concerts, jam sessions or lectures.

Transformation of a former gambling house, place of despair for many local (not only) Roma families located right on the border between the Brno city centre and areas marked by social exclusion populated mainly by Roma, into a place for development, inspiration and cooperation.

The project Amaro Records consists of a recording studio and music café with job training positions run by the NGO IQ Roma servis z.s. The project has started with a reconstruction of a former gambling house by raising necessary funds, installing new flooring, wiring, and air-conditioning. It was necessary also to procure and install all other necessary equipment, fit together a recording studio and a café. Lack of finances to ensure all complicated reconstruction and build up the recording studio has created also the possibility to involve local community more deeply which has proved to be very effective in encouraging involvement of local Roma: exchanging their volunteer hours spent on building and running the whole premises for a chance to record or perform.

At the very beginning the project focused only on creating a space to make music, however this was soon followed by the idea to respond to the deeper needs of the Roma, on their initiative, involvement, their employment opportunities. Amaro means “ours” and the music café and studio has been built also thanks to the involvement of more than 100 volunteers from Roma community and wider public.

Result: Amaro Records is a social enterprise which offers job training positions to Roma, at this moment in the music café. Currently, there is four barista positions, which allow employees to gain work experience, professional competence and above all positive feedback, showing them that they can achieve something in their life and do something meaningful both for themselves and for others. The other Amaro Records team members are the project coordinator and sound engineer.

An important part of the mission is to ***encourage mutual recognition, communication and collaboration between the Roma and the majority population***. Amaro Records is the only music recording studio in the Czech Republic offering the possibility to exchange volunteer hours for recording time. Even young people from the excluded areas can therefore afford to make music, develop their potential and talent and to fulfil their dreams.

It is often said that music breaks down barriers and makes everyone feel better. The project’s implementers hope to achieve this through musical events, which connect musicians, both starting and experienced, regardless of their ethnicity or age in the South Moravian region and through them “push” the Roma community towards the majority public.

- Labour market situation of the activity/project (open, protected)

Today the social enterprise addresses the open market. (open)

- Specific target group (if any, such as young adults/women/men/with no educational background/ with entrepreneurial skills/rural/urban etc including the size of the target group, number of people reached directly)

Socially disadvantaged Roma minority, with main focus on youth from socially excluded community at Brno.

- Durability, security of the service: legislative background, duration of the project (ex: 3 year long project, included within national service provision, experimental project, etc)

The project has started in 2016. There is no time limit for the project closure. The aim is to launch new cultural events and secure new job training positions.

- Who is involved in service provision/initiative (list of institutions and their cooperation in 2 sentences)

The project has been implemented with the expertise and support provided by the organisation IQ Roma servis z.s. as well as participation in the Acceleration Programme for start-up social enterprises organized by Impact Hub and (the bank) Česká spořitelna. The other partner organizations are the city of Brno (respectively Municipality/Borough of Brno-centre), Masaryk University – Faculty of Social Studies.

Amaro Records collaborates also with other Brno university focused on musical art - JAMU (Janacek Academy of Musical Arts), Czech Television, Czech Radio, and other local organizations (i.e. Museum of Roma Culture).

- Financing source (where the money comes from: Institution's own budget, project funds)
  - Own budget, voluntary work.
  - Civil donation: support from Bader Philanthropies Foundation, the VIA “souSedime si” Foundation, and Impact First acceleration program of Česká spořitelna.
  
- Recommendation (for visit/for DR adaptation) Yes
  - If not: Why it did not work, why has it failed?
  - If yes: Why is the initiative innovative or interesting: (special focus, special cooperation among institutions, etc)

The project is transferable and it is interesting example of successful social entrepreneurship focused on Roma. The Amaro Records community has been involved in the project realization from the initial ‘brainstorming’ stage, during the complex reconstruction and in the realization stage as employees, clients, customers, in the organisation of cultural events etc.