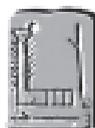


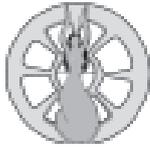
**AMALIPE CENTER FOR INTERETHNIC
DIALOGUE AND TOLERANCE**

ANNUAL REPORT

**For the activities of Amalipe Center
in 2012**



**ASTARTA
Plovdiv
2013**



**AMALIPE CENTER FOR INTERETHNIC DIALOGUE AND
TOLERANCE**



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AMALIPECENTER FOR INTERETHNIC DIALOGUE AND TOLERANCE

is a leading Roma organization, which works for equal integration of Roma into Bulgarian society. The organization has implemented activities to improve education, health and socio-economic status of Roma at local and national levels and it plays a central role in organizing the Roma civic movement and in the implementation of advocacy activities to the authorities. Amalipe Center is a member of the National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues and of the Interministerial Task Force for Resources Provision of Roma Integration. The organization is represented in the Board of the Center for Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities (CEICSEM) – a structure of the Ministry of Education, which realizes Roma integration activities in the field of education. The Chairman of the organization, Mr. Deyan Kolev has been elected to represent the Roma NGOs in the Monitoring Committee of ‘Human Resources Development’ Operational Program. Amalipe Center is the only non-governmental organization from Bulgaria that takes part in the work of the European Roma Platform.

OUR VISION, MISSION AND LONG-TERM GOALS

Amalipe Center **believes** in equal integration of Roma in society based on the preservation of Roma identity, mutual understanding and solidarity between Bulgarians and Roma. **Our mission** is to stimulate modernization and empowerment of the Roma community in Bulgaria for its active participation and equal access to resources and development processes, with priority focus on access to quality education, quality health care and social services.

The long-term goals of Amalipe are:

- To nurture Roma community capacity for access to development by increasing the educational level of Roma children and youth;
- To strengthen Roma community self-organization;
- To increase the participation of Roma in the policy making process by growing advocacy skills and joint action practices of Roma organizations;
- To stimulate more consistent and accountable public policies providing for increased access of Roma to education, quality healthcare and social services by suggesting responsive to community interests approaches, monitoring and feedback for improving policy measures and practices.

Our approach to achieve these goals includes:

- Applying innovative methods and practices at local level: in each of the areas in which we operate, we apply practical field models tested.
- Systematizing the practical results of the pilot initiatives of own and various organizations to disseminate and mainstream them nationwide and include them in the national policies.
- Pursuing advocacy activities with institutions at national, regional and local level to extend and institutionalize best practices tested by Amalipe and other organizations.

- Pursuing advocacy activities with institutions at national level to form a stable model of Roma integration and to accelerate the integration process.
- Preparation of analyzes, monitoring and evaluation of existing policies related to the integration of Roma people.

THE ORGANIZATION IN 2012

In 2012, Amalipe Center further expanded the scope of its activities. The organization covered all geographic regions and is currently implementing activities in 26 districts. This led to increasing the number of the regional and local structures of Amalipe. In order to work more effectively in the regions, and to expand our activities across the country, we increased the number of our regional coordinators from 4 to 6, and since September 2012 we have a coordinator in each of the planning regions. To reach out the local communities across the country more effectively, in 2012 we continued the operation of the existing 6 Community Development Centers and we have established 5 more. This way the organization has its own local representations in 11 municipalities, which are located in all of the country regions. Local community development clubs were established, as part of the Centers, and they are functioning at village / neighborhood level. This makes Amalipe Center the only Roma organization that has its own local and regional structures all around Bulgaria. We establish these structures with three objectives:

1. To help out more effectively our partners (schools, municipalities, local organizations, activists) and the local communities that we work with.
2. To effectively implement activities throughout the country.
3. To create a network that unites the efforts of thousands of Roma people and friends of Roma people – energy that can turn the wheel of Roma integration.

The increased scope of work led to increasing the organization's employees – from 28 in 2011 to 42 in 2012. It is Amalipe's pride that our employees work with employment contracts, following the requirements of the labor legislation. They work as a team in which each person performs a specific task and assists the others, Amalipe's faces contributed to the success of the ongoing initiatives.

The organization also relies on more than 90 volunteers who were systematically involved in activities and campaigns. They are organized in voluntary clubs (Club "K-7" – Veliko Tarnovo, youth clubs created at most of the community development centers), they became a driving force and a face of most campaigns. Young people wearing Amalipe Center T-shirts, became a symbol of the awakening community life in dozens of villages and towns.

One hundred and thirty experts and field workers from different areas were involved and also participated in the organization's activities. Colleagues from the local Roma organizations have contributed to the good work of the Community Development Centers. Experts from the Regional education inspectorates, regional health inspectorates and regional directorates Social Assistance in 6 districts participated in the Cross-sectoral impact teams that train teachers, health and social workers to effectively work in the Roma community and resolve specific cases that require interaction between different institutions. Dozens of other experts were involved in the activities organized by Center Amalipe nationwide. This way we united the efforts of Roma and non-Roma in order to achieve the mission of intercultural dialogue, tolerance and friendship.

1

INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION AND EDUCATIONAL INTEGRATION DURING 2012

Education has been a priority area of work for Amalipe Center since its establishment and in this respect our contribution is indisputable. Our main goal is the introduction of intercultural education as a means of preserving and renewal of Roma children's cultural identity, as well as fostering mutual understanding and tolerance between children from different ethnic groups.

1.1. Prevention of the drop-out rate of Roma children from school Program

Financial support: America for Bulgaria Foundation

- Why:** The main concept of this project is that early school leaving / drop-out-of-school is a pedagogical issue and educational resources are necessary to overcome it: social activities are not sufficient but rather complementary in this case. A change in the overall school environment is necessary: changes in the applied teaching methods, in the syllabi, in the organization of the learning process with the participation of the parents. Interactive and intercultural education is the best basis for overcoming the drop-out problem: for instance, the schools teaching the optional subject "Ethnic Folklore – Roma Folklore".
- Targets:** The main target is to reduce the drop-out rate of Roma children at compulsory school age. The project activities also aim at handling the issue of school absences, dissatisfactory school marks, the relatively low percentage of Roma children who continue their education at secondary schools (high schools), the lack of participation of Roma parents in school life and school management structures.
- Methods:** The methods we applied together with the schools in order to achieve these results proved effective in the long run. The **school program for drop-out prevention and student retention** is an essential tool for planning activities targeted at keeping students at school. Each school identifies its specific objectives and target group, then the specific activities targeted at retaining and attracting the children depending on the specific problems it faces.

Activities: What is common in all school programs is that they envisage activities in four key areas:

- **Training for all teachers to work effectively in a multicultural environment.** 70 teachers have been trained to be mentors during 2011/2012 school year. All of them have conducted monthly trainings in the pilot schools.

- **Introduction of “Ethnic Folklore – Roma Folklore” classes.** Almost 2500 students studied “Ethnic Folklore – Roma Folklore” during 2011/2012 school year. Their number increased to 4000 since October 2012.

- **Activities to engage parents in the school life of their children.** 66 Parent clubs were established during the second project year in addition to the 24 ones established in the first year. Lectures “School for parents” were organized and Roma parents were included in the schools Boards of Trustees.

- **Maintaining high levels of activity among students** – more than 50 Student Parliaments were established. About 440 students-mentors helped the retaining of students at risk and increased the motivation of their classmates.

- **Individual work with students at risk of dropout:** prevention activities were made for each student at risk of dropout – profile of a student at risk;

Results: In the second program year – 2011/2012 Center “Amalipe” continued to work with 90 schools in 20 regions of Bulgaria. Of these, 35 were “mentoring” and 55 “pilot” schools. One of the main approaches applied in the Programme is the division of schools into two sub-categories mentioned above. In this respect, a mentoring school is the school which has gained certain amount of experience and is successful in its efforts to attract and retain Roma children at school, while a pilot school is a school which is supported by the mentor in the development and implementation of its drop-out prevention program.

24 schools from the first project year continued their participation in the program during the second year of the project. 17 of them are mentoring schools and 7 pilot ones. The change in them is particularly apparent: the fact that 9 of them have turned from pilot to mentoring ones shows that each school may be desirable area for students. The total number of students who were monitored from the first to the second year of the project was 5170.

At the beginning of last school year, 19613 students from Roma and Bulgarian origin entered the classrooms of the project schools. 44% of them are Bulgarians and 56% – Roma.

- After the implementation of the program in the second year, dropouts are 0.68% – compared to 2.06%, which was the average dropout in project schools in 2009/2010 school year, i.e before their participation in the program.

- The average number of absences (including excused and unexcused) in the project schools decreased to 26.8 absences per student, compared to 110, which is the critical limit, adopted by the Ministry of Education.

- After two years of participation in the program the schools that continued their participation in school year 2011/2012 has 0.19% average dropout rate, which may be defined as an absolute minimum.

- The average number of absences in these schools during 2011/2012 school year was 14.41 compared to 32.05 in the first year (2010/2011 school year).

- The average GPA of students in the schools studying “Roma folklore” classes from the last year was higher (very good 4.59) compared to the GPA of all students in the same schools (average 4.28).

In the 2012/2013 school year Center “Amalipe” began implementing the program Prevention of the drop-out rate of Roma children from school in 177 schools in 23 districts in Bulgaria. 6 regional coordinators are included to work in the program.

In other eyes

“The visits of students from mentoring and pilot schools brings a refreshing element in the school climate. Such visits are a component of the plan of activities of each school project. I agree for their positive impact: on the one hand they bring positive emotions and excitement for students from both schools; on the other hand, visits contribute to the exchange of experience. In our school this change led to an improvement of the school environment and greater motivation among students.”

**Teacher of “Vasil Levski” Primary School,
village of Vidrare, Sofia region**

“It was a lot of fun during the visits of peers. We met a lot of kids like us. I went to the “Open Heart” festival in Veliko Tarnovo. I will remember this forever.”

**Nevin Shukrieva, a student at “Hristo Botev” primary school,
village of Kaspichan, Shumen region**

“Sharing experiences and ideas during these meetings is very useful for us. I always think that I already know, but we always learn something new and useful there!”

**Miroljub Ionkov – a representative of the “Hristo Botev” primary school,
village of Dolni Tsibar, Montana region**

“During the training we were able to achieve greater multicultural learning environment in our school, my colleagues and I became much more motivated - we were able to motivate many students to come to school and thus work to prevent absenteeism and to attract many parents to actively participate in school life. It really works! “

**Teacher at “Hristo Botev” primary school,
village of Marchevo, Montana region**

1.2. Supporting high school students – Emergency Fund Program

What: For the second year Amalipe Center implements activities in support of Roma youths studying in secondary schools. Supporting high school students Program is funded by America for Bulgaria Foundation. The Emergency Fund Program covers the cost of the set of textbooks necessary for classes, and those students who commute to school are provided with transport cards. For the 2012/2013 school year 437 high school students applied, 100 of them were interviewed and 73 were supported by our Emergency Fund.

Why: One of the main objectives of the program is to support the education of high school students who are highly motivated to learn, but they face serious financial difficulties for it. At the same time, as this is not a social program but an initiative aimed at helping Roma educational integration, it is necessary for the students, included in it to be engaged in activities to motivate other peers to learn, to support the schools involved in the program of Amalipe Centre to reduce the dropout of Roma children from school and other similar activities.

Results: 45 high school students were supported at the end of the last school year – 2011/2012. We have seen that 85% of the students involved in the program reduced their absenteeism and became more active in school activities. As a result, 75% of them improved their GPA and increased their motivation to continue their education in the future. The average grade of the participants in the program is good 4.00.

73 high school students were approved for the 2012/2013 school year from 437 applying. Increased activity and engagement of the students is observed from the supporting documents they have sent us (reports, tables filled with activities). More students were involved in organized activities at school, greater commitment and responsibility to the learning process was observed due to one of the criteria of the Emergency fund program – maintaining and enhancing very good academic success during the school year, which ensure support for students in the second semester of the school year. Reduction in students' absenteeism from school and their willingness to support and help their peers is also obvious. All this shows that the program achieves its objectives and the results are positive.

In other eyes

“I am very happy that I’m a Scholar in the Emergency Fund Program. It helps me a lot to be a regular student, given the financial situation of my family. I attend school regularly and achieve good results.”

Dimitrinka Iankova, village of Vodoley

“Being a Scholar in the emergency fund Program helps me a lot as well as my brother. I attend school regularly and learn from textbooks that were sent to me. I achieve good results and continue to work hard so I can raise my success at school even more.”

Mitra Todorova, Kameno

1.3. Ethnic Folklore – Roma Folklore classes

What: Amalipe Center for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance is committed to making intercultural education part of the curriculum of Bulgarian schools through the introduction of non-compulsory optional “Ethnic Folklore – Roma Folklore” classes since 2002. Through this initiative we aim to decrease the drop-out rate of Roma children from school by filling the gap between the school as an institution and the Roma community, to preserve and develop the cultural identity of Roma children and enhance tolerance and solidarity among children of all ethnicities. Ultimately we want to turn the school into a community center.

Why: For these reasons, “Ethnic Folklore – Roma Folklore” subject is being taught not only to Roma, but also to Bulgarian and Turkish children. The subject is taught in Bulgarian, the learning aids published illustrate the diversity of Roma folklore, its relations to the folklore of other ethnicities in the context of Bulgarian national culture. For the purpose, we compiled and printed a complete set of methodological aids (textbooks, workbooks, teacher’s books, interactive audio and video materials) which have been disseminated free of charge to schools teaching this subject. More information about the school subject “Ethnic Folklore – Roma Folklore” can be found at: <http://romaeducation.com/index.php/bg/sip-bg>

Results: During the 2011/2012 school year, “Ethnic Folklore – Roma Folklore” is taught in over 250 schools across the country to more than 5000 students (from Bulgarian, Roma, Turkish origin). Almost 4000 students taught Roma folklore classes in the Prevention of the drop-out rate of Roma children from school Program as some of the schools made more than 2 groups. The results that these students achieved in the academic 2011/2012 year, clearly illustrate the need for incorporating “Ethnic Folklore – Roma Folklore” into the national school curriculum. The average number of school absences per student of those who attend Roma Folklore classes fell to 19.70 (including all absences, both justified and unjustified, in all subjects), with 26.8 absences per student from the target group of the Prevention of the drop-out rate of Roma children from school Program and compared to 110, which is the critical limit adopted by the Ministry of Education as an indicator of students at risk of dropping out. In addition, drop-out rates among students involved in the Roma folklore was 0.32% – compared to 2.04%

average drop-out rate in the project schools during the academic 2009/2010 year when they were not included in the program.

In other eyes

“Through my participation in the “Ethnic Folklore-Roma Folklore” classes I learned to listen, to be more careful at class. I knew almost nothing about our traditions, but with my participation we made Calendar of ethnic groups. All customs are so beautiful and so alike. I was interested. And I loved dancing, learned dances from the three ethnic groups. Our classes passed in entertainment, songs, dances, stories, legends.”

**Sylvia Naskova, a student at “Hristo Botev” Primary school,
village of Kamburovo**

“I’ve been teaching for two years Roma Folklore in “Tsanko Tserkovski” high school, village of Nikola Kozlevo. I knew that these classes are useful and necessary. But what I see in children – the change, enthusiasm, willingness to work and self-expression - just surpasses all expectations. Children change. And it’s good that they change others people, and their attitudes...”

**Refat Talib, a teacher at “Tsanko Tserkovski” high school,
village of Nikola Kozlevo**

1.4. Supporting schools

The activity of Amalipe in the sphere of education is not confined just to a specific project or program. Rather, it focuses on supporting our partner schools with all possible means, including assistance in applying for additional financial resources.

In 2012, 2 Calls for Proposals were announced 33.10-2012 and 33.11-2012 of the Centre for Educational Integration of Children and Pupils from Ethnic Minorities under Priority Strand 1 “Creating conditions for equal access to quality education for Roma children and students” and under priority Education of the National Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for Roma Integration (2012–2020) and the Action Plan for the National Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for Roma Integration (2012–2020) and the “Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–2015”. As a result of the guidance provided by professionals from Amalipe for the schools willing to apply, more than 10 schools, municipalities and kindergartens project proposals were approved. Thus, in practice, every second project approved under the scheme was developed by our partners – schools or municipalities which have benefited from our free-of-charge guidance services. At present, our partners are successfully implementing these projects and through them their activities aimed at introducing intercultural education obtain further added value.

To help schools, municipalities and organizations we work with, at the end of 2011 they were provided with training on “Preparing Project Proposals for educational integration under the Operational Program “Human Resources Development”. The train-

ing session was held with regard to the announced Program grant schemes [BG051PO001-4.1.05 “Educational Integration of Children and Pupils from Ethnic Minorities”](#) and [BG051PO001-4.1.06 “Reintegration of Drop-outs in the Educational System”](#). The interest was very high: 80 applications for participation were received and we were able to include 56 representatives of schools, communities and organizations working in the field of educational integration and intercultural education.

Subsequently, some of them were assisted in the preparation of project proposals free of charge that have been accepted in 2012.

Support for the schools last year was reflected not only in the development of projects aimed at educational integration, but also in ensuring equal access to school and quality education. This was true particularly relevant for small schools threatened with closure, which would result in loss of the majority of students studying in them. Indicative in this respect is the case of the “L.Karavelov” Primary school – Kardam, Municipality of Popovo.

Decision of the Municipal Council of the Municipality of Popovo from 11.04.2012 and subsequent order of the Minister of Education and Science RD – 14-129 / 12.07.2012 closed the school in Kardam, Municipality of Popovo. Parents were not informed of the impending decision adopted by the City Council and gathered a petition with over 150 signatures to save the school. After the petition was not taken into account, parents appealed the order of the Minister Ignatov in the Supreme Administrative Court and because of the running proceedings the school operates in the current academic 2012/2013 year. In June 2012 the organization was asked for assistance by the parents committee, including parents of children from the village of Kardam, Municipality of Popovo, who wanted to keep from closing “L. Karavelov” primary school – Kardam. After being thoroughly acquainted with the situation of the closure of the school and appreciated the risk of loss of a significant part of children, we committed to providing information and advice to parents.

Although the appeal of the Order RD – 14-129 / 12.07.2012 was published on August 13, until 14 of September Popovo municipality refused to comply with the provisions of the Administrative Procedure Code and to open “L. Karavelov” primary school-Kardam. The Municipality provided free shuttle bus to Central School in the town of Popovo and misinformed parents that the school in Kardam will not work anymore. Teachers sought work in other schools, and some parents enroll their children in schools in Popovo. The school principal was appointed on September 14, and there were no textbooks and equipment on the first day of school and only 1 teacher. Since in the beginning of October in “L. Karavelov” primary school – Kardam the learning process has been essentially gone, some parents enrolled their children in their assigned Central School (24 students), others – in other schools in Popovo (8 students) and some part refused to enroll their children in Popovo (24 students). Some parents went abroad with their children, but the majority remained in their homes. In early October the learning process was restored, resulting in 19 students (who were not enrolled in school in Popovo and were essentially dropped) who began to visit it again. Center Amalipe together with parents and many supporters still fight with the local authorities for the right of children to have equal access to quality education.

In 2012, Amalipe Center continued its activities in the field of improving access of Roma to quality healthcare. Our activities were conducted on regional level – the prevention of tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, as well as on national level – the approbation of a mechanism for monitoring of health services at the local level, advocacy activities at the Ministry of Health, and the support of the Program for Roma medical students (Roma Health Scholarship Program).

2.1. Project: National program for prevention and control of Tuberculosis in Bulgaria, COMPONENT 5, “Extension of the scope of effective care for the prevention and control of Tuberculosis in Roma community”

Funding: The Ministry of Health, Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

Why: The main aim of the project is to reduce morbidity and to stop the spread of Tuberculosis in the Roma community. For this purpose, the Ministry of Health subcontracts organizations working with the Roma communities on regional level. For Veliko Tarnovo region, this is Amalipe Center.

Goals: The main objectives of the project are: to detect the infectious cases of TB, to successfully heal the diseased, to reduce morbidity and to eliminate cases of mortality from Tuberculosis.

Methods, Activities, Results: During the project period, our team has covered a large part of the municipalities of Veliko Turnovo district – Gorna Oryahovitsa, Lyaskovets, Suhindol, Pavlikeni, Zlataritsa, Strazhitsa, Polski Trambesh, Svishtov, Elena and Veliko Tarnovo . Through the screening of risk, outreach staff has reached people having symptoms of Tuberculosis, Tuberculosis patients and people who were directed to other hospitals and services. Those having symptoms of the disease were accompanied by outreach-workers for testing for Tuberculosis at the specialized hospital for active treatment of pneumo-physiatric diseases “Dr. Treyman”.

The total number of patients for the period January–September was 41 people. During the outreach-work biological material for examination from 187 people who

were reached again, thanks to the intensive fieldwork in the screening of individuals at risk throughout the Veliko Tarnovo region was taken. Our activities in the screening of risk among vulnerable groups of people, which was done on the basis of a questionnaire developed by the Ministry of Health, have covered 464 people during the same period. There were detected oncological and other diseases, and the field-workers kept an eye on the treatment of each client, regardless of the diagnosis – Tuberculosis or other disease. In this activity, our team was an important psychological support for individuals and their families, so that they cooperated with them to facilitate access to quality healthcare. This good practice turned out to be the link with the local institutions, local general practitioners (GPs), and local informal leaders who facilitated the access to the target group and the awareness of people. Thanks to the good contacts of Amalipe Center in various localities, the majority of residents of these settlements accepted the team working on the program for the prevention and control of Tuberculosis.

After the diagnosis was set, we kept following the condition of the patients, visiting them in their homes to check out if the medication is taken regularly, since strict adherence to the treatment is the basis of the positive outcome of the treatment. Our practice has shown that the majority of patients fail to stick to treatment, which usually lasts for 3-6 months. The reasons for this are various – lack of support from the family, underestimation of risk, unawareness of the importance of medication, difficulties dealing with the prescribed schedule of medication intake, bad tolerability of the medicines and others. In such cases, it was necessary to work with the families of the patients, who were supposed to be active participants in the follow-up treatment. It was our teams' role to provide support to patients and their families in the difficult process of adaptation to a long medical treatment, which if done, is successful. During the past year, in all localities, where there was a single person suffering from Tuberculosis, information sessions were held by medical practitioners and field-workers. These campaigns were to inform about symptoms of the disease, ways of transmission and prevention. During our meetings with the local population, we distributed hundreds of health education materials.

2.2. Program “Prevention and Control of HIV / AIDS, COMPONENT 7: “Reducing vulnerability to HIV of young people at greatest risk (age 15-24) by increasing the range of services and programs aimed at youth”

Funding: The Ministry of Health,
The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

Why: The necessity of carrying out activities under COMPONENT 7 by Amalipe Centre in Veliko Tarnovo region is caused by the fact that the health culture of young people in the field of sexual health is very low. The fact is that most young people who live in rural areas, have significantly more limited access

to quality education, and young people from the traditional Roma groups believe the topic of sexuality is a taboo and it is not to be spoken at home.

Goals: Increasing knowledge and competence among young people on sexual and reproductive health, prevention of HIV/AIDS and other sexually-transmitted infections, unwanted pregnancy, etc.

Methods, activities, results: 18 NGOs operate within the framework of program's COMPONENT 7 in various Bulgarian cities. They maintain youth volunteer groups for prevention and control of HIV/AIDS. Such group exists also in Veliko Tarnovo at Amalipe Center. The volunteers' activities consist in conducting information campaigns designed to reach as many young people as possible, and in distributing health education materials and condoms. Another major activity of the volunteers is the outreach work. Outreach work consists of reaching-out young people in their natural environment, counseling them on sexually transmitted infections, HIV/AIDS, methods of prevention of unwanted pregnancy, and motivating them for free and anonymous HIV testing at a special center, called KABKIS. The volunteers also conduct trainings on sexual and reproductive health. They work on the peer education method transmitting the learned information to other young people. The volunteers also undergo training conducted by training professionals in the given areas.

According to the data collected for 2012, the number of people reached-out during the fieldwork was 959, and during the campaigns – 5612. During the campaigns, fieldwork and trainings, 12 801 condoms and 11 463 health education materials were distributed.

During the year, dozens of peer-trainings were held in Veliko Turnovo and surrounding towns and villages. Two internal trainings of volunteers from K7 Club – Veliko Tarnovo (the volunteers' group) were held in order to increase their capacity. Topics discussed during the trainings were the following: male and female reproductive systems; hygiene of genital system; contraception; sexually transmitted infections; HIV/AIDS; fieldwork; psychoactive drugs; sexual intercourse; risky behavior, etc. The total number of young people trained was 280. The peer education method has worked successfully for years. Young people are the closest to their peers and can easily influence the formation of their opinion and attitudes. Due to the volunteers' work, we can observe a positive change of attitudes of other youngsters. Young people are becoming increasingly aware of the risks from undertaking unsafe sexual contacts, and share that they are going to use condoms during their sexual contacts after they have learnt about the possible risks.

The work of K7 Club in 2012 was smooth, but also dynamic. The volunteers found much more support, both from the people they met during the campaigns and fieldwork, and from their associates. Young people have demonstrated their abilities and skills by showing that they are ready to continue working during the next years.

In other eyes

“Since the first meeting with the K7 Club – Veliko Tarnovo, I have seen a lot of work done in a positive direction and activities towards an essential problem, which is not paid enough attention to. That is why I decided that I want to be a part of this club. The work is various, interesting, I perceive it as very useful. The whole team is fantastic, each activity is interesting and funny, team meetings are not felt like mandatory, I attend them willingly and eagerly, and the atmosphere is friendly.”

**Tsvetan Ivanov, 20 years old,
a volunteer at the K7 Club – Veliko Tarnovo**

“Me and my colleagues at the Youth club are very pleased to work with K7 Club – Veliko Tarnovo. Now people have confidence in them regarding work on programs related to HIV/AIDS. Young people are doing great. We admire them for having put a lot of effort into those things using the means of art.”

Rositsa Angelova, Youth’s club, Veliko Tarnovo

“It is very nice to work with the Center Amalipe! The work is diverse and the staff is very professional. They are extremely responsive and always support us. There are many young people working as volunteers in the K7 Club – Veliko Tarnovo in the Amalipe Center. Working with young people is very valuable, because it makes an access to and contacts with the target group much easier. Our joint campaigns have already become a tradition and we will continue to organize them together.”

**Dr. Ana Angelova, Directorate prevention of disease and
promotion of health at the Regional Health Inspectorate.**

2.3. Program: Scholarship program for medical students of Roma origin (Roma Health Scholarship Program)

Funding: Open Society Institute – Budapest

Goals: The main objective of the Program and training is to contribute to the improvement of the health status of members of the Roma community. Furthermore, we aim to provide worthy examples to follow for motivating young Roma to focus on a career in healthcare.

Activities and methods: The Scholarship program for medical students of Roma origin is made up of three complementary components:

- providing scholarships for students in higher medical and professional schools and colleges, as well as for doctors-postgraduates;
- mentoring of grantees in academic and professional issues;
- advocacy training.

The training involves building skills for personal development (communication, leadership skills, work in multi-ethnic environment, etc.), advocacy and giving information concerning the right of access to health care, legislation on protection against discrimination, the relevant elements of Bulgarian and European legislation. Advocacy training is usually conducted in two main areas – theoretical and practical. Some of the topics are related to the history, life and culture of the Roma, the reforms in the field of health care and their impact on ethnic groups, conflict resolution, social and health intervention in the community. On the other hand, the students also get practical experience in various localities near Veliko Tarnovo.

Amalipe Center for interethnic dialogue and tolerance – Veliko Tarnovo is selected for the implementation of the Advocacy component. The program is administered jointly by the Scholarship program of the Roma Education Fund (Budapest), “Roma health” project of the Open Society Institute – Budapest, and Open Society Institute – Sofia. Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health are also involved into the implementation of the project.

In other eyes

“The Advocacy training is an event, which I, as a fellow in the Program for the support of medical students of Roma origin, am looking forward to every summer. Thanks to it, I have learned many new things about the Roma community, its problems, and the ways to solve them. I met many people with whom, I believe, we will communicate further. At the seminar, I have also found my friends Anelia Ilieva and Hristina Velcheva, because of what I am extremely happy.”

**Miroslav Angelov, 26 years, Sofia, Second year student,
specialty “Medicine”, Medical University of Sofia**

“I have very good impressions from a few days in Veliko Tarnovo and our meetings with Teodora and Deyan. We got acquainted with the history, lifestyle, Romani cultural values, health issues of the Roma, rights and legislation; we also got training of expression in front of the camera, etc. Through the interpretation of Roma customs it didn't feel like we were on a mandatory training. We were not bored dealing with our tasks, quite the contrary, we were amazed. I am fascinated by the professionalism of Teodora Krumova and Deyan Kolev, who had organized everything so well, that the time for a walk was also turned into an educational activity. I think that at the end of the training, each of us was leaving with good feelings and desire to meet again!”

**Antoaneta Ivanova, Vladimirovo village,
municipality of Boychinovtsi, Montana district,
3rd year student, specialty – nurse,
Medical University of Sofia, Vratsa faculty**

“Advocacy training in the field of health care in 2012 was quite dynamic. When I came to the summer camp, I obtained a further insight into the problems, which we will have to solve in the future. I learned that in each issue, there are several responsible parties that must find the most favorable solution. The training helped me to learn the

tactics with which I can be useful, more restrained and patient. I believe that for the last two qualities there is more to ask of me!”

**Hristina Velcheva, 28, Sofia, 3rd year student,
specialty – Public Health and Health Management,
Medical University of Sofia.**

2.4. Community monitoring of healthcare services on local level

What: The aim of Community monitoring of healthcare services on local level is to develop, test, evaluate and implement a mechanism for the mobilization of the local community, using the method “social audit” in seven different localities within the territory of the municipalities of Veliko Tarnovo, Gorna Oryahovitsa and Pavlikeni.

Why: The program is an initiative, which started its activity in the beginning of 2011. Its common goal is to introduce a community monitoring of healthcare services in the Roma community in order to stimulate advocacy at the local level and to enable local communities to participate in the processes of municipality governance. In the long perspective, the program aims to improve health services and health status of Roma and other ethnic groups.

How: The model is based on the methodology of community monitoring through the so-called “community inquiry”, including periodical (twice a year) inquiring of local communities about health services they receive. To this, we add advocacy activities before local health institutions, as well as community campaigns intended in raising health culture. Besides this, we have expanded our scope by creating local community development groups in each of the villages where we hold these community inquiries. The experience gained through monitoring of health services at the local level in Veliko Tarnovo district is summarized in a report – in Bulgarian and English language.

An additional aim is to create the prerequisites for further expansion of the model in other municipalities and regions across Bulgaria in following years of the program. Our team was looking for open-minded people with potential who are willing to work for their community, and who believe that everything depends primarily on their personal involvement and civic activity.

Results: It is the second year that we work in the Kaltinec neighbourhood (town of Gorna Oryahovitsa), the villages of Vodolei and Ledenik (Veliko Tarnovo municipality), Batak, Varbovka, Satmbolovo and Byala Cherkva town (Pavlikeni municipality).

Our first task was to support small local initiatives that lead to the mobilization of the community and which motivate people to believe in their own strength and capabilities. These were various sport and cultural activities at the local level.

Then, in 2012, we have conducted two studies using the “community inquiry” method. This included interviewing literally from door to door, and aimed at assessment of the respondents’ access to healthcare services. Some of the questions concerned health-insurance status, others – women’s and children’s healthcare, access to emergency care, hospital and primary care. 498 respondents participated in both studies held in 2012 – women between the age of 18 and 60. Interviewing was held by nearly 50 volunteers who were trained for working with questionnaires and the problematic area.

For the purposes of the program in the project localities, AdvocacyCenter has established local clubs for community development, whose activities are coordinated by two municipal Community Development Centers, situated in Veliko Tarnovo and Pavlikeni. The Centers work on the problems of community mobilization and assist the process of identifying the problems of the individuals as community problems, which is perceived as the first step in approaching the problematic issues.

For the next year 2013, the fundamental objective of the community monitoring of health services will be to promote the interaction of local people with healthcare providers and health authorities at the local level, including general practitioners and dentists, hospitals, Regional health inspection and emergency rooms, because citizens are the ones who must have to keep the institutions accountable for the quality and accessibility of healthcare services.

3

FIELDWORK AND SOCIAL SERVICES IN THE ROMA COMMUNITY

In 2012 Amalipe Center continued to work in the field of social integration of Roma community. During 2012 with great success and enthusiasm on the territory of the country worked eleven Community Development Centers in the municipalities Peshtera, Novi Pazar, Etropole, Byala Slatina, Kameno, Pavlikeni, Veliko Tarnovo, Strazhitza / Lyaskovets, Dolna Banya, Knezha and Radnevo . The centers were specifically designed to work in the Roma community (including among traditional and marginalized groups) and to support the development and modernization of the local communities.

3.1. Project: “Promoting participatory field work in traditional and marginalized groups of the Roma community”

Donor: DG “Justice” of the European Commission
in the framework of the Daphne Program

Why: To help the development of Roma community by overcoming certain traditional practices, such as early marriages and dropping out of school, establishing mechanisms for self-organization and mutual assistance in the Roma community and establishment of community based services.

Objective: The main objective is empowering and increasing the community capacity and development of opportunities for social realization (with a particular focus on young people and women from the Roma community).

Approach and activities: In 2012 the six Community Development Centers continued their work on the project – the centers are innovative service, that is based in the community for strengthening the field work at the local level in the municipalities of Peshtera, Novi pazar, Kameno, Etropole, Byala Slatina and Pavlikeni. In each of the centers are working two community moderators. The community development centers work for both – the single individual and family and for the entire local community. The main engine in their functioning is the idea of activating the entire community: from the youngest child in the neighborhood, village, town and municipality, adolescents to the oldest local resident. The work focus of the centers and community moderators is not the individuals themselves but the com-

munity as a whole. The community moderators are in constant contact with the community, with its problems and successes.

The activity of the moderators of the Community Development Centers is aimed primarily at:

- Performing field work – finding cases, “primary intervention” work, establishing initial contact, mediation between the local community and institutions;
- Mapping the Roma community – for this purpose the moderators are visiting every house in the Roma community and based on a survey and conversations they identify risks and develop appropriate prevention activities;
- Creating Community mechanisms for mutual assistance, interest groups and social structures in the Roma community.

The Moderator:

- Assists teachers and school management in attracting and retaining children in school, including the implementation of school programs for dropout prevention, for organizing Parent club with participation of Roma parents;
- Works with the local community on issues for improving health education and personal hygiene – for this purpose information campaigns are conducted in order to inform the target group about the benefits of vaccinations and immunizations;
- Organizes cultural events and celebrations of traditional calendar holiday;
- Organizes Roma parents for presentation and discussion of issues concerning the upbringing of children and enhancing parenting skills and expertise;
- Assists in the formation of interest groups: youth clubs, women’s clubs, leadership groups and others;
- Organizes campaigns in the community

Results:

- 54 children and young people were reintegrated in school;
- 122 cases of prevention of school dropout;
- 60 children are attending preparatory group for school readiness after the intervention of the moderators.
- 90 children are registered in kindergarten;
- 4 cases of prevention of child abandonment in institutions;
- 4 cases of prevention of violence against children;
- Successfully resolved 8 cases of early marriages, as the young people were returned back to school;
- We were able to help 12 young people from the municipalities where we have established community development centers to continue their education at universities;
- 10 cases of referrals to social services for allocation of funds for treatment of illness;
- 4 cases in support of homeless people;
- Creation of Youth Clubs to CDC;

- Creation of sports clubs to CDC, with the idea young people from the community to build team skills, communication skills and self-improvement.
- Establishment of creative workshops to CDC, for rationalization of leisure time, for developing imagination and thinking, prevention of school dropout, preventing aggression.
- 10 computer clubs established are for the local community to develop computer skills and to promote information culture of the local population. The clubs are equipped with computers donated by the municipality of Lausanne, Swiss Embassy and the Bulgarian-Swiss Chamber of Commerce.

In other eyes

“These are young, interested, proactive, communicative people, participating in our new literacy project,” activating the inactive people”, activities in partnership with the municipality, we always get invited. There is a need for what they have done; many things have been able to do. Most importantly they encourage people to engage in municipal life and they assist them. I can not break the law and help all, but such an organization can find a way and when we are together we can do better.”

Director of Directorate “Labor bureau”

“We go to the neighborhood when there is a problem, or when we receive a signal, while the people from the Center are there all the time. We also go very often, but our efforts are not always successful, as they always succeed.”

Head of the Department for Child Protection

“They organize parent meetings on the field. We also have organized parent meetings, but when they organize it, 100% of the parents are coming. We never manage to gather all of them.”

**A principal of school in a municipality
where Community Development Center is established**

3.2. Project: “Promoting social inclusion of young people in marginalized Roma communities in rural areas”

Donor: DG “Employment” of the European Commission under the PROGRESS Program

Why: Via this project in the field of employment Amalipe Center directs its efforts in increasing the levels of employment and successful realization of one of the most vulnerable groups in Bulgaria – young people from rural areas.

Objective: Overcoming social exclusion of young people from vulnerable rural Roma communities through the development and testing of innovative services that are based in the community.

Approaches and activities: The project is based on the assumption that the reasons for social exclusion are not only poverty, but also lack of social structures within the local community. The services based in the community are an effective way to support the creation of community social structures and for accelerating social inclusion. Therefore, the project promotes the methodology, which includes three aspects:

– The establishment of community development centers as a framework for the development and testing of innovative forms of community-based services in marginalized rural Roma communities;

– Using the method for “social experimentation”: the project will develop in a relatively small scale, an innovative approach and specific innovative forms of service, that are community-based, for employment creation and social inclusion of young people from marginalized rural Roma communities;

– The project applies effective method of coordinating the efforts of the responsible institutions, NGOs and local government for rural development. The main project activities include:

- Screening of Roma groups on the territory – survey and mapping;
- Identify opportunities for creating employment – local and regional businesses, opportunities for self-employment;
- Analysis of the skills and attitudes of young people in the Roma community and other ethnic groups;
- Promoting social inclusion of young people and mobilizing the community members;
- Analysis of socio-economic status of the community and the territory;
- Development and validation of CDC among local authorities, educational and social institutions, businesses, NGOs and others;
- Education and training of moderators and other stakeholders;
- Support of activities related to education and training;
- Exchange of experience and good practice between centers.

Results:

- In 2012, 4 Community Development Centers, were established in the municipalities Radnevo, Strajitsa / Liaskovec, Knezha and Dolna Banya;
- Providing assistance for medical access and social services – conduction of prophylactic events;
- Assistance and consulting on access to social services and education;
- Identifying groups for further training and professional qualification groups – 15 people;
- Organizing crafts stands and the participation of local craftsman;
- Identification of young farmers;
- Identification of employment related to tourism;

- Joint work with employment bureaus (organizing the community for inclusion in optional qualification courses and training);
- Meetings with employers;
- Identifying the employers needs;
- Assistance for employment in construction – 10 people;
- Organizing women for the production of local products – over 10 people.

In other eyes

“When a person is sincere and really wants to help others, people can sense this. I am one of them, and they accepted me. I like my job because I am not limited to work only in one field – starting with keeping children in school, conducting informational discussions within the community and finding employment – for me this is the formula for development and modernization of the Roma community.”

Elena Alexieva – moderator CDC, town of Knezha

“This is the first forum in which non-traditional forms of integration are considered- it includes everything – education, employment, property ... What Amalipe Center is doing should be used – the entire database of information and statistics, gathered through questionnaires and studies among the Roma community. I think institutions and NGOs need to achieve synergy. Shocking are the numbers of youth unemployment, employment is a very important element. Roma issues are resolved the best at local level.”

**Georgi Krastev – Vile – Chairman of NCCEII,
speaking at a conference on the occasion of the project development**

“For us, the results of the survey among Roma community in small towns in rural areas, within the project framework is extremely beneficial because so far there is a lack of integrated approach between the various measures that could be financed by EU funds. The project experience will give the correct formula if this is the way for employment of young people from rural areas. It is important to see how to bind early school leaving, the education system and the role of the labor market.”

**Zornitsa Russinova – Deputy Minister of Labor and Social Policy,
speaking at a conference on the occasion of the project development**

4

COMBATING ANTI-ROMA STEREOTYPES AND PREJUDICES

The lack of a broad public support for the Roma integration policies is one of the main obstacles to the implementation of these policies. We do not blame the majority for prejudices against Roma, because we believe that the moral categories relate primarily to the individual, rather than to a group of people. For this reason, during the past year (2012) we implemented projects aimed at overcoming stereotypes and prejudices against Roma people.

4.1. Project: „To Touch the Untouchable: Combating Traditional and New Anti-Roma Stereotypes”

Financing: DG Justice of the European Commission within Fundamental Rights and Citizenship Program.

Why: Anti-Roma attitudes are worrisome fact which must mobilize all Bulgarian citizens with democratic beliefs: overcoming anti-Roma racism and the creation of a favourable environment for the implementation of the integration policy are the tasks in front of our entire society.

Particularly troubling are the anti-Roma stereotypes among those who work directly with children and families: teachers, doctors, social workers. Stereotypes hamper the effective work in the Roma community and thus damage the Roma population, as well as the entire society.

Goal: The aim of the project is to build a model for overcoming the anti-Roma stereotypes and prejudices among educational, social and health field workers, and to foster mutual understanding and cross-sectoral cooperation between the educational, health and social institutions, as well as for cooperation with the Roma communities to ensure that all members of vulnerable communities like Roma equally enjoy their fundamental rights.

Approaches, Activities, and Results: At the beginning of the project year we selected six pilot geographical areas, in which the project was developed and where the model was tested – Veliko Tarnovo, Vratsa, Pazardjik, Burgas, Shumen and Sofia region. To determine the level of anti-Roma attitudes among teachers, doctors and social workers, we conducted public opinion polls, first one at the beginning of the project and the second one at the end, which were to determine the level of stereotypes, and the change in attitudes under the impact of project activities.

In the initial study, the responses of the randomly selected field workers proved the high level of anti-Roma attitudes and stereotypes, and hence the extreme need of a project which would propose a model for overcoming them. A survey conducted among field workers at the end of the project showed a significant improvement among nearly 20% of them, which was gained by the project activities.

As the primary mechanism for the testing the model of cooperation within the framework of the project was the creation of Joint Task Forces (Intersectoral mobile teams) in six pilot areas. Each team consisted of representatives of the Regional Educational Inspectorate, Regional Health Inspection, Regional Directorate for Social Assistance and a moderator from the Community Development Center. The teams have been trained to perform two major tasks: to organize follow-up trainings for colleagues in their own institutions or field workers in the given field in order to help them overcome prejudices and discrimination; and to react on specific cases of discrimination against Roma on the field or in other institutions and apply a multisectoral approach in solving it.

These intersectoral mobile teams have consistently trained 2 groups of 30 participants each (10 representatives from each profession – teachers, health workers, social workers) in every of the 6 districts, i.e. 360 field workers. Every cycle of training consisted of 7 modules. For the purpose of these trainings Amalipe Center prepared and issued tutorials, for the trainers and trainees respectively. The tutorials contained the introduction into the cultural context and nature of the Roma community, as well as practical tasks to prepare students for specific situations.

By December 31, 2012 all the modules with two groups of trainees were completed. Solving the specific problem situations in the Roma community made the Intersectoral mobile teams popular and respected among the field workers and even turned them into “the institution”, in which the help was sought. Thanks to the enterprising spirit and enthusiasm of the regional teams there were also conducted several major campaigns: on occasion of St. Basil’s Day (the “Romani New Year”), The European Day of Languages 26 September, The Day of the Roma Pride, the Day of Tolerance 16 November, etc.

At the end of the project activities we conducted the same survey as the initial one with the field workers who have passed the anti-stereotypes training. The comparison showed change in the attitudes of around 20 % of the field workers who have passed the main project activities. This is a significant outcome, it indicates that change in the stereotypes of the teachers, doctors and social workers towards Roma is possible and the model tested within the project “To touch the Untouchable” could lead to this change. The new challenge now is to make it sustainable and viable in more regions of Bulgaria.

In other eyes

“I would like to thank to the team of Amalipe for showing us once again how to work with people from different areas and make a team of them. I admire their enthusiasm and the precision with which they selected topics. My expectations from the work on this project were fulfilled. I also hope for future cooperation.”

**Milka Mihaylova, senior expert in Regional Inspectorate
of Education, city of Veliko Tarnovo**

One of the main objectives of the Amalipe Center is providing equal chances for Romani women and encourage their more active role in public and political life. This is a cross-cutting principle of the organization.

In 2012 Center Amalipe worked in several directions regarding:

1. Including the problems of Romani women in the Roma integration agenda.

Amalipe Center pays special attention to advocacy activities for including the problems of the Romani women into the general and targeted policies, as well as to its reports for monitoring and evaluation of various policies – whether they take into account the gender aspect and what is their impact on the role and the situation of Roma women. As a result, although it was not designed as a separate chapter, the policy for the improvement of the status of Romani women was enshrined as a horizontal principle into the Bulgarian National Strategy for Roma Integration adopted by the Council of Ministers on 21 December 2011 and passed by the National Assembly on 1 March 2012.

2. Promotion of activities aimed at activization of Roma women. In the activities, which Amalipe Center implements for community development, gender equality and increasing of the Roma women's capacity is a major focus. In 2012, Amalipe Center has created four more Centers for community development. The organization's equality policy was purposefully implemented also in the selection of community moderators in the Centers – half of the moderators appointed were Romani women. Moreover, the main focus in the activity of the centres is directed towards work with women and children – prevention of early marriages, prevention of violence, reduce dropouts from schools, encouraging women and girls to obtain a higher level of education.

3. Since 2005, Amalipe Center is a **member of the Bulgarian platform of the European women's lobby**. From 2010 to 2012, Teodora Krumova was a Secretary of the Bulgarian platform and a member of the Board of EWL. As a result, and thanks to the efforts of other Roma organizations participating in the European platform, in 2012 the problems of Romani women continued to actively participate in the agenda and policies of the EWL. In 2012 on the initiative and with the active participation of Amalipe Center a position paper "Tackling multiple discrimination of Romani and Traveller Women – a crucial factor for the successful implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategies" was issued. The position was approved in December 2012. More information can be found on <http://womenlobby.org/spip.php?article4415&lang=en>.

6

PRESERVATION, PROMOTION AND RENEWAL OF ROMA CULTURE

6.1. Roma Children's festival "Open Heart"

Why: To turn the joy in children's eyes, the colorful folk costumes and resonant music in an unforgettable experience! Because when a child dreams, this is a dream. When many children dream – this is the beginning of a beautiful reality!

Objective: The aim of the festival is to give children from different ethnic groups the opportunity to express themselves and to encourage in them a lasting interest in the learning process as a whole. The main idea is to show that the folklore of each ethnic group has its cultural heritage which is indispensable for the existence and our communication as a unified nation. The festival aims at the preservation, development and promotion of Roma culture and folklore. The festival is on the scene to bring children from different ethnic groups together and to unite them under a common idea "The world is for everyone".

How: In 2012 for ninth consecutive year Amalipe Center organized and conducted the International Roma Children's Festival "Open Heart". In June 9th and 10th in Marno Pole Park, Veliko Tarnovo, our stage attracted more than 1300 students and children from 94 groups of different ethnic background across the country, included in Roma folklore classes or in outclass activities, aiming at educational integration. Along with the stage program during the Festival is organized a Workshop for extracurricular activities and applied arts, aimed at educational integration within which each school may submit work in the form of exhibitions, posters and other materials that students have made during the school year. Official guests, who supported with their presence the importance of the event were: Anna-Mari Vilamovska, Secretary on Education and Science to the President of the Republic of Bulgaria, Sarah Perrin – Program Director of the "America for Bulgaria" Foundation, Simeon Blagoev – Representative of the Ministry of Culture, Tania Radochay, director of UNICEF Bulgaria, prof. Abidzhit Das – India and Mrs. Erin Howe – New York. Besides children and young people from across the country participation in the ninth edition of the festival took students from music section at school "Brothers Miladinovi", village of Miladinovtze and National Roma Center, town of Kumanovo, Macedonia,

which give the festival Balkan dimension. The festival program combined the traditions, crafts, elements of fairy and music folklore, history, life and culture of Bulgarian, Romani, Turkish and other ethnic groups represented in a unique way by the children of Bulgaria.

In other eyes

“Since its beginning this festival enchanted with its simplicity and naturally became a traditional one. Your art is met with admiration and gratitude, and that makes us happy, and especially proud of. The Festival has become your day of reckoning and cause for celebration.”

Rosalia Licheva, head of RIE Veliko Tarnovo

“I welcome the efforts of the organizers for the establishment of this forum that not only stimulate interest and love of folklore, and promote tolerance.”

Vezhdi Rashidov, Minister of Culture of Bulgaria

“In the past years, the festival has established itself as a national forum for the creative expression of children from different ethnic groups in Bulgaria. It has contributed to the preservation and development of folk values and traditions, and for the education of young people in inter-ethnic tolerance and acceptance.”

T. Mladenov, Minister of Labour and Social Policy of Bulgaria

6.2. Textbooks on Ethnic Folklore and interactive CDs

In the past year Amalipe updated and strengthened the teaching set of materials for the study of Roma folklore classes. The updated editions of the two textbooks “Stories by the fireplace” and “Narrated roads” as well as two interactive CDS to them were published. The textbooks provide new materials, the results of operations of the schools in recent years. Many students and teachers will see in them the fruit of their efforts - collected photos, stories and fairy tales. Much more are the holiday photographs representing the way in which students from different schools in the country studying “Ethnic Folklore – Roma Folklore” celebrate today. Special attention in the updated textbooks is paid to several important topics: Roma family and its appearance today, values in the Roma culture and how they could contribute to the change of the macro-society, stereotypes and prejudices, the role of women in the Roma culture and etc.

Interactive CDs follow the structure of the textbooks and provide additional information and tasks for students in interesting, varied and provocative way. They give children the opportunity to work with interactive maps, arranged puzzles from old photos to see what the costumes of the various Roma groups were in the past and today, and play many games.

7.1 Roma Pride – the Day of Roma culture and pride

“Roma Pride” is an international initiative, under the aegis of EGAM (European Grassroots Antiracist Movement), orientated towards the Roma communities in Europe encouraging them to organize initiatives, in order to show their pride in their origin and culture. Thus, EGAM tries to attract the public attention to the problems of one of the largest minorities in Europe. Roma Pride is an event, happening throughout Europe, coordinated by many organizations, based in different countries and working in the sphere of human rights, combating racism and anti-discrimination.

For a second year Amalipe Center for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance organised the celebration of the Day of Roma culture and pride in Bulgaria. Varied events, arousing extensive interest and attracting many people were held within the days between 5 and 8 October. One of the initiatives, organised by Amalipe Centre was the VT FILM FEST, which was the first film fest in Veliko Tarnovo dedicated to the “Roma question”. The festival was organized with the assistance of the French Embassy in Bulgaria, the French Institute, the European Commission, the Council of Europe, club “Taralej” (Hedgehog), club “Melon”, VT events, EGAM, and Art Summer. The main idea of the film fest was to show a good selection of independent, high quality films from all over the world, in different genres, concerning the fight against intolerance and discrimination. Films, dedicated to issues concerning the interaction between Roma people and the majority population, internal problems of the community, and the Roma traditions and customs were screened within the festival. Films from Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France and Germany were shown. In the first eve of VT FILM FEST the characters from the film “Going to Italy”, who are indeed one of the best bands of Roma origin in Bulgaria – Karandila Junior Orchestra, had an outdoor concert.

The Day of the Roma culture and pride was marked by many initiatives in the places where Amalipe Centre runs Community Development Centres and local clubs. They carried out different events such as exhibitions, presentation of diplomas for higher education, traditional Roma songs and dances, traditional Roma handicrafts, souvenir articles, national costumes and pictures from Roma weddings. The events were honoured by representatives of the municipal administrations, representatives of the local governmental institutions / Social Assistance Directorates, Labour Bureaus / representatives of schools, health services, kindergartens and social services. Great interest in the initiative was demonstrated by all ethnos of the local population. The campaign was well accepted.

7.2 Vasilitsa – the Roma New Year

The events from the National celebrations of the traditional calendar feast Vasilitsa, organised by Amalipe Centre on 13 January 2012 were marked by their unprecedented scale and interest shown. Within a single day, in more than 70 schools, the celebrations gathered Roma and Bulgarian pupils from all over the country in order to show that they can both study the Roma traditions, and have fun together. The Community Development Centres brought the holiday to the local communities – even in regions and groups, amongst which it has not been celebrated for quite a long time. Dozens of mayors have been patted on their backs with the *survaknitsa* (traditional “magic” tree) for good health, success and more attention to the Roma people. The custom of *survakane* was also performed in front of the Heads of the Regional Education Inspectorates, the Regional health inspectorates and the Regional Directorates for social assistance from around the country.

Pupils, studying Roma folklore classes were heartily accepted by the Vice Prime Minister and Chairman of the National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues Tsvetan Tsvetanov, the Minister of the Euro Funds Tomislav Donchev, the Minister of Education Sergey Ignatov, the Minister of Labour and Social Policy Totyu Mladenov, the Deputy-Minister of Healthcare Desislava Dimitrova. Besides the New Year wishes in Roma and Bulgarian language, the pupils and their teachers told the politicians ideas for what needs to be done in order to support their efforts for better education. “Bahtalo Nevo Bresh!” was also addressed to the Ambassadors of the USA, France and Great Britain, who also received groups of pupils from around the country.

Together children and teachers, Roma and Bulgarians brought the feast from their homes and community into the “corridors of power” in Sofia. Their aim was to unite the efforts of schools, Community Development Centres, embassies and institutions of the executive power in the name of a better future for the Roma and Bulgarian children. For, as one of the little participants in the celebrations wrote: “We’re all angels with a single wing and we can fly only if we hug each other”.

In 2013 Amalipe Centre continued publishing reports and analyses. These summarize the experience piled in the various spheres of activity of the organization and offer a systematization of the field-tested models.

The report “European Funds and Roma integration in Bulgaria 2010 – 2011” is a continuation of the analogous report published two years ago “European structural funds and Roma integration in Bulgaria – 2007–2009”. It expands the basic observations with information about what happened in 2010 and 2011 in terms of implementation of the Operational Program Human Resources Development, Operational Program Regional Development, the Rural Regions Development Program and the effects of the implementation of these programs on the process of integration of Roma people. The report also offers recommendations, concerning:

- optimisation of implementation of the three programs within the present program period;
- inclusion of the Roma integration topic in the texts of the three programmes for the next program period;
- proposals for complete optimisation of utilisation of the European Funds for integration of Roma people: through introduction of Sectoral and inter-sectoral Integration Interventions, and through working out of a comprehensive Plan with programs to support the implementation of the National Roma integration Strategy.

The report is published in Bulgarian language.

The collection of materials “Monitoring and evaluation of National Roma Integration Strategies” summarises the significant findings, conclusions and recommendations from the analogical Hearing, organised by Amalipe Centre in Brussels on 26 June 2012. The collection contains:

- the report “Chapters on monitoring and evaluation within the National Roma Integration Strategies: the challenges ahead”, prepared by Jose-Manuel Fresno;
- the report “Good practices for monitoring of initiatives for Roma integration”, prepared by Dimitar Dimitrov and Mariana Milosheva;
- recommendations for comprehensive mechanism for monitoring and evaluation of the National Roma Integration Strategies, systematised by Dean Kolev and Valeriu Nikolae

The collection of materials is published in English language.

The report “Community monitoring of health services in the municipalities of Pavlikeni and Veliko Tarnovo” summarizes the experience from implementation of the project “Community monitoring of health services in the Roma community: intensification of the community mobilisation and advocacy”, implemented by Amalipe Centre in 2011. The purpose of the report is to represent the objective status and to provide assessment of the access to health services for vulnerable ethnic groups in the project settlements, which consequently will provide the opportunity for the local communities to request its further improvement in long-term plan.

The report contains basic information about the settlements and the condition of the Roma community. It provides answers to the questions, related to the access to health services and at the same time, formulates the conclusions and recommendations, which must initiate a change in terms of the existing practice for their provision on a national scale.

The report is published in Bulgarian and English language.

In 2012 we continued publishing the Monthly newsletter “Amalipe”. The newsletter presents the activities, implemented in the respective month, information about the development of the policies for integration of Roma people, as well as analyses. The newsletter is printed in Bulgarian and English language, and as a soft copy, it is also available on the web-site of Amalipe Centre, “News Archive” section (<http://amalipe.com/index.php?nav=bulletins>)

Traditionally, advocacy has been one of the strongest spheres of operation of Amalipe and the organization is recognised – by national and European institutions, by the foreign embassies in Sofia, and by the civil structures – as the most active and successful Roma advocacy organization in Bulgaria. In 2012 Amalipe Centre continued in pursuing advocacy activity on national level, and expanded it through advocacy on European Union's level.

Advocacy for a certain cause has always been a collective game. For this reason, the support and partnership of World Without Borders Association – Stara Zagora, New Road Association – Hayredin, the Roma Academy for Culture and Education – Sliven, Foundation S.E.G.A., Open Society Institute, the National Network for Children and a number of other organisations in Bulgaria, as well as of the National Roma Centre (Macedonia), Romani CRISS and Sastipen (Romania), the European Roma Information Office (Brussels), were of extreme importance.

The participation of high-standing politicians in the advocacy forums we organised was clear indication about the reputation and trust Amalipe enjoys as an advocacy organization, as well as about the public significance of the set goals. The Vice Prime Minister Tsvetan Tsvetanov, the Minister of EU Funds – Tomislav Donchev, the Minister of Education Sergey Ignatov, the Minister of Labour and Social Policy – Totyu Mladenov, the Secretary of the President for Education – Anna-Marie Vilamovska, Deputy-Ministers of education, healthcare, labour and social policy, the Deputy Chairperson of NCCEII – Georgi Krastev and many others took part in advocacy events, organized by Amalipe. Representatives of the European Commission also took part in forums, organised by us: for example, the hearing of the monitoring and evaluation of the National Roma Strategies, which we organised in Brussels was attended by European MPs and by more than 10 representatives of 3 General Directorates in the European Commission, including the Head of the Roma Coordination Unit – Lina Papamichalopoulou. Extremely important for us was also the support demonstrated by the Ambassadors of the USA, France, Great Britain and Poland, who participated in forums, organized by Amalipe Center. All of this contributed for working out and implementation of the integration policy in 2012 – along with its strengths and weaknesses.

Our main advocacy goals in Bulgaria in 2012 were:

1. Turning of the National Strategy for Roma Integration (NSRI) into a real working document: Amalipe Centre and our partners from the Roma civil organisations participated actively in elaboration of the National Strategy of Republic of Bulgaria for Roma Integration (NSRBRI) in 2011. To make this document different from the existing good, but not working strategies, we set as our goal to have the National Strategy approved by act of the National Assembly, and along with it – a particular plan with

programs / operations, through which the implementation of the strategy will be financed, and municipal plans for integration to be elaborated, through which the implementation of the National Strategy will reach the local / municipal level.

In 2012 we managed to achieve some of the goals specified. On 1 March 2012 the National Assembly unanimously approved NSRBRI by virtue of special Resolution: thus, for the first time the integration policy was raised to a level of national priority, mandatory for all institutions and persons in Bulgaria. However, we didn't manage to succeed in the adoption of the proposal "Programs to support the implementation of the National Strategy for Roma Integration", which was the most specific and stronger part of the strategy: it was deposited to a coordination procedure at the Council of Ministers, but it was neither accepted, nor rejected. We made every effort throughout the year to have the document considered and approved: at the end of 2012 this task was taken by the Interdepartmental task force for resource provision of Roma integration, chaired by Minister Donchev and we expect in the first weeks of 2013 the updated Plan to be approved.

In June and July Amalipe Centre, together with our partners from the "World without borders" Association – Stara Zagora, Association "New Road" – Hayredin and the Roma Academy for Culture and Education – Sliven, organized advocacy activities for elaboration of municipal plans for Roma integration. We brought up this question at the conference "National Strategy for Roma Integration – a view to the next program period", which we organized in conjunction with the National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues and with the Minister of EU Funds – T. Donchev on 15 June (<http://www.amalipe.com/index.php?nav=news&id=1215&lang=1>). A month later we initiated the beginning of this process in 10 municipalities, where Community Development Centres operate and conducted training of local Roma active members and a joint camp for municipal councillors, municipal officials and Roma activists (<http://www.amalipe.com/index.php?nav=news&date=30.07.2012&lang=1>). On national level, the front office of NCCEII and the Vice Prime Minister and Chairman of NCCEII personally took on the commitment that all municipalities would elaborate Municipal plans for integration, and District strategies for implementation of the NSRI would also need to be prepared. Pilot implementation of this process was realized in October – November in three municipalities in Sofia District, one of which was Dolna Banya, where since June a Community Development Centre has been operating. Thanks to the active participation of the Community Development Centre and to the entire team of Amalipe within the process, the Municipal plan of Dolna Banya was determined as the best one.

November 15 marked the beginning of the process for elaboration of municipal plans and district strategies for Roma integration all over the country. The process is guided by NCCEII. Through its regional coordinators and community moderators, supervised by the expert Yulia Grigorova, Amalipe Centre takes an active part in the process.

2. Improving the institutional framework for implementation of the Roma integration policy: two interdepartmental commissions, foreseen in the NSRI were created in 2012: Interdepartmental working group for normative changes in relation to application of the NSRI and Interdepartmental Task Force for resource support of the Roma integration using means from the EU Funds. After a selection procedure both groups included representatives of the NGOs, apart from the specific departmental institutions. Amalipe Centre took an active part in both tasks forces.

The Task force for resource provision of the Roma integration was chaired by the Minister of EU Funds. Specific departmental Deputy-Ministers – chairman of Managing authorities and Intermediate bodies within the Operational Programme Human Resources Development (OPHRD), Operational Programme Regional Development (OPRD) and the Rural Areas Development Programme (RADP) participate in it. Before the end of 2012 the Task force approved the idea proposed by Amalipe Centre about definition of standardised Integration interventions as well as two particular proposals for such interventions – Community Centre and Intervention for prevention of the dropping out of school. The Task force approved in general the elaboration of Plan with activities to support the implementation of NSRI in the present and new program period. The proposals accepted would be further developed in detail on an expert level in the first weeks of 2013.

The Group for normative changes is chaired by Desislava Zamfirova, Head of the Office of the Vice Prime Minister Tsvetanov. This group comprises experts from almost all ministries as well as NGOs. Amalipe Centre participates in the sub-group on education and deposited many proposals – for changes in the criteria for “protected schools”, for provision of free transport for pupils in the secondary schools, for banning the segregation of Roma children in separate classes and schools, etc. Until the end of 2012 the work of the group for regulatory changes was slow and encountered great difficulties, for which reason no proposals were accepted;

3. Defining standardised Integration interventions: although for the last 15 years numerous organisations and institutions piloted different successful practices in the different spheres of the integration policy (education, healthcare, etc.), a major part of them were not standardised and thus, have not turned into models. As a result from this, it is not clear where to direct a more significant financial resource, and even if that happens – there is no guarantee that efficient activities will be implemented. The lack of standardised models is one of the major obstacles in direction of larger funds from the European Funds for Roma Integration.

In 2012 Amalipe Centre formulated the idea of definition of Sectoral and Inter-sectoral Integration interventions and started advocacy activities in this direction. According to our understanding, which enjoyed the full support of our colleagues from a wide variety of NGOs, working for the integration of Roma people, the Integration interventions represent standardised successful practices / models. These can be sectoral (when comprising one sphere – e.g. education) or inter-sectoral (if they comprise more than one sphere). The Integration interventions should have their own methodology, describing the main elements of intervention, and a financial standard. The goal of their standardisation is to ensure their correct and thorough application: including all essential elements/activities for the respective intervention. Introduction of financial standard for each of the interventions is a precondition for its sustainable (beyond the particular projects) financing. The funds necessary for application of the integration interventions should be secured from the state budget or through the Operational Program Human Resources Development, Operational Program Regional Development, and the Rural Regions Development Program.

We formulated the idea for the integration interventions during the conference „National Strategy for Roma Integration – a view to the next program period” (<http://>

www.amalipe.com/index.php?nav=news&id=1215&lang=1), and it was supported by the Minister of EU Funds – Tomislav Donchev and by the Deputy-Minister of Labour Zornitsa Rusinova. The concept of the Integration interventions was considered and approved on 31 October during the session of the Interdepartmental Task Force for Resource Funding of Roma Integration (<http://www.amalipe.com/index.php?nav=news&id=1358&lang=1>). During its next session (held on 11 December) the Interdepartmental group approved in principle the first two interventions – Community Centre and Intervention for prevention the dropping out of school (<http://www.amalipe.com/index.php?nav=news&id=1410&lang=1>). In addition, we launched advocacy activities for provision of financing of the integration interventions through the new Operational Program Human Resources Development;

4. Binding of the European Funds over the new programme period with Roma integration: the European Funds come up as one of the main instruments for financing policies for social inclusion, including the policy for Roma integration. In 2012 began the preparation of the new operational programs. Amalipe Centre took an active part in this process. The Chairman of Amalipe Deyan Kolev was elected as the representative of NGOs, working for the integration of Roma people in the Working Group for preparation of the new Operational Program Human Resources Development. Upon consultations with the rest of the organisations, which were admitted to participation in the procedure for selection, we formulated several main demands towards the new OPHRD: inclusion of investment priority “Integration of marginalized communities such as the Roma” as one of the main priorities in the programme, inclusion of option for financing the Municipal plans for integration and the Integration interventions through the OPHRD, more serious commitment of the NGOs in the process of implementation of the new OPHRD (including through global grants).

At the end of 2012 elaboration of OPHRD was still in its beginning. The concept of the program and the first draft of the OPHRD included investment priority “Integration of marginalized communities such as the Roma”. That is a serious precondition for financing the implementation of the National Strategy for Roma Integration through OPHRD.

In the same time we initiated activities for inclusion of the subject for Roma integration in the new Rural Regions Development Program and in the Operational Program Regional Development. Our efforts in this direction were supported by the respective Chief Directorates of the European Commission, and of the Minister of European Union Funds.

5. Inclusion of the subject of educational integration in the new Pre-school and School Education Act: we continued our efforts from 2010 and 2011 in this direction. The draft-act, deposited in February 2012 in the National Assembly contained almost all proposals of the Roma NGOs, including an anti-segregation clause and proposal for creating a standard for inter-cultural education.

The main goals of the advocacy activities, we organised on European level were connected with:

1. Intensifying the commitment of the European Commission for inclusion of the topic for the Roma integration in the new operational programs operating in the mem-

ber-states with numerous Roma population: since the programs represent a joint commitment of the respective national government and of the European Commission, inclusion of Roma integration can be upheld by each of the two parties. The European Commission established a good basis about this in 2011 – both through the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies and through the proposals for new Regulations of the European Social Fund, European Regional Development Fund and European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development;

2. Intensifying of the commitment of the European Commission for monitoring of implementation of the National Strategies for Roma Integration by the EU member-states: grounding on our previous experience we are convinced that the more serious the commitment of the European Commission is, the stronger is the determination of the National governments to implement integration policies;

3. Formulating mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the National Strategies for Roma Integration on national, European and program level, which includes participation of the civil sector (through various forms of shadow reporting etc.) and of the local communities (through various forms of community monitoring): on June 26 we initiated a debate in this direction through organizing the Hearing „Monitoring and Evaluation of the National Strategies for Roma Integration” (<http://www.amalipe.com/index.php?nav=news&id=1236&lang=1>). The fact that the event gathered representatives of the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Fundamental Rights Agency and national governments was an indicator of not just the respect Amalipe Centre enjoys, but also of the readiness for dialogue on these issues.

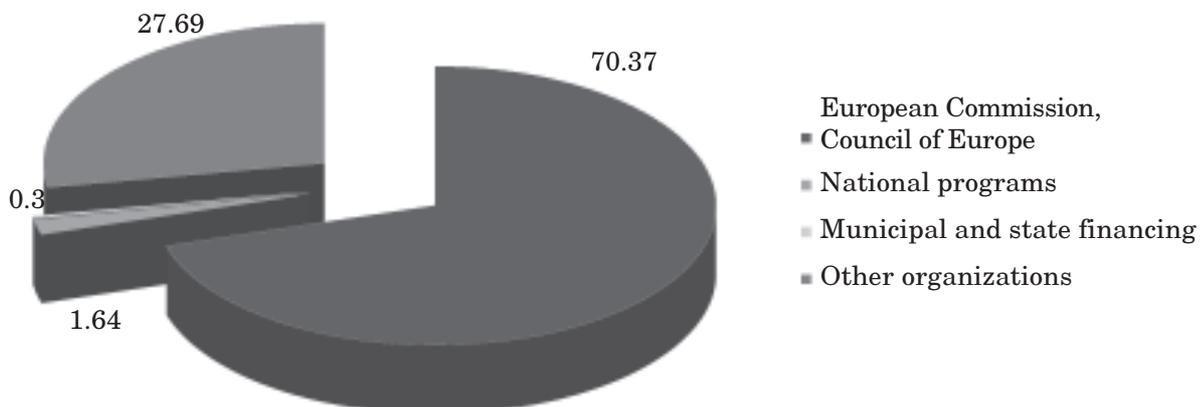
In order to achieve the goals outlined we organised advocacy forums: e.g. the conference “National Strategy for Roma Integration – a view to the next program period”, the Hearing “Monitoring and Evaluation of the National Strategies for Roma Integration”, etc. We included advocacy sessions in all major forums, which we organized within the year. Furthermore, representatives of Amalipe took an active part in the activity of the OPHRD Monitoring Committee, in the sessions of the European Roma Platform, and in the work of numerous expert groups.

The results achieved in 2012 are highly encouraging: part of them was outlined above. In 2012, the legal and institutional framework of the process of Roma integration was further developed; the integration interventions standardisation process was started, the prerequisites for close binding of European Funds absorption over the next program period with the Roma integration were created. Amalipe Centre was the main proponent of most of the outlined successes and currently the role of our organization as main partner in establishment and implementation of the policies for Roma integration, is recognised by all institutions.

We shall continue our advocacy endeavours on all subjects from 2012. The steps specified must be developed further. We should not forget however, that they may set the appropriate foundation for implementation of the policies for Roma integration, but not guarantee the implementation of these policies. The latter requires public consent and political will: i.e. factors, which are influenced but not determined unequivocally by the advocacy of the civil organisations.

On the non-profit activity

Expenses title	Amount - in thousand levs (BGN)		Income title	Amount - in thousand levs (BGN)	
	Current year	Previous year		Current year	Previous year
a	1	2	a	1	2
I. Operating expenses			I. Operating income		
A. Expenses on regulated activity			A. Income from regulated activity		
1. Donations	161		1. Income from onerous donations	1644	1097
2. Other expenses	1516	1102	2. Income from perfect donations		
Total A	1677	1102	3. Membership fees		
B. Administrative expenses			4. Other income		
Total group I	1677	1102	Total A		
II. Financial expenses			Total group I	1644	1097
losses	0	1	II. Financial income		
Total group II	0	1	5. Interest income	33	6
V. Total expenses	1677	1103	Total group II	33	6
VI. Result	0	0	V. Total income	1677	1103
Total (V+VI)	1677	1103	Total (V):	1677	1103



INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION AND
EDUCATIONAL INTEGRATION DURING
2012



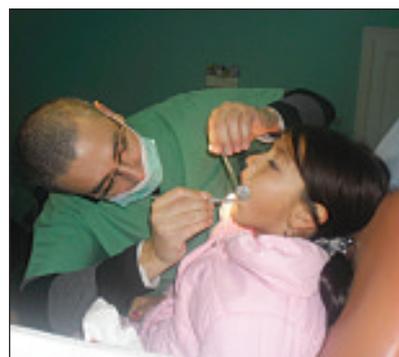
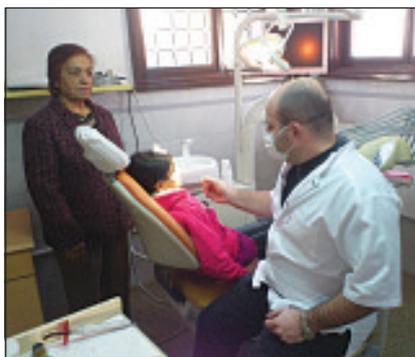
ROMA FOLKLORE CLASSES



ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CENTERS



Advocacy activities







COMBATING ANTI-ROMA STEREOTYPES AND PREJUDICES





PRESERVATION, PROMOTION AND RENEWAL OF ROMA CULTURE



**Roma Children's
festival
"Open Heart"**





HEALTHCARE AND HEALTH INTEGRATION

