

## “How the campaign played a role in our project?”



### Structure

“Today together with Roma Youth” was a conference on Minority Rights with a specific focus on Roma Rights that was held in Cahul, Moldova. The project aimed to discuss the Roma Youth Issues in Moldova, to inform both Roma and non - Roma about Roma Human Rights and to offer possible solutions for the identified problematic issues.

The Conference has been introduced by the 4 seminaries that took place in Cahul town (the administrative center of Southern Moldova) neighborhoods that together with the preparatory meeting to the Conference sum up the activities of the project.

### “All different, all equal” campaign within the project

For the entire period of the project the implementation team coped with the project activities considering at a large extent the specific of Council of Europe’s European Youth Campaign for diversity. In order to do so, within both informal conversations and most formal discussion, the treated topics included such elements as: fighting discrimination and promoting diversity, the role of Human Rights Education in Society, ethnical tolerance and social inclusion, participation as a key to peaceful Society etc. The discussions in many cases developed into debates which were reflected positively on the quality and originality of ideas . Also, the participants (youth, rural inhabitants, teachers, entrepreneurs, local and central public administration, government officials and international experts) were provided with materials and additional information on the Campaign. It is to be mentioned that the spread materials did not prove to create such a direct impact as “the free discussions” did.

Links with the National Campaign have been established. “Ograda Noastra” became a full-fledged member of the National Committee of the “All different, all equal” Campaign.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> of June “Ograda Noastra” will participate at the National Committee’s plenary meeting in Chisinau.

### The Conference itself

The Conference entitled as “Together with Roma Youth” was “the core element” of the project and constituted the first international conference in Moldova to address Roma Issues. There was created an unique opportunity *en premiere* to speak about Roma most acute problems, challenges and future possibilities from the perspective of “All different All equal” campaign and with such a complex composition and profile of the participants: Governmental sector, Civil Society and International Organizations. The fact that the conference was organized in a periphery location, Cahul (about 200 km away from the capital) justified completely “the theory of delocalization” calling at the same time the Society to pay more attention particularly to the local level action and with that greatly encouraging local Civil Society activist that in many cases feel abandoned and isolated from the “Gigantic” NGOs from the capital.

**The International Community** was represented by a series of well-known organizations heavily involved in Roma issues all over Europe such as: ERRC (European Roma Rights Center) – based in Hungary, REF (Roma Education Fund) – based in Hungary, “Community Fund of Plevn” – based in Bulgaria, “Romani Criss” based in Romania. The participation of these international structures at the conference played a crucial role in the development of the conference because these organization were in a good position to explain and elaborate on the necessity to respect Common European Values.

**The governmental sector** (the Bureau for Interethnic Relations, Ministry of Education, Local Administration) proved to be better disposed to the external organizations’ reference and expressed willingness to cooperate in the future in order to support the Roma Movement in Moldova.

Natalia Oprea, delegated by the Ministry of Education and by the National Campaign Committee in the country prepared a presentation of the Campaign and answered some questions regarding the deployment of the campaign in Moldova.

**The Civil Society** was represented by a range of local active NGOs seriously involved in local community development. Nicolae Dandes, the head of Local Council of NGOs, Cahul talked about “The philosophy of

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*All different, all equal* urging participants to act more intensely in the direction of consolidating Moldovan multi-ethnic Society. Other NGOs involved in minority rights issues (Association of Germans "Edeliveis" and the Association of Jews,) were also present.

### **Concrete Outcomes**

BY the end of the Conference a "Transbalkan Network" has been created. The network was signed by 17 local, national and international structures. The goal of the network was to assure a continuity to the discussions from the conference and to prepare the field for Moldova joining to the Roma Inclusion Decade.

### **Challenges**

"Ograda Noastra" ,aware of Council of Europe priorities, tried to enact the principles of Youth Sector according to the contextual realities in Moldova. As the Roma Community in Moldova is not enough prepared for a profound understanding of "All different, all equal" concept, sometimes for some of the Roma people it was difficult to explain (especially during the seminars) about the concept's implication or about the subtleties of Roma Human Rights. Also, not all the present at the conference Roma constructively participated in the discussions. The topics were perceived as good and important, but an obvious lack of awareness about the Human Rights phenomenon from the side of both Roma and Non-Roma proved to constitute an obstacle for a most efficient dialog able to make a difference in Harmonizing interethnic relations in the region – one of "Ograda Noastra" primordial goals.

### **Expectations and follow up**

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June "Ograda Noastra" will participate in the National Campaign Committee plenary meeting where "Ograda Noastra" will volunteer to fully participate in all the proposed activities across the country.

Post conference context is expected to bridge the achievements of the conference with new Roma Youth initiatives. Using the new "Transbalkan Network" as an instrument and National Campaign Committee as resource structure there is anticipated to go to another stage of acting: the stage of intense cooperation and international partnership, systemic lobby and official negotiations with the Government.

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**Cahul**