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III National Gathering Report - AMALIPE

Organization in charge of co-implementing the activity: Center Amalipe

Date of the Gathering: 10 of June 2023

Place: Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria

Hosting institution: The Hall of Armorial of Veliko Tarnovo Regional Administration

1- PREPARATION PHASE BEFORE THE GATHERING

Dates of meetings with NCC pre Gathering: The preparation of the event included 2 team meetings, wrote 15 invitations to political women and 40 invitations to Roma women, phone calls 2 times each. The team discussed today's order of the meeting, the motto and main highlights, as well as the preparation of presentations and other materials for women.

NCC Member(s) involved: Teodora Krumova, Silviya Stancheva, Devora Stancheva, Anna Velikova

Locations: office Veliko Tarnovo and Shumen

Evidences: communication by phone, emails sent

Action Points: We united around the motto of the meeting – „We find the power in ourselves! Let's live with dignity!”

Notes: The Roma woman is strong and motivated, she often needs social support; The important role of the mentor in the life of the Roma girl with dreams.

2- ACTIVITY IMPLEMENTATION: THE GATHERING

Title of the main conference: “Girls with dreams – we are power! Let's live with dignity!”

Why did the conference The Roma woman... for some too loud, too vivacious, too honest, too emotional, too intelligent, too complete, too divine, too tough, too sensitive, too wild, too perplexing, too successful, too powerful, too joyful, too demanding. Yes! And too determined to live with dignity!

Topics that emerged or were asked by participants after the conference On the 10th of June 2023 - International Roma Women's Day in the Hall of Armorial of Veliko Tarnovo Regional Administration, Amalipe Center gathered Roma women and girls in a meeting under the title “Girls with dreams – we are power! Let's live with dignity!” Similar meetings, initiated within the RTransform project guidelines: “Roma women transform the Educational Systems all throughout



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Europe, through their social and political mobilization” has turned into a tradition and is the 3rd yearly meeting for the last few years.

Participated women and girls from the 4 corners of the country – Dobrich, Ruse, Byala Slatina, Lukovit, Plovdiv, Yambol, Kyustendil, Sofia and many more small and big settlements. What united the girls was the fact that all of them are actively involved in changing the situation of the Roma woman. Despite their status of Roma activists, students, educational mediators, active mothers in parent clubs or active girls in school, they all make steps into improvement of the living and studying conditions of the Roma community.

Teodora Krumova, deputy chairman and member of the Board of Directors of Amalipe Center opened the meeting with the topic of the contemporary challenges, the importance of the educational status of the Roma girls and women today, the problems we face inside and outside the community and do they differ from the problems all women face, how do we face challenges and what are our paths to success.

Host of the meeting was Stanislav Nikolov, deputy regional governor of Veliko Tarnovo. The hosting of the Regional Administration was remarkable, because as Teodora Krumova noted, the change for Roma women will occur much faster if institutions take their role in supporting these politics, sanctioning hate speech or just spread the message of tolerance and overcoming stereotypes. Stanislav Nikolov greeted the ladies also on behalf of the regional governor Eng. Georgi Guguchkov and congratulated them the International Roma Women's Day, which is celebrated on the 10th of June. “I wish the forum success, through which to find solutions and to build paths to the success, in order every representative of your community to live with dignity, to follow their dreams and to be a full citizen of the Republic of Bulgaria. Happy holiday and good luck!” wished Stanislav Nikolov.

Elena Cherneva - Markova, Deputy Ombudsman of the Republic of Bulgaria, was also a guest at the meeting, who, from the position of the Ombudsman Institution, reaffirmed the commitment to the problems of Roma women and support for achieving their equal place in society. She shared about several successful practices in Bulgaria aimed specifically at supporting Roma women - in terms of providing free legal aid in cases of discrimination, domestic violence, etc.

Milka Trifonova, from Zonta Ruse, as part of Zonta International, motivated the girls by sharing that she is from an organization that protects women's rights. The main focus of her words was the prevention of early marriages. But no less important, they work for a world where women's rights are recognized as human rights. A world where every woman can reach her full potential. In such a world, women will have equal opportunities with men to determine the present and the future. In such a world, women will not fear violence. "We believe that we are helping to make the world a better place by helping to empower, educate and develop Roma women as well, so that they have the opportunity to live the lives they want." Our community is made up of professionals in different fields and countries," shared Milka Trifonova. The support of the



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Zonta Club network is extremely important because success would be much greater when the topic of Roma women's empowerment is recognized and included in the general topic of women's rights.

Extremely inspiring for the women and girls was the participation of the second secretary of the Embassy of India in Bulgaria, Mrs. Soni Dahiya, who specially congratulated the participants in the meeting. She talked about her family and how she would not have coped with the work of a diplomat if she did not have the support and help of her husband. She also shared the importance of education and encouraged girls to study and qualify as best they can to help themselves live with dignity.

Elisaveta Belogradova, Member of Parliament in the 49th National Assembly, traveled all the way from Sofia to Veliko Tarnovo especially for the meeting. Besides talking about herself as a woman struggling with the challenges of a mother, a worker and a public figure, she listened "from first hand" the successes and difficulties faced by Roma women and girls. Together we exchanged thoughts about the fact that it is not scary to make mistakes, the important thing is to try until you find yourself and what will give you meaning. We discussed common strategies for overcoming stereotypes outside and inside the community. Successful Roma women told their stories, others were looking for a way to solve their friends' problems.

Dr. Lili Kovacheva, one of the key figures in the modern Roma movement, shared moments from the history and good practices of the women's movement in the first years after democracy. She raised the question of the importance of the mother tongue as a fundamental element in asserting our identity. The initiative to create a unified system for recording the Romani language in Bulgaria was born spontaneously. Lili Kovacheva suggested that everyone who is interested in the topic should join it. The initiative does not aim to unify the official Romani language, but to consolidate around a single system for its graphic reproduction. Very naturally, this was born precisely as an idea of Roma women, who have always been the bearer and pillar of identity.

Silvia Stancheva, moderator of the national meeting, presented the important role of the mentor in the life of the Roma girl with dreams.

Violeta Staneva shared about the essential roles of every woman - parenting, housekeeping and health, about the well-being of the family and women's satisfaction.

Mira Stefanova told her personal story and what happened after the last meeting at Veliko Tarnovo University. How the place and successful Romani women inspired her to want to become a student, despite starting at 33.

Another Roma woman, Lyudmila Staneva, spoke about her decision to become a student this year, although 20 years have passed since she graduated from secondary school.



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Tanya Hristova shared with the participants how stereotypes are broken if you are a Roma woman at the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, as well as about her frequent campaigns for charity and nobility.

Bogomila Samuilova with a smile told about her path as a Roma girl from the village of Pevtsite to the University and the Presidency.

Tashka Mutafova, a working Roma woman, talked about her profession as a mediator, and how a mediator deals with everything.

During the active discussion, important topics such as workplace discrimination, the outdated and dysfunctional social system, the negative stereotypes of the Roma community affirmed by politicians were touched upon. On the topic of early marriages, Mrs. Belobradova said: "They are a social problem. They must be dealt with by law. There are invented mechanisms, the country must work on them."

The discussion led to several conclusions:

- the Roma woman is strong and motivated;
- she often needs social support;
- in each settlement the situation is different, some are very advanced, others stay behind and nothing good happens in them, the Roma woman can do a lot for the development of her community - locally and in national level. As long as she receives the necessary support - from her family, from a mentor and from the country. As long as she is given the opportunity for self-realization! To be respected, to be seen, to be understood with all her complexity!

Who joined the table of role models: Role models were successful Roma women who feel secure in various areas of life. They were from different cities from all over Bulgaria - for example - Mira Stefanova from Dobrich, Violeta Staneva from Madara, Shumen Lili Kovacheva from Sofia, etc.

3. IMPACT OF THE GATHERING

Roma women and girls' engagement in the activity as participants and role models: Roma women and girls were involved in the meeting as role models. they ranged in age from 50 to 18 years old. They had different educations - high school, current students or graduates. You have knowledge in various areas of life.



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Number of organisations and social agents forming part of the local network: During the meeting, 6 organizations participated - governmental and non-governmental. In local places, a number of local small organizations, women's clubs, schools, etc. also participate.

Leadership capacity of the organization in charge of co-implementing the activity:

Engagement of key stakeholders: People's Representative Elisaveta Belobradova, the National Ombudsman, the Women's Organization Zonta, the Regional Governor of the village of Tarnovo, the Roma women's organizations, the University of Veliko Tarnovo and many schools throughout Bulgaria got involved. All of them promised to listen to the girls and help them for their development and a better and dignified life.

Dissemination in the local/regional/national media:

- <https://amalipe.bg/romski-jeni-sreshta3/?fbclid=IwAR1i5Jh7BnTbqk91liXSYki2C1P5GidbA5NFdbkLcJLnrZHfAwozem-ij4>
- https://radiovelikotarnovo.com/%d0%b7%d0%b0%d0%bc%d0%b5%d1%81%d1%82%d0%bd%d0%b8%d0%ba-%d0%be%d0%b1%d0%bb%d0%b0%d1%81%d1%82%d0%bd%d0%b8%d1%8f%d1%82-%d1%83%d0%bf%d1%80%d0%b0%d0%b2%d0%b8%d1%82%d0%b5%d0%bb-%d1%81%d1%82%d0%b0/?fbclid=IwAR2EAirQWPTb8-qDhPyizda3IbJnSeNgZkUf-rrUEz1NsStK_71Ikw_Pxxk
- <https://boliarinews.bg/2023/06/10/%D0%B2%D1%8A%D0%B2-%D0%B2%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%BA%D0%BE-%D1%82%D1%8A%D1%80%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%BE-%D1%81%D0%B5-%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B5%D0%B6%D0%B4%D0%B0-%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%86%D0%B8%D0%BE%D0%BD/?fbclid=IwAR1pd9q8AIIXMvcphHFr56CsVeJFluplaXaRMNOJKyYMBIYWqJZAgefRoOM>
- https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=644703461030748&set=pcb.644703534364074&locale=bg_BG



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4. CONCLUSIONS OF THE GATHERING:

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