

Sector Meetings organized by OGG

During March, the Office for Good Governance in the framework of sectoral meetings based on the Strategy and Action Plan for Roma and Ashkali Communities in the Kosovo Society 2017-2021 organized sectoral meetings with relevant ministry officials, focal points of the Regional Co-operation Council and civil society organizations in relation to the implementation of activities in the sector of Employment and Social Welfare, Health and Housing, of the Strategy and Action Plan for the inclusion of Roma and Ashkali communities in Kosovo society 2017-2021.

The purpose of the meetings is to coordinate the implementation of the activities of each sector through the sharing of information, enhancing cooperation and coordination between institutions and civil society, for an effective implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan.



During the meetings it was discussed that the OGG is at the end of the process for preparing the 2018 report on the implementation of the strategy. Data are provided by the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Education and Technology, the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Local Government Administration.

OGG, in order to be better informed about the situation on the ground, in cooperation with the MLGA visited 18 municipalities, respectively the Communities and Returns Office. These meetings were important to assess the real implementation of the local action plan regarding the strategy and challenges that each municipality faces during its implementation. Each municipality has a local action plan and has created a communal committee. These committees were created to collect data from all municipal directorates in one place and to report. Also, MLGA will publish a more specific report on the local level.

The ministry officials reported on the implementation of the activities according to the action plan, achievements and challenges encountered during 2018. Also, civil society members provided their input with information from the field.

In the end, all agreed that there are improvements and good implementation of the strategy, but more work needs to be done to involve the Roma and Ashkali communities in Kosovo society.

Discussion on the Reago TV show on "Adopting the Local Action Plan for the Inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in the Prizren Municipality"



In the Reago TV show, conducted by NGO Romtegra in cooperation with RTK2, under the project implemented by BIRN and AGK, supported by the European Union Office in Kosovo, was discussed on "Adopting the Local Action Plan for the inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Prizren municipality 2019-2023 and allocation of funds for implementation of activities ". In this tv show to discuss the topic were invited: Dhurata Prokshi, project coordinator KEEN in Balkan Sunflowers Kosovo, Islam Elshani, Coordinator of the

Municipal Action Committee from the Municipal Office for Communities and Returns in Prizren and Osman Osmani member of the Municipal Action Committee and director of NGO NEVO Concept.

In the show was presented the local strategy development process, namely the Local Action Plan for the inclusion of communities in the Municipality of Prizren, starting with the signing of the co-operation agreement, setting up a working group, appointing the Municipal Action Committee, organizing workshops for drafting plan to the approval of the Local Action Plan by the Municipality of Prizren.

What was raised as a matter was the allocation of funds for the implementation of this plan and the functionalization of the mechanisms that will monitor this strategic document. At the end of the show a public call was made for the engagement of all actors who focus their work on Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in order to advocate for the implementation of policies targeting the inclusion of these communities either at the local or central level.

Visit of UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Toxins in the Roma neighborhood in Mitrovica

On March 5, in Mitrovica RADC organized the visit of UN Special Rapporteur, called for human rights and toxins (hazardous substances and residues) Mr. Baskut Tuncak.

Taking into consideration the health problems of lead poisoning faced by members of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in the Roma neighborhood in Mitrovica, RADC has organized a meeting with heads of households and Mr. Tuncak to gather additional information about their current state of health and the consequences that these communities face from the lead poisoning of the past. After receiving the necessary information, Mr. Tuncak has come up with statements for the UN which has been made public.

"The United Nations should take immediate action to ensure justice and legal remedies for displaced minority communities that were deployed in UN-built Kosovo toxic camps. About 600 members of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities settled in the camps between 1999 and 2013 on land known to be contaminated by lead. Approximately half were children under the age of 14. It is believed that lead poisoning has contributed to the deaths of some children and adults. Other former residents are said to be still experiencing a number of health problems, such as seizures, kidney disease, various physical and mental difficulties, and memory loss.



I am deeply disappointed by the inertia surrounding this case, and that the solution offered by the UN is an inoperative and fundamentally flawed Trust Fund, which will neither provide justice nor the necessary elements of an effective remedy for the victims. The voluntary Trust Fund, which was set up in 2017, has never been activated because it has not received any contributions from the international community.

The UN's integrity is at issue. It should reform its approach and mobilise the necessary resources to fully implement the recommendations of its own Human Rights Advisory Panel without further delay.

This ongoing inaction sends a loud message to these vulnerable communities. Decades ago, UNMIK did not fulfil its mandate to promote and protect the rights of these children and their families. Nothing will replace what these victims have lost, but now the United Nations has an opportunity to do what it can to atone for past mistakes. I urge it to recognise its responsibilities and take immediate, meaningful action" "said Tuncak.

March 8 - International Women's Day

On March 8, on International Women's Day, RROGRAEK, together with other women's civil society organizations, organized a March "We march, we do not celebrate". This march started from Zahir Pajaziti Square, overtaking the main streets of the capital to once again show our local and global communities that we will engage despite the challenges for a diverse and equal society.

The march was meant to protest and not to celebrate because we did not achieve gender and social justice. Therefore, we have no reason to celebrate. We oppose and fight unemployment and poverty, which is a form of structural violence that is exercised against citizens and citizens of the Republic of Kosovo.



However, this march does not end there. During the march, it was said that we will continue, with protest and political resistance to patriarchal and social injustice for the victims and all who feel oppressed by gender stereotypes, we will go to MARCH. We will continue to march for all the multiple jobs that women make paid and unpaid.

EU Award for Roma Integration 2019



Roma Active Albania (RAA) funded by the European Union (IPA Funds) has announced the winners of the EU Award for Roma Integration in the Western Balkans and Turkey, 2019 - "Unknown Heroes" dedicated to Roma women and girls who brought significant changes in their communities.

The award has been awarded to Roma women living in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, Macedonia, Kosovo and Turkey.

From Kosovo, the first prize for Roma Integration 2019 "Unknown Heroes" 9 award has been given to Mrs. Shpresa Agushi, from the NGO RROGRAEK, who is a woman dedicated to bring significant changes in the country where she lives and operates, and more specifically in fighting and preventing violence against women. The second prize was won by Kendiza Lala, who is a senior in the high school of Economics "Kadri Kusari" in Gjakova, for her hard and voluntary work with the children of communities.

The prize winners took part in a study visit to European Institutions in Brussels, Belgium, on the occasion of Roma Week 18-21 March 2019.

Increased number of reporting for cases of domestic violence

RROGRAEK, in March, continued with the project activities focusing on communication between the relevant legal mechanisms and Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities from Peja region. Kosovo Police Representatives, Victim Advocates, Gender Equality Officers, and Municipal Community Officers and other relevant stakeholders highly appreciate RROGRAEK's ongoing efforts and work to boost communities' confidence in relevant institutions and mechanisms, resulting in a significant increase in understanding and identification of the phenomenon of domestic violence among roma, ashkali and egyptian communities. This is also confirmed by the increase of number of cases of domestic violence reported to the police and other relevant mechanisms (about 30%). Coordination meetings with representatives of relevant mechanisms and institutions continuously prove the necessity of implementing the objectives of this project.



The activity is part of the project "Increased Awareness of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Youth on Legal Mechanisms Against Gender Based Violence and Prevention of GBV Phenomena" implemented by RROGRAEK, supported by the Equality Commitment Program - E4E, funded by the State Agency United States for International Development - USAID and implemented by the Advocacy Training and Resource Center - ATRC.

The "Young Social Workers" activity started in Fushë Kosovë

Eight young people from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Fushë Kosovë have started training about social work and the role of social worker in society, within the "Young Workers Social" activity of The Ideas Partnership. This activity aims to create a framework for young professionals who can join Centers for Social Work and work directly in addressing early marriage cases. Through weekly trainings and activities led by our staff and other professionals, these young people will learn the principles of

social work and will apply these lessons in practice by volunteering through field visits to the community they live in.

"Young Social Workers" was formed within the project funded by the Danish Refugee Council in Kosovo, implemented by The Ideas Partnership. This activity aims to break the barriers

towards social cohesion by ensuring the representation of members of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in roles where they can not only provide services but also challenge professional prejudices.



The Ideas Partnership cooperates with CRP / K for integrating repatriated persons



In March, The Ideas Partnership participated in the round table organized by the Civil Rights Program in Kosovo (CRP / K) with the topic "Challenges and Best Practices of Reintegration of Repatriated Persons". At this roundtable were present as participants over 35 representatives of central and local level institutions as well as local and international organizations.

The purpose of this round table was that the actors that are directly involved in the reintegration of repatriated persons to present the findings, challenges, good practices in municipalities, and recommendations regarding overcoming the problems during the reintegration process of repatriated persons. The Ideas Partnership contributed to this project by closely cooperating with the CRP / K in referring cases of repatriated families of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities from the municipalities of Fushë Kosovë and Gracanica.

Promoting the cultural diversity of Janjeva through the co-operation of the TIP with the OSCE

During the month of March, the implementation of the project "Promoting Cultural Diversity through Art" started in the school "Shtjefën Gjeçovi" in Janjeva. The first activity was attended by about 40 children from all communities living there. The purpose of this project is that students through art reflect the harmony and cultural diversity of the country where they live.

This project was made possible by the generous support of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, and is implemented by The Ideas Partnership Center in Janjevo in cooperation with Shtjefën Gjeçovi School.



Day against discrimination is marked by cultural activity



In honor of the March 1 - International Day Against Discrimination, cultural activity with children has been held. Primary school students (grades 6-9) at DokuKino have attended three short documentary films related to the topic of discrimination, which have also appeared in the documentary and short film festival DokuFest.

Two of the films featured true events in Prizren related to the homeless and the charitable beggars. After watching the movies, there was held a debate about what children have learned from the documentary films, as well as about the types of discrimination and how to prevent it.

The activity was realized within the project "Social Inclusion of Marginalized Groups in the Prizren Municipality - SoRi" supported by the German Government through the German Agency for International Cooperation, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.

Events on the Water Day



During the month of March, the staff of the Prospect + project from the Nevo Concept NGO have held different meetings for preparation of the day of water day. The marking of this day was realized in cooperation with schools, MED and RWC Hidroregjioni Jugor - Unit in Suharekë.

One of the meetings was with the unit leader for Suharekë, "Hidroregjioni Jugor", Ismet Kurtishaj. The purpose of the meeting held at the unit office in Suharekë was to coordinate activities for marking the World Water Day.

Furthermore, in co-ordination with the Director of Education in the Municipality of Suhareka, Remzi Bytyqi was also discussed about the schools where the brochures will be distributed on the importance of water. Pupils of school "Drita" in Gelanta of Suharekë have been included in the preparations for marking the Water Day. Apart from the pupils of the school "Drita" in this activity were also included their tutors.

In addition to the activities in Suharekë, Nevo Concept staff through two other projects EU SIMRAES-II and SoRi have organized together with the students of "Haziz Tola" school from the New Life, the "Two Martyrs" school from Pirana and "Ibrahim Fehmiu" school from Arbana neighborhood marking the World Water Day. The activity was realized at the Shatërvan Square in Prizren.

The purpose of this activity was to raise the awareness of the citizens about the importance of water, respectively the saving of water with the motto "Water is Life, save it". During this event, also the promotional material was distributed, which aimed at passing the message on the importance of rational use of drinking water. The activity was completed by giving occasional passers by a bottle of water, in which it was written, "A drop of water saves a life!"

Activities of the Municipal Children's Assembly and School "Lekë Dukagjini"



During the month of March, a meeting was held with the Student Council and the members of the Municipal Children's Assembly (MCA) at the School "Lekë Dukagjini" in Prizren. The purpose of the meeting was to identify issues or problems that concern children, and which can be addressed by MCA Prizren to the responsible institutions.

A total of 13 children participated in the meeting. They have presented their concerns and suggestions. In conclusion, it was decided that MCA representatives from this school together with some students address the problems in the respective municipal directorate in order to solve the problems encountered in this school.

Also, the representative from MCA, Sabina Muqaj from School "Lekë Dukagjini" organized a humanitarian activity, together with her class. In this activity, children have collected clothes and things that they do not need and have expressed their desire to donate to children in need. More than 20 gift packs were collected, distributed through NGO Nevo Concept.

Representatives from MCA - Prizren, are always active in their district and work to ensure that each child enjoys their rights and live in a safe environment.

MCA is an institution that advocates for the rights of children in the Municipality of Prizren. This project aims to govern the rights of children, respect for children's rights, increase the participation of children in different decision-making processes in the municipality. The project is implemented by the Nevo Concept in partnership with Save the Children / Kosovo and supported by the Swedish International Development Agency.

Conference on the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies



On 4 March, VoRAE was part of the Bucharest, Romania, conference where was discussed about the EU framework for national Roma integration strategies. Participants in the conference were representatives from various European countries who are exchanging experiences of their countries and achievements towards the integration of the Roma community. Moreover, one of the key issues discussed at the conference was anti-gypsyism as a new terminology, which is being dealt with in state documents as a very important issue for combating discrimination in all European countries.

Improvement of living conditions

VoRAE signed a cooperation agreement with the Municipality of Peja for the project "Improvement of housing conditions" during 2019. In this project, approximately 18 families from Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian and other vulnerable groups will be beneficiaries with functional bathrooms and annexes of models 27m², 42m² and 60m². The budget foreseen for this project is 32,000 euros.



Computer course for students

From March 15, 2019 Roma Versitas Kosova students began to attend computer courses where students in the first phase will learn about software and hardware, in the second phase they will start learning about MS Office and other software. The third stage is making databases in XLS and Access.



The trainer of this computer course was Mr. Nuhi Morina a former student of RV Kosovo, who graduated in computer sciences at the University of Prizren.

Sports and entertainment activities for school pupils of "Tefik Çanga "

On March 4, in Ferizaj, KYC - Kosovar Youth Council in cooperation with the non-governmental organization BRAN - Youth and the Future of Enlightened Youth have conducted sports and entertainment activities with 24 students from the 6th to 9th grade of all communities in the primary and lower secondary school "Tefik Çanga" in Ferizaj.

In addition to socialization and co-operation, this activity was aimed at encouraging children to take more on sports activities, where these activities will be realized for the next four months.



These activities are funded financially by UEFA to KYC while BRAN is assisting and assisting voluntarily.