

ELPIDA

The Roma Women's Association of Drosero

The Settlement

Drosero is one of the largest and oldest Romani settlements in Greece. It is located on the outskirts of the town of Xanthi, approximately 1,5 km from the town center, near the railway line, in an area that used to be farmland. Today, it is estimated that the population counts about 7,500 inhabitants. The inhabitants of Drosero are employed in seasonal agricultural jobs and many of them are itinerant peddlers. Drosero is considered a small ghetto with many problems. The settlement is plagued by unemployment, illiteracy and domestic violence, dependency on welfare benefits, teen marriages and many of its children are unregistered.

The Establishment of Elpida

The Roma Women's Association of Drosero, which is called 'Elpida' [Hope], is a non-governmental organization, founded in August of 2006 on the initiative of 20 Roma women. Their desire and need was to create an institution, through which they could be represented as Roma, claim their rights and exercise their obligations within Greek society.

The association's center stands as a versatile cultural center, as a place where training courses are offered, and functions as a forum for meeting and free expression for the residents, particularly the women and children of Drosero. The activity of Elpida has managed to capture the interest of many organizations and institutions, national and international, that wanted to support it and acknowledge and reward it for the initiatives and work, which it has carried out all these years. Suffice to say that it is the most prominent and respected, as well as the most widely recognized, Roma Association in Greece, one which actively promotes, in all areas and at all levels of public administration, the interests and the integration of the Roma in Greece, and particularly the well-being of Roma women.

Founding Members

The women who founded Elpida are: Sabiha Suleiman, Mourtzan Sali Oglu, Songlul Ramandan Oglu, Kimparie Mamut, Fikrie Sakir Oglu, Ayşe Ahmet Oglu, Bahar Sali Oglu, Beida Abentin Oglu, Kimparie Sefket, Aibitchel Sali Oglu, Tsimen Serif Oglu, Fatme Halil

Oglu, Nurten Toshun Oglu, Resmegul Kiazim Oglu, Natzie Suleiman, Meliha Toshun Oglu, Binaz Ramandan Oglu, Cadrie Triantafylidou, Zekie Mumin Oglu, Atie Suleiman, Vistan Hasan Oglu, Kimparie Nazif Oglu, Fatme Merzan Oglu. The President of Elpida is Sabiha Suleiman.

The Vision

Elpida's activities aim to:

- * Empower the women of the settlement and to support their role in their families and in the community.
- * Provide various forms of education and learning opportunities to Drosero's children and adults.
- * Carry out creative activities for children.
- * Create opportunities for a better future for the children of Drosero through the teaching of necessary skills and know-how.
- * Enhance community members' ability to assert their right to better living conditions.
- * Fight adult illiteracy.
- * Disseminate information and try to curtail problems related to the health of the residents, to domestic violence, to lack of civil registration, to social benefits, etc., and to promote social integration in general.
- * Appeal to relevant public services for the improvement of the infrastructure facilities in the area.
- * Cooperate with other organizations, which share Elpida's vision, in order to achieve the goals of the association.

* Collaborate with international organizations, with foundations and national and foreign agencies, which are active in the area of defense of human rights.

The Basic, Everyday Activities of the Association

Drosero operates an elementary school within the settlement. However, not all preschool and school-aged children are enrolled or follow the educational program, as the drop-out rate is great. Thus, the members of Elpida undertook a pioneering initiative, formerly unheard of at the settlement: to create a nursery center where young children would learn to become familiar with a school routine, to love school and not be afraid of it, as well as to begin communicating and writing in the Greek language.

Nursery Center of Creative Work

As soon as Elpida began to operate, a nursery center for basic schooling and creative work started functioning on the premises of the association. The number of children who attend the center every day ranges from 30 to 40. The children who attend the preschool center are 3-5 years old.

Apart from the two trained teachers, who are responsible for the children's educational program, two women of the association contribute to the overall functioning of the nursery center as mediators. As the majority of young children speak Romani and do not speak or understand Greek, the mediators play a very important role in facilitating the children's communication with the teachers. The nursery center starts at 8:30 and closes at 3:30. Teachers and social workers perform other duties as well. For example, they are responsible for carrying out the children's vaccination.

Remedial Courses for Students

Students of Drosero have difficulty coping with the school's demands for after school preparation for various reasons, the most important being that at home there is no one who

can help them study. Thus, Elpida offers tutoring classes to these students. Tutoring classes are set up depending on students' needs, while Greek language, mathematics and English are also taught at Elpida's tutorials.

Moreover, Ms. Suleiman, on her own initiative, established contact with representatives of the Ministry of Education in order to implement, in the schools of Drosero, the national school food program for vulnerable communities. However, the implementation of the food program and the promotion of healthy eating in the schools of Drosero were achieved through the funding offered to Elpida by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation.

Social Services Offered

Two social workers are employed by Elpida in order to 'bring back' children who have dropped out of school. In the two years that this initiative has been implemented, the number of children registered in school increased by 200. The social workers, by gaining the trust of the community, managed to motivate both children and parents to participate in formal education.

Extracurricular Activities

Elpida, in order to reward student's efforts and to contribute to their socialization outside of the village, and thus their integration with the non-Roma local community, organizes different types of extracurricular activities. For example, it organizes theatre performances for children, Romani traditional music concerts, photo exhibitions of works created by the children of Drosero, etc. All these activities are carried out outside the settlement and are often part of the "Old Town of the City of Xanthi" festivals. Moreover, Elpida organizes children's visits, e.g. to Equestrian, to the city of Komotini to take part in the music festival, to the ancient theatre of Philippi, to the Lazarist Monastery in Thessaloniki, etc. A notable activity was a presentation of the story of the Roma as an experiential story telling, organized, written and performed by the children of Drosero. It was performed at both Thessaloniki and Athens, and Elpida has received invitations to present this performance abroad as well.

Other activities, such as planting trees in the square of Drosero, also involves the children in volunteering and participating in communal activities.

Με σχόλια [CC1]: What is this place?

The association furthermore facilitates that the children of Drosero be included in summer camp programs, whereby they have the chance to go to the beach, often for the first time in their lives.



Chess is serious business and one of the extra-curricular activities offered to children of the community.

Training for Women

In addition to children's education, tutoring and training, Elpida also provides learning opportunities for its adult members.

Right from the start of its operation, the association organized Greek language lessons for adults. After five months of intensive daily lessons, 10-12 women members of the association took the national exams in order to acquire primary school certificates. Presently, up to 15-20 women participate twice a week in the Greek language lessons offered at the association's premises. Since 2006, about 120 women of different ages participated in classes for hairdressing, sewing, cooking and pastry making. Some of them managed to generate income based on their new skills. All these activities are intended to increase the knowledge and the skills of the participants, while preserving and promoting pride in their Romani culture.



Women from the community receive vocational training.

Health

Based on the actions that the association took, children received medical examinations by a team of volunteer doctors from IASO Hospital. 120 children were examined with the support of Xanthi's hospital manager, Mr. Babalidis Anastasis. On Elpida's premises a seminar was conducted on the issue of access to public medical services, as well as on women's challenges in starting a business. Furthermore, Mission Anthropos has visited our association to provide medical examinations for both children and adults.

[\(http://www.missionanthropos.com/el/\)](http://www.missionanthropos.com/el/)



Medical examinations at the center, thanks to volunteers from Mission Anthropos.



The Mission Anthropos team with the Elpida crew.

Future Activities

As time passes, Elpida's membership grows. Simultaneously the ideas for initiatives and programs to improve the lives of the residents also increase. The members of Elpida organize daily meetings where they make decisions about how best to achieve their goals.

Donors

Elpida has been able to provide services to the Roma community in Drosero, thanks to the funding and the generous donations that it receives from numerous entities and individuals. Amongst these donors are the following:

In April 2017 the Founder and Honorary President of the Citizens' Movement for an Open Society - Member and Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors Of TITAN CEMENTS, Mr. Theodore Papalexopoulos, offered a significant donation to our Association upon request, in order to ensure the food of the children aged 3 to 5 that attend the “Preschool Learning Center”, which operates in our Association thanks to the grants of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation and the non-profit organization “Solidarity Now”.

Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The MFA substantially supported Elpida in its founding, during the years 2006-2008. This support was part of a wider policy program to promote the empowerment of Romani communities in Thrace and was completed in 2008.

Website: <http://www.mfa.gr/>

Non-governmental organizations, such as Antirropon, the Thessaloniki-based Institute for Balkan Studies, the Médecins du Monde and the Thessaloniki annex of UNESCO have provided assistance to Elpida.

International organizations, i.e. the Council of Europe (2010) and the European Commission (forthcoming) also support the work of Elpida.

Website: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/home/>

Foreign diplomatic missions: the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Athens has provided considerable assistance to the association through the implementation of specific programs.

Local non-governmental organizations, whose mission has an emphasis on culture preservation, have also assisted Elpida in various ways: The Foundation of Thracian Art and Tradition, for example, did not provide funding but offered cooperation for the execution of

activities that took place on its premises, while the Filoproodi Enosi Xanthis (Progressive Union of Xanthi), offered cooperation for a photography exhibition. The exhibition, based on a project initiated by Elpida, was hosted on the premises of the Filoproodi Enosi Xanthis.

Website: <http://www.fthrace.gr/> / <https://www.fex.org.gr/>

Regional/local governmental organizations (usually EU programs), such as NELE and Centers for Adult Learning (Greek language lessons) have cooperated with Elpida for program implementation at Drosero.

Private Donors: Generous donations in kind, such as office furniture, carnival costumes, and funds have been offered by Dr. Vassilis Kontopoulos.

Public-benefit foundations: The Stavros Niarchos Foundation and the Bodossaki Foundation have been strong supporters.

Websites: <http://www.snf.org/el/> / <http://bodossaki.gr/>

Volunteering

Volunteering is an intrinsic element in the operational culture and the running of Elpida activities. For this reason the volunteer contribution to Elpida has been of critical importance, particularly for the strategic and day-by-day management of its operation. The ability of Elpida to act strategically and to have the outcomes that it has, for the benefit of the local community, is largely the result of the work of volunteers.

Networking, Synergies and Collaborations

Elpida has actively pursued the creation of a network of organizations and other stakeholders around it in order to facilitate its aims. It views this network as an opportunity to create synergies and collaborations in terms of funding and maximization of impact for its activities. Through networking, Elpida attempts to attract new funds and volunteers, raise awareness, advocate and facilitate its role as a bridge between the Romani community of Drosero and the rest of the society at local, regional, national and international levels. As the list of donors

above reflects, Elpida has developed cooperation with NGOs in Greece and abroad, local and central government agencies, foreign diplomatic missions, such as the Dutch Embassy in Athens (<http://greece.nlembassy.org/>) and the French Consulate General in Thessaloniki (<http://www.embassypages.com/missions/embassy4463/>), international organizations, such as the Council of Europe public benefit foundations. Academics in Greece and abroad as well as other individuals equally assist the work of Elpida.

Elpida welcomes and informs official visitors, such as Greek MPs, foreign diplomats and representatives of international organizations. Towards this end, the President of Elpida, Ms. Sabiha Suleiman, holds regular meetings with representatives of all domestic and foreign representatives of bodies and agencies that are interested and willing to assist it in carrying out its aims, including the US Consulate General in Thessaloniki (<https://thessaloniki.usconsulate.gov/>), the US Embassy in Athens (<https://athens.usembassy.gov/>), as well as other diplomatic missions. In a context of acute socio-economic Roma exclusion and illiteracy, networking has been particularly beneficial for Elpida. The recent selection for funding by the European Commission (<http://ec.europa.eu/>) of a project on Life-long Learning, for which Elpida joined forces with NGOs across several EU countries, is an illustration of the recognition of the capacity and of the work Elpida performs.

Conference with the Prime Minister's Office and the Prime Minister

Elpida's President, Ms. Suleiman, is very active in the political field. Her connections with politicians as well as her frequent communication with the Greek Prime Minister have helped foster discussion and achieve resolution of issues concerning either the Roma community in Greece or the settlement of Drosero. More specifically:

- **31-12-2015:** Elpida's President, Ms. Suleiman, met Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras in the framework of cooperation on policies concerning the Roma, where they discussed several issues relating to Roma problems. These problems appertain to education and also to the burning issue of the appointment of a General Secretary for the Roma. This is related to the national Roma strategy. The purpose of the General Secretary would be to liaise with all ministries with the aim to inform and advise the ministers about Roma issues. At any moment, we are expecting the announcement that a General Secretary has been appointed by the Government of Greece, in order to deal with Roma issues. If this is achieved, it will be a great success and progress for the national Roma strategy. Also, Greece is the first country to take such an initiative and will set an example for the rest of Europe to do the same.



Meeting of the Association's President Mrs. Suleiman Sabiha with the Prime Minister of Greece, Mr. Alexis Tsipras

-23-4-2016: The students of the 8th secondary school of Xanthi, in the context of their educational trip to Athens, visited the Greek Parliament and with the mediation of Elpida visited the Prime Minister's residence. The students had the chance to talk with Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras in a cordial atmosphere and present their settlement's problems.



A group of young Elpida participants visiting with Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras.

Other Elpida Collaborations

2015 International Roma Union Parliament Greek Member

2015 European Roma Union delegate from Greece

Financial Resources

The financing of the association's activities has been achieved to date with the support of private and public institutions and with financing from European projects. The volunteer assistance and donations of educational material have undoubtedly contributed to the association's work. Several activities have been implemented with cooperation of local organizations that provided space for seminars, events, health visits, etc.

Beyond the important work of volunteers, the association has managed to continue its work, thanks to the following funding:

- 2008: Ministry of Labor and Social Insurance. Actions supporting employment with the cooperation of NGOs.
- 2009-2010: Embassy of the Netherlands. Support for teaching support of students in primary, secondary, and high school.

2009-2010: Mr. Minas Efraimoglou & the European Council

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Council / <http://www.ime.gr/fhw/>) for the operation of educational and creative activities in the settlement.



Mr. Minas Efraimoglou in Drosero (Carnival 2008)

- 2010-2011: Bodossaki Foundation for the operation of educational and creative activities in the settlement.

- 2011-2012: Stavros Niarchos Foundation for the operation of educational and creative activities in the settlement.
- 2012-2013: Stavros Niarchos Foundation for the operation of educational and creative activities in the settlement.
- 2015-2016: EEA Grants Program (<http://eeagrants.org/>) Είμαστε Όλοι Πολίτες – We are all Citizens, funding Bodossaki Foundation.
- Solidarity Now (Αλληλεγγύη): The foundation Solidarity Now, from 2013 until today, has financially supported 40 organizations of civil society, public institutions and other initiatives with grants exceeding EUR 14 million to implement 68 projects. In 2016, Elpida was included in these grants, in order to cover some activities. (<http://www.solidaritynow.org/>)



- 2016-2017: Stavros Niarchos Foundation for the operation of educational and creative activities in the settlement.

Bodossaki & Niarchos Foundations

Bodossaki 2006-2016

The Roma Women's Association of Drosero, Elpida, is a community-based organization founded in 2006 by 20 Roma women who live in Drosero, a Roma community south-east of the town of Xanthi. The main objective of the organization was the creation of an institutional framework, to promote women's rights and expression.

(<http://bodossaki.gr/en/actions/the-roma-womens-association-of-drosero-elpida-hope/>)

We Are All Citizens – Bodossaki Foundation

November 2015-April 2016: This program is funded by three countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) and is part of the financial mechanism of EEA Grants. Bodossaki Foundation manages the EEA Grants program in Greece. The program aims to strengthen civil society, social justice, democracy and sustainable development. More specifically, a group of teachers, social workers and mediators undertook the difficult work of teaching children the Greek language through remedial lessons and to promote to them fundamental rights such as democratic values, human rights, equality, peace and others through experiential games. The program included art activities (painting, collage, etc.) as well as two trips, the first to the archaeological site of Philippi and the second an environmental excursion on the Nestos River.



Tutoring session at the Elpida centre.



Helping children of the community to master Greek, a key to school success.



Getting ready to paint.



Excursion with the children to the ancient theatre of Philippi.

Stavros Niarchos Foundation

Year of Grant, 2011

To support the operation of the preschool center attended by Roma children aged 3 to 5. The center prepares the children to attend Greek elementary schools. Apart from Greek Language

instruction, the children also receive health and behavioral education, which aids their inclusion in school.



Look! We made our own costumes.



Art and creativity are actively fostered at the Elpida centre.



The preschoolers with their dedicated teachers.

September 2016-September 2017 Operating preschool center for children 3-5 years old: The Stavros Niarchos Foundation funds Elpida for the operation of its preschool. A group of teachers, mediators and social workers take on the education of toddlers. The program focuses on establishing a school routine, classroom rules, hygiene lessons and Greek language for children. The program also includes many art activities (crafts, painting, construction) and on the part of the social workers, psychosocial observation of the children, informing parents about their progress and research of children's family environment. The mediators play an important role, providing translation for better communication between teachers and children, preparing meals, cleaning the space and helping the teachers. <http://www.snf.org/el/>

Με σχόλια [CC2]: See previous comment.



Playing is learning.



The preschoolers with their teacher and volunteer aides from the community.



Art activities foster crucial preschool skills.

Award

Numerous institutions have acknowledged the contribution of Elpida in alleviating the problems Drosero inhabitants face, by awarding Elpida a number of prizes and distinctions, such as:

2016: Ms. Sabiha Suleiman has been nominated in the category “Personality of the European Roma Spirit” for the 2016 ERSA Award, given by the Association for Culture, Education and Communication (ACEC). The president of Elpida was selected from among 65 nominations from 23 European Countries for the final round of the award and is among the three top nominations in this category.



Mrs. Suleiman Sabiha in European Roma Spirit Award which is won the award in category Personality (Bratislava – Slovakia, October 2016)

2013: Gold Medal ‘for resistance to be Turkish under pressure, the Muslim Roma of Thrace’ from the Rotary Clubs of Thessaloniki. In 2013, the Seventh Rotary Club of Thessaloniki held its 61st awards ceremony titled ‘Beneficence, Social Contribution & Self-sacrifice’. The President of the Rotary Clubs in Thessaloniki, Mr. Tousinas, spoke about the principles and the purpose of Rotary. The President of Elpida, Ms. Sabiha Suleiman, received the award from the President of the Jury, Mr. Aspasidis.



Awards ceremony, Rotary Clubs of Thessaloniki, 2013.



ΦΩΤΟΓΡΑΦΙΑ: ΝΩΝΤΑΣ ΣΤΥΛΙΑΝΙΔΗΣ www.photoreportage.gr 2310262084

Sabiha Suleiman receiving the Rotary Club Award, Thessaloniki, 2013.

Website Of the Rotary Clubs In Thessaloniki: <http://www.rcanatolia.org/>

2009: 2nd International Award for Women of Courage 2009 for successful and sustained effort to promote issues of the Roma community in Thrace (nominated by the American Mission in Greece). The awards were given at the United States Consulate in Thessaloniki. The US Ambassador Mr. Daniel Speckhard gave the prize to Ms. Sabiha Suleiman.



Women of Courage Award goes to Sabiha Suleiman, Thessaloniki, 2009.



Sabiha Suleiman at the Women of Courage Award ceremony, Thessaloniki, 2009.

Website: <https://thessaloniki.usconsulate.gov/el/about-us.html>

2007: In November 2007, the President of the Hellenic Republic, Mr. Karolos Papoulias, gave an award to the President of the Roma Women's Association of Drosero, Ms. Sabiha Suleiman, in recognition of the work of the organization. It was the first time that a Roma woman gave a speech in the old Parliament building, where she invited Greek society to treat Roma children as its own.



Sabiha Suleiman receives a prize from the President of the Republic, Karolos Papoulias, Athens, 2007.

Website: http://www.kinisipoliton.gr/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/150554_istoriko.pdf

2007: Award Ceremony of collective action Islets Quality 2007 from the Citizens Movement for an Open Society and the Greek Guiding.

Participation at Conferences as Keynote Speaker

The president and the members of Elpida participate in various conferences and European forums in order to learn about practices and policies concerning the Roma. This is to help devise new practices to strengthen the community and ensure its integration and identity.

Meetings attended so far:

31 March 2017: Regional Conference of Social Inclusion of Roma, with the initiative of the National Center for Social Solidarity, within the framework of the project "Development of the National Roma Platform for Consultation and Dialogue on Roma Of the Greek NRCP "), which is being implemented with EU co-financing (Program " Rights, Equality and Citizenship 2014-2020 "), Thessaloniki, Greece

24-26 March 2017: "The youth's clock", Simulation of the City Council held in the Art and Thinking Multi-Room of Manos Hatzidakis home and the City Council Meetings Room. Ms. Suleiman Sabiha was one of the persons who held a speech with title: "From the settlement of Drosero to the UN Committees", Xanthi, Greece

15-16 December 2016: Athens Bar Association, Lawyer's training on non-discrimination, gender equality and Roma and Traveller women under the JUSTROM Programme, Athens, Greece

22 November 2016: Cultural Centre of the Municipality of Athens, Launch event of the EC/CoE Joint Programme on Access to Justice for Roma and Traveller Women, Athens, Greece

19 November 2016: Bodossaki Foundation, Closing Ceremony of the programme "We are all citizens, Athens, Greece

13 April 2016: Research Institute for the Balkans, *Violence against women in the Balkans*, Thessaloniki, Greece.

18-20 March 2016: 10th Congress of the International Romani Union IRU, Skopje, FYROM.

1-2 December 2015: Dialogue mechanism with Roma and Travelers Organizations, Strasbourg, France.

6-7 October 2015: Practical info and Agenda of the Fifth International Review Conference of Roma Women, Skopje, FYROM.

1-3 October 2015: OSCE/ODIHR contact point for Roma and Sinti Issues: *New Report on Roma and Sinti Youth*, Warsaw, Poland.

28 March 2014: Greek ombudsman, framework and good practices, Athens, Greece.

5 March 2015: Day of Women, Soroptimistic Union of Greece, Xanthi, Greece.

10 March 2014: *Meeting Against Racism and Intolerance*, (ECRI), Strasbourg, France.

26-27 November 2014: ERIO (European Roma Information Office), General Assembly Meeting, Brussels, Belgium.

17 November 2014: European Roma Information Office (ERIO), high-level conference with local authorities, Brussels, Belgium.

2-3 October 2014: ROMACT, *Roma Inclusion on the Ground – The ROMACT Experience*, Brussels, Belgium.

28 March 2014: Ombudsman, *Roma Social Inclusion and Good Practices*, Athens, Greece.

10 March 2014: Council of Europe, *Meeting Against Racism and Intolerance*, (ECRI), Strasbourg, France.

28-30 January 2014: US Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, *Combating Discrimination, Violence and Intolerance Based on Religion and National Origin*. Athens, Greece.

7-8 November 2013: OSCE, *Supplementary Human Roma and Sinti*, Vienna, Austria.

16-17 September 2013: Council Of Europe, *4th International Conference of Roma Women*, Helsinki, Finland.

27-28 November 2012: *5th Congress of UN about Minorities*, President's speech in plenary, Geneva, Switzerland.

14-16 November 2012: 1st Greek-German meeting on social organization, Thessaloniki, Greece.

7 April 2012: Book presentation *Drosero: A Roma, Muslim Settlement in Thrace*, Xanthi, Greece.

03-06 February 2011: *Dosta, Awareness Campaign to Combat Prejudice Against the Roma*, Council of Europe, Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs, Athens, Greece.

2 December 2011: *Policies to Combat Discrimination in Greece and the Role of Civil Society*, Xanthi, Greece.

11-12 January 2010: *2nd International Conference of Roma Women*, Ministry of Interior, Decentralization and e-Government Network Roma and the Council of Europe, Athens, Greece.

6-9 April 2010: Roundtable with Romani and Travelers women activists *On the Road to Equality*, FRA (Fundamental Rights Agency), Cordoba, Spain.

30 August-17 September 2010: The president of Elpida was chosen by the US Mission in Greece to participate in the State Department's International Visitors Leadership Program, which is held in various US cities, including Washington, New York and San Francisco.

8 April 2009: University Of Thessaly Department of Architecture, *Building Together*, Volos, Greece.

21 November 2009: Meeting to prepare International Conference of the Women's Roma NGO Drom Kotar Mestipen, Barcelona, Cordoba, Madrid, Spain.

9-10 November 2009: *International Conference on Migration and Freedom Movement of Roma*, FRA (Fundamental Rights Agency), COE (Council of Europe) and OSCE, Vienna, Austria.

6-9 October 2009: Annual Meeting of the OECD, OSCE, Warsaw, Poland.

28 September-9 October 2009: Roma/Sinti and in particular, early education for Roma and Sinti children, *Human Dimension Implementation Meeting*, Warsaw, Poland.

29-30 January 2008: *Active Citizens: Roma Social Integration*, ERIO (European Roma Information Office), Brussels, Belgium.

8-9 February 2008: *Access of Roma Children to Education in Turkey*, ERIO (European Roma Information Office), Roma Education Fund, Istanbul, Turkey.

25-26 February 2008: *Decade of Roma Inclusion*, guest of Victoria Mokatsi-Rom MEP Organization, the Council of Europe, the World Bank, Soros Foundation Development Program of the United Nations, Budapest, Hungary.

17 April 2008: International meeting of the European Parliament for the Turkish and Macedonian minorities in Greece. FUEN (Federal Union of European Nationalities) – Federal Association of European Nations, European Green Party, Brussels, Belgium.

2 October 2008: Annual meeting OASA, Warsaw, Poland.

24 November 2008: Annual meeting of the European Roma Forum, Council of Europe, ERTF (European Roma and Travelers Forum), European Forum on Roma and migrant groups, Strasbourg, France.



Sabiha Suleiman representing the Drosero community at the OSCE meeting, Warsaw, 2015.

President Sabiha Suleiman in the U.S.A.

In 2010, Ms. Suleiman was selected by the American Diplomatic Mission in Greece to take part in the State Department's International Visitors Leadership Program, which took place in different cities in the United States of America. This program lasted from 30 August to 17 September. Website: <https://eca.state.gov/ivlp>

Ms. Suleiman's program in U.S.A.

29-8-10

Tour of D.C.

We went on a tour of Washington, D.C. and walked by the Capitol Bldg. and the White House. We got off the bus at the Air & Space Museum.

30-8-10

Department of Education

Today we went to meet with Ms. Garcia. Sampicha asked her a lot of questions like, "How do we build a school if the local government won't help and we don't have any money?" Ms. Garcia is in charge of 138 programs for development/training for teachers who teach kids whose first language isn't English.

Discussion about how poverty hinders education. How parents pull their kids out of school to work, and authorities can "threaten" them, i.e. "if you don't send your kids to school then the INS might come." See below for Questions (from Sampicha) and Answers (from Ms. Garcia):

Q: How do we make a new school? 5000 people in the settlement, 2000 kids. How do we do it?

A: It's important to have parents supporting the school. Educated parents are wealthier and more able to give money to the school. If you depend on the state or local govt, you will get massive disparities (e.g., Georgetown vs. Anacostia). Parent involvement in all aspects of helping school is critical.

Q: We have 45 to 50 kids per classroom. We have proven that we want to learn and improve education. How can we get better just with parental support? How can we get more support from the Greek government?

A: I don't have an answer for that. Parent support for school is critical. How about getting a bus and having the mothers get licenses? They can rotate driving the bus to take kids to schools in Xanthi.

Some parents from immigrant communities opt against bilingual education so their kids won't be discriminated against. That is a hard decision for a parent to make. You should ask for help from established Roma in community. And you need to empower women.

Q: We have two political parties, they say they'll help if I pledge support during the elections. But it's dirty and I don't want to be a part of that. And rich Roma disassociate from the Roma community.

A: You have to give power to the women. e.g. Ms. Garcia's parents (grandparents?) were illiterate agricultural workers. But the next generation became successful businessman. She remembers not having enough money for milk for her son. She said, "The parents have to make the children study."

Federalism briefing

At Meridian International Center, Sampicha heard a briefing on U.S. federal system and political system.

31-8-10

Mosaica (NGO)

Sampicha met with Ms. Binder-Aviles and Ms. Berl. They wanted to know about Drosero situation and Sampicha wanted to know about how to effectively mobilize minority groups to get support from the government. They seemed to espouse focusing on one theme only and sticking to that, something a bunch of diverse groups could agree to and unify behind it. Too many issues make it divisive and hard to get results.

<http://www.teachingforchange.org/>

1-9-10

U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum

(Μνημείο Μουσείο του Ολοκαυτώματος της ΗΠΑ), met with Mr. Brown.

<http://www.ushmm.org/> Sampicha visited the archives and found that the Roma materials had very little written documentation. The archivist asked for Sampicha to send materials about Roma for the collection, which had little to no stuff on Greek Roma. There was a holocaust survivor there, Ms. Godin (Galperin).

Department of State (DoS)

Went to Main State and met with officials involved in Greek affairs, including Mr. Nadel (Desk Officer, Roma Issues, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor); and some other people, including a lady named Vida from Lithuania(?) who spoke very good Greek.

Department of Justice (DoJ)

We went to the Civil Rights Division to meet with Ms. Stevens. She talked about the history of civil rights in shaping U.S. federal laws.

3-9-10

San Francisco Orientation

We had a welcome orientation in San Francisco with Ms. Lee, Ms. Sinn, et al. They came to the lobby of our hotel and afterward Kenneth took us to the International Studies Academy (655 De Haro St., San Francisco, CA 94107). Kenneth took us to a nearby Episcopalian church (St. Gregory of Nyssa Church). There were murals of "Dancing Saints" celebrating a range of great people, from Gandhi to Shakespeare. The main hall was full of food and produce. The priest was cooking and the staff were kind enough to show us around. Sampicha said she was impressed not only the food drive for the poor but also the tolerance for diversity.

International Studies Academy

At the school a student guided us around the school. <https://isa-sfusd-ca.schoolloop.com>
Sampicha was impressed by the fact there was a clinic and that they had overseas trips for the kids. There was talk with the principal of starting something between this school and Drosero. We attended Mr. Douglas Jernigan's class where Sampicha talked to the students about Roma in Xanthi. The students listened attentively and asked a lot of questions. One student asked, "If it's so bad in Xanthi then why don't you just leave?" Sampicha thought that it was a good question but answered, "If things were going bad for you here, would you leave your country? No. We have to stay in Xanthi and succeed there."

Diversity Works (NG))

Diversity Works (800 Heinz Ave. #14, Berkeley, CA 94710). We met with Mr. Ceaser in his office, which was very home-like. We had to take off our shoes and there were lots of photos on the walls he had taken of people from all over the world. He explained the programs and Sampicha asked a lot of questions.

4-9-10

Home hospitality

Today we went past Alcatraz to Ted and Diane's home in Marin. The fact that they planted all the Redwood trees themselves really surprised us. Their house was beautiful.

5-9-10

Free day

I took Sampicha shopping near Union Square. I took her to Urban Outfitters and Gap, she wanted a sweater since San Francisco is pretty cold. She bought a jacket and a dress too. I took her for a drive in the rental car around Pacific Heights and over the Golden Gate Bridge.

6-9-10

Tour of San Francisco

Ms. Boothe took us to Muir Woods through the Presidio and Sampicha really enjoyed that. She's very knowledgeable of plants and interested in local varieties. Sampicha's digital camera battery died so Joan took us to Ace Hardware to get an adapter. She also took us to Twin Peaks for a view of the city, also through Pacific Heights past Nancy Pelosi's house. The discussion on women in political positions of power seemed to make an impression on Sampicha.

7-9-10

Voices of Roma

We went to the Institute of International Education (IIE) at 530 Bush St., Ste 1000 to meet with Mr. Sani (pronounced "Shani") Rifati, President of Voice of Roma. The two were able to communicate quite well for some matters but I did have to interpret quite a bit. Mr. Rifati emphasized the importance of having a proper board of directors at Elpida in order to get funding. Donors don't give to organizations that don't have clear structures for responsibility and transparency, he said. He also said music is the best way to raise funds. That is what he's doing here. Also selling crafts made by Romani women in Kosovo. www.voiceofroma.com

Global Fund for Women

We went to 222 Sutter St., Ste 500 to meet with Ms. Hoody and her associate. <https://www.globalfundforwomen.org/> They explained how they provide small-scale grants for women-led organizations. I was struck at how easy they make the process. They accept all requests for money regardless of format and language (not that they're necessarily granting them no matter what, but they make it very easy for non-English speakers to apply).

Islamic Society of San Francisco

We went to 20 Jones St. to meet with Mr. Ghaleb. He and Sampicha discussed their respective methods of practicing their faith. At night we went to a Japanese restaurant for dinner, a place called Sanraku. She really enjoyed Japanese food.

8-9-10

Departed for Austin, Texas

Sampicha went to the California Academy of Sciences in Golden Gate Park. She really loved the aquarium but unfortunately the rain forest exhibit was closed. I thought she would like that given her love and knowledge of plants. Then we left for Texas.

9-9-10

Dr. Sonia Seeman

Called Dr. Seeman at the University of Texas in Austin, met her at a cafe. She spoke fluent Turkish, she was cultured, accomplished and independent.

Dr. Ian Hancock

He spoke Romani so he was able to communicate a little with Sampicha but then he ended up relying on my interpreting as the discussion became more involved. She told him about the struggles her community faces and he gave lots of advice, such as the need to unite and use external allies. He also offered his help and they plan to be in touch.

El Buen Samaritano Episcopal Mission

The director of this church, Mr. Azios, was very kind and gave us a thorough tour of both his facilities and the nearby church. Sampicha commented on how different the churches are here in the U.S., how American churches do a lot of social work.

Allan Elementary School

This school made an impression because of bilingual curricula. The teachers are being trained to teach better to bilingual and bicultural kids.

10-9-10

College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP)

Their descriptions of the program were interesting to Sampicha. But when she describes what is going on in Greece for Roma, it seems clear they are years behind programs like CAMP.

League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)

We met with Mr. Tafoya who told us how LULAC was started and how it was later organized. He emphasized the need to create a symbol for the association that has some kind of visual impact. He also talked about making a constitution or rules and bylaws that all members of the federation have to follow. Also, any action, any event should have the symbol prominently displayed. And he advised to team up with powerful external allies that can help shame oppressors.

11-9-10

Free day

Sonia Seeman came and got us in the late afternoon and took us to a Latino festival. Always gracious and kind, she spoke with Sampicha a lot in Turkish. There was a booth set up by people petitioning for better education. A lot of the same troubles were found here in local immigrant communities: high dropout rate, a lot of teen pregnancy, etc.

9-12-10

Departed Austin for Memphis, Tennessee

Home hospitality

Lots of Southern belles at this party. They asked Sampicha a lot about Xanthi.

9-13-10

Mid South Minority Business Council (MMBC)

Mr. Yancy and all his staff had a huge conference room ready for us and he gave a detailed overview of the organization with PowerPoint. Then it was Sampicha's turn to talk and she told about Drosero.

NAACP

Met with the local chapter and they talked about what they had in common in terms of minorities in struggle. Sampicha was discouraged to hear how the African American struggle took 300 years. But she was told things are changing a lot faster now.

National Civil Rights Museum

We visited the Lorraine Hotel where Martin Luther King was assassinated.

14-9-10

Dress for Success

Small NGO that helps disadvantaged women by setting them up with business clothes geared suitable for the work they are seeking. The ladies walked us through the operation and gave some ideas about how to apply a similar model to Drosero. Sampicha said there is a woman in Greece that has offered to give a store for the Romani women to make and sell their traditional clothes to tourists. This meeting seemed to convince Sampicha that the clothing store was a good idea.

Interfaith

A woman here discussed how they use community action to fight for rights of illegal immigrants getting ripped off by employers here in the U.S. Their NGO actually has very little to do with religion. Sampicha seemed to like the techniques for applying pressure to businesses and local officials.

15-9-10

Departed Memphis for New York City

Got to New York City and took Sampicha to the hotel in Manhattan.

16-9-10

KIPP Infinity Charter School

<http://www.kippnyc.org/> All students here are inner city kids from poor neighborhoods. 98% of the kids are African American and Latino. There was a lot of discipline and a fun atmosphere to the classes.

NYPD Conflict Resolution Center

A police detective met with us, told us about immigrant outreach programs. NYPD tries to bridge gap between police and immigrant communities.

Open Society Institute (OSI)

This is the George Soros group. Mr. Skilbeck seemed to not really know about Elpida and a lot of time was spent talking about who knew whom (Romani activists). Skilbeck said he'd get in touch with his Greek research team and have them contact Elpida for more information. In December OSI plans to officially condemn Greece and two other nations for not complying with legal decisions requiring them to improve education.

17-9-10

New York City Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs

Women's e-news

Sampicha talked a lot to these women about the problems in Drosero.

Went to Ground Zero where 9-11 happened. Also went to Liberty Island and Ellis Island to see the Statue of Liberty. Sampicha flew back to Greece 18 September, 2010.



Sabiha Suleiman participating in US State Department Leadership Program, San Francisco, 2010.



Sabiha Suleiman participating in US State Department Leadership Program, New York, 2010.



Sabiha Suleiman participating in US State Department Leadership Program, Washington DC, 2010.

Publications that Refer to Elpida

January 2014: Newspaper *Free Press*: “Δεν θέλουμε να γίνουμε Τούρκοι με το ζόρι” [We don’t want to be Turkish under pressure], reportage: Angelos Angelidis.

April 2010: Magazine *Exposure*, issue 24 p. 17, feature “Οικτισμός Δροσερού Ρομά – ‘Στη ζωή είμαστε όλοι μόνοι μας’ Κοινωνία Ώρα Μηδέν” [Settlement of Drosero Roma – ‘We are all alone in life’ A society at zero hour].

May 2009: Information sheet *Περιφερειακά, Ανατολικής Μακεδονίας-Θράκης* [Regionally, East Macedonia-Thrace], issue 1, “Ανθίζει Η Ελπίδα για τους Ρομά του Δροσερού Ξάνθης” [Hope is blooming for Roma of Drosero, Xanthi].

May 2009: Newspaper *Thrace*, “Έντερλέζι: Γιορτή τιμή από τους Ρομά” [Ederlezi, honorary celebration by the Roma], reportage: Alexander Paulikianos.

May 2009: Newspaper *Thrace Fighter*, “Οι Ρομά του Δροσερού γιόρτασαν τον ερχομό της άνοιξης με το Εντερλέζι” [The Roma of Drosero celebrated the arrival of spring with Ederlezi].

27 February 2009: Newspaper *Time*, “Η Ξεχωριστή Πρόεδρος του Συλλόγου Ρομά Δροσερού Η Ελπίδα” [The unique president of the Women’s Association of Drosero, Elpida], interview: Melachrini Martidou.

December 2008: Magazine *Nemesis*, “Κάζομ τραϊσαράβ” [As long as I live, I hope], which is the motto of Drosero’s children in the Romani language, reportage: Haralampos Dantis.

9 April 2008: Newspaper *Thrace Observer*, “Η Ελπίδα ταιριάζει στο Δροσερό” [Hope suits Drosero], reportage: Jenny Katsari- Vafiadis.

July 2007: Newspaper *Thrace*, “Οι γιατροί του Κόσμου” [Doctors of the World], on the occasion of their visit to the Drosero settlement. <http://mdmgreece.gr/>

Research and Cooperation

Elpida's activities are not limited to the educational and social fields, but go further. More specifically, the association, in an effort to disseminate information about social integration problems and Roma living conditions, has managed to mobilize people from various cultural and political fields. In this context, the association works with academics from several institutions and assists them in conducting research in the settlement of Drosero. For example:

- The census in the settlement in 2007.
- Cooperation with Evangelia Adamou, Doctor of linguistics at the University of Paris and Director of Research at the national center of scientific research in France.
- Research on language contact in Drosero, with recorded talks in 2010. Subvention: Agence Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique (ANR-09-JCIC-0121-01). *Towards a multi-level, typological and computer assisted analysis of contact-induced language change.*
- In October 2015: Research on language processing in Romani, with 50 speakers from Drosero. Subvention: Laboratoire d' Excellence Empirical Foundations of Linguistics, Agence Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique.

The Ombudsman

The president of Elpida, in her aim to find solutions for the settlement's problems and improve the living conditions of the inhabitants of Drosero, has, since the first years of operation of the association, been in contact with the Ombudsman, to express the problems of the settlement. The intention of this contact is to be heard at the highest echelons of the state, so as to arrive at solutions and produce results.

Demands

The association sends demand letters to solve problems and improve the living conditions in Drosero. Responses received so far are:

- 4-5-2007: The answer of Mr. Antonis Efstratiades, Provost of Hygiene Department in Municipality of Xanthi about garbage disposal.
- 19-11-2007: The answer of Mr. George Patrikios, Assistant Professor of the DUTH, Department of Architecture about the construction of a central square in Drosero.

- 4-6-2008: The association's demand to the Ministry of country planning, built-up area and environment (ΥΠΕΧΩΔΕ) about the integration of the Drosero settlement in the urban plan of Xanthi.
- 10-6-2008: The answer of Mr. George Paulides, the Deputy of the Mayor of Xanthi about securing means of transportation to and from the Drosero settlement.
- 2-8-2008: The answer of Mr. George Moschos, Assistant of the Ombudsman for children's rights about the education of children in all Roma communities in Thrace.
- 16-6-2013: The association's demand to the Ministry of Labor, Social Security and Welfare about combatting the unemployment of Roma people, inhabitants of the Drosero settlement.
- 16-7-2013: The association's demand to the Ministry of Infrastructure, Transport and Grid (Υπουργείο Υποδομών, Μεταφορών και Δικτύων) about the sewage wastewater and rainwater.
- 16-7-2013: The association's demand to the Ministry of Infrastructure, Transport and Grid about the asphaltting of the Drosero settlement.
- 16-7-2013: The association's demand to the Ministry of Infrastructure, Transport and Grid about issuing driving licenses to illiterates.
- 13-7-2013: The association's demand to the Ministry of Health about the equal treatment of Roma people in regard to health issues and in hospitals without being subjected to racism.

Sustainability Plan

Elpida has recently decided to actively look for ways to increase the economic sustainability of its projects, according to its priorities as delineated in its strategic plan. It has successfully attempted and continues to attempt to diversify its funding sources (see section on donors) and increase funding in order to match it with the community needs. Moreover, it is currently working on a business plan on how to raise its own funds through the production and sale of products, such as candles, baskets, etc. These products are either traditionally produced by the Drosero Romani community, or they are produced by the members of Elpida who in the past were trained on how to produce them.

A number of challenges are associated with social sustainability in the case of Elpida:

1. In order to recruit remunerated personnel and, especially, volunteers, Elpida needs to make the average Greeks overcome the negative and stereotypical image they have of the Roma. In dealing with this, Elpida attempts to raise awareness regarding the Drosero community and the rights of the Roma in Greece.

2. There is a greater difficulty with creating economies of scale because Drosero is an irregular/illegal settlement. The fact that Drosero, for decades after its establishment, remains outside the town plan of Xanthi results in greater costs for connecting to networks, such as the power network and transport to the town; it means that properties to host projects are small in size and this increases the risk of disruption of activities. All these are reflected in greater operational costs.

3. Due to socio-economic conditions in Drosero, much needed support and expertise needs to come from outside the community. Significantly, the particularly low education level of the Drosero inhabitants makes them unable to cope with the magnitude and complexity of the problems they face.

These risk factors, especially the low education level, mean that social sustainability for Elpida activities differs from that of “mainstream” NGOs. The time horizon for projects and programs is longer, in anticipation of the Drosero Romani community reaching its emancipation moment. In relation to this, capacity-building for Elpida, as a Romani community-based organization, starts with fighting illiteracy and endowing the Drosero inhabitants with knowledge and skills, which are taken for granted by “mainstream” NGOs. By focusing on education and life-long learning, Elpida is contributing to creating the necessary human capital and helps Drosero to reach faster its emancipation moment.

It is, therefore, of fundamental importance for Elpida to ensure that funding for its main activities, i.e. childhood education and, especially, the running of its preschool education program, is regular and sufficient as well as scheduled according to this longer-term time horizon, which the special conditions at Drosero necessitate. Elpida is open to discussing with every potential partner and grant provider issues of sustainability, always with respect to the fundamental rights of the Roma, respect for their identity and acknowledgment of their status as Greek citizens.

Program JustRom

From the beginning of May 2017, the function of the legal clinic within the JustRom program was launched at the Cultural Association of Roma Women of Drosero - Xanthi "ELPIDA".

This program was set up in cooperation between the Council of Europe and the European Commission with the aim of enhancing Roma women's access to justice.

As a result, at the Cultural Association of Roma Women of Drosero - Xanthi "ELPIDA", the free legal support office was established, where the beneficiaries can come and receive legal advice from a Lawyer and a Legal Assistant who provide their services.

The objective and goals of the law clinic is to administer justice to Roma people and especially to women who have been victims of racial discrimination, violation and violation of human and civil rights, victims of domestic violence and in general crimes committed against them such as forced marriage, traffic, victims of the Police Authorities. Etc.

Program EduRom

2014-2015: European Union Program EduRom (<http://www.edurom.ro/>): *Promoting the access of Roma to LLP, VET and employment trough family education in primary schools*, which involved six countries (Romania, Spain, Czech Republic, Republic Of Ireland, Bulgaria and Greece). The US Consulate General in Thessaloniki and Stavros Niarchos Foundation provided grants, funding the participation of Elpida in the program. The organizations and universities, which took part in this program, are the following:



Δήμος Αθηνάων: Οργανισμός Πολιτισμού Αθλητισμού και Νεολαίας (ΟΠΙΑΔΝΑ) (Municipality of Athens: Organization of Culture, Athletics & Youth) is a new organization resulting from the merger of the organization of Youth and Athletics and the Cultural and Musical department of the Municipality Of Athens. Its mission is to engage, through activities, recreation areas, culture, sports and education, people of all ages, giving them the opportunity to come into contact with art, sport and science.

Website: <http://www.opanda.gr/>



Kingdom of the Netherlands

Orange Grove: The Orange Grove is a new workspace for networking and support of Greek and Dutch entrepreneurs under 35 years old, and also Greek graduates, who want to start their own business in Greece. It is an ambitious initiative of the Dutch Ambassador in Athens Mr. Jan Versteeg. The goal of this project is to provide the necessary support (contacts, expertise, knowledge) to Greek and Dutch entrepreneurs, who want to start their own business or expand their business activities in Greece.

Website: <http://orangegrove.biz/>



Romani Association of Women Drom Kotar Mestipen: a non-profit organization created in 1999 in Spain (Barcelona) by Roma and non-Roma women with different backgrounds. It is a national organization, carrying its activities out mainly at the regional level. It was created to overcome the triple exclusion suffered by Roma women: being women (gender discrimination) belonging to an ethnic minority group (ethnic discrimination) and being denied equal access to education. It works with the promotion of social, political and economic opportunities for the Roma women, Roma identity and Roma adult education.

Website: <http://www.rom-act.eu/spip.php?article40>



Rovira i Virgili University is located in the Catalan cities of Tarragona and Reus, Spain. It is named in honor of Antoni Rovira i Virgili.

The University is a teaching and research institution with centers in Tarragona, Reus, Vilaseca, Tortosa and El Vendrell.

Website: <http://www.urv.cat/en/>



Amalipe Center for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance is a leading Roma organization, working for the equal integration of Roma in Bulgarian society. The organization plays a central role in organizing a Roma civic movement and advocating for Roma integration within the state institutions. Amalipe is a member of the National Network of Children, the Civil Participation Forum, the National Patient Organization, the European Women Lobby. Amalipe has its representatives on the Monitoring Committees of the Human Resources Development OP, Education and Science for Smart Growth OP, Regions in Development OP, Good Governance OP and the Partnership Agreement. At present the organization has

community development centers and local community clubs in 11 municipalities and works with a network of more than 170 schools.

Website: <http://amalipe.com/index.php?nav=About&lang=2>



The University of Barcelona is a public Spanish university. With 75 undergraduate programs, 353 graduate programs and 96 doctoral programs serving more than 63,700 students, UB was considered to be the best university in Spain in 2011, according to QS World University Rankings, which also ranked the university 148th overall in the world. In 2010, according to the university ranking by Academic Performance (URAP), it is the best university in Spain and ranked 83rd university in the world.

Website: <http://www.ub.edu/web/ub/ca/>



Non-governmental organization SLOVO 21 was founded in 1999 in Prague and realizes educational, cultural, media, public awareness and other projects, especially Roma projects and projects aiming at integration of immigrants.

Leading goals are to combat racism and xenophobia, to help protect and respect human rights, to teach tolerance towards ethnic minorities, in particular the Roma minority, to

support integration of foreign nationals living in the Czech Republic, and to provide media support to minorities in the Czech Republic.

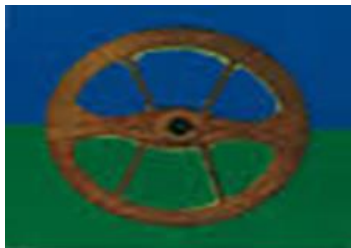
Website: <http://www.slovo21.cz/>



Federation of Cultural and Adult Education Associations (FACEPA)

FACEPA gathers adults with no university qualifications, who are taking part in adult education, and supports their associations by means of direct participation in social, cultural, educational, political and economic fields. Our purpose is to work collectively towards a democratic educational and cultural model, in which the voices of people with no academic qualifications, who have been excluded from public debate, are taken into account.

Website: http://www.basicsskills.eu/?page_id=2996



The Roma Women's Association 'For Our Children' was founded on 15th June 1997 at the initiative of a group of Roma women from Strand Colony, Timisoara, Romania. For Our Children aims to promote Roma in the socio-political life of Romania, proudly and without prejudice, by providing educational and cultural activities for Roma women and children. Objectives: Promoting the access of Roma women and girls to education; Defending the rights and ensuring equal opportunities regarding the access to education for Roma children; Preventing prejudice and racism by organizing conferences, discussions, and seminars; Promoting a positive image of the Roma within the media; Maintaining the identity of Roma through Romani language courses, theatre, music, dance, and preserving the values and traditions.

Website: <http://www.socialintegration.org/network/roma-womens-association-for-our-children/>



This website is only in Spanish



Pavee Point is a Dublin-based, national, non-governmental organization established in 1985 and committed to the realization of human rights for Irish Travellers and Roma living in Ireland.

The organization is a partnership of Travellers, Roma and members of the majority population working together to address the needs of Travellers and Roma as minority ethnic groups who experience exclusion, marginalization and discrimination.

Website: <http://www.paveepoint.ie/>



Embassy Of France in Athens (Ambassade de France en Grece) <http://www.ambafrance-gr.org/-Francais->



Australian Embassy

Australian Embassy in Athens (<http://greece.embassy.gov.au/>)

Contact:

If you would like to know more about Elpida and its activities, or if you would like to identify ways for assisting in its mission, please contact us at: sullogoselpida@gmail.com..