



ROMANET  
PROGRAM

CF  
Carpathian  
Foundation

ETP Slovensko  
ETP Slovakia

PROJECT OF THE TITLE OF  
"ROMANET – COMMUNITY  
BASED CAPACITY BUILDING"  
**2012-2013**

# "THE WHEEL GOES ON REVOLVING..."



HUNGARY | POLAND | ROMANIA | SLOVAKIA | UKRAINE

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## RomaNet Programme...

### The wheel has been revolving for 10 years!

The goal of the RomaNet Programme of the Carpathian Foundation, launched in 2002, is to support projects that preserve Roma cultural values while solving some of the most pressing needs that the Roma communities of the Carpathian region have identified as being instrumental in putting them in a disadvantaged position compared to non-Roma groups.

*“Without joined forces and dialogue the low level self-esteem of Roma people will not change, and they will be far less capable of representing their interests efficiently.”*

*(one of the participants)*

#### THE BEGINNING

From 2002 until 2005, the Carpathian Foundation provided financial support for projects that facilitated cross-border co-operation, network building and the development of Roma organisations. Fifty four (54) projects amounting to 166,782 USD were supported in four countries of the Carpathian Euroregion.

Subsequently the joint learning and training of the supported organisations were served by conferences “RomaNet I” and “RomaNet II”, during which the leaders of the Roma organisations of the Carpathian region discussed the forms of co-operation and the possibility of establishing a network representing their interest.

Based on the achieved results starting with 2006 with the support of the Open Society Institute, the National Civil Fund and other local players, we organised a training series in the interest of developing the capacities of the participating organisations. As a result of the training programmes the project planning and implementation capability of the Roma non-profit organizations improved dramatically.

#### JOINT PLATFORM

In 2008 as a result of the training series and thanks to the co-operation of the participating organisations, a non-formal RomaNet interest network was established for developing representation and interest enforcing capabilities of the Roma communities living in the region. In the interest of sustaining and extending this we started a forum and a training series that lasted until 2010.

#### YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE FOCUS

During the joint work it has been a recurring problem that the talented proactive Roma young people were excluded from Roma civil life and continuity of actions between the generations was missing. A program, for young people was established in 2009 to rectify this problem. The program was called “Zhas amenge!” Or in English “Let’s Go!”

First, in 2009/2010, the participants during 20 sessions in seven settlements in four counties developed skills necessary for non-government organizations. Among these skills taught were community organising, interest representation, and putting interest into action. A professional co-operation network organising process was also started. The 2010/2011 period, ending in May 2011, had as its major success, the completion of a sociographic manual, jointly produced which described the settlements, residential environment, and settlement communities of the participants.

#### AGAIN BRIDGING THE BORDER

The RomaNetCo-operation Network developed by the Carpathian Foundation was also implemented during the 2010/2011 time period the framework of this project the Slovakian and Hungarian Roma non - governmental organisations assisted Roma people who participated in joint training events (covering the topics of legal protection, interest enforcing, communication and negotiation techniques, as well as planning project ideas and tender writing). Professional experiences were exchanged during “Good practice” visits and other meetings.

#### In summary, the Programme has achieved so far:

- Continuing programme work for 10 years in more than 500 addressed Roma organisations
- Training of 1000+ participants at training events, forums and events
- Supporting 21 Hungarian projects
- Supporting 54 projects in Poland, Slovakia, Romania and Ukraine and publishing an evaluation study and situation assessment
- Establishing the RomaNet Interest Representing Network

*The RomaNet Programme is differentiated from the other similar programmes by the fact that it places outstanding emphasis on those cross-border co-operation programmes as well, which encourage experience exchanging between the countries and which lead to measurable results.*





## RomaNet – community based capacity building

The project, entitled „RomaNet – community based capacity building” was implemented through the co-operation of the Carpathian Foundation-Hungary and its partner, the Slovakian ETP Slovensko organisation between October 1, 2012 and October 31, 2013, within the framework of the Hungary-Slovakia Cross-Border Co-operation Programme 2007-2013 ([www.husk-cbc.eu](http://www.husk-cbc.eu)).



### Background

In general, Roma communities – especially the European Roma people – are characterised by a low level of education, high unemployment rate, the difficulty (or lack) of accessing medical care and other essential services, poor dwelling conditions and strong discrimination demonstrated towards them.

The development possibilities of Roma communities are significantly influenced by the professional preparedness of Roma civic organisations.

Our experiences, gained during the course of implementing our programmes and the feedback provided by our partners, indicate that the Roma organisations operating in the Besztercebánya and Kosice districts of Slovakia and in the North Hungarian region within Hungary (the most disadvantageous areas of both countries)

regarding their professional preparedness are at a disadvantage compared to Roma and other organisations that operate in other Hungarian and Slovakian regions. Exactly for this reason, strengthening their absorption capacity is indispensable in the interest of the development of the peripheral, border territories, since this will contribute to the development of the region as a whole, to the increasing of social-economic cohesion. In the interest of improving the situation of the Roma communities it is necessary to take actions in a unified manner, to have a unified strategy, irrespective of the borders. The stronger the absorption of a community becomes and the more efficiently it uses the resources, the more possibilities it will have for improving its quality of life. Our project reacts to this challenge.



## The purpose

The purpose of this project is to encourage the co-operation of the Roma non governmental organisations operating on the two sides of the border and to support their capacity development in the interest of the joint solution of the problems of the North Hungarian and East Slovakian Roma people.

The programme targets with the support of the European Union the joint development of the Hungarian-Slovakian border regions.

## The method - „learning by doing” - the project itself

We involved into the project five Roma nongovernmental organisations from the North Hungarian region and five Roma nongovernmental organisations from the different disadvantaged settlements of the districts of Kosice and Besztercebánya. During the long years of their operation both implementing organisations have been well embedded into the life of the region. They do know directly the organisations operating in the target region, therefore the selection aspects had been also defined on the basis of the experiences (local embedment, support level, recognition, clear objectives, committed colleagues, volunteers, goods ideas, the lack of resources and information, etc.).

The members of the organisations, whose members were selected through a tender (October-November 2012), designed step by step their so-called own mini projects in the course of an intensive practice oriented training that covered the topics of designing and implementing projects, assessment of the demands, mobilizing the communities and the development of partnerships. The implementation of the mini projects, finalised on the occasions of the trainings and of the cross-border forums (December 2012 – February 2013), was the experience gaining phase for the organisations. The participants of the project month by month (March 2013 – July 2013) presented what they had learnt and



the way they are able to deploy in practice the mini projects that unite their local site knowledge and plans. Their work was assisted by continuous support that was provided by experienced mentors. Through a continuous information flow, involving the participants and the wide audience as well, we provided information about the implementation of the project, including the mini projects, with the aid of the official website of the RomaNet programme ([www.romanet.hu](http://www.romanet.hu)).

The participants visited each other's projects and events, and in this way they had the chance to integrate what they experienced on these occasions into their own projects or to utilise them in the future. By closing the mini projects the participants could experience how important and useful it is to evaluate the implemented events, to share their adventures and whatever they have learned (July- August 2013).

The participants of the project practically carried out a joint examination work by jointly organising the closing conference and festival (September 2013). The success of the event confirmed to the participants the usefulness of the accumulated knowledge and experiences, and it confirmed to the implementers of the project that the way they started is a viable way that should be followed.





## The project implementing parties

### Carpathian Foundation – Hungary

The Carpathian Foundation–Hungary registered in 2002 and having its seat in Eger is a member (in addition to Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine) of the International Carpathian Foundation Network that has four independent legal members. The Foundation operates as a cross-border regional community foundation and by providing financial professional assistance primarily within the Hungarian territory of the Carpathian Region – Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, Hajdú-Bihar, Heves, Jász- Nagykun- Szolnok and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg counties – it encourages the co-operation of non governmental, state and profit oriented organisations, the cross border and inter-ethnic approaches: through its community based rural development, human resource development, cultural and environmental value preserving, societal relation development programs and projects.

The Foundation has implemented several successful projects and programmes since 2002 in the interest of developing the Roma non governmental organisations.

Website address: [www.karpatokalapitvany.hu](http://www.karpatokalapitvany.hu)

### ETP Slovensko

ETP Slovakia is a non profit consulting and training organisation, which was established as the direct continuance of the Central and East European Environment Protection Training Project (the ETP Project). The ETP Project was initiated in year 1992 by the International Development Agency of the United States, and it was implemented in six Central and East European countries until 1998. ETP Slovensko since its foundation in 1995 has been operating as an independent organisation.

Since its foundation the ETP Slovensko has been closely co-operating with the local governments and enterprises, as well as with the nongovernmental organisations in implementing programmes that facilitate the increasing of the sustainability of local developments and the protection of the environment, moreover which provides assistance for disadvantaged individuals and families, including the Roma people and immigrants.

Website address: [www.etp.sk](http://www.etp.sk)





## Introduction of the participating organisations and their mini projects

### IN Network Slovakia



The society as the local organisation of the IN Network International operating in 32 countries facilitates the implementation of social and charity projects on a national level. It supports the youth related work through the contribution of students living in socially disadvantaged families and it supports the missionary activities of the local churches. At present the organisation employs 15 persons full time, but in addition to this numerous volunteers do also support their work, which includes among others the following: operation of a Community Center, organising different camps (for Roma families, during summers, organised in the cities), supporting the Dživipen music ensemble, etc.

„During the project we got nearer to the children and to their parents. We learned that we have to find new solutions for the problems. We have picked up new contacts and we have obtained the assistance of people working in other areas as well. We had to learn that we have to accept the new ideas and opinions as well. As the organising committee we are proud of our team and of the fact that we worked with sharing the responsibilities, with exploiting our strengths.,,

Jozef Demjan,  
colleague

### Reutilised toys

(March 22, 2013, Veľká nad Ipľom)



The series of mini projects was started with an event of the IN Network, which was organised at the settlement of Veľká nad Ipľom. The society offered an alternative, useful, free time passing opportunity for the local children and young people. The program focused on environment protection and an environment conscious lifestyle. Within the framework of this the children prepared toys with reutilising PET bottles and used CD disks, egg holders, with the assistance of an expert. The prepared toys were introduced by about 20 children in the framework of a forum to the other village children, who had the chance to also acquire the method of preparing these toys in a playful form. It is a special success of the event that it was also visited by twenty teachers and social workers, in order to capture ideas for their future work, through getting acquainted with the motor movement -developing and a creativity-demanding alternative method.







## Siroki Roma - Hungarian Society (Siroki Roma-Magyar Egyesület)



The society was established in 2008 with 14 members, with the mission of improving equal opportunities of children living in poverty and deep poverty and their families. The objectives of the society include the provision of social protection and access to services. The Society since its existence organised many community programmes including the following: Roma Day, Halloween Celebration, Santa Claus Eve and with weekly regularity family weekends and flea markets. In addition to this, the children and the young people may pass their free time with playing table tennis, table soccer, using computers and other table games in the Community House of the settlement. The organisation previously participated as a consortium partner in the „Stone holes of Tarna” estate liquidation project, and as a result they improved the dwelling conditions of local families of difficult fates, living in poverty – they established new homes for 11 families – and through education they also facilitated job finding for the adults.

„The project provided for me and for our Society an opportunity to extend our contacts, to acquire new knowledge and to implement a high scale event at our settlement.”

Zsuzsanna Forgó  
society member

## International Roma Day (April 6, 2013, Sirok)



The society marked International Roma Day (April 8) as the main topic of its mini project. In the framework of a one day event – which was opened by the ceremonial welcome speech of the Mayor – they compiled a programme series, which in addition to introducing the traditions of the Roma People (Péter Szuhay, Ethnographer) also lined up amateur and professional artists coming from different art branches – including the theatre for children, the Slovakian „Slumdog” Theatre, Péter Berki and its music band.

The programme provided a venue for introducing the traditional Roma foods as well: the participants had the chance to taste the meaty “lecsó”, the bean pastry and the “bodak” which is considered to be the bread of the Roma people.

In spite of the unfavourable weather no less than 100 persons visited Sirok, moreover the society also hosted the Slovakian participants of the project, opening through this, the series of the events of the Hungarian mini projects.



## QZ Roma Veľké Dravce



This society that was established in 2011, builds its activities on wide societal co-operation – involving governmental and local organisations, the authorities, societies, international partners and the business sector – with the purpose of managing and reducing social disadvantages (job searching, social consulting) and organising educational and sports events, operating programs primarily for the young people. In the framework of this, during recent years it implemented one of its projects that focused on preserving the Roma traditions, and also implemented another project with the title of “Football for everyone” which strengthened the peaceful cohabitation of the Roma people and the majority society, and contributed to fighting the biases.

„The most memorable part of the project was team work and the mutual support that was provided for each other. For us monitoring the work of other organisations meant a huge motivation. It also offered us the opportunity to learn from the mistakes. The project also helped us in building out contacts within the city. From the local inhabitants and the local governments we received positive feedback. It is encouraging that the children assisted the adults in cleaning the settlement. We are also glad that the Roma children seem to be increasingly interested in environment protection related topics.”

Alžbeta Illéšová  
Director

**By protecting the environment  
we also protect ourselves!  
(April 22, 2013, Veľké Dravce)**



The project was closed symbolically with an event that was organised on Earth Day. During April the organisers held 2 training and interactive days, where about 35 children and young people had the chance to get acquainted with the protection of the environment. The children planted herbs, and then they took these herbs home and nurtured them at home. At the closing event, with the participation of more than 100 children, 11 cherry trees had been planted, the nurturing of which will be fruitful. The organisation with the active involvement of the children and by developing their commitment wishes to spread an environment -conscious life style among the young generation. Acknowledging the activity of the organisation, the local government of the settlement also welcomed the event and the local government through its continuous support ensured the success of the project.





## Society for Szúcs [Szúcs Községért Egyesület]



The Society was established in 2009. It had been reorganised recently on the occasion of the replacement of the manager. Its overall objective is to develop the settlement of Szúcs through civil co-operation, to indicate the local problems that involve wide classes of people, to develop standpoints, to elaborate solution proposals and to keep in contact with the local government and its institutions.

In the interest of the above goals the society implements its activities in the following areas:

- forming public opinion, informing the people at large,
- popularising sport and a healthy life style,
- close co-operation with the local government,
- organising cultural, leisure time programmes, supporting events,
- facilitating the improvement of the quality of life and promoting the development of the settlement.

The society - thanks to a subsidy won recently – will start the development of a community space within the settlement with the purpose of providing foundations for and strengthening of the local community life by ensuring continuous services and programmes.

„For us the project was the fuel for our renewed society. Thanks to the event that was organised within the framework of the project our community had been significantly activated.”

Margó Sándorné Csóka  
President of the Society

## The Day of Szúcs! (April 22, 2013, Szúcs)



The society focused on a double target in connection with the event. On one hand it wanted to keep an environment protection day for the children living in Szúcs, supplementing this with a joint tree planting - planned with a tradition creating objective – carried out for those children, who had been recently born. On the other hand it wanted to symbolically unite the two settlement parts of Szúcs located about 2.5 km from each other, in the framework of a meeting, a union of those people was held at a high altitude point, who came from the two settlement parts.

As a result of the joint effort of the men living at the settlement parts and the volunteers of the organisation, garbage vessels were made and placed in public areas, with the purpose of overcoming the deficiencies.

Thanks to the success of the event the inhabitants of the settlement have been joining in a continuously increasing number of the subsequent events of the organisation.

## OZ Šačanský život (Šacakero dživipen)



The founders of the organisation that was established in year 2012 in one city section of Kosice include some active adult members of the local community who wish to keep alive the Roma culture and the Roma traditions. They wish to do this especially since this part of the city population of 4700 people has close to 300 Roma inhabitants, more than half of whom are children and young people. Thanks to the largest local employer (US Steel) and the ETP Slovensko organisation – which operates a community house – the organisation offers through different programs (e.g. operating an amateur theatre) opportunities for the local young people to spend their free time usefully. It offers development programs both for the children and young people, as well as for the adults. The volunteers of the organisation pay attention to keeping the local kindergarten and school in order, as well as the surroundings.

*“This was our very first project, which we implemented in co-operation with another non governmental organisation and the support of the local government. During the project we learnt the process of project and cost planning and the administration tasks, as well as the way reports should be prepared. In addition to this we had the chance to get acquainted with many new interesting persons as well.”*

*Soňa Csisárová  
society member*

## Town Theatre (May 25, 2013, Košice-Šaca)



The project of the members of the society focused on organising an amateur theatrical performance. The organisers planned the writing and presentation of a play the basic story of which was inspired by the everyday life of the local Roma community. For this end they tried to involve local people, who have few opportunities for passing their free time usefully. For the amateur group it was a great challenge to organise and carry out the diverse tasks involved, which at the same time also served as a team building exercise. The play of the title of „Poor and rich people in love” was brought to the stage as a result of 2 months work by a group of 20 young and older people. The final play had been already complemented with a dance. The choreography was prepared by local children and also included the Roma anthem. At least 200 persons attended the performance, including the leader of the local mayor’s office as well, who spoke with appreciation of the work of the organisation and its members. The long term objective of the organisation is to start an active community life for the inhabitants of this section of the city, building on the wave of success.





## Hungarian Roma Society of Szomolya [Szomolyai Magyar Roma Egyesület]



The organisation was established in 2005 thanks to the initiative of 11 local Roma inhabitants. The primary objective of the Society is to help the local (Roma and non Roma) people in having access to those services and information that may improve their quality of life. Its secondary objective is to assist the local Roma people in the process of integration. In achieving that the Roma people and the local majority society should mutually accept each other. In order to implement these objectives the society operates a social office. It organises trainings and community programmes and labour market consulting. It does this latter activity in the framework of a program at 5 settlements located in the vicinity.

The Society since its foundation implemented several smaller and larger programmes. In the framework of its „Estate liquidation” programme, 23 families had the chance to move from their cave apartments to an integrated residential environment. In line with the „Anda Romano Lyako – Roma customs,” thanks to their programme the visitors to the settlement may get acquainted with the way the Roma and non Roma people and their families lived in these cave apartments.

*„As young people, for us the project primarily meant an opportunity for learning and gaining experiences; learning to work in a team and implementing a whole day programme.”*

*György Lázár  
society member*

## Children's Day (May 25, 2013, Szomolya)



The young members of the society targeted the local children and their families with their colourful, exciting children's day programmes.

The usefulness and importance of the event was highlighted even by the Mayor in his welcoming words. The day consisted of three larger units: in the framework of the first unit the local and invited talented young people introduced themselves, presenting the wide range of activities that are available to the children, to the young people: amateur dramatics, music and singing, dancing, etc. Subsequently the earlier registered teams participated in an interactive adventure game.

The rest of the visitors were meanwhile awaited by a jump castle, a handicraft workshop, with background music prepared by the participants of the DJ contest. At the end of the day a closing contest series decided the contest winners of the teams.



## OZ KVOZ LAČHO DROM

The mission of the organisation that has been operating since 2001 is to assist the Roma people in their everyday life situations. As a part of this Roma exemplary people in Slovakia were introduced and on an international level as well. In the Community House operating in the settlement (Kokava nad Rimavicou) services are offered for the local Roma population regarding managing their everyday life problems.

It pays special attention to the raising of the local children, of the young people: organising school preparatory programmes for those who are left out from kindergarten education. It provides lifestyle consulting for young mothers and couples; and it provides the young people with out of class hour activities – with football, aerobic, singing and dancing, as well as music instrument training courses. In addition to this in the interest of participating in financial training, saving and improving their dwelling situation it supports those people, who are looking for jobs with different programmes. As a result of their work in the recent years 20 persons succeeded in finding a job on the labour market and a number of students successfully completed their primary studies and had the chance to start their secondary education.

„We gained lots of experiences during the project. Each community has its own specific problems, and we have to use different solutions to overcome them. This is very inspiring for us. We established new partnership relations, and we received support and an opportunity to give advices to each other. A valuable result of the project is the fact that we realised that we are not perfect. Whenever we start to think that we are perfect, reality brings us back down to the soil of reality. The project taught us humbleness.”

Beáta Berkyová, volunteer  
and Vladimír Sendrei, Director

## Čercheňora – Child Talents (June 1, 2013, Revúca)



The closing event of the project of the organisation was also held on the International Children's Day. The project – the finding of talented Roma children – was implemented in two Slovakian regions, with the co-operation of three partner societies and with the involvement of 14 schools operating in the regions. During the public assessments singing, dancing and music instrument performances of 150 children were presented to the jury, and finally 25 children had the chance to participate in the talent searching contest. The success of the project is reflected by the fact that finally 600 people visited the contest, including the Lady Mayor of the city, who during the project supported with all the means possible the successful implementation of the project and highlighted its importance. Thanks to the project 6 children could participate in the summer singing camp of Ida Kellarova, the famous Czech singer, and the possibility of a study scholarship was offered to 2 children for further studying in the Dive Maky („Wild Poppies”) organisation art school. The long term objectives of the organisation include that it wishes to mentor the selected children and to motivate their parents to support their children's wish to further study in these directions.



## Society for the Rehabilitation of the Peace-Estate [Béke-telep Rehabilitációjáért Egyesület]



The society that was established in 2004 carries on its activities in the “Felnémet” city section of Eger, in the interest of improving the living conditions of the Roma families and their children living in the Peace-Estate.

The purpose of the society is to facilitate the complex social integration of the Roma population living in this city district. The Society actively participates in the process of establishing public utilities and the development of the infrastructure of the Peace-Estate that is located in the “Felnémet” city district. In the interest of achieving the above targets it implements the following activities: organises community programs, operates a dance group, collects garbage, and it participates in organising a summer camp for disadvantaged children. The Society represents the interests of the local Roma people in the areas of economic, cultural and public life.

## For “Felnémet”! Youth Day (June 15, 2013, Eger – Felnémet)



The young members of the Society and its voluntary assistants organised primarily a programme series that addressed the children and the youngsters of the settlement section. They kept an art workshop and football sessions in the previous month – the closing event of which was the Youth Day.

The visitors of the event – close to one hundred persons came in spite of the school graduation celebration period – were also awaited by colourful programmes (collage, montage, and graffiti preparation, face and glass painting and a poster contest) as well as sporting opportunities (trampoline, angling for children, table soccer). The programmes also included theatrical performances, orchestra performances and a soccer championship.

„The most important benefit of the project for me was in addition to gaining experiences is the chance that I could get acquainted with new people at home and beyond the border as well. A close relationship was established with the Slovakian participants as well, with whom keeping contact in the future is important for us.”

László Attila Balogh  
society member



## OZ Equity



The society is a non governmental organisation that was established on voluntary basis. Its purpose is to support the disadvantaged groups, to ensure for them the possibility of equal access to the different resources, but in addition to this a great emphasis is placed on supporting projects and providing advice.

In the interest of achieving its objectives the society operates in a number of activity fields – training, organisation of informative and attention raising events, participation in different national and international projects, establishing co-operation with education, research and cultural organisations and companies – and it operates several programs as well, including: the Scholarship Programme, the „Slumdog” Theatre, the Catching up Programme (for supporting the completion of primary school).

*„The greatest benefit of the project was for us that we had the chance to co-operate with new people, including Hungarian partners as well. We won friendships and huge stimulation through the project. For us – the volunteers of the organisation – this was our first project organised by ourselves. We learned how important planning and detailed preparations are. The project strengthened our belief in our own capabilities, and this means a huge encouragement as regards the future.”*

*Karol Horváth  
Volunteer*

## Make order around us! (June 15, 2013, Moldava nad Bodvou)



The society operating at the Roma estate of the settlement called the local community to implement a “great cleaning”, the purpose of which was not only to carry away the garbage on a single occasion, but to change the waste storing customs of the local people, to introduce selective waste collection and to spread it widely, and to achieve the introduction of regular waste removal. Between April and June the organisation organised two workshops for the children of the estate, introducing to them the dangerousness and the harmful impacts of garbage. They cleaned on five occasions the sport field, the road of the estate, the community house and a part of the estate in the framework of waste collecting activities with the involvement of about 150 local inhabitants. This reinforced, even in the organisers, the importance of this action. In addition to this each member of the local community contributed also financially to keeping the estate in order, to the procurement of the tools needed. In co-operation with the local Mayor’s Office 7 garbage containers were installed, the removal of which will be taken care of by the city. As the closing step of the project the results of the project were introduced in the framework of an event that was rich in cultural and sport happenings. The purpose of the society is to continue its activity, widely involving the local people, in the interest of saving their residential environment and the environment in general.





## Laskó Stream Society [Laskó-forrás Egyesület]



The society was established recently upon a local initiative. Since its foundation the number of its membership and its volunteers has been continuously increasing. Through their wide ranging activity scope – social, cultural, sport, environment protection, civil interest protection, etc. – they wish to become a central player of the settlement, of the community of Hevesaranyos. As regards their field of operation they wish to develop a close co-operation and a long term partnership with the villages that are located along the Laskó stream in the interest of improving the development of the settlement and of this region, and improving the life quality of people living there.

„We may learn how strong we are, we may step over our own shadow only if we try!”

Gábor Suha  
President of the Society

## The Day of the Laskó Valley (July 6, 2013, Hevesaranyos)



The purpose of the newly established society was to introduce itself in the framework of a community event by involving as widely as possible the village and the settlements that are located along the Laskó stream. The hunters' house located in the outskirts of the village hosted the whole day event, where the participants could get to in the framework of an environment protecting interactive “treasure hunting” tour.

In spite of the extremely hot day more than 150 participants – including the organisers, volunteers and the supporters – could witness the introduction of a number of local talented young persons. The traditional Roma lunch (meat & cabbage) was followed by colourful lectures, and then the event was closed with a team contest (strength test) and a raffle.

It is an achievement of the successful event that more and more local inhabitants contact the society with the intention of joining it, moreover the leader of the settlement also indicated its intention to co-operate in the interest of implementing programmes jointly with the organisation. The introduction of the talented young people was so successful that they were invited to participate as performers at several local events.



## Closing event

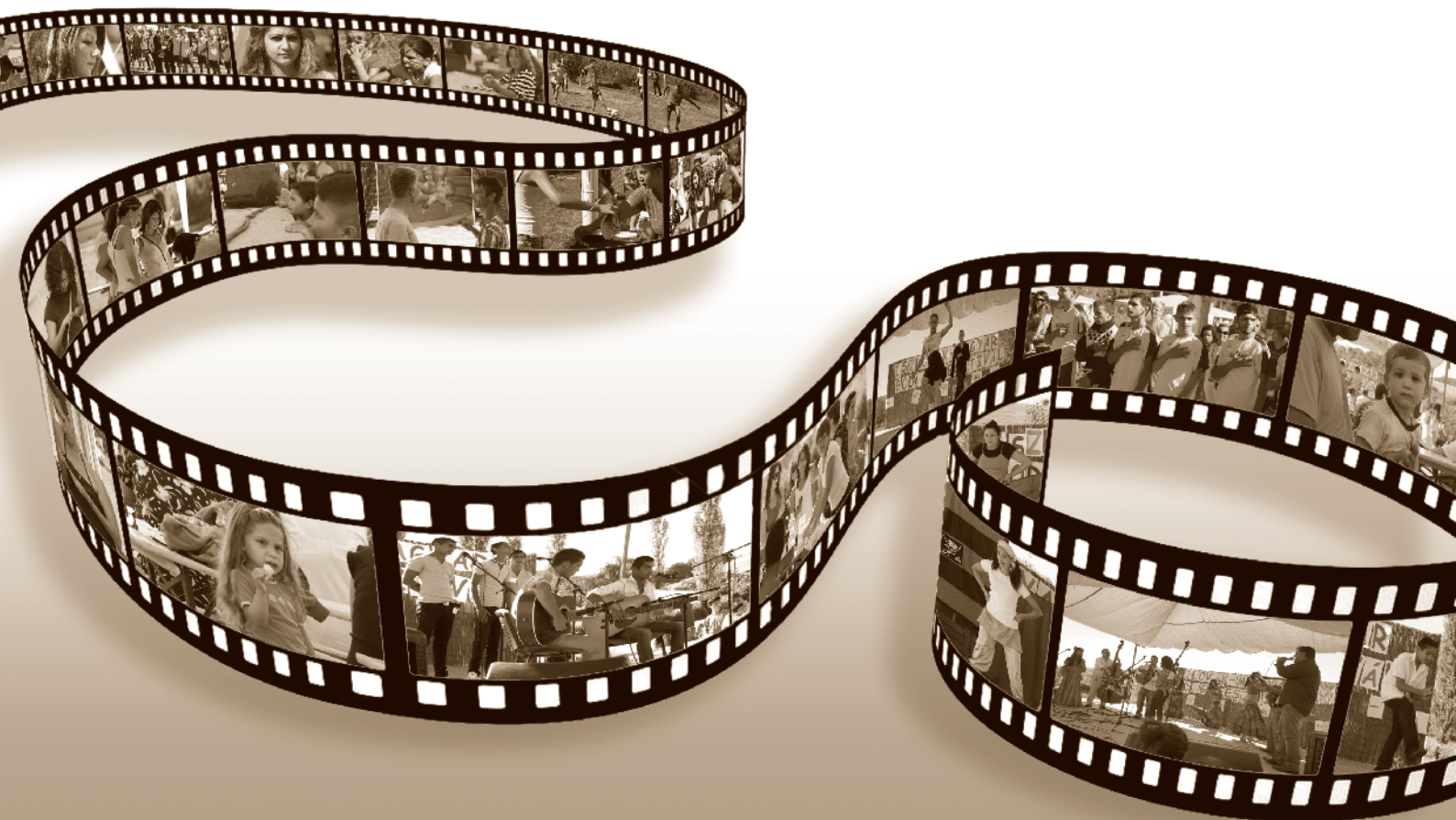
The “RomaNet – community based capacity development” project lasting for one year was closed with a two-day long event in Szúcs, which was planned and implemented by the participants themselves as a kind of a final examination work.

The first day was opened by a conference, where in addition to introducing the project and the mini events that were organised on the two sides of the border and their results to those interested, the experts of practical implementation shared with each other their experiences about the successful ways and methods of integration.

On the following day the 1<sup>st</sup> Slovakian-Hungarian “Bodag” Festival was held with great success, on which close to 500 participants could get acquainted with the secrets of grilling “bodag” at the bank of the lake in Szúcs, in idyllic surroundings. They had the chance to

taste the traditional Roma meal specialities, while they were entertained throughout the day by well known Roma performers, dancing groups, orchestras and musicians. The small children were involved in handicraft workshops and interesting games.

The huge success and the high number of visitors of the closing event was itself the highest appreciation possible for the organisations participating in the project. It was proven that through the project they successfully acquired the methods of planning and implementing different projects. And for the implementing foundations it had been also confirmed that the “learning by doing” method developed and tried as a pilot in the framework of the project in addition to being efficient and successful, also leads to actual and measureable results in the area of developing the absorption capacity of Roma civic organisations.







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