



Table of Contents:

*Be a volunteer at the Roma Children Festival "Open Heart" - page 1

*Integrated operation that will support the implementation of municipal plans for Roma integration was discussed - page 1

*Early marriages in Veliko Tarnovo already exceptions - page 3

*The Bulgarian teachers Unit organized a conference on educational integration - page 2-3

*Amalipe team had a meeting with an American human rights activist - page 1-3

*Introducing the students supported by Amalipe during the first school term - page 1

*Third partner meeting within the "LAD - Language for the prevention of school failure" Project- page 3-4

*Being a student in Valchi Dol - page 4

* International conference "Training in acquiring life skills and financial literacy in Bulgaria and Europe" - page 4

*Book of reports of the Second National Scientific - Practical Conference "Intercultural education as a means of reducing the dropout of Roma children from school" - printed out - page 5

**United against tuberculosis" page 1

*Sylvester Marinov: "The school makes one a human" - page 5



FOCUS

Be a volunteer at the Roma Children Festival "Open Heart"

International Roma Children Festival "Open Heart" is coming! It is traditionally held every first weekend of June in the park "Marno pole" in Veliko Tarnovo. Nearly 2,000 students from across the country and the region in three dizzying days presented in songs, dances, theater and crafts the culture and traditions of all ethnic groups in Bulgaria.

You can become part of this emotion and enjoy the unique rhythms and customs, as involved in the preparation and organization of the 13th edition of the festival.

Simply sign up here or call 062 600 224. We are expecting you!



SCHOOL

Introducing the students supported by Amalipe during the first school term

Eighty-eight students from across the country were supported by Center "Amalipe" to complete secondary education by providing them with transport cards and textbooks. They come from poor families living in villages and small towns and studying in secondary schools in big cities. To keep boys and girls in school Center "Amalipe" helps them not only by covering their transportation costs and textbooks, but including them in different activities. The students were required to attend school regularly, to have at least Good success and to engage in activities of school parliaments and youth clubs of tolerance.

In the first term, the average grade of supported students is Very good 4.75. The average number of unexcused absences is only 3.38 and twenty-five students do not have a single absence.

56 of the young people are supported within the program "Equal Chance", funded by the Trust for social achievement, six others - by the Evangelist Methodist Church, the rest are supported by funds from the organization.

Detailed information and analysis coming soon to the education page of Center "Amalipe" <http://www.romaeducation.com/bg/>



KHERE (HOME)

Amalipe team had a meeting with an American human rights activist

Mr. Hilary Shelton, vice president of the oldest and most widely accepted human rights organization in the USA - National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, met the team of Center "Amalipe" and community moderators from the Centers for community development across the country. The meeting was held in the town of Veliko Tarnovo on 9th of March. The discussion was accompanied by shared experience, faith in success and that warm feeling of a meeting between allies who share common values and striving for common causes.

The main discussed topics of the meeting were the long way of African-Americans in the US from legally regulated segregation (the so-called "laws of Jim Crow") to the highest echelons of power (Senators and even President), as well as the operational; mechanisms of Colored People

Continues on page 3 >>



ROMA HELTH

„United against tuberculosis"

Centers for community development, established by CIDT "Amalipe" in 11 municipalities launched a campaign under the motto "United against tuberculosis". The initiative is connected to the World Day against Tuberculosis on March 24.

Since 1996, by decision of the World Health Organization (WHO), every year March 24 is celebrated as World Day against Tuberculosis. On this day in 1882 the German bacteriologist Robert Koch announced that he had isolated the agent caused tuberculosis - an achievement that paves the way for the diagnosis and treatment of the disease. The Day aims to focus public attention on the most common infectious disease in the world - tuberculosis, which each year causes the death of millions of people, mostly in developing countries. According to WHO, about 30 percent of the population on Earth is infected with agent of tuberculosis. Each year about 8 million people become ill with tuberculosis, and every year from this disease die about three million people.



The aim of the campaign is to improve the health awareness among ethnic minority groups, as well as screening and early diagnosis of tuberculosis.

For any detailed information about the different initiatives, please

see: <http://www.romadevelopment.org/index.php/bg/nachalo/novini/325-aktsiya-obedineni-v-borbata-s-tuberkulozata>





OBSERVER

Integrated operation that will support the implementation of municipal plans for Roma integration was discussed

Operation "Socio-economic integration of marginalized communities" (by which the OP "Human Resources Development" will support the efforts of municipalities, NGOs and employers to implement the municipal plans for Roma integration) will be complemented by operation "Integrated measures to improve access to education of the "OP" Science and education for smart growth. " Thus, the approved projects will be integrated and will include a wide range of activities in four areas - access to employment, education, social and health services, and community development and overcoming negative stereotypes. In 21 large urban municipalities the operation will be accompanied by the construction of social housing, supported by OP "Regions in growth." This will be the first integrated intervention, supported by three operational programs in the current programming period.

This became clear at a joint meeting of the Subcommittee "Roma integration" of OPHRD and the Thematic Working Group "Social inclusion through education" of OPSESG. It was held on March 28 and was co-chaired by the respective deputy ministers Zornitza Rusinova and prof. Nikolay Denkov. At the meeting they discussed the draft of the criteria for selection of operation "Integrated measures to improve access to education," the application form, by which municipalities will declare interest, as well as criteria for evaluation of concepts. The meeting was attended by representatives of the governing bodies of the two operational programs, representatives of the Ministry of Regional Development, representatives of NGOs - members of the Monitoring Committees and members of NCCEI.



OBSERVER

Early marriages in Veliko Tarnovo already exceptions

Reducing of early marriages in Veliko Tarnovo area is declared by the institutions related to this problem, as well as determined within a field survey. During a workshop for planning of joint actions with the participation of representatives of departments "Child Protection", prosecution, police, schools, municipal governments in the area, community moderators and representatives of the Roma organization Amalipe was found that for the last 5 years coexistence of minors have declined sharply. Recently there are individual cases concentrated in certain locations. For example, cases of early marriages in which prosecutors of Pavlikeni have worked in 2009 numbered 18 and in 2015 they decreased to four. More information about the workshop read here.

The trend was registered by the survey conducted by Amalipe among the Roma community. According to the data every second starts coexistence between 18 and 24 years. The change in trend can be clearly traced in recent years. And if in 2010 a similar national survey showed that every second was married before the age of 18, this study shows that the figure has dropped to every third one. The results clearly show that the higher the level of education is, the later Roma people marry and early marriage among people with secondary and higher education are more an exception. Another interesting trend that the research shows is that it reduces the number of children in the family. The average number of children in the Roma family in Veliko Tarnovo area according to this study is 2.5. The study also recorded the fact that currently cases of early marriages are concentrated in several locations mainly within the groups of Burgudjii (Kamen, neighborhoods "Kaltinetz" and "Garata" of the town of Gorna Oryahovitsa, Pavlikeni), partially within the group of Kaldarashi (Pavlikeni and Gorna Oryahovitsa) and considerably less within the group of Roma Muslims. For example, in 2015 in the municipality of Strajitsa cases of early marriages were registered mainly in the Burgudjii group in the village of Kamen, as well as 2 cases among Roma muslim group that forms the majority of Roma in the municipality and region. Even in slums inhabited by Roma Muslims, for

example in the quarter "Detelinite" in the town of Strajitsa (known as the "Hollywood" neighbourhood), early marriages are no longer observed.

The entire study is available on http://www.amalipe.com/files/bulletin/EM_report_TOTAL_FINAL_FINAL.pdf

The positive trend is the result of increased field work in the Roma community in the prevention of early partnerships implemented by the Centers for Community Development in municipalities of Pavlikeni, Strazhitsa and Veliko Tarnovo, which CIDT "Amalipe" and the respective municipalities created in 2011. Another reason is the good cooperation between institutions and local communities, as well as the active work of the institutions themselves. In Pavlikeni municipality, for example, a common practice is the District Prosecutor Atanas Filipov to organize lectures for prevention of early marriages in local communities. "People are not criminals, said prosecutor Filipov. When they understand that kind of crime in most cases they are ready to react reasonably. "

The same trend is present in other regions of the country. It is not straightforward, as there are also places with an increase in the number of early marriages, especially among the most marginalized families, but prevention and active permanent action and good partnership between the Roma community and local institutions can significantly reduce this problem.

The work of Centre "Amalipe" for prevention of early marriages began in 2010 with conducting a national study and implementing pilot activities in the community. The results were published in a book that is available in the section "Publications" on <http://www.amalipe.com/files/publications/ranni%20brakove%20last.p>

Since 2011, the organization began establishing centers for community development as one of the activities of the community moderators working there is aimed at organizing the community to overcome this patriarchal tradition. Since 2015 the organization is a partner in the international project "Early marriages - culture or abuse?", implementing activities in Veliko Tarnovo area.



OBSERVER

The Bulgarian teachers Unit organized a conference on educational integration

For a second consecutive year the Union of Bulgarian Teachers to CIUB organized a conference on educational integration of children and students from ethnic minorities. It was held on March 25, 2016 in the city of Sofia. It was attended by representatives of the union, Ministry of Education, schools and organizations. Amalipe was presented by Peter Malinov, regional pedagogical coordinator for Southeastern Bulgaria and Anelia Dudinova, regional coordinator "Community Development" for the Sofia region.

The conference was opened by Yanka Takeva, chairman of the BTU and Dian Stamatov, Deputy Minister of Education and Science. Both stressed the importance of educational integration in view of the overall development of Bulgarian education. Then Dr. Joseph Nunev, state expert in the Ministry of Education, presented the updated strategy for educational integration of children and students from ethnic minorities. This strategic document defining the policies of the Ministry of Education was adopted in 2004. In June 2015 the strategy was upgraded and the process started to involve not only experts from the Ministry of Education, but also representatives of universities, schools and NGOs. An Action Plan was also approved. From September 2015 began announcing competitions for educational integration funded by OP "Science and education," said Dr. Nunev.

Natalia Mihalevska, Head of the Department "Organization, control and inspection" in MES, made a short summary of the project "Your Lesson", which will be funded by OP "Science and education". She emphasized a few key things:

- "Your Lesson" will be the largest in scope, content and finances, so it will be also a national program to increase motivation to learn and to participate in extra-curricular activities (ECA). It is a continuation of



OBSERVER

The Bulgarian teachers

Unit organized a conference on educational integration

>>> Continued from page 3

"Success" Project and will be implemented not only in non-consolidated schools. The project covers all schools in the country regardless of their type - municipal, state, without covering private schools and kindergartens

- The supported ECA must be part of a comprehensive school program for dropout prevention. In the summer, schools will be able to work out their school programs, to identify their needs for financing ECA connected on the one hand with the development of abilities and talents, and with educational deficits on the other hand;

- Participating schools will be divided into three groups based on 22 criteria. Each group will finance a wide range of ECA-s and proportion and budget will be different;

- Important part of the project in schools with great number of dropouts will be organizing of the so-called education courses in Bulgarian language and mathematics and other subjects, but priority will be given to the first two items from 1st to 12th grade;

- The specific ECA in each school will be selected through a mechanism for parental and civic participation. Public councils "Your Lesson" will be set up, which will involve also parents and public figures. Schools, NGOs, community centers and others will feed an internet platform with extracurricular activities they offer. Based on this, the public council will choose which ones to organize in the concrete school. The aim of "Your Lesson" is to attract not only what the school can offer as a base and training of teachers, but all the region can offer.

- The budget will be allocated as a financial standard for every child, but there will be additional funds on this standard to allow for efficient operations with the parents to be able to hire people from NGOs to be their mediators etc.

A detailed statement of Mrs. Mihalevska on "Your Lesson" refer to: <http://romaeducation.com/bg/>



WHERE (HOME)

Amalipe team had a meeting with an American human rights activist

Continued from page 1 >>

>>>Although slavery have been abolished more than a century, some of its marks are still present among broad segments of American society, said Mr. Shelton. We are still far from real equality. For example, the percentage of unemployed African - Americans is about twice higher than the percentage of the White Americans. Despite, before the economic crisis in 2008 White Americans owned 90 percent of the dwellings in which they lived, while African- Americans - 44 percent. After the crisis those percentages decreased to 60% for Whites and only 20% for African-Americans. Despite all these problems, the movement for human and civil rights has achieved great success since mobilizing large sections of the African-American community, as well as white Americans.

Mr. Shelton emphasized the importance of good education and formation of the educated elite. One of the important battles won by the National Association of Advancement of Colored People was on the national tests, which assess the success of students at the end of each level of education to be consistent with the cultural characteristics of all ethnics, not just whites. After this success, our educational system approached the students with their identities and African-American students sharply increased their school success, said the activist.

Extremely interesting was his story for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. It has over half a million members, over 2,200 structures in all States, including student dormitories and military bases. The association involved not only African Americans

but also Indians, Jews, as well as many white people. Volunteering is a guiding principle for the vast majority of its members: they do not only spend their time, but also pay membership dues, donations for the association's activities.

Mr. Shelton said that in the US there is a union of the main organizations fighting for the rights of African Americans. It was initiated by major donors who have asked organizations not to compete but to specialize in certain fields of work, guaranteeing financing for all major "players". Thus, the organizations are currently independent but also interact effectively to achieve common goals.

"Your visit to Veliko Tarnovo to have a meeting with us is a great honor and trust in the work of Amalipe! Things you shared about the experience of African-American movement gives us inspiration and faith in the success of our efforts for Roma integration", said Deyan Kolev, chairman of Center Amalipe.

Interview with Mr Hilary Shelton read here:

<http://www.dnesbg.com/obshtestvo/amerikanskiyat-pravozashitnik-hilari-shelton-pred-vyantra-dnesv-vlitchat-v-sasht-oshte-sashtestvuva-zaradi-sadebni-greshki-prodalzhavat-da-umirat-nevinni-horav.html>



SCHOOL

Third partner meeting within the "LAD - Language for the prevention of school failure" Project

From 11 to 13 March, 2016 in Constanta, Romania was held the third partner meeting of the project "LAD - Language for the prevention of school failure" (Training in Bulgarian language as a second language for children in preschool and first grade). The meeting was attended by representatives of Center "Amalipe" (Veliko Tarnovo) Primary school "Angel Kanchev" (Ruse) Primary school "Aleko Konstantinov" (Ruse) Kindergarten "Red Riding Hood" (Ruse), University of Veliko Tarnovo "St. St. Cyril and Methodius" and the International association Elias Canetti (Ruse). The meeting was organized by the partner organization Colegiul Național Pedagogic "Constantin Brătescu" in Constanta (Romania).

The first day was devoted to a meeting with directors and mediators from different schools in Constanta. They shared their experiences and turned their attention to how important are Roma mediators for the community and how big changes they have observed in their schools after employing them. Some of the participating mediators have been working for 10 years in their localities. They are part of the staff of the school.

Over the next two days prof. Ana Maria Chibotaru, director of the National Pedagogical College "Konstantin Bratescu" in Constanta, presented a detailed working models of cooperation between the school and the Roma community, forms of organization of joint work and strategies for conflict resolution and intervention. Training materials for mediators, such as training program, monitoring and evaluating the

Continues on page 4 >>



Cotinued from page 3 >>

work of mediators in Romania, were also presented. Prof. Chibotaru stressed that they have started first working with local authorities and the government on the establishment of the profession "educational mediator".

The strong need for training and including mediators in Bulgaria, especially in schools with large numbers of minority children has arised at the end of the meeting.



SCHOOL

Being a student in Valchi Dol

School should be a place where every child can find himself, find his talent, but mostly - to build skills that will help him be a good person and a good citizen. And without underestimate or belittle the role of the family, the teacher is the one who most closely can help a child achieve and build these skills while being at school. Of course, for this purpose he must first keep the child at school. For some this is a daily struggle. The success in it can be achieved, however, if you open the school to the community and help everyone to feel partners in a common cause: students, parents and teachers. However, this could happen if the school gives you mostly freedom to be yourself, respect others and manage to find what makes you a team. The success is not measured by the number of appearances in the tests, nor with the results of the external evaluation.

It is measured by the fact that children are at school, feeling good, both in class and during the breaks. Secondary school "Vasil Levski" in the town of Valchi Dol has managed to achieve all this. And everyone can see it - of course, if he had teachers once like those in Valchi Dol, who have learned him to see, not just to look. Anyone who has worked with children can recognize when they feel free, when they feel on the spot and happy with what they do. Unbiased observer would look at the webpage of the school to see how many talents the students have. Probably hard to fit in the agenda for Day of talent. Most likely what children dancing in the video is one of those talents - as dancing hip-hop, Bulgarian folk dances and everything else that helps them to express themselves through music.



He'll also see that this is a cozy, bright, colorful school. Anyone working with children can feel it ... he can also feel (even in biased reports) that teachers and students communicate freely without passing the limits of respect and position.



He'll also see that this is a school, which teaches love of knowledge and calling to be a teacher. Not accidentally, students not only have the motivation and desire to continue their education, but to be precisely teachers. Whether they like it, if there weren't an example to follow? ... The unbiased viewer will also see that these are students who do not just repeat

memorized phrases for Levski but consciously appreciate what he did. Maybe objective journalists could make another report before this one in which to talk about the charity action that the school held to build a monument of Levski in its yard, as well as to visit the school during its patronal feast. Maybe then they would understand the true sense of the words in the hall of the school!" We need acting, not words!" The author is not given- I'm sure children know who he is (not sure about those who used the school so cheap). The same great Bulgarian has talked about



the "brotherhood and perfect equality among all nationalities. Bulgarians, Turks, Jews, etc. will be equal in every respect, whether in faith or in nationality, either in civil terms, or in anything else."The study of traditions, customs and culture of various ethnic groups is one of tools used to explore the diversity, one of the tools that helps us to live together and makes us equal, which helps us to succeed together. And teachers, students and



parents at the secondary school "Vasil Levski" in the town of Valchi Dol manage to achieve it!

parents at the secondary school "Vasil Levski" in the town of Valchi Dol manage to achieve it!

Good luck, dear colleagues! Keep on your enlightenment work!

Photos: Secondary School "Vasil Levski" in the town of Valchi Dol



SCHOOL

International conference "Training in acquiring life skills and financial literacy in Bulgaria and Europe"

On March 21, 2016 in Sofia was hosting the International Conference "Training in acquiring life skills and financial literacy in Bulgaria and Europe". The event is part of the campaign Global money week and was organized by the International Programme Aflatun International and the Association "Integra Bulgaria", national representative for Bulgaria, with financial support from the Institute of European Investment Bank and the Erasmus + Program in partnership with the Child and Youth Finance International, NNC and Initiative for financial literacy.



Amalipe presented "EDUFIN" Project under the Erasmus + Program, aiming to develop a methodology and curriculum on financial literacy addressed to young people from disadvantaged groups in society.

For more information about the conference, please visit:
<http://romaeducation.com/bg/news-bg/604-mezhdunarodna-konferentziya-obuchenie-v-pridobivane-na-zhiteiski-ucheniya-i-finansova-gramotnost-v-balgariya-i-evropa>



SCHOOL

Sylvester Marinov: "The school makes one a human"

Silvestar Asenov Marinov is a participant in the program "Equal opportunity - access to secondary education" funded by the Trust for social achievement. He lives in the village of Popitsa and is a student in the 11th grade in high school „ Otec Paisiy ", Vratsa with musical profile. He also participated in many concerts and competitions and during his spare time he is a volunteer at the Center for Community Development in the town of Byala Slatina, community center and nursing home in his native village. More about his motivation and dreams, read in the interview.

Hello, tell me more about yourself.

Hi, I'm Sylvester Marinov. I was born and live in the village of Popitsa, located in the region of Vratsa. I am 17 years old and I study at high school "Otec Paisiy" in Vratsa. I sing, play the piano, and for a year also play a fiddle. I like to deal with voluntary and folklore events. The emotion to go out on stage in front of dozens of people is indescribable. I love what I do.

How did you decide to study at exactly this school? Did you get support from your relatives?

When I was five years old, in the kindergarten, a teacher discovered that I have a gifted voice and offered my parents to take me to the Municipal Festival of children's song "Golden Cockerel" (which to this day is held annually). The first year I ranked third place, the second year - on the second and third year I got first place for the performance of Bulgarian folk song. Then after graduated the local primary school, my dream was to go to music school. Vratsa was closest to my village so I decided after the completion of primary education to study there. As for the support of my family - they have always been there for me.

I know you have to travel. Have you and your family encountered any problems during your education?

Because my parents are separated for nine years, I live with my father and he cares for me (financially, etc.). It has happened to have financial difficulty and I've always understood our situation, although he never bothered me with the problems.

I guess this is why you turned to Center "Amalipe" and the "Equal Chance" Program. How did you know about it?

I knew for the Program by the moderators of CCD Byala Slatina, who one day had come to promote the program. It is not the first time I have been approved for the project. I also participated in 2013/2014 academic year.

What benefits do you have from your participation in the program?

I was provided with sufficient support so I did not have any financial obstacles to my education. It is not easy for a student to study in another town.

Have you ever felt discriminated or underestimated, while you were studying?

I've heard the phrase "gypsy work" often ... however discriminated - rather not.

You have a very good success and participate in many outclass activities. What would you say to younger students who do not see much sense in school or are at risk of dropping out for one reason or another?

I would say that there is nothing better than school years and that everything that happens in school - lessons and skills,



advice from teachers make sense. The school makes one a human.

Do you want to continue your education?

For sure. Everyone knows that having a secondary education is like having a document for primary education. Higher education guarantees a secure and peaceful future.

What do you want to learn and in what area you want to realize?

I would like to continue my education at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", as I want to study for a music educator.

Bravo! I wish you success, which I'm sure you will achieve. We talked earlier about the things you do outside school. Probably many of your peers prefer to have fun after school, and you're giving your time to help others. Why do you do with volunteering?

It is a pleasure to see the smiles of the people I am helping. Entertainment after school also are not missing.

Except in CCD Byala Slatina, I am also part of a group of volunteers to CC "Progress 1897" in the village of Popitsa. With the same group we perform various activities in the Home for elderly people in the same village.

It is amazing how children enjoy if hugged and I am pleased to help a child who has no parents, to smile at me and enjoy from my embrace.

Child's eyes so shined so bright with happiness that someone cares about him ... I almost cried. The director of the Nursing home had brought several elderly women and it turned out that one of them is the grandmother of this kid. The woman wept ... it was very emotional.

And finally, what do you dream of?

I dream of a happy family, a job that I would enjoy (for example music teacher) and health.



SCHOOL

Book of reports of the Second National Scientific-Practical Conference "Intercultural education as a means of reducing the dropout of Roma children from school" - printed out

Book of reports of the Second National Scientific - Practical Conference "Intercultural education as a means of reducing the dropout of Roma children from school" was printed out. The conference was held in June 2014 in Veliko Tarnovo. It was attended by over a hundred teachers from across the country, heads and experts from the regional inspectorates of education, education experts, representatives of universities. The conference was organized by the Center for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance "Amalipe", University of Veliko Turnovo and District Governor of Veliko Tarnovo. It was preceded by 15 regional conferences to share best practices, and most interesting reports of the regional conferences were awarded participation in the national forum.

The papers in the collection are grouped into 5 sections:

- Theoretical and regulatory framework of educational integration;
- School program for dropout prevention;
- EPA "Ethnic Folklore - Roma folklore";
- Individual approaches to work with the risk of drop out and activities for activating and motivating students;
- School and Parents: equal partners in a common cause

Published reports of 80 authors presented invaluable experience from their daily practice in dozens of schools nationwide. This experience is not only on attracting, retaining and education of children and pupils from different ethnic groups, but also on the achievement of higher educational results, developing capabilities of students and teachers and transforming the school into a center of the entire local community. It strongly suggests that the joint efforts of teachers and active parents inevitably leads to the most important success: quality education and a better future for all children.



Trust social alternative (TCA) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to break the vicious circle of poverty by promoting opportunities that help the most disadvantaged citizens of Bulgaria to achieve educational and economic success. TCA supports programs for its integrity, growth potential and transparency help to improve the welfare of the poorest people in Bulgaria, with special focus on Roma.