



RE-designing Access to Cultural Heritage for a wider participation in preservation, (re-)use and management of European Culture

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The REACH project established four participatory pilots that were diverse in nature, working with different types of communities and stakeholders, in different situations and political climates. Their remit was to undertake participatory activities with specific stakeholder groups, to consider which participatory approaches were most effective and, perhaps more importantly, raise the profile of cultural heritage in, and on behalf of, their associated communities.

This deliverable provides an overview of the REACH Minority heritage pilot, by presenting the current status of minority and specifically Roma heritage in Europe and by highlighting the participatory practices related to the preservation, (re-)use and management of Roma heritage in Hungary, both in rural and urban contexts. Roma are the largest transnational minority in Europe and also the biggest minority group in the country, but have never been the subject of specific research activity that considers their culture and heritage. Using participatory practices seemed to be the most suitable way to recognise and highlight resilient Roma heritage, both for their own communities and also for the wider population, in a society that has traditionally been hostile.

The analysis of case studies, mostly based on the wide range of empirical work (including local encounters with groups of stakeholders, interviews and participatory observation) emphasise the importance of social aspects of the cultural activities. This incorporates social innovation and social cohesion that Roma heritage-related institutions, organisations or individual actors maintain. In most cases, this aspect is realised in the form of education, but there are also other options. A further dimension of analysis concerns cultural rights, examining participatory methods and community-involvement from the perspective of gaining equal rights in cultural recognition.

Through pilot activity, the intention was to bring parties together to try to overcome stereotypes and break through the traditional top down view of history, culture and heritage. Although the socio-political environment was challenging, with several proposed partners forced to withdraw at various stages of the pilot, it was possible to bring together stakeholders, to reduce isolation and increase visibility of their heritage, activities and struggles, and not only in Budapest, but also in deprived rural locations in Hungary.

It would be wrong to say that the environment for Roma in Hungary is not difficult, but the work of the pilot has been to build participatory partnerships, raise profiles and provide a foundation for future positive collaboration.



2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 BACKGROUND

The REACH project set itself the task of considering the work of current and completed projects, to understand what they had done well, what might not have been as successful and the lessons that could be identified. A wealth of information was uncovered and evaluated to consider participatory approaches for the management, preservation and (re-)use of cultural heritage (CH). To test this further, it was decided that four participatory pilots should be established that were of diverse natures, working with different types of communities and stakeholders, in different situations and political climates. One of the REACH pilots considers Minority heritage and, in particular Roma heritage in Hungary.

When Minority Heritage was defined as one of the four REACH pilots, it was evident that the Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem University (ELTE) team would focus on Roma communities living in Hungary. Roma are the largest transnational minority in Europe and also the biggest minority group in the country. Although, for several methodological reasons, it is difficult to define their number, Hungarian demographers and sociologists assume that they represent around 10-13% of the Hungarian population, a figure of approximately 800-900,000 Roma citizens.¹

Despite this demographic importance and the preponderance of sociological and anthropological research on Roma from various angles, there has been no explicit study of Roma heritage in Hungary before. There have been pockets of interest, as for several years, the Atelier Department and the Cultural Heritage Studies MA programme at ELTE included studies and seminars on Roma history and culture in its curricula. Research has investigated Roma musicians, Roma urban neighbourhoods and other related topics for Master's theses and PhD dissertations², but nothing that has considered in detail heritage within Roma communities.

The REACH Minority heritage pilot is focused on marginalised minorities and aims to show how the institutionalisation of their (re)appropriated cultural heritage can result in the economic and social revival of their communities. It therefore aligns with the important initiative to establish Roma minority heritage as a step towards reinforcing social inclusion and creating more tolerant, diverse societies in Central Europe countries.

Participatory practices seem to be suitable tools to construct the concept and the institutions of Roma heritage to both bring familiarisation and canonisation of a mostly ignored culture, and also reach out to Roma communities by allowing them to rediscover their own cultural history. Implementing new dimensions of CH in an area that has been mostly excluded from the national cultural canon, the REACH pilot could help to provide new possibilities for Hungarian Roma communities and offer a positive identity to a long-time stigmatised community.

¹ http://www.mrtt.hu/vandorgyulesek/2017/05/pasztor_penzes.pdf (downloaded 13-01-2020)

² György 2013.



2.2 ROLE OF THIS DELIVERABLE IN THE PROJECT

The role of this deliverable, as with the pilot itself, is twofold. One aspect is clearly to work with communities and bring parties together to raise the profile of Roma heritage in Hungary. The other is to consider the range of participatory approaches that fit with this task to either confirm, or not, the REACH project's prior findings that will be used within project conclusions.

To fulfil its first role, the deliverable provides a series of varied case studies that analyse social aspects of Roma communities and their heritage, traditions and lifestyles, identifying gaps, transferable elements of participatory activities and opportunities for cross-collaboration between stakeholders. Each case is insightful, demonstrates the reality of resilient Roma communities and asks questions, especially of what comes next.

From a REACH perspective, this deliverable builds on the previous tasks, including the evaluation of prior projects and the development of participatory models, common protocols and recommendations. Such considerations include Participatory Action Research, a qualitative methodology that seeks to develop collaborations between stakeholders, using the bottom-up approach, a 'learning-by-doing' process conducted 'with' people and not 'on', 'about' or 'for' people. This is supported by the establishment of Participatory Project Groups (PPG), which decide and manage participatory activities and the four phase, Plan, Do, Check and Act model that form the foundation of the REACH participatory model recommendation.³

After a short planning period to align this methodology with the Minority heritage pilot (participants, assessment criteria and success indicators etc.), specific roles and procedures were set, with the pilot's activities to involve a series of Associate partners⁴ in the organisation and coordination of encounters with local stakeholders. Following the conclusion of the pilot (and its three contemporaries), these earlier findings and recommendation will be reassessed ahead of presentation at the final REACH conference and inclusion in project results.

The outcomes of this task and especially this deliverable have multiple connections with other project activities, evaluation and conclusions. Background research into the identification of Roma cultural heritage initiatives, projects and institutions in Hungary, as well as dialogue held with them and other local stakeholders, led to the identification of examples of best practices that have been collected, analysed and added to the REACH project database that is available on the Open Heritage website⁵.

The activity of the Minority heritage pilot will also be evaluated in the development of *the REACH proposal for resilient European Cultural Heritage*. Using a theoretical baseline, pilot examples will be used to consider the effects of change and how tangible and intangible heritage, identity, cultural diversity and practices are maintained.

³ Details of underpinning methodology for REACH participatory models is discussed in greater detail within REACH deliverable D3.1 – Participatory Models: <https://www.reach-culture.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/REACH-D3.1-Participatory-Models.pdf> (downloaded 17-02-2020)

⁴ Associate partners are those individuals, organisations or projects that have agreed to collaborate with the REACH project to share mutually beneficial information and results.

⁵ www.open-heritage.eu (downloaded 24-02-20)



2.3 APPROACH

The review of prior projects (REACH deliverable D3.2 - *Selection of projects and mapping of clustered research findings*⁶) revealed that several EU funded projects considered certain aspects of cultural diversity and heritage of marginalised communities (eg ARCHES, SIGN-HUB, ENGHUM, MOMOWO, COHERE, CULTURALBASE, MELA, POEM and TRACES) but, none of them focussed specifically on cultural heritage of Roma communities.

Being the first European-funded project to work on Roma heritage in Hungary brought with it implications relating to social participation and communities, leading the ELTE team to adapt a wide range of methods, taken from different social sciences and adapting them to the pilot's context. Methodology comprised desk research, participatory activities and participant observation, empirical research and semi-structured interviews, as well as more informal discussions with local and international stakeholders.

From the beginning, the ELTE team had to take into account that the pilot work would involve vulnerable social groups and this would have implications for specific research activity and working conditions. In Hungary, and indeed throughout Europe, Roma face discrimination on a daily basis, including social, spatial and educational segregation. It was therefore understood that individuals involved in Roma heritage-making may also face - on a personal level - hostility and discrimination from the majority society and so the first steps for the project team were to establish trusting relationships.

The initial step was to define the specific objectives of the pilot. These were fundamentally determined by the expertise of the ELTE team which is mainly based on history, cultural heritage studies, urban studies and Roma studies by using wide-range of methodologies of other social sciences. Initially, three main pillars were identified: 1) theoretical research on Roma CH; 2) observation of participatory approaches; 3) building cross-collaboration through local encounters.

Each of the REACH pilots considers participatory approaches within its communities to share areas of commonality. The main methods of interacting with Associate partners and other stakeholders within each pilot community is through a local encounter, the name that the REACH project is using for local events that bring together different groups for open and honest discussions. As well as the important local dimension arising from this activity, local encounters play an important role in the project, as the test bed for ideas and participatory models.

Before the pilot began, a six-month preparatory period (month 3-8) was dedicated to an extensive analysis of existing research literature on Roma CH and establishment of an extended network of Associate partners (Annex 1). However, tracing and contacting Roma cultural initiatives and institutions in Hungary, was an ongoing process, from the beginning of the pre-pilot period until the pilot's completion.

⁶ <https://www.reach-culture.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/REACH-D3.2-Selection-of-projects-and-mapping-of-clustered-research-findings.pdf> (downloaded 24-02-20)



Based on background research and community building activities during the pre-pilot period, local encounters were planned in cooperation with the Associate partners in mostly rural or urban deprived areas. Rural, in this context, refers partner organisations located in very small villages and their work, related to preservation and (re-)use of Roma heritage, is in some way representative of cultural practices and traditions related to rural lifestyle. (For instance, the Roma Country House in Hodász exhibits the housing conditions and the typical crafts and sale-works or rural lifestyle.) Urban context relates to neighbourhoods of Budapest where an important Roma community resides and to which (eventually stigmatised) labels and images of a 'Roma area' are linked.

The presentations made at the project's local encounters would be followed by a multi-faceted analysis, based on several aspects (vulnerability, social innovation, gender, resilience and role of research etc.) Together with other meetings and discussions that would bring together stakeholders, that may never previously have interacted, conclusions would be drawn and fed back into the REACH project, and plans would be formulated to further the agenda of Roma communities and their heritage.

2.4 STRUCTURE OF THE DOCUMENT

This deliverable specifically covers the following areas:

- Chapter 3 summarises the main concepts of minority heritage and the current status of Roma heritage studies in European scholarship. Furthermore, it reflects briefly on the institutionalisation of Roma cultural heritage in Europe and in Hungary
- Chapter 4 outlines the local encounters and further activities of the Minority heritage pilot, ahead of considering good participatory practices in Roma heritage, and finally, the role and status of Roma woman in the heritage-field.
- Chapter 5 considers the results of the project on two levels, the first involving the work with Roma communities in Hungary and the second, in the context of the REACH project.
- Chapter 6 summarises the work of the pilot and draws a conclusion.



3 MINORITY HERITAGE

The emergence of the notion of cultural heritage is closely linked to the European state formation and Romanticism, which is defined in political terms by nationalism. As the nation-state required national heritage to consolidate national identification, it also needed to neutralise the potentially competing heritages of different regional, social, or ethnic groups.⁷ According to Stuart Hall, heritage is part of the ‘educative apparatus’ of the state which creates a sense of belonging to the nation. In this sense, heritage is used as a tool by the nation in order to construct for itself a sort of collective social memory.⁸ However, since the 1960s, together with the emergent narrative of the History from below⁹, the awareness about the fact that *heritage is not given; it is made* started to infiltrate heritage and identity politics discourses¹⁰. The selectiveness and the constructionism of the heritage became ever more visible, suggesting that the method of how heritage is chosen, represented, and maintained is not automatic, but always arbitrary and illustrates the imagination of a certain nationalism. Notions like selective tradition, authorised heritage discourse (AHD)¹¹, and critical / contested heritage studies have appeared in (mostly Western) heritage studies and greatly influenced heritage institutions and museums. Texts (very often in a post-colonial context) have observed how the process of defining heritage is modulated by power and authority, and how traditionally heritage has been the possession of “white middle class men”, without the recognition of “other heritages”.¹²¹³

Over the past few decades, there has been an important shift toward the “other heritages”, that are different from the cultural canon of “middle class white men”. These new cultural narratives have emerged in most cases in a post-colonial context, showing how people with different gender, social class, and ethnicity can have different (transversal, subaltern and hybrid) cultural experiences.

Today, it seems that - mostly in the Anglo-Saxon world - cultural heritage studies and institutions are well aware of the pluralistic and often competing character of contemporary cultural identities and they recognise the need to find different ways to commemorate or preserve cultural traditions.

European heterogeneity is much more recognised and visible than it was 50 years ago, due to a reversal of the colonial flow, from centre to periphery, and therefore, the diversification of the metropole. It is also greatly influenced by the global indigenous people’s movement that started in the Americas and in Canada and has been implemented in international politics of identity, recognition and cultural rights.

⁷ Graham and Howard 2008: 7.

⁸ Hall 2008: 221.

⁹ Emerged with the founding of the History Workshop movement at Ruskin College, with publications such as Thompson 1963.

¹⁰ McDowell 2008: 43.

¹¹ Smith 2006.

¹² Littler 2008: 91.

¹³ The transition of heritage perspectives from above to below is discussed in greater detail within REACH deliverable D3.1 – Participatory Models: <https://www.reach-culture.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/REACH-D3.1-Participatory-Models.pdf> (downloaded 17-02-2020)



This latter impact is represented in various policy documents and in the creation of various organisations, such as the United Nations (UN) Working Group on Indigenous Populations, the UN International Year of World's Indigenous Peoples in 1993, and from the UNESCO Convention on cultural heritage of 2003.¹⁴

There are a great number of good practices where the preservation and management of minority heritage is realised with the participation of the communities, breaking up with the colonial and exoticising tradition that was relevant for centuries.¹⁵ Museums and archives are urged to find proper answers to maintain and institutionalise indigenous or minority heritage; in Western Europe, mostly regarding the cultural practices of former colonies and migrant communities, in North-America, regarding the heritage of First Nation and African-American communities, while in Australia, this concerns Aboriginal heritage.

The gap between the nation-building function of heritage and the popularisation of heritage practices belonging to post-colonial, multicultural societies is becoming greater and greater. On the one hand, cultural heritage has a growing role for global economies and becomes therefore, ever more inclusive. In this way, heritage is promoted for an increasingly aware public - this is what Tony Bennet calls the "differencing machine".¹⁶ On the other hand, the traditional role of heritage is reinforced, justifying the existence of a unique and dominant narrative. These controversial processes are linked to the ever-changing politics of multiculturalism, othering and xenophobia. Moreover, inconsistent attitudes are displayed by UNESCO and important international heritage-organisations, who partly declare cultural diversity as a human right, but - through world heritage and intangible heritage lists - maintain and reproduce inequality between developed and underdeveloped countries.¹⁷

While critical, post-colonial and multicultural heritage studies have been concerned with the heritage of minorities from the "Western" world (such as "black" heritage, or the cultural traditions and practices of migrant, refugee and LGBTQ communities), minority heritage studies have now been canonised. However, for Europe's largest transnational minority, the Roma, this canonisation is still to take place. Although there are several Roma museums and cultural centres in (mostly Western) Europe, they mostly represent one specific aspect of the Roma culture, e.g. Flamenco and basketry museum, or the Roma holocaust. Moreover, in some cases they are depoliticised, and do not reflect on the sensitive and tense relationship between Roma art and political-cultural reality (such as at the Museum of Romani Culture in Brno).¹⁸ Moreover, in the past few years, there have been significant moments, with the opening of the European Roma Institute of Arts and Culture (ERIAC)¹⁹ and the launch of the virtual database RomArchive.²⁰ However, in terms of cultural policies on local, national or European level, there is still a great lack of attention paid to Roma heritage.

¹⁴ Comaroff-Comaroff 2009: 46-47.

¹⁵ <http://www.mela-project.polimi.it/> (downloaded 17-01-2020), <http://www.traces.polimi.it/about/> (downloaded 17-01-2020)

¹⁶ Bennett 2017.

¹⁷ Harrison 2013: 140-141.

¹⁸ Cserti-Csapó 2014: 150-166.

¹⁹ ERIAC: <https://eriac.org/> (downloaded 17-02-2020)

²⁰ RomArchive: <https://www.romarchive.eu/en/> (downloaded 17-02-2020)



Figure 1: The participants of the panel discussion in The Future of Roma Heritage conference on the 8th February 2018: Tímea Junghaus (Director, ERIAC), Péter Niedermüller (Member of the European Parliament), Eszter György (Senior lecturer, ELTE), Iulius Rostas (Chair, CEU Romani Studies Program), Mimoza Gavrani (Student, CEU Romani Studies Program). The ELTE team co-organised this conference with European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERAC) and Central European University (CEU) within the framework of ERIAC International Outreach Program. Eszter György participated in the panel discussion and Gábor Sonkoly, (Dean of Faculty of Humanities, ELTE) was the leader of the REACH table in the world café session. (Source: CEU / Dénes Erdős)

3.1 ROMA HERITAGE

With an estimated population of 8-12 million, the Romani people still face a high risk of poverty, exclusion, racial violence and discrimination. At the same time, Romani cultural and artistic production, Romani history, and Romani contributions to national cultures and identities remain largely unknown and unrecognised.

The reason for such neglect may lie exactly in the interpretation of heritage as part of nation-building strategies. According to Katie Trumpener, in order to develop modern European histories, Roma had to be relegated to the domain of “pre-modern”, history-less cultures, in contrast with the innovations and progress related to modern societies. For centuries, Roma have symbolised, in different cultural and historical contexts, primitive democracy, obstruction to the progress of civilisation, resistant and primitive cultural forces.²¹ Michael Stewart finishes his classic work on the Roma community of “Harangos” by stating that the “course of events” of the Gypsy²² past is dissolved in the timeless “once been” (*verakana*)²³ and James Scott finds that the European Roma, widely persecuted, “*have no story they tell about their origins or about a*

²¹ Trumpener 1992: 874.

²² This deliverable uses the politically correct and internationally recognised term ‘Roma’ but in some cases, mostly in historic context, the term ‘Gypsy’ might also appear, either in Anglo-Saxon or in Hungarian discourses. The word “Gypsy” might also appear instead of “Roma”, in Hungarian reference terms, commonly used in some specific context like “*cigányzene*” [gypsy music]

²³ Stewart 1993: 256.



promised land toward which they are headed. They have no shrines, no anthems, no ruins, no monuments. [...] Shuttling between many countries and scourged in most, the Gypsies have constantly had to adjust their histories and identities in the interest of survival. They are the ultimate bobbing and weaving people."²⁴. Scott's statement may be exaggerated (particularly concerning the lack of anthems and origin myths²⁵), but its last sentences, referring to the adaptability and the constant dialogue with the dominating culture are recurrent conclusions. According to Judith Okely: *"Gypsy culture is created through contact, sometimes conflict and specific exchange. Gypsy culture is one emerging from ever-present and changing culture contact rather than a former isolate allegedly undermined by contact. Theirs is a culture created from and through difference."*²⁶

Authenticity regarding Roma culture lies in cultural innovation and adaptivity, rather than in an "ancient, exotic or original" culture that anthropologists and historians have tried to impose. In reality, ever since their arrival in Europe, around the 15th century, Roma had been constantly excluded and discriminated against, while their representation became gradually exoticised. From the Enlightenment onwards, Roma were represented, not only as pre-modern and people without history, but also as people who threaten European modernisation and development. In the 19th century, the image of the outlaw, romantic, adventuresome Gypsy emerged.²⁷ All of these factors - the lack of cultural legitimacy arising from the lack of national territory, the "orientalisation" and exclusion from modernity for centuries, the discrimination and the series of exoticising representations - have contributed to the delayed and deficient status that characterises the cultural heritage of European Roma.

Given this perception, it follows that European Roma communities are extremely heterogeneous, as are their cultural traditions and contemporary practices. From Travellers to settled communities, speaking a great number of different languages or dialects of Romani, the level of assimilation or social integration creates numerous different cultural answers. When thinking about European Roma heritage, it is important to question who is constructing the cultural canon and to what extent is the heritage preserved by the majority society and how much by the Roma minorities themselves.

As the REACH project is primordially focused on participatory approaches, it has therefore analysed Roma heritage practices, together with the active involvement of the community, from the bottom-up, instead of using those top-down models, as traditionally prescribed by majority society. Community-based heritage management is founded on these principles and supports the taking back of control over what others have defined as a community's relationship to the past in the present —, its 'heritage'. As Rosalind Langford, Tasmanian based Aboriginal artist, stated, *'if we Aborigines can't control our own heritage, what the hell can we control?'*²⁸

²⁴ Scott 2009: 235.

²⁵ The Romani flag was accepted at the first World Romani Congress in 1971, where the international Roma anthem, Gelem was also voted in. In Hungary, the song based on a poem by Károly Bari, Zöld az erdő is also considered as the Roma anthem.

²⁶ Okely 2010: 40-41.

²⁷ Van Baar 2006: 278.

²⁸ Johnson 2000: 128.



Communal heritage is established through shared representations, discourses and practices sometimes defined as “collective memory”. A shared history is perceived as crucial to the formation of the “imagined nation”, a concept which may be relevant when thinking about the transnational Roma communities. As the anthropologist Alaina Lemon²⁹ states, the problem is not that Roma deny history, but that its lack of infrastructure magnifies their memories as broadly collective, constituting an “imagined community”. In the REACH Minority heritage pilot, the ELTE team tried to rectify this lack of representation and gave voice and greater visibility to initiatives that link Roma and community-based heritage together.

²⁹ Lemon 2000: 80



4 CASE STUDIES OF THE PILOT

As explained in deliverable D3.1 – *Participatory Models* - the REACH pilots approached four very different aspects of participatory heritage practices. Varying in geographical scope, types of communities and methodological approaches, the four pilots could loosely be divided into two groups, where the Minority heritage pilot stood together with the Rural heritage pilot. (The other groups comprised the Small Towns’ heritage and Institutional heritage pilots.) The related Minority and Rural heritage pilots had similarities in their main activities which comprised mostly intervention in the territory, mediation, social and economic empowerment and fieldwork, considering local communities, professionals, focus groups and the civil society as their main participants.

4.1 PREPARATORY PHASE

The preparatory phase of the Minority heritage pilot ran in parallel with the first 8-9 months of the REACH project. It included the establishment of the partner network, initial visits and meetings with stakeholders and the preparation of the local encounters by defining main themes, questions and actors who may be linked and invited to the same events.

4.1.1 BUILDING CONTACT LISTS / ESTABLISHING THE NETWORK

In order to gather a large number of cases, the ELTE team started work by listing all institutions, public and private organisations and actors that had a relationship with Roma cultural heritage in Hungary. Therefore, **in the final months of 2017 and at the beginning of 2018**, ELTE looked for and contacted as many local actors as possible in Hungary, as well as in neighbouring countries. The list of organisations contacted is available in Annex 1.

The main results of this approach were that:

- around twenty organisations had been identified, among which there were cultural and educational institutions and voluntary structures. These included public bodies (regional / local galleries, collections owned and funded by municipalities) and Roma-led NGOs, typically supported by foreign / international grants.
- many of the actors and organisations that had been active in the recent past (from the end of the post-socialist era in 1989 until the early part of the 21st century) had ceased to exist by the time of the pilot’s work. The reasons for these disappearances vary, but also coincide with a right-wing political regime taking office in Hungary. There has been a general trend towards weakened and threatened civil organisation. As a result, the final list of contacts proved to be shorter than had been anticipated, with many request letters having never been answered. This led to the final list of active stakeholders being relatively restricted.
- after making initial revisions and drawing conclusions concerning the network of possible contacts and partners, the ELTE team had to establish an approach toward “Roma heritage” in a very broad sense, including educational initiatives, tourism-related organisations, social innovations and other actors that do not work directly work in the heritage/preservation sector.



- after building relationships with potential partners and analysing their professional profiles, it was concluded that public institutions are gradually disappearing or becoming marginalising and those that remain active are typically NGOs and bottom-up orientated initiatives. (Kamill Erdős Gypsy Museum³⁰ in Pécs is a public institution that has existed since 1995 and is located in the heart of Pécs. Despite the fact that it is the only “Gypsy Museum” in Hungary, it is peripheral, displays only a tiny permanent exhibition and therefore has a restricted cultural impact in both the city and region. In contrast, there are several NGOs in Pécs that are very active and successful, such as the Kóstolda Roma House Restaurant³¹ which was opened in 2015 and is a great local example of Roma entrepreneurship, being founded by the Színes Gyöngyök Egyesület and employing six Roma women as cooks and waitresses.)
- it also became clear that in order to set up and sustain a successful organisation, there has to be a key actor, an engaged central figure, who is the catalyst and driver of the initiative and who can motivate the community to participate.

4.1.2 VISITS AND MEETINGS WITH THE LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS

During the **final months of 2017 and in the first half of 2018**, the ELTE team organised several trips in order to meet the main actors and to visit various institutions:

- in November 2017, the REACH team, together with professors and students of the Atelier Department organised a one-day trip to Hodász in order to visit the Roma Country House (which had become one of the main partners of the pilot) and also the Greek Catholic Church which has provided Romani-language liturgy since the 1940s.
- in January 2018, the pilot team organised a trip to Pécs and held a meeting with the following institutions: Kamill Erdős Gypsy Museum, The Gandhi High School and the Romology Department of the University of Pécs
- in April 2018, a visit was made to the Hungarian Naive Arts Museum, Kecskemét that owns a large collection of paintings from Roma artists (János Balázs, Gyöngyi Rác Kalányosné)
- in June 2018, there was a visit to the Muzeum Romske kultury (Museum of Romani Culture) in Brno, Czech Republic.
- several other visits and meetings were organised in Budapest with a range of different Roma stakeholders.

³⁰ <http://pecs.varosom.hu/latnivalok/muzeum/Erdos-Kamill-Cigany-Muzeum.html> (downloaded 21-01-2020)

³¹ <https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Family-Style-Restaurant/K%C3%B3stolda-404317776420397/> (downloaded 21-01-2020)



Figure 2: ELTE Team visited the Museum of Romani Culture in Brno on 27th June 2018

4.1.3 PLANNING LOCAL ENCOUNTERS

In each pilot, the approach of REACH teams is to hold local encounters to enable dialogue with local stakeholders and citizens organisations. As interactive events, they comprise small group sessions that can help to build trust. For the Minority heritage pilot, these events provided the first opportunity for local stakeholders to meet, a forum for experts and practitioners from both public and private sector with an interest in Roma. As culture and heritage in Hungary are so isolated from each other, local encounters afforded not only the chance to meet for the first time, but also to link different segments of this new network together.

During this initial period, the ELTE team endeavoured to categorise local stakeholders and to plan the local encounters according to different spatial, professional, cultural dimensions. In this way, two main streams were defined:

- local encounters focusing on rural Roma heritage, linked to cultural tourism, rural heritage and revitalisation of traditional professions
- local encounters concerning Roma heritage in urban context, stressing Roma representation in the urban space of Budapest, re-writing the collective memory and the local history of certain neighbourhoods of Budapest (8th and 4th district).

In addition to these two types of local encounters and other pilot activities, the ELITE team also decided to focus on intangible Roma heritage and started to collect good examples of preservation and (re-)use of intangible heritage practices.



4.2 REALISATION OF LOCAL ENCOUNTERS AND MAIN EVENTS OF THE MINORITY HERITAGE PILOT

Before presenting the proceeding and the main themes and results of the three local encounters, it is necessary to provide qualifying remarks and complementary information.

- As described above, the present political climate is extremely hostile and, in some cases, directly menacing toward NGOs. As a result, Hungarian civil society is generally weak, which has led to a common passivity toward political, cultural and social engagement.
- Furthermore, the Roma minority still suffers from the everyday discrimination and racism of the Hungarian majority society (including concrete cases of prohibiting Roma individuals from entering bars or more generally concerning school segregation and restrictive employment).

It is important to consider these two statements in the context of the REACH project organising meetings and discussions around Roma heritage in Hungary. This meant that the REACH team often faced difficulties in engaging with Roma cultural institutions and autonomous actors. Instead of sharing their knowledge and experiences, a number of actors seemed suspicious and reserved in response to approaches. The result was that although the ELTE team had contacted more than twenty organisations and initiated numerous cooperation events and discussions, it ultimately only managed to organise three major events that may be considered to have been local encounters. However, despite this qualification, over the course of the project, there have been many more occasions (meetings, visits, conferences, workshops and interviews) when the Minority heritage pilot and its interests could be presented and shared with stakeholders.

4.2.1 INTRODUCTORY MEETINGS IN BUDAPEST

7 September 2017, Glove Factory, 8th district

5 February 2018, Atelier Department, ELTE

The first couple of meetings involved the preparation of the local encounters and a common framework for cooperation with the four major associated partners, including planning for the Minority heritage panel at the REACH opening conference and further meetings. These four partners: Hodász Country House and MOME EcoLab represented rural Roma heritage and Gallery 8 and the Glove Factory the urban aspect (more precisely the 8th district). It soon became clear that the latter two were, for various reasons, much more passive and ultimately not as involved.

The first meeting took place at the Glove Factory as, at that time, it still seemed that their participation was ensured. This introductory meeting outlined the overall description of the project, the principal objectives of the pilot and the different actions that the ELTE team had conceived. The next preparatory meeting took place in early February 2018 and was already more focused on the concrete steps that needed to be taken.

List of participants:

- Melinda Rézműves (Hodász Roma Country House)
- Bori Fehér (MOME EcoLab)
- Zita Varga (Glove Factory Community Centre)
- Boglárka Szalga (Glove Factory Community Centre)



- Ágota Szilágyi-Kispista (Gallery 8)
- Eszter György (REACH/ELTE BTK Atelier)
- Gábor Oláh (REACH/ELTE BTK Atelier)

At the beginning of the meeting, Eszter György outlined the list of potential partners involved in the pilot, as well as other participants, clustered stakeholders and organisations that could be interested. At this time, the pilot had already contacted the Gandhi Secondary School, Újpest Local History Collection, Romology Department of the University of Pécs and further organisations who, at a later point, joined the REACH events.

Participants planned the opening conference panel by deciding on its format and composition. In order to offer a more democratic and dialogic environment, it was conceived as a round table discussion, in Hungarian, involving the four associated partners.

Furthermore, potential dates and occasions for local encounters were introduced by the partners – ultimately, these ideas could not be realised for various reasons. For instance, Gallery 8 proposed to organise a local encounter, to be linked to one of their exhibitions, but by the summer of 2018, the Gallery was closed.

4.2.2 PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE PILOT'S WORK ON THE 8TH DISTRICT

Introductory meeting of Roma heritage project of 8th district, Budapest

20 June 2018, Eötvös Loránd University, Dean's Meeting Room

List of participants:

- Anna Czékmány, director of Museum Education Department, Petőfi Literary Museum
- János Csóka, president of Roma Minority Self-Government, Budapest
- Erika Garami, Archivist, Budapest City Archives; Topotéka project coordinator in Hungary (<https://www.topothek.at/en/>)
- Eszter György, ELTE, REACH
- Ágota Szilágyi-Kispista, curator at Gallery 8
- István Gábor Molnár, president of Roma Minority Self-Government, Újpest; founder and director of Roma Local History Collection, Újpest (<https://ujpestiroma.hu/>)
- Gábor Oláh, ELTE, REACH
- Tibor Sándor, head of Budapest Collection, Metropolitan Ervin Szabó Library, Budapest; Topotéka project coordinator of 8th district (<http://jozsefvaros.topothek.at/>)
- Gábor Sonkoly, Dean of Faculty of Humanities, ELTE, REACH

The aim of this meeting was to launch the idea of a Roma local heritage collection in the 8th district of Budapest. Among the 23 districts of Budapest, the 8th district has the largest Roma population. It therefore seems crucial to preserve and manage the local Roma heritage, by involving local Roma and non-Roma stakeholders, including civil organisations, public institutions and the local administration. This first meeting introduced potential actors to each other and outlined the initial objectives, related to the establishment of the local Roma heritage collection. As an inspiratory model, the first and so far, only Roma Local History Collection was invited from Újpest, 4th district of Budapest.



Figure 3: István Gábor Molnár introduced the Roma Local History Collection during the Introductory meeting of Roma heritage project of 8th district of Budapest on 20th June 2018

The Roma Local History Collection of Újpest was introduced by its founder and director, István Gábor Molnár. This collection, including a digital archive and an exhibition, located in the building of the Roma Minority Self-Government, Újpest, is based on a 20-year-long research of local heritage. The complex research includes oral history, participatory observation method and archive research.

The discussion focused on the adaptivity of the “Újpest-model” to the 8th district and the potential participatory process and practices of the pilot. Possible obstacles and difficulties were also highlighted, including ethical concerns, the weakness of civil society and the lack of local Roma organisations. In other terms, the difficulty of approaching the local community emerged as a key topic for the following meetings. Nevertheless, participants considered the idea of the local Roma heritage collection as a pertinent project and seemed committed to participate in it. The Topotéka project (including the Budapest Collection, Metropolitan Ervin Szabó Library and the Budapest City Archives) offered to create a digital platform for the local Roma collection, as well as an exhibition at the building of the Budapest Collection, Metropolitan Ervin Szabó Library. János Csóka, president of Roma Minority Self-Government of Budapest, offered to facilitate further meetings with local self-government members in the 8th district.

Anna Czékmány emphasised the educational possibilities of the project and the potential application of the Roma heritage project in museum educational practices of the Petőfi Literary Museum. Ágota Szilágyi-Kispista proposed to organise exhibitions in the Gallery 8 and to involve the curators and volunteers of the Gallery in the research phase of the project.



Participants agreed on the importance of the project objectives and were willing to meet again in the near future, hopefully with the participation of further local actors, such as:

- representatives of the Local Government of the 8th district
- representatives of the Roma Minority Self-Government of the 8th district
- teachers / director of the Lakatos Menyhért Primary School
- members of different Roma NGOs.

This meeting and the preparatory actions resulted in the conference organised in February 2019 (presented at 4.2.4.). As mentioned, due to its closure, Gallery 8 dropped out of the project, but almost all the other participants at this meeting were involved in the conference and during the research seminar, organised with the Cultural Heritage MA students of ELTE. It seems that the most important proceeds of this meeting were the contact made between prestigious public institutions such as the Budapest City Archives and the Metropolitan Ervin Szabó Library (representing the Topotéka project) and the Újpest Roma collection. The fact that these important national collections became more aware of the existence and importance of Roma cultural heritage and local history represents a long-term result that goes beyond the scope of REACH project.

4.2.3 LOCAL ENCOUNTER IN HODÁSZ

The first real local encounter took place on 9 October 2018 in Hodász and was entitled “Preservation, re-use and management of Roma cultural heritage”.

This local encounter was hosted by the Roma Country House in Hodász, founded in 2001, which is the first institution of its kind in Hungary. The Country House, located in an extremely deprived sub-region in north-eastern Hungary, not only plays an eminent role in preserving the Roma traditions, but also in local community-building and in ensuring diverse artistic and professional activities to the children and teenagers of the village. In addition to the organisers, the following people participated in the encounter:

- István Gábor Molnár, president of Roma Minority Self-Government, Újpest, founder and director of Roma Local History Collection, Újpest and Éva Váradi, member, Roma Local History Collection who represented another principal partner institution, focusing on the preservation, management and (re-)use of Roma cultural heritage.

Hodász and Újpest are the two main examples where Roma heritage is maintained and represented in a complex way, including social innovation and sustainability linked to various activities with children and teenagers. The two cases may also be compared with each other as they are both founded and managed by Roma leaders, representing an “interior” and genuine approach.



Figure 4: Participants of the workshop in Hodász on 9th October 2018. Back row: Balázs Juhász, Gábor Oláh, Balázs Váradi, Fanny Hajdú, István Gábor Molnár, Éva Váradi, Natália Jakab, Sándor Tisza; front row: Rita Szerencsés, Natália Oszkó-Jakab, Melinda Rézműves, Eszter György. (Source: Patrik Mravik)

- Fanny Hajdú, production manager from Pro Progressione and Natália Oszkó-Jakab, director, Valley of Arts Festival and Arts for Rural Development Foundation represented non-Roma cultural organisations who both focus on cultural tourism, cultural management and sponsorship. Their participation at the event was very useful and pertinent as they could provide examples where bottom-up initiatives, small / rural cultural practices could be streamlined into important cultural events such as the Valley of Arts Festival.
- Balázs Váradi and Balázs Juhász, architects are concerned with social architecture while Rita Szerencsés, project manager in the MOME EcoLab is concerned with social design. Their initiatives focus on empowering marginalised (Roma) communities in small, deprived villages with the participatory approach of social architecture and social design. Their work is very much based on the active involvement and empowerment of local communities, mostly children and teenagers. Their contribution to the local encounter was crucial as they represented the very few initiatives that are actively involved in cultural entrepreneurship in deprived rural areas, with a special focus on tackling prejudices and social exclusion toward Roma communities.
- Natália Jakab, vice-director, instructor, Gandhi High School
- Sándor Tisza, director, Traditional wooden park, Csongrád.

The event started with the visit to the different buildings of the Country House, including:

- the small cob house that presents the living conditions of a relatively wealthier Gipsy family with traditional furniture and home utensils
- a shabby house dug into the ground that represents the living state of the 1930s
- the building of so-called 'string-kindergarten' (named after the strings that had been stretched around the Gipsy slum) which was founded in 1970 by Lina Rézműves, mother of Melinda Rézműves, the owner and manager of the Roma County House
- a new community building, representing the housing conditions of the 1970s, which aims to be a tea house / community centre for the local youth
- Atelier and Guest house, which includes a nursery room and a conference room.



Figure 5: Melinda Rézműves presented the different buildings of the Country House to the workshop participants and students of Gandhi Secondary School on 9th October 2018. (Source: Gábor Oláh)

After the lunch, participants introduced themselves and their institutions and even though they came from very different professional and geographic backgrounds, key words and central notions appeared commonly in their discourses: in some ways, all of their initiatives have been concerned with the preservation of local values, outreach and the involvement of the community and the eagerness to find innovative ways to remain sustainable. The introduction was followed by a very fruitful and interesting discussion during which the various aspects of sustainability and the possibilities to create more visibility for marginalised cultural heritage sites were emphasised.



The presence of the creative / cultural industry (represented by the director of Arts for Rural Development Foundation and the manager of Pro Progressione) significantly enabled the recognition of new perspectives and suggestions regarding the creation of rural festivals introducing Roma culture or the nomination of the Hodász Country House to the European Roma Cultural Routes. The encounter facilitated the eventual cooperation of Roma cultural institutions, experts in social design and social architecture and cultural managers.

In conclusion, even though the meeting offered a positive and unique opportunity for various organisations to network with each other and to present different ways to generate cultural tourism, including minority heritage elements, the possibilities to replicate the Hodász model and even to integrate Hodász itself into a wider cultural touristic context, do not seem close to realisation. Due to its very special local history, Hodász differs from many other villages with a large Roma population. Also, the importance of the key figure, that is to say the activism and the comprehensive knowledge of Melinda Rézműves makes this place function in such a complex and innovative way that is not easy to replicate. Until now, there is no other Roma country house in Hungary, and nowhere that is comparable with so many different layers of preserving, managing and (re)-using rural Roma heritage.

The ELTE team asked the local encounter participants to send feedback. Here are some quotes from the participants:

“For me, the environment was very inspiring, to see the developments, the willing and the activities. It is always very nice to meet active communities who are eager for a real change. I think the discussion was very fruitful, although I couldn’t decide how much the suggestions are in harmony with the previous conceptions. Also, I didn’t really see the role of the other partners in the cooperation between Hodász and the Valley of Arts (or if we need to have a role at all). Personally, I felt that our activities weren’t very interesting for the others but it might be due to the local embeddedness. However, I hope that there will be an efficient cooperation between Hodász and the architects from the Technical University. It will important though to establish a real participatory design and not a simple construction camp. Maybe at this point we might intervene and support the process with our experience.”

(Rita Szerencsés, project manager, MOME EcoLab)

“For me, the visit to Hodász was very exciting, both the site and the projects that were introduced seemed very interesting. I had a lot of ideas how it would be possible to develop further these initiatives. What I found the most interesting was what Melinda said; how she feels that there would be a great need not to treat Roma communities exclusively from social aspects but from cultural as well. I agree with her but on the other hand I think it is difficult to change people’s mentality without carrying about this dimension. Briefly that’s all but I really hope that we will have the opportunity to cooperate in the future and discuss these issues.”

(Fanny Hajdú, production manager, Pro Progressione)

4.2.4 Local encounter in / on the 8th district

12 February 2019, Budapest (Hungary). The Roma heritage of the 8th district (Josefstadt).

Eötvös Loránd University, Faculty of Humanities

As explained in 4.2.2, the ELTE team initiated a meeting at the beginning of summer 2018 in order to plan participatory research on the Roma heritage of the 8th district, by adapting the “Újpest-model”. Several stakeholders had been asked to join the project, among which, Gallery 8 and the Józsefváros Topotéka were local. Unfortunately, by that time, the Glove Factory / Kesztyűgyár - due to different reasons – had disappeared. Shortly after the introductory meeting, it became apparent that Gallery 8 was closing, which meant that the original REACH associated members from the 8th district had become inactive. For this reason, the ELTE team had to look for other options to grasp participation and to approach the diverse aspects of the Roma culture in this specific urban space.



Figure 6: The poster of the mini-conference (Source: Gábor Oláh)

Facing these difficulties of weakening civil society, the pilot decided to engage in participatory research with university students and organised a research seminar for the Cultural Heritage MA students of ELTE University. In this way, the local encounter took the form of a mini-conference, co-organised with the second-year students of the Cultural Heritage MA programme. Students completed research into three heritage topics during the first semester: community, music and the fine arts of the Roma community in the 8th district. During the research, they cooperated with local REACH partners and other stakeholders. Interestingly, a Roma artist, who was organising an artistic workshop for local children in the Glove Factory / Kesztyűgyár, was

available and so, in this way, the institution, took part in indirect manner. In addition to her, other artists (painters, musicians and singers, also involved in community building practices), the local Roma minority Self-Government, the Budapest Roma Cultural and Educational Centre (FROKK) took part in the research.

The conference included two key-note lectures. Péter Szuhay, former director of the Roma collection in the Museum of Ethnography, presented a digital repository entitled the Virtual House of Roma Culture. Tibor Sándor, head of Budapest Collection, Metropolitan Ervin Szabó Library, Budapest, talked about the Topotéka project of 8th district³².



Figure 7: Anna Klára Andor, Dóra Nagy, Sára Kónya and Gergely Szabó (Students, ELTE Cultural Heritage MA programme) presented their research 'From the "Mátyás University" to the Mátyás Pince'. (Source: Márk Túróczi)

The key-note lectures were followed by the three presentations held by the MA students:

1. Adrienn Tóth, Tamás Tüske, Zsófia Vajda and Bianka Vilonya: The role of the individual in Roma community-building
2. Anett Jánosi, Melinda Lovag, Zsófia Szalai, Julianna Szántó and Edina Szathmári: Roma fine-arts through the lens of contemporary artists
3. Anna Klára Andor, Dóra Nagy, Sára Kónya and Gergely Szabó: From the "Mátyás University" to the Mátyás Pince

The third section of the conference comprised a round table discussion considering the possibilities of institutionalising Roma heritage, participants were Eszter György, István Gábor Molnár, president of Roma Minority Self-Government, Újpest; founder and director of Roma Local History Collection, Újpest and Kálmán Káli-Horváth, actor, painter and committee member of the future Cziffra Centre (Roma Cultural Centre, due to be opened in the 8th district in 2020.)

³² <http://jozsefvaros.topothek.at/> (downloaded 18-02-2020)



Figure 8 Round table discussion about the possibilities of institutionalizing Roma heritage, the participants were Eszter György (ELTE, REACH), István Gábor Molnár (president of Roma Minority Self-Government, Újpest; founder and director of Roma Local History Collection), Kálmán Káli-Horváth (actor, painter and committee member of the future Cziffra Centre) (Source: Gyula Nyári)

The conference was accompanied by a photography-exhibition. Gyula Nyári's photographs document Roma cultural events that have taken place in the 8th district over the past two-three decades. Some of the places and institutions depicted on the photographs no longer exist, meaning that the pictures are extremely important in maintaining the collective Roma memory of the district.

The event was very successful, as over 50 people attended the conference. In addition to university students, many different stakeholders and representatives of other, Roma or non-Roma cultural and educational institutions were present (including the Tom Lantos Institute, CEU and the University of Debrecen etc.)

The main conclusions of this local encounter relate to the questions of visibility and invisibility of urban Roma memory and cultural heritage. Several presentations and comments during the discussions proved that the Roma-related local history, cultural traditions and productions of the 8th district are extremely rich and varied. It seems that the 8th district stands as one of the most pertinent cradles of Roma culture in Hungary, including, among others, an important tradition of Roma musicians, the presence of various local cultural institutions and the memory of places that are still available through oral history. However, it became apparent that the majority of these cultural elements and dedicated places of the urban space are becoming inactive and/or invisible. The main questions of survival and creation of new institutions (such as the Cziffra Center) very much depend on political will. In other words, it seems that in this context, that bottom-up initiatives are less powerful and the destiny of the resilience of local urban Roma heritage is more up to top-down provisions.

4.2.5 LOCAL ENCOUNTER IN PÉCS

21 May 2019, Pécs (Hungary). Intangible Roma cultural heritage in Hungary – Communities and participation

Gandhi Secondary School Pécs, Dobó István u. 93, 7629

The REACH local encounter was hosted by the first secondary school in Europe that is devoted to preparing young Roma for higher education. The Gandhi Secondary School, located in Pécs, Hungary was founded in 1992 by Roma activists. The main objective of the school is, through education, to produce future Roma representatives committed to the cause of the Roma and the continuation of Roma language and culture. In order to achieve this, Gandhi provides secondary school certification and helps its graduates to continue their studies into colleges and universities. The school also teaches Boyash and Romani languages and Roma history and culture. In 2017, the pedagogic method for the preservation of the Gipsy/Romani intangible cultural heritage was selected as an element of the national register of best safeguarding practices in Hungary.



Figure 9: The participants of the local encounter: Tibor Cserti-Csapó, Natália Jakab, Eszter Zoltán-Borzován, Eszter Csonka-Takács, Eszter György, Szilvia Szénási, Gábor Vidák, József Szegedi, Gábor Oláh, István Gerendási, Beatrix Berendy, and Lászlóné Hunyadi. (Source: Patrik Mravik)

The event started with a lunch at the Kóstolda Roma House Restaurant. The restaurant opened in 2015 and is a great local example of Roma entrepreneurship, being founded by the Színes Gyöngyök Egyesület and employing six Roma women as cooks and waitresses. In the cosy and family-like atmosphere, visitors may, not only discover authentic Roma cuisine, but also a restaurant that attempts to break down discrimination and prejudice.

After lunch, participants received a guided tour of the Gandhi Secondary School. As the institution had just celebrated its 25th anniversary, there was a small exhibition in the corridors, presenting photographs and objects collected from the past.



Figure 10: The event started with a lunch served by Anna Várnai (president of the Színes Gyöngyök Association and Kóstolda Restaurant) at the Kóstolda Roma House Restaurant. (Source: Patrik Mravik)

The main discussion took place in the meeting room of the Secondary School and was hosted by Natália Jakab, vice-director of the Gandhi Secondary School. Following the introduction, participants introduced their approach toward intangible Roma heritage and how their institution / organisation was linked to it. Among the three Hungarian members, two (the Gandhi Secondary School and the Talentum Art School) have been included in the national register of best safeguarding practices in Hungary, due to their educational programmes, and another (The Hungarian and Gypsy Dance Traditions of Nagyecsed) has been, since 2017, part of the national inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Representatives described their history and also their definition of Roma cultural heritage, with each example representing a different Roma community and cultural tradition. Eszter Csonka-Takács, director of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Department at the Open-Air Museum, Szentendre, explained the bottom-up approach of the Hungarian organism and highlighted the importance of heritage communities and the active participation and involvement of the local communities. She also emphasised the importance of elements selected on the Hungarian list. Tibor Cserti-Csapó, professor at the University of Pécs, Faculty of Human Arts Department of Romani Studies and Sociology of Education talked about the question of authenticity of the Roma culture and the danger of exoticising certain cultural traditions. Members of the UCCU Foundation highlighted their mediator role, as volunteers who work with the methodology of informal education and their aim to tackle the often racist and xenophobic attitude of the majority society. They also explained which communities they represent and how the stereotypical categories between diverse Roma groups in Hungary (Romungros, Hungarian Roma, as the most assimilated, and Vlach Roma, as less integrated) may sometimes be misleading.



Figure 11: REACH local encounter at Gandhi Secondary School, Pécs on 21st May 2019

The discussion concerned many pertinent issues, such as the position of the communities, their activity and their involvement in the case of Hungarian Roma, where poverty and disadvantageous social status may very much balk the participation in cultural activities.

List of Participants:

- Beatrix Dr. Berendy, president of the Rajkó Educational and Art Foundation
- Tibor Cserti-Csapó, deputy head of department, PTE BTK NTI Department of Romology and Sociology of Education
- Eszter Csonka-Takács, director of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Department
- István Gerendási director of the Rajkó Folk Ensemble and Orchestra
- Eszter György, associate professor, ELTE BTK Atelier Department for Interdisciplinary History, REACH
- Lászlóné Hunyadi, director, Rajkó-Talentum Primary School of Art and High School
- Andrea Ignác, instructor of the UCCU Roma Informal Educational Foundation
- Natália Jakab, deputy director of the Gandhi Secondary School
- Patrik Mravik, PhD student at ELTE BTK Atelier Department for Interdisciplinary History
- Gábor Oláh, REACH junior research fellow, ELTE BTK Atelier Department for Interdisciplinary History
- Szilvia Szénási, director of the UCCU Roma Informal Educational Foundation
- Anna Várnai, president of the Színes Gyöngyök Association and Kóstolda Restaurant
- Eszter Zoltán-Borzován, director of the Berey József Local History Collection, Nagyecsed
- Gábor Vidák, coordinator of the UCCU Roma Informal Educational Foundation, Pécs
- József Szegedi, instructor of the UCCU Roma Informal Educational Foundation, Pécs



In order to conclude the main points of this local encounter, it is worth citing one of the participants, István Gerendási who is director of the Rajkó Folk Ensemble and Orchestra:

„Unfortunately, it was sad to understand that these organisations could host and educate a lot more children but the number of applicants is less and less. This is an urgent issue, not only for us but also for public authorities who are responsible for this domain. Our organisation would have to become much more well-known and by this understand the appearance in different media, through which we could reach out in a more efficient way to the Roma population in Hungary. It was wonderful to see how the Roma and non-Roma participants of the event are engaged in this matter. In order to see the utility of this event, we will have to see that the problems that have been brought up are not only communicated as theoretical issues but have some solutions as well.”

These thoughts reflect the overall experiences and lessons from the pilot. Institutions that have undertaken the preservation of Roma heritage are often abandoned by the state and are struggling ever more to survive and to continue to fulfil their original objectives.

Furthermore, cultural activities are strongly interwoven with socially inclusive programmes, in most cases realised through formal or informal education. However, it must be also stated that during the past few years, intangible Roma heritage has gained greater visibility and in spite of universally acknowledged doubts about authenticity and cultural transmission, different parts of Hungarian Roma dance, music and the existing Romani language types are being preserved in institutionalised environments.

4.3 OTHER PILOT ACTIVITIES / PARTICIPATORY ACTIVITIES / BEST PRACTICES

In addition to the introductory meetings and the local encounters, the three years of the Minority heritage pilot also included a large number of other activities, such as organised visits to various institutions, formal or informal discussions with stakeholders, structured interviews with experts and consultations with academic researchers.

A significant event took place at the REACH Opening Conference in May 2018 at the Hungarian National Museum, Budapest, where the Minority heritage pilot organised a round-table discussion, chaired by Eszter György.

The participants of the round table discussion were Melinda Rézműves from Roma Country House in Hodász, Tímea Junghaus from European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture / Gallery 8 Roma Contemporary Art Space and Zita Varga from Glove Factory / Kesztyűgyár Community Centre. The discussion was held in Hungarian with simultaneous translation into English available via headphones. This discussion focused on Roma cultural heritage and aimed to show how the institutionalisation of their (re)appropriated cultural heritage can result in the economic and social revival of their communities.

Melinda Rézműves, as ethnographer and author of several Romani language handbooks, emphasised the importance of the common Romani language as a main element of Roma cultural heritage. She also noted that as Roma communities have not been represented within the European Year of Cultural Heritage, the REACH pilot is of great value.

According to her, this occasion was very important, with representatives of the Roma community involved in a panel held at the Hungarian National Museum. The Roma are often talked about as a challenge and therefore need these types of positive opportunities to show that this is not the case, especially as there is no museum in Hungary that is dedicated to reflect the Roma and their culture.



Figure 12: Participants of the panel discussion on Roma cultural heritage in the REACH Opening Conference on 11th May 2018: Zita Varga (Glove Factory / Kesztyűgyár Community Centre), Tímea Junghaus (European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture / Gallery 8 Roma Contemporary Art Space), Melinda Rézműves (Roma Country House in Hodász), Eszter György (ELTE, REACH). (Source: Gábor Oláh)

In the past there have been a number of Roma based initiatives and short-term projects, but few permanent institutions and ongoing support. People move from project to project trying to maximise benefits and are able to demonstrate positive results, but ultimately the project ends and work is discontinued. If there were longer term, sustainable projects and financial support, there could be greater potential for success. In the case of Kesztyűgyár Community Centre, the financial continuity is ensured by the local Municipality, but their activities involve local Roma community more in an indirect way and they are not explicitly concerned with cultural heritage.

Tímea Junghaus emphasised the fact that there are 600 Roma related NGOs in Europe today, all of a diverse nature, with different rationales. There are approximately 12 million Roma in Europe, of which eight million speak one of the 93 dialects of Romani; it is a world language. At international level major changes are needed for the Roma community to achieve objectives, building on friendships and academic links. Is there interest from others to support this activity, to recognise the Roma culture and feed it back into education and wider society? Large scale change is needed rather than short term projects that have good intentions, which may help, but may actually be patronising.



From the audience, Gábor Sonkoly, ELTE's Dean of Faculty of Humanities, asked about Roma heritage and culture; it was considered that heritage is more significant. His follow-up question asked whether there was an institution needed for Roma heritage and indeed what a Roma museum would be like. Plans had been drawn up for such a museum before and promises were made in the final year of a Government's term in office; they lost the election and the plans fell through.

Reflecting on the themes of the REACH project, participatory approaches were considered important, to make changes and to gain greater recognition of the Roma community, its culture and heritage. Participatory approaches and resilient heritage might have even greater importance in the case of rural heritage initiatives (such as the Country House in Hodász) as the local community is even more marginalised than those living in the capital city, but a European network and institution (ERIAC) will also have to build upon the involvement of various Roma communities by representing different cultural practices.

4.3.1 MEETINGS WITH PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AND STATE AUTHORITIES

3 July 2018, meeting with Lajos Kathy-Horváth, director of the Budapest Roma Cultural and Educational Centre (FROKK)

Kathy-Horváth was born into a family of famous musicians; his father Lajos Kathy Horváth Senior, and his uncle Sándor Horváth were among the most popular jazz guitarists of the forties and fifties. In 1976, he won a scholarship from the György Cziffra Foundation and began to study at San Lise near Paris under Ivry Gitlis; later he became the pupil of Yehudi Menuhin. In 1996, he became director of the Sunhouse, the Gypsy Cultural Centre (which, until it closed, also functioned as a Gypsy theatre) and since 2010, he has managed the Budapest Roma Cultural and Educational Centre (FROKK).

Having a significant network among Roma artists and also being involved in Roma politics, Kathy-Horváth could be a key figure on the scene of Hungarian Roma cultural heritage, but unfortunately it seemed that his institution is passive and does not fulfil its potential to become the main cultural and educational Roma centre of Budapest. For instance, FROKK owns a large collection of contemporary Roma painting, but these artefacts are never displayed. Regardless of the organisations' wider role, Kathy-Horváth and FROKK contributed to the REACH pilot by giving interviews to the Cultural Heritage MA students when preparing to the conference presentations on the local heritage of the 8th district.

3 January 2019: meeting with Katalin Victor Langerné, Deputy State Secretary for Social Inclusion at the Ministry of Human Capacities

A meeting took place with Katalin Victor Langerné in January 2019. Her ministerial role includes social inclusion (comprehending principally Roma inclusion) and is responsible for the establishment of the Cziffra Center. This proposed cultural centre would be located at the site of the former Roma Parliament in the 8th district and would signify the repayment of a long-term debt of the Hungarian State, as it had been envisaged by Hungarian governments for many years

Previously, Langerné had participated in a round-table discussion entitled “*The richest heritage, unclaimed – Roma musical tradition in the Carpathian Basin and its wider region*” at the Budapest Ritmo Festival in October 2018. Thus, the meeting in January 2019 was a follow-up to this conference discussion and gave the ELTE team the opportunity to present the REACH project and Langerné to introduce the main conceptions about the Cziffra Center.

In short, the centre would not be a Roma museum, and therefore would not include a permanent art collection, but rather a cultural complex where performative art events may take place and temporary exhibitions could be organised.

Although the foundation-stone of the centre was laid in early March 2018, the construction has been delayed significantly and even now, there is no precise information available about the opening of the site.



Figure 13: Participants of the round-table discussion entitled “The richest heritage, unclaimed – Roma musical tradition in the Carpathian Basin and its wider region”, of the Budapest Ritmo Festival on 6th October 2018: Balázs Weyer (Director of programming at Hangvető, host of Budapest Ritmo Festival), Matyáš Dlab (Curator of the sound library, Museum Romani Culture in Brno), Katalin Victor Langerné, (Deputy State Secretary for Social Inclusion, Ministry of Human Capacities), Eszter György (ELTE, REACH), Péter Szuhay (Former director of the Roma collection, Hungarian Museum of Ethnography) (Source: Dávid Szél)

4.3.2 INTERVIEWS WITH EXPERTS ON DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF ROMA HERITAGE

Semi-structured interviews were held with local stakeholders and important figures of Hungarian Roma heritage who either did not attend the local encounters, or their activity seems so important that it was worth dedicating special time to them, in order to discover their work in greater depth, and especially their role in participatory activities.

April 2019: Interview with István Gábor Molnár, founder and director of the Újpest Roma Local History Collection

Several visits and meeting took place at Újpest during the timeframe of the Minority heritage pilot, which enabled the ELTE team to become better acquainted with the complex functions of this centre that houses the largest and continually growing Roma library of Budapest. There are two main local history-sites or memorials: a “Stolpersteine” / stumbling stone, located in front of the building, installed in 2015 to remember József Dráfi, a member of one of the first Roma families settled in Újpest, killed in Ravensbrück on 20 April 1945, and a wooden sculpture and plaque for the memory of Gábor Dilinkó, a Roma hero of the revolution of 1956, who was also a painter and writer and born on the site where the community building stands today. Among these features, the local history photographic and document exhibition and the community hall are the most important elements.

During an interview, István Gábor Molnár talked in detail about starting the local history collection, his original motivation, various methods that he and his team had applied, the roles that the community has undertaken in the creation of the place, and the diverse forms of participation involved in its everyday functioning. He explained the main factors in a successful collection of data, which resulted in the rewriting of local history to incorporate a much more active presence of the Roma community than had been stated by official historiography.



Figure 14: The Újpest Roma Local History Collection (Source: ujpestiroma.hu)

December 2019: interview with Rodrigo Balogh, founder and director of the Independent Theater

In December 2019, Rodrigo Balogh discussed Independent Theater, describing it as one of the few Roma / Gypsy theatres of Hungary which, since its foundation, has not functioned in a physical theatre building, but rather organises its events in various places all around Hungary. In addition to its pioneering cultural work, which includes the production of theatre plays related to the socio-cultural context of Hungarian Roma, the Independent Theater has collected and published the first international Roma drama collection, entitled Roma heroes – Five European Monodrama. Moreover, in 2017, they created the Roma Heroes educational methodology, that is the first educational material dealing with Roma drama in an international context. Their work is deeply embedded in an international context as they work in close cooperation with other European Roma theatres (from Ukraine, Romania, Italy, Spain, Austria and Great Britain). Their funding is also ensured by international / foreign supporters and grants (EEG, EU and Visegrad Fund, etc.) Participatory approaches are very much present in their methodology as they are in constant interaction with Roma and non-Roma pupils and university students during their workshops, festivals and other communal events. In this way, Roma theatrical heritage is not only presented and preserved, but perpetually re-used and re-interpreted by the participation and involvement of the public. The whole concept of “Roma Heroes” is to transform traditional, stereotypical roles of Roma in the mainstream cultural canon so that Roma protagonists are empowered and have the agency to create change.



Figure 15: Independent Theater Hungary organized the third Roma Heroes International Theatre Festival between 24th August and 15th September 2019 (Source: Independent Theatre)

4.3.3 ROMA LIBRARY IN ÚJPEST --- DIGITISATION AND PRESENCE IN SOCIAL MEDIA

In addition to the other activities of the Újpest Roma Collection, they are also building an international Roma library. The process of collecting books (which have often been received as gifts from Roma writers, poets, researchers and artists) is communicated through the Facebook page of the Újpest collection and also the official Facebook page of the library. In this way, the virtual community is able to follow this library and see how it is growing and which books included in it.



Figure 16: Example of the Újpest Roma Library Facebook page.

4.4 PARTICIPATORY PRACTICES, GOOD EXAMPLES

As with the REACH project as a whole, the major aspect of reviewing and analysing cultural heritage preservation, management and (re-)use was the presence of participatory practices, as such, the Minority heritage pilot was able to highlight cases where Roma heritage has been maintained through the active involvement and participation of the community. Moreover, as stated before, these participatory practices are, in most cases, interwoven with social innovation and actions that raise social inclusion. This section presents several good examples where these two aspects are successfully demonstrated.

4.4.1 UCCU ROMA INFORMAL EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

UCCU was established in 2010 with the aim of creating a platform for meeting and dialogue between Roma and non-Roma youngsters, therefore reducing stereotypes and prejudices against Roma. It involves young Roma people who, through informal educational methods such as volunteer moderators, facilitate workshops related to Roma identity and culture in primary and secondary schools throughout the country. Since negative prejudices are still very present in Hungarian society and, according to sociological and psychological literature, adolescence is the age when these negative attitudes crystallise and anti-Roma prejudice becomes more coherent, it seems logical to focus on this age-group.³³

³³ Váradi 2014.

UCCU organises interactive classes around the topic of Roma culture and identity in five different modules:

- Roma identity (about the diversity of Roma society and tackling stereotypes)
- Roma identity in pictures (photography exhibition about the life of ordinary Roma families)
- Dilemma café (discussion about controversial topics)
- Class in Fair (opportunities to get to know Roma cultures in several steps)
- 8th District Walk tour (by going outside from the classroom, pupils are introduced to Roma cultural and heritage sites in the 8th district of Budapest).

Of these modules, the 8th District Walk tour is the most popular, and became a successful example of social entrepreneurship. Due to its popularity, the organisers have developed further walking tours (in both Hungarian and in English), not only for school pupils, but also for national and international companies, embassies and foreign groups. They have also established a similar tour in the city of Pécs, in which several Roma heritage-related institutions and sites take place (including the Gandhi Secondary School and Kóstolda Romani Home Restaurant).



Figure 17: Image captured from a promotional video by UCCU showing that REACH partners participated in the 8th District Walk tour after the REACH Opening Conference in May 2018 (Source: UCCU)

UCCU's Social innovation has been explicitly recognised, as in 2019, they won the 2,000 Euro SozialMarie prize for social innovation.³⁴ The foundation participated to the Erste Seeds Incubator programme, where coordinators helped them to develop a business plan for walks, to include different target groups, locations and themes. In 2018, they won the UniCredit Bank "Step with us!" programme and they were professionally supported by NESst (international investor in social enterprises, neest.org), to launch the walking tour social enterprise.

³⁴ <https://www.sozialmarie.org/hu/projects/7783> (downloaded 22-01-2020)



Even though there have been previous examples of walking tours in the 8th district, that show the hidden parts and social environment of the capital city Beyond Budapest³⁵, the social enterprise of UCCU – working with Roma guides and focusing on local Roma memory and cultural heritage - offers a more genuine representation and tackles prejudices in a far more explicit way.

The success of UCCU lies mostly in the structural and organisational context of the foundation, built on the participation and cooperation of volunteers and on the permanent presence and invitation of young Roma members. In all, they work with 40 Roma young people, 10-15 of whom are guides. Working and / or volunteering with UCCU offers skills and opportunities to them that are usually not accessible in Hungary for the Roma society. Being active in a wide range of occupations creates confidence and preparedness, reinforces communication and debating skills, among many others. It is presumed that UCCU's recurrent successes and developing national and international network may encourage other Roma-led organisations to emerge and develop themselves. Volunteering provides sustainability and a renewable membership. In a larger context, UCCU supports the emergence of experienced Roma individuals, integrated in the international network of social enterprises and NGOs.

UCCU offers a positive example of how to tackle a huge social issue (prejudices and Anti-Gypsyism) in a direct way, using specific methodologies (non-formal education and city walking tours and, in both ways, peer-learning). As such, their objectives are cumulative: on the one hand, they raise awareness among non-Roma people that participate in walks or workshops and, on the other, develop Roma community and leadership. Their entire programme is built on community participation, in a stricter and broader sense: as a strong community of UCCU volunteers and employees make an impact on a much larger community of Roma and non-Roma youngsters who - during the UCCU workshops and city walks – become more acquainted with Roma culture and identity.

4.5 SPECIFIC ROLE OF ROMA WOMAN IN HERITAGE-MAKING

Roma women are a vulnerable group in the Roma community itself. In most Eastern-European countries, they don't exist on the public agenda, their issues are not solved through government policies and they don't have sufficient NGOs that can stand up for them. As a historical explanation for this intersectional oppression and disadvantageous status, it should be considered that for centuries, the representation of the Gypsy woman took on a fantasised character and allowed the imagining of the Other. She was constantly presented as steeped in mystery and erotic passion due to sexual and psychological qualities that were presumed to be exceptional.³⁶ Often trapped in the mechanisms and traditions of a patriarchal society, Roma women face greater more difficulties and hindrances, on many levels of self-realisation than Roma men.

³⁵ <https://beyondbudapest.hu/tours/socioculturalwalkingtour> (downloaded 19-02-2020)

³⁶Hasdeu 2008.



For these reasons, it is extremely important to highlight good examples and case studies where Roma women are empowered and have agency in the preservation and management of Roma cultural heritage.³⁷ In the context of the REACH project, the Minority heritage pilot was able to get to know and cooperate with many women, engaged in very different aspects of the heritage scene. Despite the above-mentioned, traditionally patriarchal Roma society, the ELTE team could trace and analyse several initiatives where women have leading roles.

First, the original four associated partners were all represented by women. This was visible at the REACH opening conference where the participants in the Minority heritage panel discussion were all women; Tímea Junghaus, Zita Varga, Melinda Rézműves and Bori Fehér (although, due to unforeseen circumstances, only the first three were present.). Even though none of their institutions are linked directly to gender issues, their work ultimately reflected on such questions. For instance, the Roma Country House in Hodász had several social programmes focussed on women, such as the “Lina-Romanyi Mentorica” project in 2014-2015 which targeted the prevention of young Roma girls from leaving school early. Also, in 2015, Gallery 8 organised a very popular photography exhibition in the series of events Roma Body Politics, entitled ‘No innocent pictures’, where they reflected on how Roma bodies, especially women’s bodies are represented traditionally in a racial framework where race is enacted in the moment of the gaze. With the help of Roma artists and community, the project focused on the depiction, representation and participation of Roma – and especially Roma women – in the media, art and public life.³⁸

MOME ECOLab is mostly concerned with organising programmes and activities for children, however, they also had several projects which were more closely linked to female practices, such as their publication, entitled A Masina - szociális gasztronómia Bódvalenkén (The Machine - social gastronomy in Bódvalenke) (2013) which introduced traditional Roma meals prepared by the women of an extremely poor village, Bódvalenke. Gastronomic cultural heritage was thus put into a social context, where the kitchen of the poor became something valuable, to be preserved.³⁹

³⁷ Fortunately there are numerous good examples in Europe such as several Roma Women’s Organisations (Panhellenic Educational, Cultural and Creative Association of Roma Women in Greece, FAKALI and KAMIRA federation of associations of Romani Women in Spain, etc) RomArchive also has a section dedicated to the Roma Women’s Movement (<https://www.romarchive.eu/en/roma-civil-rights-movement/building-blocks-romani-womens-movement-europe/>) and the Roma Women’s Congress is another positive example with over 375 Roma women from a grassroots level coming together to discuss the solutions to their problems.

(<http://dromkotar.org/congress/>) (both downloaded 19-02-2020)

³⁸ <http://gallery8.org/en/news/2/73/roma-body-politics-i-no-innocent-picture> (downloaded 21-01-2020)

³⁹ Barcza-Oravec 2013.



Figure 18: Romama Gypsy House Restaurant in Tomor during the ELTE team visit on 16th February 2019

Another example of where Roma gastronomic heritage meets female entrepreneurship is the Kóstolda Roma Flat Restaurant in Pécs. The initiative started in 2004 as an association helping Roma women in the region of Pécs. Kóstolda opened in 2019, a real restaurant in the centre of the city. The original goals of the association ‘Coloured Pearls’, to support disadvantaged Roma women in finding employment and increasing their quality of life, was to be achieved through empowerment and advocacy training. Among other activities, the Coloured Pearls association runs a Mother’s club which helps deprived mothers to obtain capabilities and skills to enable a better functioning community.⁴⁰ Their bottom-up initiatives aim to challenge and reverse traditional Roma female roles and in this sense, besides their impact as preservers and managers of Roma gastronomic heritage, they also have an important role in social innovation and inclusive practices.

Women also have specific importance in the management and preservation of intangible Roma heritage in Nagyecsed. The Hungarian and Roma dance traditions of the town that are listed on the national UNESCO’s intangible heritage list are maintained partially by the “Vazdune Cherhaja” Rising Stars Roma Women’s Association.⁴¹

⁴⁰ <http://szinesgyongyok.hu/rolunk/celjaink-tevekenysegeink/> (downloaded 13-01-2020)

⁴¹ <https://www.facebook.com/emelkedocsillagok/> (downloaded 13-01-2020)



Figure 19: Employees at Kóstolda House Restaurant (Source: Patrik Mravik)

The activities mapped by the REACH project prove that the heritage sector can have a positive impact on the empowerment of Roma women, through initiatives that open up a space where female entrepreneurship can be encouraged, supported and valued. Roma women's agency in the preservation and management of cultural heritage may find expression in fields such as gastronomy or cooking that are conventionally associated with women's work and thus may appear to reinforce traditional gender roles. However, in a context of intersectional oppression and social deprivation, it is important, first of all, to recognise and demonstrate that Roma women's knowledge, skills and initiative are valuable and can be a springboard for further empowerment.



5 RESULTS AND IMPACT

5.1 ROMA COMMUNITY RESULTS

The socio-political context of the pilot is that Roma heritage is under-represented and in general, civil society is frightened and oppressed in Hungary, meaning that the ELTE team often faced difficult situations where the political climate and top-down decision making influenced cultural practices and the survival of certain institutions, including a pilot associate partner. Even though their closing was not the direct consequence of political decisions, the passive or failing presence of certain organisations could be explained by a hostile attitude toward civil / Roma cultural attendance.

Even with facing socio-political challenges, the work of the pilot highlighted different social dimensions such as gender and vulnerability groups. These observations enable questioning of existing norms, a better understanding of the societal relevance and resilience of community heritage, and offer the opportunity to engage new sets of theoretical questions that expose implicit assumptions regarding several societal aspects.

This deliverable began by looking at the transformation of heritage, away from the top down, traditional white European perspective, the work within the Minority heritage pilot has given Roma culture and heritage greater visibility and challenged, even broken, stereotypical images. Hosting the Roma panel of the REACH conference at the Hungarian National Museum was a significant moment, as was its message, with that panel thanking REACH for working with Roma groups to recognise and amplify heritage and not be yet another well-meaning short-term social welfare programme.

Activities during the pilot, and especially the local encounters, revealed the potential for future cooperation between stakeholders, by identifying opportunities of cross-collaboration. It should be highlighted that the participants of the local encounters were mainly isolated from each other (geographically, socially and professionally) and therefore REACH support increased their visibility towards each other and created the opportunity for them to get to know more about the good practices and struggles of others.

The Minority heritage pilot used multiple methods to bring Associate partners together. Potential successes include the contact made between prestigious public institutions such as the Budapest City Archives, the Metropolitan Ervin Szabó Library and the Újpest Roma collection. The fact that these important national collections became more aware of the existence and importance of Roma cultural heritage and local history represents a long-term result that goes beyond the scope of REACH project. The potential of these linkages may be in the future exchange of archival documents / photographs between Újpest and the national library / national archive or eventually, the organisation of common educational programmes or research projects.



Non-traditional approaches were also used; rather than bringing parties interested in Roma CH to a meeting in Budapest, the local encounter was held in Hodász, at the Roma country House in a deprived area in the north-west of the country. This made discussions more vivid and less theoretical and led to discussions of including the House as one of the European Roma Cultural Routes. This may or may not be realised, but the significant fact is that the discussion took place, something that would not previously have happened and not at all without the work of the Minority heritage pilot.

As with any reflection, shortly after an activity has taken place, it is not possible to predict future results that may arise. It is always worth considering that positive words in a meeting may not always generate positive actions and with the REACH pilot drawing to a close, there may not be the support to maintain the newly established links, but what the pilot has done during its 18 month lifetime is to bring people together, raise awareness of issues and leave behind a more confident and proactive group of stakeholders.

5.2 ASSESSMENT OF PARTICIPATORY ACTIVITIES

The full title of the REACH project is RE-designing Access to Cultural Heritage for a wider participation in preservation, (re-)use and management of European culture. Through its wide range of activities, the Minority heritage pilot has certainly considered the preservation of Roma culture and heritage, the management of its resources and considered ways in which it can be creatively reused within society.

The 'learning-by-doing' process proposed in deliverable D3.1 - *Participatory models* – has proven to be the most suitable and flexible method for the Minority heritage pilot. By using the methods and techniques of Participatory Action Research⁴², the ELTE team was able to adjust to local conditions, especially the loss of associate partners. During the pilot, diverse forms and compositions of Participatory Project Groups have been created and maintained in cooperation with associate and 'close' partners in order to plan, analyse and evaluate local encounters, in a broader sense, the participatory approaches in CH. This method has helped to produce knowledge and results that have not been available through traditional tools and techniques. For example, taking into account the closure of the two urban partners and assessing local options led to the idea of creating the research seminar involving ELTE students working with Roma stakeholders.

D3.1 also looked at the results of the assessment of prior projects and messages from conference and workshop presentations and drew a number of conclusions. One of the roles of each of the four REACH pilots was to test them, to see how applicable they were in very different fields of cultural heritage. All of the following points are present in the Minority heritage pilot:

- CH participatory activities are often overlooked, but have intrinsic, economic and societal benefits
- they must be promoted as an asset/benefit, not a liability/cost

⁴² Participatory Action Research is a qualitative methodology that seeks to develop collaboration between stakeholders, using the bottom-up approach, a 'learning-by-doing' process conducted 'with' people and not 'on', 'about' or 'for' people. This is supported by the establishment of Participatory Project Groups (PPG), which decide and manage participatory activities.



- activities can boost individuals' confidence, build soft and work-related skills
- short- and longer-term plans/strategies are needed to embed activities
- people must be involved in activity planning and decision making (bottom up)
- young people need to be engaged to maintain traditions and to safeguard (in)tangible heritage
- strategies need to empower women, who have always been strong transmitters of heritage.

There are a number of aspects prevalent within the Minority heritage pilot that had been identified previously, including the passing down of traditions, stories, memories and oral histories between generations, the use of community based activities to share heritage, including demonstration and non-formal education, the use of social media to promote Roma heritage and the request for wider society to reappraise Roma communities rather than solely accepting longstanding stereotypes.

The Minority heritage pilot also provided a further approach to be added to the project's list and that stems from the more formal educational project undertaken by ELTE's students, to meet with the Roma community and activity co-participate to promote Roma heritage.

The final aspect is a participatory characteristic of the pilot when considering top down and bottom up approaches. For the Minority heritage pilot, the assumption was made that it would comprise:

"complex community relationships, built on trust, with a desire for a bottom up approach, but not always have the authority to do this"

The work within the pilot has confirmed this definition, especially in Hungary, with weak civil society hindering progress. The intervention of ELTE, through the student led local encounter, also confirms the conclusion that there is a less distinct Participatory Heritage model that sits between top down and bottom up, where the conditions are put in place from above to enable the activity form below to thrive.

5.3 REACH PROJECT RESULTS

The results of the Minority heritage pilot, (together with those of the other three pilots) will be reviewed, synthesised and integrated as part of the cultural heritage discourse via the REACH social platform and presented, as part of a panel discussion, at the final conference in Pisa. Specific aspects of pilot findings will be examined in greater detail and produced as best practice examples to be included on the project's Open Heritage website. Activities will be considered as part of the project's evaluation of activity and used to define the *REACH Proposal for resilient European CH*.



As a result of their work on the Minority heritage pilot, ELTE has produced a number of publications and has presented several conferences.

Publications:

- Eszter György, Gábor Oláh: The creation of resilient Roma cultural heritage. Case study of a bottom-up initiative from North-Eastern Hungary, in: Melanie Kay Smith and Boldizsár Megyesi (eds): Cultural heritage and social cohesion: Special issue in English No. 6 (2018)
- Eszter György: An attempt to create minority heritage. The history of the Rom Som club [Rom Som cigányklub] (1972–1980) in *Romani Studies*, 29.2, 2020

Two further articles, presenting the results of the pilot, are planned to be published in the coming months:

- Sára Kónya et al (CH students from ELTE): The spatial expression of the Roma musical heritage in the 8th district of Budapest
- Eszter György, Gábor Sonkoly and Gábor Oláh: Toward a resilient European heritage: the case of Roma cultural heritage in Hungary

Conferences:

- 16 February 2018, “The Future of Roma Cultural Heritage,” the first event in Budapest held by the European Roma Institute of Arts and Culture (ERIAC), CEU Romani Studies and co-organized by REACH
- 20-21 March 2018, Cultural Heritage, Social Cohesion and Place Attachment at the Centre for Social Sciences, Institute for Sociology, Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre of Excellence. *Eszter György and Gábor Oláh: The creation of resilient Roma cultural heritage. The case study of a bottom-up initiative from North-Eastern Hungary*
- October 2018, “The richest heritage, unclaimed – Roma musical tradition in the Carpathian Basin and its wider region “, Budapest Ritmo Festival
- 23-24 May 2019, Arts and the City Conference at Károli Gáspár University and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, *Eszter György: Roma Heritage in Budapest: The Example of the Roma Local History Collection in Újpest*



6 CONCLUSION

This deliverable offers a summary and analysis of the 18-month long REACH Minority heritage pilot, which specifically considers Roma cultural heritage. It has reflected on the different levels of institutionalisation of Roma cultural heritage in Hungary, while highlighting what is still largely unknown, unrecognised and underrepresented heritage.

As the first European funded project to explore Roma cultural heritage in Hungary, the ELTE team faced multiple challenges and responsibilities during the pilot's lifetime. Being aware of its 'pioneering' role, the team used a wide-range of tools and methodologies taken from social sciences in order to perform a detailed analysis of current status of Roma CH. One factor that was always considered was the perception of Roma communities by majority society, the way that they are treated and their own wariness of those seeking to work with them. ELTE approached with care, to build trusting relationships, which were ultimately fruitful.

The initial step was to define the specific objectives of the pilot, with three main pillars identified: 1) theoretical research on Roma CH; 2) observation of participatory approaches; 3) building cross-collaboration through local encounters. The team started by undertaking an extensive analysis of existing research literature on Roma CH to develop its theoretical framework. As a result, two studies were published and a bibliography was developed (see Annex 2). Next, the team tried to trace and contact Roma CH institutions and initiatives in Hungary (see Annex 1), to discuss and create a network that could strengthen and support independent initiatives (in mostly rural or urban deprived areas). The local encounters were used to build a network of stakeholders including NGOs, SMEs, local authorities, cultural management experts, artists and researchers. This network would contribute towards the extension of its cultural practices, learning innovative ways of cultural representation and social governance, and share different experiences of managing local minority heritage sites and practices.

Over the 18-month period, approximately 30 meetings were held with a wide-range of stakeholders, leading to a number of good practice cases being identified. Beyond the initial associate partners (MOME EcoLab - Cloudfactory project, Roma Country House in Hodász, Kesztyűgyár Community House, Gallery8) closer collaboration was established with many institutions that let them become quasi associate partners (Újpest Roma Local History Collection, Gandhi Secondary School, UCCU Roma Informal Educational Foundation and Independent Theatre). These institutions, not only supported the ELTE team to develop the pilot activities and the REACH social platform, but their activities contributed to other areas of the REACH work programme.

One of the major challenges has been the general weakness of the Hungarian civil society, and given the levels of discrimination that are already apparent, this is exacerbated for the Roma communities. This weakness has largely historical roots, but one cannot ignore the anti-civilian governmental decisions of recent years, which have greatly influenced the state of Roma advocacy today.



The government and government party led local administrations do not consider people's involvement in autonomous groups, their support of values and views, other than the official policy agenda, or their attempts to take over roles of the state/local government in any way.

In addition to being confronted with the fact that there are very few and seemingly fragile civil initiatives in the field of Roma cultural heritage, the anti-civil policy, the lack of their official recognition and the sector's lack of money pose a constant threat to their very existence. The project faced many of these challenges, a significant example is that Gallery 8 ceased to function in the summer of 2018 due to lack of funds. The suspicious and dismissive attitude of the local government of the 8th District in 2018 resulted in loosening the participation of Kesztyűgyár Community House in the project.

In this context, the ELTE team recognised early on the need to take a more proactive role in the design of the pilot activities. The starting point fundamentally changed the observer/researcher role that the team had envisioned into one with multiple roles of researcher, initiator, facilitator and organiser of events and meetings; this also refined the pilot's objectives. In this new role, there was an opportunity to connect organisations that would never have come into contact, having been isolated and even unaware of each other (geographically, socially and professionally). The organisation and success of local encounters showed the importance of interactive and supportive initiatives. When considering the Roma County House's idea for the European Roma Route or the different methods and approaches in preserving and managing of officially recognised intangible Roma heritage, it is clear that many ideas and initiatives are possible through cross-collaboration.

Several examples have arisen from the pilot that demonstrate how participatory activities can produce stronger impact in terms of community building, social innovation and cohesion. With the attempts to engage and mobilise community members and build connectedness through cultural heritage, the examined practices and initiatives have a unique position in these marginalised communities. On one hand, a wide-range of participatory practices are integrated into the heritage agenda in these 'good practices', on the other hand, the long-term sustainability of these practices is endangered - among others - by the lack of official recognition.

There is no doubt that the Roma are a resilient community, one that has faced, and continues to face multiple challenges, but has maintained its identity, cultural diversity, tangible and intangible heritage, by managing and overcoming change. Sometimes this is led by a strong individual and in other cases, through interested and supportive stakeholder groups, adopting new practices and creating new opportunities to manage, preserve and (re-)use Roma heritage.

Although the Minority heritage pilot has operated in difficult circumstances, its work with Roma communities focussing on CH and the success that it has generated has underlined the need for such activities and research to make examples of good practice visible both nationally and across Europe.



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8 ANNEXES

8.1 ANNEX 1: CONTACT LIST

The organisations, institutions and initiatives are listed in geographical order, from west to east.

Name of the organisation	Location	Website	Remarks
Autonómia Foundation <i>Autonómia Alapítvány</i>	throughout Hungary	http://autonomia.hu/en/	Meeting in April 2018
Cinka Panna Gypsy Theatre <i>Cinka Panna Cigány Színház</i>	throughout Hungary	http://cinkapanna.hu/index.html	Unable to contact them
Bogdán János Gypsy Minority Community House <i>Bogdán János Cigány Kisebbségi Közösségi Ház, Nyugat-Dunántúli Roma Közgyűjtemény</i>	Nagykanizsa	N/A	Unable to contact them
Karaván Theater and Art Foundation <i>Karaván Színház és Művészeti Alapítvány</i>	Kaposvár, Budapest	http://karavanma.hu/rolunk/	Unable to contact them
Erdős Kamill Gypsy Museum <i>Erdős Kamill Cigány Múzeum, Cigány Kulturális és Közművelődési Egyesület, Rácz Aladár Közösségi Ház</i>	Pécs	http://www.ckke.hu	Visited in January 2018
Khetanipe Association <i>Khetanipe a Romák Összefogásáért Egyesület</i>	Pécs	http://khetanipe.hu/en/	Exchanges in e-mail
Gandhi High School <i>Gandhi Gimnázium és Kollégium</i>	Pécs	http://gandhigimi.hu	Participated in local encounter
Colored Pearls Association <i>Színes Gyöngyök Egyesület</i>	Pécs	https://www.facebook.com/Sz%C3%ADnes-Gy%C3%B6ngy%C3%B6k-Egyes%C3%BClet-124947714207242/	Participated in local encounter



Kóstolda Roma House Restaurant Kóstolda Lakásétterem	Pécs	https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Family-Style-Restaurant/Kóstolda-404317776420397/	Participated in local encounter
Újpest Roma Local History Collection Rácz Gyöngyi Közösségi Központ / Újpesti Cigány Helytörténeti Gyűjtemény	Budapest (4 th District)	http://eotvostarsasag.hu/racz-gyongyi-kozossegi-kozpont/	Participated in local encounter, several meetings and interviews
KuglerArt Gallery KuglerArt Szalon Galéria	Budapest (5 th District)	http://kuglerart.com/en/	Unable to contact them
Roma Gallery Association of Hungary Magyarországi Roma Galéria Egyesület	Budapest (5 th District)	N/A	Unable to contact them
Romaversitas Association Romaversitas Alapítvány	Budapest (6 th District)	http://romaversitas.hu	Unable to contact them
Kalyi Jag Roma Minority Professional School Kalyi Jag Roma Nemzetiségi Általános Iskola, Gimnázium, Szakgimnázium, Szakközépiskola, Alapfokú Művészeti Iskola és Felnőttoktatási Intézmény	Budapest (6 th District)	http://www.kalyi-jag.hu/	Unable to contact them
Rajkó Folk Ensemble and Orchestra Rajkó Művészegyüttes és Zenekar	Budapest (7 th District)	http://rajko.hu/en/	Participated in local encounter
Rajkó-Talentum Primary School of Art and High School Rajkó-Talentum Alapfokú Művészeti Iskola és Középiskola	Budapest (7 th District)	http://www.rajko-talentum.hu	Participated in local encounter
National Roma Cultural and Media Centre Országos Roma Kulturális és Média Centrum	Budapest (7 th District)	https://www.oronk.hu/mediacentrum/	Participated in local encounter



Gallery8 – Roma Contemporary Art Space <i>Gallery8 – Roma Kortárs Művészeti Tér</i>	Budapest (8 th District)	http://gallery8.org/gallery8	Associate partner, Gallery8 closed in 2018
Glove Factory Community Centre <i>Kesztyűgyár Közösségi Ház</i>	Budapest (8 th District)	http://kesztyugyar.hu/english/	Associate partner
Roma Visual Lab <i>Roma Kép Műhely</i>	Budapest (8 th District)	http://www.romakepmuhely.hu/	Meeting in February 2018
Budapest Roma Cultural and Educational Centre <i>Fővárosi Roma Oktatási és Kulturális Központ (FROKK)</i>	Budapest (8 th District)	https://www.facebook.com/Fővárosi-Roma-Oktatási-és-Kulturális-Központ-FROKK-181591138528530/	Meeting in July 2018
Independent Theatre <i>Független Színház</i>	Budapest (11 th District)	http://fuggetlenszinhaz.blogspot.com	Several meetings, interviews
Roma Education Fund <i>Roma Oktatási Alap</i>	Budapest (13 th District)	http://www.romaeducationfund.org/	Unable to contact them
UCCU Roma Informal Educational Foundation <i>UCCU Roma Informális Oktatási Alapítvány</i>	Budapest, Pécs, Miskolc	http://www.UCCUalapitvan.hu/english/	Participated in local encounter
Sostar Group <i>Sostar Csoport</i>	Budapest, Berlin	https://www.facebook.com/Sostar-Csoport-521629561255090	Meeting in January 2018
MOME EcoLab – Cloudfactory project <i>MOME EcoLab Felhőgyár project</i>	Budapest, Bódogváros, Tomor	https://cloudfactory.mome.hu/?l=eng	Associate partner
Gypsy Writers Association <i>Cigány Írószövetség és Nemzeti (köz) Művelődési Társaság</i>	Dunavarsány	http://ciganyirodalom.freewb.hu/	Unable to contact them
Gypsy Artistic and Scientific Association <i>Cigány Művészeti és Tudományos Társaság, Kethano Drom</i>	Kiskunlacháza	http://www.kethanodrom.hu/	Unable to contact them



Museum of Hungarian Naive Artists of Kecskemét <i>Kecskeméti Katona József Múzeum, Magyar Naiv Művészek Gyűjteménye</i>	Kecskemét	https://muzeum.kecskemethu/naiv/	Visited in April 2018
Romano Teatro	Miskolc	https://romanoteatro.hu	Unable to contact them
Romama Gypsy House Restaurant <i>Romama Cigány Lakásétterem</i>	Tomor	https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Restaurant/Romama-Cigany-Lakaseterem-471179976393834/	Visited in February 2019
Traditional Farm and Playground <i>Fahídi Tanya Fahídi Hagyományőrző Tanya és Játzópark</i>	Csongrád	http://fahiditanya.hu	Participated in local encounter
Museum Erkel Ferenc <i>Erkel Ferenc Múzeum</i>	Gyula	N/A	Unable to contact them
Gypsy Country House in Elek <i>Elekí Cigány Tájház</i>	Elek	http://elekiciganytajhaz.iwk.hu/	No longer exists
Real Pearl Association <i>Igazgyöngy Alapítvány</i>	Berettyóújfalu	http://igazgyongyalapitvany.org/	Exchanges in e-mail
Roma Country House in Hodász <i>Hodászi Roma Tájház</i>	Hodász	http://www.romatajhaz.hu	Associate partner
Berey József Local History Collection <i>Berey József Helytörténeti Gyűjtemény és Galéria</i>	Nagyecsed	https://my.matterport.com/show/?m=SyxYDwZzDm2	Participated in local encounter



8.2 ANNEX 2: RECOMMENDED READING

Although the texts listed below are not cited within the deliverable, they provided useful background reading on the topics of minority and Roma heritage.

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