



Qualifying Roma for Professional Radio Journalism

Country: Slovenia

Organisation: Peace Institute – www.mirovni-institut.si

Contact: Brankica Petkovic – brankica.petkovic@mirovni-institut.si

Partners involved: N/A

Target Group: Roma community in Slovenia, particularly young people wanting to work in the media

Programme Description:

The initiative began to give young Roma journalists the skills to work in radio production and therefore be able to run a Roma Community Radio themselves. With skilled Roma journalists producing programmes, it became very difficult for public authorities to ignore the request for a Roma community radio station.

As part of the Roma Communication Capacity building programme the Peace Institute of Slovenia organised two intensive radio journalism workshops for Roma teenagers and young adults. Roma trainees with little or no journalism experience were taught how to produce and deliver a radio programme. Training involved regular feedback and daily meetings between the project manager and the trainer that took into account all the trainees' feedback. This type of feedback was very important to consider when putting together the Radio Journalism Handbook.

The programmes were on complex issues particularly relevant to the Roma community that tends to be overlooked by the mainstream media. At the end of the project the trainees had produced one 5-minute programme and one 20-minute programme.

Supported by an extensive, targeted media campaign the programmes were aired by a number of Slovenian radio stations, in particular, the National Public Radio. This meant that a large percentage of the Slovenian population was able to listen to a programme that gave them a broader perspective on the problems Roma face in Slovenia. It also meant that the Slovenian Roma community could learn about relevant social and political developments that might improve their situation.

The Peace Institute also gave general support to the Roma community by helping them apply for a license and frequency to establish the Roma Community Radio. The Institute also facilitated connections between Roma media and international media organisations.

Challenge: Recruitment of participants from different areas of Slovenia.

Solution: By working with the Roma Association participants were found across Slovenia. In areas where the Roma community was not involved in the Association it was much harder to include them in the project.

Impact and Success Stories:

- Strong links were forged between the Roma community, Government officials and a group of media professionals dedicated to the empowerment of the Roma community in the media.
- Roma journalists now work on a programme for the National Public Radio specifically targeting the Roma community.
- For the first time political figures were approached by Roma journalists asking questions on behalf of a community that is traditionally excluded from public life and deprived of many rights and opportunities given to the majority of the population of Slovenia.

The project “stimulated the creators of media content for the Roma minority and the decision makers of media and minority policies in Slovenia to seek further measures for providing minorities with media access.” Brankica Petkovic, Programme Director

“Our trainers taught us journalistic skills, without them Romics wouldn't be what it is today – the first Roma Community Radio Station in Slovenia.” Jozek Horvat Muc, President of Roma Association in Slovenia

“I am still learning what kind of rights and responsibilities I have as a journalist that I can knock to different doors, ask questions and that authorities have to answer my questions...” Haris Tahirovic, host of the Roma radio programme at Radio Student in Ljubljana