



START UP

METROPOLITAN ROMA APPRENTICE GRANT PROJECT

BUDAPEST



eea
grants

eea financial mechanism

EUROPEAN UNION

VI TU ANDRE TE SHAJ AVES
HOGY TE IS ELINDULJI



Márton Kulinyi:



"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." Said Martin Luther King in his famous „I have a dream" speech. And, after 46 years, America elected a black president. How many actors, athletes, doctors, lawyers, and tram conductors, how many teachers and officials had to prove that our fellow men ought to be judged by their character and abilities and not by the color of their skin.

I am happy to see the kind gipsy tram conductor on the tram in Budapest, the dark skinned nurse in the medical center drawing blood and I was happy to train my social worker colleague to help a disillusioned job-seeker find employment. I know, and I unfortunately experience that prejudice against minorities is growing stronger countrywide even though we are a minority when we leave our country. In our life we often have to go forward with contrary winds and stand our ground. At such times every help becomes very precious, but every thorn, ill-willed remark pulls us down.

We have devised a program to start off 35 young Roma people. People who have proven by their maturity, with their degrees that they are capable of achieving the same as their peers who were born in success. However, their achievement is much greater as it is more difficult to work our way on river upstream, greater effort and perseverance are needed. The mentors, patrons, and trainers were all devoted and provided personalized help for everyone to find their place in the world of work in

public institutions.

Budapest is an inclusive city. Accordingly, there were eight other institutions in the capital beside the local government that applied to give internship positions to the young people who had been accepted in the project. It was our common goal to make known the ways and maze of the public sphere as well as the rules and beauty of public service. During the course of six months the places of employment had an opportunity to witness first hand the commitment, stamina, and skills of their fellow Roma citizens. Most young people wanted to excel through their work, performance and trustworthiness and not through belligerence. Prejudice gave its place to trust and generally the idea was reinforced that every person is unique with values, limitations and possibilities that can be improved.

Finally, let me quote the mission statement of one of the interns: "... I had a more important task: to set an example to the youth; that, yes, it is possible to get on independently of gender or the color of skin and that there are opportunities in life and it is a worthy endeavor to try to become better people."

Márton Kulinyi
Budapest Esély Nonprofit Ltd.
Managing director



Dávid Hargitai:

I am lucky. While the year 2009 was the year of terrifying, senseless and incomprehensible Roma homicide and it was the year when the worldwide financial crisis reached our country, I had the privilege of working in a successful project. One that has set as its goal that young Roma people with a high school or a college degree would be a part of a six-month internship to start them off to find employment in the labour market.

It is not easy to enter the world of work and become rooted in it. Often even the ones starting from a not disadvantaged position have to make serious efforts for years. Research done prior to the implementation of the project has shown that entrants have difficulties in finding employment due to the lack of work experience and recommendations from previous supervisors. The situation of Roma entrants is even more difficult because of the discrimination that is present in all areas of life, but we have chosen them as the target group of our project because they are significantly underrepresented in administration, in the local government of Budapest. I believe that the best way to dissolve prejudice is experience, in this case, a trustworthy coworker.

We were able to include 35 people into the project out of the 85 applicants for the „Beindító” (“Starting off”) advertised as a scholarship opportunity supported by EGT, the Norwegian Financial Mechanism and the Local Government of Budapest. During the selection process we were guided by two goals: to secure the transparency of the selection process and on the other hand, we were trying to find the best matches between registered employer institutions of the local

government of Budapest and scholarship applicants – as our company’s motto says: “The right person to the right place”.

Unfortunately, out of the 35 people included in the project we lost two right at the beginning, but two were successfully employed in the primary labour market before the expiration of the internship. In the end, 31 people finished the six-month employment. Their work and integration was guided by patrons and mentors trained by the project, appointed by the employer who knew the positions. In order to increase their competencies they participated in personality development training, English and IT courses. The primary purpose of the project was to ensure an opportunity to gain work experience and we could only hope that there will be some who can be employed immediately after the project ends. Even though our heart goes out for each precious intern whose performance was excellent, who have not yet managed to find employment. We are proud of the 12 people who have already succeeded. We hope that the others with their experience and recommendations will soon find employment.

„We did not achieve our success alone. Beside EGT the Norwegian Financial Mechanism, we would like to give special thanks to the Local Government of Budapest for always supporting us in difficult situations, our invaluable partners in professional issues Romassist public benefit association and Studio Metropolitana, to Daniel Gerő who worked as a senior mentor, and to the patrons who worked the most with our interns. Last, but not least, I would like to



thank the interns for their tenacity and exemplary conduct.”

With this booklet we would like to present the values that surfaced in those who participated in the project. The quotes from the interns’ writings and the patrons’ reports reveal the different sort of viewpoint changes that started to happen, what perspectives opened and what prejudices were solved by working together. Finally, we summarize our experience and conclusions in 10 points. It is our hope that with this we can contribute to a successful continuation.

Dávid Hargitai
Budapest Esély Nonprofit Ltd.
Project manager

SZILVIA NAGYNÉ FARKAS



„Projects such as this one give an opportunity to the employers to get to know us that us Roma people are the same workers as non Romas. Still, primarily I have proven to myself that I am a good worker, good labourer and I am needed.”

ZSUZSA BORSY PÉTERNÉ

Zsuzsa Borsy Péterné /Szent Imre Hospital – Financial department manager /:

“She adapted herself well to the community, she feels well in this workplace environment. She communicates more and better with her immediate colleagues, but she certainly has no problems in her relationship with other colleagues.”





SZABÓ TÜNDE KATALIN

Szabó Tünde Katalin /Szent Imre Hospital – Scientific library – librarian/:

„I have never been more relaxed to be away from work – I wrote in a letter to our HR manager –, because Robi does a great job. The PR office thinks the same too. ”

“Since the „Beindító” program provides opportunities in public institutions in Budapest for gypsies to take part in the work with the employees; the surfacing differences or similarities, the opening of cultures can help shape judgment against Roma people and eliminate the prejudices based on stereotypes.

KRISZTIÁN RÁCZ

*„It is important to improve
the ability for acceptance in
workplaces”*



„I have a lot to thank this program. I received new strength and momentum to implement my ideas and I could get to know a few of my friends and colleagues and I think that is amazing. I am grateful for the opportunity and I am especially thankful that I can coordinate my current work together with my partner who was my patron, I think I have managed to get the maximum out of “Beindító”

EDINA SÁNTA

/Studio Metropolitana Kft. – communications manager/:

„Motivated, enthusiastic colleague, has ideas and suggests innovative solutions, he has an advanced strategic perspective. ”



BERKI ERZSÉBET

"I clearly felt, that being a young person with a Roma background was an advantage. In the institution and in the home there are many young Roma people so I was accepted faster."



ALIBÁN ZOLTÁNNÉ

Éltes Mátyás Elementary School – children supervisor:

„Working together and cooperation were very useful for the patroned person and the patron equally – from a human as well as from a professional point of view.”

“To be a children supervisor is not only a task: it requires devotion, continuous fight, humility, understanding, care, patience, tenacity, and a willingness to do things – but I had a more important task: to set an example to the youth; that, yes, it is possible to get on independently of gender or the color of skin and that there are opportunities in life and it is a worthy endeavor to try to become better people.”



JÚDA BEN DÁVID



„My patron said that there have never been Roma people in the Mayor’s Office in Budapest. This speaks for itself. They notice us and they are interested in us. It happened to me that the security guard at the gate had a hard time believing that I actually work here. Another colleague thought I was the gardener or I came because of plumbing; I did not even try to convince them otherwise. Should Roma people work in public institutions? I think they should, indeed. It cannot be, it should not happen that gypsies would not be able to get on.”

PÉTER RADNÓCZI

/Mayor’s Office Budapest – Department of the Environment Department – division manager/:

Dávid is helpful, willing to take on tasks and makes an effort to fit in with the community at the workplace. ”

BEATRIX KISS

„My gipsy background does not show in strong visible features so I have never had a problem with that. The reason why I rather feel the disadvantage of my background is that my family's social-economical status is very low due to which I would have never had the opportunity to work in such a prestigious cultural public institution.“

DR. ZALKA PÉTER

/Museum of History Budapest – PR manager/:

„Everyone praised her attitude and diligence. She was very disciplined in helping selflessly, often overtime.“



„This project is a firm foundation on which we can safely build future ideas.”



„This project can become one of the model employment policies. With the case of 35 young Roma people it has proven that it is able to reach successful results in helping in the lives of many more gypsy and non-gypsy people.

...

It would be a great step in dealing with the present social tension if a dialog developed between the parties – and it does happen when we build bridges with the help of such lifelike programs. ”

GYÖRGY STEFÁN

/Than Károly High School – deputy headmaster/:

„He is very determined in his work and does an excellent job, moreover, he works with such routine, and compassion that will be missed very much later should his ways lead him somewhere else from here. The headmaster of our institution was so satisfied with Pali’s work that he offered him a very similar contract to the one he has now, but he would be directly employed by the school with a public servant status.”

NIKOLETT KOVÁCS-TITI



KORMOS SÁNDOR

/Mayor's office – IT department – project leader/

„Nikolett is an open, honest person with a hands on attitude. In our work relationship she has proven her excellent communication skills and endurance in working.

“Personally, I do not want and I would feel awkward if there were lower expectations than what the pace of work requires from me because I am a gipsy.”



ALÍZ ROSTÁS

5



Földszint

Röntgen, CT, Ultrahang, Mammográfia



Sürgősségi Betegellátás

Bártfai utcai Szakambulancia



Központi Laboratórium



Átjárás a B, C, F épületbe



Művese Allomás

"... the most important thing is that a gipsy customer could meet well prepared, compassionate gipsy clerks, nurses, and doctors on our side, that is on the office's side. People who they can trust with their problems because they know what they have to say will be properly translated to those who will make a decision in their case."

LAKÓ LÁSZLÓNÉ

/Szent Imre Hospital – HR management – Labour issues facilitator/:

„I was happy that in the person of Alíz I had a chance to get to know a kind, respectful, and helpful young lady.”



ILONA SZTOJKA



ERZSÉBET CSÁSZÁRNÉ DR. MIKLÓS

/Mayor's Office Budapest – Housing department – division manager/:

„Ilona fit in very quickly with the Housing Department Housing Economy Division's work. She performed her tasks always with joy, attention, and very circumspectly. She was very reliable with every administrative task and she solved them accurately.”

“I am happy that I could participate in the program if for none else, but for the opportunity to get to know Ilonka. I and my colleagues will very much miss both her person and her work.”

“I realized that they sincerely accept me and they are not afraid that I have a Roma background when they left me alone in the office and you could see their purses, cellphones just on their desks. I was the only one who carried her stuff all over the place.”

The best experience for me was when it was over, even people who I have not worked with at all came up to me to say goodbye.”

SPECIAL POLICIES RECOMMENDATION

The suggestions below are for those who believe that including thousands of young and ambitious Roma people in the economy represents great value for the whole country. It is our purpose to help those employment policy professionals, decision makers who would like to act on a national level to have more efficient ways of helping Roma people find employment. The „Beindító” project did not only prove to be an operational and successful labour market tool, but it can also efficiently help dissolve prejudice against Roma people as potential employees.

SUGGESTIONS

1. We suggest the harmonization of trainings for the gifted, various supports and employment help. We need to help ambitious young Roma people to enter the world of work with a twofold service system, with two different functions. One provides help with continuing education the other helps those who would like to be integrated into the world of work. While the first is provided by already existing ways of support and institutes (e.g. Romaversitas), the other has to be given by intern scholarships systems similar to “Beindító”.
2. We suggest the extension of the scholarship system from the public sphere to the private and civil spheres.
3. We suggest the national extension of the scholarship system with the involvement of local governments.
4. We suggest to ensure the widest possible access to information about subsidies and opportunities for Roma people.
5. We suggest the maintenance of the principle of publicity and transparency in order to reinforce the social appreciation for the program.
6. For the sake of efficiency we suggest that the time of the internship be extended from six months to one year and the follow up period from three months to six months.
7. We suggest that the matching of interns to workplaces be based on the compatibility of competencies and not on certification.
8. We suggest a harmonized operation of the mentor, patron and coach systems.
9. In order to find the most motivated participants we suggest that not only the interns, but also employers and mentors be screened.
10. We suggest the scholarship system be complemented by personally tailored trainings such as language, IT as well as extra services such as housing support, travel support or living expenses support.



ATTILA MOLNÁR

I participated in the preparation of the “Beindító” project and I was a patron too. During the preparation it was nice to see that the leadership of the local government – by this I actually mean the whole field of politics – and the leadership of the office stood up in unison for the realisation of the project. There has not been any doubt, even for a second, that the members of the local administration are very strongly motivated, they understand and feel the particular importance of such an initiative for every member of a metropolitan society.

However, this was not the most important experience and result of the program for me, but it was those six months that I spent as a patron during which time I got to know a very gifted colleague. I managed to develop a very good relationship with her professionally as well as privately. The program gave me a like-minded person, and a coworker who is professionally well prepared, willing to learn and improve, ambitious and wants to go forward.

Attila Molnár
Local Government of Budapest
Facilitator for equal opportunities

JUDIT DR. SZÉKELY

As the State secretary responsible for employment and training at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour I have always considered the social integration of Roma people as well as the development and implementation of programs promoting their equal opportunities of utmost importance. As a member of the European Union our country has joined the realisation of the “Decade of Roma Integration Program the purpose of which is the acceleration of the social and economical integration. There are numerous programs in the Új Magyarország Fejlesztési Terv that target the increase of labour-market participation and fosters employability, but the assurance of equal opportunities emerges as a horizontal premise in the EU as well as in the national policies. Help provided for the improvement of the disadvantaged social groups is an excellent tool for the elimination of differentiation that counteracts labour-market participation and discrimination that is present in all areas of life. The “Beindító” Intern Scholarship Project for Roma People in Budapest, funded by the EGT Norwegian Fund promoted the achievement of such goals and it made it possible for 35 young Roma

people to gain work experience and find employment at organisations owned by the Local Government of Budapest. Congratulations to all those who have succeeded to be employed on the primary labour market during the time of this project . And to those who still face an intense time of job seeking I wish success and persistence and I trust that the experience gained in the project did not only foster the development of professional skills, but that it will significantly contribute to fitting in later on.

Finally, congratulations to all those who increased the employment opportunities of young Roma people and improved the accessibility of public services thereby contributing to a possibly more receptive conduct on the part of employers and on a larger scale on the part of Hungarian society to Roma identity in the future.

Judit Dr. Székely
Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour
State secretary responsible for
employment and training





The project is supported by the EEA Financial Mechanism and Norwegian Financial Mechanism with the contribution of the Local Government of Budapest.

Edited by: Dávid Hargitai, Dániel Gerő, Krisztián Rác – apprentice • Professional lecturer: Márton Kulinyi • Photo: Gergő Demény, Bence Járdány