

Award for Roma integration



8, H, No. 15

Award for Roma¹ Integration in the Western Balkans and Turkey, 2014

Application Form

Prior to filling out the Application Form please read the Contest rules
([create hyperlink](#)) to see if your organizations meets the
eligibility and award criteria.

Please fill out this application form and submit it via electronic mail to ELARG-Award-Roma@ec.europa.eu.

OR by post to the European Commission, DG Enlargement, 'Award for Roma Integration', Rue de la Loi 15, 1049 Brussels, Belgium in English language by **06 August 2014 (18:00 Brussels time - CEST)**. Late submission will not be considered.

¹ As it is most commonly used in EU policy documents and discussions, the term "Roma" refers to a variety of groups of people who describe themselves as Roma, Gypsies, Travellers, Manouches, Ashkali, Egyptian, Sinti and other.

THE PARTICIPANT

Name of the initiative/civil society organisation	Citizens association for the promotion of education of Roma OTAHARIN
If the participant is not a registered NGOs, please describe the structure, nature and objectives of the civil	
Country/jurisdiction	Bosnia and Herzegovina
FULL ADDRESS:	
Street/Post Box	Beogradska 38
Postal Code, City	76300, Bijeljina
CONTACT PERSON:	
Name (Ms, Mr)	Mr Dragan Jokovic
Telephone	+387(0)55 250 543;
Email	ugotaharin@teol.net
Website	www.otaharin.org
Organisation's aim and main activities (no more than 500 words)	<p><i>Citizens Association for the promotion of Education of Roma -Otaharin</i> was established in 2005. in Bijeljina town (Republic of Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina), with the purpose to emphasize problems of Roma minority and tackle obstacles for their social inclusion. Otaharin means dawn in Romani language and stands for new beginning for Roma minority position in the society. The organization's purpose was to help Rome minority to reintegrate into society and overcome obstacles through integration of Roma children in the education system and awareness rising (of their rights and opportunities) with Roma parents. Otaharin works on the policy and principle that every child belongs to school and has the right to access school and education. Constant support from SHL Foundation helped to build the organization's capacities and extend the scope of work. Over the years of constant support and trust in organization, Otaharin identified further obstacles (apart from school education) for successful inclusion, tackling obstacles for the well-being of the child. Otaharin has always worked with Roma and Non-Roma youth an in very close cooperation with schools and institutions. Moreover, Otaharin's work was characterized by National Action Plans for education of Roma and other</p>

	<p>minorities that was set up by Bosnian and Herzegovinian state in the process of Roma Inclusion [2005-2015] in 2009. However the state carried out limited number of activities scheduled in the National Action Plan. This is the major impact on Otaharin's work, since Otaharin is the only organization that implements the action plan in two communities – Bijeljina and Zivinice</p> <p>Otaharin operates in the following areas, particularly important for the Roma minority: Youth activism, Formal and non-formal education for children and youth, Rights of women, Culture and identity of Roma minority, Promotion of health and prevention of HIV and STDs and Combating trafficking in human beings by prevention of child labor and street begging.</p>
Total number of staff/members of initiative	Permanent staff 4, part time employees 18, volunteers 20 and more than 200 members of association.
Number of NGO staff/members of initiative belonging to Roma communities	Permanent employed 2, part time employed 3, volunteers 11 and more than 200 members from Roma settlement including all parents and youth.

OVERVIEW OF PROJECT INITIATIVE

Title of the project or initiative	"Enhancing Basic Education for Roma in Bosnia and Herzegovina"
Period covered by the project(s)/initiative(s)	From: 2011 To: 2012
<p>Please explain in no more than 300 words on how the project/initiative proposed for the award comply with the eligibility criteria for the 2014 EU Roma Award for the Western Balkans and Turkey, 2014 (please refer to the eligibility criteria on the website: add link)</p>	

Part of our Project activities were:

Direct assistance- Field activities:

- Assisting Roma parents in enrolment process of children in school; Identifying children out of school system through regular field visits in Roma settlements; Field visits with MIT (Mobile Intervention Team, consisting of outreach officer, school pedagogues, social worker to visit Roma pupils who are struggling in school)

School activities:

- Providing remedial teaching during school year; Providing school material and textbooks; Summer school as a sort of preschool for Roma children who are about to be enrolled in 1st grade

Meetings and round tables:

- Meetings and round tables with parents and representatives of local authorities

Youth Centre activities:

- Workshop-activities (Literacy, Creative, Acting, Computer workshops) for Roma and Non-Roma children and youth; Training session for 16 Roma girls to become peer-educator

Project Goals and Objectives were:

Goal 1. Support to integration in schools during the school year

- To increase enrolment of Roma children in first grade
- To Increase number of Roma children attending primary schools
- To promote progress and participation of Roma children in primary schools

Goal 2. Raising society's, institutions' and Roma parents' awareness of importance of education

- To raise public and local representatives' awareness of actual situation regarding the implementation of national action plans for Roma with a special emphasis on education
- To raise awareness of Roma parents on importance and sustainability of formal education

Goal 3. Empowerment of Roma Youth

- To advance social integration of young Roma by organizing workshops for Roma and Non-Roma youth at Otaharin's RYCC (Roma Youth and Cultural Centers) in Zivinice and Bijeljina.
- To strengthen capacities of 16 Roma girls by educating them as peer educators on the subjects of human rights protection with special emphasis on domestic violence.

Achieved Results

1. Support to integration in schools during the school year

- From Jan- Sep 2011: Out of 28 children identified being out of school system we managed to enroll 21 children back in school in new school year 2011/12
- In school year 2011/12 a total of 46 enrolled Roma children in Bijeljina and Zivinice.
- In school year 2011/12 a total of 269 number of Roma children attending primary schools in Bijeljina and Zivinice (Increased by 22, 17% compared to school year 2010/11)

2. Raising society's, institutions' and Roma parents' awareness of importance of education

- Otaharin signed memorandum of cooperation with municipal authorities, social welfare centers, schools and local communities; assured closer cooperation and exchange of information;
- A total of 11 parents meetings (7 in Bijeljina and 4 in Zivinice) , attended by a total of 275 parents

“Citizens association for the promotion of education Otaharin” is CSO registered with Ministry of Education of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2005 on behalf of teachers, Roma parents and activists. We established this organization due to the needs of Roma minority at the time when no one was taking care about Roma children's basic rights, such as to have equal access to education and not to be discriminated. Huge discrimination, prejudices and stereotypes towards Roma minority, motivated us to work on promotion of human rights, equality and social inclusion through the project “Enhancing basic education for Roma in Bosnia and Herzegovina”.

Otaharin is operating in Bosnia and Herzegovina in two entities, in Republic of Srpska in Bijeljina, where lives biggest Roma national minority in this entity (approximately 1500 Roma inhabitants) and another location is in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Zivinice, also one of the largest Roma communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (approximately 2000 Roma inhabitants).

Our initiative is focused on promotion of equal education and reduction of social gap between Roma minority and majority in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Through constant presence and close cooperation with Roma communities as well as with all levels of authorities, we are putting all resources on promotion of equality and importance of education as only way out from current position where Roma population is in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Our initiative started in 2005 with small actions in the local society and it was growing in time to big regional project. As of 2011, we undertake the huge initiative with support from our donors and partners, to include all Roma children in education system with emphasis on primary education.

There were lots of obstacles in this process such as discrimination towards Roma minority on all levels of society. Therefore, Otaharin was implementing this initiative over the past 5 years because the mind of decision makers and majority towards Roma requires long term approach.

Project duration 2011-2012.

Using a maximum of 1000 words, please provide an overview of the project, which should include: the nature of the initiative and its content, its objectives, results and the impact it has generated. Please mention where exactly the project was implemented (district/municipality/region/etc.).

The project "Enhancing Basic Education for Roma in BiH" allowed us to promote education for Roma in Bijeljina and Zivinice as an indispensable step for social integration by focusing on three areas: Raising Roma parents and institutions' awareness for importance of education and their respective responsibilities, fostering formal and informal education through a multifaceted program.

Otaharin moreover opened an integrative Roma Youth and Cultural Center in Bijeljina for promoting a cultural diverse, educational and innovative program and with the intention to provide young Roma and Non-Roma with a space where they can gather, exchange ideas and develop social and practical skills.

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(167 parents in Bijeljina, 108 in Zivinice) in primary schools in 2011,

- 3 Roma parents involved in parent's council in Bijeljina; 1 parent in parent's council Zivinice

3. Empowerment of Roma Youth

- 8 Roma volunteers (4 in Bijeljina and 4 in Zivinice) are gaining working experiences assisting in preparation and realization of workshops every year included in our youth center activities
- 16 Roma girls aged 14-20 (8 from Bijeljina and 8 from Zivinice) are educated certificated as peer educators,
- over 300 Roma and non-Roma youth participated in various workshops in Roma Youth Cultural Centre in Bijeljina (creative workshops, education about human rights, sexual-reproductive health, Let's sail together, Forum Theater etc.

The Project's target groups were:

Roma communities in Bijeljina and Zivinice.

Živinice is municipality in Canton of Tuzla placed in northeastern part of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. There are five localities inhabited by Roma: Ciljuge, Bisinska, Savino Brdo, Rasadina and Djurdjevik.

Bijeljina municipality is located in the northeastern part of the Republic of Srpska, in the region of Semberija. Most Roma lives in three settlements: Divlji Zapad, Copor and Tombak.

Our age group are pupils from 6 up to 18 years of age in school areas that we are working as it follows:
II Elementary school in Zivinice, Knez Ivo od Semberije, Jovan Ducic and Sveti Sava in Bijeljina.

Impact

Bearing mind that there were only 10-15 Roma pupils registered in school system in 2005 and in school year 2011/12 we had 142 Roma pupils in Bijeljina, as one of our key achievement we consider the constant increase of participation of Roma pupil in education system.

The project focused on decreasing social and educational gap between Roma and Non-Roma and to support their **integration** in the civil society. We are nominating this project because over the years the project "Enhancing Basic Education for Roma in BiH" became a sample of good practices of how to approach problems of inclusion of Roma into the education system. Through this award we see the opportunity to promote our project by sharing our experiences and ideas as well as to enhance this project by strengthening the organization's and project's capacities.

Please state, in no more than 300 words, how the project is a) innovative in nature and b) has contributed to change the life of individual Roma in a sustainable manner.

Being a grassroots organization we knew from the beginning that a close cooperation with both, our beneficiaries, Roma communities in Bijeljina and Zivinice, and local authorities, is necessary to achieve long term goals and bring about a change. Doing that over years we identified not only the core reasons for why Roma keep being on margin of society as the biggest minority in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also learned how to face those problems properly and efficiently. We concluded that working towards social integration of a minority always requires an inclusive approach, meaning that Roma and Non-Roma, no matter in what context should be brought together. That is why all activities of this project, activities with local authorities, parents, school children, youngsters and volunteers include Roma as well as Non-Roma.

Moreover we would like to deliberately point out two specific activities Otaharin is implementing within this project, that demonstrate the originality and sustainability of this project. Since its beginning in 2011 Otaharin has annually implemented a "summer school" for children who were about to enrol 1st grade, but were not able to attend any kind of preschool program. After years of lobbying and efforts we put through the summer school we last year finally started cooperation with UNICEF and public kindergarten, through which disadvantage (Roma) children can attend official preschool program. Another example that shall demonstrate the project's original approach is the Mobile Intervention Team. The MIT consists of an outreach officer, a municipal representative, school pedagogues and a social worker with the task to visit Roma pupils who are struggling in school at home. The concept of bringing stakeholder, those most responsible for this issue, into Roma communities' aims at raising their awareness about right of the Roma and hold them accountable for dealing with issues of Roma community.

If project funding is provided by a donor/donors, please describe in no more than 300 words on how your initiative/organisation has the ownership of the innovative approach and/or the method of work.

Otaharin over the past 9 years created an image of organization that work closely with Roma community on protection of the human rights of Roma minority in Bosnia and Herzegovina and promotion of education. We became recognized in Bosnian society as grass root organization that crates various programs for social inclusion of Roma minority that have original and inclusive approach. Otaharin cooperates with various donors such us Roma Education Fund, Schuelre Helfen Leben Foundation, GIZ, CARE international, etc. Nevertheless, ownership of the initiative that we apply with and every other programme fully belongs to Otahairn due to the fact that we are responsible for creating and carrying out all program activities in close cooperation with Roma communities and Roma representatives. We ensured ownership of the initiative by involving Roma communities as equal partners form very beginning of process of creating the initiative and equally contributing to fulfilling the goals and caring out activities of the initiative.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

participants are invited to provide additional supporting information as available, and encouraged to send documents in electronic version whenever possible. Supporting information may include:

- Video clips, photographs;
- publications (leaflets, brochures etc. promoting the initiative/project);
- links to websites related to the initiative/project (to be mentioned in the application form)
- media coverage (if any);
- any other material and proof of the impact of the initiative/project justifying the organisation being proposed for the civil society prize

This information can be provided in two ways:

- BY POST, together with the completed nomination form to: European Commission, DG Enlargement, 'Roma Award', Rue de la Loi 15, 1049 Brussels by 18:00 Brussels time on **06 August 2014**.

OR

- BY EMAIL to ELARG-Award-Roma@ec.europa.eu, in electronic format together with the completed application form, by 18:00 Brussels time on **06 August 2014**.

LIST OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Please list below the supporting documents attached to this nomination.

1. Recommendation letter osce
2. Golden award from Bijeljina City to Otaharin (local language official document not able to translate)
3. Memo of understanding municipality Zivinice (local language official document not able to translate)
4. Momo of understanding City of Bijeljina (local language official document not able to translate)
5. _____