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## Case Study II.

Activities of the Project  
*Roma Heroes in Theatre  
and Everyday Life*  
–Trainings and  
Non-formal Education  
for the Empowerment of  
Roma Youth: Training  
Courses, Roma Heroes  
Workshops, Creation of  
Roma Heroes  
Publication



## **Case Study II**

Activities of the Project *Roma Heroes in Theatre and Everyday Life –Trainings and Non-formal Education for the Empowerment of Roma Youth*: Training Courses, Roma Heroes Workshops, Creation of Roma Heroes Publication

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**Project Partners:**

Ternipe - združenie pre rómsku mládež na Slovensku a v Maďarsku  
(Ternipe Association)

Independent Theatre Hungary – Nők a Jövőért Egyesület  
(Women for the Future Association)

Romániai Magyar Pedagógusok Szövetsége  
(Uniunea Cadrelor Didactice Maghiare din Romania / Hungarian Teachers'  
Association of Romania)



Romániai  
Magyar  
Pedagógusok  
Szövetsége



independent  
theater

# Introduction

Three organizations – Ternipe Civil Society (*Ternipe – združenie pre rómsku mládež na Slovensku a v Maďarsku*), the Independent Theatre of Hungary, and Hungarian Teachers' Association of Romania – have united to provide a platform for everyday Roma heroes and the heroes of European Roma dramas. The aim of the project is to enhance awareness of Roma communities and promote active citizenship among young people through workshops and publications. Both Roma and non-Roma young people participated as trainers in the project's activities and created their own publications.

The Independent Theatre of Hungary shared its methodology for *Roma Heroes workshops*, developed over many years, with Ternipe, while Ternipe presented a method for creating *publications about Roma heroes* that engage young people in the process. Both methodologies were implemented during the project. Hungarian Teachers' Association of Romania took on the role of reviewing the publications and disseminating the results to ensure that shaping young people's attitudes and activating them is included within formal education frameworks and among civil organizations in Transylvania.

This case study presents the participating organizations, their missions, and the work conducted by the Ternipe team in Slovakia throughout the project, from the training course through the implementation of workshops to creating the publication, while also sharing the results achieved and the challenges encountered, as well as useful tools and considerations. We recommend it for all those interested in involving young people in socially sensitive topics within education, culture, or the media.

Enjoy your reading!

*Diana Filep*

# Participating Organizations

## **Ternipe Civil Society (in Slovak: Ternipe – združenie pre rómsku mládež na Slovensku a v Maďarsku)**

Ternipe is a youth organization focused on supporting and developing Roma youth in Slovakia and Hungary. The word *Ternipe* means ‘youth’ in Romani language, reflecting the organization’s key objective: to strengthen, support, and provide educational and cultural opportunities for the Roma youth community. The mission of Ternipe Civil Society is to facilitate the social integration of Slovak and Hungarian Roma into the majority society, improve their educational and social conditions, and protect and nurture Roma cultural values. Its activities include organizing camps and educational excursions for children, high school and university students, conducting training sessions, workshops, and courses, organizing conferences, collaborating with other organizations and institutions at both local and international levels, and organizing cultural events for the Roma. The organization’s activities contribute to ensuring that young Roma people can be active participants in their own community and the society at large while maintaining their cultural roots.

## **Independent Theatre of Hungary – Women for the Future Association**

This is the first and only Roma theatre company in Hungary specifically showcasing the stories and issues of the Roma community on stage. The theatre’s goal is to initiate conversations about social issues, thereby highlighting personal responsibility. The organization’s mission is to enable disadvantaged Roma and non-Roma young people to become successful artists, trainers, and professionals in various fields, and, above all, active citizens. The aim is for diverse groups to understand and accept one another and to create value together. Their artistic and educational programmes aim to familiarize as many people as possible with the diversity of Roma theatre, various genres, and topics. The organization plays a pioneering role in ensuring that the voices of Roma communities are heard through

the means of art and culture. Their performances provide an essential platform for showcasing Roma identity and history while building bridges between Roma and non-Roma communities.

### **Hungarian Teachers' Association of Romania [RMPSZ]**

The RMPSZ is an advocacy and professional representation organization for Hungarian education in Romania. The organization is actively involved in the process of democratizing the Romanian educational system and represents the interests of those involved in Hungarian-language education, including through the organization of training sessions and professional programmes. Its main objectives include supporting Hungarian-language education, professional development for teachers, advocacy, and maintaining communication and cooperation. The RMPSZ plays a fundamental role in ensuring the future of Hungarian-language education in Romania and providing proper professional support to teachers. The organization's work contributes to preserving the cultural and linguistic identity of the Hungarian community, as well as maintaining high-quality Hungarian-language education. Therefore, the RMPSZ is not only a professional community for teachers but also an important cultural and educational institution that plays a crucial role in the life of the Hungarian community in Romania.

## **Professional Objectives and Activities**

Those interested can read a summary of the professional objectives of the project partners and activities in the project's publication, under the chapter titled *Case Study I: Professional Objectives and Activities from a Bird's-Eye View*.

As mentioned in the introduction, knowledge transfer took place between the partners in Hungary and Slovakia: each organization initiated the other into one of its methodologies. Our aim was to involve eight young people from Slovakia in learning the *Roma Heroes workshop* methodology, enabling them to acquire the necessary knowledge to confidently lead workshops focused on Roma heroes for

young people. With the planned workshops, we aimed to reach at least 80 participants across four locations, thereby providing the young trainers with the opportunity to gain practical experience.

Additionally, we aimed to create and publish online a national *publication on Roma heroes*, accessible at a countrywide level. The publication primarily showcases contemporary Roma role models to encourage greater openness from the majority society towards Roma communities and to offer inspiring examples for both Roma and non-Roma young people. The methodological description of the *Roma Heroes publication* as a youth-engaging method can be found amongst the project's publications under the title *Roma Heroes Publication – Methodology* in the project's second methodological publication.

The young people involved from Hungary and Slovakia thus gained knowledge about European Roma dramas, giving them insight into the living conditions and historical background of European Roma communities. Furthermore, they had the chance to develop various trainer skills and enhance their interviewing, writing, and editing abilities in the process of creating the publication.

The project's dissemination event will be organized by the RMPSZ in Romania in November 2024. We hope to present the methodologies of the workshops and publications, the published methodologies, and the training course to 80 participants while also reporting on the workshops that were realized and introducing the publication. A workshop will also be held on-site, allowing participants to experience what has been discussed.

# Involvement of Young People, Training Course, and Publication Development

Before selecting the peer trainers, in November 2023, two experts and trainers from both Ternipe and the Independent Theatre of Hungary – István Vavrek and Diana Filep; Lucia Lakatos and Márton Illés – shared their methodologies and background information on the training course and publication development during a three-day kick-off meeting. This professional gathering was vital for collaboration, organizing future events for the project, and preparing and designing the training course to ensure that participants are adequately prepared for the workshops and conducting the interview for the publications.

In November, we published a call for applications in both Hungarian and Slovak languages on our Facebook page, MadromTv, associated with Ternipe.



It was crucial that applicants were open to acquiring various skills, able to work both in teams and independently, willing to discuss the social topics and issues facing the Roma community, and able to fit the 60-hour training into their schedules.

Nine individuals applied from the network established by Ternipe that brings together Roma high school and university students. All nine of them were already known to us, as they had participated in several of our other youth projects

beforehand. They were all currently studying or establishing themselves in their careers (five were pursuing pedagogical studies – among them was someone who had already started teaching, two were studying tourism, one was studying economics at the time of application, and one was in the final year of their high school studies). Among the applicants, seven were women and two were men; all of them were between 18 and 30 years old, of Roma descent, and active members of the minority community, with five of them also experienced in formal or non-formal education. Since they had already participated in various projects related to Roma identity, they possessed foundational knowledge and background information about the Roma community and culture, as well as the social problems arising in relation to them and other topics.

Based on the individual discussions conducted with them, their age, experiences, personality traits, and communication skills, we deemed them suitable to become peer trainers in the near future. During a local in-person meeting, we presented them the specific goals, structure, and upcoming events of the project, where they would have the opportunity to acquire various competencies. Furthermore, although many of them had previously met, this was an opportunity for participants to get to know each other, and team building could begin. They learned various warm-up games that they could later practise and facilitate, and each of them selected a Roma drama that they would moderate discussions on during the international training.

## Dropout

With nine applicants, we aimed to provide everyone with the most suitable times, methods, and a friendly environment to ensure their participation in all processes of the training course. Nevertheless, some dropout from the selected participants can always be anticipated. Unfortunately, this occurred with us as well; just prior to the first international training, two applicants withdrew from the project citing personal reasons and time constraints. Integrating a new participant into the workflow is very challenging, as local trainings have already taken place, and numerous tasks must

be fulfilled in preparation. All the same, we have tried but could not find a new applicant.

## First International Training

The first three-day international meeting took place in Budapest from January 27 to 29. The purpose of this meeting was for the Hungarian and Slovak teams to get acquainted with each other and to introduce them to the intricacies of the training course and publication development based on the previously prepared plan. Prior to the meeting, participants were given the task of preparing a warm-up game of their choice, which they would lead over the course of the three days, thereby experiencing the trainer role first hand. Additionally, they were required to become familiar with two out of eight pre-selected dramas and to thematize one through a moderated discussion within the group. Their final task was to review the publication on everyday Roma heroes developed by Ternipe over the previous years, as well as interviews and materials showcasing Roma individuals found online, in books, or in newspapers, paying attention to the aspects they would incorporate, develop, or neglect in our own publication.

We began the first day with introductions, and after establishing the framework, we used warm-up games to lighten the mood. In the afternoon, colleagues of Ternipe (Diana Filep and István Vavrek) introduced the group to the existing Roma Heroes publication, which was prepared under the *Our Future and Goal 2* 'Naše práva a budúcnosť 2' project, and also outlined the methodology of publication creation. Following this, participants had the opportunity to mutually interview one another, which assisted them in compiling effective questions for conducting interviews. They shared these questions along with the assigned tasks, including the materials they read, the sources, and good examples. This enabled them to envision a preliminary format for the publication. Although many ideas were generated, including some that could not be implemented in tandem, these provided valuable points of reference for the future. Also, we managed to accumulate a wealth of questions that, when refined and articulated, could elicit compelling stories from interviewees, forming excellent texts.

The second day had a focus on the warm-up games led by the participants. Subsequently, they received feedback from the trainers and their peers. This proves to be extremely useful every time, as later addressing the mentioned shortcomings will enable them to approach tasks with greater professionalism while being mindful of avoiding previously highlighted mistakes. Thereafter, colleagues from the Independent Theatre (Lucia Lakatos and Márton Illés) discussed trainer communication and aspects of moderation, laying a good foundation for the subsequent session, where participants facilitated a moderated discussion based on the drama they had prepared in advance.

On the third day, participants worked on the workshop modules. Peer trainers were able to gain insight into how the *Roma Heroes workshop* functions, being present not just as participants, as outsiders but also receiving explanations for the questions and reasons arising as to the different underlying processes. Various helpful tips and important insights were shared, as the two trainers from the theatre have a wealth of experience, having encountered numerous positive as well as negative situations in their work.

## Second International Training

The next international training took place between 15 and 17 March in Rimavská Sobota, Slovakia. After an opening round and warm-up games, the Hungarian and Slovak teams presented to one another the questions they had gathered for interviews during their local meetings between the two international events. Following this, participants paired up and conducted interviews with each other in preparation for real-life interviews with future subjects. This task also proved to be appropriate for team-building purposes, as participants learned more about one another during their conversations. They then shared some stories, important thoughts, and 'headlines' from the interviews they had conducted, offering feedback on the ones they found engaging or interesting while drawing further inspiration from them.

The peer trainers outlined their concrete plans for interviews with individuals they wished to feature in the publication after completing their training. Their task was to arrive at the second international training with two specific names, regardless of whether the individuals would ultimately agree to the interviews or if they could complete them. Both teams also brainstormed ideas for the format and content of the publication, building on ideas from the previous training while introducing many new ones. Narrowing down these concepts was crucial to creating a clear vision for the publication – a goal which was successfully achieved.

The following day, some of the participants led moderated discussions on selected dramas. They also learned the basics of assertive communication, an essential skill for trainers. Additionally, they engaged in situational role-plays related to conflict management, which was highly beneficial, as it helped them prepare for various challenging or uncomfortable scenarios. Different solutions to the rapid challenges have been discussed, based on which they would be able to handle certain inappropriate remarks, passive or aggressive behaviour on the part of workshop participants, or unanticipated situations such as time constraints, inattentive communication between trainer partners, unsuitable venue conditions, etc.

On the third day, the peer trainers once again had the opportunity to practise their trainer roles. This step was critical before leading actual workshops, as it allowed them to identify potential mistakes. Each participant was assigned a workshop module to deliver during the day – based on the previously sent material, descriptions –, adhering to time limits and keeping their audience in mind. After completing their modules, the lead trainers provided detailed feedback, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement. This feedback session also gave peer trainers a chance to ask questions about any potentially unclear parts or processes. The responses and feedback revealed that the peer trainers were well-prepared and confident to lead future workshops.

## Examination

The 60-hour training concluded with a written examination that no longer included practical tasks, as participants had already demonstrated their suitability to lead groups in various scenarios throughout the training. However, theoretical knowledge is indispensable for conducting workshops, so everyone had to prepare from the six selected dramas, supplementary materials, and trainer competencies. The exam was conducted in written form, in two rounds due to scheduling conflicts. Two distinct sets of questions were compiled for the two groups. Upon answering and then evaluating them, results confirmed that all participants met the required standards and were adequately prepared.

## A Brief Overview of the Key Aspects of the Training

- Building an inclusive, welcoming, and friendly team is fundamental to encouraging collaboration, open questions, constructive criticism, and even making mistakes – an essential part of growth.
- Participants must be given opportunities to gain personal experiences, whether through games, workshops, or exploring stories of the publication. Sharing these experiences and the emotions and thoughts associated with them is invaluable for gathering perspectives for workshops, games, and materials they can later apply in practice when leading exercises or conducting interviews themselves.
- Regular mutual feedback is of paramount importance. Honest feedback is the greatest gift, and much can be learned by observing how others handle situations or by understanding their feelings and viewpoints during an activity. Professional feedback from trainers is also vital, balancing

reinforcement and areas for improvement. On the other hand, peer-to-peer feedback plays a key role in fostering horizontal learning.

- Gradual progress is essential, giving participants every chance to acquire new knowledge while gaining practical experience and a sense of achievement. These experiences motivate their further learning and development.

It is important to balance playfulness with taking responsibilities seriously. Peer trainers must connect with young people, laugh together, and engage in shared activities while maintaining focus on objectives and adherence to guidelines. Accuracy and preparedness were therefore expected of participants, and constructive criticism was provided openly whenever necessary. This approach led to active, committed, yet joyful and playful participation.

## **Feedback on the Training Course**

All participating peer trainers found the training to be valuable. According to their feedback, it not only met their expectations but exceeded them in several respects. Below are some quotes from them, taken from the feedback interviews:

‘The Roma Heroes workshop was a great opportunity for me. As a trainer, it felt amazing to transfer knowledge, strengthen self-image and identity. The structure of the training was well thought out, enjoyable, and experiential.’

‘For me, the Roma Heroes training course was a wonderful experience. It offered many new insights, enabling me to gain new knowledge. The best part was engaging as a trainer. Showing the children that there can be a simple everyday person behind heroes.’

‘To me, becoming a trainer means I can open new doors among people while sharing knowledge and learning myself. I find it important to strengthen identity and weave together old and new perspectives, particularly on topics like Roma identity, which might not be discussed elsewhere. I am glad that in the Roma Heroes

trainer's course we are addressing significant issues that are often forgotten in everyday life.'

'The training course provided me with plenty of new things, including how to assist a team, how to strengthen children's sense of identity, all in a playful manner and with lots of joy. It was a great experience to learn and develop together while hearing different stories we had not known before.'

'During the trainer's course, I was surrounded by a supportive team, which made it easy and playful to learn the methods, and I could confidently open up about any of the topics. I gained not only knowledge and experience but also lifelong memories and friendships.'

'I was keen to try something new, and I have no regrets about starting the training. I gained a lot of knowledge, skills, and experiences from both local and international meetings that I can make use of in the future too. I met amazing people, with whom I am fortunate to maintain contact to this day. I am happy to have become a trainer.'

## **Publication Creation**

As previously mentioned, during the training, the young people studied materials showcasing Roma heroes, which helped them articulate what kind of publication they wanted to create. They also contemplated the style, appearance, and content that would interest them and other young people in such a publication. They found the power of personal stories to be especially important. During the brainstorming sessions in the local and international training, they selected the potential individuals they would like to present. They made sure that the publication represented a variety of professions, ages, and traits, but one thing had to be common among them – they should openly and proudly identify as Roma. Having said that, the most important criterion was that everyone should interview a person they found interesting and inspiring, whom they considered an everyday hero in some way. We did not want to influence the peer trainers' individual choices; however, we collectively agreed that the publication should not include individuals

actively involved in politics, thereby maintaining independence. Avoiding a focus on the active members of our organization was yet another consideration.

Out of the seven young people, six agreed to conduct interviews with two individuals each, summarizing the discussions into one to two pages of narrative. Additionally, they would attach links to the texts if any interviewees had some available online content. The peer trainer who did not prefer interviewing took on the responsibility of assembling, correcting, and editing the texts.

Among the potential interviewees contacted by the young people, some did not respond at all, while some others eventually did not react despite previous discussions. However, it could be generally stated that most received the request positively. During the outreach, we informed them about the purpose of the publication and what it was intended to achieve. Subsequently, personal meetings took place at the agreed times, or online meetings were arranged for those residing abroad at the time. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed, from which narratives were created in the first-person singular. Since of the twelve interviewees two had already passed away, family members and acquaintances were consulted in these cases with a view to gathering information about them. The trainers spoke about them in the third-person singular. As many did not agree to have their photos taken or did not wish to take photos during the meetings, it was mutually decided that everyone would share their most flattering, preferred photograph for the publication.

The completed texts were sent to the subjects to avoid misunderstandings that might arise during the interviews or the publication of undesired sentences or stories voiced by the heroes.

# The Implemented Workshops

The eight peer trainers were required to hold a workshop in pairs. Following the training course, they had the opportunity to choose whom they wanted to partner with. This process went smoothly, and choices were made quickly and without conflict. Since there was an odd number of peer trainers, one of them partnered with a trainer from Ternipe to conduct the session. In other cases, a Ternipe specialist was present as a support person, who observed their work from the background. The assistant aimed not to interfere with the workshop processes, as the focus was on allowing the peer trainers to experience leading a session themselves. However, the assistant could later provide feedback, highlighting potential mistakes and stressing positive aspects.

Several possibilities came into view when selecting locations for the workshops: primary schools, secondary schools, groups of university students, and various youth camps. We compiled a list of potential venues, after which the trainer pairs were offered the chance to choose which location they would like to go to. Subsequently, the trainer pairs reached out to a contact person or a staff member of the respective location by e-mail, phone, or in person, explaining the reason for the request, and Ternipe also sent out an e-mail notification about the project and the workshop. If the particular institution was open to it, a team leader interview took place over the phone, video call, or in person. This interview prepared the co-trainers for the participants', i.e. the group's capabilities, potential problems, difficulties that might arise, which topics and dramas they might be most interested in, and the facilities of the venue. Once they had a sufficient amount of information, a date was chosen by mutual agreement and the trainer pairs started the preparation, which was then approved by the experts.

If any of the institutions proved problematic – no date suited them, no feedback was provided –, the peer trainers preferred to think of another venue.

Four workshops took place in the months following the end of the training course. The first workshop took place in the primary school in Hodejov, where a peer and an experienced trainer delivered the session to students aged 13–15

years, in the presence of a teacher who too joined as a participant. As the school and the majority of the group were of Roma origin, we wanted to give them as much knowledge as possible about Roma history, and strengthening their sense of identity was also a stated aim. The feedback showed that all this was successful – they gained a lot of new information through the dramas and discussions, and during the creative processing and warm-up games they felt very relaxed and had fun.

Here we were able to use the knowledge we had gained in the training course on what to do if a participant does not actively engage and withdraws from the processes. We did not force or make it compulsory for them to participate, but we tried to involve them as much as possible. We reinforced that there was no right or wrong answer, which meant that most of the time they gave their opinion and thoughts when it was their turn. In the creative processing, although they were offered several options, they did not want to participate in any of the groups or take on other tasks such as photography or filming. Nevertheless, we welcomed as a success that they quietly and attentively watched the creative performances, took part in the collective photo shoot, and filled in the feedback form. It was a very useful experience for future workshops on how to deal with participants exhibiting a passive attitude.

The second workshop took place at the Gesztete primary school. It was also attended by students from 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grades, i.e. aged between 13 and 15 years, most of whom were also of Roma origin. As the workshop progressed, the students opened up more and more, becoming increasingly open to the topics and speaking out more courageously. They also enjoyed the group games and in their feedback reported gaining a lot of new knowledge about the Roma.

Once again we came across a situation where one participant was passive during the session, and although they seemed bored, the peer trainers said that they received very positive feedback from them – they were happy to take photos and said we should go there some other time to hold another workshop like this. In groups of this age range, we have found that there is always a so-called ‘alpha personality’ or someone who is perceived by others as ‘difficult to deal with’, who chooses to take a passive approach to learning new skills. However, at the end of

the session, we find that they have in fact – even if not showing it – enjoyed the kind of non-formal education we can offer during the three hours. We are showing and teaching the students something new, something they are not used to, and this, wittingly or unwittingly, gets their attention, and, for the most part, they like it.

The third workshop took place as part of project *Our Rights and Our Future 4* 'Naše práva a budúcnosť 4'. This was attended by Roma secondary school and university students aged 16–25. As the Roma young people present attached great importance to active engagement, developing their Roma identity, and learning as much as possible about Roma history, culture, and problems, it was essential to give them as much new information and knowledge as possible. According to the feedback, this is where the workshop had the biggest impact on the participants in terms of learning and understanding the concept of the everyday hero and realizing that in fact anyone can be a hero, even they themselves, if they are proactive. Since we were dealing with people who were already taking wings and the early steps in choosing a career, many of them were able to draw motivation from the dramas and their own heroic stories by the end of the session. Besides, they enjoyed the teamwork, the creative processing, and we also managed to provide them with a lot of new information.

For the fourth time, we visited Mocsáry Lajos Elementary School in Fil'akovo, where participants were made up of students aged 13–15 years. One of the co-trainers was also a teacher at the school, so the students already knew them from before. The question was how much this would influence the students' attitude to the workshop, as they already had an established image of the trainer. In the end, the young people were not influenced by this fact, as the workshop methodology and the acquired training competencies helped the trainers to make the students prescind from knowing the trainer as a teacher after the first few minutes. They really enjoyed the session, and it was a particular success that one of the very quiet, reserved participants, who did not communicate much with classmates in everyday life, now answered several questions, shared a story in front of the group, and participated in the creative session by acting out a role. Creating a safe environment and giving positive and reinforcing feedback is very important for participants with such a personality, too, so we are glad to have had such an experience.



# Impact, Results, Feedback

Following the training course, our peer trainers also reported on the experiences they had gained from the real-life workshops they had themselves already delivered, both professionally and personally. Many of them stressed the importance of being able to present something to the groups that they would not have encountered elsewhere:

*'I was able to pass on new knowledge that I myself was exposed to through the dramas. It was an utterly great feeling to introduce participants to things they hadn't heard of before, and probably wouldn't have heard of outside the workshop. It was good to see them getting involved in the various processes and sharing their thoughts on different topics. The workshop gave me the opportunity to meet new people, and I always learned something new from these sessions.'*

*'It was a very uplifting feeling to pass on to my group the new information I had learnt during the training course. The sparkling eyes, open mouths, and positive feedback made it all worthwhile. I hope I could be of assistance to the Roma participants in their identity formation and that the non-Roma participants will be more open towards the Roma minority in the future.'*

Several participants commented on how delivering the workshop helped them develop their competences:

*'I feel that I have improved a lot in my speaking and communication skills. These are important not only during the workshops but also in my work and personal life.'*

*'The training course has given me plenty of useful tips that I can put to use not only in workshops but also on the job as a teacher. I consciously pay more attention to communication, attitude, and to team building through group exercises and games.'*

Participants aged 13–25 also expressed their opinions via the feedback forms following each workshop. The vast majority of them found the workshop interesting and learned new things about Roma culture and people thanks to the dramas. This is an extremely important feedback, as all four venues had a high percentage of Roma participants, and their identity can be greatly shaped by learning about their

history and other Roma communities in the world. These are often neglected in the context of formal education.

An important element of the workshop was the different group games, which the participants enjoyed very much. Games were often cited in reply to the question 'What was the best thing about the workshop?' In our experience, these warm-up games always created a safe, relaxed, fun environment in which they could then work together more easily, open up and which had a very important team-building effect.

Another thing that came up a lot on the feedback sheets was 'acting'. In the final modules, participants work on one of the stories in a team in the context of creative processing. When it came to performing and acting in this creative processing, the participants always had a lot of fun and enjoyed it. Along with games and dramas, these were the most often highlighted in the feedback forms as the best parts of the workshops.

In addition to learning through play, there were some who approached the workshop from the emotional side, highlighting the discussions and the opportunity to learn about the emotions of their classmates. For us, this underlines the community-building power of telling one's own stories and the impact on participants of listening carefully to each other within each module.

Many times before the workshop, the group leaders indicated that the young people were not looking forward to the session, as they had never participated in one before and did not know what the three hours would entail. However, almost without exception, we received positive feedback following the sessions, both written and verbal. The change in their attitude was already noticeable early in the session, as they realized that it would be different from a formal class, and that the trainers would not be sitting in judgement on them, but that they could open up and express their opinions freely. The next day of the workshop, our trainer received the following message from one of the participants:

*'I had a great time, and I think the others did too. Thank you very much, we learned quite a lot.'*

Based on the feedback we received, we can conclude that the peer trainers had a successful workshop, their skills were improved, and all finished their session in a

good mood. Also, they were able to transfer new information to the participants, got closer to the Roma culture, developed a lot of new perspectives on the topic, and they were introduced to a new learning method, which they enjoyed very much.

# Concluding Thoughts

Over the past year, a close-knit team of trainers has developed who continue to be part of each other's lives both at work and in their personal lives. They have also turned openly to each other for help and advice in workshops and in the production of publications, and there is a constant exchange of experience and expertise. We are pleased to see that good relationships have been established and that they have remained active members of the organization. The many new skills, practices, and work experiences they have gained will help them in their daily lives and future goals.

We encourage all NGOs, cultural and educational professionals who want to strengthen social inclusion to cooperate with young people from different backgrounds. Offer them inspiring experiences, seek their opinions, and give them personalized, motivating tasks that lead to a sense of achievement. By providing support in a safe environment, setting goals, and encouraging challenge and self-improvement, young people can become real heroes who can make our communities more beautiful.