



Roma Heroes Publication – Methodology

The Methodological Publication of the
Project *Roma Heroes in Theatre and
Everyday Life –Trainings and Non-formal
Education for the Empowerment of Roma
Youth – Volume II*

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Ternipe – združenie pre rómsku mládež na Slovensku a v Maďarsku
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independent
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I. Introduction

The methodological guide of a publication on Roma personalities may take into consideration numerous aspects to ensure that the publication is culturally sensitive, accurate, and authentic.

Why Is It Important to Prepare a Publication about Roma Personalities?

- **To Increase the Social and Cultural Visibility of the Roma Community**

The Roma community in Slovakia has been present in the country for centuries and has a rich cultural heritage. Nevertheless, the Roma community is often underrepresented in historical and cultural discourses. A publication about Roma personalities provides an opportunity to appropriately present the contributions of the Roma community to the social, political, cultural, and economic life of the country.

This kind of visibility not only reinforces the self-esteem and self-identity of the Roma community but also offers the majority society an opportunity to learn about and appreciate the historical and contemporary roles of the Roma.

- **Presenting Positive Role Models for Young Generations**

Creating a publication about Roma personalities may serve as an important tool for Roma youth to encounter some positive role models from their own community. Many Roma young people face challenges in education, the labour market, and

social integration, and these role models can inspire them to attain success as well. The achievements of Slovak Roma personalities in various fields (e.g. art, science, sports, or politics) can motivate them to pursue their goals.

- **Overcoming Social Prejudices and Stereotypes**

Stereotypes and prejudices related to the Roma community are still widespread in Slovakia. Through a publication showcasing Roma personalities, it is possible to present stories and life paths that transcend stereotypes and shed light on the diversity and value-creating potential of Roma communities. This can help the majority society to rethink its prejudices and foster greater respect and acceptance for Roma communities.

- **Promoting Intercultural Dialogue**

A publication about Roma personalities in Slovakia is not only essential for the Roma community but also creates an opportunity for intercultural dialogue. The publication can show how Roma personalities have contributed to the development of Slovak society and can foster better understanding and cooperation between Roma and non-Roma communities. This is particularly important in a society where the Roma community is often marginalized.

- **Showcasing the Richness of Roma Culture**

The Roma community in Slovakia possesses a rich cultural heritage that includes music, dance, storytelling, as well as craftsmanship and folk art. A publication about Roma personalities provides an opportunity to showcase these cultural values and demonstrate how these traditions have shaped the lives and works of Roma personalities. This not only offers cultural recognition to Roma communities but also contributes to the promotion of diversity and tolerance between cultures.

II. The Role of Roma Culture and Community in Society

The role of Roma culture and community in Slovak society is extremely important, as the Roma have been present in the territory of the country for centuries. The contribution of the Roma community to society through craftsmanship, music, and dance is outstanding and significantly enriches Slovak cultural heritage. Roma music and dance are particularly popular and closely intertwined with Slovak folk art. Although Roma communities are often marginalized, they constitute an organic part of the social and economic life of society. The preservation of Roma identity, including language, family, and cultural traditions, contributes to social diversity. The cultural heritage of Roma communities not only provides internal cohesion but also strengthens social cohesion. This publication provides an opportunity to present Roma personalities who can serve as positive role models and help overcome prejudices.

Planning the Publication

1. Who Can the Publication Target and What Goals Can Be Achieved for Each Target Group?

- **Students and Teachers**

The publication can be particularly important for schools and educational institutions, as presenting the Roma community and culture can contribute to the social sensitization of students. Through its use in educational programmes, students can learn about the history, culture, and prominent personalities of the Roma community, thereby fostering acceptance and tolerance. It also provides a useful tool for teachers to educate about Roma role models, this way reinforcing the identity and self-confidence of Roma students.

- **Roma Communities**

The publication plays an important role for Roma communities too, as it allows them to learn about their own history and heroes. Presenting positive role models can strengthen the community's self-esteem and identity. The publication offers Roma communities the opportunity to take pride in their own achievements and history, as well as to celebrate the prominent figures of their culture.

- **The Broader Public**

The publication may also be useful for the wider public, including members of the majority society who may be less familiar with the culture and history of the Roma community. It can help reduce prejudices and stereotypes by showcasing the contributions of Roma personalities to Slovak society. This promotes mutual understanding and the establishment of better relationships and social dialogue

between Roma and non-Roma communities. *Preserving historical memory* may also be an important goal of the publication, as it documents the past and current roles of the Roma community, helping future generations to retain this knowledge.

- **Civil Organizations and Minority Advocacy Groups**

Civil organizations and minority advocacy groups may also benefit from the publication, particularly in initiatives aimed at the social integration of Roma communities. The publication may assist in sensitization campaigns, educational programmes, and it supports efforts aimed at promoting the social visibility and equality of Roma communities.

- **Policymakers and Government Bodies**

A publication about Roma personalities may be significant for policymakers and government bodies, particularly for those involved in the development and implementation of minority policies. The publication can provide information regarding the social situation, culture, and leading figures of the Roma communities, contributing to improved policy decisions related to Roma communities.

2. How to Involve the Roma Community in Creating the Publication

Involving the Roma community in creating the publication is extremely important, as it enables a credible and authentic representation of the community's history and outstanding personalities. Collaborating with university and high school students for the publication is particularly valuable, as it offers young people the opportunity to participate actively in the process and learn about the history and culture of the Roma community.

Active Involvement of Roma Students and Undergraduates

In the case of the Ternipe publication, it was essential to involve Roma high school and university students in the creation of the publication. This not only strengthened their self-confidence but also provided them the opportunity to research and document members of their own community. This way, they could create a personal connection during the working process and enriched the publication with direct sources. They were also included in creative processes such as producing illustrations, photo documentation, or designing visual elements. Roma young people could bring their own perspectives and viewpoints into the publication, making their individual voices heard.

Conducting Interviews with Roma Personalities

To engage the Roma community, students were given the opportunity to conduct interviews with Roma leaders, artists, educators, or other prominent figures. This created a direct connection with the community and allowed those involved to share their stories in their own words.

Organizing Community Forums and Workshops

During the creation of the publication, young people could organize community forums or workshops where Roma students and local community members could discuss the themes of the publication together. This helped to ensure that the information genuinely reflected the community's needs, allowing authentic perspectives to be included in the publication.

Involvement of Roma Mentors and Experts

Involving Roma undergraduates or experts as mentors could support the students' work by assisting them with research, conducting interviews, and compiling materials. This allowed young people to receive valuable professional guidance, and

the older generation from the community could actively contribute to the publication.

3. Research Methods

Primary and secondary research plays a key role in preparing the publication about Roma personalities. The most important *primary research method* is interviewing, as it creates a direct connection with members of the Roma community and provides information from authentic sources. During the interviews, Roma personalities can share their own experiences, life paths, and opinions, which offers a more personal and authentic picture of them. Additionally, *researching archival sources* is another essential element, as it provides deeper insights into the history of Roma communities through historical documents, newspaper articles, and other written sources. These data complement the interviews and place the stories presented in the publication within a broader context.

Secondary research, such as using Internet sources and books, provides extensive information. The literature, studies, and articles available online will help students expand the academic foundation of the publication. Using *books and scholarly articles* can ensure that the publication's content is well-founded, credible, and comprehensive. Combining sources ensures this way the publication's diversity, authenticity, and reliability.

Identifying credible sources is crucial in the publication about Roma personalities. Roma leaders who are well acquainted with their community's history and culture represent primary sources of information. They often can provide personal experiences and authentic data that help present the true situation and contributions of the community.

Historians and experts who work with Roma communities also provide reliable information. They have professional backgrounds and research experience, ensuring the scientific validity of the information.

Civil organizations also play an important role, as they often work directly with Roma communities and have first-hand data and experiences. These organizations can assist in gathering and verifying data relevant to the community, contributing to the credibility of the publication.

Conducting interviews with members of the Roma community requires thorough preparation and a respectful approach.

1. It is important to clearly communicate the goals and the aim of the publication during the interviews so that respondents understand how the shared information will be used.
2. Choose an appropriate time and place where the interviewees feel comfortable and can speak openly.
3. Use open-ended questions in the interviews, allowing subjects to elaborate on their thoughts and experiences in detail.
4. Always request permission to record the interview and assure the subjects that they understand how the data will be handled and stored.
5. Handle the data collected during the interviews with care, considering personal data protection and confidentiality.
6. Organize the gathered data and document the information shared during the interviews accurately and in detail.
7. When processing the data, ensure that individual respondents are not identified if they have not consented to anonymous publication.
8. Handle the data according to strict data protection regulations, ensuring that the information remains secure and is only used for predetermined purposes.

4. Content Considerations

When selecting Roma personalities, the following criteria can ensure the credibility and relevance of the selection:

Historical Significance

The primary criterion is that selected personalities should have historical significance. Choose individuals who have had a significant impact on the history and culture of the Roma community. These may be, for instance, leaders, activists, or artists who have played an important role in the social and political development of the community or who have made significant contributions to the preservation and promotion of Roma culture.

Contemporary Actors

It is important that the publication includes contemporary Roma figures who are still active in the development of the community or who have a significant impact on the social discourse. These could be, for example, current activists, artists, academics, or public figures who are still shaping the status and social recognition of the Roma community today.

Community Opinion

The selection process should also take into account the views of the Roma community. It is important that these personalities are recognized and respected by the members of the community. Community opinion can help identify individuals who play or have played a truly important role in the life of the community and with whom the community can identify itself.

Personal Impact and Inspiration

Also, we should choose personalities who have had a personal impact on the life of the community and serve as inspiring examples for young people and other community members. These individuals can demonstrate perseverance, achievement, and contribution to the community.

Diversity and Representation

Make sure that the selected personalities reflect diversity within the Roma community. In making our selections, we should consider achievements and contributions made in various fields (such as art, science, activism, etc.) and the representation of different Roma groups.

Authentic Sources and Evidence

During the selection process, we should use authentic sources and evidence such as documented results, awards received, and community recognitions, to support the significance and role of the personalities.

Research and Pre-screening

Conduct thorough research on the personalities, including historical sources, interviews, and direct feedback, to obtain an objective picture of the individuals' work and impact. Pre-screening helps us choose the most relevant and credible individuals.

Consultation with Experts

We should consult Roma community experts, historians, and cultural professionals about the selected personalities to confirm the correctness and authenticity of our choice. They can provide additional valuable insights and perspectives on the significance of these individuals.

5. Presenting the Life Trajectories of Roma Personalities

When presenting the life trajectories of Roma personalities, it is important to explore in detail the individuals' family background, upbringing, careers, and the preservation of their Roma identity. Below follows a detailed description of these aspects.

Family Background

Presenting the family background helps us understand the environment from which the individual comes and how it has shaped them throughout their life. This includes the parents' occupations, their social status, as well as the family's cultural and historical background. Through family background, we can trace how community and family dynamics influenced the individual's development and goals.

Upbringing

In discussing the subject's upbringing, we explore how the individual's worldview and value system were formed. This involves family upbringing, community values, and the educational and social environment. It is important to mention how the individual received support or faced challenges from the community and how these shaped their character and career.

Career

When presenting the career, the chosen career path and the significant achievements attained in their professional life should be presented in detail. It is worthwhile to highlight key milestones, professional successes and challenges, as well as the individual's professional impact on the community and society. Detailing

the career path helps us understand how the individual has contributed to the advancement and visibility of the Roma community.

Preservation of Roma Identity

Emphasizing the preservation of Roma identity is crucial, as it sheds light on how the individual has maintained and represented their cultural heritage throughout their career. This may include the use of the Roma language, the preservation of traditional values and customs, as well as community involvement. It is important to demonstrate how they have integrated and supported Roma identity in their work and public activities, and the impact this has had on the community.

Personal Stories and Challenges

Presenting personal stories and challenges encountered throughout one's career enriches the individual's life trajectory and provides an opportunity to showcase the perseverance and effort with which the individual has successfully faced challenges. These details contribute to a more nuanced and inspiring portrait of the individual.

Cultural Contribution

We present how the individual has contributed to the development of Roma culture, for example, through artistic works, organizing community events, or nurturing traditions. This helps to understand the individual's contribution to cultural heritage and its impact on the community.

Community Recognition

Presenting community recognitions and awards is also important, as these reflect the chosen personality's achievements and contributions recognized by the community as well as the values it deems important.

Legacy and Impact

Finally, it is essential to present the individual's legacy and impact. This may include their long-term effect on the Roma community, the mark they left on cultural and social life, as well as the effect on future generations. These aspects help provide a comprehensive and detailed picture of the life trajectory of Roma personalities.

6. Structure of the Publication

How the publication is structured is crucial for a clear and logical presentation of the content. Below, I outline how a publication about Roma personalities should be structured to ensure clarity and informativeness:

1. Table of Contents

The table of contents should be placed on the first pages of the publication, allowing readers to navigate quickly between the different sections. It should include all chapters and subsections, along with the page numbers.

2. Introduction

The introduction presents the purpose, significance, and background of the publication. Here, we discuss the motivation for creating the publication, the main objectives of the research, and the relevance of the information intended for the reader.

3. Presentation of the Roma Community

This section provides a general overview of the Roma community, including its history, cultural heritage, and social situation. It helps the reader understand the context in which the personalities presented have operated.

4. Presentation of Personalities

This section is the central element of the publication, where we present the selected Roma personalities in detail. It is worthwhile to dedicate a separate chapter or subsection to the previously outlined aspects for each personality: family background, upbringing, career, preservation of Roma identity, personal stories, etc.

The presentation of personalities can be organized based on three main approaches:

- *Chronological approach*: This method presents the life paths of the personalities in chronological order, starting from the earliest periods up to the present. This helps readers understand the individuals' development and the historical context in which they operated.
- *Thematic approach*: In this case, the personalities are grouped according to various themes or categories such as artists, activists, or scientists. This allows readers to easily compare the contributions of each individual across different areas.
- *Geographical approach*: The presentation of personalities takes place based on their geographical location, for example, different countries or regions. This approach can be useful if the aim of the publication is to showcase the geographical diversity of the Roma community.

The choice of approach depends on the purpose of the publication and the readers' needs, with each method offering its own advantages in presenting the personalities.

5. Historical and Cultural Context

In this section, we provide additional background information about the presented personalities' context of activities. At this point, we can illustrate how the works of these individuals fit into the history and culture of the Roma community.

6. Interviews and Primary Sources

If interviews and primary sources make up an essential part of the publication, we can detail the interviews we have conducted and the personal accounts we have gathered with the specific individuals. This can include short excerpts or full texts.

7. Appendices

The appendices contain supplementary materials related to the publication such as:

- photos and illustrations: images of the presented personalities and events;
- maps: if relevant, depicting the geographical locations of the Roma community;
- manuscripts and documents: presentations of copies of contemporary documents or manuscripts;
- bibliographic and source references: the books, articles, and sources referenced during the research.

8. References

The *References* section includes all sources, books, articles, and other references used. This helps readers conduct further research and gain deeper insights into the topic.

9. Index and Subject Index

The index and subject index sections aid readers in quickly looking up specific individuals, concepts, and topics. The index includes all mentioned names and their corresponding page numbers, while the subject index lists the main themes and keywords in the publication.

10. Acknowledgments

In the *Acknowledgments* section, we can express our gratitude to those who have contributed to the creation of the publication such as interview subjects, researchers, experts, and supporting organizations.

This structure helps ensure that the publication is logical and comprehensive, making it easier for readers to navigate and understand the content.

Graphic elements, such as images, maps, and diagrams, play a fundamental role in the visual understanding of the publication. *Images* can personally showcase the Roma personalities, their experiences and activities, creating a more personal and effective connection with the readers. *Maps* illustrate geographical locations and community boundaries, which helps in understanding the local context and historical relationships. *Diagrams* and *charts* visually convey data and statistics, making it easier to interpret complex information.

7. Writing Techniques

To write an engaging and easily understandable text, the following guidelines may help:

1. **Use clear and simple language:** Avoid overly complex expressions and technical jargon. The aim is for the text to be easily understood by anyone interested in the topic. Use everyday words and short, clear sentences.
2. **Keep the structure of the text in mind:** a clear structure helps readers follow the text easily. Use paragraphs, subheadings, and bulleted lists to keep the text well-structured and easy to read.
3. **Be specific and use examples:** instead of general phrases, use specific examples to illustrate the point. These help readers visualize and better understand the information.
4. **Make it interesting and engaging:** hold readers' attention with interesting stories, anecdotes, or exciting facts. For the sake of readability, tell details that connect emotionally with the reader.
5. **Reader-friendly style:** keep the reader's needs and interests in mind. The writing style should be appropriate to the target audience, whether formal or informal, but always friendly and direct.
6. **Regular revision and editing:** the first version is often not a perfect one. Read over the text several times and ask others to review it. Correcting any errors or difficult-to-understand passages will help make the text clearer and more readable.

It is also worth considering a few aspects in order to create a *friendly but authentic tone*: direct and accessible language, an empathetic and respectful approach (show empathy and respect for readers so that they feel their opinions and interests are important), authentic information, personal stories and examples (use personal

anecdotes and examples to make it easy for readers to relate to the topic while keeping the text friendly and direct).

When editing *short biographies and interview texts*, the following points should be taken into account:

1. **Concise and to the point:** Texts should be concise and focused, highlighting key information such as personal background, major career milestones, and relevant activities.
2. **Easy-to-read structure:** use clear paragraphs and subheadings to make texts easy to read and understand.
3. **Credible and accurate information:** make sure that all facts and quotes presented accurately reflect reality, avoiding any misinterpretation.
4. **Personal tone:** interviews should reflect the personality and tone of the interviewee so that readers can get an authentic picture of them.
5. **Editing and stylistic clean-up:** thoroughly check texts for spelling and grammatical errors, ensuring that texts are smooth and professional.

8. Using Photos and Visual Elements

Any acquisition of photos should consider the following steps:

1. **Archiving:** all photos acquired should be properly organized and archived. Use categories and labels to make images easily searchable and store them in a secure but easily accessible location.
2. **Requests for permission:** if the photos are protected by copyright, first ask for permission to use them. This may involve contacting the copyright owner and obtaining the appropriate legal documents to avoid legal problems.

3. **Free-to-use sources:** use sources where the images are free to use such as Creative-Commons-licensed or public domain images. Be sure to comply with the terms of the licence and always give proper attribution where appropriate.
4. **Quality and relevance:** make sure that the photos you choose are of good quality and relevant to the content of the publication. The images should reinforce the text and be visually interesting.
5. **Legal and ethical considerations:** ensure that the use of images does not infringe on people's privacy or rights. When using portrait photographs, ensure that consent is obtained from the individuals and take into account privacy regulations.

Captions play an important role in the interpretation of visual content.

9. Digital and Print Versions

When choosing the publication format, it is important to consider the advantages and disadvantages of digital and print formats. Here is a detailed overview below.

Digital Publications

Advantages:

1. *Ease of accessibility:* in digital format, publications are quickly and easily accessible from anywhere with an Internet connection and can be downloaded instantly or viewed online.
2. *Cost-effectiveness:* no printing costs, materials, or transport are required, reducing the cost of producing the publication.

3. *Update and modification*: the digital format allows for easy updating and modification of content, which can be quickly accessed by readers.
4. *Interactivity*: allows for the inclusion of interactive elements such as links, videos, and audio that enrich reader experience.

Drawbacks:

1. *Technical limitations and accessibility issues*: reading can be difficult without the necessary equipment (computer, tablet, smartphone) and Internet connection for digital publications. Access may be limited in certain locations or for certain audiences.
2. *Screen fatigue*: for longer reading times, reading on a screen can cause eye strain and fatigue, which can reduce the reading experience.

Printed Publications

Advantages:

1. *Tangibility*: printed publications are tangible in a physical format, which for many people means a more enjoyable reading experience.
2. *No technical devices needed*: they can be read without the need for any electronic device or Internet connection.
3. *Durable and can be preserved*: printed publications can be kept for long periods of time and are easily accessible when placed on a bookshelf.

Drawbacks:

1. *Costly to produce*: printing costs, necessary materials and shipping costs can increase the cost of producing a publication.

2. *Updating difficulties*: if modifications are needed, new copies have to be printed, which can be time-consuming and costly.
3. *Limited availability*: available in physical format only in specific locations, it does not provide immediate access globally.

The choice is based on target audience, budget, and desired accessibility. Both formats can be useful in the right situations, and both can be used to achieve the best results.

To ensure wide availability of the publication, it is worth adopting several strategies. First of all, make it available on digital platforms such as websites, online libraries, and social media channels so that it can be easily accessed by interested parties.

Printed copies can also be distributed to bookshops, libraries, and educational institutions so that they are also available in physical form. It is essential to develop partnerships with relevant organizations and institutions that can help promote the publication. We should also provide free access or discounts for those who cannot buy it. Finally, ensure that the digital format is accessible and use marketing tools to reach a wider audience.

10. Concluding Thoughts and Future Plans

Monitoring the impact of the publication is essential for the success and further development of the project. The following steps are worth considering:

1. ***Collecting reader feedback***: Invite readers to comment on the publication, for example through questionnaires, online surveys, or personal interviews. Feedback can provide information on the value of the publication's content,

the reader experience, and opportunities for further improvement. Pay attention to recurring comments and criticisms to understand what works well and what can be improved.

2. **Success indicators:** measure the success of the publication based on quantitative indicators such as download numbers, sales figures, and website traffic. These data can help us understand how widely the publication has reached the target audience.
3. **Professional opinions:** Seek feedback from experts, researchers, and other people concerned who can provide relevant opinions on the content and quality of the publication. Their assessment can help enhance professional credibility and identify further research directions.
4. **Further research directions:** on the basis of reader feedback and professional opinions, determine future research directions. Explore what new aspects or themes are worth exploring and how the publication could be further developed for future projects.
5. **Impact measurement:** assess how the publication has influenced the audience and the social perception of the topic. Analyse whether the publication has contributed to raising awareness about the topic or promoting community discourse.
6. **Corrections and improvements:** based on the information gathered during the monitoring phase, make necessary corrections and improvements to the content of the publication or to the distribution strategy so as to make future publications even more successful.

These steps will help to thoroughly evaluate the impact of the publication and to ensure that the project continues to evolve and meet reader and professional expectations.

By developing digital versions, we can enhance interactivity and user experience, for example by adding multimedia content, links, and interactive elements. In print, modernizing design and graphic elements and improving paper quality can increase the aesthetic value and durability of the publication. It is essential to maintain contact with experts and partners to ensure the highest level of professional support and accessibility. Finally, the distribution strategy of the publication should also be reviewed and optimized to reach a wider audience and have a greater impact.

The methodological guide at hand ensures that the publication is prepared in a manner that is structured, thoughtful, and respectful of members of the Roma community, reflecting their cultural diversity and historical relevance

