

## Role Models and Good Practices

### “Reinforcement of the Hungarian National Roma Platform – 2022-2023”

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*Pictures supplied by the persons and organisations introduced among the descriptions of role models and good practices along with photos taken by the Ministry of Interior*

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Dear Reader,

*“Cooperation, partnership, information and meeting in person...”*

The Deputy State Secretariat for Social Inclusion of the Ministry of Interior has – in its capacity as National Roma Contact Point – been implementing the Hungarian National Roma Platform project since 2016, with the help of funding awarded under the direct application scheme operated by the European Commission for the Roma Contact Points of Member States.



The project aimed at extending the professional coordination systems of social inclusion policy (to the greater county level) and at promoting the social inclusion policy dialogue is expected to result in a continued increase in the number of opportunities for consultation promoting and facilitating regional cooperation. During consultations we receive feedback on experience and lessons drawn from the implementation of the strategy and the functioning of inclusion services and programmes.

In 2022 and 2023 we held 3 Roma platform events in each of the greater counties of Baranya, Békés, Somogy, Pest and Győr-Moson-Sopron, which were attended by a total of over 700 participants. The specialists delegated by state, church and civil society organisations represented by a wide range of specific fields and all of them serve the cause of social integration – directly or indirectly. It is our pleasure to report that greater county assemblies and greater county Roma minority governments were represented at a high level at these events.

The topics discussed during the events were aligned to the intervention areas and actions of the Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy 2030 and in response to the specifics (e.g. villages with small populations, beneficiary districts etc.) of the social inclusion policy of each of the regions concerned. Sharing information is just as important as meeting in person and engaging in

dialogues; accordingly, we discussed issues of social inclusion policy, including the development projects planned to be undertaken in the context of the Human Resources Development Operational Programme Plus scheme and during the 2021-2027 period.

Close to 90 specialists delivered presentations and/or participated in roundtable discussions at the 15 events. Consultations at a theoretical level and also on the basis of practical experience were conducted concerning early childhood and childhood programmes, out-of-school and holiday programmes, educational and student hostel programmes, higher education and Roma special college programmes, small village and district programmes, Roma pastoration and Roma identity, cooperation between municipal governments and Roma minority governments, the long-term programme entitled “Emerging Settlements” as well as achievements and challenges involving the specific field of catching-up.

When visiting five of Hungary’s greater counties we encountered a multitude of values, role models and good practices. In this publication we will bring one person and one organisation from each greater county closer to the Reader. We asked them to share with us some aspects of their lives and activities. The contributions so received will be presented on the pages below, in the way of transmission of value.

**Mrs. László Radomszki**  
deputy state secretary

## ROLE MODELS



**Mrs. János Balogh**  
– Baranya Greater County  
– early childhood educator



**Mrs. Tamás Tóth**  
– Békés Greater County  
– head of institution



**Mónika Bogdán**  
– Győr-Moson-Sopron Greater County  
– police officer



**Sarolta Tóth-Orsós**  
– Somogy Greater County  
– remedial teacher



**Katalin Kotricz**  
– Pest Greater County  
– municipal council member

*“I loved” and “I was loved back”*

**Mrs. János Balogh**



I started off from a small village called Baranyahidvég where I was surrounded by love and attention. My parents were illiterate, yet all my life they encouraged me to keep learning so that both me and my siblings can live a better life.

I performed very well in primary school so I had an opportunity to apply for admission to secondary grammar school. In 1978, I enrolled to the kindergarten training college of Kecskemét where I spent some wonderful years and a much-desired new world opened up to me. I consider myself lucky because I always had at least one teacher to support

me and help me perform to the best of my abilities. This attention really meant a lot, driving me further to accomplish my goals and in time be able to return this care to someone similar to the person I used to be when I was a child.

I completed my studies in 1980 and returned to the town of Siklós where my former teacher helped me get a job. This was followed by 40 very happy years working as a kindergarten teacher and where I loved my job. It was gratifying to do what I liked so much, where “I loved” and “I was loved back”. I knew that the love received from the children was the most genuine feedback indicating that I was doing my job well. I also worked with Roma children. Their parents liked to assign their children to me upon enrolment – they trusted me.

My parents identified as “Vlach” Roma. My awareness of my own identity developed later in life. In 2000 I participated in a Romology training course at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities of the Pécs University of Sciences. That faculty was the place where it was good to be Roma. Everything was about us; in all fields of science everything was about the Roma. I was very deeply affected by my studies. I was provided with new knowledge for the definition of my own identity – it was there that I recognised that my family and I were Boyash Roma. I relearned my mother tongue and took the language exam.

What used to seem to have been lost as a consequence of social pressure and winds of politics appeared to be recoverable. The language, the culture, the power of the community and our Roma history, which we used to live: they all came back to me then.

In 2013, I was visited by the director of the Szent Imre Catholic School of the town of Siklós and asked me to teach Roma ethnology at the school. I received little help and could not really find books on ethnology, therefore I put together the study curriculum myself. Through lengthy planning and extensive research, brushing up on and making a selection from my university studies I managed to develop an effectively functioning system which, needless to say, I have been continuously enhancing ever since. The subject was introduced gradually in an ascending system and now it is available for every grade. I was grateful to the lecturers of the Romology department for providing me with authentic and comprehensive knowledge. First and foremost to Dr. Anna Orsós who established Boyash literacy: “our Anne”.

Teaching teens seemed to be difficult and scary at first but I experienced a lot of joy and gained lots of experience at the school.

The main pillars underpinning my teaching are strengthening the children’s identity and raising awareness of belonging. I lay great emphasis on reading and writing in Boyash. Most of the children speak their mother-tongue but it is at the school that they first encounter literacy. These studies were also welcomed by parents: I have received a lot of positive feedback proving it.

I retired in 2020 but I have continued teaching ethnology. Today I have a lot more opportunities for using more up-to-date technical devices and online platforms. More and more publications, textbooks and workbooks help me in my work.



I have two adult children, both young graduates. My daughter has followed me and besides having a degree as an English teacher she is also a Romologist now.



Participation in the Roma Platform events has reassured me that what I am doing is important and I wish to continue, to share and follow good practices. Valuable acquaintances have been made that go beyond these events.

*“my family is the most important part of my life and the key to my successes”*

**Mónika Bogdán**



I grew up in the village of Szil, the youngest in a family of six children. I remember that I was looked after a lot by my siblings – given the great age difference – while our parents were at work. I lost my father very early on, when I was still only a child. My mother – who passed away nearly 10 years ago – raised me on her own and she was of the opinion that learning and work is a very important part of our lives. She supported us as best as she could but

when I finished secondary school I had to start working because she could not afford to finance my studies any longer.

I found a job at a furniture factory but I always had the feeling that I did not want to spend all my life working there. I studied while working and graduated as a social pedagogue in 2009. I am the first college graduate in my family.

I still have a good relationship with friends from both high school and college and I meet them – and now their families too – quite regularly. My ethnicity has never been a problem to them or me either.

As a social pedagogue I worked with handicapped children for 6 years, during which I gained a lot of experience but after a while I felt like doing something different. It was then that I came across a police invitation to candidates for specialisation in crime prevention. I submitted my application and now I have been serving in the police force for 10 years. Although I had never envisaged a police career, I did nurture a desire to improve and move forward. My superiors supported me in these endeavours so after the completion of law enforcement organiser training course for officers I was transferred from the public service employee status to the professional staff as of 1 April 2017.

Since 1 January 2022 I have been serving at the Crime Prevention Department of the Győr-Moson-Sopron Greater County Police Headquarters. It is gratifying to have an opportunity for sharing and realising my ideas. I feel like a full member of the team and that my ethnicity poses no obstacles to me.



My work is essentially focused on youth protection so I have not moved too far from my basic qualifications. I am proud to be participating in the teaching of central programmes – such as “OVI-ZSARU” (*kindergarten cop*) and “DADA” (*acronym for the Hungarian words smoking, alcohol, drugs, AIDS*) and I spare no effort to convey as much crime prevention related information to children, teachers and parents as possible.

“Élet-CÉL” (*Life - GOAL*) is considered as one of the Crime Prevention Department’s most successful programmes. The programme was launched in 2022 on the basis of our own initiative. Its primary, and most important, goal is to offer disadvantaged children and young people role models, individuals who, through diligence and hard work, have achieved outstanding results. The highly successful programme series enjoys the support of people such as József Horváth, Roma biologist specialising in cancer research, Zoltán Orsós, Catholic vicar, Zoltán Mága, violinist, and many others. I am proud to be able to present role models of Roma origins to students, colleagues and other professionals.



Besides my work my family is the most important part of my life and also the key to my successes. I have known my husband for more than 10 years to whom I have been married for 5 years. He is not Roma and he gives me a lot of support in both my work and my private life. Our family is now complete with our little daughter. She is 4 years old and goes to kindergarten.

*“having learned from my personal experiences, healed from my grievances, I can be of use”*

**Katalin Kotricz “Kató”**



I was brought up in Piliscsaba. My family wanted very much that I – a Roma kid – should start attending a high standard school and my abilities were up to the admission requirements. At school however, I suffered so many atrocities that in spite of my excellent school results my parents had no choice but to transfer me to an inferior primary school when I got to the fifth grade – I could not mentally cope with the things I had to go through. That was when I

determined that when I grow up I will do my best and make every effort to protect and help children and adults suffering from discrimination.

I met my partner during my teens and we even had a daughter. Our relationship came to an end however, and now I am raising her as a single mother, with the help of my parents.

In 2015 my father completed the first Cursillo (a 3-day course of Christianity) for Roma men, which made such a profound change in his life which affected first me and my mother, and later our whole environment. More than a hundred people have participated in Cursillos through our intercession so far, which is how our communities and prayer groups have been formed.

I was offered a job at the Boldog Ceferino Roma Misszió (*Blessed Ceferino Roma Mission*) in the town of Esztergom – that was where I really embraced community building and helping people as my true calling. Boldog Emília Roma Kulturális és Hagyományörző Egyesület (*Blessed Emilia Roma Cultural and Tradition Preservation Association*) was established, of which I was elected president. It was in 2018 that we launched our programmes including camps, spiritual days, talent scouting events, distribution of donations, theatre group, Roma dance group, children’s nativity play, pilgrimages. More and more people across Hungary got to know us, we have

entered into a variety of cooperation agreements so far and we are touring the country.

In 2019 I was encouraged by residents of the town of Piliscsaba to run in the local Roma self-government election – I became a minority self-government representative (chair of the minority council). As a result, we were able to offer even more organised events and community opportunities for Roma and non-Roma people. We commemorate the victims of the Roma Holocaust each year. Our Roma dance group participated in a number of events in 2021 – including the International Eucharistic Congress where we were able to provide an insight into the culture of the Roma nationality, which was an honour, and a moving experience.



We seek to contribute to the rising of the Hungarian Roma community by creating opportunities for community programmes, work and learning. Most Roma people have been engaged in seasonal, low-skill jobs for which no special training is required, therefore it is essential that complex efforts are made to create labour market opportunities. It is also important however, that Roma people get to know, and join, communities and organisations where they can present the values of the Roma culture to make it possible to reduce prejudice in both directions.

We are also performing Roma pastoration tasks, with a focus on cultivating elements of the traditional Roma culture and strengthening Roma identity. This is served by mother tongue workshops and language courses; Roma tradition preservation associations and handicraft workshops.



I am grateful to God and my role model, that is, my father, for being able to work for children and people and, having learned from my personal

experiences, healed from my grievances, I can be of use.

*The Hungarian National Roma Platform's events make it possible for us to learn about the situation of Roma people living in other towns and villages as well. Meeting with professionals and specialist is very important so that we can learn about each other's experiences and learn from each other.*



*“even the parents of some of our students used to attend our schools”*

**Mrs. Tamás Tóth**



My husband and I live in the town of Szarvas. We have three daughters and five grandchildren. I have a teacher’s degree, an applied romology + pedagogy certificate and a social family helper certificate, plus I have a certified social worker qualification.

I dealt with the social area within the church institutional system from 1996 and later in the municipal governmental institutional system, thereafter in the autumn of 1999 I took up a job as a family helper at the child welfare service of the

Family and Child Welfare Centre of the town of Szarvas which was established in that year. After the establishment of the micro-regional system from 2006, I worked as a professional unit’s head at the Körös-szög Micro-region Multi-purpose Association’s Social and Child Welfare Institution, then from 2008 on we also operated a Biztos Kezdet Gyerekház (Sure Start Children’s House). I was appointed director of the Szarvas Family and Child Welfare Centre in 2016, in which position I have been working ever since. The institution performs the tasks of the Szarvas District Family Helper Centre and the Szarvas Municipality Family Helper Service. The Children’s House has also been operating continuously, for 15 years now, as part of the institution’s organisation.

Besides my position and tasks in the state-run institution system I was vice president of the foundation called Emberöltő Alapítvány from 2005 and have been its president since 2008. The foundation was established primarily to perform, and facilitate the performance of, social and child protection tasks. That was when I became involved with the “Tanoda” (Study Hall) programme.

Between 2006 and 2018 we were awarded grants – from EU funds – in a total of seven *Tanoda* application schemes in two towns, under my professional guidance. We are still operating two *Tanoda* type schools: the one called Csodaszarvas *Tanoda* in Szarvas and the other called Csillagtúra *Tanoda* in

Békésszentandrás. I wish to emphasise that our *Tanoda* have not been closed even for just a single day since 2006. It is quite a professional achievement for us to see that even the parents of some of our students used to attend our schools.

The population of the town of Szarvas is declining. There is a significant Roma (Olah and Romungro Gypsy) community within the town’s currently 15 thousand strong population. Experience shows in our towns that many of the disadvantaged students are non-Roma children – they are also in need of the opportunities provided by social opportunity creating services.

At our *Tanoda* we can also observe that the biggest problem of children today is, in many cases, not that they are hungry, feel cold or have other physical needs that we could not compensate but that the overwhelming majority of the children attending our institutions have unfulfilled spiritual needs. And a significant proportion of learning and behavioural issues stem from such unfulfilled needs. I am convinced that misery stems more from spiritual causes, while poverty stems more from physical causes. Of course these two often come hand in hand but still, poverty is often much easier to break out from and compensate for. It is easier to put clothes on, and feed, children living in poverty than remove them from neglect, endangerment or even abuse – an increasing number of children are living in such circumstances and not only in the most disadvantaged social groups.



One of the most difficult challenge and task of child protection work today is managing children’s problems resulting from their exposure to the virtual world. Experience of the past decade or so shows, unfortunately, that the endangerment and neglect, indeed, even abuse, of children, take place in the online space, or stem from its usage habits. In many cases even parents raising children live in the captivity of social media, a direct consequence of which is the endangerment of children.



At our Tanoda the organisation of stimulating programmes or excursions is no longer our only professional goal. Constant exposure to stimuli and the occurrence of socialisation and behaviour issues stemming from excessive activity have become a standard in the world of smartphones.

We have set emotional security as our primary professional goal – we welcome children in a clean, relaxed, orderly environment, with attention and meals. We offer them experiences they have not seen for quite some time or they may never have had. I am referring to simple things such as tranquility, security, contemplation, manual activities, joint creative work, thinking together. We try to compensate the noise to which they are continuously exposed in the digital world with silence, attention and calmness, thereby promoting their learning achievements, integration and socialisation.

I consider the thoughts of one of the most authentic and most well-known representatives of child protection, brother Csaba Bőjte, as the basis, guideline and motto of my professional work: “I love those for free whom others do not love even in exchange for money. I do not busy myself with those who are loved, taught and served by many for money.”

Meeting and consulting with other professionals in person has always been very important to me because I received and learned the most on such occasions during my work.

*“I hope I am also viewed as a positive example”*

**Sarolta Tóth-Orsós**



The course of my life has been deeply influenced by my teachers, for which I consider myself to be lucky. I also wish to be able to contribute laying down foundations for a successful future for the children and students around me.

I started my postgraduate studies in Youth Worker training at the University of Kaposvár, obtaining my first degree as a remedial teacher specialising the pedagogy of students with learning disability.

I was a founding member of the Roma Boarding School established at the university in 2012, today bearing the name of painter István Szentandrásy. During my studies I was student member of the board of the special college, participated in organising and running programmes, helped implement a talent management programme and worked with talented disadvantaged students assisting university lecturers. As an alumni student I am still participating in the programmes organised by the Roma Boarding School.

In the context of the secondary school programme of the Jesuit Roma Boarding School I was tasked with mentoring two school girls along with liaising with their private teachers, form teachers and parents as well as keeping them motivated and providing them with support. Despite their unfavourable socio-cultural backgrounds the girls passed their final exams excellent results and today both of them go to university.

I have been working for the Bárczi Gusztáv Faculty of Special Needs Education as a travelling remedial teacher ever since I obtained my degree. In the mornings I provide speech therapy for preschool children with special educational needs, while in the afternoons I am engaged in the improvement of secondary school students with learning disabilities (dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, attention deficit disorder).

Previously, I worked as a student and volunteer, and later on as an associate pedagogue, for the Tanoda (called Hangya Tanoda) of the association called Napkerék Egyesület of Kaposvár. The school has undergone considerable development in recent years. I gained a massive amount of experience concerning the individual



needs of disadvantaged students and students of special educational needs, as well as about the possibilities of improving their capabilities. One very important element of my work besides educational catch-up is the promotion of social integration, in which effective and efficient communication and cooperation with parents and with the heads and teachers of educational institutions are crucially important. During sessions and during spare time activities I lay particular attention on aspects such as social competence, environmental awareness and sustainable development to help students live a better and more healthy life in the future.

I find it highly important that during a charity run the students met with children with disabilities. It was also important for them to see multiple positive examples, that they are proud of their origins and are familiar with the past, traditions and values of the Roma community. I hope I am also viewed as a positive example.

I have received a number of awards during my work: for my talent fostering work in 2016 in Kaposvár, at the level of the institution’s general director in 2020 for my outstanding professional work performed at a very high level facilitating the education and training of students and in 2022 I received the Somogy County Roma/Gypsy Opportunity Creation award in recognition of my work in helping disadvantaged students of Roma/Gypsy origin. Receiving these awards was a great honour for me, significantly contributing to maintaining and increasing my motivation.



As far as I am concerned, it is indispensable for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of my work for disadvantaged students that I should be able to get to know and communicate with other professionals and specialists also working towards this noble goal in other towns and villages in Hungary because as they say “If you want to go fast, go alone! If you want to go far, go

together!” Participation in the events organised by the Hungarian National Roma Platform offer very good opportunities for this. Besides consulting with professionals and specialists I already knew, the programme has also provided me with opportunities for meeting new people who may be important in future cooperation.

## GOOD PRACTICES

### Iskolakultúráért - Esélyteremtésért Egyesület (Association for School Culture – Opportunity Creation)



Our association for school culture and opportunity creation called Iskolakultúráért –

Esélyteremtésért Egyesület was established in 2004 in the town of Győr. Its aim is to operate and

support programmes, development projects and training courses to improve school atmosphere, develop learning work culture and help students acquire the skills for leading a successful life. We help with the labour market and social integration primarily of disadvantaged young people – particularly of the Roma community – and promote their employability.

Most of the association's members are pedagogues, each personally representing a new development programme – later the organisation was joined by school managers, lawyers, IT specialists and visual artists adding colour to, and complementing, our operation. The association's management board has been made up of the same persons for 19 years. Our activities included the operation of training programmes and Tanoda programmes, and the organisation of conferences.

Up to 2018 we were awarded grants in application schemes – run by the European Union, Hungary and the town of Győr – for the operation of the training courses and the Tanoda programme. Since 2019 January we

have been functioning as an institution in connection with child protection in the Gyárváros district of Győr. We have a 10-strong staff of retired specialist and general teachers and social pedagogues. Our work is helped by university students – pursuing studies in



special education and social pedagogy – and retired teachers who are happy to work with children as volunteers.

We undertake to help with the development of up to 35-42 students a year. Most of the students we work with live in disadvantaged families, one third of them in Roma families. In terms of age groups, our Tanoda is attended by students of the first and second four years of primary school, vocational school and technician students, from 5-6 institutions of the town. Smaller siblings of our students have also joined us – in some cases 3-4 children attended our Tanoda from a single family. Some 80% of our new participants come to us after failing at their school.

Children of refugees arriving in our town have also been offered community and learning opportunities at our Tanoda during the past 5 years. To facilitate their social integration we have also been working on improving their cultural, social and life skills and empowerment capabilities. At the Tanoda called Győri Tanoda-Klub one of the integral parts of our programme was the promotion of career building, including an assessment of the students' capabilities and helping them to learn as many trades and professions as possible, followed by selecting secondary school for each student. We even visited various secondary schools and successful companies.



Most of our students are boys. For 3 years, we have been providing them with practical training in the world of modern high technology and manufacturing technology at the FABLAB (Resilience Innovation Facility by Tdh - Hungary) shop in Győr. The point was that they could produce objects of various sizes, such as phone holders, lamps, etc. by independently designing, 3D editing, 3D printing and laser cutting at workshops and summer FABLAB camps.

Our strength is that we manage to retain at least half of our students for a few years. Children who attended our Tanoda for two or more years have all

successfully finished, or making good progress at, their schools of choice and in their respective vocational training programmes.

Some return on a regular basis requesting our professional assistance for making progress and reporting on their achievements. They even participate in our programmes. Even our students' parents and siblings participate in our festive events, excursions and camps.



In the past few years we already organised as many as 5 or 6 major excursions a year for our students, mainly to big cities in Transdanubia, but we have also visited a chocolate factory in Austria, along with the town of Eger and mountain top called Kékestető. In the recent years we organised 3-4-day camps in boarding houses and children's resorts. The children were

accommodated in high quality two-bed rooms, were provided with smorgasbord breakfast and with evening meals, holidaying in Veszprém, Velence or Gyenesdiás.

Our programmes are assisted by our fantastic sponsor partners, we are closely cooperating with the City of Győr, the local schools, the school district and the family assistance and staff of the family helper and child welfare centre. We provided an excellent practical training facility for Széchenyi University's special education, social pedagogy and sociology students. Students from other faculties – including law, engineering and recreation – also like to come to us for voluntary practical activities. We have organised joint programmes with university lecturers and students in the summer and at Christmas. The Tanoda of Mosonmagyaróvár and Somlóvásárhely are our regular partners in the exchanging of experience and organising conferences.

Nearly every element of Győri Tanoda-Klub raises the level of social cooperation and trust and joint thinking between disadvantaged Roma

students, parents, the educational and social institutions and the higher education professionals in teacher training in the town of Győr. We have created a local community, a technical/professional workshop and club that has, during the past 19 years, saved more than a thousand underperforming disadvantaged students, including Roma students, from dropping out, and helped them to success and achievements. Moreover, our operation has created a system of social connections which would never have evolved without our Tanoda. We are looking forward to the 20th year of our institution with joy and well prepared.

The series of events organised by the National Roma Platform has enabled us to see what we are capable of when it comes to helping and what the Roma communities need.

## Hungarian Interchurch Aid



The priority objective of the organisation established in 1991 is to offer opportunities for families seeking a way out of poverty. It is in this spirit that the HIA operates its social and child welfare institutions including temporary homes for families, the Biztos Kezdet Gyerekházak (Sure Start Children's Houses), daytime care

institutions for addicts, daytime care services for psychiatric patients and social work performed for homeless people.

The Hungarian Interchurch Aid (HIA) launched its Kapaszkodó Program (Handhold Programme) 10 years ago, whose aim is, with the help of various special professionals (psychologists, lawyers, developer pedagogues, remedial teacher, therapeutic helpers) and services provided by them (development for individuals and small groups, tutoring, movement development, community and experience programmes), to effectively overcoming disadvantages brought by children from home, reduce drop-



out rates and create realistic future visions.

The first elements of the complex development programmes were launched in the temporary homes for families operated by the HIA in 2010 including vertically structured services where opportunities for social inclusion through education, early child development and creating opportunities for the parents in the labour market.

A unique pilot programme was launched in the village of Kastélyosdombó in 2013 on the basis of previous experience where customers admitted to the temporary home for families were provided with opportunities to test

themselves in the labour market in a sheltered environment, in addition to being provided with assistance to solving their housing problems. One unique feature of the programme was that parents were offered training in agriculture and livestock production and could participate in the activity of the model farm put in place at the premises of the institution. Families participating in the programme successfully were enabled to start their independent lives by moving into “life-changing houses”, supported with continued mentoring and in many cases job opportunities.



The EU programme called “Endless Possibility” launched in 2017 in the field of social inclusion was the next milestone where the HIA familiarised itself the first steps of assistance based on presence, with methodology guidance by the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta, in the Gönc district.

Partly on the basis of the above, the HIA also joined the Emerging Settlements programme – launched in 2019 – now implementing it at as many as 13 locations, providing opportunities for people living in disadvantaged regions to achieve real success by recognising and utilising their own resources, in more and more different fields (e.g. education, labour market).

The staff of the HIA are working, for the most part, with families – adults and children alike – in both social inclusion and institutional care. Children are open and interested; they make contacts easily and they look for the company of adults they find authentic. They need community occasions, they look for opportunities for spending time together but it is difficult to introduce regularity into their daily lives. The possibility of regular meetings helps to achieve lasting results.

Field staff are facing a significantly more serious task in the case of adults. The adult population living in the most disadvantaged areas bears a variety of burdens, including old patterns, daily difficulties and lack of future vision. The

primary tasks in this case are to build up a relationship based on trust and to trigger motivation. Some of our clients are not really open to change; they cannot and will not take the opportunities offered by the inclusion programmes. For them it is important that their children have more and better opportunities than they had.



We are most successful in reaching out to expectant mothers and mothers of small children; they regularly and willingly attend the mother and baby sessions organised for them and eagerly gather knowledge on child care and child raising.

The extra service capacities of the HIA constitute significant trust capital in relation to the services operated in the region by civil society organisations, municipalities and churches; on the other hand, many more signals and social problems are brought to the surface during work where physical presence is required and in some cases these even indicated needs for additional tasks to be taken care of by local social service providers. Forming local partnerships is indispensable for managing these.

The implementation of the programmes led to the forming of many a new partnership at district and municipal level. In implementing the Emerging Settlements programme the staff assigned to the Jelenlét Pont (*Presence Point*) work striving to close cooperation with local schools, kindergartens, district nurses, municipalities and all other relevant actors.

Most local actors are indisputably involved in the lives of disadvantaged people with the best intentions, however, if they do not perform their activities aimed at helping with their social inclusion on the basis of shared values and directions, they will stand little chance of accomplishing their objectives, that is, providing the most disadvantaged people with actual support. Local informal and formal cooperation mechanisms and historical reasons must be approached with respect – by learning about, and accepting, them it will be possible to develop effective and efficient cooperation mechanisms.

*At the events of the Roma platform we gained an insight into the work of those present from practical implementation to more theoretical levels. Difficulties, criticisms and suggestions for solutions were outlined and they were understood by the staff of the Ministry of Interior.*

*Good practices were presented and success stories were told and inspired field staff members who are sometimes overwhelmed by uncertainty and feel as though they do not have the necessary means and instruments.*

*As far as social inclusion is concerned, the aim is to find again and rekindle the strength of local communities in various towns and villages.*



**Pisont István Tehetségkutató, Fejlesztő és Gondozó Alapítvány (Pisont István Talent Scouting, Fostering and Promotion Foundation)**



*“My siblings and I grew up in deep poverty. Our mother raised 5 children, always struggling to make ends meet. We had a difficult childhood, but our mother’s love made up for all of our shortcomings and we*

*lived a happy life as a family. Sports, in particular playing football, mean the only way out for us. There always was someone in our lives to help us along the way. István grew up to be a Hungarian top league player who made it to the national team and proved his skills internationally as well. András made it to the Hungarian top league and was selected to play in the junior national squad. Richárd played in the Hungarian secondary league and was selected to play in the junior national squad.”*

The foundation called Pisont István Alapítvány was established in 2015 with the aim of providing talented – Roma and non-Roma – young people living in Hungary with opportunities through sports.

The Foundation wishes to reach out to as many children as possible to explore their talent and provide them with support adapted to their capabilities, for building up a career in football, to find their way to the right coach and club, and prove themselves there.

Integration in a new environment is often difficult for children coming from poverty, from disadvantaged families – or indeed, the new environment is not prepared for their arrival. The Foundation aims to support talented children in such situations, help them overcome obstacles and promote their integration. To this end, the Foundation also seeks to provide mentoring and even assets (sports equipment).

The Foundation believes that origin or social disadvantage should not be an obstacle to the unlocking of talent and the development of future generations of players. They hold that it is important that children do not deny their origin or situation and that communities are inclusive at the same time.

They make a point of finding talented individuals who – because of some difficult situation in life – have not yet been able to show their skills to others, or are prevented by something from doing so.

They think that during their work with children cooperation with education institutions, child welfare institutions and local sports associations and clubs are indispensable in both finding talents and helping them along their way.





The Foundation organises nationwide selection programmes, assessing and selecting some two hundred – two hundred and fifty children each year. The most gifted kids can make progress in locations such as the Bozsik Stadium, Ferencváros or

Debrecen. The high class venues and the role models playing there are a further motivation for the children.

The Foundation implemented a nationwide Roma sports programme in 2015, which they had an opportunity to present even in Brussels in the spring of 2016.

Young talents discovered by the Foundation: Patrik Farkas and Erik Farkas (Liverpool), Norbert Balogh (Genoa, Debrecen, Kisvárdá), István Tánczos (Budapesti Honvéd).

In its operations the Foundation lays emphasis on community building as well, along with awareness raising.

András Pisont delivered presentations in the event entitled “successful life paths, role models” as part of the events organised by the Hungarian National Roma Platform in Békés Greater County, and in Gyomaendrőd he presented the activities of their Foundation as part of the out-of-school programmes and recreational programmes.

## Somogyvár Község Roma Nemzetiségi Önkormányzata (Roma Minority Government of the Town of Somogyvár)



It is particularly important for us in the opportunity creating programmes that every citizen should have equal opportunities and receive equal treatment in every town and village in Hungary. The municipality has set itself a goal of promoting the living standards of disadvantaged families and of providing them with increased care, attention and patronage.

We started effective community work to prevent poverty from spreading and deepening. We can more efficiently help with the social integration of marginalised people in the community by providing them good community life, enhancing their self-confidence and helping them solve their problems.

Since 2015 we have been continuously involving Roma people in the public employment scheme. Why are we doing this? It is key that we manage to motivate them to do the good thing, to provide them with guides and confidence for helping themselves with which they can move forward step by step in their daily lives. On the other hand, we also consider it important to take measures to improve mental health and self-awareness, and help integration into the world of work. In some cases we are facing difficulties because the lifestyles of some families are different from those of others. There are no set daily rules. We have been working during the past five years – with the support of EU-funded programmes – to help as many Roma individuals as possible in our county to complete primary school and find jobs. We established a good relationship, for example, with the Kéthelyi Integrált Szociális Otthon (integrated social home of the town of Kéthely) where we involved 42 participants in a social nurse and caregiver course under the project entitled “Nő az esély” (Chances are Increasing). During the course the participants were even paid salaries.

We are the only Roma minority government in Hungary that has been maintaining a Biztos Kezdet Gyerekház (Sure Start Children’s House) – for 5 years now. It is highly important for us that we can ensure the possibility of healthy development for all members of society, in particular, for disadvantaged children and children who are recipients of regular child protection benefits.



At the institution called Több Eséllyel Biztos

Kezdet Gyerekház (Sure Start Children’s House) strong priority is attached to the weekly Parents’ Forum where, besides sharing experiences, parents could discuss matters relating to child raising, the development of children, or even illnesses, with the involvement of district nurses, the head of the children’s house or paediatrician, from time to time. In our developer programmes mothers can form a clear picture of the areas in which, and the extent to which, their infants or small children are lagging behind in terms of development.



We try to make birthdays and namedays to be unique festive events. We colour birthday hats, attach “Happy Birthday” stickers, adorn the room, for older children we make glitter tattoos and

spend time playing children’s music and baking cakes.

We can host 15 children aged 7-14 at our camps – we have visited with our campers a number of famous and important towns of Hungary, including Budapest, Sümeg, Nagyvázsony, Pécs and Keszthely.

In maintaining our partnerships we strive continuously and with great openness to enhance our relations with local governments, Roma civil society organisations and social institutions in our region.

Each year we celebrate and nurture our culture and traditions with a cultural event. Our local government presents a Santa Claus package to young children aged 0-3 years old as part of a festive event, every year. We hand out gifts wrapped in a shoebox to every disadvantaged family before Christmas. Every year we light the Advent candle together with the Roma community over a hot cup of tea, discussing the events, difficulties, joys and lessons of the past year.



In addition to resolving topical local matters and problems another important achievement is improved cohesion, cooperation and communication within the local community; each of which is part of the foundation for efficient and effective work. We spare no effort to ensure that the local residents get to know us and gather the

courage to come to us with their problems.

## Szteleho Gábor Integrált Szociális és Gyermekvédelmi Intézmény (Szteho Gábor Integrated Social and Child Protection Institution)



An institutional system operating at sixteen sites in Budapest and two other towns in Pest county, performing child protection, specialised care and social long-term residential care related tasks.

We provide integrated residential care in special children's homes, for infants and young children aged 0-3 years (up to school age in the case of siblings) placed in care on a temporary basis, taken into foster care, as well as for children placed in care on a temporary basis, taken into in foster care and children with special needs, along with aftercare for young adults, in children's homes and residential homes.

Our primary task is to provide children admitted to the children's homes with residential care and services – taking into account their personalities and individual needs to the maximum possible extent – facilitating the development of their personalities and their return to their own families or their placement to foster or adoptive parents.

Another important task for us is to nurture sibling relationships of the children in care. Siblings admitted simultaneously are preferably placed in the same group and regular contact is ensured between siblings placed in different groups or children's homes. The homes promote and ensure as frequent contacts as possible between the children in care and their relatives, taking into account the requests of such relatives and the daily programmes of the children.

Care and assistance is provided in special residential homes in groups in family atmosphere for children and young adults with mental disabilities, co-disabilities, organic disorders, psychiatric disorders, socialisation difficulties and severe communication skills deficits, compensating for their deficits in a way adapted to their individual characteristics. Special emphasis is laid, in the

development of children and young adults with special needs, on the protection of children's rights and personality rights, and on promoting independent activities of the persons in care.

The homes for people with disabilities is a form of service provided for people with disabilities who do have a family background and those taken into foster care, where they are provided with capacity building and therapeutic activities aligned to their particular disabilities, along with early development, generative preparation and movement therapy. Most of the people in our care are also affected by neurological, psychiatric, musculoskeletal, sensory and metabolic diseases as well, therefore we make sure that everyone is provided with the necessary high standard healthcare services as well.



Our Institution is linked to the function of social inclusion through two areas. Our primary and most important task is to promote the social integration of children living in state care. Failure at school plays a significant role in the development of deviant behaviour, therefore it is crucially important that the children concerned are admitted by educational institutions where their deficits, if any, are reduced, and that it is ensured that they spend their spare time in a meaningful and useful way. It is also important that the children admitted to such institutions should not lose contact with their biological families, to the extent possible.

Another area is the employment of disadvantaged Roma women which was also implemented through the CCHOP-7.1.1-16-2017-00001 "Nő az esély" ("Chances are Increasing") programme. Our institution has undertaken to employ 14 persons through the project – they have been/are working as childminders in the specialised child protection care or as nurses-carers in specialised social care.

One human policy requirement that is observed in our Institution is that we do not discriminate between our staff members – work ethic and performance are the only criteria taken into account in the evaluation of the employees.

There has been no conflict or problem among our workers during the course of the programme; the Roma women were well-received and their integration



was facilitated by the staff. More than 50% of the participants continued to work for us even after the completion of the programme. Even those who terminated their legal relationship with our Institution continued to work in this field, finding jobs closer to their places of residence. It should be noted that our employees'

perception of Roma people's attitude to work improved significantly as a result of the programme.

Opportunities were created at the events of the National Roma Platform for meeting regional and local participants of various levels (e.g. representatives of church service providers and municipalities, the representative of Roma pastoration) where experience could be exchanged in the realisation of the objectives, in dialogues on the tasks to be carried out and even in the evaluation of achievements and failures. I met a number of highly valuable people and gathered lots of important information which I will be able to use and utilise in my work.

## Further role models and good practices

A number of organisations appeared as partners, contributors delivering presentations and as good practices, in the project entitled “Reinforcement of the Hungarian National Roma Platform – 2022-2023”.

Almamellék-Somogyhárságyi Általános Iskola és Kollégium (primary school and student dormitory)

Babócsa Municipal Government

Hungarian Baptist Aid

Baranya Greater County Roma National Minority Government

Baranya Greater County Self-Government

Battonya Municipal Government

Békés Greater County Self-Government

Békés Greater County Roma National Minority Government

Békés Municipal Government

Blessed Ceferino Institute

Cigány Értelmiség Érdekvédelmi Egyesülete (interest protection association of Roma intellectuals)

Czinka Panna Roma Cultural Association

Csobánka Municipal Government

Csobánka Roma Nationality Self-Government

Csodaműhely Egyesület

Dél-Alföldi Társadalmi Esélyteremtési Igazgatóság (Southern Great Plain Directorate of Social Inclusion)

Emberöltő Alapítvány (foundation)

Gandhi Gimnázium Közhasznú Nonprofit Kft.

Gyomaendrőd Municipal Government

Győr Municipal Government

Győr-Moson-Sopron Greater County Self-Government

Győr-Moson-Sopron Greater County Police Headquarters

Győr-Moson-Sopron Greater County Roma National Minority Government

Iskolakultúráért - Esélyteremtésért Egyesület (Association for School Culture – Opportunity Creation)

Jelen és Jövő Gyermekeiért Alapítvány (foundation for the children of today and the future)

Kadarkút Municipal Government

Kaposvár Municipal Government

Kaposvári Tácsics Mihály Gimnázium (secondary grammar school)

Katolikus Karitasz - Caritas Hungarica

Kira Vendéglő – Hungary’s first Roma restaurant

Kunágota Municipal Government

Magyar Agrár és Élettudományi Egyetem (Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences)

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary

Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta

Magyar Máltai Szeretetszolgálat Egyesület (Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta)

Magyar Pünkösdi Egyház (Hungarian Pentecostal Church)

Magyar Vöröskereszt Győri Igazgatóság (Hungarian Red Cross Győr Directorate)

Mezőkovácsháza Municipal Government

Monor Municipal Government

Mosonmagyaróvár Municipal Government

Nagybajomi Csokonai Vitéz Mihály Általános Iskola és Kollégium (primary school and student dormitory)

Napkerék Egyesület (association)

Nyugat Dunántúli Regionális Krízis Ambulancia (regional crisis clinic of West-Transdanubia)

Zoltán Orsós parson

Hungarian Interchurch Aid

Lutheran Roma Vocational College of Pécs

Pest Greater County Self-Government

Pest Greater County Roma National Minority Government

Piliscsaba Roma Nationality Self-Government

Pisont István Tehetségkutató, Fejlesztő és Gondozó Alapítvány (Pisont István Talent Scouting, Fostering and Promotion Foundation)

István Pisont footballer of the national team

Hungarian Reformed Church Aid

Sarkad Municipal Government

Sellye Municipal Government

Somogy Greater County Self-Government

Somogy Greater County Roma National Minority Government

Somogyvár Község Roma Nemzetiségi Önkormányzata (Roma Minority Government of the Town of Somogyvár)

SZÁMÍTHATSZ RÁNK! Egyesület (association)

Szany Municipal Government

Szany Roman Catholic parish

Szarvas Város Roma Nemzetiségi Önkormányzata (Roma Minority Government of the town of Szarvas)

Szent Erzsébet Alapítvány (foundation)

Szent Imre Katolikus Általános Iskola Siklós (Catholic primary school of the town of Siklós)

St. Martin's Caritas Foundation

Szentandrásy István Egyetemi Roma Szakkollégium (Roma Boarding School)

Szigetvár Municipal Government

Sztehlo Gábor Integrált Szociális és Gyermekvédelmi Intézmény (Sztehlo Gábor Integrated Social and Child Protection Institution)

Tan Kapuja Buddhista Gimnázium (Buddhist secondary grammar school)

General Directorate of Social Inclusion

Zsámbéki Premontrai Technikum, Szakképző Iskola és Gimnázium  
(Premonstratensian technical school, vocational school and secondary grammar school of the town of Zsámbék)