

THARA Romani Zor! 2015 – 2019 Project Profile

<http://www.volkshilfe.at/thara-romani-zor>

<https://www.facebook.com/roma.thara>

A brief overview of Thara's main activities

Individual job, career and education counselling

Individual counselling addresses a wide range of clients' issues and is one of



THARA's core competencies. Clients' needs and goals are extremely varied and range from help writing a CV and a job application to support finding jobs (especially online.) Finding the right adult education course to fit the client's aspirations and goals is also an important aspect of Thara's work. Many Roma lack formal education, vocational training or language skills

and seek advice and support in finding the right course or training programme.

In some cases, overcoming hurdles which prevent clients from finding work have to be tackled first. In such cases, the ability of Thara counsellors to contact institutions with which clients may have problems is helpful.

Clients also appreciate the fact that the counselling sessions are longer and more intensive than elsewhere. They also like the fact that Romnja work as counsellors, often feeling more "at home" with them than with counsellors from a different ethnic group.

Counselling is offered in German, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, Romani and English.

Pilot educational workshops

1.) Educational workshops designed to offer basic skills and knowledge which are necessary for finding work or improving one's status in the labour market are the second core competence of the project.

For many Roma who have come to Austria from other countries, a lack of formal education and language skills pose problems in finding good employment or improving their status. Very often, their informal skills are impressive, but they are forced to work in low wage jobs due to a lack of language skills.

In order to help clients improve their chances at finding better work or entering the labour market, THARA offers workshops in which the most important basic skills and knowledge—including language skills will be taught. The series of workshops will be held twice a year, free of charge. The groups are to be no larger than 7 participants and the experienced trainer, who has previously worked for Thara, is bi-lingual, which guarantees perfect communication between the participants and the trainer. All topics are directly linked to employment

issues and include basic computer skills, language skills and important information pertaining to the Austrian labour market and relevant institutions.

2.) A special workshop for women who have had traumatic experiences (war, migration, violence) which impede their ability to find stability in life and thus, as a consequence, employment and development is offered in cooperation with FemSüd, a women's health clinic. This workshop is also a pilot project as it is not yet known whether the response from the target group will be positive or not. What can be said, however, is that many Romnja are afraid of speaking openly about the traumatic experiences they have had. Also, it can be observed that many of them are unwilling to accept therapeutic help as they view this as a "weakness" or a sign of "mental illness". There is still very little understanding of what therapy can do to help overcome the crippling effects of traumatization.

Thara "Community Work"

One of the pillars of Thara's success through the years has been the fact that some of the original Thara team dating back to 2005-06 are still working in the project. This has given the team members the opportunity to build up a reputation of reliability and trustworthiness in the Roma communities over time. "Community work" is a concept which was developed by Thara and consists mainly of various activities which connect Thara to the target groups. This can include communication, either personal or through media, participation in events at which many Roma gather, social and informal contacts but also cultivating contacts to the various communities from which Thara draws its clients. "Community Work" is a good example for intensive and necessary participation of a project in the lives of the target groups it is working for and with. It provides opportunities for effective communication and dialogue which would otherwise not take place.

THARA's Facebook

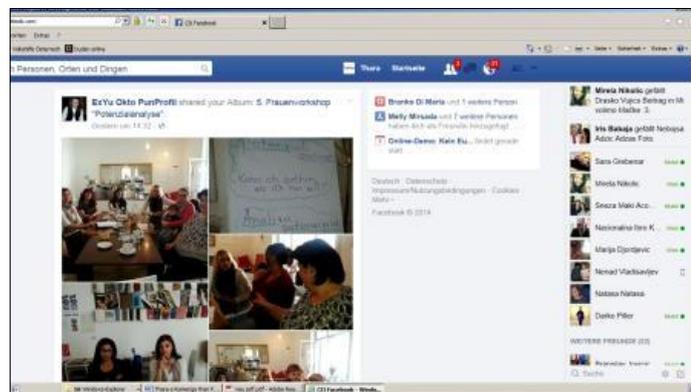
presence (since 2013)

www.facebook.com/roma.thara

(also an example of "Community Work") has grown steadily since its creation. A popular feature of Thara's Facebook page is a group which features current employment opportunities.

Facebook is also used to

advertise and report about activities which have taken place and are of interest to members of the public who couldn't attend.



Thara "Infotainment" Events



These events combine important information (mostly relating to employment topics) and social gatherings. Guest speakers are professionals in their field and often bilingual. After the initial input session, the audience can ask the speaker questions and

exchange contact data. Often, members of the audience make appointments to see the speakers at a later date. After the input session, there is often a concert or some other form of cultural offering put on by members of Roma associations with which Thara works together closely.



Roma-Awareness-Raising Workshops

This workshop, which has been developed over a period of several years and has been held for a large number of participants, includes information about

- Roma history, language and culture(s)
- traditional Roma-family structures and values
- and the situation of Roma in Europe today

The structure and content of the workshop has been adapted to accommodate the interests and questions of the participants. The trainers are THARA team members. The fact that Romnja themselves are trainers is considered to be the most positive aspect of these workshops as the participants appreciate the answers and anecdotal explanations provided by the trainers.

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