



**European Crime Prevention Award**  
**and**  
**EUCPN Best Practice Conference 2011**  
**Project Entry Form**

**ECPA/BPC 2011**

**Please answer the following questions in English.**

Organizations: Community Fund "Library and Cultural Club" - Pleven and Regional Police Department – Pleven – Ministry of Interior.

Duration: 2010 – 2011

Location: Bulgaria, Pleven Municipality – villages Bukovlak, Bohot, Brashlyanitsa, Tarnene and Yasen.

1. Project title:

„The Family Starts With The Children“.

2. Please, give a short general description of the project.

The project introduced an innovative approach to prevent the criminal behaviour of children of Roma origin who live in the smallest settlements in Pleven municipality territory. The project achieved its aim through:

- creating art clubs in the local Library and Cultural Clubs for preventive work with children through art;
- School for Parents to increase the responsibility of the parents in bringing up their children;
- Public Councils integrating the local communities and authorities to Roma problems, participation in solving these problems.

The project activities are performed in five multiethnic villages Bukovlak, Bohot, Brashlyanitsa, Tarnene and Yasen. In these areas live social excluded Roma communities.

These are the poorest families which often have many children. Therefore often their only income is the social benefits. They can not find vacancies because of the lack of professional qualifications. Roma children drop out early from their schools and characteristic traits of the majority of them are the deviant behavior and the illegal and criminal actions. In these villages, due to the territorial remoteness and the lack of specialized organizations and institutions, Roma children are in the most risky groups.

The project is performed by Community Fund "Library and Cultural Club" - Pleven whose major partner is Regional Police Department – Pleven – Ministry of Interior. The project has created a network of partnerships involving, Pleven Municipality, The Association of Mayors and Deputy Mayors „Miziya-2006“, "Together" Association of Village Youths, Association "Youth Bureau for Social Services and Civil Initiatives".



3. Please, describe the objectives of the project.

The major aim of the project is to introduce an innovative and sustainable model for prevention of crime and criminal behavior of Roma children through the influence of art.

- creating art clubs in the local Library and Cultural Clubs as an alternative spaces for education and personal development of Roma children in five multiethnic villages Bukovlak, Bohot, Brashlyanitsa, Tarnene and Yasen.
- Increasing the parents' capacities and responsibilities, through information and direct influence on the parents in the School for Parents.
- Increasing the civil activity of the village communities, through the creation of Public Councils responsible for the support of the children of Romani descent, who are at risks of committing crime.

4. How was the project implemented?

For the effective and useful performance of the project activities, a research was done which observed the causes for the anti-social actions of Roma children. The research also examined the capacity and the interests of Roma parents, as well as the possibilities of the local communities for participation in the project. On the basis of this research was developed an innovative approach for prevention, that was implemented in the five villages.

Art clubs were built up in suitable places in the local Library and Cultural Clubs, work programs were developed; and specialists and volunteers who were educated and prepared for work with the target groups were called. The children groups were formed by means of a suitable technique that used special criteria that guaranteed the accessibility in the formation of these groups.

In these Art clubs Roma children are gaining experience in the areas of painting, dancing, music and theater. Well-educated people from these villages, librarians and teachers assist the young people in their work. In addition a mobile team of a psychologist, a social worker and a pedagogue work with the children performing both group and individual activities.

"The School for Parents" accomplished group and individual talks with parents and other family members of the children from the target group. The working plan was developed on the basis of the weak points in the knowledge or in the level of acquired information of each parent that were shown by the research.

For involving the inhabitants of the five villages, special Social Councils were created. Their members became the village mayors, the Principals of the schools, and respected local leaders from these villages. As a result of the activity of the highly respected members of these villages charity campaigns were launched aiming for the material and moral support for these children and their families.

5. Were partners involved in planning and / or implementation of the project? If so, who were they, and what were their roles?

Major partner of the project is Regional Police Department – Pleven - Ministry of Interior. Specialists from the Police Department developed the methodology of the research, as well as the analysis of the results and the creation of analysis Report. They also made special suggestions and recommendations for the future realization of the project. Members of Regional Police Department – Pleven – Ministry of Interior took part in the education of the teams of "Public educators". Police experts are also lecturers in the School for Parents.

Partners of the project are also the five Library and Cultural Clubs in the villages Bukovlak, Bohot, Brashlyanitsa, Tarnene and Yasen. "Art clubs" and "School for Parents" are set up in



these Library and Cultural Clubs. Also, the workers in these Library and Cultural Clubs are engaged in the leading of the art works, as well as in the coordination of the project activities on local level.

The Association of Mayors and Deputy Mayors „Miziya-2006“ provided the direct participation of the mayors in the creation and coordination of the work of the Public Councils in the 5 villages.

The Association of the Village youths “Together” mobilized the young in the five villages to launch charity campaigns connected with the project.

Pleven Municipality as a partner secured the financial stability of the project after its finalizing, through financing the leading organization from the Municipality budget.

6. How did you build in plans to measure the performance of the project? Has the project been evaluated? How, and by whom?

A Plan for Interior Monitoring and Assessment was developed after the start of the project. It contained quality and quantity indicators, as well as tools for collecting information for their reporting. Representatives of partner organizations took part in a monitoring team. A regular research is being done as well as queries. Their aim is to determine the progress, results and level of influence of the project.

7. What were the results? How far were the objectives of the project achieved?

The planned aims are achieved. The innovative working model for Roma children in the Municipality is successfully introduced. As a result of the project in 2011:

- No anti-social actions of Roma children are registered in these areas;
- Roma children from the target groups haven't yet dropped out from school and continue their education;
- Not one early marriage is registered, just the other way round – three marriages of children from the target groups were postponed until they come of age.
- As a result of the increased responsibility of the parents, not one child from these villages was given to a state institution.

8. Are there reports or documents available on the project? In print or on the Web? Please, give references to the most relevant ones.

Three reports were completed during the implementation of the project. A Model for the development of the method has been made. This model will be spread to other villages with multiethnic population. This will enable these smaller towns and villages to deal with the criminal actions of children. The scheme can also be used in places with isolated Roma groups or just with a high rate of criminal activity. This technique uses art to make children familiar with the common human values and behaviors. This enables them to integrate with the others and helps them stop their anti-social behaviour.

9. Please, write a one page description of the project.

The model highlights crucial questions, connected with the crime, committed by Roma children in Northern Bulgarian villages, and with the prevention of these actions. Diverse tools are introduced, in order to influence the lives of Roma groups. Their integration now is easier, thanks to the radical new method. This technique aims integration and prevention of illegal actions with the assistance of art and science. The most important accent is put on Roma children with dangerous or criminal behaviour. The method is useful not only for Roma people. The other inhabitants of these villages have overcome their prejudices and actively help and encourage Roma children in the activities of the project. This obviously contributed to the positive change in the atmosphere of these five villages.



The project consists of 4 main components, each of which aims the prevention of illegal and criminal actions of Roma children and families of five villages in Pleven Municipality. The project made easier the integration of isolated Roma groups in the villages of Bukovlak, Bohot, Brashlyanitsa, Tarnene and Yasen. The regional Library and Cultural Clubs and culture centres were involved in the process of implementation. Exactly these places gave space to Roma children to develop their social and artistic abilities. They became more educated people, able to develop their abilities in different art or science spheres.

**Component 1** - Art clubs were created in the buildings of the regional Library and Cultural Clubs. Teachers, librarians, highly-educated people volunteered and worked with the groups of children. Each group consist of 12 children each child is between 8 and 12 years old. Each group has an individual program based on the interests of the children and on their abilities. Different techniques were developed. Diverse tools were used by the volunteers in order to achieve maximum results. An additional program for Social Abilities was also included in the project. It consisted of three major points: "Nurturing program" – it enables the children to have daily breakfasts in the clubs. An interesting fact is that the children take part in the cooking process and this enriches their abilities, knowledge and skills.

"Program for friendship" – different interactive games were used in order to build up common human values and to remove the aggressiveness and violence of children.

"Shoulder Educational Program" – giving the children information and knowledge about their traditional ethno-cultural customs and habits.

**Component 2** – A Mobile Centre for Public Support was created. Its main purpose was to talk with Roma families and give Roma children useful suggestions and advice. The members of these Centers were a policeman, a teacher, a pedagogue and a psychologist. They effectively help Roma children in overcoming their problems, such as illegal actions, cases of leaving school prematurely.

**Component 3** - School for Parents. Experts of the problems of the target groups have regular meetings and talks with the relatives or the parents of the children. The talks are made in accordance with the problems and needs of Roma families.

The 4-th **Component** is addressed to the local communities in these villages. Non-Roma people are made familiar with Roma problems. They have overcome their prejudices and ethnical intolerance. Public Councils have been formed in every village. The regional leaders, such as mayors, school teachers and Principals have been involved in the work of these centres. They have organised charity campaigns and given the children space to expose the products of their work. The Public Centres also were engaged in the distribution of books, clothes and foods that were given to Roma families in charity campaigns.

The model is successful, because it introduces radical new techniques and methods in order to educate integrate and support Roma children. Using the power of art Roma families are integrated, their illegal or anti-social actions have been reduced to minimum. Some of the strong sides of the project are the mobilization of the local resources, the changing the regional libraries, and the local population, which is now able to understand Roma problems, as well as the creation of innovative organizations. It can be inferred that the project can be beneficial and multiplied to places with Roma problems.