



## **FRIENDS OF ROMANO LAV ANNUAL REPORT**

**2017 – 2018**

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## **Welcome! Friends of Romano Lav Message from the Trustees**

We would like to warmly welcome you to Friends of Romano Lav's Annual Report for 2017-18. Please take a few moments to read through this report and reflect with us on what has been another very busy and productive year for the organisation. From International Roma Day to photography workshops and exhibitions, from the very first Govanhill International Carnival to winning a prestigious international arts prize for '*The Roma Guide: 10 facts people should know about Roma*' project - not to mention the many creative performances and events throughout! – our programme has been packed with a huge variety of events and activities. None of these activities would have been possible without the generous support of our funders, as acknowledged in this report, as well as the hard work of the Friends of Romano Lav team. 2017-18 has also been an exciting year of change and development for our board; we increased our capacity by recruiting four new Trustees, and intend to continue on this exciting path of expansion as we see our project diversify and grow. Further, we

created a new permanent staff role of Project Assistant, employing Rahela Cirpaci, who previously worked with us as a member of sessional staff, and who has proved to be invaluable to all aspects of our project delivery. As ever, we are indebted to our staff and particularly to our team of young sessional workers and the wider communities they represent for their enormous contributions to the project's development over this last year, whose dedication and enthusiasm never fail to ensure that our events are a success. As Trustees, we would like to extend our thanks to everyone involved with Friends of Romano Lav and we look forward to an equally active and successful 2018-19.

### **Opre Roma!**

Lorraine Barrie

Colin Clark

David Donaldson

George Gorman

Jim Monaghan

Ashli Mullen

Fatima Uygun

## About Friends of Romano Lav

### Context

Roma have been historically one of the most systematically oppressed and marginalised populations in Europe, subject to violence, persecution and discrimination. Despite often fleeing racist persecution, Roma continue to experience this legacy of oppression today, with discrimination and destitution exacerbating the everyday struggle to survive. Roma are Europe's largest minority and have been identified as its most vulnerable ethnic group. The extraordinary levels of poverty, discrimination, and inequalities in both opportunities and outcomes in employment, education, health and housing that Roma continue to face led to the establishment of the Decade of Roma Inclusion in 2005 (2005-2015), which aimed 'to close the gap' between Roma and non-Roma within ten years. Whilst this initiative raised the profile of the issues that Roma face, increased expertise, and made some incremental (if uneven) progress on particular outcomes, the efforts were insufficient to achieve the structural changes necessary to have a substantial impact on Romani lives.



### Roma Voice

Friends of Romano Lav (SC044474) was established in 2013 and has worked as an independent SCIO since 2014 to challenge the racism, discrimination and disadvantage experienced by migrant Roma communities in Glasgow. The words '*Romano Lav*' mean 'Roma voice', which reflects the key founding principle of our organisation and the continuing objective that underpins all of our work: to ensure that Romani people, especially youth, are involved as active agents in all decisions that affect their lives. Friends of Romano Lav exists then, not to speak *for* Roma, but to work *with* our local Roma communities to ensure that Romani voices are heard in all relevant local social, political, and cultural domains and that we are led by their concerns. We use community development as a tool to achieve the advancement of citizenship of Roma communities by involving them in decision-making processes, creating a sense of ownership, and increasing participation in community activities.

## Where We Work: Govanhill

Friends of Romano Lav is based in Govanhill in Glasgow, where approximately 3500 of Scotland's total estimated 4000-5000 Roma reside (SM Gateway, 2013). The majority of Glasgow's Roma live in Govanhill, which is a neighbourhood in the South of Glasgow with a population estimate of 14,716, although this is thought to be an underestimate (Govanhill Regeneration Group, 2017). Govanhill has historically been a destination for new migrants, who have tended to form communities and settle. Whilst Glasgow's population is three times as diverse as the national level (with 12% of its residents identifying within minority categories, compared to 4% at the national level), Govanhill is ten times as diverse, with over one third (40%) of its residents from ethnic minority groups (Scottish Census 2011). Govanhill experiences a complex range of social and economic challenges and is considered one of the most deprived zones in Scotland. For example:

- Approximately 2,272 households in the Govanhill area are overcrowded, which is 24% of all households in the area. This increases to 34% for households with children, which is 88% above the Glasgow average (Govanhill Regeneration Group, 2017).
- Housing density, increasing population through migration, overcrowding and high levels of occupancy define Govanhill as one of the most densely populated areas in Glasgow (Crosshill and Govanhill Community Council, 2015).
- The population in Govanhill classified as income deprived is 24.5%, which is 14% above the Glasgow average, and 23% employment deprived, which is 16% above the Glasgow average (Understanding Glasgow, 2015). This rises to 42% in some areas (Clark, 2017). There is evidence of increasing income deprivation, with average weekly household incomes decreasing from £334 in 2011 to £283 in 2015 (IBP Strategy and Research for the Govanhill Community Development Trust, 2015). This is likely to be partly driven by welfare reform.
- Around a quarter of Govanhill's residents are living in poverty and the child poverty rate is 30% (Govanhill Regeneration Group, 2017).

The outcomes of these problems of poverty, overcrowding, and subsequent environmental issues are reinforced and exacerbated by consistently negative media coverage of the area and its 'community tensions'. This perpetuates divisions and a culture of blame. As the largest ethnic minority in the area and a 'new' migrant population, having largely come from Slovakia and Romania from EU enlargement in 2004 onwards, Roma are often at the sharp end of poor housing, labour market precariousness, and exploitation. Specific challenges for Roma in this context include literacy and language barriers, which mean that any employment opportunities tend to be low-skilled and low-waged. Roma who are working are often engaged in casual labour in chicken factories, food processing plants, supermarket warehouses, car washes, and in the agricultural and hospitality industries. For Roma women, this is exacerbated by the disproportionate levels of child caring responsibilities that make finding employment or accessing education more difficult.

## Why Friends of Romano Lav Exists

To combat these problems and improve the quality of life for Roma in Glasgow, we have initiated a range of projects that aim to integrate Roma communities in society through creating opportunities for capacity building and voluntary work, promotion of intercultural dialogue, and challenging discrimination. From our experience working with young Romani people, we believe that it is important to start this work from an early age. There are many negative perceptions and stereotypes regarding Roma people that need to be challenged and dismantled. Roma must be welcome, present, and visible in the public sphere and their contribution to our



communities and to society must be valued. Investing in young Romani people's capacities and in their prospects now is a critical factor in changing their future. We believe that taking steps towards overcoming these structural disadvantages and improving opportunities for representation and participation could contribute, in a small way, towards breaking the centuries-long cycle of poverty and discrimination they face and for future generations of Roma to come.

### Our objectives:

- to prevent and to relieve poverty among members of Roma communities living in Glasgow;
- to advance arts and culture, and in particular to raise awareness, understanding and appreciation of Roma culture among all local communities;
- to provide recreational activities, with the object of improving the quality of life for the local community as a whole and with particular reference to encouraging members of the Glasgow Roma communities to participate;
- to advance education, in particular supporting training and work experience and improving employability especially for Romani young people; and
- to promote racial harmony, equality and diversity, with a view to addressing the social exclusion suffered by members of Glasgow Roma communities.



## 2017 at a Glance: From April onwards

### 2017 Glasgow International Roma Day

International Roma Day (8th April) is celebrated every year internationally. This was established in 1990 by the World Romani Congress of the International Romani Union as a day dedicated to celebrating Roma culture and raising awareness about issues faced by Roma.



In Glasgow, International Roma Day has been celebrated since 2013 with a large public procession and a related series of events celebrating Roma history, traditions and the cultural contribution of Roma people. It is organised by Friends of Romano Lav, community members, and partner organisations. As a relatively new community in Glasgow, Roma are faced with some of the discrimination that they have been subject to historically, so International Roma day also raises awareness about the issues that Roma still face. International Roma Day provides a crucial space for Roma and their neighbours to interact and to celebrate Roma pride - tackling social exclusion whilst instilling a sense of empowerment and support from the local community.





Key preparations were undertaken particularly by young people in advance of the celebratory procession around Govanhill on 8 April at a community placard making workshop. The messages we produced to display on these placards reflected our pride in our communities, in our local neighbourhood in all of its diversity and multicultural, and our aspirations towards unity, respect, and meaningful inclusion. As some of our young people put it:

***Proud of Govanhill! Proud Roma; Proud Human! Roma Make Glasgow!***



The procession on the day saw Roma from Slovakia, Romania, the Czech Republic, Poland, Bulgaria, Scotland, and England marching through Govanhill. We closed our day by offering traditional and truly delicious food from Poland, Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia at a small reception at the Govanhill Baths.





International Roma Day events show the power of community initiatives and are a result of team work and collective action. Govanhill streets were filled with colourful placards offering many messages of hope, unity, and solidarity. It shows that together we can overcome barriers and build community cohesion.



***Opre Roma!***



### **Employability workshop with BEMIS (2 June 2017)**

We hosted an insightful workshop on 2 June facilitated by the employability advisors from BEMIS (**Black and Ethnic Minority Infrastructure in Scotland**), who work with young people from minority backgrounds to enhance employability and foster greater labour market inclusion. The workshop was focused in particular on Modern Apprenticeship opportunities. But we also discussed the basics of job interviews and discussed more advanced methods of tackling competency-based questions and 'selling' ourselves. There were also one-to-one sessions to discuss tailoring applications and CVs to every employer. And by the end of the session, one of our young people had secured an interview for the very next week!

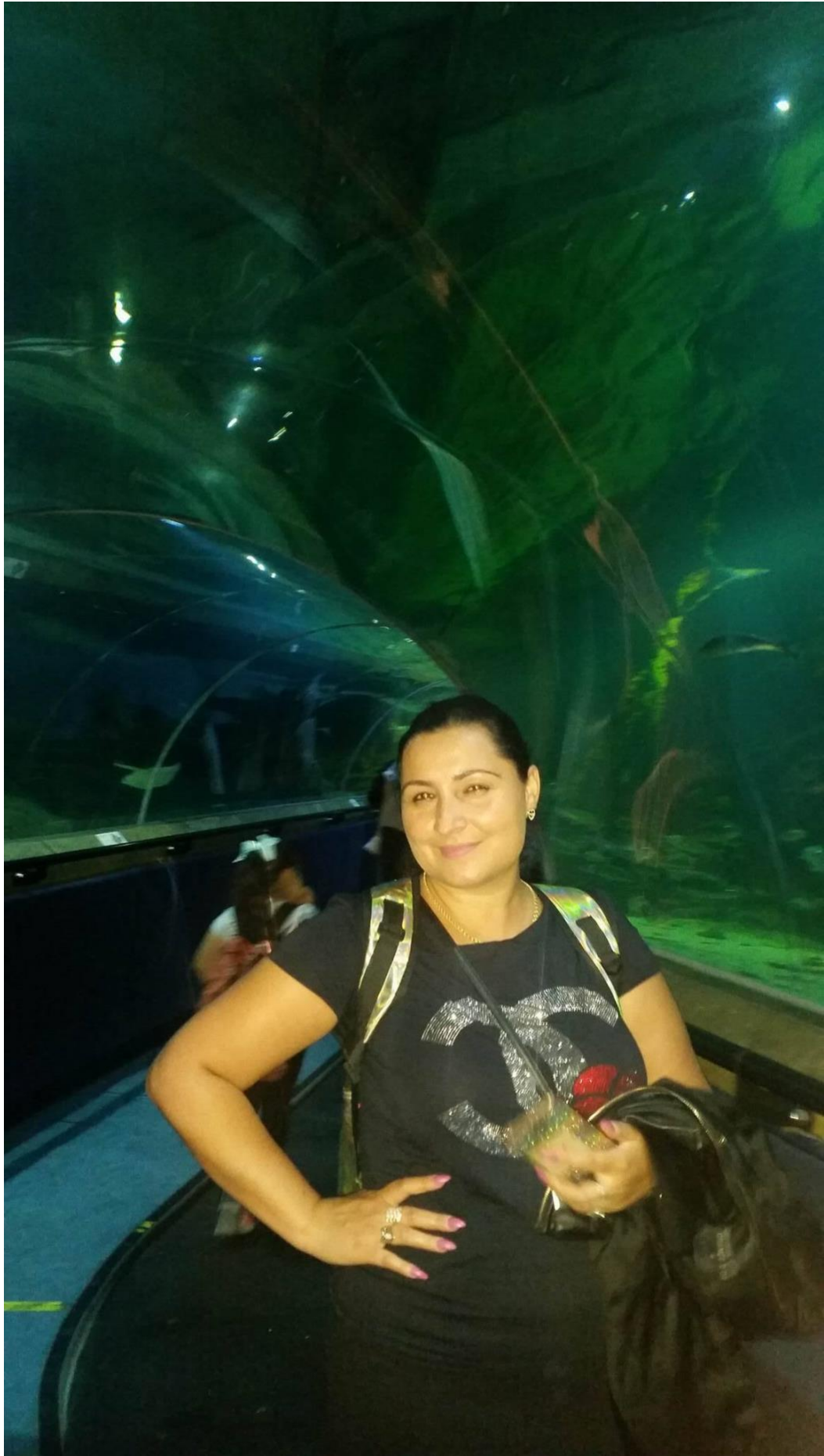
### **Roma Holocaust Remembrance Event (2 August 2017)**

August 2017 marked our second year of commemorating the Romani Holocaust (or *Porrajmos*, the Great Devouring) during the Second World War. Following on from the success of last year, we held a larger event which included speeches by representatives of Roma communities followed by short cultural program with Romani artists performing music and poetry and food provided by the Community Canteen.

### **Trip to Deep Sea World (6 August 2017)**

We organised a group to go to Deep Sea World in August. The trip was great fun for all involved but was also a serious accomplishment for our sessional workers who almost entirely organised, administered, and supervised the trip. This year we again put a large focus on the empowerment of our young people who handled their responsibilities brilliantly!







## Govanhill Carnival 2017 (26 August 2017)

In August 2017, we participated in the very first Govanhill International Carnival. Organised by the Govanhill Baths Community Trust each year and now a staple event in the local calendar, the Govanhill International Carnival aims to bring together Govanhill's diverse communities in a vibrant celebration of our unique neighbourhood, which is Scotland's most diverse locality.



Many local organisations were invited not only to participate, but to make their own unique banners to display on the procession.



The experience of working together to imagine and produce something tangible – a material embodiment of our organisation and its ethos – enhanced the whole experience and brought us closer together as a group. We were satisfied to see our ideas brought to life from the initial design throughout the creative workshops and held it high with pride on the day!



We took our newly fashioned banner to the carnival and made ourselves visible in the colourful and lively parade as it weaved its way through Govanhill to Queens Park Arena, where there was music, food, and family friendly activities.







Upon arrival at Queens Park Arena, local MSP and Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon delivered a very well-received opening speech on the many characteristics that make Govanhill so vibrant and unique. The audience were then treated to a dizzying array of music, performance, and family friendly activities.



Nicola stuck around to enjoy the acts and joined some of the local children to observe from the crowd.





The acts featured included the wonderful *E Karika Djal* (Moving Wheel), longstanding partner group and friends of Romano Lav, who treated us to an energetic performance of live music and dance, in which Roma music was fused brilliantly with other musical traditions.





## Competition win for 'The Roma Guide' (October 2017)

Friends of Romano Lav's project "*The Roma Guide: 10 facts people should know about Roma*" which was mentioned in last year's report won the first place the category drawing on the 24 International Arts Festival "Amico Rom" (Roma Friend), in Castel Frentano Italy.



Since 1994, this festival organised by Roma artists and activists in Italy recognise the work of Roma and non Roma artists and activists around the world. The Roma Guide is a comics journalism article created in collaboration with the Roma activists Ionut Ciocarta e Alexandra Babor from Romania, Marcela Adamova from Slovakia, Orsolya Orsos from Hungary, the Brazilian comics journalist Alexandre De Maio, the journalist Juliana da Penha and the Scottish Roma organisation Friends of Romano Lav.



## St Nicholas Day Party (6 December 2017)

We successfully delivered our annual St Nicholas' Day event again this year and enjoyed an even bigger turnout than last year, with over 200 Roma people attending. Our St Nicholas Day event brings the Eastern European tradition of St Nicholas giving gifts to children in the pre-Christmas period to Govanhill.



The program was packed with fun activities for children and adults including food inspired by traditional Romani cuisine, St. Nicholas giving out gifts to children, face painting and a music recycling work shop, and music by *Children of The Sun*: Live performance of traditional music and dance from Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia.











We would like to thank all of the people who supported this event in any capacity and who assisted during such a busy event, including supporters of our Crowdfunder. Particular thanks go to partner organizations and funders: [Community Renewal Scotland](#), [Govanhill Community Canteen](#), [Ando Glaso](#), [Glasgow Life](#), [E Karika Djal - Moving Wheel](#), [BEMIS Scotland](#).





## **Feast day of Saint Andrew (7 December 2017)**

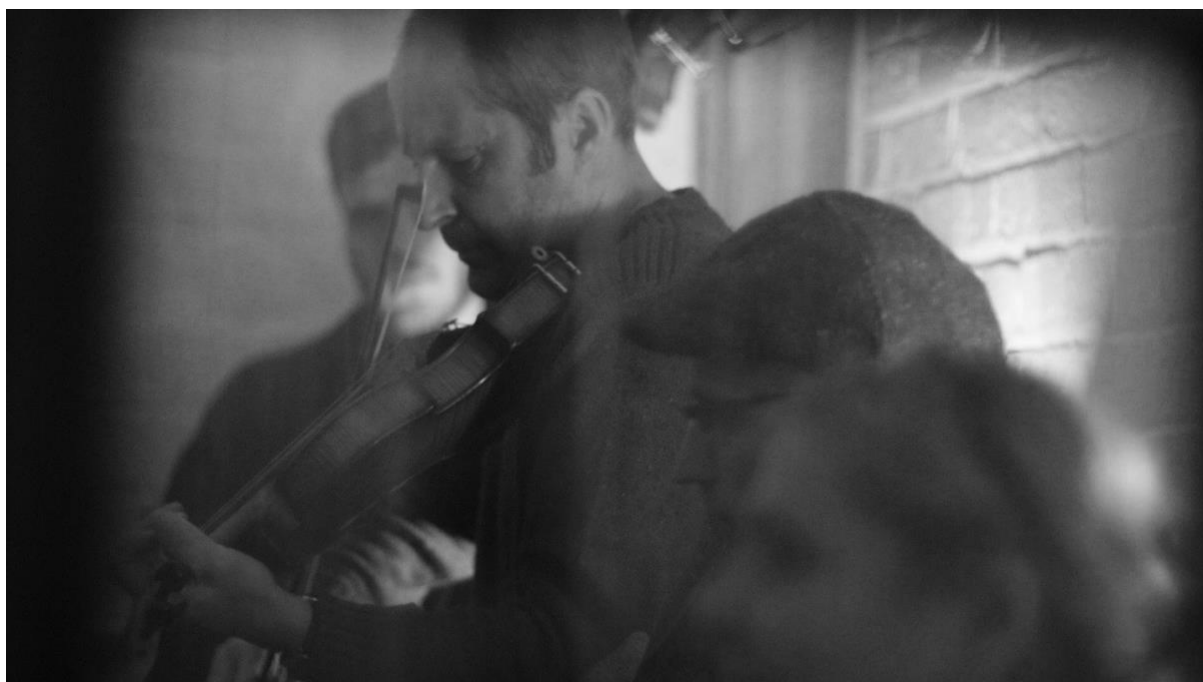
The Feast Day of Saint Andrew was a one-off food-led event celebrating and exploring Saint Andrew; who he really was, what did he do, where did he come from, and where else is he celebrated? The patron saint can not only be connected to the Scottish seaside town in Fife, but also to the Colombian island of 'San Andrés', Barbados's 'St Andrew', Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, Ukraine and many more places near and far. Nicknamed the 'Patron Saint of Social Networking', The Feast Day of Saint Andrew looks to map the man's journey as a fisherman born at the Sea of Galilee, his preaching around the shores of the Black Sea, his death in the city of Patras in Greece and how his remains that can be found in Italy, Scotland and Poland: all through food.

The event took place at the Kinning Park Complex and was organised by Küche and The Glad Cafe. After our St Nicolas' Day event, our Romanian and Polish Roma sessional staff were invited to cook as part of the event and were able to successfully support Eastern European themed catering for a non-Roma audience and linked up with local catering businesses with a possibility of future cooperation. There is clearly an appetite for authentic Roma cuisine and this is one that we will explore further in the future and continue to work with our young Roma to date!

## **E Karika Djal Album Launch (22 December 2017)**

Six new songs were made available in the lead-up of Christmas from E Karika Djal, a local Romani band which Romano Lav have continued to support this year, including for the costs connected to recording the tracks. Off the back of this record, E Karika Djal have went from strength to strength, receiving positive reviews from Roma and non-Roma audiences.





Along with our other local Roma band Romane Cierhenia, they are becoming an increasingly professional outfit with appearances at Queens Park Shindig Festival, Govanhill Carnival, St Nicolas' Christmas event, the Glasgow Mela, and most recently, at a prestigious concert in Edinburgh for the first Gypsy, Roma, Traveller History Month celebrated in Scotland.

### **Bus trip to Balloch Aquarium and Christmas market (December 2017)**

Finally, we rounded off a very busy December with a trip to Balloch Aquarium and the Christmas Market! We had so much fun, we forgot to stop to take photographs, but we can assure you all that it was an excellent experience for all involved!

## January – 31 March 2017

### Burns Supper in Govanhill (25 January 2018)

In January, we held a Burns Night celebration: combining all of the usual traditions and trappings of a Scottish Burns Night with a celebration of Romani culture. The community event was another well attended and exuberant affair, with plenty of free food, Scottish Ceilidh, and Romani traditional music.



This fusion of traditional Scottish culture and Roma culture proved to be popular with guests and especially so for many of our Roma young people, who learned a lot about Scottish traditions that they were previously unfamiliar with: perhaps exceptionally, the haggis, which was a central talking point throughout the evening and which many tried for the very first time!

We would like to offer thanks to our partners for this event: Community Renewal Scotland and Ando Glaso. We would also like to extend our thanks to the music groups E Karika Djal, Dallahan, and a newly set-up young dance group, who all exemplified the talent and potential of Roma in Govanhill.





*Romano Lav's Project Coordinator Miro Cuba showing off his best ceilidh moves!*





## Photography Exhibition (2 February – 11 March)

From 2 February until 11 March 2017 we had a brilliant photo exhibition at Tramway in the Southside of Glasgow. The exhibition exhibited the work of young Roma people emerging from an eleven-week intensive photojournalism project (starting in November 2016) that dealt specifically with the experiences of young Roma in Govanhill. Over the course of the weekly photography workshops, the group learned technical and artistic aspects of photography, how to use features like colours, texture, frame, light and editing, and were equipped with professional cameras to take home throughout so that they could capture their lives at home, outdoors, and at events and so on. The young people were encouraged to write stories about each picture and discussed these in group feedback sessions. The exhibition was a great climax to weeks of hard work and brilliantly showed both the talent of the young Roma and the beauty of Govanhill.

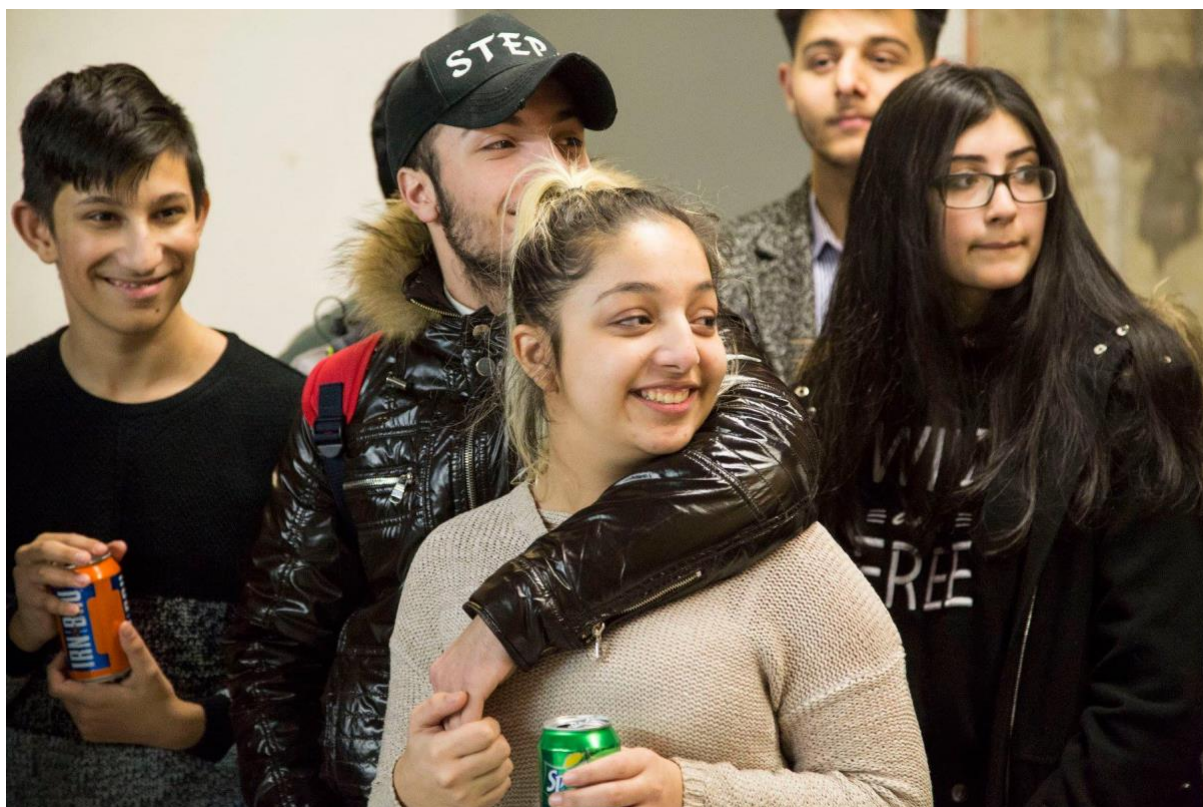


We know from our experience as well as our research that a key area where a positive sense of Roma identity and culture is often sorely lacking is in the media (and perhaps especially, the lack of positive media coverage about Roma in Govanhill). This project was our attempt to support Roma youth to take control of their own representations in quite a literal sense. The exhibition received a lot of positive media attention (including by newspapers such as the Daily Record, Evening Times, Herald Scotland, the National, the Big Issue and others; see below for example). Its launch also featured a press conference and speeches from the young people, with televised coverage on BBC news and STV. This was a much welcome departure from the overwhelming negative coverage of Roma.









Thanks go to the work done by all of the wonderfully talented young Roma people involved in this great project and our collaborative partners for helping to facilitate the workshops and exhibition: Media Co-Op, Community Renewal, and the New Economics Foundation.





## Romano Lav joined Stand Up to Racism's 'March Against Racism' (17 March 2018)

Stand Up to Racism is a broad coalition comprising of many grassroots organisations, refugee and migrant communities, as well as trade unions, political organisations, and activists. All of these groups and individuals are united in opposition to the rising tide of racism, fascism, Islamophobia, Antisemitism, and the scapegoating of refugees and migrants.



We joined Stand up to Racism's march against racism in Glasgow. Proudly flying the Romani flag, we made a visible addition to the procession. The struggle for Roma equality is bound up with the struggle for equality for all oppressed peoples, and events like this allow those connections between experiences of marginalisation to be made and new solidarities to be forged.







## Govanhill Baths Photo Exhibition (28 March – 15 April 2018)

In addition to our intensive photojournalism project, we also worked with Community Renewal and Govanhill Voice on a more traditional journalism project, with young Roma learning to write content and stories which were publicised on the local journalism platform, Govanhill Voice. The project was a joint partnership between Romano Lav and Annette Street Primary School. The classes with pupils from P6 and P7 involved walking tours that allowed the pupils to explore the places and facts they had learned about in class. They were able to visit a range of local locations within their community whilst exploring the medium of photography, and to record their learning and experiences through their photos each week. Huge thanks go to photographer Lisa Craig and Mrs Etherington of Annette Street School for leading the classes.



The school's topic theme this year was Scotland, so photographic principles of texture, colour, perspective, focal points and framing were taught along with local points of interest. Local history was touched on with the pupils learning in class about the Dixon family who built the area, and renowned landscape architect, Sir Joseph Paxton, who designed Queens Park. Alongside bird and plant species found in the park in late winter and early spring, we also visited and found out about local monuments and landmarks. These included the Iron Age mound, which surrounds an ancient settlement in the park, and the Battlefield Monument, which commemorates the Battle of Langside where Mary Queen of Scots was defeated in 1568.



## Roma Youth Sub-Committee (March 2018)

In March 2018, we officially established a Roma Youth Sub-Committee. Whilst our organisation has always been youth-led, this is an important step in facilitating a direct and regular link of communication between our sessional workers and the board. Our Vice-Chair David Donaldson aims to meet regularly with the group to focus on Roma activism, empowerment, and inclusion within existing Gypsy and Traveller rights action groups and networks.



This is an important development befitting of the key founding principle of our organisation and the continuing objective that underpins all of our work: to ensure that Romani people, especially youth, are involved as active agents in all decisions that affect their lives, that we are led by their concerns, as well as to ensure that Romani voices are heard in all relevant local social, political, and cultural domains. We look forward to seeing how this new structure progresses.

## Pre-Roma Day Celebration at Annette Street Primary (29 March 2018)

International Roma Day celebrations for 2018 kicked off early with an exuberant dance and musical performance from Romane Cierhenia at Annette Street School on 29 March. As always, the performance drew an excited audience out from their classes at the school. Big thanks go to everyone that made this event possible!



Following the start of celebrations at Annette Street School we were busy with other preparations for the day itself at Romano Lav HQ on 31 March. We held a placard, arts, and crafts production workshop making an array of colourful additions to the Roma day procession to make sure we had the brightest display ever on our annual 8 April Roma Day celebration.



Our activities throughout the school year at Annette Street Primary also included music recycling workshops. The music-recycling programme was a six-week long series of workshops and was met with enjoyment from pupils and positive impressions from teachers. Roma pupils were shown how to build their own recycled instruments from



old plastics, tins, and wood and were taught rhythm structures so that they would be able to play together and form a short performing set. The purpose of this programme was to show children that waste material can be recycled in a useful way again (in this case, by repurposing it to build improvised musical instruments).



This idea comes from the so called 'trash orchestras' which are popular particularly in South American countries. In an area like Govanhill, where waste and environmental issues are prevalent, and often blamed on the Roma communities in particular, innovative approaches to environmentalism such as our trash orchestra help to educate, include, and challenge stigma. Via the fun and accessible means of musical education, this programme taught the children about environmentalism and recycling and encouraged them to re-use material and to limit household and street waste in the neighbourhood.



## Our funders and supporters 2017/18



University  
of Glasgow



THE UNIVERSITY  
of EDINBURGH



## Our staff/volunteers 2017/18

**Miroslav Cuba**  
Project Coordinator



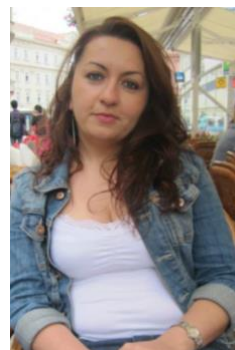
**Rahela Cirpaci**  
Project Assistant



**Ashli Mullen**  
Volunteer

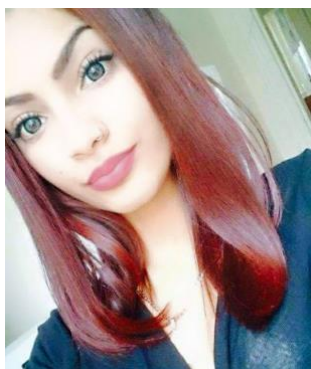


**Marcela Adamova**  
Senior Consultant



## Sessional Workers

**Jana**



**Nikolka**



**Valerie**



**David**



**Erik**



**Isac**



## **Financial Statement**

### **Summarised statement of financial activities for the financial year 2016 – 2017 (1<sup>st</sup> of April 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2017)**

<b>Balance from previous year</b>	<b>£8032.00</b>
<b>Income from Grants and Donations</b>	<b>£44,133.00</b> <b>(£43,728 = grants; £405 = donations)</b>
<b>TOTAL Income</b>	<b>£52,165.00</b>

<b>Expenditure for Charitable Activities</b>	<b>£35,164.00</b>
<b>TOTAL Expenditure</b>	<b>£35,164.00</b>