

# Report 2011-2021

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## Letter from Director

After a decade of work of the Institute, I would like to mention in this 10-year report of our work the beginning of the organizational structure of IRCA, small, voluntary, with young graduates, with little experience, but with a will and great desire to learn, work and advance some integration processes of the Roma minority in Albania.

At the time, we were only 10 Roma students in all of Albania, meanwhile there was an urgent lack of dissemination of information on education, employment and capacity building related to the younger Roma generation. In these conditions we knew well that we were at the zero point of influence and active participation in the process of integration of the Roma minority. There were many programs that focused on the priority points of involvement, but the Roma youth did not have the necessary capacities and information. This is where IRCA was born, for career counseling, education and Roma youth participation. Through the Romani Corps of Volunteers we had to increase the number of students as well as the number of active young people to advance the integration processes of the Roma minority. This was the unique way to create the roma elite that work for the roma integration.

We started with the assistance of Roma high school and university students to complete the RMUSP university scholarship, which was supported by the Roma Education Foundation, assisting on average about 50 young people each year. Capacity building of our staff, strategic reflection, development of long-term plans as well as the first advocacy theories were key for IRCA in those beginnings, and here would start a very special contribution, which we appreciate, the development support Institutional from the Roma Initiative Office and following with support of National Democratic Institute and Anntarc with updating the strategic documents of IRCA.

A series of employment practices in state and private institutions would then be offered to Roma students by training in the workplace. Also the behavior and functioning of the Roma Mediator, as a very successful structure to facilitate members of the Roma minority who have difficulty in equal access to social services. This practice brought by IRCA was awarded the first prize by the European Commission for the countries of the Western Balkans and Turkey in 2016.

IRCA expanded the field of youth capacity building but also in the implementation of programs with a real impact on democratization, anti-culture Corruption, Local Government, Community Policing, Election Participation, Intercultural Education and AntiGypsism. Over the past 10 years, IRCA has shown a steady increase in terms of capacity and number of staff as well as the number of associates associated with the Institute, as well as the areas of expertise in which we are engaged. Always, good communication, analysis, solution orientation and impact both in the process of designing and implementing programs with bottom-up access to all our work, has created a good reputation for the wider community, institutions and donors.

Through hard work, professionalism and integrity IRCA has been developed by a relatively small organization in Albania's main benchmark for social inclusion, Roma youth empowerment, Intercultural Education and the effective Participation and Advocacy of the Roma minority in Albania and beyond. The work and results achieved reflected in this 10-year report, would be impossible without the support and dedication of our staff, experts and collaborators.

On behalf of IRCA's team, I would like to extend our gratitude to external and internal stakeholders who have encouraged and supported us and to our volunteers and collaborators for their genuine efforts with whom we share the same vision for an inclusive society in Albania.

Executive Director

Bledar Taho

Institute of Romani Culture in Albania

## **Vision**

External Vision (for the beneficiaries)

Roma people are empowered and have significant access, engagement, representation and participation in civic life and public decision making at all levels.

Internal Vision (for the organization)

IRCA, a leading organization that stands for a multi-ethnic and inclusive society that is founded on universal principles of human rights and equality.

Mission: IRCA enables the equal and sustainable development of Roma communities through advocacy, mobilization, empowerment, cooperation, policy-oriented research, action and participatory research as well as equal participation in democratic processes, equal access into the rights and services and the promotion of the Roma Culture and Identity

Combination of volunteer advocacy with education services and recreation activities, has led to establishment of three youth networks including Romani Students' Network, Romani Corps of Volunteers as well as Romani Youth Parliament - Forum. Most of IRCA's activity is also featured in an online radio program entitled "Capitol"-Radio.

Work: Impact of IRCA's work fall in 3 main categories:

- a) Intercultural dialogue:
- b) Youth Empowerment:
- c) Advocacy and Participation:

The organization structure of IRCA includes the Steering Board, Goodwill Advisors, the Executive Director as well as the staff 6 project staff. IRCA has also created the Romani Corps of Volunteers counting over 211 member both Roma and non Roma students and graduates.



## IRCA Team and Associates



Bledar Taho  
Executive Director



Xhesika Korra  
Program Manager



Kludja Hamiti  
Head of Finance



Aurora Koçi  
Project Coordinator



Ina Hiri  
Project Officer



Marjus Veizi  
Project Officer



## IRCA Establishment and Growth

IRCA is established on July 1, 2011 and influenced by services provided at advocacy bodies such as the Italian Institute of Culture in Albania, Goethe Institute, British Council, American Coorner as well as the career advice, research and documentation centers functioning within universities in Europe and North America, with most of which IRCA initiators have had their own experiences.

In 2011, IRCA started voluntarily the carrier advice and job campaign “ Kamav te phirav anglal”, which in the last 6 years provided assistance and facilitate around 1100 roma youth and students with education and info for varies opportunities for carrier counselling and getting jobs for around 120 people.

During this decade Institute of Romani Culture in Albania has worked in terms of:

1. Institutional Development by raising capacities of staff in the processes of project coordination, management, monitoring, evaluation, fundraising abilities and production of internal regulations and documents.
2. Intercultural Dialogue focusing on inclusiveness, relationships between people of diverse cultural, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds and respect for cultural diversity giving value to cultural, individual, and role differences by creating a supportive and affirming climate for individuals of all races, ethnicities, national origins, genders, gender identities, sexual orientations, religions, ages, abilities, sizes, socioeconomic statuses, and languages. meaningful.
3. Youth Empowerment setting a process to encourage youth by all means aiming to make them drivers of change equipping them with the necessary skills and capacities.
4. Advocacy and Participation conducting programs in which Roma citizens take collective action to bring desired changes to public policies and processes shifting power and establishing methods for government responsiveness, transparency and accountability.



## Institutional Development

**Duration: 1 November 2012 - 31 December 2017**

**Donor: Open Society Foundation - Roma Initiative Office in Berlin.**

**Duration: 1 December 2019 - 31 December 2019**

**Donor: National Democratic Institute**

**Duration: 1 February 2019 - October 2019**

**Supporter: ANTTARC**

Based on this support IRCA has the all the organizational documents and capacity/professionalism needed to work in the NGO sector. Under this program, IRCA focused on three main pillars including intercultural dialogue, youth empowerment and advocacy and participation. Through the implementation of this grant was achieved to increase our staff capacities on management, evaluation and reporting, was made possible the production and development of internal regulations and documents such as strategic plan, communication strategy and fundraising strategy. The institutional support has also enabled IRCA to better structure its work, resources, and impact of its program activities.



## Intercultural Dialogue

Evaluating the impact intercultural dialogue has in the society, Institute of Romani Culture in Albania has intensively worked on the direction of promoting Roma Culture and Heritage among different target groups such as teachers, professors, academia, police, civil servants, youth etc. aiming to increase their cultural sensitivity and make them aware of cultural differences that might otherwise be mistakenly interpreted as signs of disrespect for their authority and professional competence. This practice helped the service providers to better approach to the Roma community members and provide the services required.

From 2014, through conferences, training sessions, meetings, focus groups, open lectures and radio podcasts, 5699 participants were introduced to Roma Culture and Heritage and were informed on the importance of with our different identities constructively and democratically on the basis of shared universal values.

Some of the initiatives implemented on this regard are:

### **Systemic and Academic Response to Anti-Gypsism and Discriminatory Practices towards Roma in Education System**

Duration: 1 January 2014 – 30 October 2016

Donor: Roma Initiative Office, Budapest, Hungary

### **Alteration of four schools into community centers in the municipalities of Tirana, Durrës, Berat and Shkodra**

Duration: 15 November 2016 – 15 September 2017

Donor: UNDP Albania with financial support of European Union

### **Diversity and Advocacy for Children Inclusion**

Duration: April 2016 – June 2016

Donor: Partnerë për Fëmijët - PRECEDE Network (EU funding)

### **Promoting Intercultural Dialogue through the Promotion of Roma Music**

Duration: April 2016 – September 2018

Donor: UNDP Albania with financial support of European Union

### **Promoting Roma identity and equal access in education in Albania through Roma online radio and volunteer engagement of Roma role models**

Duration: 1 January 2016 – 30 June 2016

Donor: Australian Embassy in Italy



## Youth Empowerment

In 2011, IRCA started voluntarily the career advice and job campaign “Kamav te phirav anglal”, which provided assistance and facilitate around 2163 roma youth and students with education and information for varies opportunities for carrier counselling and getting jobs for around 557 people. Also facilitated the access of 125 Roma students in professional internships and 137 Roma citizens in vocational courses. One facebook page group is continuing to provide info and assistance as well an online community Radio “Capitol”.

Also trainings were provided to 435 Roma and non Roma youth on labor market exploration, business orientation, employment opportunities.

### **RomVeritas**

Duration: 1 September 2012 – 30 May 2013

Donor: UNDP Albania

### **Empowerment of Roma youth and social inclusion through employment.**

Duration: May 2013 – October 2013

Donor: AMSHC

### **Think Critically, Act Responsibly**

Duration: 1 October 2016 – 31 May 2018

Donor: US Embassy in Tirana, Albania

### **Establishing the Basis for the Living Program in Albania**

Duration: November 2017 – December 2018

Donor: UNHCR, Albania

### **Supporting Social Inclusion of Young Roma through Non-Formal Education**

Duration: 1 July 2017 – 30 June 2022

Donor: EACEA- EU ERASMUS + program coordinator

**Network of Free Legal Aid Providers for Roma children and at-risk youth**

Duration: 1 January 2019 – 30 June 2019

Donor: Arsis

**Coaching Cycle towards Employment**

Duration: June 2019 – October 2020

Donor: SwissContact

**Empowerment of Roma girls and women through education: “The Way to Access Public Services and Participate in Public Life ”**

Duration: 1 September 2019 – 30 November 2020

Donor: US Embassy in Tirana, Albania

**“Empowering marginalized youth through art to prevent juvenile delinquency and re-integrate in society”**

Duration: 1 October 2019 – 30 April 2020

Donor: Terre des Hommes, Albania

**“Punësimi, Sipërmarrja dhe fuqizimi i grave/vajzave vulnerable të Durrësit.”**

Duration: September 2020 – October 2020

Donor: Qendrës “Aleanca Gjinore për Zhvillim”



## Advocacy and Participation

During the years, IRCA conducted programs to increase informed Roma citizen participation in decision-making processes and to establish strong civic culture. IRCA endeavors to increase the direct connections between Roma citizens and public officials. Since Roma communities have in their settlements leaders who they trust, IRCA worked to increase the capacities of 125 Roma mediators and youth in terms of advocating and lobbying, community organizing and anti-corruption, community policing.

The work done in the field by the Roma mediators in the process of identification, addressing and facilitation has assisted and referred 417 Roma families in preparing legalization documents and profit from restauration program, 748 Roma children and adults registered in civil registration and obtained identity documents, 30 Roma individual obtain health card, 3263 Roma pupils and students facilitated with free book from Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth, state quotas etc., and 917 Roma families were provided food packages during the pandemic situation with Covid-19.

Although knowledge and skills were provided to Roma community regarding advocacy and lobbying , special attention was dedicated to participation in public life and citizen responsibilities and duties. A series of awareness and informative campaigns took place all over Albania increasing the number of Roma voters in electoral processes, more than 2071 Roma citizens participating in our sessions and more than 1972 Roma citizens was first voters.

### **Roma Mediators Advocate for equal services in public services in Fier region**

Duration: 1 April 2012 – 30 October 2012

Donor: Open Society Foundation in Albania

### **“I Am Roma I am Albanian Citizen”**

Duration: April 2013 – March 2014

Donor: US Embassy in Tirana, Albania

### **Sustaining the Roma youth’s Hope for a Democratic Future in Albania**

Duration: 2014 -2015

Donor: US Embassy in Tirana, Albania

**Roma Youth Ambassadors of a Corruption-free Society**

Duration: November 2015 – October 2016

Donor: US Embassy in Tirana, Albania

**The participation of Roma Youth on increasing the security in Tirana, Durres and Fier region**

Duration: November 2014 – January 2015

Donor: Swedish Support on Community Policing- SACP

**Advocating for Social Service Delivery by CSOs at Local Level in Fier region**

Duration: January 2016 – June 2016

Donor: IRIS Network (Europe Aid).

**Training and Voter Education for Roma Women and Youth**

Duration: 30 November 2016 – 30 June 2017

Donor: OSCE Presence in Albania

**Roma Youth Ambassadors for a Corruption Free Society at Local Level( Municipality of Divjaka and Lushnja).**

Duration: 1 May 2017 – 30 April 2018

Donor: Institute for Democracy and Mediation

**Advocating for Inclusive Social Service Delivery at Local Level through Roma Mediators**

Duration: 1 June 2017 – 31 May 2018

Donor: Institute for Democracy and Mediation

**ROMACTED: Promoting Good Governance and Empowering Roma Communities at Local Level**

Duration: 1 November 2017 -31 July 2020

Donor: European Union (DG NEAR) and the Council of Europe

**Advocating for the provision of social services at local level in Albania through CSOs**

Duration: 22 November 2017 – 28 February 2018

Donor : Roma Active Albania

**National Roma Integration Advocacy Coalition in Albania (NACRIA)**

Duration: November 2018 – January 2020

Donor: Open Society Foundation in Budapest, Hungary



**Involving Roma Youth in Increasing Community Safety in Shkodra**

Duration: 8 January - 30 January 2018

Donor: Swedish support for community policing

**'My Vote Counts' - A Civic Electoral Campaign in Support of Roma Minority's Informed Participation in the Forthcoming 2019 Local Elections in Albania**

Duration: 15 November 2018 - 30 April 2020

Donor: National Democratic Institute

**Joint Actions for Roma Inclusion and Good Governance in Tirana**

Duration: 1 February 2019 - 31 January 2020

Donor: ANTTARC

**Advocating for Equal Roma Rights in Albania**

Duration: March 2017 - August 2017

Donor: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung

**Roma Youth Ambassadors for a Corruption Free Society at Local Level**

Duration: 1 October 2019 - 31 March 2020

Donor: USAID

**Revitalizing Roma Mediating Structures at Local Level in the Municipalities of Fier, Berat and Gjirokaster**

Duration: 1 October 2016 - 9 September 2017

Donor: USA Embassy in Tirana, Albania

**Improving Equal Access in Public Services for Roma minority in Durrës, Albania**

Duration: 1 January 2017 - 30 January 2017

Donor: Australian Embassy in Italy

## IRCA Partners

The IRCA's strategy in Albania centers around organizational willingness – demonstrated in the IRCA's strategic framework – to engage in strategic and visionary partnerships with a variety of organizations and institutions, both to foster new relationships and to meet the standards of advocacy patterns that ensure structural, systemic policy changes. Particular emphasis is being placed upon developing linkages with organizations, networks and institutions in order to jointly engage in addressing Albanian and regional challenges. IRCA has established partnerships with private sector operators which are intended not only to ensure increased funding, but also to create the sense of ownership and to demonstrate potential for successful public-private partnership practices.

In the course of its ten years of existence IRCA has succeeded to establish close cooperation links and partnerships with:

### 1. National Partners.

- Albanian Parliament & Parliamentary Commissions
- Ombudsman Office
- National Minority Committee
- The Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination (CPD)
- State Election Commission
- Albanian Government
- Ministry of Health and Social Protection
- Ministry of Finance and Economy
- Ministry of Interior
- Ministry of Education & Science
- University of Tirana, Faculty of Social Sciences
- European University of Tirana.
- Marin Barleti University.
- University of Durres “Aleksander Moisiu”
- Local Government Units (Municipalities of Fier, Tirana, Korca, Durres, Pogradec, Roskovec, Elbasan, Shkoder, Lezhe, Vlora, Gjirokastra, Permet and Berat.
- Roma and Pro Roma Organizations



## 2. International Partners

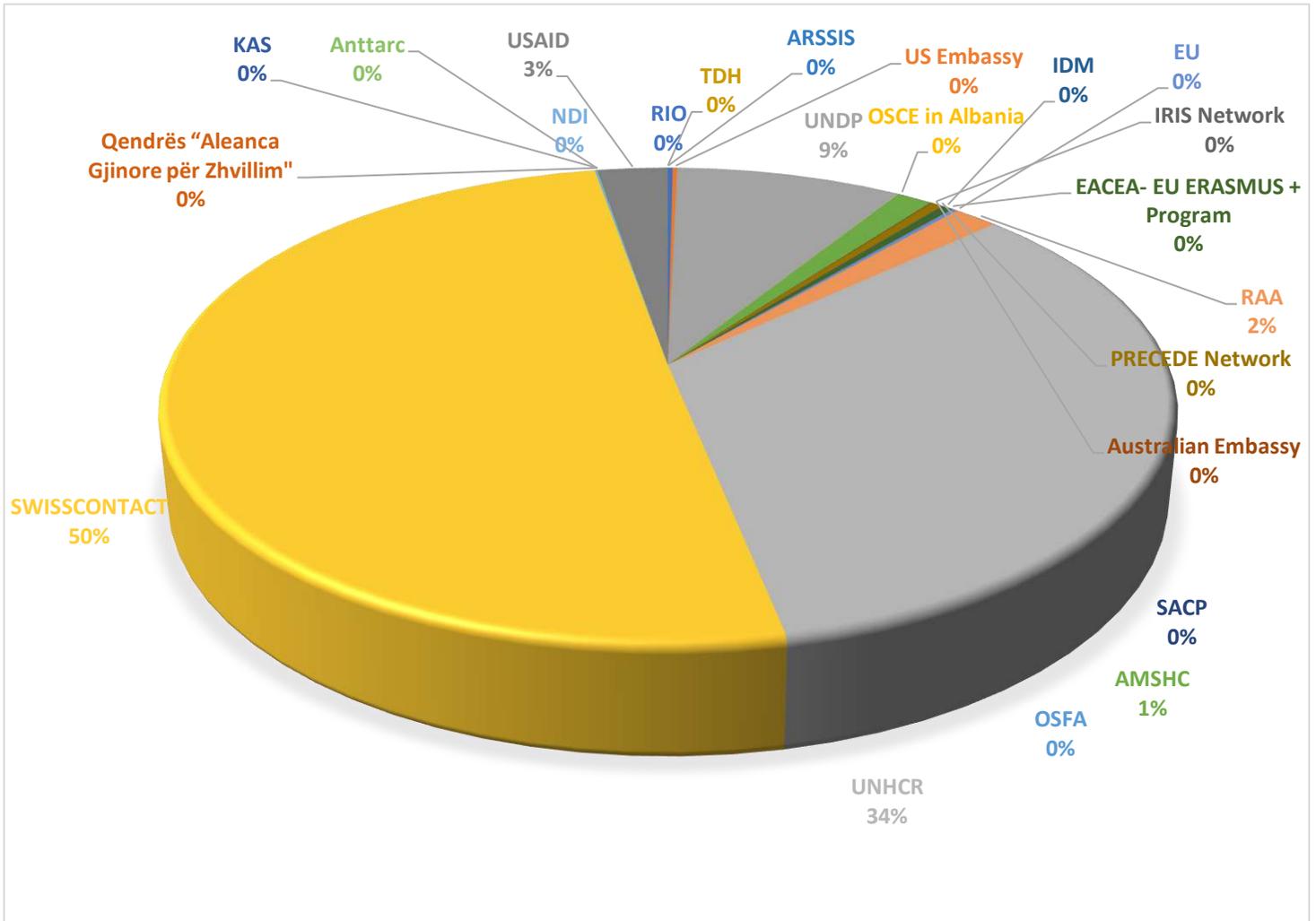
- European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture
- OSCE Presence in Albania
- UNDP office in Albania
- USA Embassy in Tirana
- Council of Europe presence in Albania
- European Delegation in Albania
- Open Society Foundation in Berlin, Germany
- Central European University in Vienna, Austria
- Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life (IFNL) at Clemson university in USA
- Akademia -245 in Bulgaria
- Zip Institute
- National Roma Centrum in North Macedonia
- Romalitico in North Macedonia
- Other European and international institutions

## 2. Coalitions and Networks

- National Advocacy Coalition for Roma Integration in Albania- NACRIA
- IRIS Network
- WEBER
- Tirana Youth Leadership
- PRECEDE
- Ana Lind Foundation

# IRCA Budget

IRCA is grateful for the support and partnership of the donor organizations that have enabled us to deliver concrete assistance to beneficiaries and sustainable results in a number of areas.



## Social Media Audience



Page Likes 3,7 mijë  
Female 59,3%-Male 40,7%



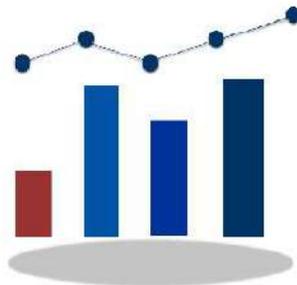
Page Likes 218  
Female 52,7%-Male 47,3%



Clics on Podcasts 1800  
Clics 75.6%



2000 Visitors  
New Visitors 85.1%  
Returning Visitors 14,9%



# Photo Gallery: IRCA in 10 Years



