ANNUAL REPORT

INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH AND POLICY ANALYSIS ROMALITICO

YEAR OF REPORT 2024

Annual Report 2024

Romalitico
ROMA POLICY ANALYSIS

www.romalitico.org

Executive Summary

Romalitico continued to fulfill its mission through fieldwork, research, advocacy, and direct support to the Roma community. Our work is grounded in the values of equity, justice, and participation.

Overview

This year, we implemented more than 50 activities across four flagship projects. With a focus on Roma communities in 20 municipalities, we influenced public policies, created opportunities for economic empowerment, supported youth and women, and initiated creative formats for digital communication and advocacy. We proudly share this report as a testimony to the results achieved together with our partners and the communities we support.



> *2024 was a year of great mobilization, partnerships, and tangible results. Romalitico remains true to its mission and vision for a better tomorrow for Roma – with knowledge, commitment, and togetherness.*

Elvis Shakjiri
Executive Director

Mission and Vision

Romalitico's mission is to promote a dynamic society through analysis, evidence-based research, and advocacy to influence public policies, power relations, and the allocation of resources for Roma in the Republic of North Macedonia and Europe.

Romalitico's vision is to challenge the status quo and advance the position of Roma in Europe.



Achieved results (selected)

- **19 hubs** in municipalities with significant Roma populations
- Over **200 individuals have secured employment** in the private sector with the support of the field staff.
- **Supported over 560 Roma** secondary school students in securing scholarships.
- Helped over **500 individuals legalize their homes**
- **76 budget proposals** were accepted in **19 municipalities** with a total of **1.05 million euros**.
- With the support of the field staff, **25 Roma received social housing**.
- Successfully advocated for the government **to allocate 5% specific quotas for Roma** in active employment programs.
- Assisted over **7,000 individuals** in accessing rights
- Advocated for the revision of **6 laws** and contributed to the drafting of **2 national strategies**.
- Initiated **102 legal actions** to address rights violations.
- Completed 71 local actions in a total value of **1,03 million euros**.
- **Improved standard of living** for **36 thousand** Roma.
- **10 reconstructed objects**, such as schools, kindergartens, playgrounds, and bus stops.
- **27 reconstructed roads** with a total road length of **4,5 kilometers**
- Installed **8 street lighting networks** that illuminated a road with a total length of **15 kilometers.**
- Implemented **13 eco-actions** and improved the eco-awareness of **645 young people.**
- **Generated** a total of **1,08 million euros:**

1. Local institutions: 877,596 euros
2. Local community: 136,514 euros
3. Civil society: 48,755 euros
4. Business sector: 10,000 euros
5. Donations from citizens: 12,188 euros
6. Romalitico: 276,767 euros

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

During 2024, the Assembly of Romalitico held General Assembly on 13th of November. The following matters were discussed and decided upon during these meetings:

- The Assembly was informed about Romalitico's ongoing activities
- The achieved goals of Romalitico were presented
- The Director of Romalitico was re-elected
- Other elections, re-elections, and necessary amendments were carried out

PROJECTS

ROMA INCLUSION ACITIVITY

The goal of the project is to reduce discrimination against Roma and to improve their inclusion in society. Within the framework of this project, Romalitico had a structure of more than 40 field collaborators operating in 19 municipalities.

TOGETHER FOR PROSPEROUS COMMUNITY

The project's goal is to improve Roma inclusion and living standards in Roma communities across 17 municipalities in North Macedonia. Local actions were implemented as part of the project, and diaspora, alumni, and business networks were established.

ROMACTED PHASE II

The main goal of the project, according to the Call for Proposals (CfP), is to improve local democracy, accountability, inclusiveness, and responsibility towards Roma citizens, as well as to enhance service delivery.

ACCESS TO THE LABOR MARKET THROUGH STRENGTHENING SKILLS

The main goal of the project is empowerment of Roma with specific knowledge, skills, and practical experience, and to utilize the private sector's opportunities for employment.

INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

ELVIS SHAKJIRI HONORED BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT AS GLOBAL ANTI-RACISM CHAMPION (GARC) AWARD

The Executive Director of the Institute for Research and Policy Analysis – Romalitico, Elvis Shakjiri, received the prestigious Global Anti-Racism Champion (GARC) Award, which was personally presented to him on October 21, 2024, in Washington, at the U.S. State Department by the U.S. Secretary of State, Antony Blinken. This prestigious global award is a recognition of his significant work, as well as that of Romalitico, in advocating for the rights of the Roma community in our country.



ROMALITICO HOSTED 12 MEMBERS OF SWEDISH PARLIAMENT

On October 8, we had the honor of hosting 12 Members of Parliament from the Kingdom of Sweden, who were introduced to our work and the results we have achieved. We discussed our shared commitment to advancing the rights and integration of Roma, as well as opportunities for further cooperation.



INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

ELVIS SHAKJIRI MEET WITH THE US AMBASSADOR TO THE UN

The Executive Director, Elvis Shakjiri held a meeting in New York with the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield. During the meeting, Shaqiri shared the situation of the Roma community in our country and across Europe, highlighting the key challenges the community continues to face.



ROMALITICO PARTICIPATED THE ENLARGEMENT FORUM IN BRUSSELS

Program Manager Deniz Selmani participated in the Enlargement Forum “Towards a Successful Enlarged European Union,” held during the 591st plenary session of the European Economic and Social Committee. The forum gathered over 100 representatives from the European Commission, Member States, candidate countries, and potential candidates. It emphasized the role of social dialogue and civil society in the EU accession process and the importance of upholding the EU’s fundamental values.



INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE WHITE HOUSE MEET WITH UNDOCUMENTED ROMA

Representatives from the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration of the U.S. State Department in Washington and USAID were introduced to the work of our field collaborators at the hub in Shuto Orizari, as well as to undocumented individuals who shared their personal experiences in the process of obtaining birth certificates and citizenship.



DELIVERING SPEECH FOR AUGUST 2 - EUROPEAN ROMA HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

At a commemorative event organized by the Council of Europe on the occasion of August 2 – the European Roma Holocaust Memorial Day, the program manager, Deniz Selmani, delivered a speech. He emphasized that remembrance alone is not enough and called on those present, as well as the wider public, to be advocates for change, stating that with the right to remember comes a deep responsibility to act.



RESEARCH AND POLICY ANALYSIS

ROMA LOCAL DEVELOPMENT INDEX (RLDI)

Roma Local Development Index (RLDI) is a tool used to measure the level of socio-economic development of Roma communities at the local level. It assesses key areas such as education, employment, housing, health, and civic participation, helping identify gaps, track progress, and guide evidence-based policymaking to improve the living conditions and inclusion of Roma communities.



RESEARCH ON ROMA YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT



The research focus is on analyzing the causes, challenges, and patterns of unemployment among young Roma individuals. It aims to identify structural barriers such as discrimination, low access to quality education, skills gaps, and limited employment opportunities, while also offering evidence-based recommendations for improving Roma youth inclusion in the labor market.

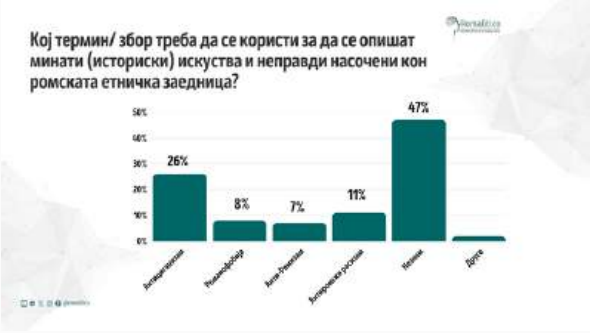
RESEARCH ON DIGITAL LITERACY IN THE ROMA COMMUNITY

The research focus on assessing the access, skills, and usage of digital technologies among Roma individuals. It aims to identify gaps in digital inclusion, understand barriers such as affordability, education, and infrastructure, and provide evidence-based recommendations to improve digital competencies and bridge the digital divide within Roma communities.



RESEARCH ON ANTIGYPSYISM IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

The research examines the forms, manifestations, and impact of structural discrimination and racism against Roma. It aims to document experiences of antigypsyism in key areas such as education, employment, housing, health, and public life, while providing evidence-based recommendations to combat discrimination.



INFLUENCING POLICIES

In 2024, Romalitico actively worked on advocating for and **improving the legal framework for resolving the status of undocumented individuals**, with a special focus on the Roma community in North Macedonia. The following four documents were amended:

- Law on Identity Card
- Law on Registration of Permanent and Temporary Residence
- Law on Civil Registry



Romalitico attended a workshop organized by the Government for the completion of the draft text of the **National Strategy for Interculturalism and Social Cohesion 2024-2026** (previously known as the Strategy for Development of the One Society for All). This workshop was part of the Government's commitment to partnership with civil society and participatory participation in the shaping and adoption of key strategic documents. The attendance from the representative of Romalitico was important not only for the organization, but also for the representation of the Roma community in the new National Strategy for Interculturalism and Social Cohesion 2024 – 2026.



In 2024, Romalitico, through forums with the Roma community and coordination with municipal sectors in 25 municipalities, identified 216 priority needs that were submitted as budget proposals for the year 2025. Out of these, 76 proposals were accepted by 19 municipalities, securing a total allocation of 1.05 million euros. This achievement reflects the growing influence of Roma community engagement in local budget planning and highlights the commitment of municipalities to address the identified needs. Strengthening Roma participation in local council sessions is crucial to ensure that their voices continue to shape policies and decisions that directly impact their communities.

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

together with U.S. Deputy Ambassador Eric Meyer, visited the Lear Corporation factory. Over the past few years, Romalitico successfully recruited 80 Roma individuals who gained employment at the factory. During the visit, several Roma employees—working as engineers, team leaders, and managers—were present, demonstrating that Roma can advance and thrive in their careers. Lear showcased an excellent model of inclusion and diversity, setting an example for other companies in North Macedonia. At the time of the visit, a total of 214 Roma were employed at Lear Corporation.





Romalitico had the honor of hosting the Head of Development Cooperation at the Swedish Embassy, Mr. Mikael Atterhög, and National Program Officer Mr. Fidan Elezi during a field visit last week, accompanied by representatives from We Effect. The visit continued in Kochani, where Sida representatives met with Amphenol Technology Macedonia to discuss employment opportunities and challenges. They also engaged in a meaningful dialogue with the Roma community, addressing the barriers faced by unemployed Roma and exploring possible solutions.



On December 4, 2024, Romalitico, in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce, organized a Job Fair attended by 26 companies and more than 130 Roma participants. The fair aimed to facilitate access for unemployed Roma to employment opportunities, enhance their professional qualifications, and increase their visibility and competitiveness in the labour market.



ROMA WOMEN

As part of the USAID Roma Inclusion Project, six sub-grants were awarded under the Roma Women's Program. The aim of this grant scheme was to strengthen civil society organizations working to promote greater inclusion of Roma women. The organizations awarded grants were:

- Association Flagellum
- Association Sumnal
- Association MIR
- Association of Roma Women "Esma"
- Association Initiative for Women's Rights from Shuto Orizari
- Association Barikanipe



Romalitico, through an authorized provider, conducted elderly care training for 30 Roma women in 10 municipalities. The participants gained basic and advanced caregiving skills through practical and theoretical sessions led by certified instructors. The training aimed to support the economic empowerment of Roma women, and upon completion, participants received certificates and were guided toward job opportunities.



LOCAL ACTIONS

Another success story and lasting contribution in the interest of the Roma community was realized with the paving of a section of Panko Brašnarov Street, 240 meters in length. This initiative brought particular joy to the children from the neighborhood, as they could finally walk to school safely and happily, wearing clean shoes and no longer trudging through mud. The completed street not only improved daily life but also symbolized progress toward equal living conditions and greater dignity for Roma families in the area.



In a completely new extension at the end of the classrooms, the "Vancho Kitanov" Primary School in the village of Crnik, Pehchevo, received three new toilets, including one cabin adapted for persons with disabilities. After four months of intensive work involving various construction activities such as demolition, masonry, installation of water and sewage systems, tiling, facade work, and full toilet equipment, all 63 students and the entire school staff finally gained access to modern sanitation facilities.



Romalitico and the Youth Educational Forum (MOF) carried out a joint action to raise awareness among the citizens of Delchevo about the importance of environmental protection. A mural, painted by young activists, now stands as a lasting reminder to all residents—from the youngest to the oldest—of the need to care for nature. This was just one of many actions undertaken by Romalitico to improve infrastructure and living standards for the Roma community in Delchevo.



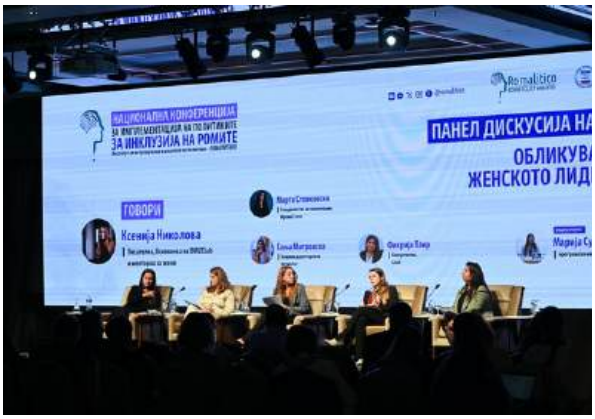
The installation of 138 solar-powered streetlights was realized in several Roma neighborhoods in Kumanovo, illuminating a total road length of 11 kilometers. Romalitico, in cooperation with the Municipality of Kumanovo, the Roma diaspora, and the local community, worked to bring light to the neighborhoods of Bavchi, Sredorek, Karpi, and the streets Braća Miladinovi and Tane Georgiev, where more than 2,500 residents live.



EVENTS, CONFERENCES, TRAININGS

From July 24 to 27, Romalitico organized the national human rights training “Roma Youth Combating Antigypsyism,” where 20 participants, through interactive methods and group work with our trainer Mustafa Jakupov (an expert on antigypsyism), explored topics such as team building, principles, values, the history of human rights, and their importance in everyday life.





On 8th and 9th of November, Romalitico organized National Conference for implementation of the policies for inclusion of Roma communities. The conference served as a platform offering a comprehensive dialogue between policymakers, the donor community, representatives of civil society organizations, and the community itself, with the aim of improving Roma inclusion at both national and local levels.

On the occasion of the World Day of the Romani Language, Romalitico organized the event Šun Romane held on November 4, 2024, at the Educational Cultural Center Laboratorium. During the event, attendees had the opportunity to hear experiences related to the Romani language and to enjoy a creative performance in Romani. A library with books in the Romani language was exhibited at the event.



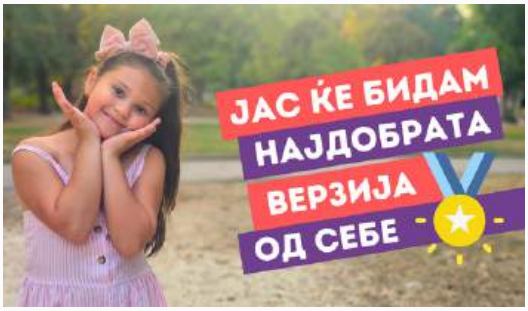


The final meeting of the Advisory Group of the ROMACTED Phase 2 program highlighted the results achieved between 2021 and 2024, including the implementation of 20 infrastructure projects in 15 municipalities and educational support reaching 548 Roma children, with significant progress in school completion rates.

CAMPAIGNS









#WhoAreWe

To mark International Roma Day – April 8, Romalitico organized a campaign containing three major events to educate the wider public about Roma culture, tradition, history, and language. The exhibition “WHO ARE WE?” was displayed at Skopje City Mall from April 1–14, 2024, and attracted daily visitors, gaining coverage from six national media outlets. On April 13, 2024, a cultural event in the City Park and an evening celebration with music performances concluded two weeks of continuous activism and public education.

#TheFutureIsMe

To mark the International Day of the Girl – October 11, we organized the #TheFutureIsMe campaign, involving 11 young Roma girls with diverse interests and talents. Through this campaign, we aimed to change narratives about Roma and present a positive image of young people who are no different from other youth in our country. As part of the campaign, 11 posters, 11 videos, and one video compilation featuring all the participating girls were published and shared on our Facebook page.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Program Manager Albert Memeti participated in the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) – Not Too Young to Run: Engaging Youth in the Political Process II, supported by the U.S. Department of State. The program empowered young leaders by strengthening their confidence, inspiring visions for change, and providing tools and networks to advance their careers. During the exchange, participants engaged with diverse institutions to learn best practices in citizen activism, leadership, and youth development.





The Romalitico team participated in a series of anti-corruption trainings organized with the support of the Swedish Embassy. These trainings provided valuable knowledge and practical tools for identifying, preventing, and addressing corruption at various levels of governance. Through interactive sessions and expert-led discussions, the team strengthened its capacity to promote transparency, accountability, and integrity in policy work and community engagement. This initiative reflects Romalitico's ongoing commitment to advancing good governance and democratic values.

The Barvalipe School module was held in Mavrovo from September 27–29, 2024, and opened with a reflection on the dedicated and collective work carried out by field teams since 2021. Participants explored key questions—Where were we? Where are we now? Where do we need to be?—while discussing the progress made, the results achieved, and the everyday challenges encountered along the journey toward Roma leadership and empowerment.



Program Managers Albert Memeti and Deniz Selmani participated in a course on Market System Development organized by DevLearn. The training provided in-depth insights into inclusive economic development, with a focus on analyzing market dynamics, identifying systemic constraints, and designing sustainable interventions. Through practical tools and case studies, the course strengthened their capacity to support Roma economic empowerment and contribute to more resilient and equitable local economies.

VISIBILITY

In February 2024, Romalitico launched its own podcast series, dedicated to highlighting influential Roma individuals who have made a positive impact on society. The podcast features guests who are actively engaged in promoting Roma culture, identity, history, and tradition. By the end of the year, seven episodes had been recorded, offering inspiring stories and meaningful conversations that celebrate Roma contributions and foster greater understanding and appreciation within the wider public





In 2024, nine editions of the Roma Index magazine were published, featuring insightful articles, analysis, and stories that reflect the realities, challenges, and achievements of Roma communities. The magazine serves as a platform for informed discussion and advocacy, promoting Roma inclusion and visibility in public discourse.

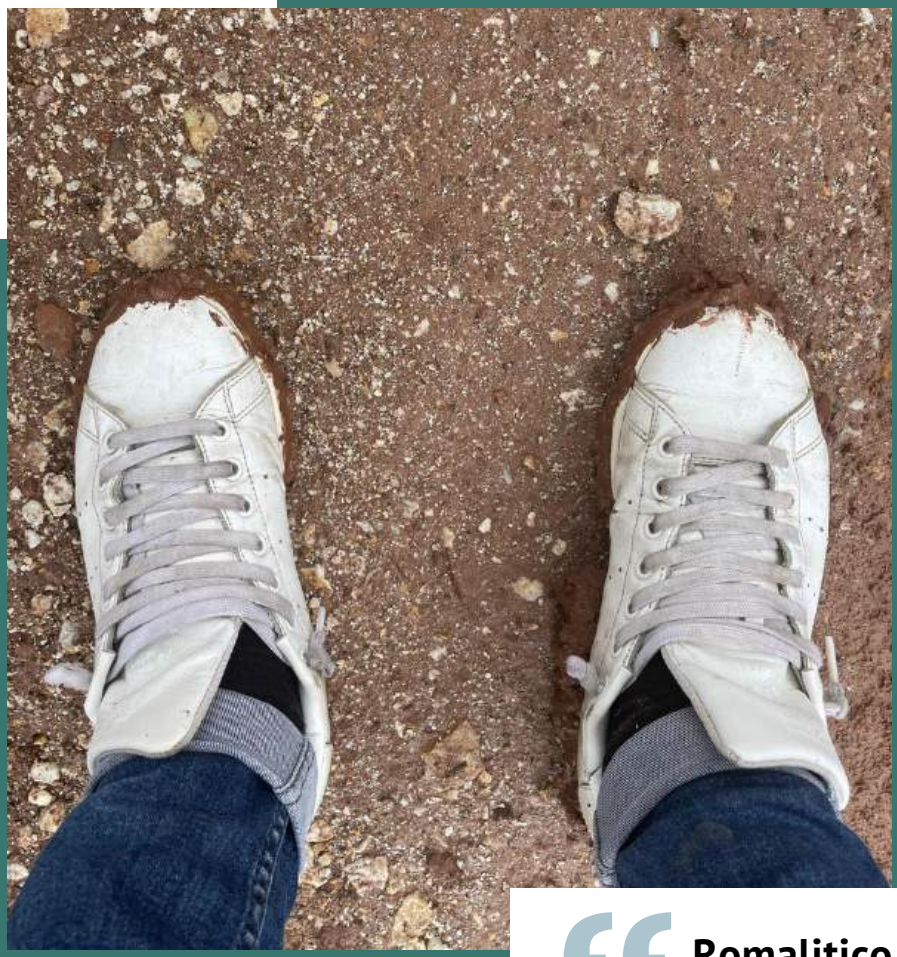
Romalitico in 2024 achieved significant media outreach, securing coverage on over 43 online portals and 10 national television channels. The organization appeared on more than 155 news stories, which collectively reached over 1 million views across social media platforms. This extensive media visibility played a vital role in raising public awareness about Roma inclusion, promoting the organization's work, and amplifying the voices and priorities of Roma communities nationwide.











Romalitico knows that real success doesn't come overnight. It takes hard work, persistence, learning from every step, and above all—trusting the process.

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