

2024 Annual Report

Youth Agency for the Advocacy of Roma Culture «ARCA»



Foreword by the Director



Dear friends, partners, and colleagues!

The past year has been challenging for all of us. Amidst difficulties and changes, we continue our work to ensure that the Roma community has a voice and is heard. Roma are an integral part of Ukrainian society, and our mission is to protect their rights, culture, and dignity.

The year 2024 was a time of significant achievements: we held numerous cultural events, organized international forums and exhibitions, and secured funding for social initiatives. Special emphasis was placed on supporting vulnerable populations—now more than ever, unity, assistance, and solidarity are crucial.

I thank our entire team, volunteers, partners, and everyone who took part in our projects. Only together can we create a better society!

Sincerely,
Volodymyr Yakovenko



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Mission and Strategic Goals



The Youth Agency for Roma Culture Advocacy «ARCA» is a Roma youth NGO operating in Ukraine's civic sector since 2018. Our work focuses on developing the Roma youth movement, preserving Roma history and culture, and fostering intercultural dialogue in Ukraine.

Our Mission

To promote a positive image of Roma communities in Ukrainian society through education, media, history, and culture.

Strategic Goals:

- Develop and support the Roma youth movement in Ukraine and internationally;
- Promote intercultural dialogue and combat antigypsyism and all its manifestations—stereotypes, prejudice, and hate speech;
- Preserve and promote Roma cultural heritage in Ukraine;
- Advocate for Roma community interests at local, national, and international levels.

Strategic Goals for 2025:

- Organize cultural and educational events;
- Protect Roma rights through advocacy;
- Expand international cooperation;
- Implement educational and social initiatives for youth.



Key Projects and Events in 2024

All our projects are cross-sectoral and closely interconnected, ensuring a comprehensive approach to Roma community development. Our cultural initiatives also serve an advocacy purpose, contributing to anti-discrimination efforts and the preservation of historical memory. Advocacy activities reinforce social programs by attracting resources to support vulnerable groups. International cooperation allows us to integrate best practices in human rights and civil society. From exhibitions and conferences to roundtables and humanitarian programs, our core initiatives aim to strengthen the community and promote its active participation in public life.

Thanks to the synergy of these areas, we achieve significant impact on both national and international levels. Youth are an integral part of all our activities and play an active role in every initiative.



Cultural Events

Cultural events focus on preserving and promoting Roma culture, art, and historical heritage. These include exhibitions, festivals, conferences, and creative initiatives that foster intercultural dialogue and raise awareness of Roma culture.

Commemorative events draw attention to the Roma genocide and contribute to intercultural understanding. For example, the exhibition ***“Their Memory Through My Eyes”*** is available to visitors at the National Historical and Memorial Reserve “Babyn Yar.” This exhibition offers a deep and emotional journey through history, with each visual piece telling the personal story of a victim or witness. It is dedicated to the memory of Roma who survived the Nazi genocide during World War II or who lost their loved ones.



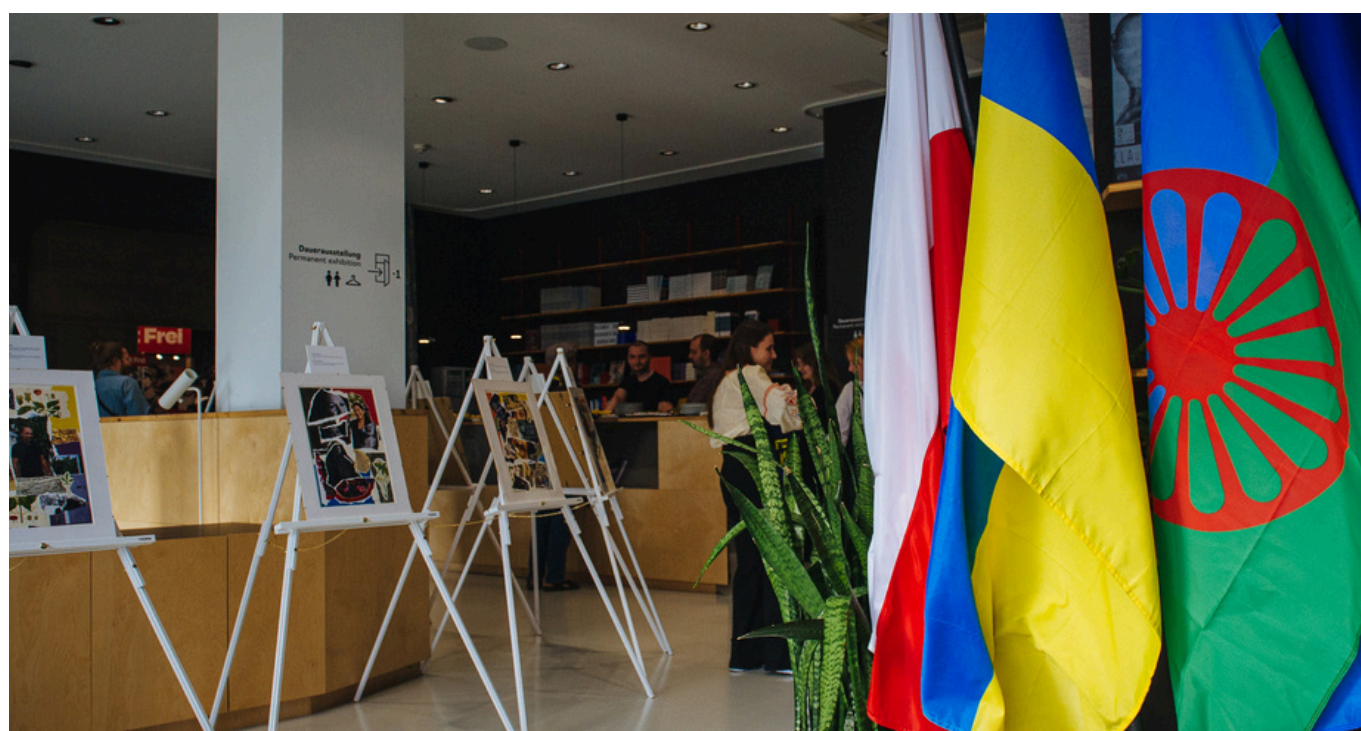
Commemorative events draw attention to the Roma genocide and contribute to intercultural understanding.







The cultural events we organize abroad not only raise awareness of the issues facing the Roma community, but also express support for Ukraine as a sovereign state.





On the International Roma Resistance Day, May 16, 2024, the Pilecki Institute in Berlin hosted an educational event titled **“Roma in Ukraine — Fighters for Democracy, Human Rights, and Justice.”** The event was dedicated to Roma resistance and the vital role of Ukrainian Roma in the context of Russian aggression.

As part of the event, there was an exhibition of collages by Ukrainian artist Oleksandr Maksymov, titled “Me — Ukrainatar,” as well as panel discussions featuring Roma, Ukrainian, German, and French scholars, civil society representatives, and human rights defenders.

The highlight of the international event was the screening of the documentary “Voices That Have Names,” directed by Nataliia Vainilovych.





On May 17, 2024, a presentation of the book **“Russian Colonialism 101”** by Ukrainian journalist and media expert Maksym Eristavi took place in Berlin. One of the key topics for the German audience was the Russian military occupation of Ukraine since 2014.

The discussion also highlighted personal stories of Ukrainian Roma who were forced to flee their homes due to Russian aggression. At the same time, attention was given to those Roma who, from the beginning of the full-scale war and Russian invasion, joined the ranks of the Armed Forces of Ukraine to defend the country.





The exhibition **“Me — Ukrainatar”** was also opened in early December 2024 in the German city of Heidelberg, at the Documentation and Cultural Centre of German Sinti and Roma. The exhibition explored the theme of Roma identity in Ukraine and its contribution to culture. It offers a broader perspective on Roma identity through the lens of Ukrainian artist Oleksandr Maksymov, presenting his reality as a true image of the people — free from stereotypes and prejudice. Through the visual medium of analog collage, the artist invites viewers to discover Roma individuals who have made a significant contribution to the shaping of Ukrainian society, advancing culture, medicine, science, and social movements.



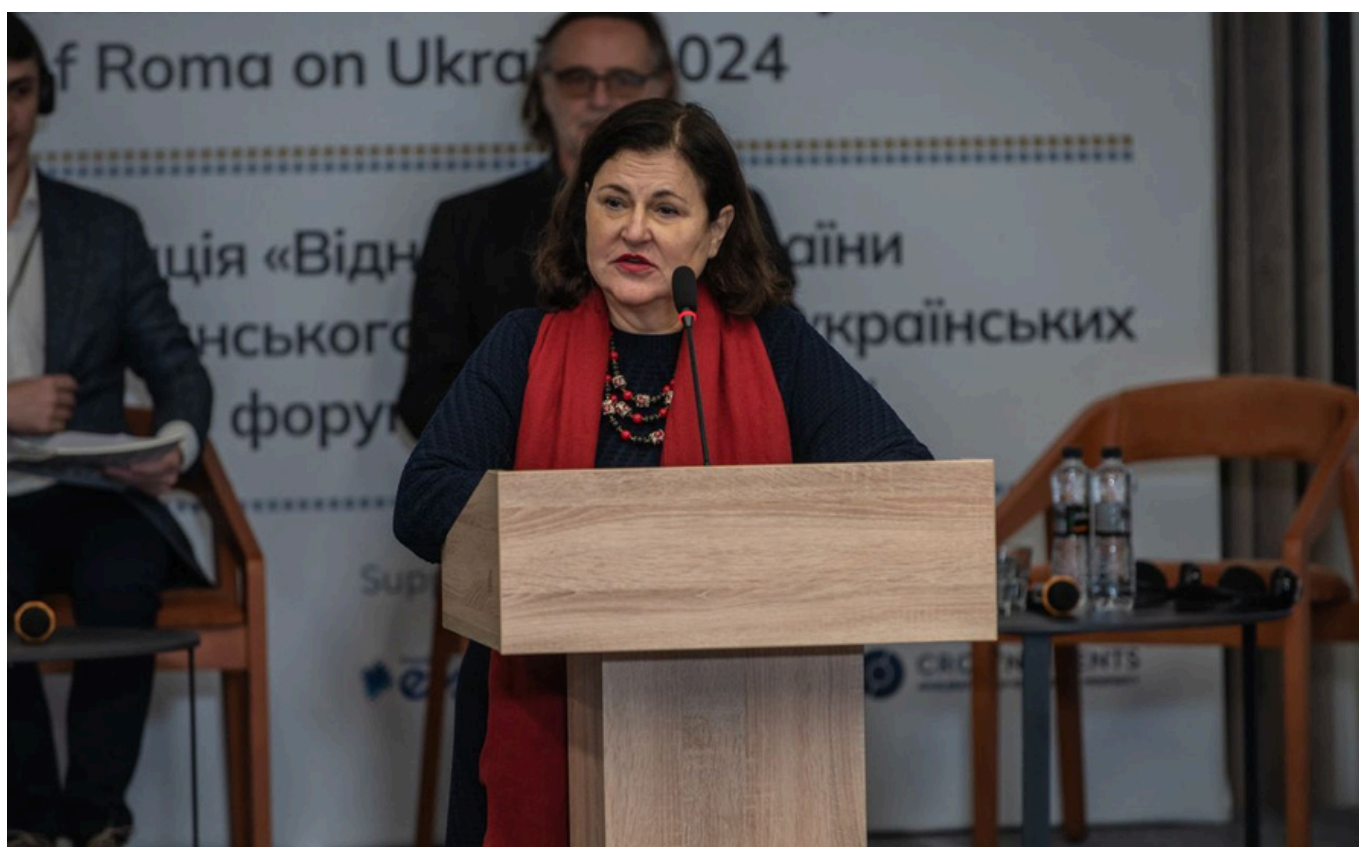


Advocacy Activities

Advocacy efforts are aimed at protecting Roma rights, shaping public policy, fighting discrimination, and conducting human rights work. This includes meetings, roundtables, public campaigns, and participation in legislative initiatives.



The conference **"Rebuilding the Country and the Prospects for Ukrainian Roma Civil Society"** held in Kyiv focused on challenges related to war and post-war reconstruction. The EU Ambassador to Ukraine, Katarína Mathernová, stated during the international conference that the treatment of minorities is a key indicator of Ukraine's readiness for EU accession.



The treatment of national minorities is an important indicator of Ukraine's readiness for EU membership. This was stated by the European Union Ambassador to Ukraine, **Katarina Mathernova**, during the conference.



The conference **“Ukraine’s Recovery and the Prospects of Roma Civil Society”** was held in October in Kyiv, with the political support of the Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine and the Federal Foreign Office of Germany. The State Service of Ukraine for Ethnic Affairs and Freedom of Conscience and the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma were official partners of the event. During the conference, participants proposed and discussed approaches to ensuring that the rights and needs of Roma are upheld in Ukraine’s recovery process and in the country’s path toward European Union accession, as well as the role of different stakeholders — the Government of Ukraine, the international community, and Roma civil society.





The advocacy work of our organization is aimed at protecting the rights and interests of citizens, promoting socially significant reforms, and ensuring that the state fulfills its obligations. Thanks to our advocacy efforts, for the first time since its approval in 2005, the Resolution of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on the Commemoration of the International **Roma Holocaust Memorial Day** was implemented in Kyiv in 2024. This became an important step toward aligning legislation with the real needs of society and marked a significant achievement in recognizing historical justice and strengthening Ukraine's national memory.



This year, we also actively participated in roundtable discussions and meetings with representatives of the government and international organizations regarding the **protection of Roma rights**. One such meeting took place in Kyiv with the Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine and representatives of European embassies. The discussion focused on the overall situation of the Roma minority in Ukraine and the active involvement of embassy representatives in events concerning the inclusion of the Roma national minority in Ukraine's reconstruction processes.

In addition, we carried out **advocacy media campaigns** highlighting that post-war recovery must go beyond infrastructure rebuilding. Recovery should encompass all areas without exception and involve all ethnic groups. One of the key aspects of this work is ensuring equal opportunities for the most marginalized groups, such as the Roma community.



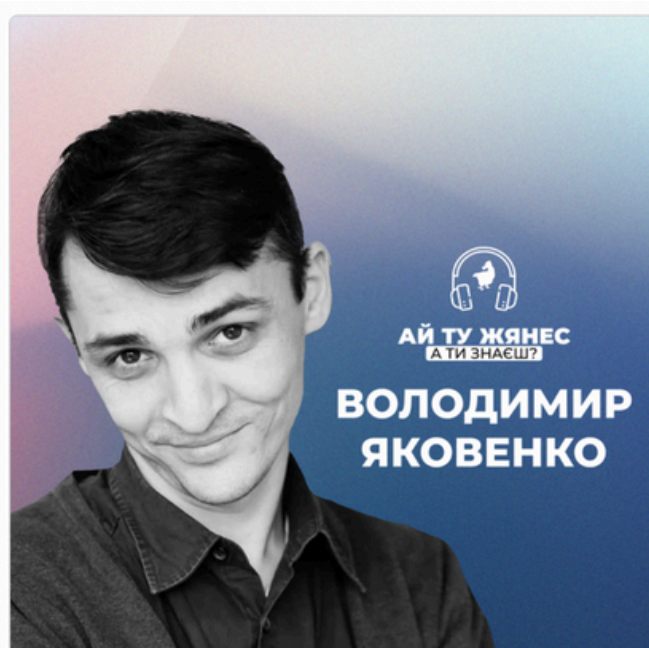
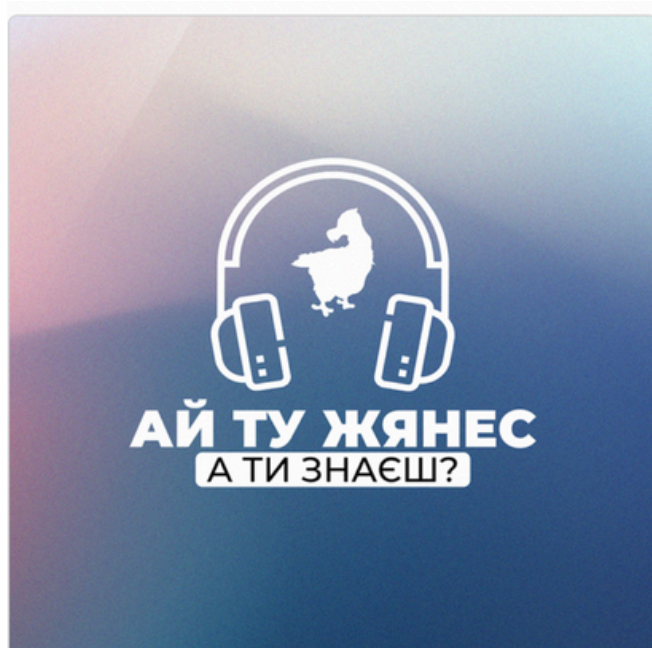
Social Programs

The social programs are aimed at supporting vulnerable groups within the Roma community, particularly low-income families, children, and youth. These programs include humanitarian aid for families affected by the war, educational initiatives to enhance knowledge and employment opportunities for young people, as well as social adaptation programs. These efforts contribute to the integration of the Roma community and to improving its socio-economic conditions.





As part of the educational initiatives, the media project — **the Djanes Information Platform**, established in 2019, has continued to actively develop. Djanes is a modern media platform of the Youth Agency for the Advocacy of Roma Culture “ARCA” that promotes dialogue, support, and solidarity both in Ukraine and abroad. It is a space free of stereotypes and prejudice, where the voices of those often unheard in contemporary Ukrainian media can be expressed. These voices share stories of resistance, perseverance, and the struggle for their values and identity. The platform involves professional journalists of both Ukrainian and Roma origin, working across a variety of genres including analysis, reporting, and opinion columns. Using diverse multimedia formats, the team produces textual, audio, and visual materials.





International Cooperation

International cooperation enables the organization to integrate the experiences of other countries into its work, engage international partners, and participate in global initiatives. This includes sharing best practices, attracting international grants, and taking part in international conferences.



At the Ukraine Recovery Conference 2024, during the “Meet & Greet” session on June 12 in Berlin, the Youth Agency for the Advocacy of Roma Culture “ARCA”, together with Ukrainian and international Roma partners, organized the event “The Contribution of Roma to Ukraine’s Recovery.” Guests from German and Ukrainian governments, as well as international donors, actively participated in the discussion about the needs of Roma in the recovery process — both material and intangible — and the contribution of Roma to Ukraine’s victory.



19.02.2024
15:00 – 15:55
Берлін, Німеччина

CAFE
KYIV

Повага, визнання та права національних меншин в Україні:

Роми, Кримські Татари та Надазовські Греки



A separate event was also held during **CAFE Kyiv 2024** on February 19 in Berlin, bringing together activists, opinion leaders, politicians, foreign investors, representatives of the arts and startups to express solidarity with Ukraine and contribute to its post-war reconstruction. The event addressed the situation of national minorities and indigenous peoples in Ukraine, highlighting the active role of Roma, Crimean Tatars, and Azov Greeks in the country's struggle for independence.





Throughout the year, ARCA actively participated in events of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), which monitors the protection of Roma and Sinti rights. In particular, in March, ARCA took part in the seminar and conference “Identifying Challenges Faced by Ukrainian Roma During the War and Overcoming Barriers Through Policy, Advocacy, and Empowerment”, held in Warsaw.



ARCA also participated in a roundtable discussion during the DeZIM Conference “Migration – Conflict – Solidarity: A Common Ground Between Politics and Research” at the University of Mannheim in Germany in October. During the event, participants presented an analysis and research findings on the situation of Roma from Ukraine and the challenges they face in different EU member states.



ARCA was actively involved in a consultative meeting on the realization of Roma youth potential, organized by the Youth Department of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. During the meeting, representatives of Roma NGOs from across Europe, along with members of the Roma and Travellers Team, discussed progress in implementing the Strategic Action Plan for the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers (2020–2025) and announced an upcoming recommendation on gender equality for Roma women and girls.



ARCA also presented at the conference “Advocacy and Coordination for Ukrainian Roma Refugees”, organized by the ERGO Network of Roma Organizations in Brussels.



Achievements and Impact

Over several years of active work, the organization's team has implemented dozens of projects, established international partnerships, and contributed to changing public attitudes toward the Roma community. Below is a summary of the key accomplishments — in numbers and stories of change.

500+ participants in international events

20+ advocacy initiatives in support of the Roma community

5 international partnerships with European organizations

5 000 000+ UAH allocated for the implementation of the organization's initiatives



Achievements and Impact

Cultural Events

The events held not only contributed to the preservation and promotion of Roma culture, but also helped to overcome stereotypes, strengthen intercultural dialogue, and highlight the Roma contribution to national and European culture. Thanks to initiatives such as exhibitions and performances, public awareness of the history of the Roma people and the challenges they face today has significantly increased.





Achievements and Impact

Advocacy Activities

The interaction between the Roma community and government bodies has intensified, and international organizations have shown increased attention to Roma issues. Advocacy campaigns have influenced the development of social equality policies. Following the conference in Kyiv, a dialogue with authorities was initiated regarding the expansion of support programs for Roma communities, while information campaigns have helped reduce discrimination in society.





Achievements and Impact

Social Programs

These programs improved the quality of life for individual Roma families affected by the war. They helped young people acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and contributed to their integration into local communities. Program participants gained opportunities for professional growth, which increased their self-sufficiency and confidence in the future.





Achievements and Impact

International Cooperation

Opened access to best practices for Roma community integration, enabling the implementation of more effective approaches in the organization's work. New partnerships strengthened human rights efforts, while international funding made it possible to scale up initiatives. Participation in global forums helped Roma activists gain new knowledge and increase their role in international processes.





Achievements and Impact

Overall, these initiatives contribute to long-term societal change by fostering a more tolerant environment and equal opportunities for all.





Financial Report

SOURCES OF FUNDING



85 Grants from international foundations

5 Contributions from private donors

10 Contributions from partner organizations



Financial Report

EXPENSE STRUCTURE



50 Organization of events

20 Advocacy activities

15 Operational expenses

15 Educational programs



Team and Partners

The organization's team consists of 11 professionals working on a project and contract basis, enabling the effective implementation of a wide range of initiatives.

Our initiatives are carried out by specialists from various fields — advocacy, culture, social work, and international cooperation — ensuring a comprehensive and professional approach.

We work both within Ukraine and across European countries, which helps expand partnerships and attract international support. This allows us to respond effectively to the challenges faced by the Roma community and implement integrated solutions.

You can learn more about our team and activities on the organization's website: arca.org.ua/en/





Donors and Partners

ERIAS
EUROPEAN ROMA
INSTITUTE FOR ARTS
AND CULTURE

**CENTRAL
COUNCIL**
[of German
Sinti & Roma]



CROWN AGENTS
ACCELERATING SELF-SUFFICIENCY & PROSPERITY





Plans for 2025

The organization will focus on expanding social integration programs and educational initiatives for the Roma community, as well as supporting youth leadership through training and grant programs.

Expansion of educational programs for Roma youth

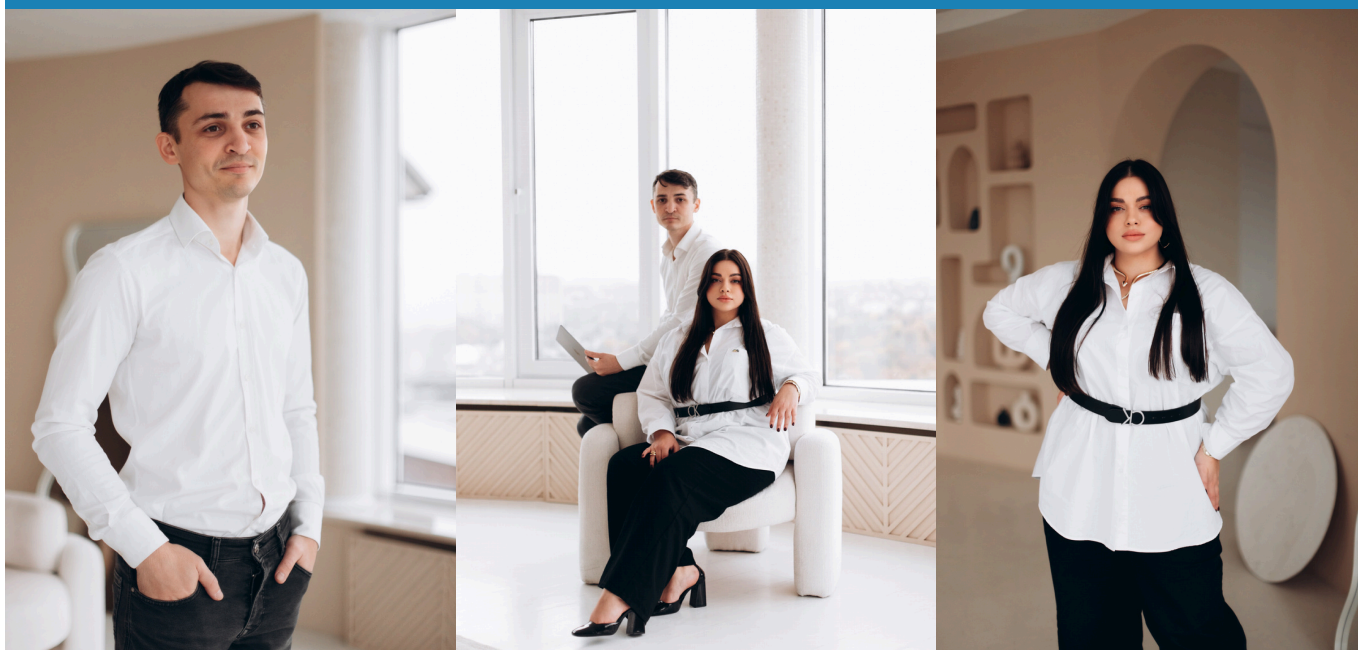
New scholarship opportunities will be introduced, along with the launch of online courses and the development of mentorship programs to help young people access quality education and employment.

Strengthening international advocacy efforts

We will expand cooperation with international organizations, participate in global forums, and initiate policy changes aimed at improving Roma rights.

Engaging new partners for project implementation

We will work on expanding our network of donors and partner organizations to increase funding and the impact of our programs, as well as involve the corporate sector in supporting social initiatives.



Thank you to everyone who has supported and continues to support the work of our organization!

Together, we are making the world a more inclusive and fair place!



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МИ В СОЦІАЛЬНИХ МЕРЕЖАХ



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