

Romania is my home without a doubt.
But I am also proud to be called a
'gypsy'."



"I was born and raised in Romania and I currently live in Alba Iulia in Romania. I am an active campaigner for human rights, fighting against violence and discrimination towards the Roma community. I am constantly advocating for multi-ethnic co-existence and common understanding. Because of my constant political activity I have been involved in several organizations fighting for Roma rights, having different positions within these organizations including title of president of Romania IVLP Alumni Association, General Secretary at the International Romani Union and president of Pakiv Romania NGO.

I consider myself to be a European citizen, part of the diverse European family. I am very proud of my roots. Because I was born and raised in Romania, Romania is my country and Romanian is my nationality. I am also gypsy according to my ethnicity. These mix of cultures do not represent a problem for me, I am actually proud of them.

Romania is my home without a doubt and I never considered migrating to a different country. Romani are often discriminated in Romania but we are still citizens of this country. The word 'gypsy' does not exist in Romani language so it does not bother me to use it or to be called like this and not romani.

I was the president of the International Romani Union, Union which was founded in 1971 and it received the status of consulting organization with the United Nations.

I am actively involved in politics and one of my life missions is to fight for the international recognition of Romani. We have many Romani across Europe, we have our own language, we have our flag, our culture and traditions, why not obtain a UN recognition on this matter?"

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Never give up. If you are defeated you rise up and this is how you become a champion. That's what I teach my Roma students."

"I am a citizen of Sarmasu, a village located in Mures County, in Romania. I have been living in Sarmasu for the last 30 years but I was born and raised in Lechinta, a village in Bistrita county.



I am a geography teacher, married with two children and I teach here at the school in Sarmasu. I care a lot about the local Roma community and I was involved in local politics, in the Local Council but I did not really like it so I am no longer politically active.

I like teaching, in my opinion one of the best ways you can stimulate children is through sports. I personally played soccer at a professional level in the second Romanian division when I was younger. I know how much you can learn and develop through sports; we had organized a national soccer championship at our school for Roma children and our team won. The Roma children really enjoyed this competition.

I am proud of my Roma roots and I never felt discriminated against here in Romania. I got the opportunity to play soccer at a professional level and now I get the chance to teach and impact the lives of so many Roma children.

I never wanted to migrate to a different country for a better life, Romania is home for me, my mother language is Romanian and I also speak Romani.

My mission in life at this stage from a professional perspective is to achieve better results for my Roma community. I want more children to obtain an education here in the village and attend High School and University; to help decrease the percentage of dropouts among Romani children; and to motivate them and help them grow.

In addition my suggestions for the municipality are the following (if funding would be available): "*School after School*" (A supervisor would take care of the Roma children after school and help them with their assignments); "*Second*

Chance” (This would be a program meant to help the alumni finish their education, you can take intensive classes and do two years in one); *“School for Parents”* (Bringing parents to school to guide them on the importance of obtaining an education, so that they encourage their children to stay in school and obtain an education.)

As a former athlete one of my life mottos is: *“Never give up. If you are defeated you rise up and this is how you become a champion.”*

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“If I can do something good for my community then I am up for the challenge.”

“My name is Dodo Anna and I am a school mediator and Romani teacher in Band, a village located in Mures County, in Romania. As a school mediator I establish the connection between the school and the Roma community’s children and their parents, wether they face problems at school or



sometimes at home. I am proud to be Roma, even though my first language and mother language is Hungarian, I also speak Romanian due to my studies. In my opinion it is never too late to get an education.

Although I went to school only until 10th grade, I wanted to complete my education and learn more, at 39 years old I went to evening classes to recover some of the missing classes needed in order to obtain the baccalaureate degree. When I applied for University I applied for the 2 vacant seats assigned for Roma representatives and I got in. I studied at Babes Bolyoi University the branch from Targu Mures, faculty of "*Educators and Teachers*". As a student among Romanian students I never felt discriminated, I was always treated the same as others by both my colleagues and my teachers, the Romanian state also offered me a scholarship. I was highly appreciated by everyone during my study period.

Romania is my home and Band is my home town, I never thought of migrating to another place. Most of the Romas who go abroad move for a couple of years to work and make savings to come build a house back home, maybe buy a car. They always returned back home, Romas like to stick together and live in their home country which in this case is Romania.

I think that the most important thing in order to solve some of the problems in the Roma community is to improve the education system. Parents should be more involved in the education of their children and encourage them to go to school, teach them the importance of obtaining a degree so that further in their life they can get a job and contribute in the society they live in.

I would like to obtain for my community the following: "*School after school*", a program where children are kept in schools after classes and helped with their homework by a supervisor. This project helps them socialize and obtain better results in school; scholarships; jobs; even access to water as you do not have water in all the houses in Roma community from Band. In Band there are three roma communities, situated in different places in the village.

One of my life motto`s is: "*If I can do something good for my community then*

I am up for the challenge otherwise I prefer not doing anything”.”

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