



2020 ACTIVITY REPORT

Lietuvos sakaliukų sąjunga (LSS) – is a non-governmental, non-profit organisation uniting children and young people from Lithuania and around the world. We belong to the international network IFM-SEI (International Falcon Movement - Socialist Educational International). Our goal is to reduce social exclusion, integrate vulnerable groups, and promote tolerance through non-formal education methods. We operate on the principles of democracy, justice, solidarity, equality, citizenship and voluntarism. The organisation unites 15 chapters throughout Lithuania (Vilnius, Alytus, Lazdijai, Radviliškis, Kelme, Raseiniai, Panevėžys, Molėtai, Šiauliai, Telšiai, Kaunas, Rokiškis, Vilkaviskis and Biržai). The most active branch of LSS is the Vilnius city branch "**Padėk Pritapti**", which since 2009 has been operating as a multicultural day centre for children and youth, where children and young people of Roma, Lithuanian, Russian, Polish and other nationalities meet every day.

THE MAIN ACTIVITIES OF THE LITHUANIAN FALCON SOCIETY AND „PADĖK PRITAPTI“ IN 2020:

PROMOTING INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE.

Our activities are open to multi-ethnic children and young people, we communicate in five languages, encourage discussions about cultural diversity, provide a space for the promotion of different traditions, and educate the public by breaking down particularly negative stereotypes about the Roma community;

DAILY ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS.

In the "Padėk Pritapti" activities, we focus on each child, helping them with homework and closing learning gaps. We use inclusive education methods to assess a child's individual abilities and discuss results and achievements together. It is important for us to recognise the real needs of children and young people, so we spend a lot of time having frank conversations where we try to see the world through their eyes - without prejudice, judgement or devaluation. We provide comprehensive support not only for children, but also for the whole family/guardians. We mediate on housing, employment, social security issues. In cooperation with the "Food Bank" and the "Not About Me" Foundation, we provide regular support to families with food and other essentials;

APPLYING ARTS EDUCATION ACTIVITIES.

We are always looking for innovative ways of non-formal education to explore, empower, awaken creativity, and communicate. Working with children and young people, we strive to show them a more diverse world, to introduce them to different people, professions, and opportunities. Together with professional artists, we use social theatre, photography, architecture, music, and art education, which allows children and young people to learn about themselves, reveal themselves, to develop confidence in themselves and others;

ADVOCACY

- is a crucial part of our organisation's activities, including media monitoring, public information, human rights advocacy, and representing the interests of the Roma community in cooperation with public authorities and business representatives. We are involved in public policy development, especially in the field of education and Roma integration. We are members of the Working Group and the Monitoring Committee of the Programme for the Integration of the Roma of Vilnius into Society 2020-2023. We cooperate with various public authorities - the Department of National Minorities under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the Office of the Ombudsman for Equal Opportunities, the Vilnius City Municipality and others, with whom we share our professional experience in the field of social integration and non-formal education;

PROMOTING VOLUNTEERING.

Every year, we present our activities at universities and colleges, promote young people's citizenship through volunteering, and invite students for internships;

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT.

We uphold the international message of Roma empowerment: 'Nothing about us without us', and we work to involve the Roma themselves to make their voices heard. Every year, we celebrate with the community the International Day of Roma Culture (8 April), the Day of Remembrance of the Roma Genocide (2 August), the International Day of the Roma Language (5 November), and organise educational activities and public debates;

INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

We look for best practices in foreign countries - we work closely with partners in Sweden, Latvia, and Poland who have more advanced Roma integration programmes.

HUMAN RESOURCES

In 2020, the organisation had 5 employees: a project manager, a social worker, and two youth workers. All 4 staff members worked full-time. The growth of human resources has significantly strengthened the day-to-day running of the organisation, with clear roles for each staff member, and the provision of quality support to children, young people, and families. LSS has 10 volunteers who help in daily activities - helping children with homework and leading educational sessions.

FACILITIES

The organisation is now in its second year at Ševčenkos 16 B, a loft with 315 sq/m. The space is suitable for a day centre, an open youth space, and staff activities.

FUNDING

In 2020, €122.008 in revenue was generated to implement the activities of the organisation. Funding was received from the Department of National Minorities under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the Vilnius City Municipality, the Nordic Council of Ministers' Office in Lithuania, the Active Citizens Foundation, the Embassy of the United States of America, and Erasmus +.

ACTIVITIES

✓ **DAY-TO-DAY RUNNING OF THE DAY-CARE CENTRE (AS PART OF THE CHILDREN'S DAY CENTRES PROJECT, FUNDED BY SOCMIN AND VILNIUS CITY MUNICIPALITY).**

The day centre is attended by 40 children (30 of Roma ethnicity, the rest are Lithuanian, Russian and Polish). The activities of the Day Centre are designed to address the main problems we have encountered in the Day Centre over the years. Children lack social skills, which prevents them from getting to know first themselves and then others. Therefore, a lot of attention is paid to children's feelings, managing emotions and promoting respect. There is also a lack of hygiene skills, which is why we work together to teach the basics of a healthy lifestyle and personal body care. In the search for interesting methods of self-knowledge and self-awareness, the staff of the day-care centre have chosen art as a method of self-knowledge. By drawing with different techniques, the children will have the opportunity to express what is important to them through their drawings. One of the biggest problems children face in and out of school is the lack of knowledge of the Lithuanian language. Not understanding the language leads to falling behind the general level of the class and a lack of motivation to learn. This is why it is so important to learn Lithuanian through non-formal education methods. We focus on language games, story reading, creative writing, and group activities where we play with the language. Communication, cooperation and the involvement of the child as an active decision-maker in the daily life of the day centre is one of the most important tasks of the centre.

✓ **OPEN YOUTH SPACE (AS PART OF THE SOCMIN-FUNDED OPEN YOUTH SPACES PROJECT).**

„Padėk pritapti“ activities are not only aimed at children but also at young people aged 14 and over. The Open Youth Space is open Tuesday-Wednesday-Thursday, 4-8 pm, and focuses on the empowerment of young people, self-esteem building, self-knowledge, cooperation, gender equality, promotion of tolerance, volunteering, and discussions on topics of interest to them. The Open Youth Space is regularly visited by 15 young people, 10 of whom are Roma.

✓ **ARTISTIC PROJECTS TO PROMOTE ROMA CULTURE AND THE CREATIVITY OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE.**

In 2020 „Padėk pritapti“ implemented the following artistic projects: 'Draw Me a Path. An Illustrated History of the Roma' (a TMDE-funded project to learn about Roma folklore, culture, customs, and information gathering). The material collected by children and young people was later used in a comic book illustrated by Akvilė Misevičiūtė, which tells the story of the Roma of Lithuania (a project funded by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania). The comic as a methodological tool for educators was presented in Vilnius schools, at the Faculty of Pedagogy of Vilnius College, and a discussion was organised at the Martynas Mažvydas Library. In 2020, the comic was disseminated in other Roma areas of Lithuania.

✓ **PROJECT "SOCIAL DIALOGUE"**
(FUNDED BY VILNIUS CITY MUNICIPALITY).

Project implemented with "Apeironas" theatre directors to empower children to talk about themselves through theatre: using movement, sound, lighting, and stage. The footage produced during the project was presented as a creative methodological tool for schools and educational institutions.

✓ **EMPOWERING AND PROMOTING THE EMPLOYMENT OF YOUNG ROMA AND OTHER MARGINALISED GIRLS (AS PART OF THE PROJECT "WE ARE COMMUNITY SUPERHEROES", FUNDED BY VILNIUS CITY MUNICIPALITY).**

20 project participants - young Roma and other socially excluded girls from Vilnius city - took part in 30 educational sessions and one final event at the Kirtimai Cultural Centre. During the project, the participants were involved in artistic, cultural, and professional activities, acquired skills in communication and cooperation, planning, financial literacy, career planning, aesthetic understanding, and contributed to the creation of a new artistic value and a new offer of social activities for the Naujininkai community.

During the project, the participants learned how to create a CV, write a cover letter, take part in a job interview, got acquainted with the offer of various professions, and gained practical professional knowledge in the beauty and aesthetic industry. The acquired competencies will promote and increase the opportunities and competitiveness of Roma and other socially excluded girls in the labour market. The project increased the offer of extracurricular cultural and social employment for Roma and socially excluded adolescent girls and young mothers living in Naujininkai (and beyond). The girls were able to engage in cultural and social activities, develop their competences, acquire new knowledge, meet new people and strengthen their competitiveness in the labour market.

✓ **I CAN - EMPOWERING THE ROMA COMMUNITY BY PROMOTING SOCIAL INTEGRATION.**

The main objective of the project is to empower the Roma community by promoting social integration. The project aims not only to empower Roma to become more involved in local community activities, but also to promote dialogue between Roma and non-Roma, thus reducing negative attitudes in society. The project will coordinate volunteering activities and mentoring. The project is partly funded by the Active Citizens Foundation.

SUMMER CAMPS.

✓ Summer activities for children and young people are an important part of the project. In 2020, a summer camp was organised at the Akmendvaris campsite in Trakai district, with the participation of 30 children and young people from the Day Centre "Padėk pritapti". Children from disadvantaged families do not have the opportunity to have a rich summer holiday, so summer camps are the most welcome summer event for children and a great motivational system for attending school and the day centre.

✓ **PROMOTING VOLUNTEERING, RAISING AWARENESS, DEVELOPING THE COMPETENCES OF TEACHERS AND FUTURE TEACHERS, ADVOCACY.**

The LSS team actively cooperates with schools and the Faculty of Pedagogy of Vilnius College, where it conducts seminars on multiculturalism and inclusive education, and invites students to volunteer and do internships. All project activities are presented to the public and the media, and discussions on non-formal education are organised. LSS regularly participates in the municipality's working groups on education and cultural dissemination, thus Socmin represents the needs of young people, TMDE represents the needs of different ethnic communities, and engages in daily advocacy.