



Roma Mainstream Media Internship Programme

Country: Hungary

Organisation: Centre for Independent Journalism – www.cij.hu

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Partners involved: leading media organisations including Roma Press, Centre Nepszabadsag Ringier Training and Further Training Institute, Civil Radio, Radio C, Centres for Independent journalism in Bratislava and Bucharest, Novi Sad School of Journalism and the International Centre for Journalists in Washington.

Target Group: Roma community, Hungary

Programme Description:

With the unemployment rate at over 80% for adult Roma's and the drop out rate from secondary schools higher than in any other ethnic group, the need to stop the marginalisation of this minority is of great importance. The media have often reinforced this marginalisation by uninformed and unfavourable reporting of issues facing the Roma community.

The Roma Mainstream Media Internship programme has been running at the Centre for Independent Journalism since 1998. It tackles widespread misunderstanding of and stereotypes on the Roma community in the media by diversifying newsrooms. Young Roma journalists are offered internships within mainstream media organisations.

Through this internship programme eight to thirteen students take part annually in 10 months of intensive practical and theoretical training. The accredited journalism course is taken by all students and includes modules in political science, media law and ethics, economic policy, genres and feature writing, to name a few. Students learn radio and television news production, diversity and human rights reporting and more specialised workshops, such as crime and courtroom reporting. Students are then placed in a media organisation for at least 30 hours a week whilst still attending classes and working on their thesis. Mentors play a key role in the development of each student, guiding them through the process and ensuring they get the most out of their placement.

"By integrating Roma colleagues in to the newsroom, there has grown a more widespread awareness of the challenges and problems faced by their communities". Programme Manager, CIJ

"The Roma mainstream media internship programme meant opportunities for me. I was able to get out of the uncertain existence, within which I had been drifting along with hundreds of thousands of other people." Intern, 2001.

Challenge:

In the Hungarian media the job market has become saturated over the past few years, making it very difficult to find permanent jobs in the industry. This has led to difficulties in reaching the programme's goals.

Solution:

No university or school guarantees employment once a student completes his or her education. By attending this course Roma students gain the tools to compete with their peers on an equal platform.

Impact and Success Stories:

- 40% of interns have remained in the media – a higher percentage than the national average of graduates from leading journalism schools in Hungary. Another 20 % work in related professions - press offices, public relations, non-profit sector, government.
- After taking the course more students enrolled in higher education– realising the importance of finishing their education so they can further their career prospects and take control of their lives.
- In 2003 the Roma mainstream media internship programme was selected as best intercultural education project of the year by the Belgian Evens Foundation.
- The graduates of the programme have won more than twenty awards for journalism excellence.