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Itinerant Theatre Performance



CASE STUDY



Safari Fetiş | A Case Study

A theatrical safari through an urban jungle of misconceptions and contradictory realities

A collection of artistic, production and pedagogical practices, methods and instruments used for creating an itinerant outdoor theater performance and youth workshops

Created by

Giuvlipen, Romania with contributions from Playhood Youth Theatre Group

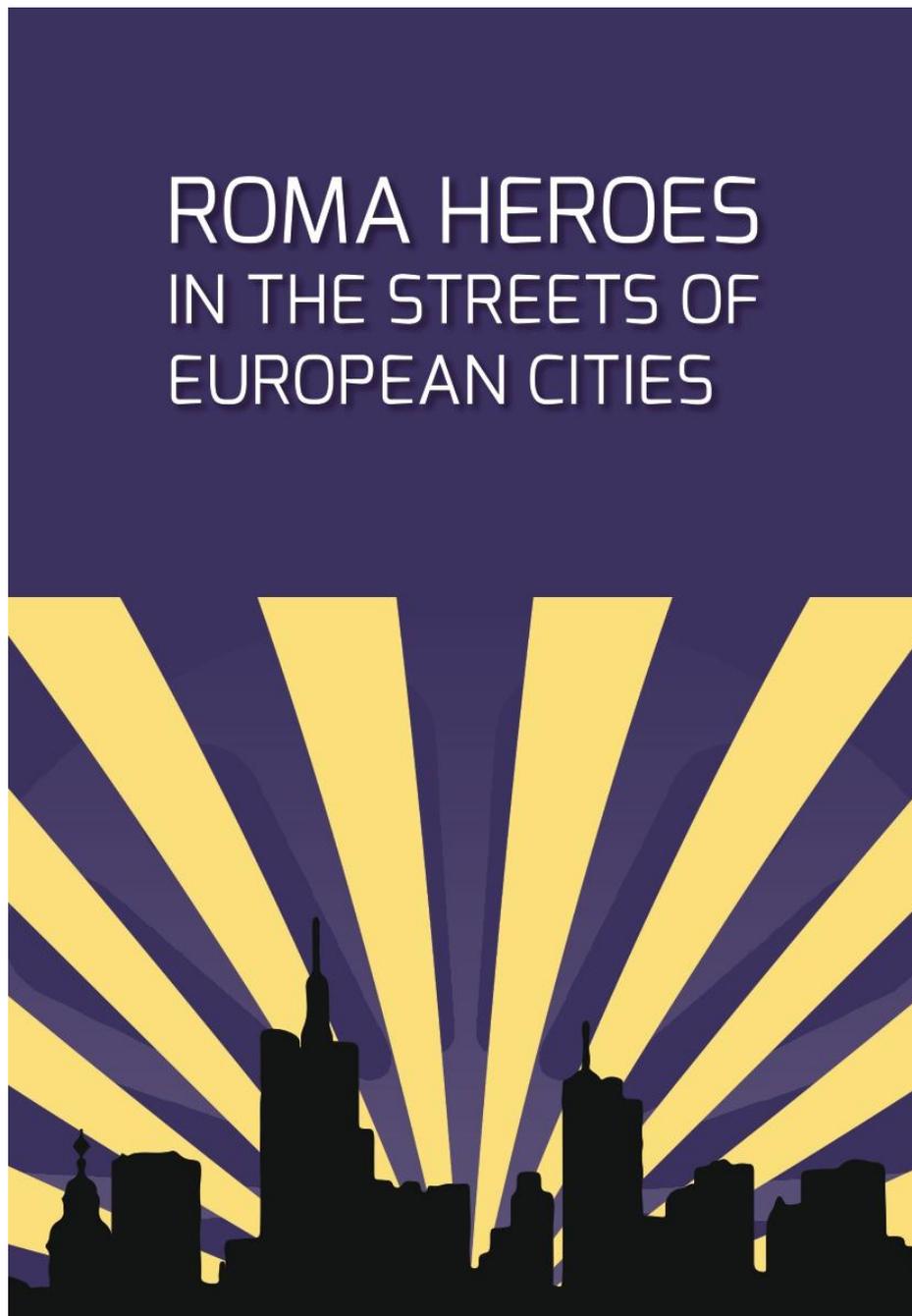


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ROMA HEROES IN THE STREETS OF EUROPEAN CITIES

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The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the European Commission.

What to expect from this brochure:

We put together all of the methods, instruments and materials that we created and used in this project. We also explained step by step what we did and why. Apart from this being a way for us to review and centralize the work we did for a new performance - SAFARI FETIŞ - we trust that all of the materials can be used and adapted by professionals working with or at the intersection of any of these beneficiaries: youth, Roma, city or town inhabitants. You can expect to go through quite a lot of information but you can also expect to find things you can use.

We invite you to read, reflect, adapt&use but also reach out if you need additional information or if you have ideas of how to make Roma Heroes in the Streets of European Cities more visible and more involved.

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CONTEXT: European. Roma. Youth. Theatre.

The Eurobarometer reports that the Roma people belong to the biggest ethnic minority of Europe, yet the attitudes of EU citizens towards them are among the most negative ones. Much more often the members of this group face social and economic problems and discrimination, even more than most other minority groups. Despite this challenging situation, Roma communities have been part of European societies for many centuries, contributed a lot to the shared European cultural heritage and also played a relevant role in Europe's history. Roma theater has more than 100 years of history, too, and there are professional Roma theaters working in numerous European countries, but they are still hardly known and isolated.

Due to the intricacies of oppressive actions and racism, stories about the contribution of Roma communities to the artistic and cultural field are, most often not recorded or fast forgotten. Knowing the power of stories, their contribution to building better futures based on reciprocal appreciation and cooperation, and believing that they are key to not repeating dangerous segregational and discriminatory actions led us to pursue a collaborative project centering the stories of *Roma Heroes in the Streets of European Cities*.

ROMA HEROES IN THE STREETS OF EUROPEAN CITIES is an Erasmus+ project created and developed by 4 European organizations:

- [Independent Theater Hungary](#) (legally and financially represented by the Women for the Future Association)
- [Rampa Prenestina](#), Italy
- [AAIÚN Producciones](#), Spain & Asociación Cultural Por La Investigación Y El Desarrollo De Teatro Profesional En Andalucía
- [Giuvlipen](#), Romania (legally and financially represented by the The Roma Actors Association)

While working in different programs - dealing with theater, storytelling, education and inclusion - we try to reach out innovatively and creatively to empower individuals, improve their lives and strengthen communities by developing and delivering creative, participatory art based on interventions that bring about a positive social impact, build self-esteem and promote social inclusion and employability.

All project partners contribute to creating artistic works of self-representation that focus on social issues and on organizing educational activities that can contribute to the acknowledgement of inclusion as well as the forming of active citizenship amongst youth. All three organizations are not only independent artistic creators, but also initiatives that involve Roma and non-Roma youth as

actors, creators and trainers. Given the context and history of Roma theater, we believe it is important to offer youth - with predilection Roma youth - artistic and cultural professional competencies, creative abilities (developed by the means of direct involvement in cultural productions and workshops), as well as the context to discover and learn about Roma culture. We trust that this way we can set the bases of a future where Roma culture and art is better known, more visible and altogether stronger.

Our plan going into this project was to promote the common values of Roma and non-Roma people and inspire their active involvement in shaping the lives of their cities. The way we designed and planned this project was so that all beneficiaries have the opportunity to uncover information about the past and current lives in the city and neighborhood they live in, so that they understand the cultural values and roles, challenges and involvement Roma communities had and still do. We believe in the values and potential of Roma theater to empower young Roma and non-Roma with artistic and educational tools as well as open interactions. We trust that the beneficiaries' work - their performances as well as the training they will lead - will bring light to inspirational stories, centering values as well as challenges that will have the power to shift from the paradigm of inclusion to that of togetherness, especially since we all share the European cities we inhabit.

ABOUT GIUVLIPEN

Giuvlipen means feminism in the Romani language and is the first independent Roma feminist theater company in Romania. Our art is challenging, experimental and highly performative. The themes of our performances are diverse, but they all have something in common: we openly discuss topics that history, mentality and social or political constraints have often silenced. In each show, we seek to reclaim the art, history and cultural identity of Roma, through stories told by Roma artists.

Many of our theater performances are the result of a collaborative process of work in which we involve other Roma collaborators to share their stories that later come to life in our shows. As professionals, we use theater as a way to speak about our experiences, as a response and as recourse to the lack of inclusion and marginalization we have faced. At the same time, we help get rid of the idea that Roma theater is sad, overwhelming and focused only on our oppressive experiences. We celebrate our identity and resistance through theatre, we take a lot of pride and joy from being Roma on stage and we want to contribute to a new type of drama, one that is more inclusive with minorities and non-white theater makers.

ABOUT OUR COLLABORATORS PLAYHOOD & STUDIOURILE FERENTARI

[Asociația Ferentari](#) is a non-profit organization that supports the activities of PlayHood: a community of young people who combine education with various arts, such as theater, video editing workshops, audio production, creative writing, storytelling, or personalized mentoring activities.

They aim to develop basic skills such as reading, writing, critical thinking, along with digital education with applicability in visual and performing arts. Playhood evolved into more than a youth theater group and their dream is to build SF - Studiourile Ferentari (en. Ferentari Studios) - a creation and experimentation lab where the children and youth of Ferentari can continue to benefit from training, workshops and mentorship activities free of charge, under the guidance of arts and culture professionals.

[Playhood](#) can proudly say they received awards and have participated in prestigious festivals both in Romania and abroad. Their work has been recognized by top artists and the media, and some of the youth have started to receive paid roles in various productions. They are proof that with minimal investment success can exist beyond drug dealing and other illicit activities right in the heart of Ferentari.

What you can find in this case study

Whether you are

- a person working with youth and discuss topics such as identity, representation, culture and art, youth theater
- an educator or a pedagogue looking for alternative interactive educational instruments and methods
- a person working in an organization that works at the intersection of any of the following: youth empowerment, Roma identity, art & culture, performative arts, street art & performing
- A young person looking to develop knowledge and abilities that can help you pursue a performative professional path

if you continue to read you will find:

- Information about the Roma community and the lives of young Roma in a European capital city
- Ideas for artistic performative work that centers Roma inspired from our consistent work to bring Roma representation in theater
- Methods, instruments and workshop plans to work with young Roma and non-Roma using theater

We are confident that through this project, young people's attitudes towards Roma individuals and active participation has improved, and that a series of experts will have gained new methods and inspiration for their work. By highlighting the stories of Roma individuals and communities and the values of Roma theater, history and culture become an integral part of European cultural heritage. We trust that we managed to mobilize Roma communities and young people by emphasizing these values and inspiring members of the majority to participate as instruments of inclusion, recognizing that we all live on a continent that we share, in cities that we share, with similar interests to our fellow citizens, regardless of our background.

We hope that our instruments, methods and activities will also support educators, cultural experts, social & youth workers in their work and inspire them to use inclusive, interactive and user-friendly artistic and educational practices in as many areas of their activity as possible. Through our efforts, we hope to provide tools and inspiration to other artistic and educational initiatives that will have the opportunity to integrate new and creative solutions into their activities.

Why did we choose to center Ferentari in this project?

Ferentari, also called Ferentexas, is usually described as a no man's land, a land where no social rules apply, dominated by drug use, prostitution, poverty and violence. There are a lot of urban myths surrounding the neighborhood and the press usually uses the subject to add other layers of stereotypes and to inflict judgements to the Roma community that lives there. By focusing on this subject and the stories of the residents we intended to put in focus the reality on the ground versus the stereotypes propagated in the media regarding the Roma community. We searched for Roma people that lived in the area for many years and asked for help to retrace the changes and developments of the neighborhood and its residents.

We were interested in the history of the Ferentari neighborhood (a neighborhood in the capital city of Romania), the ways in which its image is tightly linked to Roma people and discovered it was important to focus on the evolution of the locative situation of the Roma community in the area and the ways in which the mainstream press talks about the subject.

The message that we wanted to convey to the audience was that the majority is so used to demean, stereotype and laugh at anything related to Roma communities, and that nobody takes the time or makes the effort to ask *hows* and *whys* anymore. Since this attitude of self-sufficiency and self-righteousness is perpetuating racism and discrimination against an entire community they actually know nothing about we wanted to retell the history of this district using the voices of its residents, the people that really know the answers to how and why, but have never before been given the chance to actually tell their stories.

Since we opted for creating an outdoor performance we also managed to reach people who don't attend theater and educational institutions regularly and this way we used the public

spaces of a vibrant European city for celebrating its interethnic cultural heritage and to include groups who are usually left out in these cultural and educational activities.

The Creative Process - Part 1: Research & Documentation

What you will find in this chapter:

- > A bit about the history of Ferentari & links to some studies conducted about it
 - > Ferentari in the press
 - > How is Ferentari seen by its inhabitants: interviews with peers & interviews with their neighbors
 - > Methods and Instruments we used + workshop and activities ideas that can be used in youth work and beyond
-

> The History of Ferentari

Since one of the core objectives of our project was to shine a light on the real lives of Roma and non-Roma living in European cities, Ferentari was the place that seemed obvious to be in the center of the “Roma Heroes in the Streets of European Cities” (RoHeSEC) project.

As a general context, Ferentari, also called Ferentexas, is usually described as a *no man's land*, a land where no social rules apply, dominated by drug use, prostitution, poverty and violence. There are a lot of urban myths surrounding the neighborhood and the press usually uses the subject to add other layers of stereotypes and to inflict judgements to the Roma community that lives there.

Throughout time, mass-media, the authorities and social media resorted to stereotypes, exoticism and forced narratives for modeling the image of Ferentari. If we were to resume in very few words what we found out about Ferentari during our research and documentation phase for the project was that there is very little information regarding the history of Ferentari and it is definitely not common knowledge.

From the few available studies and documentation we managed to find out the following: Ferentari is a neighborhood in Bucharest, Romania, located in the Sector 5 district. The area was initially a floodplain with marshes and ponds, and it was gradually urbanized in the early 20th century.

Ferentari started off as a working-class neighborhood built between 1845-1947 with almost 600 apartments. In the Romanian Dictionary *ferentar* (pl. *ferentari*) meant a former soldier in the light infantry (from the latin term *ferentarius*). This is just the first of the theories regarding the origin of the name of the neighborhood.

The name of the neighborhood is closely related to the name of its main artery: Calea Ferentarilor, which can already be identified on the topographic map of Satmari from 1864, at its end towards Calea Craiovei (Calea Rahovei from 1877). Another theory that tries to explain the origin of its name suggests that it is possible that the name of Calea Ferentarilor appeared in honor of the Oltenian soldiers of Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza - the ferentari - who would have been rewarded with land for their bravery; another theory regarding the name of the neighborhood, supported by some

historians, is related to the *ferentari* of Mihai Viteazu's army this time, who would have had their training ground in this area.

Regardless of the provenance of the name, the history of Ferentari is closely tied to the living situation in Bucharest¹.

In an extensive study² done about Ferentari by a team of researchers of various specialties, the architect involved in writing the urbanistic case study mentions the following:

“From an urbanistic point of view, Ferentari as a whole is an area of incomplete modernization and incomplete urbanization in some places. Aleea Livezilor and its counterpart, Aleea Iacob Andrei, are located beyond an industrial area that was once very active but is now almost entirely abandoned. The spatial and administrative fragmentation of Aleea Livezilor can be explained by the interruption of the socialist modernization process that aimed to create a block housing district that would eliminate the older form of mahala housing and serve as a dormitory district for the adjacent industry. The disappearance of the industry was not accompanied by urban rehabilitation programs; on the contrary, workers' homes were abandoned for a while, and some residents even mentioned that they were proposed for demolition.”

Overall, as shown on a recent [interactive map](#) the buildings in the area are relatively new, the oldest dating back to the 1970s.

A special situation is that of the Zăbrăuți area which is, according to the same research mentioned above, “a community consisting of approximately 3000 people who live in 420 households. The population is predominantly Roma, and the Roma families mentioned in the City Hall's data are: Ursari, Spoitori, Lăutari, Vătrași, and Boldeni. The Zăbrăuți neighborhood consists of eight blocks, five of which have a predominantly Roma population. Three of the eight blocks are separated from the rest by a barbed wire fence. These three blocks are mainly inhabited by non-Roma tenants. The areas in front of these blocks contrast sharply with the rest in that they are full of well-maintained and flashy parked cars. However, non-Roma people are also spread throughout the other 5 blocks, but the Roma population remains the majority in them.”

Zăbrăuți is considered to be the most notorious ghetto³ in Bucharest. It has that reputation because of a spontaneous riot in the area that has been covered heavily by the media. However the evolution of the locative situation in Zăbrăuți from the communist times to 2011 (when the study

¹ More about Roma communities and housing issues in Bucharest - Ferentari is centralised [here](#)

² [Comunități Ascunse Ferentari](#) (2011); the excerpt cited is from the chapter “*The Ghetto and the Disadvantaged Residential Area (Zld) Aleea Livezilor.*” written by architect Cătălin Berescu

³ Over time, the meaning of the term 'ghetto' has evolved. Its origins can be traced back to the Italian words 'giudecca', 'borggetto', or 'gietto', which were used to describe the neighborhoods where Jews were forced to live. A ghetto is a type of living area for marginal communities, which, although present in reality and Romanian public consciousness, is not recognized as an administrative issue and has been relatively unexplored by Romanian researchers.

covering it is published) is very relevant to understanding the situation in Ferentari neighborhood overall:

- 1980s: The blocks in Zabrauti were housing units belonging to Metrorex, used to accommodate workers who built the Bucharest subway.
- 1989: After the Bucharest subway was finished, the workers who previously came from rural areas returned to their homes and abandoned the living spaces in Ferentari; the communist authorities planned to demolish the buildings but were unable to do so before the regime fell.
- 1996: The local authorities decided to take over the buildings and turned the abandoned neighborhood into one of social housing, starting the process of legalizing housing in the area. Contracts were signed first for leasing for a couple of months, later for 1 year, then for 5 years with the possibility of purchase.
- 2004: Most tenants were able to buy the studios at a very low price, making them owners, and the municipality was formally absolved of responsibilities related to managing the neighborhood and the investments necessary for decent living.
- Soon, housing problems intensified, debts to electricity companies accumulated, and in winter 2002, the electricity supply was suspended, leading to a crisis.
- November 2006: Electrica, the electricity company, disconnected illegally connected blocks from the electricity grid, leading to a spontaneous revolt by the residents of the neighborhood that ended in an intervention with special forces and firefighters.
- The sector 5 town hall ended up covering the costs of restoring the internal electricity network of the blocks and installing individual meters, while a private wealthy controversial man paid the accumulated debts.
- After this resolution of the crisis, the price of studios doubled, and people with medium social status moved to the area. Those who could not keep up with the new pace and could not pay the bills migrated out of the neighborhood to nearby towns.
- Problems such as flooded basements and lack of heating systems still persist.

Ferentari has a negative reputation, being considered by DailyMail as one of the most unsafe places to go on vacation. Among the criteria that can be mentioned are: the number of violent acts, thefts, stolen cars, uncleanliness, etc.

It is more than debatable whether this reputation corresponds to reality. According to the official statistics of the Romanian Police, Sector 5 of Bucharest ranks last in the number of crimes in Bucharest (compared to the other sectors), making it the safest area in Bucharest, according to these statistics.

Last but not least, despite the stereotype that all Ferentari residents are Roma, ethnic diversity is quite high, with permanent residents being mainly poor workers and rural migrants.

> Ferentari in the press

When we began working to plan the activities of the project we thought we would focus solely on the way Ferentari is depicted by the Romanian and international press and that the performance will focus on approaching this aspect. Even though we ended up taking the concept in a slightly different, more comprehensive direction, we still did quite a thorough documentation and analysis of the media coverage Ferentari has received so far. What emerged was that there are mainly two directions in press materials:

1. Ferentari: a dangerous place full of drug addicts and poor Roma people
2. The NGOs and people who are saving people from Ferentari and solving their problems

We put together a [document](#) with a **selection of media articles** published in the international press, a list of titles of press articles discussing Ferentari related topics from 2021, and 2 links to video media coverages about the neighborhood.

This can be used by educators, youth workers or artists as an instrument to explore what type of narrative the media is perpetuating about the neighborhood. The document can be the starting point of a discussion about our own biases and how they are shaped by the type of media we consume. It can also be the starting point of a discussion about ways to hold the press agents accountable and to form future generations of journalists to be more responsible with the perspectives they present about a neighborhood like Ferentari and the people living there.

This document is part of a 2 hours workshop that is detailed below.

> How is Ferentari seen by its inhabitants: interviews with peers & interviews with the peers' neighbors

As mentioned by the people living in Ferentari but also reflected in studies and shared by activists and people working in the community, people here are “used to interact with journalists, researchers, social workers, politicians, charity or foundation employees, politicians [...] and they are somewhat bored to talk to yet another person who want to know their lives.” In the same study⁴ the researcher gives the following example:

“C.M., an activist of the Roma Party, told me:

A lot of research was done, and their hope when they saw someone asking them 2-3 questions was 'maybe something will change here'. They don't perceive that you are coming to conduct a study, they think you are coming to help them. And after telling you this and that, they see that nothing changes, and then they tell another person, but the third time they will dismiss you. Fortunately, I can't say I've encountered too many difficult situations, although there have been some tense moments.”

⁴ [Incluziune și excluziune. Studii de caz asupra comunităților de romi din România](#) (2009); the study includes a chapter called *Ghetou de lux? Aleea Zăbrăuți, București* in which the author, Miruna Tîrcă, writes about a certain area in Ferentari.

Research is sometimes biased too. As we found out, some of the research done in Ferentari focused on confirming either popular or ready-made beliefs, without looking to understand the complex systems in place or put things into perspective by taking into account institutionalized racism, the mechanics of addictions, interiorized discriminatory narratives. This leads to the perpetuation of the same narratives - that are now based on supposedly reliable proof - and to the further insolation of the ones who are already vulnerable and most affected by these harmful beliefs in the first place.

We believe that it is very important to always try to get a glimpse of the reality lived by a certain group by learning from them directly and getting them involved in the conversation about their own spaces, beliefs and lived experiences. Especially when creating artistic work based on real events, people and situations. However, we highly recommend being mindful of the context as well and keeping in mind that no one is entitled to demand answers or exposure if someone does not want to offer that. This is one of the reasons why in all of Giuvlipen's work (*Safari Fetiş* included) we try to dramatize the stories and the characters and present on stage performances that are merely inspired by realities and not ones that aim to replicate them.

One of the core aspects of the "*Roma Heroes in the Streets of European Cities*" project was the involvement of youngsters who are considering an artistic practice as a professional path. Building on the foundation of the former collaborative project we developed together with the same partners ("[Roma \(S\)Heroes in Theater Education and Everyday Life](#)") we reached out to previous participants in the project and got them involved in this new experience. An experience that we designed as a new layer to go on top of the one that trained them in theatrical methodologies. The way we thought about this project was so that these youngsters will become peer trainers - this way they could benefit from new competencies and also use the information they had previously learned and share it with their peers, hence becoming **peer trainers**.

N.G. was one of these peer trainers and she was born and raised in Ferentari. Knowing some of her stories and some of the artistic activities she had previously been part of in the neighborhood, we decided to reach out to the youth theater group Playhood and get them involved in developing the project. Therefore, we added to the team of peer trainers two other young Roma performers who were part of other Giuvlipen projects and then extended it with five (5) other young performers that were part of Playhood.

So, the important **pillars** going into the next research step of the project were: getting **insights about Ferentari** from **people who are part of the neighborhood** and **centering** the work around **youth** as much as possible.

Therefore we started by interviewing two of the peer trainers and asking questions about their perception of Ferentari. Since both N.G and A.P. were born and raised in Ferentari, we believed that

they should be the first ones to share some information about the neighborhood. The set of questions we used were:

- If you would bring someone to Ferentari for the first time in their life, where would you take them?
- What is one thing that you would like people to stop saying about Ferentari?
- Your favourite spot in the neighborhood is?
- What is your least favourite place in the neighbourhood?
- If you had decision power, what would be some things you would keep from Ferentari? What would be the things you would change?
- How does a week in the neighbourhood look like?
- Your fondest memory from Ferentari is?
- If you had to create a touristic map of Ferentari what should definitely be on it?
- What did you hear being said about Ferentari?
- What would you like to be said about Ferentari (in the future, or something that is not said enough)?
- What should be included in a leaflet with the history of the neighbourhood?
- How would you describe the people in Ferentari?
- What is the biggest challenge about living in Ferentari? And the biggest advantage?

The whole interview with them is available as an Annex to this case study [here](#).

What we learned was that Ferentari is known for being one of the poorest and most disadvantaged areas in the city. It has a high concentration of Roma people, who face discrimination and social exclusion. Ferentari is also known for being a center for sex work and drug dealing, although this is not unique to the neighbourhood and can be found in other areas of Bucharest as well.

Both N.G. and A.P. agreed that daily life in Ferentari can be challenging, with many residents facing poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to basic services like healthcare and education. Infrastructure is poor, with many buildings in a state of disrepair and lacking basic amenities like running water and electricity.

Despite these challenges, they both recognized there is a sense of community and resilience among the residents of Ferentari. Many organizations and activists work to improve conditions in the neighborhood and support marginalized groups. There are also community spaces and initiatives that provide support and opportunities for youth and families.

If there were one phrase to sum things up this would be what N.G. shared:

"I wish people would ask us more questions. This way we could answer and tell our own stories about Ferentari."

Based on this interview we designed a **workshop** that we shared with our project partners during the first International Meeting in Budapest.

We trust that the educational instruments used in this workshop can prove to be useful when working and recommend using it with groups of youth or adults when there is a topic that usually gets polarized media (usually negative in an overwhelming percentage). We opted for this type of exercise because we believe that they can come in handy especially when working with little to no documentation in regards to the history of a place (just like in our case with Ferentari) and when the information available is somewhat biased or polarized.

Although for the International Meeting with the partners of the project the times allotted to each activity were shorter, we recommend the time frames described below, so that all participants have the time to go through the available information, as well as prepare an improvisation scene.

Activities	Est. Time	Trainer needs to prepare:
<i>Split the room in 2 groups</i>		
GROUP A: Analysis of press depictions of the situation in Ferentari (1 translated newspaper article + video of a piece of news about Ferentari shown to participants in the workshop); they take notes	30 min	- newspaper articles translated in English - video 1 or video 2 of a news coverage (*optionally with English subtitles or from international news outlet)
GROUP B: Have someone from the neighborhood available to be interviewed in a short call (15-20 minutes); then take notes; we found a more time efficient alternative: we interviewed 2 neighborhood inhabitants beforehand and the participants were able to read the interviews during the workshop		- person who is previously briefed - set of questions they need to ask the person - recording document (where they have the most important things they need for prepping the improv scene: characters, situation, place, etc.) *alternatively the workshop participants go over the document with the interviews with the neighborhood inhabitants
BREAK	15 min	
GROUP A: Prepare a max. 10 min improv scene about a day in Ferentari. Base it on the information you gathered from the press articles.	30 min	Separate spaces for the groups to work in without disturbing each other.
GROUP B: Prepare a max. 10 min improv scene about a day in Ferentari. Base it on the information you gathered from the interview(s)		Recording document (where they have the most important things they need for prepping the improv scene: characters, situation, place, etc.)
Have each group present the improv scene of a day in Ferentari based on the information they have used	10 min group A 10 min group B	
Have a short debrief of the image media depicts about a place and/or a group of people	10-15 min	

In this adjusted scenario, the **workshop lasts for a total of 2 hours**.

Although we did it with only two groups working at the same time, the activity can be done with more groups, as long as the necessary time for the presentations of the improvisation is kept the same. In case of a larger group that splits into more subgroups, it would be useful to have more moderators/trainers/coordinators to make sure all groups have people they can ask for help. An important aspect would be to keep enough time to have a conversation with the participants about how different materials can serve to discover different things and how they reflect very different aspects from the same reality. Where necessary, have a conversation about how the media can distort reality and perpetuate harmful ideas about a place and/or a group of people.

In regards to the organizational and administrative aspects, we recommend choosing a workshop space that allows you to split the big group and offer subgroups spaces where they can discuss as well as “rehearse” what they plan to present in front of the reunited group without disturbing each other.

In the **next documentation phase** we focused on **extending the conversation to other people in the neighborhood**. Therefore we involved the **peer trainers in a process of interviewing their Ferentari neighbors**. All peers had the same set of questions:

- Where do you think the name Ferentari comes from?
- How would you describe Ferentari in three to five words?
- Within the neighborhood, are there more stigmatized areas than others?
- What are the places to visit that you would recommend in Ferentari?
- Are there traditional Roma families in the neighborhood? What do they do?
- What professions do people in the neighborhood have?
- What are the most important and relevant events that have happened in Ferentari that you remember and that have had a big impact on you?
- What cultural products about Ferentari do you like? What about those that you don't like?
- What would you change about Ferentari?
- If you were mayor of Ferentari, what would you do?
- What is the history of the Roma people here, in Ferentari?

The answers we received completed the picture we already had about the perception Ferentari inhabitants have about their own neighborhood but they also brought to light some less explored stories, urban myths and day to day realities:

When asked *Where do you think the name Ferentari comes from?* Some answered:

- “I understand that there were two brothers: one died on the front and the one who stayed home named the neighborhood after him, from Ferent, which means Ferentari.”

When asked *How would you describe Ferentari in three to five words?* Some answered:

- “Happy, lively, decent people ... well, I can also say ... Cockroaches, rats, bedbugs, and other insects.”

- "Poor, helpful and (needs) more education."
- "Well, Ferentari neighborhood is very quiet compared to other neighborhoods, even though it has a reputation of this and that. It's quiet and clean though - we always clean and there are good people."

When asked *Are there traditional Roma families in the neighborhood? What do they do?* Some answered:

- "If a census were to be conducted, the reality would be completely different from what is said and talked about. I think three-quarters of this neighborhood are majority, not minority."

When asked *What are the most important and relevant events that have happened in Ferentari that you remember and that have had a big impact on you?* Some answered:

- "For me, it was important when the mayor came and gave us houses on the spot - everyone who had a studio apartment had the opportunity to do their paperwork, to solve the property issues. Then, those who had the possibility to put gas in their homes, did so. Those who couldn't, didn't... Some are still using gas cylinders. People were happy in those times."
- "They (referring to the city hall officials) also bring detergent for cleaning to the people."
- "Weddings, in the summer. The most beautiful and traditional ones."

When asked *What cultural products about Ferentari do you like? What about those that you don't like?* Some answered:

- "They had shows here at Ferentari Market."
- "Well, there aren't many cultural ones. Not really... Maybe you, the young people who sing sometimes. But otherwise, not really."
- "If it were about our traditions that happened in Ferentari such as the "White Night of Movies" or "Sistem pe Ferentari" or something else that happened, yes, I really liked these because they characterize us and are part of our tradition. For example, at "Sistem pe Ferentari" there was lăutărească music, our music, and the dance was a traditional dance. And what I don't like would be... I don't like trap, rap... well, rap is okay, but I really don't like trap music."
- "At the beginning of 2013, there was a cultural event called "Mothers Club" - "Together we change the community".
- "Cultural products? A library... but we don't have one"

When asked *What professions do people in the neighborhood have?* Some answered:

- "In general, most women work as caregivers or dishwashers in restaurants, but there are also people of a more noble breed, such as doctors, masseurs, manicurists, and pedicurists."
- "Well, all kinds. Starting from directors, doctors, down to the lower-level people."

- "Well, all kinds of professions, like any other person. Salesperson, also street sweeper, and... what else can I say. All kinds of professions."

When asked *Are there traditional Roma families in the neighborhood? What do they do?* Some answered:

- "Yes, yes, those are the ones who sell carpets - the Hungarian Roma. There are also the tinkers, and there are those who wear skirts and sell pots and pans."
- "There are tradition Roma people who sell flowers"

When asked *What is the history of the Roma people here, in Ferentari?* Some answered:

- "Well, my mother used to tell me that they somehow came from Letca Veche. And they walked on the road, they walked and walked for days. Several of them left because of poverty. "Let's go to the capital to see what's there - supposedly it's better there." This was around 1500, 1600. (She knew the story from my grandfather, so to speak.) And one day five, six, seven Roma came. They said to the others, "Come on, it's good here, look, we find work," and they brought their relatives too. They came on foot, they didn't come suddenly like that... And slowly they came to Bucharest and we became more numerous here too."
- "Roma people used to be horse traders in the past, some of them were musicians, and many of them still keep their old occupations."
- "Not very old. Roma people are in Ferentari because they have lower incomes - it is a poorer neighborhood."

If we were to summarize their opinions, the following (opposing) views are the most common ones: "This neighborhood of Ferentari was very clean, very respected. You understand? The people were very united, helpful, until drugs came (in the neighborhood) and destroyed everyone. Everyone there started losing (because of them). It was very good before - cleanliness, respect, and all that. You understand? Everyone was fine, they weren't afraid to go out or leave the door open. It was very beautiful before, I loved sitting outside and having a coffee or talking to someone. But slowly, everything was destroyed, you understand? Because of drugs and people who came from other neighborhoods and destroyed it."

"I wouldn't leave Ferentari. I got used to living here."

Having all of this information as well as a good feel of the neighborhood (thanks to the input from the Playhood and Studiourile Ferentari team) we moved on to creating the script of the play.

The Creative Process - Part 2: Safari Fetiş

What you will find in this chapter:

- > step by step process of creating the *Safari Fetiş* performance
 - > How & What can be used in youth work and beyond
-

In the case of Ferentari we found the approaches used so far in documenting topics that had to do with it were quite similar to a “safari”: sensational seekers (albeit press, researchers, mainstream artists or do-gooders with savior behaviors) come to the neighborhood and watch people and their lives from a safe distance, almost like someone would watch wildlife in the savannah. They come seeking for entertainment or confirmation of their beliefs and then go back to their lives excited to tell the story of how brave they were to go there in such a wild place, without any thought about how their behavior affects the real people who live their real lives in a real 21st century European capital neighborhood.

The creative team worked on a performance starting exactly from this. We called it *Safari Fetiş* to hint at this type of approach coming from outside of the neighborhood. Additionally, we hope to have contributed to empowering the artists involved to reclaim their stories by satirically setting the performance as an urban safari through the neighborhood, that shows its realities exactly as they are: diverse, complicated and very personal.

> The script of *Safari Fetiş*

Based on the research and documentation done as described in the previous chapter, the dramaturgist Mihaela Drăgan and the script-writer and director Ionuț Oprea proceeded at writing the first draft of the text.

Ionuț started rehearsing with the team of actresses and continued adjusting the text together with them until the wording became natural and very close to how they would say the things in the script.



The artistic team presented two of the scenes to the partners in the project during the International Meeting that was hosted in Bucharest, right at Studiourile Ferentari. Some of the feedback received at that time was that some of the concepts introduced in the text don't

blend in well enough either due to the wordings or to the fact that they are not so well integrated by the actresses. Based on this feedback, the last draft was adjusted and the script was finalized.

The final version of the script of Safari Fetiș is available in [Romanian](#) and in [English](#) and can be used for text analysis or even for youth groups who want to create works that depict the realities of people living in a neighborhood of a European 21st century capital.

The text comprises five (5) scenes performed by six (6) actresses. All the scenes are welded together by a narrator - the Safari guide - who not only has the role to be **the host** - explaining everyone the important aspects they need to know in order to have a good time as part of the performance - but is also the provider of research and introduces concepts that the audience needs to interiorize, process, learn.

The tour starts at Studiourile Ferentari. The first 3 scenes - 2 dialogues and a monologue - are happening there too. Then the audience is guided through the neighborhood where they first witness the last written scene - another monologue - and then they continue to 2 more locations where the setup is more focused on engagement and immersing the audience into the atmosphere of Ferentari.

> The production of Safari Fetiș

The main challenge of the production was the fact that the concept was that of an urban Safari. This came with great opportunities but also a couple of complicated aspects we needed to navigate:

- Silvia Horobeanu designed the costumes and came up with some scenography elements

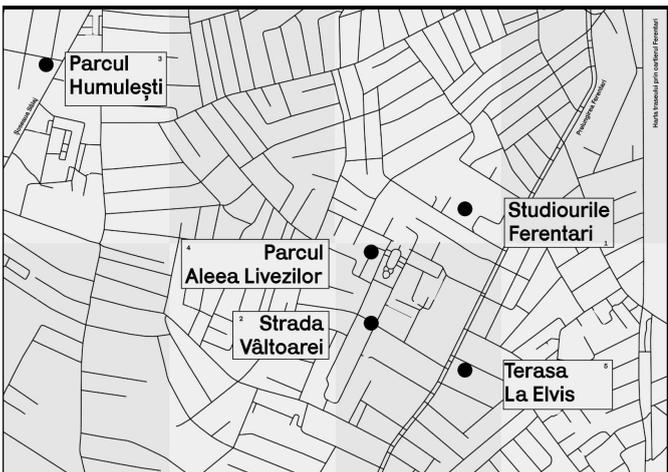




Given that the performance was an itinerant one, meant to resemble a safari, she opted for animal prints and elements that can come in handy when exploring a(n) urban) jungle: binoculars and a map of the neighborhood (these were handed out to all the members of the audience who joined us for the performances)

- One of the most important elements of the performance was the tour of the neighborhood. Therefore, it was important to have a means of transportation to take the audience and some of the cast to the important points in Ferentari. We decided that the most appropriate option was a minibus because it was big enough to fit a considerable number of spectators but small enough to make its way through the narrow alleys of Ferentari. This

meant that we were limited to around 23 people traveling at the same time - which translated into needing to limit the number of spectators per performance which proved to be challenging also because it meant that if we reserved a seat and the person didn't show up, we couldn't have extra audience members to fill in the spot. This also means that the performance can mostly only "live" in Ferentari and should anyone want to invite it to a festival or take the script and present it somewhere else, it would need serious adaptation.



1. Outside of the promotional brochure

De-a lungul timpului, mass-media, autoritățile sau mediile sociale au recurs la stereotipuri, exotism și narațiuni forțate pentru a modela imaginea cartierului Ferentari. Safari Fetiş este un tur ghidat al cartierului Ferentari, prezentat sub forma unei satire performative, care adresează mistificarea cartierului și dezumanizarea locuitorilor care trăiesc aici. Spectacolul e cu și despre oameni din Ferentari, cu probleme, visuri și bucurii, o felie de cotidian, comentată doar cu un dram de umor, într-o bucătărie plină de clienți dar fără aviz de funcționare.

Spectacol itinerant de teatru

Fetiş

Regiunea are o reputație negativă, fiind considerată de DailyMail unul dintre cele mai nesigure locuri în care să mergi în vacanță. Printre critici este asociat mereu numărul actorilor de violență, de furt, de mașini furate, înșelăciunile etc. Este mai mult decât discutabil dacă această reputație corespunde realității. Conform statisticilor oficiale ale Poliției Române, Sectorul 5 al Bucureștiului este pe ultimul loc la numărul infracțiunilor din Municipiul București (comparativ cu celelalte sectoare) fiind deci cea mai sigură zonă din București, conform acestor statistici.

A existat un cinematograful pe Călea Ferentari, la nr. 86. Inițial s-a numit „50 Decembrie” iar din anul ’60 Cinema Ferentari. Degradarea acestuia a început înainte de 1990, situație similară cu a multor alți cinematografe din București. După 1990, clădirea acestuia a fost transformată într-un service auto pentru a fi demolat ulterior în vederea asigurării terenului necesar edificării unui centru cultural dedicat minorităților etnice.

În trecut a existat o poliținică pe Str. Văltoarei, dar după 2000 aceasta a fost abandonată de autorități. În scurt timp clădirea a fost devastată și astăzi este doar o ruină. La puțin timp după 1990 a fost desființată și Poliținică „Ferentari” ce a funcționat pe Str. Veseliei nr. 73.

Regie și text: Concept artist: Scenografie și costume: Poziție: Actrițe: Producție și coordonare proiect:

Ionuț Cornea
Mihaiela Drăgăan
Silvia Horobescu
Sorinel Bradu
Cătălina Vataâ
Alina Vălsanu
Georgiana Vataâ
Ana Maria Vataâ
Andreea Petre
Andreea Ionțâ
Andreea Roșu

2009 SF

2. Inside of the promotional brochure

> The performances of Safari Fetis̆

We had 4 scheduled performances. The first two were invitation based because we wanted people that were close to the cast and production team to be able to see their work. Additionally we wanted to have the opportunity to invite members of the press to view the performance too.

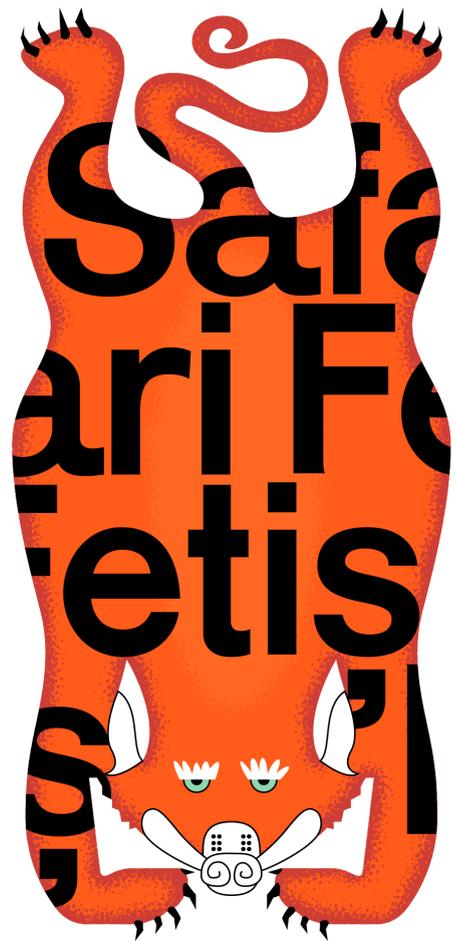


The last 2 performances were promoted as free of charge and a reservation was necessary in order to participate. We mainly reached out to youth theater groups in Bucharest and youngsters to encourage them to participate and watch their peers.

During the period of time when the artistic team was presenting the performance we also had *Safari Fetis̆* recorded by a professional team (Andrei Ducea and [Patrupetrei Production](#)).

Thanks to them the [performance is now available for viewing](#) on Giuvlipen's Youtube channels with English subtitles.

An additional element that brought everything together was the **visual identity** that Teodor Bratu created for the performance. Using a very bold shade - reminiscent of the color of a wild tiger's fur - he used a stylized tiger image reminding us of a balkan exotic game rug. The poster served as the base of all the declinations we used for social media promotion as well as signalistics at the locations involved in the performances.



Project team:

Direction and text: Ionuț Oprea

Artistic concept: Mihaela Drăgan

Scenography and costumes: Silvia Horobeanu

Poster: Teodor Bradu

With: Cateluța Vatală , Anca Valeanu, Georgiana Vatală, Ana Maria Vatală, Andreea Petre, Andreea Ioniță

Production & promotion team: Andrada Roșu, Bianca Plăcintaru & Augustina Vasile

Filming and Editing: Andrei Ducea & Patruietrei

Performance created together with the youth theatre group Playhood & Ferentari Studios.



Ferentari - the space that media and urban legends have portrayed over time as a dangerous, violent, and nobody's neighborhood. But what does Ferentari really mean for the people who live, love, and suffer here?

Safari Fetiș is a guided tour of the Ferentari neighborhood, presented in the form of a performative satire that addresses the mystification of the neighborhood and the dehumanization of its residents.

Over time, the mass media, authorities, or social environments have contributed to shaping the neighborhood's image, often through the use of stereotypes, exoticism, and forced narratives. For decades, the ghettos of Ferentari have been viewed from a safe distance, with indifference and cynicism, even by those who should have addressed the lack of social services or systemic inequality. At one point, a lawmaker even made a map of syringes, a project that probably awaits continuity through a dusty drawer, just as promises do in all electoral campaigns.

A block may be thermally insulated, a small street may be asphalted, all on the philosophy of "paint the fence outside, but inside it's a leopard". In the meantime, children who grew up without any chance ten years ago are now adults, good only for being pointed out by the privileged world, included in anthropological projects and studies, or used in statistics on illiteracy or violence.

Safari Fetiş is about the people of Ferentari, with their problems, dreams, and joys, a slice of daily life, seasoned only with a pinch of humor, in a kitchen full of customers but without a functioning permit.

The Creative Process - Part 3: Youth Engagement

What you will find in this chapter:

- > the workshop plans used for the training of trainers and for the trainings of peers
 - > the ideas that emerged from the peer trainings
 - > the ideas that emerged from the international peers
-

Since we believe young people will play a key role in the cultural and educational processes of the future we set off to make some of them experts in the fields of art education and training and target others to engage with the first ones via workshops. Following the work we did in our previous collaborative project ([“Roma \(S\)Heroes in Theater Education and Everyday Life”](#)) we wanted to guide young artists to also become trainers, gain abilities and experience success by working in interethnic creative cooperation projects (such as this one). This way we believe we can contribute to their employment perspectives and model young people’s attitude towards more inclusive societies in order to consolidate their active participation.

“Roma Heroes in the Streets of European Cities” included two workshops that used the **Safari Fetiş** play as a starting point and used the educational methodology developed in the beginning of the project with the help of young trainers and international partners of the project (the Foundation Bricks document can be accessed in the project page [here](#)). The workshops were aimed at Romani and non-Romani teenagers and young professionals interested in non-formal education and/or performing arts and were coordinated by four young trainers trained within the project.

We used various theater and street theater methods to initiate conversations about the importance of self-representation, owning one’s own identities, cultures, and values, and generating one’s own narrative for addressing these topics. The stories also made room for debates about self-governance and passivity, heroes and victims, community and individuality, empathy and ignorance.

> The Training Of Trainers (TOT)

The team of peer trainers responsible for delivering the Safari Fetiş workshops consisted of 4 young Roma performers that are close to Giuvlipen’s work. Two of these had been formed in a similar methodology in our previous ERASMUS+ project and the team was filled in with 2 other young Roma performers with very different backgrounds.

We were excited to have such a diverse team of trainers:

- **Nicoleta Ghiță** ([Niko G.](#)) began her artistic career really early, as an actress in the youth theatre group Playhood in Ferentari - the neighbourhood in Bucharest where she grew up. In the meantime,

she added to her portfolio several roles in different shows (that she performed as part of the Roma feminist theatre company in Bucharest and on different Romanian stages), as well as the trainer position in some projects dedicated to youth. She has been experimenting with writing lyrics for a long time, because she believes this is how people get to see her through her own eyes. The story she told in this project was her first official musical recording. After that she released the album *Techno-Witches* ([Tehno Vrajitoarele](#)) together with Kali. Her *Resistance Story* is written in rhymes, it has rhythm and always has a strong message. Just like the trap that she composes, performs and posts on social media, where she gets both hate and support.

- **Julio Elvisey Pisciă** Is an interdisciplinary artist who graduated from the Theatre and Music University in Timișoara. He is passionate about poetry, theatre and sound. His career started in his teenage years as a collaborator of an independent theatre company in Timișoara, together with which he toured in Romania and abroad. Throughout his career he was part of various Festivals in Romania and abroad, he was a peer-trainer in Erasmus projects and his poems were published multiple times in Romania. In the last years he began experimenting with sound and he is an independent music producer.
- **Arhanghella** - She studied fashion design and is a performance artist. She joined the Giuvlipen team as part of the Girls' Resistance project and since then she was part of the performative project „Cu fiecare atingere vom renaște”(“With Every Touch We Will Be Reborn”), as well as an actress in the latest Giuvlipen production “Trauma Kink”. She makes art and IS art and states that her existence is a form of protest in the transphobic and racist society that we are living in.
- **Bianca Mihai** - Is a singer and actress. She was the semifinalist in one of Romania's Got Talent editions, took part in various musical festivals in Romania and performed together with IOel Tudor's orchestra. In high school she performed in a youth theater group that toured the country. She says about herself that she is passionate about anything that has to do with people and art and she seeks to get to people through art. She is currently a student at the Economical Studies University in Bucharest but continues to pursue her passion for acting and music, especially jazz and she is building her performing career.

The Training of Trainers design was done by Mihaela Drăgan and Zlita Moldovan the co-founders of Giuvlipen.

The exercises and practices proposed in the methodology are aimed at helping participants:

- Deconstruct things they read and heard about the Roma community living in Ferentari neighborhood and understand the context in which the identity of the district was developed;
- Gain new perspectives on issues regarding institutionalized racism and discrimination and ways of individual and collective resistance;

- Discover new ways of sharing views and personal stories and create new spaces - safe spaces -, for reflection, critical thinking, debate, and search for solutions to the social inequities that they encounter in their daily life;
- Become more self-aware, enable them to critically analyze the stories that they hear and read and empower them to generate new narratives that draw on everyday heroes that usually get lost in the overflow of sensationalist headlines
- Develop a sense of community and collective agency within a group of people that shares the same interests and worldviews, even if they have different ethnicities.

That is why it was important that during the TOT the peer trainers went through the whole content that we designed for the peers so that they can understand it, interiorize it and then deliver it.

> Who were the trainers of the peer trainers?

Zita Moldovan is an actress and presenter of the show "From the life of the Roma" on Național TV – a Romanian TV channel broadcast on national television. A graduate of the Faculty of Theater and Television in Cluj, since 2006 she has been collaborating with the "Ion Dacian" Operetta Theater in Bucharest, beginning with the show "Broadway Bucharest". Since 2014 she is the co-founder of the Giuvlipen Theater Company where she also plays in the shows "Gadjo Dildo", "Who Killed Szomna Grancsa?", "Orange Blue", "Urban Body" and "Kali Traś" - the first show in Romania about the Roma Holocaust (a co-production with the Romanian State Jewish Theater, directed by Mihai Lukacs). In 2016, Zita launched the first collection of clothes with Romani influences, "Romany Dreams" with the purpose to combat racism in the Roma community, an initiative that had a positive impact. In 2018 she was part of the Romanian-French production "Uprooted" directed by Bogdan Zamfir, presented in Paris during the Romania-France 2019 season. The most recent film in which she played was "Two Sixty Lions" directed by Camelia Popa. In 2020 she launched "Loly" – a clothing collection inspired from the culture and traditions of Roma people. In 2021 she was one of the 10 actors selected by TIFF (Transylvania International Film Festival - one of the most prestigious Film Festivals in Romania and Europe) to be apart of the "10 for film" program. In her 15 years long career, Zita has also been actively involved in the Roma feminist and anti-racist movement, working as a theater trainer in Roma communities and in various Roma rights campaigns.

Mihaela Drăgan is a multidisciplinary artist with an education in theatre who lives in Bucharest and works in several other countries. In 2014, she founds Giuvlipen Theatre Company, for which she is an actress and playwright, together with other Roma actresses.

Over the last years she has been working in Berlin as an actress for Maxim Gorki Theatre, Heimathafen Neukölln, Theater Aufbau Kreuzberg. She is also a trainer for Theatre of the Oppressed method and she works with Roma women on their specific issues in Romania. In addition, she has been working with refugee girls in Germany as a theatre trainer.

She was one of the six finalists for The 2017 Gilder/Coigney International Theatre Award from New York, an award which acknowledges the exceptional work of 20 theatre women around the world. In 2020 she was nominated again and she is the recipient of the Special Award of the League.

In 2018, Drăgan was a resident artist in Hong Kong at Para Site Contemporary Art Centre where she developed Roma Futurism – a concept that lies at the intersection of Roma culture, technology and witchcraft. Her performance "Roma Futurism" has been showcased in multiple art spaces such as: the Museum of Contemporary Art from Belgrade; FutuRoma – the collateral exhibition at Venice Biennale; the Critical Romani Studies conference at Central European University in Budapest and the Romanian Cultural Institute in London.

In the same year she was acknowledged by PEN World Voices International Play Festival 2018 in New York as one of the ten most respected dramatists of the world.

In 2019 she was one of the playwrights selected for the acclaimed Royal Court Theatre International Summer Residency in London where she wrote a science fictional play about a future utopian society of Roma witches who control technology and fight neo-fascist politics in Europe.

In 2021 she exhibited her first video installation "Future is a safe place hidden in my braids" divided into 3 short films that depict futuristic rituals for healing transgenerational trauma of Roma people and project a safe future for the community.

> The TOT workshop plan

1. Introduction game (Co-co-mi-mi)

Co-co-Mi-Mi is a get to know each other type of game that also engages the participants' attention and concentration abilities. Participants sit in a circle. They decide (based on let's say who is the youngest or who has the most pets) who goes first. The first person starts off by saying the first two letters of their first name twice. So if my name is Mihaela I will say clear and out-loud MI-MI. The person following me says the two sounds they heard from the first person (MI-MI) and then proceeds to say the 2 first letter of their first name (let's say their name is Radu, they will say MI-MI and then RA-RA). The first person says the previous sounds and then their own, until the circle is complete.

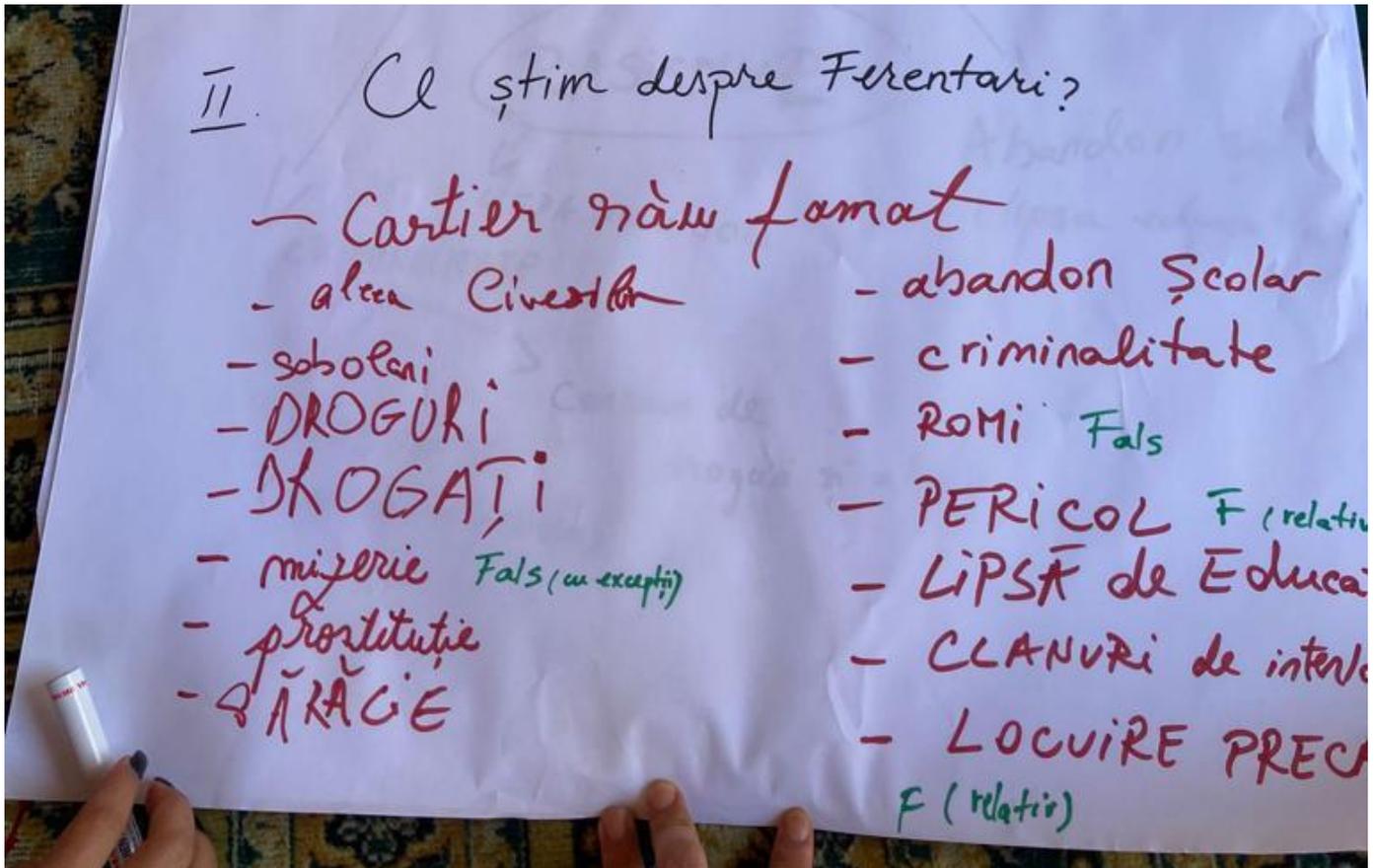
*It would be useful to do another shorter game before this one where everyone says their name fully so that this game is easier.

*You can do another more difficult round where you try to say all the sounds you heard before yours and see how long of a string you can do as a group.

2. What do we know about Ferentari?

(Context: In the Romanian media, especially in Bucharest, Ferentari is portrayed as the place of all urban evils: drugs, thieves, bullies, illiterates, uneducated, unemployed people living off the state, who do not pay for public utilities, an area inhabited by an unwanted and undesirable population.)

Open conversation with peer trainers about what they know about Ferentari.



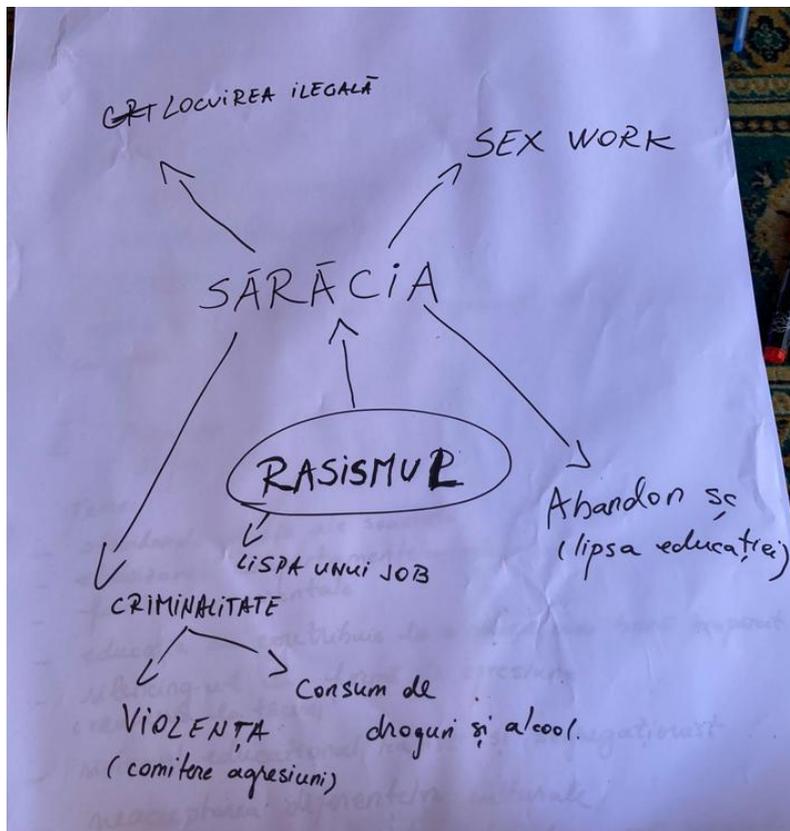
3. Which of these stereotypes are real problems of the neighborhood?

We use the information listed during the previous exercise and we make a list of what are real problems and what are exaggerations from the media. We back things up with information from the previously conducted research.

For example:

"Scientifically, it is proven that poverty leads to crime and violence (Valdez, Kaplan, Curtis Jr., 2007), especially in disadvantaged ghetto areas, and due to poverty, educational resources are limited, resulting in a lack of qualification and difficulty in finding a job. Therefore, people in these areas are more likely to resort to alcohol and drug consumption, the next step being the commission of aggression or violent crimes, in order to provide for their subsistence, on the one hand, but also as a way of protesting against social inequalities, on the other hand, leading to a response in the same manner by law enforcement authorities."

Then we try to break the information down and understand the mechanics of those problems. We make a presentation for the peer trainers about: the gentrification of Ferentari and identifying the problems of the neighborhood: poverty, precarious housing, lack of electricity, heating, school dropout, drug use and trafficking, filth, institutionalized racism vs. myths: Roma population living off unemployment, etc.



RACISM - POVERTY - ILLEGAL LIVING - SEX WORK - LACK OF EDUCATION (school dropout) - DIFFICULTY IN FINDING A JOB - CRIME AND ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES - ALCOHOL AND DRUGS USE - VIOLENCE (committing aggressions)

4. We analyze the scene of the letter to the mother from SAFARI FETIȘ.

We identify the themes together with the peer trainers: who defines what culture is? Violence as "part of their culture" - debunking this statement with arguments, education - a neoliberal discourse vs. racism and segregation in schools.

The text of the scene is available [here](#).

The video is available [here](#).

5. Improvisation on a discriminatory situation they have experienced in school.

Two by two the trainers need to prepare an improvisation scene based on their previously lived experience.

6. Energizing exercises: Samurai.

This is an excellent physical warm up. All players sit in a wide circle. One player is the Samurai - they start by lifting their Katana (sword), making a powerful, energy releasing sound: HA!. They keep their sword up in the air, and their 2 neighbors (left and right) "slaughter" them, by swinging their swords into the samurai's sides, again making a synchronized



energy releasing sound: HA!. When the neighbors retract their swords, the Samurai lowers their sword; while doing this they make eye contact with another player, and once more send a very energetic HA! In the direction of the player who now becomes the new Samurai. Everything starts all over again. Start slowly, and then increase the tempo.

*When someone makes a mistake (misses their queue, doesn't synchronize in "cutting" the Samurai, etc.) they get removed from that round of the game. This continues until only 2 people are left and they battle for the title of ultimate Samurai by having a duel on one leg pushing each other until one puts the second leg down.

*For an extra layer of complexity replace the sounds with HA! HE! HO!

7. We read and analyzed the scene of the petition in SF.

There is a presentation of the definition, history and emergence of the ghetto.

We identify the themes: authorities' negligence, corruption, community division, internalized racism, and lack of solidarity.

The text of the scene is available [here](#).

The video is available [here](#).

8. Improvisation: in 2 large groups or in one big group the participants need to improvise a situation where they have experienced or provided solidarity, Or a situation of individual or collective resistance.

9. Writing exercise:

Utopian Ferentari: What solutions would you implement if you were the mayor of Ferentari? How would the neighborhood look like in your (ideal) vision?

We write down ideas from everyone on a big flipchart and exchange thoughts

10. Instead of a conclusion, let's define the following terms: privilege, discrimination by association, ethnicization of poverty, neoliberalism, capitalism, colorism, classism, white supremacy.

> The Training of Peers Workshop Plan

Because the youth workshops were scheduled later than the ToT, the pairs of peer trainers went through another meeting with the project coordinator in order to prepare for the delivery of the training. During this meeting each of the trainer pairs concentrated on how to deliver the content and how to facilitate the experience for the workshop participants.

The participants in the workshops were excited to find out about the realities of the Ferentari neighborhood but they also wanted to ask questions about how to tackle racist behavior and how to address discrimination situations. Therefore both workshops went longer than planned because of the conversations the trainers had with the participants on various topics relating to the content of the workshop.

We happened to schedule the second workshop in a space where at the same time the Playhood Theater group was performing. Therefore the participants in the workshop had the opportunity to have a direct conversation with youth from Ferentari neighborhood and the last part of the workshop transformed into a sharing session between the workshop participants (mostly youth theater group members) and young Ferentari inhabitants

The part that caught their interest the most was imagining they would be the mayors of Ferentari and they got excited to propose different views for a utopian Ferentari.



Allocated Time	Activity	Activity Description	Lead trainer	Necessary materials
15 min (before Start)	Check-in	Welcome, attendance sheet, space management		printed attendance
10 min	Introduction game	Name+gesture Co-co-mi-mi (see explanation above)	Trainer 1	
15 min	What do we know about Ferentari?	Roundtable with each participant saying one thing they know about Ferentari Short discussion: myth or reality	Trainer 2 discusses Trainer 1 writes	flipchart + marker
10 min	Which of these stereotypes are real problems of the neighborhood?	Presentation of some elements from the research conducted in Ferentari, we divide the sheets with information and fill in myth and reality on the flipchart	Trainer 2 discusses Trainer 1 writes	Printed sheets with the information (for all participants or for the trainers)
15 min	Analyzing the letter to the mother scene from SAFARI FETİŞ	Run video with the scene , participants have the script text in front of them Identification of themes Questions and discussions: >Who defines what culture is? >Violence as "part of their culture" - dismantling this saying with arguments (see notes from TOT with arguments here), >Education - a neoliberal discourse vs. racism and segregation in schools	Trainer 1 writes Trainer 2 moderates, Trainer 1 also participates	Sheets with the letter scene from Safari Fetis laptop with video flipcharts & markers for brainstorming topics
40 min	Improvisation on a discriminatory situation they experienced in school.	Divided into teams (4-5 people/group => 3-4 groups) Preparation time 10 minutes Maximum presentation time 5 minutes After each presentation, question in the room about what theme was identified, how it was for them	Trainer 1 moderates the improv Trainer 2 & Trainer 1 have the final conversation	
At 12.30 - 10 min	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK

10 min	Energizers	Samurai (see explanation above) <i>hip-hop-boing</i>	Trainer 1	
15 min	We read and analyze the petition scene from SAFARI FETIS	Run video with the scene , participants have the script text in front of them Identify the themes: negligence of the authorities, their corruption, community division and internalized racism, lack of solidarity Questions and discussions: myth and reality	Trainer 2 discusses Trainer 1 writes	sheets with the petition scene from Safari Fetis laptop with video flipcharts & markers for brainstorming topics
25 min	Improv on a situation in which they experienced or offered solidarity (working in a group). Or: a situation of individual or collective resistance.	Divide into 2 teams (7-8 people/group) Preparation time 10 minutes Maximum presentation time 5 minutes After each presentation, questions in the room about what solidarity tools, what resistance means, how did it present?	Trainer 1 moderates the improv Trainer 2 & Trainer 1 have the final conversation	
20 min	Individual writing exercise: The utopian Ferentari.	What solutions would you implement if you were the mayor of Ferentari ? How would the neighborhood look in your vision? What does an ideal Ferentari look like? 10 minutes of individual work 10 minutes of sharing and mapping	Trainer 1 presents Trainer 2 writes	white sheets flipcharts & markers for mapping ideas
10 min	Wrap-up & Feedback	Defining key terms: privilege, racism, institutionalized racism, discrimination by association, ethnicization of poverty & notorious behaviors, neoliberalism, capitalism, colorism, classism, white supremacy, segregation, double standards, silencing (popcorn method) Room tour with an intention that participants have at the end of the workshop. What do I intend to do from tomorrow?	Canva presentation: PDF here Canva here	Canva presentation - made by Trainer 2
<i>10 min after</i>	<i>check out</i>	<i>feedback forms, gratitude</i>		<i>feedback form with QR code so they can fill in online</i>

> Instead of conclusions: the Mayor(s) of Utopian Ferentari

One of the recurrent questions we've been asking everyone involved in the "Roma Heroes in the Streets of European Cities" was:

WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WERE THE MAYOR OF FERENTARI? HOW WOULD THE NEIGHBORHOOD IDEALLY LOOK LIKE?

Here are some of the things Ferentari inhabitants said they would do if they were the Mayor:

- I don't know... An improvement for retired people who have less resources, because I saw many who don't have things [...] And yes, a little cleaner. More cleanliness.
- First of all, I would take care of people - I would go from house to house... I'm not lying to you. I would take care of people - I would volunteer to take them to the town hall (so that they could make requests, get emergency help. I would continue helping them, and I would make those who have more give a bit to the others. If I, as mayor, didn't manage to help all the people in the fifth sector - at least the ones in my community: Livezilor, Sălaj.
- First of all, the rehabilitation of the blocks, beautifully designed spaces and the sewage.
- I would change all the sewers, the rats would disappear, the garbage would no longer exist, the places would be clean, (there would be) light bulbs on the streets, (there would be) railings. [...] the whole street - I would change it for the better so that I could live like a normal person. Not being afraid to go out on the street because I could get stung in a syringe or come across a garbage can. It's a hotbed of infections - (if I were Mayor) people won't be afraid of anything from now on.
- Order, first of all. I would merge all households.
- More order, civilization.
- I would renovate and paint all the houses so that people can live there. I would feed them...
- A hospital, a school. I would buy two million oxygen concentrators.

Here are some of the main areas where the youth who participated in the peer workshops would invest as Mayors of Ferentari:

- **Public infrastructure:** investments in public health (hospitals, clinics, street cleaning), social housing, beautification of neglected



areas (parks, green spaces, streets), and public transportation (metro, public transport)

- **Community engagement:** involving residents in decision-making, supporting local artists and cultural events, promoting informal education workshops, creating community support centers (especially emotional support), and encouraging social activities that bring together people from different neighborhoods
- **Economic development:** providing job opportunities, programs to help people find employment, and financial support for cultural programs
- Social services: free access to basic needs for residents, providing resources for homeless people and drug users, and offering free access to mental health services
- Police reform: regulating authorities to prevent over-policing or abolishing the police altogether
- Education: promoting social education campaigns on a global level, emphasizing the importance of schools and educators in the community, and introducing projects to help people find work

And last but not least here are some ideas from the peers involved in the projects developed in the partner organizations (who were challenged by the Romanian peers to think about what they would do if they were Mayors of the cities they live in)

If the peers from Hungary were mayors of Budapest they would:

- Rename streets with names of Roma writers and musicians
- Change the signs in Budapest to not only be written in Hungarian but also in Romani language
- Offer scholarships for disadvantaged youth and young adults who can't access education
- Offer resources for the creation of construction companies in order to implement a settlement liquidation program (in Hungary there are still Roma settlements in place)

If the peers from Italy were mayors of Rome they would:

- Provide opportunities for Roma people living in camps to get out of camp
- They would offer support to Roma people so that they could enter the workforce
- They would give spaghetti and pizza so that people are not hungry anymore
- They would offer Roma people recognition as citizens of Rome; this way, if the Roma people were recognized as an ethnic minority (which they are not at the moment) they could have more rights
- They would allow Roma people to live freely wherever they want
- They would make better use of EU funding

If the peers from Spain were mayors of Romani town they would:

- Make it so that the city's plans and proposals are voted online, especially their priority of implementation
- Prioritize smaller changes such as: street lighting, cleaning, adding more trash cans
- Improve the entertainment and cultural opportunities that youth have
- Talk to mayors from other towns and villages in order to create better connections between them; they would build bike lanes, they would increase the number of buses

- Promote culture to younger people too; they would make opera, theater and books more popular with younger people too
- Promote alternative professions and training in fields such as: film, physical activities, sports, etc.
- Make sure they have a better cleaning system
- Make better use of the land around town by building a power plant that uses alternative ways of creating energy
- Support youth with transportation passes so that they can have easier access to their educational institutions

A city that is good to its inhabitants shouldn't be a utopia. A neighborhood in a 21st century European city should be a place where its inhabitants appreciate living in and want to contribute to make it better.

A Ferentari that is good to its inhabitants should not be a utopia.

We believe that if each and every one of us treats the spaces they live in or pass by every day less like if they were on a Safari, we would come closer to having cities and neighborhoods that nourish cultural variety and good living.

And we hope that the methods, instruments, research and conversations we shared with you in this brochure will come in handy for you to also make the cities you live in better places for you and for the Roma heroes inhabiting the streets of European Cities.

> Annexes

Links to studies & documents:

> [RO&EN_Info despre Ferentari din cercetari _ Info about Ferentari from different studies.pdf](#)

> [Ferentari - Housing issues.docx.pdf](#)

> [Incluziune și excluziune. Studii de caz asupra comunităților de romi din România](#)

> [Comunități Ascunse Ferentari](#)

Press articles about Ferentari: [Workshop Support_Media Articles about Ferentari.pdf](#)

[Peer trainer interviews about Ferentari.pdf](#)

The script:

> in English: [Safari Fetis script EN_closing of the project version.docx.pdf](#)

> in Romanian: [RO_Text Safari Fetis_update final de proiect.docx](#)

> [Scena Petiției_The Petition Scene_Safari Fetis.pdf](#)

> [Scena scrisorii_The Letter scene_Safari Fetis.pdf](#)

The video of the performance: [here](#)

[Let's Go Out! Taking Roma Heroes To The Streets \(Foundation Bricks Brochure\)](#)

*The training plans: are inserted directly in the Case Study

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