

ROMNI ANNUAL REPORT 2024



1. Executive Summary

In 2024, Platforma Femeilor Rome ROMNI continued to uphold its mission to advocate for the rights, dignity, and inclusion of Roma women and communities in Moldova. With over 9 years of experience in rights-based, community-driven approaches, ROMNI responded proactively to emerging challenges, particularly in the context of refugee protection, gender-based violence, and discriminatory practices. Through strategic partnerships, impactful advocacy, and robust grassroots engagement, ROMNI empowered thousands of local and refugee Roma women and their families. This report outlines the organization's comprehensive achievements in 2024 and highlights the path forward for 2025.

2. Organizational Overview

Founded in 2016, ROMNI has become Moldova's leading Roma women-led organization focused on advancing gender equality, social inclusion, and the rights of Roma communities. ROMNI's strategic focus includes humanitarian response, legal aid, anti-discrimination advocacy, and the promotion of Roma cultural identity. With a multidisciplinary team and a wide network of mediators, activists, and legal professionals, ROMNI continues to address both urgent needs and systemic challenges faced by Roma women and families.

3. 2024 Key Achievements at a Glance

- Over **2,500 local and refugee Roma individuals** reached through humanitarian aid, training, hotline and legal services.
- **21 capacity-building training sessions** delivered on discrimination, hate speech, GBV, and reproductive rights.
- **60,130+ online media views and outreach** engagements in Romani dialects

and Romanian.

- **140+ professionals trained**, including community mediators, activists, and legal professionals.
- **Successful advocacy campaigns** addressing antigypsyism and reform of national gender-based violence institutions.
- **Continued Safe Space operations**, providing social, legal, and humanitarian support for Roma women and children.

4. Programmatic Impact Areas

4.1 Humanitarian Response & Refugee Support

In 2024, ROMNI extended its refugee support efforts through direct services and strategic partnerships. In collaboration with the Norwegian Refugee Council, UN Women, and Choose Love, ROMNI supported over 2500 Roma refugees, ensuring access to essential services, legal stay, and humanitarian aid including food, vouchers, and shelter supplies. ROMNI's localized approach and network of mediators were critical in identifying undocumented Roma and integrating them into service referral systems. Additionally, ROMNI's Safe Space provided vital psychosocial and informational support, including the services of the social laundry and sewing space to hundreds of refugee women and their children.

4.2 Gender-Based Violence & Reproductive Rights

For the first time in 2024, ROMNI implemented dedicated projects on gender-based violence (GBV) and reproductive rights, marking a significant expansion of its advocacy and protection agenda. With support from UN Women and UNHCR, ROMNI organized 16 training sessions for over 180 participants, including mediators, legal professionals, and human

rights defenders. The sessions addressed GBV, discrimination, hate crimes, and reproductive rights and health access.

Educational outreach was strengthened through the creation of audiovisual materials on GBV in six Romani dialects, accompanied by Romanian subtitles. These culturally tailored resources filled a critical information gap and were disseminated widely across digital platforms. The materials also served as key tools for Roma mediators in community-based awareness sessions.¹

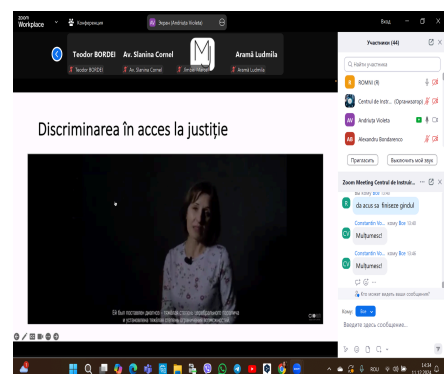
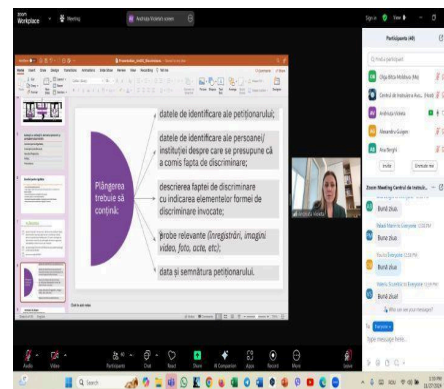
ROMNI's approach combined legal empowerment, survivor-centered support, and feminist solidarity. One notable success story involved a young Roma woman who, after receiving psychosocial and legal support from ROMNI, successfully exited an abusive relationship and returned to her family. Such outcomes underscore the importance of trusted, community-rooted interventions in combating GBV within Roma communities.

4.3 Legal Empowerment & Capacity Building

In 2024, ROMNI expanded its commitment to empowering Roma communities through legal education and skill development. Targeting both community members and professionals, ROMNI conducted with Millenium support structured training on identifying, documenting, and responding to discrimination and hate crimes—particularly those targeting Roma women and girls.

A total of 140 individuals were trained, including:

- **Community mediators** from both sides of the Dniester
- **Human rights defenders and legal professionals**
- **Roma youth**, including people with disabilities and women at risk



Training sessions provided electronic toolkits with complaint templates, informational materials, and media articles. Evaluations demonstrated knowledge increases in over 80% of participants. Mediators requested additional follow-ups and cited ROMNI's media outputs (e.g. *Ziarul de Gardă* interviews) as valuable training materials.



¹ Youtube ROMNI Info
<https://www.youtube.com/@romniinfo>

This capacity-building strategy was not only technical—it fostered solidarity, strengthened trust, and contributed to a growing grassroots movement of informed Roma advocates.

4.4 Awareness Raising Campaigns

In 2024, ROMNI implemented a series of strategic awareness-raising and social cohesion campaigns aimed at amplifying Roma voices, combating discrimination, and promoting equal rights. These initiatives were carried out across Moldova in collaboration with key institutional partners and international allies, using a blend of grassroots mobilization, public events, cultural expression, and digital outreach.

Roma Women’s Solidarity March – April 5, 2024

As part of **Roma Awareness Week in Moldova (April 5–13, 2024)**, ROMNI organized a landmark event—a **Roma Women’s Solidarity March** under the slogan *“Roma Women – Now and Here”*. The march served as a powerful call to action for the elimination of discrimination against Roma women and the promotion of equal opportunities in Moldovan society.



A total of **60 participants** (50 women, 10 men) joined the march. Participants carried messages such as *“We Have Equal Rights”*, *“Roma Women Matter”*, *“Proud to Be Roma”*, and *“Accept Me! Know Me!”*, advocating for dignity, respect, and inclusion. The event offered Roma women a public platform to voice their cultural pride, societal contributions, and aspirations for justice and equality. More than a demonstration, the march was a vibrant celebration of Roma identity and heritage—fostering solidarity across communities.



Human Rights Caravan – July–August 2024

During the summer, ROMNI actively participated in the **Human Rights Caravan**, a national initiative led by the Ombudsperson’s Office. Through this campaign, ROMNI promoted Roma rights, civic engagement, and anti-discrimination awareness in public forums.



Key outreach activities took place in:

- Cahul (July 2, 2024)
- Ungheni (July 14, 2024)

In both locations, ROMNI organized community discussions, distributed educational materials, and conducted rights awareness sessions. A total of **50 participants** (30 women, 20 men) engaged in these events. The focus included hate crime prevention, legal protections, and promotion of Roma culture and history.



Roma Holocaust Commemoration Events – August 2024

On **August 2 in Chişinău** and **August 5 in Soroca**, ROMNI, in partnership with national institutions, embassies, and civil society actors, held commemorative events to mark **Roma Holocaust Day**. In Chişinău, the ceremony took place at the *Visterniceni train station*, a historical site of Roma deportation during WWII. In Soroca, the event was hosted at the *Nicolae Bulat Museum of History and Ethnography*.

ROMNI presented a dedicated exhibition on **Roma women during the Holocaust**, emphasizing both remembrance and resistance. The events attracted **56 participants** (36 women, 20 men) and promoted public understanding of the historical injustices endured by Roma communities. These commemorations served as a moment of both mourning and mobilization—underscoring the ongoing need to combat antigypsyism.



National Social Cohesion Events – September to December 2024

Between **September and December 2024**, ROMNI joined forces with the **Interethnic Relations Agency**, **INTERSOS Moldova**, and the **Ombudsperson’s Office** to strengthen cross-community understanding and build inclusive civic spaces.

ROMNI’s team participated in:

- **The Festival of Ethnicities** (September 15, 2024)
- **The Festival of Human Rights and Equality** (December 11, 2024)



At these events, ROMNI disseminated key informational materials addressing hate speech, discrimination, and human rights protections. The organization also deepened institutional collaboration with the Ombudsperson’s Office, advocating for the adoption of a draft law on antigypsyism.



Additionally, ROMNI received donations of inclusive children’s literature and educational resources from partners including **CNPAC**, enriching future outreach and youth-focused activities. These events gathered **50 participants** (37 women, 13 men), and generated new collaboration opportunities—such as ROMNI’s future participation in the **Pushkin Festival**.



Digital Awareness Campaigns and Media Engagement

ROMNI actively leveraged social media platforms to amplify its awareness efforts and engage broader audiences.

From **August 2024 to December 2025**, the organization:

- Published **several social media posts**, highlighting project milestones, advocacy actions, and human stories
- Reached over **2 000 total viewers**

- Released **two powerful video interviews**:
 - One featuring **Andrei Sîrbu**, a young Roma man sharing his lived experience of social inclusion
 - One with **Ecaterina Pitula**, a Roma student discussing her journey in higher education and the structural challenges she faced.

These digital campaigns served to challenge stereotypes, foster empathy, and promote Roma leadership narratives—particularly among youth. Through storytelling and online engagement, ROMNI successfully extended its educational reach beyond in-person events and into virtual civic spaces.

4.5 Advocacy & Policy Reform

ROMNI’s advocacy efforts in 2024 were strategic, coordinated, and grounded in intersectional feminism. The organization:

- Submitted an **Alternative Report to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**, focusing on antigypsyism.
- Co-developed an **Opinion Paper** on Moldova’s **Asylum Law**, highlighting Roma refugees’ vulnerabilities.
- Played a decisive role in delaying the **reform of the ANPCV (National Agency for the Prevention and Combatting of Violence)** to allow stakeholder consultations.



ROMNI also joined with CSO partners and international observers (e.g. OSCE-ODIHR, ENEMO) to raise concerns over hate speech and social media incitement. Dozens of cases were reported, yet only a fraction received responses from tech platforms, underscoring the systemic failures in digital accountability.

Advocacy efforts culminated in the proposal of a **short-term advocacy plan for 2025**, aimed at securing legislation against antigypsyism—a persistent form of racial discrimination unaddressed by Moldova’s legal framework.

5. Strategic Partnerships and Collaborations

In 2024, ROMNI continued to strengthen and diversify its strategic alliances:

- **International partners:** UN Women, UNHCR, ERGO, Norwegian Refugee Council, OHCHR, Millenium, Choose Love
- **National stakeholders:** Roma Task Force, Interethnic Relations Agency, Ombudsperson, Equality Council, Platform for Gender Equality
- **Local actors:** Community mediators, municipalities, service providers, independent media

These partnerships enabled ROMNI to:

- Deliver emergency and long-term assistance to over 1,700 Roma refugees

- Influence national policy and participate in law drafting processes
- Mainstream Roma women’s rights into national gender equality frameworks

ROMNI’s standing as a trusted grassroots actor enabled it to act as a **bridge** between marginalized communities and policymaking institutions.

6. Organizational Development

In 2024, ROMNI significantly advanced its internal governance, institutional capacity, and strategic planning. With support from UN Women the organization developed over ten foundational documents and policies that now guide its daily operations and long-term strategy, including:

- Code of Ethics and Conduct
- Adult and Child Safeguarding Policies
- Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Policy
- Anti-fraud and Anti-corruption Policy
- Fundraising Plan and Communication Strategy
- Refugee Crisis Response Plan (WPS-adapted)
- Financial and Procurement Manuals

These documents were developed through an inclusive process involving ROMNI staff, volunteers, and field mediators. The

participatory method ensured relevance, ownership, and practical applicability across different operational levels.

In addition, ROMNI expanded its professional team, particularly in legal assistance and psychosocial support. The organization also invested in leadership training and internal mentoring to cultivate the next generation of Roma women leaders.

7. Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL)

ROMNI's MEL framework in 2024 focused on results-based management, community participation, and adaptive learning. Key instruments included:

- Pre/post-training evaluations
- Participant feedback forms
- Field observations and monitoring visits
- Focus group discussions with beneficiaries and mediators

Findings and insights were fed directly into program refinement. For example, during summer trainings, many Roma beneficiaries showed limited literacy levels. In response, ROMNI deployed facilitators to assist participants, ensuring that data collection remained inclusive.

Another key lesson emerged from Roma LGBT+ participants who engaged cautiously due to social stigma. ROMNI adopted a culturally sensitive, confidential approach to foster safety and trust, contributing to the development of discreet inclusion practices.

Overall, the MEL approach enabled ROMNI to tailor interventions more effectively,

improve feedback loops, and document promising practices for future scaling.

8. Communications & Media Engagement

Communications in 2024 focused on visibility, outreach, and narrative change. ROMNI produced original video materials in six Romani dialects on gender-based violence, legal rights, and civic empowerment—addressing the lack of Roma-language resources in Moldova.

Key achievements:

- Over **60,130** views across social media platforms
- High engagement with **Ziarul de Gardă** and other national media
- Creation of the **ROMNI INFO YouTube Channel**
- Live coverage of public events such as the **Roma Women's March** on April 3

ROMNI ensured accessible language, cultural relevance, and strategic use of social media to reach both local and refugee Roma communities, many of whom are excluded from mainstream information channels.

ROMNI's communications also countered online hate speech during the 2024 electoral period. The organization submitted over 50 reports to platforms like Facebook, while simultaneously collaborating with OSCE-ODIHR and Genderdoc-M to escalate cases and prepare legal complaints.

9. Financial Overview, Public Summary

ROMNI's total operating budget in 2024 exceeded € **233.500** sourced from diversified international donors, including:

- **UN Women** (core institutional support and gender-focused programming)
- **UNHCR** (refugee protection, GBV, and humanitarian response)
- **Norwegian Refugee Council** (legal stay and service linkage)
- **Choose Love** (emergency response and resilience-building)
- **ERGO Network** (advocacy and communication campaigns)
- **Millennium** (discrimination, hate crime, legal assistance, advocacy)

The funding structure reflected both short-term emergency needs and long-term capacity development. ROMNI employed sound financial management practices, audited expenditures regularly, and aligned its spending with donor frameworks and internal strategic priorities.

ROMNI also began laying the groundwork for future financial sustainability through the development of a **three-year fundraising strategy**, prioritizing core funding, flexible response mechanisms, and Roma-led consortiums.

10. Challenges & Lessons Learned

ROMNI's interventions in 2024 operated within a complex and often adverse context. Key challenges included:

◆ **Literacy barriers:**

Many Roma beneficiaries had limited or no literacy skills, especially older women and newly arrived refugees. This required additional facilitators for written evaluations and highlighted the importance of using audio-visual content in Romani dialects.

◆ **Sensitivity of LGBT+ inclusion:**

Roma communities largely avoid discussions around sexual orientation and gender identity. ROMNI had to balance discretion with inclusion, using confidential methods and trusted mediators to ensure participation and safety.

◆ **Institutional mistrust:**

Persistent mistrust in the justice system and law enforcement remains a key barrier. Roma women are often reluctant to file complaints due to fear of stigma, inaction, or retaliation. ROMNI addressed this by providing survivor-centered consultations and working with Roma mediators to rebuild trust in legal pathways.

◆ **Discrimination in shelter acces:**

Roma women, particularly those who are refugees or have disabilities, face significant obstacles in accessing shelters for survivors of gender-based violence. Reports indicate practices of refusal based on internal regulations, which are neither public nor transparent. This discriminatory practice leaves many victims without safe refuge, perpetuating cycles of abuse and marginalization.

◆ **Environmental disruptions:**

Extreme weather, including heatwaves and heavy rains, disrupted several planned trainings and outreach events. ROMNI responded by rescheduling activities and advocating for flexible timelines in donor frameworks.

◆ **Hate speech and social media incitement:**

During the electoral period, ROMNI documented a surge in online hate speech targeting Roma and other marginalized groups. Despite submitting over 50 platform complaints, most offensive content remained online. This revealed a structural gap in corporate accountability and the need for state-backed digital human rights enforcement.

11. Success Stories and Testimonials

ROMNI's impact in 2024 was not just institutional—it was deeply human.

📌 *From Silence to Solidarity: Roma Participants Share Stories of Discrimination and Resilience:*

Following the three training sessions facilitated by ROMNI, participants exhibited a remarkable degree of openness and engagement, candidly sharing personal testimonies—many of which highlighted experiences of discrimination, hate speech, and hate-motivated violence. These narratives not only deepened the collective learning environment but also reinforced the urgency of targeted legal and social interventions. Feedback from community sessions often includes sentiments such as, *“Thank you, now we know where to go”*, highlighting the critical need for sustained grassroots outreach and legal literacy initiatives.

📌 *Breaking the Cycle of Violence:*

Following a training on hate crime and GBV, a family of a young Roma woman approached ROMNI mediators to seek help. Married since the age of 14 and subjected to emotional and physical abuse, she was afraid to report her case. Through continued support from ROMNI and her community, she eventually left her abuser and returned to her family with her child, starting a new life.

📌 *Roma Mediators in Action:*

After participating in capacity-building sessions, several Roma Community Mediators used ROMNI's educational videos and Ziarul de Gardă articles as training tools in their own communities. Their feedback has been instrumental in designing the 2025 training curriculum.

📌 *Legal Aid that Delivers:*

Two survivors of GBV received individual legal consultations and psychosocial support from ROMNI. With guidance and care, both began procedures to secure protection and access justice—one of them successfully submitting a police complaint with the assistance of a ROMNI legal expert.





These stories affirm that systemic change starts with safe spaces, trusted facilitators, and legal empowerment tailored to real-life challenges.

12. 2025 Strategic Outlook

As ROMNI looks toward 2025, its vision is rooted in resilience, rights, and representation. Strategic priorities include:

- 🏛️ **Legislative Advocacy:** Lead efforts to develop and adopt Moldova's first legal definition and law against antigypsyism, in

collaboration with the Gender Equality Platform and national MPs.

-  **Expanded GBV and Legal Services:** Increase survivor support services in underserved regions and promote Roma women's access to legal remedies.
-  **Media and Civic Education:** Continue producing high-quality, culturally adapted Romani-language materials to build civic awareness and combat misinformation.
-  **Intersectionality and Inclusion:** Deepen work on intersectional issues affecting LGBT+ Roma, women with disabilities, and elderly Roma women.
-  **Donor Diversification and Sustainability:** Implement a multi-year fundraising strategy, explore pooled funds, and advocate for increased flexible funding for Roma-led organizations.

ROMNI remains committed to feminist solidarity, intersectional justice, and community-led transformation. Together with our partners and Roma women across Moldova, we will continue to reclaim power, resist injustice, and rewrite the future.