

# DREAM ROAD



Danube Transnational Programme  
**DREAM ROAD**

Project co-funded by the European Union funds (ERDF, IPA, ENI)

## LEARNING LABs implementation

Within the project  
Danube REgion for improved Access and eMpowerment  
of ROmA Development (DREAM ROAD)



## Introduction of DREAM ROAD's pilot actions

We live in an age of global social and environmental problems. One possible way to deal with these problems is a social innovation. Social integration is a process in which, during the meeting of cultures, unique values mutually influence each other, and in the system of new values that are created, their original characteristics are preserved. Along with other core values, such as diversity, acceptance and openness, equal opportunities.

DREAM ROAD's pilot actions were implemented in 10 different DANUBE region countries: Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine. The pilot actions aimed at creation of LEARNING LABs and a development of innovative training aimed at improving the digital, information and functional literacy of the Roma minority. A range of tools was developed and tested in the course of the Pilots in the years 2021 and 2022.

DREAM ROAD seeks to empower members of Roma communities to become agents of change.

Participatory development of novel interventions to enhance digital, information and functional literacy of Roma people and establishment of broad alliances in their implementation are key results of the project. Transferrable pilot implementations root in the development of computer-supported collaborative learning labs as catalysts of knowledge, hands-on learning and digital access, where members of overlooked and often failed communities can obtain skills and know-how to function as informed users and equal members of society.

Successful introduction of alternative approaches to community building and knowledge facilitation through computer-supported collaborative learning will not only be benefit for socially disadvantaged Roma population, but also enhance the skills of public authorities and other relevant bodies to establish a productive dialogue with Roma community members, respond to societal challenges, recognize and seize existing opportunities of the ever increasingly present digital world more rapidly. Meaningful cooperation of Roma communities, public authorities and local communities is the key in achieving success in implementation of viable community ecosystems.



■ Danube Transnational Programme area

Germany

Czech Republic

Slovakia

Ukraine

Austria

Hungary

Moldova

Slovenia

Croatia

Romania

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Serbia

Montenegro

Bulgaria



## Hungary

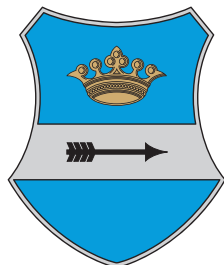
The Learning Labs implemented by the Institute for Cultural Relations policy were designed as a mobile Learning Labs set up in cooperation with the self-government of Budapest, Batmonstor and Sukosd communities. The Learning Labs were developed in cooperation with Roma community representatives, external experts and stakeholders. A partnership was also created in order to achieve the most efficient solution between non-governmental organisations, educational institutions, charity organisations and Roma community representative authorities from Budapest and Bacs-Kiskun County.

The main objectives of the Mobile Learning Labs were to (1) provide useful knowledge on project writing and project development in order to boost the capacities of civil society organisations focusing on the well-being of Roma people, to (2) create a forum and an environment for long-term cooperation between the partners and to (3) serve as ad-hoc brainstorming forums in order to (a) assess the needs of Roma representative authorities

and Roma organization, to (b) collect information and present good practices and former experiences of the partner organisations and to (c) work together on the realization of co-writing of various project proposals based on the profile and the needs of the partners.

The most important activities of the Learning Labs were to provide information and knowledge through training courses. The events were held in different locations and participation was based on invitation (invited partners could also invite further partners) and was conducted free of charge for the participants. The trainings served as knowledge-transfer events (based on the experience of the partners) and as brainstorming meetings in order to provide tangible outcomes and sustainable partnerships for project-planning, development and implementation. The trainings were mobile and large-scale events allowing to reach more than one organisations which were involved at the same time.





The second Learning Lab in Hungary was established in Zala County. Zala County Regional Development Agency organised a series of six IT-related training sessions in November in Lenti for local Roma youth. The training series covered 3 main competence areas:

- Information and data literacy (12 hours)
- Communication and collaboration (12 hours)
- Safety (12 hours)

In the first block, the participants learned how to switch on a digital device, start an internet browser, search and filter the web. They also gained insights on how to search for jobs on the Internet, copy web addresses, download and upload files, and have fun online.





One of the main topics of the second block was setting up and using an e-mail account. They learned how to format e-mail text, attach attachments and send e-mails. They also focused on how to access social networking sites, how to practice online citizenship, and how to learn about voice and video communication.

The third and final block provided insights into the dangers of the internet and how to protect against them, as well as a focus on the safe use of social networking sites, personal data protection and device security.



## Slovakia

In December 2021, Slovakian LEARNING LAB was launched at housing estate Luník IX in Košice, one of the Roma communities in Slovakia most affected by social exclusion. The key approach to developing the pilot Learning Lab has been built on three principles:

1. **Participatory development** of the Learning Lab involving the key stakeholders and the target group, Identifying and involving community leaders as facilitators
2. **Learner centred approach:** The curricula have been developed in cooperation with prospective learners.
3. Building Learning Lab as a non-formal learning framework **open to partnerships** for its future sustainability

The LEARNING LAB was designed for two sub-groups (a group of unemployed and job seekers and group of employed) which communicated common learning priorities and goals.

**The group of unemployed Roma** from the socially excluded environment of the Luník IX housing district considers the most important area in the field of education to be the preparation associated with finding a job. In many cases it has been the case that they were in the situation of long-term unemployment, and it would not be unusual that these adults would face problems to become registered job seekers. Therefore, the goal of Learning lab activities for unemployed is to train a group of people from the community so that they themselves are able to mediate help in finding a job in their community. The workshops for this group focus on:

- a) Employability/job search skills (general digital and communication skills): in practice, this meant developing tasks and support for being able to solve job related tasks and problems in technology environment (for example: get to know the basics of working on computers and internet search engines; set up e-mail boxes (how to safely handle passwords, how to distinguish fraudulent e-mails and messages, how to communicate in a formal way via e-mail, create a structured resume and learn to write a cover letter etc.) and





- b) Practical skills with potential for self-employment. Clients expressed interest in developing or strengthening specific technical skills that could be basis for provision of services within community or later even outside community.

For the group of employed Roma at Luník IX the workshops focused on language skills, cultural identity, travel, financial literacy, entrepreneurship and civic engagement. The activities contribute to development of general skills and digital skills while fostering individual identity and self-esteem:

- a) English language lessons for adult beginners, which would include working with computers and the Internet, translators, applications for self-study of foreign languages, etc.
- b) Roma traditions. Develop skills by following and documenting traditional and contemporary Roma cuisine: traditions in the kitchen, old mothers' recipes and modern favorite Roma recipes, the culinary process captured with the help of a video, in the Roma language with Slovak subtitles, a collection of recipes from Luník IX.
- c) Deeper study of the Romani language and creation of contributions to the Romani





Wikipedia, which requires the use of standardized Romani, work with a dictionary, work with the Internet, develops competences to search for and create relevant content.

Other general skills that have been developed in connection with the activities include media skills with specific focus on providing cultural programme at social events (photographer service, video production).

For both groups it was identified that there is a need to provide opportunities to:

- digital and financial skills: attend lectures on topics related to digital technologies and

financial literacy with application to daily problems of community members

- develop and support life skills in the area of personal and digital safety, learn how to deal with threats in digital environment, develop effective communication skills to prevent avoid or deal with conflicts, identified as a series of workshops with different topics relevant to the identified needs of Roma community members:

The main goals of the pilot Dream Road Learning Lab in Slovakia is to:

- Activate and engage discouraged learners, disadvantaged members of Roma community.
- Provide opportunity to gain experience as a facilitator – young Roma will improve their communication skills and organizational competencies.
- Prepare and provide a wider range of learning activities that can be offered to the disadvantaged learners including adults with low levels of basic skills (low literacy, weak digital skills)
- Identify and support potential agents of change from the community



The LEARNING LAB's trainings in Austria were interactively designed as 1-day trainings, with different methods, such as sociometric exercises, role plays, individual and group exercises and theory inputs as well as the opportunity for (self-) reflection.

The trainings took place in small groups with a maximum of 20 participants, there was also an internal exchange of experiences and besides the knowledge transfer on the part of the trainer, a lot of emphasis was put on the development of possible actions. The participants were therefore provided with many useful tools.



The goals of the training were furthermore, to break down stereotypes, some of which are centuries old, to show room for maneuver / possibilities for action, to promote public discourse and to deal in detail with all forms of exclusion and discrimination. The aim of the Learning Lab was to provide food for thought, to trigger processes of reflection and to encourage people to come to terms with the social and individual structures of antiziganism.

In addition to prevention work, the workshops always intended to develop and demonstrate possibilities for action.

Ultimately, the goal was to strengthen and build a just society, which offers all its citizens equal opportunities for participation.

### Target groups

- Members of the Austrian Roma Community
- Trainers, educators, youth leaders, multipliers
- Other interested people

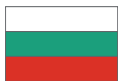


## Methodology

- Sociometric constellation exercises, brainstorming, knowledge transfer, theory inputs, small group and large group exercises, biography work, exercises for empowerment
- (Self)-reflection exercises, role plays
- Pointing out commonalities and possibilities of solidary co-creation
- Developing scope for action and strategies

As already mentioned, the target group includes members of ethnic groups - but the workshops are also aimed at trainers, educators, youth leaders, multipliers and other interested parties. The content of the individual workshops is conveyed through sociometric constellation exercises, knowledge transfer, theory inputs, small group and large group exercises, biography work, (self-)reflection exercises and, in the case of face-to-face teaching, role plays. In doing so, the commonalities and the possibilities of solidary co-creation are to be shown.





## Bulgaria

2 LEARNING LABs were set up in Bulgaria:

- The first LEARNING LAB is at 23 Marno Pole Str., Floor 4, Office 5, Veliko Tarnovo,
- the second one is at Address of the mixed learning laboratory of the DREAM ROAD associated partner "St. George the Victorious", town. Suvorovo - Str. "Industrialna 20", Suvorovo, Varna Region.

The Bulgarian LEARNING LABs are actively used by the meth community. Educational mediators as well as teachers use the learning labs to conduct





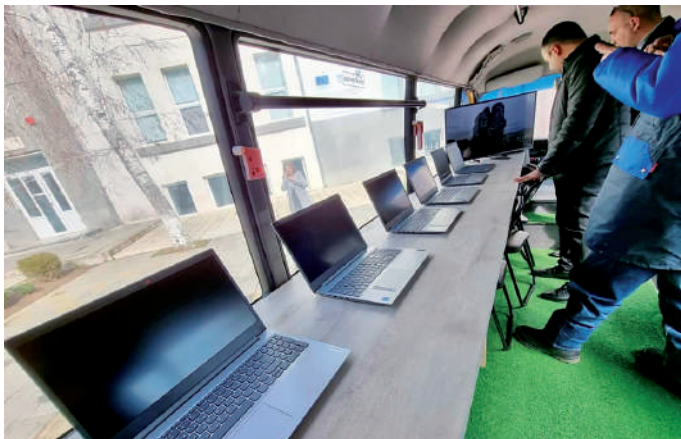
trainings for parents to increase their digital competences and skills through training and use of different equipment. Students from the school, supported by teacher Vladimir Ivanov, completely renovated and built the mobile LEARNING LAB for the benefit of the whole Roma community.

A school bus provided by the municipality of Suvorovo was brought to life to host online lessons and workshops. The bus was unusable and in a miserable condition, but in the hands of motivated teachers and students nothing is impossible. For the first time in Bulgaria, a project was being implemented to renovate a school bus that was unusable but has now been converted into a mobile learning laboratory. The established LEARNING LAB is both mobile and stationary and will serve nearby Roma communities, developing digital, information and functional literacy for students, parents and ordinary citizens.

Thus, the training laboratory is a renovated school bus equipped with laptops, TVs, multimedia, sound equipment and equipped doctor's office. The laboratory is an innovative creation using innovative technology. In the back of the bus is the medical capsule, again made by the students with



the help of Vladimir Ivanov and under the expert guidance of the director Eng. Mariana Velikova. The capsule provides connection with a doctor, a psychologist and a social worker. In the capsule it is possible to check a weight, temperature, blood pressure, blood sugar, etc. Suvorovo are pioneers in its development, and at this time there is no other similar mobile laboratory in Bulgaria.







## Czech Republic

The LEARNING LAB in the Czech Republic was designed as a hybrid solution with the target of the City of Brno and Southern Moravia region. Learning Lab opens regularly for Roma as a space for learning and cooperative purposes. Upon request, the following equipment is available for its users: meeting room equipment (meeting room, tables, chairs, flipchart), 2 laptops, 1 projector, 1 digital camera, and 1 multifunctional device (printer, scanner).

The Czech learning lab is aiming at improve the knowledge of the learning lab's participants in the following fields : digital literacy and employment - professional development, career definition, photo and video making, basics of entrepreneurship, social engagement.

As the preparatory step before start learning labs' workshops to enhance Roma competencies, the training materials targeting different skills were prepared focusing on:

- Information and data literacy (browsing, searching, filtering, evaluating and managing data, information and digital content),
- Communication and collaboration (interacting, sharing, engaging and collaborating through digital technologies),
- Digital content creation (developing, integrating and re-elaborating digital content),
- Safety (protecting personal data and privacy),
- Problem solving (creative use of digital technologies).

The main topics of the LEARNING LABs' workshops were usage of Internet and ICT for better employability as well as its basic usage and also how to search for employment. The Internet and ICT offer many possibilities to look for a job





using various means. Different specialized servers may provide us with supporting information. For the possibility of increasing success in career development, it is necessary to take other preparatory steps, for which basic knowledge of computer use is necessary. Furthermore, at least basic knowledge of working with an ICT may be benefit or even a requirement in many recruitment, career or life situations.

The main achievements may be summarized as following:

- developing skills and social inclusion for Roma community through creative and multidisciplinary approach.
- facilitate networking, collaboration, and education within Roma.
- reducing gaps in access to digital services and infrastructure.



## Moldova

The Digital Learning Laboratory from Republic of Moldova was launched on 8<sup>th</sup> of December 2021 at the Orhei District Public Library "Alecui Donici". It was equipped by Terre des hommes Moldova Foundation with 8 laptops and accessories, 1 smart TV and 1 portable speaker.

Terre des hommes developed a comprehensive curricula and training modules of different levels of difficulty adapted to the needs of the beneficiaries based on which trainers from the LAB deliver the digital learning courses. Since December 2021 until September 2022 several digital literacy courses were held at the LAB for Roma people, people of other ethnicities and for community mediators with various training modules, which were established depending on the requests of the participants.



**Terre des hommes**  
Helping children worldwide.





The courses were held both at the Digital Learning LAB, as well in villages with a higher number of Roma people, the trainers from LAB going to these places and providing the trainings.

Some of the Roma participants were for the first time at a training course of any kind since the completion of general school (since 14 - 15 y.o.) or even elementary school (since 8 - 9 y.o.). Many of Roma people that attended the courses showed their interest to continue them, to have more advanced digital skills and to be able to apply them in their day-to-day life or to be able to obtain a job, to open a family business or to level up their professional skills.

Besides the training courses, the Digital Learning LAB from Moldova also offers a platform for meetings with various community stakeholders, round tables with local authorities to discuss Roma community issues and to find solutions.





## Romania

Learning Lab in Romania is located at the Social Assistance Department in Resita. The laboratory offers a common space to develop and learn, exchange ideas with workshops and open talks and so to facilitate access to labor market, facilitate access to public services and the access to online services used in daily life. The laboratory is equipped with 1 access platform to social services; 10 notebook's, 1 Multifunctional printer, 2 wireless internet access points, 1 Video projector, 5 Desk's, 15 desk chairs.

In terms of focus, based on consultations with the main stakeholders, the following three competences were identified as the most important:



- 1) Information and data literacy,
- 2) Communication and collaboration,
- 3) Safety.

End-users will be developing knowledge, skills, competences, character and behavioural traits, beliefs, motivation, and digital skills in order to be able to enter the online local, national and international labor market and so increasing their chance in finding a job. At the same time an increase of the competences in using IT tools for accessing and offering social services to/by citizens/ institutions is also expected.

Facilitators in the fixed learning lab will be 10 employees of the Social Services Department who are working on day to day basis with the local Roma community members and are professionals knowing how to address Roma in an efficient way. Also the people benefitting from social services are familiar with the facilitators and will be more open to work with them. For the mobile learning lab, Nevo Parudimos Association employees (DREAM ROAD project partner) together with local volunteers will go on the field in the communities and help the people on the spot.





## Serbia

The Learning Lab implemented by the Roma Inclusion Office was established as a mobile Learning Lab. The concept was created in order to raise the level of competence of coordinators for Roma issues in the process of implementing measures to support the Roma community to overcome social exclusion, marginalization and poverty. The main role of the coordinators for Roma issues is that, as representatives of the local self-government unit, provide professional and technical assistance to the Roma community on the territory of the local self-government in order to respond to the needs of the Roma national minority and improve their socio-economic position. The content of the concept and the expected effects were defined based on the determined needs and expectations of the relevant stakeholders. The needs analysis procedure was carried out through a consultative process with representatives of the public administration, public authorities, potential training participants, the non-governmental sector and end users, ie Roma men and women.





The mobile learning lab consists of equipment, training programs and platform.

Basic equipment includes 3 laptops purchased as part of the project.

The training program objectives, outcomes and content are based on the job description of the coordinator for Roma issues. As part of the DREAM ROAD project, a training program for improving digital skills and competencies of coordinators for Roma issues was developed. The general goal of the training is to improve the knowledge, skills and



abilities of coordinators for Roma issues for the efficient use of information and communication technologies and digital media in order to more effectively support Roma men and women in the process of social inclusion and acquisition of digital competences. Areas of digital competence covered by the training are: Information and data literacy; Communication and collaboration; Digital content creation.

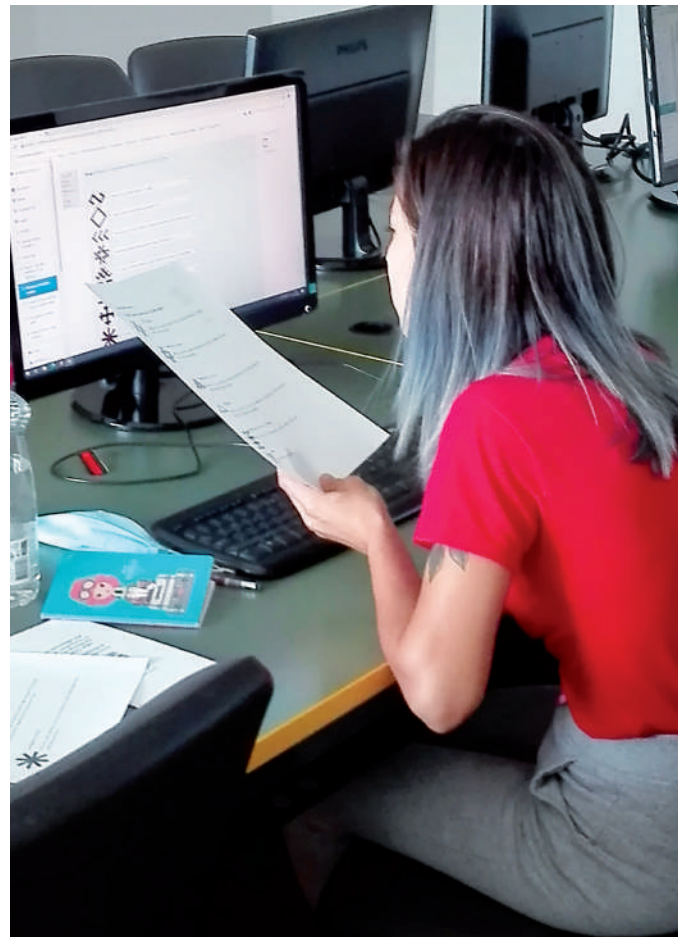
Given that the Roma Inclusion Office is public institution established by The Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina aiming to improve the position of the Roma in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, the platform will be part of Roma Inclusion Office web presentation. The main purpose of the platform is directed to share knowledge, experiences, information and documents relevant to the job of coordinators for Roma issues and inclusion of Roma at the local level.



## Slovenia

Due to the location of Roma settlements in the area, which are scattered across the Pomurje region, Research and Educational Centre Mansion Rakičan (RIS) opted to make a mobile LEARNING LAB. This means that while the Learning Lab may be set up permanently on its premises, the location of activities varies.

The pilot LEARNING LAB set up by RIS Mansion Rakičan was envisioned with the needs of the local Roma community at the forefront. These needs were made clear by the pandemic - with members of local Roma communities being left behind by the school system due to lack of equipment and due to lack of parental support. In addition, older



members of the Roma community lacked basic computer skills, which prevented them from being able to apply for even the most basic jobs that require minimal computer skills.

The activities of all workshops were planned so that users would be able to acquire basic skills that would enable them to apply newly gained knowledge in everyday life. This primarily means knowledge of basic Microsoft Office programmes, primarily for word processing. However, through these very basic programmes, they were given broader skills to navigate through the Windows environment, looking up information that they required online, printing etc. While some may have some knowledge of how to access information online through mobile phones, navigating programmes gave them the skills to multi-task and to complete a task that was given to them, from gaining information to printing. The purpose was to empower users to such an extent that the fear of negative life outcomes in fields of employment, social inclusion, income due to digital exclusion is no longer as prevalent. Given that the issue of unemployment among the Roma population (especially the younger population) is high, the participants focused on skills that would help them



in the workplace, starting with finding potential employers, reaching out online and to present themselves with appropriate CVs or motivational letters. Those that lacked work experience were also able to add participation in these organised workshops on to their CVs.



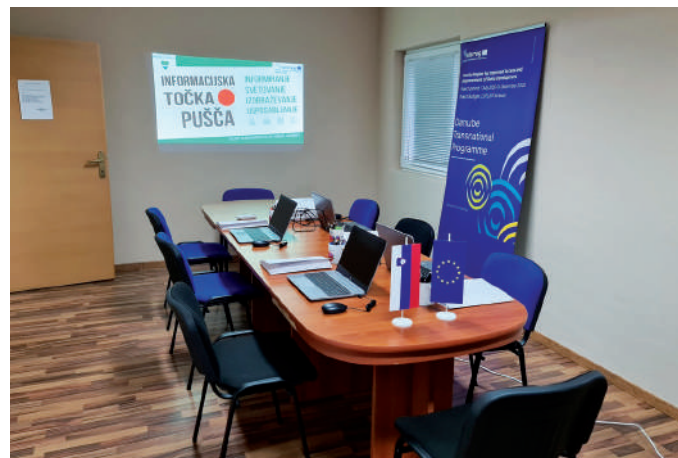
## Slovenia

The second Slovenian Learning Lab was established by the Municipality of Murska Sobota. The municipality has opened an information point (Learning Lab) in the Roma settlement Pušča, where numerous events, educational and counselling services take place. The members of the Roma community can get all the necessary information in the multipurpose hall in Pušča. The Municipality of Murska Sobota, together with 15 organizations, has signed a memorandum of understanding for cooperation in the establishment of the information point in the area. These 15 organizations from the region will hold events and trainings here that are intended for the Roma community and would otherwise have to be held outside the settlement.

The acquired ICT equipment will be used both for the work and training within the information point, the organization of events and for the international involvement of the Roma, especially in the field of exchange of experience and mutual cooperation in general. In this way, the project partner also wants

to strengthen the Roma, Pušča and the Municipality of Murska Sobota in the international arena. Otherwise, the equipment will also be available for the work of KS and other companies that need this type of equipment.

Mestna občina  
**MURSKA SOBOTA**





## Ukraine

Despite the hard situation in Ukraine due to war, Ukrainian Learning Lab located in Uzhhorod shows good results in conducting and attracting Roma to its activities which took place in the first half of the year 2022 for defined target groups.

The workshops were conducted on the following topics:

1. «Presentation of the project "Dream Road"»,
2. «Brain Storm On Innovative And Non-Traditional Approaches Of Learning»,
3. «Application of tools of public participation»,
4. «Youth and Human Rights»,

**YOUTH  
SPACE**



5. "How to create and sell viral content? Technologies and practices",
6. "10 Steps to journalism. How to succeed in and not lose motivation in work."

Highly qualified trainers were invited to participate in the implementation of the LEARNING LABs. Professional and experienced trainer and facilitator Ihor Melnychuk taught young Roma at our trainings. Also professional trainer Ivan Kulchytsky was involved for consultation during the project implementation.



## **Project „DREAM ROAD“**

Danube REgion for improved Access and eMpowerment of ROmA Development

Project Duration: 30 months (01 July 2020 – 31 December 2022)

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Project web site:

[www.interreg-danube.eu/dream-road](http://www.interreg-danube.eu/dream-road)

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