



mosaic
inclusive investing for founders



I launched my first collection, Romany Dreams, driven by a desire to represent Roma culture in the fashion industry



Loly by Zita Moldovan

Name

Zita Moldovan

Country

Romania

Find out more

www.lolybyzitamoldovan.com

My Story

I am an actress and journalist, known for my work with Giuvlipen, the first feminist Roma theatre company, and for hosting "Roma for Romania", a show on B1 TV. During the pandemic in 2020, I rekindled my interest in fashion, founding the brand Loly (meaning "red" in Romani), a colour symbolising life, strength, and resilience among the Roma. Initially uncertain of Loly's sustainability, I faced significant challenges but remained committed to preserving and modernising Roma cultural elements through my designs.

My Motivation

Representing Roma Culture: In 2016, I launched my first collection, Romany Dreams, driven by a desire to represent Roma culture in the fashion industry. I aspired to create a brand inspired by traditional Roma aesthetics, reimagined through a modern lens. Loly by Zita Moldovan embodies this vision, offering vibrant, culturally rooted designs that echo the resilience and vibrancy of the Roma community.

Challenges

Lack of Formal Business Training: Venturing into entrepreneurship was new for me, especially as I lacked formal business training.

Financial Challenges: Financial strain posed a primary obstacle, given the need for continuous investment in fresh collections to retain and attract customers. Additionally, rising taxes and expenses in Romania further complicated my journey, prompting moments of doubt about the sacrifices involved. I faced the dual challenge of sustaining the brand while managing financial stress, ultimately building patience and resilience to keep the business afloat.





Accomplishments

A key advantage for me was the support from the Roma community, whose encouragement bolstered my motivation. Additionally, I retained a loyal customer base that provided consistent orders, crucial for covering business expenses and enabling the release of new collections each year. Nonetheless, balancing creative design with the pressures of entrepreneurship required constant dedication and adaptability.



Were interventions specifically for underrepresented entrepreneurs?

The REDI support was a specifically targeted support. There is a great need for targeted support for Roma entrepreneurs, given the historical discrimination and stigmatization of Roma art and culture. Grants and funding initiatives play a vital role in stabilizing and advancing Roma-owned businesses, particularly those seeking to enrich public appreciation for Roma culture.



What interventions/support did you receive?

I received a grant from the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERIAC), supplemented by an additional personal contribution. This support allowed me to create a new Haute Couture collection, which debuted in May 2024 through an exhibition showcasing eight unique pieces. Additionally, I benefited from guidance from REDI (Roma Entrepreneurship Development Initiative), which provided advice on navigating business challenges and honing her skills in unfamiliar areas.



Describe the impact of these interventions?

The ERIAC grant had a substantial positive impact, enabling me to produce a Haute Couture collection, an undertaking that required greater financial resources. Through this support, I was able to introduce unique Loly-branded materials, featuring cultural symbols that reflect my heritage. This investment elevated the brand's cultural authenticity and market appeal.





Future Plans



Looking ahead, I envision opening a store on Victoriei Avenue, a bustling area in Bucharest, which would include a small sewing workshop. Currently, I collaborate with an external workshop, incurring higher production costs than if I employed my own seamstresses. A dedicated space and staff would allow me to scale Loly more efficiently and enhance the brand's visibility.



What interventions or supports would help you achieve those plans and visions?

My expansion plan requires a substantial financial investment, likely achievable through a sizable grant or funding programme. Such support would enable me to establish the envisioned workshop and retail space, fostering the growth and impact of Loly as a culturally significant and sustainable Roma fashion brand.

Follow Zita's progress and visit her [website](#)

Loly
by Zita Moldovan



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