

The Roma Education Resource Book

**Educational Issues
Methods and Practice
Language and Culture**

Edited by

Csaba Fényes
Christina McDonald
Anita Mészáros

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Foreword

Dear Reader,

This resource package on issues related to Roma and education is the result of your many requests to have more information on the subject. Our aim at the Institute for Educational Policy is to support your strategic and programming efforts in the Soros Foundation Network. We hope that you find this resource package informational and useful for those purposes.

The articles herein were compiled by a team at IEP, OSI – Budapest, and are organised loosely around three main areas: general issues concerning Roma education in the region of Central and Eastern Europe as well as a handful of other countries in the world, examples of methodology and practice, and articles on topics touching upon language and culture. Always in the focal point is education, and in our minds, how we can improve education for Roma children.

With these readings, we hope to provide information that in general could inform educators, policy makers, educational administrators, or other interested parties about the above issues.

The package is not intended to be used as a learning material, but rather a starting point for a possible series of debates. Some of the articles contradict what other articles published in this package aim to prove. The inclusion of a particular paper does not necessarily mean that the editors agree with the points made by the paper.

Please use this package as you wish. Translate it into your language, distribute to your network of educators, make it available to the public, organise debates around it. The choice is up to you.

We are always interested in receiving other articles related to the above topics, from a variety of countries and contexts. If you know of other good articles, research or relevant information - in any language - that you think would be useful to distribute among the network, please send it to us! Your access to information in your country is better than ours.

Read, enjoy and learn!

IEP

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Recognising Difference: The Romani "GYPSY" Child Socialisation and Education Process

By **Tracy Smith**, Romani Association of Australia, Prospect East, Australia
 Source: **British Journal of Sociology of Education**, June 1997, Vol. 18 Issue 2, p243, 14p.

ABSTRACT

There is considerable conflict between Romani Gypsy child socialisation and education processes and mainstream education practices. In Romani communities children are encouraged to show initiative and independence at an early age. They learn participating in the communities' economic activities and observing adult verbal and non-verbal communication skills. In mainstream education, by comparison, they learn in an enclosed classroom where they are rarely able to initiate or create their own learning experiences. Due to the increasing demands of industrialized societies, literacy is vital for Romani people. However, education systems are at present failing to meet the needs of these children. Structural inequalities such as poverty and racism, coupled with differing viewpoints on the benefits of education, continue to contribute to the low participation rates of Romani children in mainstream schools.

INTRODUCTION

A child's identity is shaped by the norms, values, and behaviours of the culture in which he or she is raised. In Romani Gypsy society socialisation occurs via the extended family network. This network provides Romani children with emotional and physical support. Despite the great diversity which exists between Romani Gypsy groups, a number of generalisations can be made about traditional Romani child socialisation processes. For example, Romani children are encouraged to show independence from an early age, they rarely receive physical punishment, and they learn to understand and read the verbal and no-verbal communications signals of adults in their community at a much earlier age than their non-Gypsy counterparts. Traditional Romani education is community education. Children participate in the communities' day-to-day activities and it is here that they learn by watching, listening and observing, the economic, social, linguistic, political and moral codes of their society.

In a Gypsy society socialisation occurs via the extended family network.

Romani education differs considerably from mainstream education. In most westernised education systems young children are educated in structured, competitive environments, where each hour of the day is regulated according to timetables and specific learning activities. Teachers have certain expectations of children and their parents. They imagine that all parents view school as important, that parents are literate and, therefore, able to understand the nature of their children's school work, they believe that parents will provide children with adequate time and space to do homework, and they often assume that money is available for school uniforms, books, and school activities.

For many Romani children these ideal conditions do not exist. Poverty, racism, and a lack of access to essential services are considerable barriers to equitable participation in mainstream

education. The highly-structured nature of mainstream education does not compare favourably with traditional Romani child socialisation and education processes. Many Romani parents do not see mainstream education as either practical, essential, or necessary for their children; instead they imagine it to be a means of controlling their

Opposing structures, values – two very different societies.

own, and their children's lives (Grosso-Nicolin & Osella, n.d.; Lee & Warren, 1991). The conflict which exists between mainstream education and traditional Romani Gypsy education is located in the opposing structures, values and interests which are used to support and maintain social cohesion in two very different societies.

Despite these problems, most Romani people recognise that mainstream education is the only possible route to literacy for their children. Literacy is imagined to be vital in today's society where even the most basic needs such as obtaining a drivers' licence, filling in a social security form, or requesting a residence permit require literacy. A common ground is, therefore, sought between traditional Romani education and mainstream education. Previous attempts to discredit Romani education and socialisation, in favour of replacing it with the values of the dominant culture, have not worked. Romani people strongly believe that they have the right to determine the course and direction of their children's education, and that educational decisions should not be imposed upon them by an outside authority.

Literacy

In this paper, therefore, a critical approach (Gibson, 1986; Fay, 1987) to the discussion of education for Romani children is adopted. This approach favours the exposure of the historical, political, cultural and social processes which influence the access Romani children have to equitable education. Information in this paper has been compiled using published material on Romani education and child socialisation processes from a range of disciplines, my own experiences as a Romani Gypsy person, and my own understandings, through conversations and educational work with Romani people, of the educational, needs and concerns of our people.

ROMANI CULTURE AND SOCIALISATION PATTERNS

Romani people left their homeland in India over 1000 years ago and scattered throughout the world. Since that time they have incorporated into their lifestyles a diverse range of religious, linguistic, social and economic practices. Many Gypsies of today are sedentary. However, other groups such as those in the United Kingdom, France and in some parts of Spain continue to practise travelling lifestyles. Gypsies in the United Kingdom, for example, are often compared to Irish and Scottish Travellers with whom they share some connections through mixed marriages, and the adoption of similar economic activities and travelling routes.

Many Romani people see themselves as belonging to a diverse nation of Romani people who, although dispersed throughout the world, share similar historical, cultural and linguistic ties which set them apart as a nation of people. The Romani Nation is, therefore, a political, cultural and social symbol (rather than a geographical construct) through which the world is divided into two spheres, the Gypsy and the non-Gypsy people, or Roma as they are often referred to, with a sense of national unity through which they can make claims, at forums such as the United Nations, for equal rights, social justice, and cultural recognition. In keeping with this symbolic representation of Romani identity, issues such as education are addressed in this paper from a global perspective.

A Gypsy nation?

A global approach to education carries with it a tendency to generalise. Generalisation in connection with Romani education issues is inevitable, due to the dearth of research in this area. There is a lack of reliable, well-constructed case studies, which would enable the author to focus more closely on one particular Romani group, or the relationship a group has with a national education system. In areas such as Australia, the Middle East, India and much of Eastern Europe, for example, there has been little research conducted into Romani education issues. In other areas such as the United Kingdom, Western Europe and North America Romani education research is fragmentary, and rarely addresses wider social issues such as poverty and racism. The author has, therefore, searched for areas of common ground on Romani education and

Lack of consistent research. child socialisation issues, between academic research and my own practical experience as a Romani educator.

The importance of the family. The importance of the family in a Romani child's life is mentioned in many studies conducted throughout the world. It is also a subject raised frequently by Romani families. In most Gypsy communities the family and the extended kinship network are the primary influences in a Romani child's life. However, the media, school, and the culture of the dominant society also contribute to a Romani child's understanding of their world. Family members teach Gypsy children to respect other adults, themselves (Lee & Warren, 1991, p.315) and the group (Liegeois, 1987, p.46; Berthier, 1979, p. 383) by including them in the day-to-day activities of the community.

The importance of independence. In traditional Romani communities children are encouraged to be independent from an early age. This prepares them for the social and economic responsibilities of adolescence when they will be expected to marry, work full-time, and raise a family of their own. Independent behaviour is reinforced in a number of ways such as encouraging children to seek and prepare their own food, dress themselves, put themselves to sleep without supervision (Berthier, 1979, pp. 380-381), and care for younger children. A child's sense of autonomy is further reinforced by a lack of physical punishment (Adams et al., 1975, pp. 97-99; Liegeois, 1986, p. 68.). Conformity is encouraged using "joking" or mocking (Grosso-Nicolin & Osella, n.d., p. 27) as a way of making children feel embarrassed or foolish.

Unlike mainstream Western societies, where milestones such as walking, starting school and turning 21 are accorded much importance, Romani families view the stages from infancy, to childhood, to maturity, with relatively little anxiety. There are no timetables for crawling, cutting teeth, walking, etc. (Berthier, 1979, p.383). However, families are interested in their children's development and the acquisition of skills such as baby talk (Reger & Gleason, 1991, p.604) is often greeted with interest and delight.

God's blessings. When babies are born into Romani society they are considered to be signs of prestige, good luck and God's blessing to the family. They are accorded special care during their first 6 weeks of life when they are considered to be ritually impure and in danger of illness. In some North American and European Romani communities, babies are kept away from the adult men (Sutherland, 1975, pp. 151, 154, 263, 284) until they have been baptised, a rite which removes their impurity (Berthier, 1979, p.379).

Socialisation. From 5 to 12 years of age, children are regarded as free from impurities and innocent of defilement. They are, therefore, unaffected by the Romani hygiene laws. A Gypsy childhood, in comparison to adolescence, is characterised by few social responsibilities and a lack of political status (Wood, 1973, p.73; Sutherland, 1975, p. 134). Children are free to explore, experiment and observe the everyday activities of their community. Romani children are, however, expected to assume some economic responsibilities such as child-care or small jobs. Young children will often enthusiastically mimic the economic activities of adults in the community.

Four-year-olds have been observed watching the men engaged in dismantling some item of scrap and then moving off to their own scrapping situation. This may emerge as a practical exercise in dismantling and stripping and it is not unusual for the child to dismantle some toy with whatever tools are available, possibly a hammer. This play that seems destructive and inconclusive to the casual observer may in reality be play to some purpose and be strongly role-orientated. (Adams et al., 1975, p.97)

Adams et al. (1975, pp. 96-97) further comment, in their study of Romani economic activities in the United Kingdom, that children by the age of 5 or 6 can differentiate between ferrous metals of high value and non-ferrous metals of a cheaper value. Most children by this age can also clean, retrieve and identify spare parts (Adams et al., 1975, p.96).

The roles which young Romani adults adopt at puberty are gender-related. For example, boys acquire more rights and fewer obligations than girls (Berthier, 1979, p.382). In some traditional communities, such as those in North America, the parent's search for a suitable wife for their son is a symbol of his approaching manhood. Parents might judge a young woman as suitable if she has a good reputation, family background, personal character and temperament. Skills considered to be important include her ability to care for children and the home, her courtesy towards guests, and her aptitude for earning a living (Yoors, 1967, p. 183). Once married, a young Romani man takes a greater role in the community's economic, social and political activities.

Gender-related roles

Romani Gypsy girls, once they reach puberty, are expected to adopt a series of socially responsible behaviours. The family becomes more protective of young woman. In traditionally-orientated families adolescent girls may no longer be allowed to sleep with other children, let their hair down in front of men, take their shoes off in front anyone, nor wash, hang out, or exchange their clothes with children or men (Wood, 1973, p. 73; Sutherland, 1975, p. 28). Shop-bought clothes are often exchanged for the longer traditional Gypsy skirts, and young women usually wear a headscarf one they are married. Young married women are responsible to their mother-in-law, whom they are obliged to help with cooking, cleaning and child-care.

Changes in the behavioural patterns of Romani adolescents seems inevitable in communities where children are spending more and more time in non-Romani schools with children near or of their own age-group. Increasingly the intrusion of outside influences such as the television, videos, the radio and school affect the willingness of Romani adolescents to accept traditional practices and gender-assigned roles. Adolescents and children once spent most of their day with Romani adults and children from a range of age-groups, often up to three generations. Young couples, who were married at puberty, stayed with their parents until they had several children. In this way, cooking, economic activities, and the care of young children were shared, and cooperation between family members ensured equally in business dealings and harmonious social relations.

Changes in behavioural patterns

In some Romani Gypsy communities these practices continue. However, Romani communities, like many other traditional non-western communities, are being placed under increasing pressure to conform to mainstream social norms in areas such as education. In an unfamiliar environment such as the classroom children are no longer taught by community members, their time is structured and their success and growth is judged according to a predetermined psychological, academic and developmental criteria which extends from early childhood through to late adolescence and beyond.

The people-orientated learning environment in which Romani children are educated is, therefore, a distinctive feature of the Romani education system. This education system incorporates a number of values associated with maintaining social cohesion. For example, the needs of the Romani community, are considered to be more important than an individual's need for social mobility. Family and the extended kinship network provide children with a sense of security, permanency, and confidence. These things are particularly important for children who move frequently. A child's acquisition of work skills is vital, due to the important contribution children make to their family's economic activities. Romani children accompany family members on jobs such as flower selling, tarmac-ing, scrap metal collecting, or fortune-telling. Many young girls have acquired fortune-telling skills by the time they are 14 (Silverman, 1982, pp. 392-393) by listening to readings, observing customers and watching the methods of divination their mothers, aunts or grandmothers use with customers. Grosso/Nicolin & Osella (n.d.,p.20) suggest that the main reason Romani children "do not know how to play" and give up games easily in order to please others is because Romani children from an early age have looked after younger children. Caring for younger children, whilst adults work in other areas, provides the community with a valuable service. Romani children are thus encouraged to believe that they are able to, and capable of, contributing to the real-life economic activities of the community. Playing, by comparison, seems to lack purpose and value.

The learning environment for Romani children

Acquisition of work skills	<p>In addition to this, a Gypsy child's active participation in the adult world of the Romani community has any intangible educational benefits. Children learn to read and understand verbal and non-verbal adult communication skills such as language, gestures, postures, facial expressions, whistling signals, vocalisations and hand signals at an early age. Patrins or trail-signs, for example, are coded messages usually constructed from items found in the natural environment such as sticks, pebbles and branches. These messages are left at particular points along the road by nomadic and seminomadic Romanies. They usually represent warnings, directions, or details of such things as how many people are camped at a certain place, or which family camped where (Wood, 1973, p.63.). Children learn about the preparation of trail-signs by watching adults creating them and observing where they are placed. This form of non-verbal communication helps children to remember certain landmarks and features of the surrounding landscape, and it familiarises them with the particular routes along which the group is travelling.</p>
Communication skills	<p>The Romani language is the primary means of communication for most Romani children. However, levels of language acquisition vary between groups. For example, some Gypsy children speak Romanes as their first language, some are bilingual, and others use a diluted form of the Romani language which has been mixed with local non-Gypsy dialects. In addition to this, there is an increasing group of Romani children who will learn very little of their language, due to the amount of time spent at school, rather than in the community. Children have traditionally acquired the Romani language through contact, rather than through direct instruction.</p>
The Romani language	<p>Story-telling is an example of a verbal communication skill which is still practised by many Romani communities today. Story-telling is used to educate and entertain, and to reinforce moral and religious values. Some stories deal with the adventures of the old Rom who travelled to many distant and exciting places (Wood, 1973, p.64.), others are "songs of youth and manhood, epic and sorrow songs" (Yoors, 1967,p. 113). Ghost stories or tales of the supernatural are also popular, as are personal stories, which glorify or exaggerate recent adventures, or situations where a Gypsy outwitted a non-Gypsy.</p>
Story-telling	<p>Children are introduced to this form of verbal communication at an early age. For example, Reger & Gleason (1991 pp. 601-617), in a study of language acquisition skills amongst Romani children in Hungary, found that children were introduced to "lengthy and dramatic stories during early infancy". The story-teller frequently used the child's name and told the story "with exaggerated (sometimes chanted) intonation, slow rate vowel lengthening, and other baby talk features". Story-tellers in the groups they studied would often stop and ask babies of even a few months old if they understood.</p> <p>Reger and Gleason found that children by 10 to 12 years of age had become good story-tellers and used "jokes", "anecdotes" and "surprise endings" in their stories. By the age of 13 to 14 years children had adopted adult narrative features such as "formulaic endings and beginnings; elaborate role play" and situations based on events from everyday life. Reger comments that: "Unlike the school role play with which we are familiar from the developmental literature, Gypsy role play is lengthy, carefully structured, and remarkably realistic" (Reger et al., 1991, p.613). This example demonstrates the educative role verbal communication skills play in Romani societies. Children acquired story-telling skills by listening, observing and participating in story-telling activities. Small babies were seen as important enough to be accorded a place in the stories told.</p> <p>Verbal and non-verbal communication skills are important features of the Romani education system. These skills, plus associated social skills, enable Gypsy children gradually to familiarise themselves with the adult world. This makes the transition for a Romani childhood to adolescence to adulthood relatively easy. In addition to this,</p>

Romani children from an early age are encouraged to listen, imitate, observe, cooperate and attempt adult tasks.

CONFLICTS BETWEEN TRADITIONAL ROMANI EDUCATION AND MAINSTREAM EDUCATION

Mainstream education contrasts considerably with traditional Romani education. The enclosed classroom environment, where the majority of learning experiences take place, differs significantly from a Gypsy community education. A Romani child spends most of its day in the family camp, at the home of a family member, or accompanying a member of the family on a job, where he or she may or may not interact with non-Gypsy people and their environments. The classroom, by comparison, is a place which children must attend every day, where they will be surrounded by children who are not related to them, and where they are taught by a teacher who is not a family member. In most mainstream classrooms children rarely get to choose activities, spend as much time as they like on these activities, or determine who they will complete these activities with. Children are expected to remain seated in a closed environment where rules exist about orderly behaviour, attentiveness and discussion.

Discipline, routine, the ability to be quiet, to learn abstract facts--these are the things which differ in the daily life of a Sinti child from that of another child. The teachers do not know about the way of life of these children and so misunderstandings arise. The children cease to want to go to school (Lenner, 1993, p. 58) [the Sinti are a Gypsy group]

Discipline, routine

For many Romani children mainstream education lacks relevance and value. Educational activities such as hypothetical problem-posing (Keeffe & Schmeider, 1988, p. 12; Harris, 1990, p.5.) and philosophising do not, for any Romani children, appear to result in any concrete, tangible outcomes. An example of this is found in a study by Grosso-Nicolin & Osella (n.d., pp.28-29) who set up a school for research purposes in a "Gypsy camp" in Italy. Romani children, they suggested, were initially "fascinated" by school, and worked hard to gain the acceptance of the teacher. However, when children were asked to do unfamiliar activities, or to use abstract concepts, they became uneasy and often lost interest. The activities, which the group found most successful were those linked to camp-life.

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"what is learned in school has little relevance to their lives outside school".

Cunnington (1991, p. 12) suggests that Australian Aboriginal children experience a similar loss of interest in school in the late primary and early secondary years. He proposes that this is because they feel that "what is learned in school has little relevance to their lives outside school". Grosse-Nicolin & Osella (n.d., pp. 24-25) suggest that for Romani children also the "real school of life is in the camp" where a child is taught "activities which enable him to live". The authors suggest that the Romani child does not feel any personal attachment to school life, because it lacks that solidarity of camp life, where the community is "never sure of anything", if there will be money for food or a job, or when the community will have to move on.

How is knowledge used?

Conflicting interests and values exist not only between Romani and mainstream educational environments and practices, but also between the way knowledge is used in each situation. In Romani society decisions which affect the whole community are usually reached by consensus; however, age, gender, and kinship obligations also carry weight. Dominant Westernised societies, by comparison, operate through large-scale bureaucracies, where decisions can be made with little or no community support. The use of time in Romani society is described by Yoors (1967, pp. 44-45) as being

without "apparent goal outside of plain survival and self-perpetuation" and without the security associated with routine. In Westernised systems, the use of time is future-orientated (Harris, 1990,p. 35), learning towards progress and the evolution of time.

Knowledge in traditional Romani society is passed on orally. It is usually associated with the wisdom of the elderly, who remember traditional customs and stories and who have gained insight and intelligence through life experiences. Knowledge in Westernised societies is, by comparison a "bundle" of ideas (Keeffe, 1992,p. 9) constantly being disputed and investigated (Harris, 1990, pp. 22-24) and nearly always available in a written format.

In school, they are likely to learn only about mainstream culture, history and politics.

The use and application of knowledge in Romani and non-Romani societies, therefore, is also a site of conflict. The most dramatic difference between the two education systems, however, is the content of the different learning systems. While participating in their community's day-to-day activities Romani children learn about their culture, history, political, social and economic life. At school, they are likely to learn only about mainstream culture, history and politics. This is reflected in the following comment:

Our children have never learned anything about their own history, culture and customs. Instead, every reference to Gypsies is bad. They hear only negative stereotypes everywhere they turn. I believe many Gypsies have learned to look at themselves in that same way. Our children should learn instead to feel pride in the rich heritage of the Gypsy people. (Helsinki Watch, 1991, p. 75)

Gypsy children must learn to reconcile two very different educational systems.

In a mainstream classroom a Romani child is unlikely to learn the same skills, nor to develop the same sense of independence and confidence associated with his or her valuable role in Romani society. As demonstrated in the above examples, it is extremely difficult to locate a common ground between mainstream educational practices and traditional Romani education. The creation of Romani schools has yet to become a reality. At present, very few Gypsy schools exist anywhere in the world, and many of those that do are dubbed remedial schools or schools for the "socially handicapped". Despite these difficulties, most Romani children will, by necessity and a lack of choice, attend non-Gypsy schools. In order for Romani children to participate successfully in mainstream schooling they must learn to reconcile two very different educational systems. Further to this, they will have to overcome structural barriers which make equitable participation in mainstream education extremely difficult. The most prominent of these barriers are poverty and racism.

Many teachers bring racist attitudes with them into the classroom. Some imagine that Romani children are inferior, insignificant and incapable of being taught, and so they either ignore the children or, alternatively, harass them. An example of this is found in the following comment:

They call me "Gypsy" and treat my children poorly. The teachers don't pay any attention to the children. They say, "You are a Gypsy and have no business sending your children here". They seat the children together in the back benches of the class. (Helsinki Watch, 1991, p. 74)

Teachers formulate expectations of Romani children based on their own beliefs, assumptions and knowledge or lack of knowledge of Romani society. Many teachers have taken-for-granted assumptions about their students which are reflected in classroom practices. Teachers, for example, rarely acknowledge the differences between a society based on oral communication and one based on written communication. Cunningham (1991, p. 9) mentions this point in regard to Aboriginal society when he suggests that teachers imagine that all children are "aware" of the printed word and find it "meaningful and useful" before they start school. In addition to this, it is often taken for granted that children will have space, time, quiet areas to study in, and parental support for doing homework. Teachers who have no knowledge of how a Romani household operates in regards to cooperation and shared responsibilities, nor of how poverty affects the lives of Romani children, will often fail to make

Many teachers bring racist attitudes with them into the classroom.

allowances for a child's inability to meet these criteria. The differences between a Romani child's life and those of other children at school, however, are usually all too obvious to the children themselves. As Munivra, an 11-year-old Romani girl currently living in Germany, comments:

They live well. Everyone has their own room. Everything is clean. They have simply everything... They sleep really well. They got to school, but when they come back from school they do their homework. There's no noise. When the need peace and quiet they go into their own rooms to write. Nobody makes noise or disturbs them.

...When I get in from school, I have lots to do. I have to help with the housework, tidying up, minding my little brother, going to the supermarket to do the shopping. (Munivera in Hartmann, 1994:, p. 19)

Poverty is experienced by Romani children in most countries in the world, particularly in Europe where many Romani people live without adequate housing, employment, health care, and access to essential services. Finding money for school uniform, books, excursions, and school lunches is often impossible (Forray et al., 1989, p. 519), as this Romanian Rom comments:

Many Gypsy families didn't have the means to dress their children well. It is normal that if you have large families you will have bigger economic problems. So parents had to send their children to school poorly dressed, with hand-me-down clothes. During Ceausecu's time, these children were viewed differently by the teachers. The teachers, seeing the children poorly dressed, put them in the back of the class where they wouldn't be seen. They also looked at their clothes and thought poverty was the same as stupidity. The children felt this animosity, and, as a result, they often left school.

Poverty is thus equated with "stupidity", and children are not given the extra attention they need in order to overcome educational barriers. For example, Romani children are often enrolled in "special" schools, created for children with physical or mental disabilities, simply because they come from poor neighbourhoods or settlements (Ladanyi, 1993, p. 32). The number of Romani children placed in schools for the mentally handicapped or socially disadvantaged is unknown. However, statistics for Romani and nomadic children from 19 years ago for the Federal Republic of Germany show that 50 % of Romani children were in such schools (Reetsma in Liegeois, 1987, p. 69.). In France, during the same period, 80 % of Romani children were in "socially handicapped" classes (L'Ecole Liberatrice, in Liegeois, 1987, p. 69.). In some countries in Eastern Europe a single Romani child cannot be found who has attended a normal school throughout his or her entire school career (Bremer Volkshoschcule, in Liegeois, 1987, p. 68).

An 11-year-old Romani girl comments on the differences between a Romani child's life and those of other children at school.

Poverty is equated with stupidity.

Institutional racism

Romani children are thus subjected to forms of institutional racism which erode their self-confidence and independence. Anti-Romani racism is particularly prevalent in Europe, where children may be denied school places simply because they are "Gypsies" and are not considered deserving of a place. Nomadic and semi-nomadic Romani groups are particularly vulnerable to this form of discrimination. In the United Kingdom, for example, there is a lack of safe stopping places for Romani and Traveller groups, and a plethora of rules, regulations, and by-laws which make travelling lifestyles extremely difficult.

Segregation

A prime example of the kinds of problems Romani children face in the United Kingdom is provided by Waterson (1993, pp. 132-139). Waterson describes the plight of a group of Romani families in South Wales. In 1977 41 caravans, threatened with eviction, occupied three unauthorised stopping places. The children of these families were being taught by two teachers in a poorly-equipped ex-school meals van. Five years later an unheated classroom, segregated from the rest of the school, was set up in the local school grounds and was used by two teachers as a base for teaching children ranging in ages from three and a half to 16. In 1986 an anti-Gypsy committee protested outside a Gypsy encampment of 60 caravans proclaiming that they did not want Gypsy pupils attending the local school. In 1987, after a BBC film and television crew and the Advisory council for the Education of Romany and Other Travellers had drawn public

attention to the Romani and Traveller education problems in Swansea (Waterson, 1993, pp. 132-139):

The children were offered segregated education in the room used five years earlier. They were not allowed to play or eat with the other children, there were even complaints because the Travellers used the same dining room as the others. (Waterson, 1993. P. 138)

In 1989 Traveller and Romani children in the segregated classroom were finally permitted to play and eat with the other children (Waterson, 1993, p. 139). The racist attitudes of the local settled community, non-Gypsy parents, and the education authorities involved in this case provide an example of the kinds of problems Romani families encounter when attempting to gain access to mainstream education.

Exclusion

A Romani child's sense of exclusion is further reinforced by the ridicule of non-Gypsy schoolchildren. Egan (1980, p. 21) notes that in North America this has been particularly damaging for children who have never attended school before and who commence school late in childhood. The types of attitudes which non-Romani children hold in regards to Gypsy children are reflected in the results of sociograms conducted in Italian schools. These studies have demonstrated that non-Romani children do not consider a Romani child as a possible partner in or out of school (Karpati, 1993, p. 79.)

Racism, poverty and the placing of their children into schools for the mentally handicapped are amongst the many reasons why Romani parents are reluctant to send their children to school (Egan, 1980, p. 23). Some parents feel indifferent or hostile towards mainstream education and the school system in general, others would like to see their children do well at school (Wallbridge, 1972, p. 28; Helsinki Watch, 1991, pp. 73-78). Many adult Romanies and Travellers remember school as a place where they were frequently placed at the lower end of the class, often in fights and "always in trouble" (Wallbridge, 1972, p. 28). Romani parent who suffered similar kinds of verbal and physical abuse as their children during their own childhood will often refuse to force their children to attend school despite considerable pressure from educational authorities for the children to do so (Yung, 1980, pp. 292/294).

Many Romani parents consider school to be a disruptive influence on their children's lives, because it takes their children away from parental guidance and the cultural, social and economic activities of a Romani traditional education and lifestyle (Liegeois, 1987, p. 161; Lee et al., 1991, p. 316). In North America, for example, many Romani families are reluctant to send their children to school because they fear "the Americanising influences at work there", they sense the hostility towards themselves and their culture, and they feel that the school environment is polluting, because it conflicts with the Romani hygiene laws (Vogel, 1975, p. 126). In North American schools there is little recognition or knowledge about Romani culture, language, or special cultural needs (Vogel, 1975, p. 128). For its reason, some Romani leaders have suggested that school should be run for only two and a half a day, the maximum amount of time that others are willing to be separated from their children (Egan, 1980, p. 23).

School takes their children away from parental guidance and the activities of a Romani lifestyle.

This separation of children from families is an important concern for Romani families, who have learnt to be wary of any form of social control involving their children. School is particularly incompatible with the expectations Romani parents have for their children when they reach puberty. Girls, particularly, are unlikely to complete elementary school studies (Forray et al. 1989, p. 515). In Romania, for example, many Romani children are forced to leave school early due to poverty and early marriage, or due to a need to find work or help in the family business (Helsinki Watch, 1991, p. 76). These problems are evident in other Romani communities in Europe. In Spain, for example, the drop-out

Leaving school at an early age: poverty, marriage or a need to help in the family.

rate is particularly high after 11 years of age (Yagues, 1993, p. 111) when children have to shoulder responsibilities regarded as more important than school, such as looking after younger brothers and sisters. Boys, in accordance with Romani customs in Hungary, often leave school at 11 years of age to prepare for their future roles as head of the family and to learn a trade (Forray et al. 1989, p. 527).

Statistics demonstrate the dismal inadequacy of current education systems in Europe in regard to meeting the needs of Romani children. For example, the Resolution of the Council and the Ministers of Education on the Provision of Education for Gypsy and Traveller Children (1991) estimated that only 40 % of European Romani children attend school regularly (the others have never been to school) and that 50 % but in most places 80 % of Romani adults are illiterate. Until recently there has been little co-ordinated effort aimed at addressing the education needs of Romani children.

The range of difficulties which Romani children face in regard to obtaining an education which is equitable, and which recognises their unique culture and history, seem insurmountable. Romani groups recognise the value of a non-Gypsy education yet they are reluctant to place their children in mainstream educational situations which erode their children's self-confidence and pride in their own culture. In their search for a common ground which incorporates both styles of education Romani people have suggested a number of guidelines. These include the education of Romani and non-Romani teachers at a nationally and internationally recognised Romani teacher training centre, the production of Romani teaching materials such as books, language tapes and videos, the introduction of a more equitable assessment scheme, less rigid timetabling at schools (Munoz et al., 1993, pp. 148-153), the use of Romani cultural mediators to help bridge the gap between the Romani community and the school, and more participation and collaboration between Romani and non-Romani people on education projects.

Mainstream education erodes their children's self-confidence and pride in their own culture.

A number of programmes aimed at improving the participation rates of Romani children in mainstream schools have been initiated in recent years. For example, the Gypsy research centre in Paris has been actively involved for a number of years in a range of projects aimed at making mainstream education more equitable for Romani children. In Pécs, Hungary, a school has been set up which attempts to find common ground between traditional Romani education and non-Romani education. The Gandhi School teaches Romani children Gypsy "languages, legends, music", "dance" and "traditional crafts" in addition to academic studies (Hooker, 1995, p. 10). In the United Kingdom various Local Education Authorities and schools have initiated creative projects aimed at supporting Romani children. The STEP (Systematic Training and Early Prevention) programme (Chandler & Boglione, 1992) run by the Tacoma Public Schools in North America provides an example of how non-Romani teachers and the local Romani community collaborated on a project to establish a culturally appropriate school programme for Romani children.

Gandhi
Gimnázium in
Pécs,
Hungary

Funding provided by the European community has enabled some Romani people to become involved in education projects. However, in many cases Romani people are not being employed on these projects, they are not being given decision-making powers, and their ideas and contributions are being overridden by non-Gypsy educators. Many Romani organisations who provide educational support for Gypsy people are run almost entirely by volunteers and must compete with non-Gypsy groups, supposedly providing services for Romanies, for even the most basic funding. The educational needs of travelling Romani children are often met using stopgap measures, rather than with well-constructed educational support and programmes. For example, in the United Kingdom distance education for travelling children is regarded as a stopgap measure provided by Local Education Authorities for children who are expected to attend schools and use distance education only as emergency measure. Compare this to Australia, where Gypsy and Traveller children can receive their pre-school, primary, secondary and tertiary education by distance education. This

Educational
support

education is provided by specialist distance education teachers and supported by a range of learning materials and technological equipment provided by distance education colleges. Travelling lifestyles in Australia, though not openly encouraged, are supported and acknowledged, and the education which a child receives by distance education is considered to be equal to, if not better in some cases, than mainstream education.

Self-determination

Self-determination is the right of any culturally distinct group to choose their own political, cultural, social, economic, and cultural status (Nettheim, 1992, pp. 118-120). The level of self-determination that a group is able to achieve is subject to the policies of respective governments and the support they have for minority group needs. Minority groups, such as Romani Gypsy people, will not achieve self-determination until they are able to participate more fully in the design, delivery, and implementation of educational programmes.

Educational research

Education research has an important role to play in seeking creative ways of addressing Romani education issues. Vogel (1975, p. 129) has suggested four areas in need of particular attention — increased research by universities into Romani culture and language, dissemination of information to school personnel and the public about Romani life, school programmes which consider Romani language and culture and encourage traditional Rom to attend schools, and the restoration to non-traditional Rom of a sense of cultural appreciation in order to help bring the Romani people together.

CONCLUSION

This paper has described the differences between Romani and non-Romani education and child socialisation processes using a critical framework. The Romani child socialisation and education process is characterised by community education. Romani children develop self-confidence and culturally appropriate values in an environment where they are encouraged to be independent, are rarely punished and where they make a valuable contribution to the community's economic activities. A Romani childhood is characterised by its relative freedom from social responsibilities until the onset of puberty, a time when young Romani adults adopt gender-assigned roles. The transition from adolescence to adulthood is facilitated by a Romani community education, because it is here that Gypsy children learn adult verbal and non-verbal communication skills and participate in the community's economic activities.

Freedokm of responsibilities

An increasing need for literacy has resulted in many Romani people seeking a non-Romani education for their children. Mainstream education, however, fails to meet the needs of Romani children in a number of ways. The controlled and confused environment of the classroom provides little scope for independence, creativity and pride in a Romani cultural heritage. The creation of an education system designed to meet the needs of Romani children is highly unlikely; instead, a common ground needs to be found, one which acknowledges the structural problems which Romani children face at school such as poverty and racism, and one which recognises the Romani child socialisation and education process. Equally important for Romani children is the importance of developing new projects aimed at improving the participation rates of Gypsy children in education. These projects, however, must acknowledge the right of Romani people to be self-determining and to participate fully in education projects which involve their children.

A common ground needs to be found

In this paper the conflict between two opposing education systems is described. The importance of identifying a common ground between these two systems is acknowledged. However, no solution is offered. The lack of research in the area of

Romani education, the diversity existing between Romani groups, the differences between the complex educational systems operating in various countries, and the widespread distribution of Romani groups throughout the world make it difficult to create valid solutions, or examples of educational systems which may be particularly useful or conducive to Romani lifestyles.

At best, only generalisations can be made about the Romani child socialisation and education process. In some cases many, if not all, of the traditional practices described in this paper have been lost. In other cases, all these traditions continue to survive. What can be stated with confidence, however, is how vital it is for non-Romani educators to recognise the distinctiveness of Romani history, language and culture, and for steps to be taken to address the inequalities that Romani people face in areas such as education.

It is vital to recognise the distinctiveness of Romany history, language and culture.

Correspondence: Ms Tracy Smith, Education Representative, Romani Association of Australia, PO Box 824, Prospect East, South Australia, Australia 5082.

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Roma in the Educational Systems of Central and Eastern Europe

By: Claude Cahn, David Chirico, Christina McDonald, Viktória Mohácsi, Tatjana Peric and Ágnes Székely

Source: European Roma Rights Centre Report, Summer 1998

Historical background: how did they treat Gypsy children's schooling?

The relation between the Roma people and the non-Romani educational systems has historically been troubled. In the view of many Roma, school is the place where Romani children, stolen by the state, are „turned into *gadje* (non-Roma).” Early modern policies, such as those of modernising Habsburg rulers Mari Theresa And Joseph II in the eighteenth century attempted to change Roma into “Christians”, “new citizens” and “farmers” by removing them from Romani families, placing them with non-Romani ones and sending them to schools to have their difference educated out of them. These strategies were echoed in the countries of central and eastern Europe after World War II as governments used schools to enforce policies of assimilation — Roma were forcibly settled, expected to conform closely to rigid standards of sameness, and display a demonstrative loyalty to the ethnic majority. Romani children were to learn such norms by having their Romaniness removed in school, and their culture itself was viewed as a package made up of social disadvantage and deviance which a tide of systematic schooling would cleanse.

Special schools: a collective dustbin

Following the collapse of communism, the countries of central and eastern Europe have been characterised by both economic crisis and a dramatic rise in overt racism. The impact of both has important implications for the human rights situation of Roma in schools. First of all, Roma suffer abuse in the normal school system: teachers physically, verbally or emotionally harm Roma. Other pupils or the parents of other pupils also abuse Roma and school authorities such as teachers or school directors fail to act appropriately to curb, prevent and punish them. Secondly, most of the countries of central and eastern Europe feature school systems which are practically segregated; Roma are often found in different classes or different schools. This arrangement bears no relation to the minority education called for by some Romani activists. Existing separate classes and schools are invariably worse in quality than classes where the student body is predominantly non-Romani. This effective segregation is more or less codified in some countries in the institution of so-called “special schools”. Special schools are schools for the mentally disabled. In such countries as the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia, special schools are used as a collective dustbin for children who are deemed not fit for real schooling. Roma are so fabulously over-represented in such schools that many suspect that, as before, the Romani ethnicity is viewed by schooling authorities as synonymous with social and educational disability. Finally, in some areas racist practises are so entrenched that Roma simply do not attend school at all, or, if once enrolled, are forced back out.

ABUSE IN SCHOOLS

ERRC interviews

All Roma who have attended a school know the range of cruelties that the non-Roma inflict on Romani children. In the first place, they face abuse from teachers. Katalin Kovács was 14 years old when the ERRC interviewed her in November 1997. At that time, she lived with her father and her brother in a Romani settlement in the Hungarian town of Dömsöd, approximately five kilometres south of Budapest. Katalin completed four years of elementary school but stopped attending school regularly because of the way she was treated there. She told the ERRC:

There were only three Roma in the class of over twenty kids. The teachers were mean to Roma. They treated Hungarians differently. Hungarians were always better. They talked to them nicer. My form-teacher used to say things to me like, 'since you've been here my blood-pressure has risen. I'm sure it's at least two hundred.'

„Hungarians were always better.”

Ms Annamarie Kovács, another primary school student from Dömsöd, related similar problems to the ERRC when the ERRC interviewed her in November 1997:

One day we laughed at the maths teacher in class. The maths teacher told Ms Ciboja, or form-teacher. She told us, 'You stinking little Gypsy whores, you're not in Tókert [the name of a large Romani settlement in Dömsöd]!' Everyone heard it — she said it in front of our whole class. Ms Ciboja said all sorts of other bad things about us and she slapped Anita, the other Romani girl in our class, on the face. Then she told us to go home. I didn't go to school for about a month after that— why should I? I won't go someplace where they humiliate me like that. The headteacher didn't know about the incident though, and the school wanted us to pay a fine because I didn't go. So my mother went to school and explained why I hadn't gone. Still, nothing happened to that teacher. She wasn't reprimanded and she never apologized. I started to go to school again, but I didn't go to Ms Ciboja's classes and they failed me because of absences.

„I won't go someplace where they humiliate me like that.”

One Romani boy who had been enrolled in both German and Macedonian schools told the ERRC in an interview conducted in August 1997 that he preferred German schools because, "in Macedonian schools, teachers hit me." Three former teachers interviewed by the ERRC in the Czech Republic recalled meeting with extensive and explicit racism from teachers in the staffroom. However, in some countries, a state of denial exists with respect to the problem of racist abuse by teachers in schools; and new Czech minister of Justice Otakar Motejl, then President of the Supreme Court, told ERRC, in an interview conducted in April 1997, that Czech teachers were too well-educated to be racist.

Extensive and explicit racism from teachers in the staff room.

Abuse in schools comes not only from teachers. Non-Romani children also laugh at and humiliate Romani children in school and teachers do not intervene effectively. Education for tolerance is close to non-existent in Central and Eastern Europe. For example, one case reported to the ERRC involved an instance of abuse in a school in northern Czech Republic in 1997. The parents of non-Romani children requested that their children not be seated next to the only Rom in the class. The teacher complied with the request and seated the Romani boy by himself. It was only when his mother, a social worker, went to the school and suggested that the teacher should not support racism in this way, that her son was returned to his seat. The Ministry of Education's officer for nationalities Education in the Czech Republic Marie Rauchová came close to acknowledging this problem when she told the ERRC, "teachers in these situations are often unable to deal with racist tensions."

Teachers are unable to deal with racist tensions.

Abuse in the normal school system leads to segregation. This process has been documented as far back as 1926, with the opening of the first of two "Gypsy schools" established before World War II in Czechoslovakia, the Uzhorod schools, 13 and 14 in the Transcarpathian region of what is today Ukraine. The 1938 doctoral thesis of Marie Nováková about the schools tells of one of the reasons for their establishment: "... the families of the other children didn't want their children to sit on the same bench as dirty and flea-ridden Gypsies."

SEGREGATING ROMA: SPECIAL SCHOOLS

Schools aim to differentiate between weaker students and would-be achievers.

The educational systems of Central and Eastern Europe are demanding, placing an emphasis on the memorisation of large quantities of facts and the regurgitation of information provided by the teacher, a figure who is often authoritarian. At the core of schooling philosophy is streaming: rather than aim at the best education for all, schools aim quickly to differentiate between weaker students and would-be achievers. A small number are prepared for university education and by the time children reach the end of the eighth class, most of them have their future clearly delineated. Children who have successes in this system have practically chosen a career by the age of twelve. Romani children – for reasons ranging from early age language differences to the cultural specificity of both curricula and pedagogical methods to the abuses described above – do not as a rule perform well early on in their schooling lives. They are, in the overwhelming majority of cases, streamed into classes offering substandard education. In the worst (and, in countries such as the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia, most common case), Romani children are transferred early in their educational lives to the so-called “special schools” for the mentally handicapped.

Placement of Romani children into special schools is made because of racial discrimination.

Romani children in the Czech Republic are fifteen times more likely to be found in schools for the mentally disabled than non-Roma. Pedagogues interviewed by the ERRC in the Czech Republic and Hungary agree that in most cases, placement of Romani children is made not on the basis of real mental disability, but rather because of racial discrimination. One special school teacher in the Czech Republic told the ERRC: “I have five or six Roma in my class. At least three or four could perfectly well be in elementary school.”

In Hungary, there are financial incentives for parents with children in special schools. In the current economic climate in Hungary, in which 60-80% of Roma are unemployed, such payments for special schooling are a mechanism for the perpetuation of separate, substandard schooling for Roma. Additionally, once in such schools, children are rarely transferred back: in the Czech Republic there exists a mechanism called “the diagnostic stay”, through which children are sent from normal schools to special schools for periods of up to six months to determine whether they have learning disabilities or not. In reality, children are rarely, if ever, transferred back to normal schools following the completion of this “diagnostic stay”.

The diagnostic stay is particularly insidious in that it is designed for so-called “borderline cases”, children whom educational psychologists — the persons charged with recommending children for special schools — are unsure about. In reality, all Romani children are borderline, since psychologically perfectly normal Romani students are automatically seen as candidates for failure in the Czech educational system. For Roma, there is a continuum between being recommended for testing, being deemed “borderline” and therefore in need of a diagnostic stay in a special school, and completing one’s education in such a school. The situation is similar in Hungary, where experts state that Roma are simply much more likely to be recommended by teachers for evaluation by psychologists, than non-Roma.

One educational psychologist at a special school in the city of Novi Sad in northern Yugoslavia explained to the ERRC why, in his opinion, Roma were over-represented among students considered to be mildly mentally handicapped at the school at which he worked, but not among those students considered severely mentally handicapped:

If both parents have not completed primary school or have been to special school themselves, are unemployed or don't speak Serbian properly, differences will appear when such children come to school.

Such children were, according to this educational psychologist, "pseudo-retarded": although not developmentally handicapped, the educational system regarded them such. In the Czech Republic and Slovakia, children who finish primary school in special schools are blocked from continuing their education in anything other than remedial technical schools offering vocational training for future low skilled labour: the so-called "schools for mops and brooms". In Hungary, legislation stopping children who had graduated from special schools from continuing in anything other than a parallel system of substandard secondary schools was changed in 1992. In practice, however, children graduating from special schools in Hungary still do not cross the line from special primary education into normal secondary education. In early 1996, the state Romani television programme *Patrin* located and attempted to make a documentary programme on a Romani man who had graduated from primary education in a special school, returned to complete normal secondary school, and gone on to enroll in university as a student of philosophy. The film was scrapped, however, when it emerged that the man concerned was severely autistic and had a talent for retaining a large number of facts for a short period of time; although really mentally challenged, he was, by the standards of the Hungarian educational system, a perfect student. Most children leaving special schools do not continue on to secondary education at all.

„Pseudo-retarded” children

Even where segregation does not involve the labelling of the greater part of the ethnic group as "mentally disabled", Roma are often relegated to separate, substandard schools. For example, authorities in several towns in southern Poland took advantage of the existence of a private schooling project aimed at reducing illiteracy among Roma and transferred all local Romani children into the separate classes, illiterate or not. *De facto* segregation has existed in Hungary since 1960s. In 1961, the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party, who at that time had monopoly on political life, created the category of "socially deprived" (*hátrányos helyzetű*). From 1962, so-called "c-classes" were established for "socially deprived" children, with the "c" meaning lowest level on a scale of a-c. In 1971, sociologists István Kemény and Gábor Havas reported that these classes were predominantly Gypsy. In 1962 there were 70 such classes, and in 1971 there were 181. According to a report by sociologist Péter Radó, in 1997 there were separate classes made up predominantly of Roma in 132 of 840 normal schools surveyed. There were a total of 3,809 "normal" schools in Hungary at the time of the survey. In 1997, a group of Romani students sued the principal of the Ferenc Pethe primary school in the town of Tiszavasvári in north-eastern Hungary because the school had organised both separate dining facilities and a separate graduation ceremony for Romani students at the school (see Roma Rights, Spring 1998). Court proceedings are still open in the case.

Segregation

ONE STEP BEYOND

Romania, with its Romani population of over two million and its extreme levels – even by regional standards – of anti-Romani sentiment, offers a glimpse of a different kind of education entirely. Although Roma in Romania suffer from a variety of segregative practises when they enter the school, system, in many instances, Roma may not even enter the education system because they are blocked by laws which demand that persons show residence permits in order to enrol in schools.

In the first years following the collapse of the Ceausescu regime in 1989, Romania was the site of approximately thirty anti-Romani pogroms featuring killings and the expulsion

The situation in Romania

Roma are blocked by laws from entering the educational system.

of whole communities from villages. These people, along with Roma who have left villages in search of work opportunities in cities, now lead extremely marginal existences on the outskirts of Romania's larger towns and cities, most notably Bucharest. Unable to procure residence permits for what is often no more than cardboard box housing, Roma are unable to enroll their children in schools. The bureaucratic requirements of the school system therefore effectively ensure that the children of persons on the fringes of society are condemned to remain there.

Many of Romania's Roma deny their ethnic origins.

Racism is still the main factor in the non-schooling of Roma in Romania. Non-governmental organisations in that country, working to assist in creating conditions whereby such children could enrol in schools, report that they have met with hostility from nearly all authorities concerned. As a result, some Romani communities in Romania receive no schooling whatsoever. Understandably, many of Romania's educated Roma vigorously deny their ethnic origins; at present, such denial seems, sadly, to be the best strategy for Roma determined to pass successfully through the Romanian education system.

Private students in Hungary – a way to get rid of Romani students.

Even where conditions are not as extreme as in Romania, there is often pressure on Romani children to leave school. Hungary features an arrangement whereby children may become "private students" and thereby be exempt from the "normal" school program if, in the wording of the 1993 Hungarian Education Act, "it is justified by the student's abilities, disabilities or his or her special situation." This euphemistic program is, more often than not, used by teachers to get rid of Romani students. One female special school teacher in Hungary told the ERRC:

I had a Romani boy in my class who was very disruptive. First we tried transferring him to another class in which the teacher was a male and stricter than I am. But the student was still very disruptive, in a class, where there had already been quite a number of students with behavioural problems. So in the end the child became a private student. Once every month he comes to school. We decided on a day when he sits down with his teachers, and the teachers explain to him what to study, and he takes exams. I know the results of his last exams and all I can say is that becoming a private student has not meant any good results for the student concerned.

„Privatised” Romani students

According to a study by János Girán and Lajos Kardos of 85 schools in Hungary in which the fraction of Romani students was 10% or more, there were "private students" affiliated with, but not attending, more than 50% of the schools. Romani students on those schools had been "privatised".

Finally, Roma throughout Eastern and southern Europe are also denied education due to the high costs of schooling supplies and an unwillingness among Roma to send their children to school in the shabby clothes of poverty. In Macedonia, for example, where unemployment was recently registered at over 37%, nearly all Roma with whom the ERRC met were unemployed and many were living solely on social welfare payments of 4,100 denars (approximately 140 German marks) per month for a family of four, paid irregularly. School books cost from 1,619 denars (approximately 55 German marks) for pupils in the first class, to 3,600 denars (approximately 120 German marks) for pupils in the eighth class. A family of four living on social welfare payments in Macedonia would therefore have to pay one month's salary simply for school books.

Poverty blocks schooling.

Poverty affects other aspects of the education of Roma as well: Roma in the Veliki Rit settlement in Novi Sad, Yugoslavia, told the ERRC that since the majority of houses in the settlement lack electricity, their children encounter significant difficulties in doing their homework in the evening.

MINORITY RIGHTS: MINORITY SCHOOLING FOR ROMA

The rights of minorities in the states of Europe have become an issue of great concern in the years following the end of communism, especially in the light of the war in the former Yugoslavia and tensions emerging between peoples and states in the wake of 1989. The issue of minority education resides at the centre of this debate. International concern over violence between ethnic Hungarians and Romanians in the region of Transylvania in Romania (1990) spurred political demands that the Hungarian university in the city of Cluj be reopened. Concerns over the situation of ethnic Greeks in southern Albania has similarly played out in the provision of arrangements for minority schooling at the level of secondary schools for Greeks in Albania. The legal basis for such arrangements was codified at European level when the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities entered into effect on February 1, 1998.

The situation in European states

Minority schooling, especially at the level of primary and secondary education, is of two kinds. In its minimal form, language and culture classes are provided so that members of the minority in question may learn their native language, history and customs. In its maximal form, members of the minority are taught “international” subjects such as maths and biology in the native language.

The minimal and maximal forms of minority schooling.

Few Romani activists have called, as yet, for minority schooling in its maximal form, although the political programmes of parties such as the Romska Inteligencia of Slovakia, which call for a new Romani consciousness, suggest that soon Romani demands in the sphere of education will increase. At present, states have undertaken minimal programs for Romani language. From 1991, Hungarian universities have offered credit courses in Romani. Four primary schools in Skopje, Macedonia offer Romani language lessons to students. Such programmes need to be well funded and spread beyond the urban centres in which they are presently located.

Roma-specific schooling programmes at present sometimes involve provisions for Romani teaching assistants in the classroom. Such programmes exist, at present, in Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Slovakia and Ukraine. They are often run and/or sponsored by non-governmental organisations, and systemisation of successful projects in this field is often called for by Roma activists.

Also, there are a number of private initiatives or non-governmental schools for Roma, such as the Gandhi school in Pécs, Hungary. The Gandhi school is a boarding high school for “Romani elites” with a distinctive philosophy involving removing Roma from localities and training them for Romani leadership. Even here, in a seemingly maximal minority school, training is primarily in Hungarian. A similar school set up and financed entirely by Roma opened its doors on September 1 this year for the central Bohemian town of Kolín in the Czech Republic. Minority schooling models developed elsewhere, such as bilingual schools educating tolerance for both members of the minority and of the majority are rarely discussed and seem not to be part of the current mainstream discourse on Roma education in central and eastern Europe. Non-Roma with whom the ERRC has spoken see the idea of schools where Romani culture and language would receive equal weight as the national culture as anathema, and do not want to consider sending their children to such — at present, purely hypothetical — school.

Gandhi
Secondary
School,
Hungary

ALIENATION AND EFFECTIVE CHANGE

Roma are still at ground zero in the struggle to achieve equal access to quality education.

Centuries of discrimination render Roma alienated from educational systems in ways similar to their alienation from other areas of society. Discrimination in education reproduces the effects of discrimination across generations. Governments and authorities have not shown a willingness to act firmly to punish abuse in school or to desegregate schools. Most countries of the region remain without effective anti-discrimination legislation, or the will to tackle pervasive discriminatory practises. And end to or at least amelioration of the effects of the streaming system is similarly not envisioned anywhere. Thus, for the time being, Roma are still at ground zero in the struggle to achieve equal access to quality education.

The Tasks Concerning Gypsy Children's Socialisation at School

By **András T. Hegedűs**

Source: **Social Cohesion, Szolnok, 1998**

The aim of this study is to demonstrate one aspect of what we expect from schools and teachers as far as the co-operation with Gypsy pupils and their parents is concerned. It is also necessary to present an outline of the establishment of an inter-cultural school, which is in conformity with the multicultural attitude of the societies within the EU. I would also like to reflect on how the co-operation between the primary education system and Gypsy people can be improved and on how little the teachers trained in colleges/universities and given further training at post graduate courses know about Gypsies, if they know anything at all. I am convinced that the issues to be mentioned below should necessarily be incorporated in the curriculum of teacher training and of the training programmes organised for practising teachers.

GYPSIES IN EUROPE AND IN HUNGARY

As for the number and proportion of the Gypsy populations in each country, their identity, names, languages, history and aims, the situation is rather complex. The situation in Hungary is somewhat less complicated since the extremely heterogeneous Gypsy population of half a million people have three acknowledged languages, they are not evenly spread within the country and as far as maintaining their own identity is concerned, they also seem rather mixed. Prevalently, though, regarding their position in the labour market, within the educational system and in health care, etc. they are very disadvantaged with few exceptions. Their situation is only relatively disadvantageous, and any Hungarian Gypsy family would happily live the life of a Dutch or a Swedish Gypsy family. At the same time, Gypsies looking for work and a home immigrate to Hungary from the neighbouring countries, both legally and illegally, which shows that their situation here can only be regarded as disadvantageous if it is compared with the situation of the majority of the Hungarian society.

„Their situation here can only be regarded as disadvantageous

The Gypsy population in Hungary is approximately 500.000 people; i.e. they constitute roughly 5% of the population of the country. The mother tongue of three-quarters of them is Hungarian (Romungro people), of one-fifth is Romani (Oláh people), while a small percentage speak Beash (an archaic Romanian dialect, Beash people). Irrespective of their different mother tongues, each group consists of both people who can be considered rich even by European standards and people who can be considered poor by "African" standards but the majority live at the subsistence level of the Hungarian society.

The majority live at the subsistence level of the Hungarian society.

They had all settled down by the 1950s and they have permanent residence. They found employment in the industrial and agricultural sectors gradually and at a fast pace. Since the 1960s Gypsy children have generally attended schools. The political and economic changes in the 1990s halted this process.

Today more than half of Gypsy children live in families with none of the adults being employed, as more than two-thirds of adult Gypsies have become unemployed (Somlai, 1998). Gypsy children are disadvantaged concerning almost every material aspect of life, from housing to eating.

More than two thirds of adult Gypsies have become unemployed.

It is a well-known fact that they achieve badly at school (Kemény, 1996). 4-6% of the 14-year-old population have not completed their primary education, however, the

majority of these teenagers are Gypsies. An estimated 3.5% start secondary education while 58% of the 14-18 year-old Hungarian population attend a secondary school.

Gypsy families solely expect the school to instruct school subjects.

The subjects taught and the educational methods applied at schools are difficult to match with the values and attitudes of Gypsy families (Forray, 1997). Gypsy families often expect the school to provide children with less than other families do: they solely expect the school to instruct school subjects while they consider it to be the task of the family to provide thorough education for the children. Even the children of the better-off Gypsy families fail to do their schoolwork on a regular basis. They do not do their homework, they are not given any help when studying at home, and they do not have separate rooms, desks or shelves where they could work or keep their school kits. They leave for school without having breakfast or taking packed snacks and they often suffer from hunger. They often arrive late and miss classes since it is their task to look after their younger brothers and sisters.

Gypsy children are sometimes physically separated from the rest of the class.

Naturally, schools are neither able nor suited to compensate for Gypsy people's disadvantages and teachers themselves cannot be of too much help, either. Moreover, primary schools have still been using various forms of segregation in the 1990s. Gypsy pupils are sometimes physically separated from the rest of the class for reasons of public hygiene (see the Minority Ombudsman's 1988 report).

The most typical practice of segregation is to direct Gypsy children to attend remedial schools maintained for mentally slightly handicapped pupils. This means separating the children of the most disadvantaged, e.g. Gypsy families from their peers and removing them from the "normal" system of public education. The effects of the coaching programmes offered can easily turn into their opposites in such circumstances.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF GYPSIES AND THE SCHOOL SYSTEM IN HUNGARY

Approval and understanding of being culturally different.

Most of our schools need to face Gypsy people's problems on a daily basis. The management of a school may have great influence on creating an atmosphere that emphasises co-operation. First of all, it needs to be understood that in spite of their heterogeneity, socially, Gypsies have a common situation and their culture has a lot of intrinsic values. The managements of schools need to work out procedures that are based on the approval and understanding of being culturally "different" as well as on the assessment of school performance.

The main issue is not how to defeat illiteracy but how to increase the level of their schooling.

As far as the schooling of Gypsy children is concerned, very significant steps have been made over the past few decades. That is the reason why the topical issue today is not any more how to defeat illiteracy (though the problem still exists) but how a faster increase of the level of their schooling can be brought about, how to enhance the school success of these children and adolescents and how to curb the negative trends of the 1990s.

The development itself is not being questioned despite the painful fact that the relative backwardness of the young Gypsy generation as compared with the majority is showing an increasing tendency. The number and the proportion of Gypsy children is lower and lower in each and every school year - especially so in the higher grades of primary schools and in secondary schools - while non-Gypsy pupils of the same age accomplish their primary education almost without exceptions and go on studying in secondary schools.

It is an important task of our schools to accelerate Gypsy pupils' advancement. To achieve this aim, it is necessary to accumulate a large amount of knowledge and develop different skills to improve Gypsy children's school results and create a peaceful coexistence of the different ethnic groups at the same time. The issue is especially topical now that families have the right to choose between schools, which more and more frequently results in having schools where either the very large majority of the

pupils or all of them belong to the Gypsy ethnic group. It largely depends on the head teachers of these schools whether it is possible to establish a successful co-operation between the school and the local Gypsies (Hegedűs, 1993a.).

As Liegeois-George (1998) emphasises, Gypsy families are more and more learning to accept the importance and the rules of school education. In order to establish real co-operation instead of the still very frequent relationships built on subordination and dependence it is necessary to adopt an attitude and patterns of behaviour that are based on acceptance on behalf of the school and the surrounding society.

Acceptance on behalf of the school and society.

THE BACKGROUND OF FAILURES AT SCHOOL

Most Gypsy pupils suffer such frustrations at the very beginning of their studies that they soon fall behind and drop out from school. The failure is expressed in their unsatisfactory school results but Gypsy children's sensitivity, vulnerability and their being unable to tolerate the defeats are also important factors.

Evidently, there are two groups of factors reinforcing each other behind the school failures (Forray-Hegedűs, 1998).

Firstly, the defects are caused by the lack of certain skills and knowledge, which they have failed to acquire during their school career. Their knowledge of history, mathematics, chemistry or spelling may be inadequate. These insufficiencies may be detected and made up for by intensive coaching. Accustoming children to studying, helping them master the necessary learning skills and strengthening their motivation, which inevitably decreases (partly) due to their failures, are more difficult tasks. From this point of view, Gypsy children are similar to other multiply disadvantaged children: they should learn how to learn.

The lack of skills: they should learn how to learn.

The second group of background factors is of psychological and socio-psychological nature. Attending a secondary school still counts as a rare phenomenon among Gypsies (except for a few small elite groups of professionals). Secondary school students get far away from their communities, not only in a geographical sense, but also socially. It is not surprising that Gypsy communities try to protect themselves against losing their people, especially the most talented ones. But the young people who opt to study in secondary schools also have to face the risk of losing their community by exposing themselves to the dangers of assimilation (sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously).

Psychological and socio-psychological factors.

The two groups of factors are interconnected: the compulsion to assimilate (or its danger) often decreases children's motivation to study. They have to face the question whether it is worth making such efforts for studying and paying a high price for it by risking losing their families or the ethnic community. Within the ethnic group there is little chance of choice, advancement and integration. They also have to consider what might happen if eventually they fail to assimilate and thus become losers in every respect. In other words it means that many Gypsy communities do not appreciate the knowledge taught in schools (and studying) and they do not consider it to be useful and useable within the society (Hegedűs, 1993b). The hidden or open anti-Gypsy attitude of certain school increases the sense of danger and seclusion and it creates a vicious circle. Frustration increases and the risk of their personalities getting seriously damaged is multiplied.

The background of the failure of Gypsy children at school

- lack of the necessary factual knowledge
- some learning skills have not been acquired
- fear of losing touch with their ethnic group
- fear of failure to assimilate
- they consider the knowledge learnt at school to be unimportant and useless
- anti-Gypsy atmosphere at school and around their homes

Consequence: a low level of motivation to study.

IT IS NECESSARY TO PROVIDE A SYSTEM OF TWO-WAY SUPPORT!

Any attempt to support Gypsy children's studies solely by helping them make up for the lack of the necessary knowledge, skills and competence will fail. Neither is it sufficient for them to participate in training programmes and camps where they are assisted in learning about and understanding their original culture to achieve that aim. It can only have an indirect effect on their school performance.

Recognition of
Gypsy
children's
ethnic culture

Only the support of their school studies and the recognition of their ethnic culture together can provide solid support for their studies.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TEACHERS' VIEWS AND BEHAVIOUR

Gypsy culture needs much more publicity, their values should be made better known. By this, their non-Gypsy companions, i.e. the society would be able to accept them to a much larger extent. The points where the two cultures meet should be detected.

Gypsy culture
needs much
more
publicity.

"Gypsy people have no culture that we should respect. Actually, they are the ones who had better adapt and change."

Both opinions represent existing views, they are at opposite poles. Mentally, teachers themselves find it hard to separate Gypsy children from the Gypsy ethnic group. Teachers' views weigh more than those of many other professionals. Teachers – especially in a village-like environment – are still regarded as authorities, whose views are formative concerning the local public opinion.

Teachers' prejudices and behaviour cannot be regarded as private issues, as they are public figures: their views are formative concerning the social climate of the school and the local community.

Teachers'
prejudices
cannot be
regarded as
private issues.

That is why it is dangerous for a society if teachers are labelled as counter-selected and badly trained professionals since their damaged self-esteem undermines their morale and hinders their taking responsibility.

TEACHERS' OPINIONS ON GYPSIES

Many teachers only see differences among Gypsies as far as their lifestyle, work ethics and consequent living standards are concerned. So work ethics and living standard have such a unique role in the human quality that they do not even define layers within the Gypsy community but very simply divide it into two parts. From one point of view, there exist the orderly ones (who can "hardly be called Gypsies") and then those who "can only blame themselves" for their own misery. This view is unacceptable.

Many teachers regard the Gypsy community as a homogenous group in every respect. This attitude signals indifference and rejection. There are also teachers who are aware of and respect the many-sided culture that exists within the Gypsy community and consider it right to protect the local and regional culture.

Many teachers regard Gypsy community as a homogenous group.

Education in a Gypsy language and the education of the Gypsy culture cannot be conducted against the will of teachers. Many teachers do not find these innovations impossible at all. Still, rejection and hostile opinions are also expressed.

Some teachers who reject the idea of establishing "Gypsy classes" argue that "teachers would break down if they had to teach Gypsy-only classes"(!). Others suspect that Gypsy people and their political leaders would not allow it to happen, however favourable it otherwise would be. Those supporting segregation often argue that it would bring about the opportunity to organise special coaching programmes and a more intensive education for Gypsy children. Unfortunately, the educational policy concerning national and ethnic minorities comprises the potential danger of making it possible to establish segregated Gypsy classes because it is not forbidden to establish German, Slovakian or Romanian classes either. As in the case of Gypsy children who need special coaching – in contrast with other minorities in Hungary – it is necessary to set the objective of enhancing their social integration based on equality, it is not only discriminative but also professionally *per definitionem* unacceptable to separate Gypsy children from their peers in an organised form.

Teachers supporting segregation.

The teaching of the language (minority language) is a delicate issue. The representatives of the majority society still feel that providing such extra service for minorities would mean that Hungarians deprived themselves from something. Those rejecting the education of the Gypsy language mostly and rationally argue that it is not the mother tongue of the Gypsy people (i.e. of those living in their region or in Hungary) and they should also learn it as a foreign language. Some people consider the Gypsy language (as such) to be unnecessary. Others fear that Gypsies would regard such a measure as discriminative and would protest against it. Their arguments only slightly differ from those of the Gypsies who do not wish to make their intimate, family language public. The difference is in the power relationships, since obviously, the self-imposed isolation of a minority builds walls similarly to segregation. Still, the segregation initiated by the majority is more dangerous, as a power position is attached to it. It is necessary to protest against views of this type: "They have their own clubs, they should maintain their culture there if they wish. And if they want to speak their Gypsy language, let them speak it at home and teach it to their children at home. They live in Hungary and they are supposed to learn the school subjects in Hungarian here."

The Gypsy language

People's views being so varied is natural and may be accepted, but it is impossible to tolerate over-generalisation, simplification and especially rejection!

GYPSY PUPILS AT SCHOOL

Their personalities should never be hurt.

This is how a successful teacher characterised the way of behaviour to be followed: "Their personalities should never be hurt and one should not behave in an official way. I always approach them in a positive manner. A friendly and convincing tone of voice and sincerity – this is the only way to achieve results with them."

Teachers who think like this have discovered the right behaviour which educational psychologists recommend when establishing the teacher-pupil relationship, in an empirical way. Gypsy pupils, who are defenceless in school (and in the society) to an even larger extent crave the above-described way of behaviour more obviously than the average pupils.

A deeper understanding and sincere interest in their lives are necessary for dealing efficiently with Gypsy pupils. "We do not know Gypsies well enough. Teachers are afraid of the many Gypsies because they do not know them. Gypsies are also afraid, they are distrustful, and they fear everybody. But it is not so difficult to deal with them. The only thing is, you should not reject their invitation and kindness."

Cooperation: an optimal relationship

In some schools it is a problem that within certain Gypsy communities, whose members are more bound by traditions than the rest of the society, family means extended family and this extended family tends to react to all real and imaginary offences against their children with such sensitivity that seems unusual to members of the majority society. If they experience any such offence, they join forces and want to take remedy. The Gypsy community's right to define the role of the family and that of the child within the family ought not to be questioned. On the other hand, it is necessary for them and the school to jointly determine the locally valid forms of making contact and thus establish an optimal relationship.

In the interest of starting new projects, the following respects of co-operation have to be emphasised:

- openness, sincerity and respect towards different children of different attitudes in order to gain their support
- taking interest in and learning about the culture of the local Gypsies
- the necessity of teachers taking the initiative
- respecting that family often means extended family (as opposed to Hungarian nuclear families)
- respecting that Gypsy families are overly concerned about their children
- the necessity that schools and families should jointly determine the locally valid forms of making contact

SOURCES OF CONFLICT

Here we list a few of the major sources of conflicts without the intention of providing a complete inventory. By settling these conflicts, the relationship between the school and the Gypsy pupils will become less problematical and there will be a greater chance of success. The settlement of these conflicts involves making mutual concessions.

THE MAIN CONFLICTS BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES	
Schools' objectives and expectations (the image schools create of themselves)	The interpretation of these by the Gypsies (the image that the Gypsies create of the alien culture)

1. Aims concerning teaching and education	
The operation of schools is based on social consent as far as the objectives, values, standards etc. are concerned	the operation of schools is based on law and order the school forces, punishes and retaliates
Children (pupils) are prepared for their adult lives at school	children's "real lives" are happening here and now, outside the school
Schools offer better chances in life through the education they provide	schools teach pupils how to read, write and count
Schools determine what the knowledge necessary to acquire consists of	Children (families) have the right to decide what knowledge they want to attain
Schools evaluate and assess pupils by giving marks	schools evaluate and assess pupils by appraisal and scolding
2. School activity takes priority during school time	
the school takes priority during school time	the family and the community take priority at any time
Families are responsible for sending their children to school prepared for the lessons	schools are responsible for preparing children in a way that families determine
Schools take the task of educating children away from families	only families and the community are responsible for the education of children
3. "Hungarian" schools and Gypsy families	
at school and in the teacher-pupil relationship pupils are always regarded as "children"	children only remain real children until pre-puberty
Emotions are not essential in school work	schools can only be accepted if there is a close personal and emotional contact between teachers and children
Conflicts at school happen between teachers and pupils or pupils and pupils	Real conflicts at school happen between Gypsy and <i>gádzsó</i> (black and white) groups
Parents are not supposed to visit the school during teaching time	Parents (families and the community) are obliged to protect children at school, too
Schools take children away from their families	The only natural place for children is within the family and the community

The school has to accept that children are absent on occasion.

Being absent from school for two or three days – it may have different reasons, e.g. they need to be present at family occasions (weddings, funerals, christenings, etc.), their parents need to travel, there is a pig killing, a harvest, a fair, a religious village festival, etc. The school ought to accept that children are absent on occasion, considering their reasons.

Prudery in Gypsy communities

Getting undressed before a PE lesson or at the doctor's – in many Gypsy communities prudery is stronger than what we are used to, showing close resemblance to the traditional culture of the peasantry. Not only is it so among girls but also among boys. It is important to find the ways and rules that do not hurt anybody's sensitivity (e.g. by allowing them to participate in PE lessons wearing tracksuits).

Avoiding participation in out-of-curricular school activities – one of the reasons for this may be solicitude: families accept that children are safe within the walls of the school but fear that teachers cannot look after them outdoors. If teachers are unable to

convince parents that their children are safe, they ought to give them exemption from the participation in these activities.

Conflicts of ethnic character – especially in an atmosphere of mutual distrust, “normal” or “average” conflicts between teachers and pupils or pupils among themselves may seem to have an ethnic character. These conflicts have their own background and progress and the process of them taking on an ethnic character has to be halted in time.

Parents are often illiterate.

Report book notes – teachers should try to avoid sending parents written messages as, unfortunately, parents are often illiterate or functional illiterate. Sometimes even those who can cope with reading block capitals cannot read teachers' handwriting.

Appraisal and school result – it is important to seize every opportunity to praise a child's performance, behaviour, appearance and manners. However, it has to be taken into consideration that families may not be able to interpret the differences between the general appraisal and school marks correctly. It always has to be emphasised if the appraisal is not given for school results.

Too early marriages.

Too early marriages constitute a source of conflicts that is not easy to handle. However, we can observe a tendency of the age of getting married to increase among the Gypsies as well. There prevails an opinion among teachers that a too early marriage is the consequence of earlier sexual maturity or moral decay (cohabitation without legal marriage). They are not aware of the real reason, which is the following: the given community (culture) considers their young to be ready to start a family sooner. It is not a biological specification (either inherited or “racial”) but a socially determined characteristic. Schools cannot do anything against early marriages (or Gypsies' starting a family) in the short run. The increasing value of schooling may bring about some results in the long run.

The treatment of these conflicts will be more successful if members of the Gypsy ethnic group are employed in the school, either as teachers or as members of the technical staff, who could mediate between the school and the Gypsy community.

AGE- AND GENDER-RELATED ASPECTS OF THE BEHAVIOUR AT SCHOOL

Many people claim that the endeavour to accomplish primary education is primarily motivated by the necessity to obtain a school certificate: it is a prerequisite for vocational training, but its primary attraction is that it is necessary to obtain for getting a driving licence. It is probably an exaggeration but this motivating factor is worth taking notice of because it can be attractive, or at least openly recognisable and declarable especially among teenage boys. Girls find obtaining a certificate of a trade listed in the *Országos Képzési Jegyzék* (National Register of Training) attractive. The trades that they are mostly interested in concern family care, housework and household jobs and have recently been recognised as trades. These are of little value in the labour market, though.

The endeavour to accomplish primary education.

Very often, these are the only reasons for families to support attending courses where it is possible to obtain a trade certificate, as children often have duties within the family, which are considered more important than attending school. The one of primary importance is looking after the younger siblings, which is a typical female job.

It is generally observed that the younger children of families are less frequently absent from school, at least not a lot more often than their Hungarian classmates. It is a very

Absenteeism

important achievement because in many Gypsy communities, the members of the parents' generation had to be "gathered" and "directed" to school by force and by using threats and punishments daily.

Absenteeism and a loss of interest in school matters become conspicuous and start hindering the successful studying of pupils over the age of 12 or 13.

Gypsy children – as well as children of other minorities that live in traditional communities where the European type of schooling does not have an important role – start becoming estranged from school at this age.

The traditional differences are present in the education within the family: girls are educated for the family, boys are educated for the world. Girls are educated to become mothers and consequently they are restricted in their freedom of movement. They are not allowed to fully develop their personalities and abilities. Boys are educated freely to become independent and earn their living at quite an early age.

Girls are educated for the family, boys are educated for the world.

In the Gypsy communities that preserve traditions, the age- and gender-related differences are greater than usual.

THE EFFECTS OF FAMILY EDUCATION ON THE BEHAVIOUR AT SCHOOL

Despite all the heterogeneity of the Gypsy community, the style of education within the family and its results are similar:

- small children are kind, jolly and helpful
- there are great similarities in the latent or openly preserved traditions which declare children mature enough to take responsibility in family matters from the early teenage years on
- the equivalently delicate internal and external social situation of the ethnic group causes maturing children to have an enhanced sense of danger, which results in their readiness to protect themselves and as a consequence, in aggression

Many teachers think that the fact that Gypsy pupils are less successful at school than it could be expected is primarily due to their lacking sense of duty, which is something that characterises the Gypsy ethnic group in the eyes of many people. The deterministic factors of their living conditions and traditions are also added to this, which teachers may regard as extenuating circumstances.

The sense of duty

The sense of duty can be very well developed within this group of children but it refers to family, common family work, the upkeep of the family and not to the school.

Members of ethnic minorities very often regard their families as the only community that serves to inspire and strengthen their positive self-esteem. In such groups the fact that women are supposed to become mothers and housewives and take on the cohesive function has to be emphasised even more strongly, which attitude is paradoxically justified by the outside threats and the pressures of assimilation.

An important factor of a man's identity.

As a consequence of the conservation of the traditional family relations, boys become "macho". Many teachers describe the first signs of this as indecency, aggression and gallantry. In addition, society generally underestimates and disparages the members of minority groups (e.g. by providing little chance of advancement for them). Thus a very important factor of a man's identity becomes insecure, namely their sense of being the strong ones. In many cases men react to this by showing aggression against the physically weaker ones.

Emotional security

The connection between these issues and the warmth of the family atmosphere is that Gypsy children have a very strong sense of emotional security. The most important way to improve the co-operation between schools and Gypsy families and children should be to create a warm, highly emotional atmosphere at school, too. More opportunities should be offered for the emotional binding to take organised forms (e.g. by inviting the families to the school more frequently). Children have to be accepted the way they are. Teachers need to make sure that their sensitivity is not hurt, especially during the early teenage years. They need and should be offered special care and attention and a more evident expression of emotions than average pupils.

Children who are used to a warm family atmosphere want the school to offer them the same. Because of their ethnic sensitivity and vulnerability (which is often empirically based), teachers should always respect their feelings and work hard to increase their sense of security.

TEACHER TRAINING

Gypsy children's specific problems in national curriculum

Gypsy children's specific problems are not taken into consideration by The National Core Curriculum, the Unified Requirements of Teacher Training, the efforts to established a unified system of teacher training or the unconsidered and haphazard system of specialist examinations. Legally, there are also contradictions between the right to protect one's language and inherited culture and the duty to organise coaching programmes to help children fulfil school requirements. It is a mere illusion that teachers can be expected to take on a behaviour contrary to their stereotypes and prejudices or aim at the objectives of certain not yet outlined laws or campaigns.

Taking this into consideration, teacher training needs to be modified to a certain degree. Similarly to the practice of several countries, learning tolerant behaviour and the ability to communicate with members of other age groups belonging to other cultures ought to have an important part in the training. Teachers ought to take part in modern personality assessment training programmes of standards that comply with those of the turn of the millennium. These programmes should deal with fear, racism and xenophobia. It is impossible to start a real conversation without this change since our aim is that racism should be punished and "shy racism" should be regarded as something to be ashamed of and ignominious in the eyes of all civilised people.

A lot of foreign and a few Hungarian examples prove that it is not sufficient to "enlighten" teachers or teach them about the Gypsy/Romani culture as their feelings, anger, stereotypes and body language will hardly change. These courses are certainly useful as a couple of lucky foreign examples prove this fact. It happens unexpectedly often that a participant at a certain course understands it all at once, and knows how to deal with things from the next day on. Still, these cases are only exceptional.

It is not sufficient to „enlighten” teachers on Roma culture.

According to other foreign experiments, prejudice decreases in direct proportion to the increase of the frequency of contacts - but segregation and openly aggressive processes are stronger all over the world (Aronson 1975, Allport 1977).

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS

Here we make some general suggestions in the spirit of the above principles. (These suggestions are put forward on the basis of the recommendations of the European Council.) These suggestions are not in close connection with the descriptions above but it would be possible to satisfy certain needs presented above by carrying them out.

If, in any school, parents express their wish that the Gypsy language and culture should be taught, these have to be used in school education. (As a regional language and a regional culture, they have to be respected in the same way as any minority language and culture.) The lack of written materials or a trained teacher cannot be the obstacle to language teaching.

Teaching the Gypsy language and culture

At universities and colleges (irrespective of the students' major subjects, specialisation and the type of their studies) and at other training programmes, teacher trainees and teachers ought to be offered the chance to have courses and seminars dealing with the Gypsy/Romani culture as soon as it is possible. It is a necessary constituent of a European type of education and of professional intelligence but this kind of training cannot substitute for the participation at personality assessment training programmes or in guided fieldwork.

It is of primary importance that proper connections should be established between families and schools. Parents' co-operation has to be encouraged and they have to be assisted in recognising and accepting the importance of the knowledge that can be obtained at schools and the fact that this knowledge is considered to be of great use within the society.

Proper connections between families and schools

In schools with a large number of Gypsy pupils, there ought to be some adults belonging to the Gypsy ethnic group among the staff members, who can mediate between the school and the families.

When introducing projects offering any kind of vocational training, it has to be examined whether the given vocation can help Gypsies to maintain and extend the scope of the economic activity in a way that is acceptable for them.

The local Gypsy community ought to be involved in the outlining and implementation of every new educational programme.

Discussions, organised ways of passing on the experience that has been gathered, professional debates on the problems and a search for finding the solutions together.

SUMMARY

My study is based on the research, the experiments and the experience of teaching individuals and groups of two decades. I have seen several similar and different examples of empiricism and theories in different countries. Each of them knew about – and in one way or another also used – the publications written by my co-authors and myself. In 1998, we consider these conclusions and suggestions to be the most important points concerning the near future and the introduction of new projects. In many cases we have experienced that project work has its advantages as well as serious disadvantages. Besides starting to work with Gypsy children, specialists' study trips, in the course of which they have visited each other, have been of great importance. Both teachers and pupils from the successful schools that I know have been abroad several times and these trips have proved to be useful. The World Bank and PHARE projects – not referring to higher education now – provide a lot of experience to exploit. Taking all for's and against's into consideration, I think that when inviting applications for grants and when carrying on with them, not only the earlier

mentioned guidelines but also the opinions of the leading local specialists and the traditions and experience of the given country have to be considered carefully.

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School Success for Roma Children

Address by **József Choli Daróczi**
Cluj, Romania, December 11-13, 1996

József Choli Daróczi is a Professor of Romology at the Teacher's College in Zsámbék, Hungary, an educator in the Kalyi Jag Roma vocational school, as well as an accomplished poet and translator.

The "School Success for Roma Children" meeting in Cluj, Romania, December 11-13, 1996, was sponsored by the Education Program Support Unit (EPSU) of the Open Society Institute, Budapest and the Cluj Branch of the Soros Foundation, Romania. The meeting was held for Soros Foundation education program staff. This address was transcribed by Heather Iliff, OSI Budapest, December 17, 1996.

Most of the people involved with Roma children are not Roma themselves.

I am one of the real Olah, meaning a Roma person who speaks Romanes. In my experience, I have seen that most of the people who are involved with Roma children are not Roma themselves. They are *gadzo*, or non-Roma, or white. One of the conclusions after years of work in this field, is that studying issues alone does not lead to results.

In thinking about education for Roma children, we must first ask what do we mean by "values" in Europe? Are European moral values in fact the values of Roma? I am convinced that Roma values are different and there are historic and cultural reasons for this.

The European education system wants to create *gadzos out* of Roma children.

When we tell a Roma child how they are to act in school, we hold for them the same expectations that we have for *gadzo* children. And, there are Roma children who will obey. But, of real value to a Roma child? In my experience, the answer is no. Roma children cannot incorporate the values learned, and less and less so. Such a rift between the Roma and the rest of society has developed that Roma children are not part of the society. They cannot use society's values in their every day life. If a Roma child is educated in the standard way and goes back to live inside the Roma community, he/she would starve. The life skills a Roma child needs are very different from the life skills of a *gadzo* child. The curriculum of a normal school does not allow a Roma child to function in society or learn the skills they need. As long as there is a rift in society between will continue to be problems in education. The European education system wants to create *gadzos out* of Roma children. Yet, if a Roma succeeds in school, they are not accepted into the *gadzo* society anyway.

"If we want Roma children to succeed in school, we must build our pedagogy around the needs of Roma children and get out of the box of trying to get the Roma child to fit into the traditional European model."

Before 1948, Roma people did not send their children to school, but they knew how to make a living. Today, Roma parents send their children to school for three reasons: 1)

Reasons why roma parents send their children to school

fear of reprisal from the government, 2) to receive economic aid, or 3) for baby-sitting. There is no real interest in learning. What is more important to a Roma parent is to what extent the child takes part in and becomes an active member of the community, and to what extent the child takes on the role assigned to him/her.

A Roma child in a Roma family is treated as a small adult. The only difference is the person is smaller. The child has full rights as a member of society and can participate in all family and community discussions. In school, they feel they should have a say in what happens at school. They are not used to asking for permission. If a child wants to talk in class or leave the class, they do as they would do at home. Immediately, conflicts arise between the Roma child and the institution of school. The child does not want to go to school anymore, he thinks "the teacher hates me, she doesn't like Roma." Both the teacher and the child are right. The teacher is behaving according to the norms of their own society, but they don't know the culture of each others' societies. The teacher and child do not know how to recognize the conflict and realize they are on parallel tracks. The teacher realizes that the child is unmanageable and sends the child to special education classes. The fat is sealed. The teacher concludes that there will always be problems with Roma children. After a few failures, the teacher will give up (with a few exceptions). The child feels an aversion to going into this institution, because, he feels he is being picked on.

A Roma child has full rights within a Roma family.

In this situation, two types of personalities emerge: the inactive, passive child and the aggressive angry one. Both types represent serious problems for the entire society. The passive, inactive person is just as serious a problem as the deviant one. Societies that deal with Roma educational issues draw a long list of conclusions. But we must get out of our box as educators and really take a look at Roma communities and accept them for who they are. If we want Roma children to succeed in school, we must build our pedagogy around the needs of Roma children and get out of the box of trying to get the Roma child to fit into the traditional European model.

Two kinds of personalities as a result

"We must get to the point, through teacher training and other programs, where the two values [of Roma and non-Roma communities] can work together."

Roma children have no role models in positions in society. In 18th and 19th centuries, there was no written Roma tradition. In the 1970s in Hungary, a few artists and intellectuals began to write in Roma language, and Roma art began to emerge. Today there are 27 Roma writers in Hungary. Thirteen are members of the Hungarian Writers Association. Why were there only musicians up until now? Because the *gadzo* teacher is not a model for Roma children. Roma parents have always sent their children to work with musicians, and now they send them to work with writers. If more teachers were Roma, children would have role models.

If more teachers were Roma, children would have role models.

There is a continuous tension between the child and the *gadzo* community. This is evident from the way the child's parents are treated. People take on a demeaning manner toward Roma. For example, when a Roma person enters the municipal government building to inquire on an issue, in Hungary they are often addressed using the informal form. The Roma person is immediately placed into the role of the inferior, and they will continue to interact in that role as an inferior. When a Roma family comes to a parent-teacher meeting, the Roma mother is so concerned about the role she is playing, she says "yes, teacher" to everything, and there is no communication

No communication at parent-teacher meeting

happening. If the relationship were different -- and it is the role of the teacher to try to understand the Roma norms and culture -- miracles will happen.

“School must be a multi-cultural environment where Roma children feel safe to step in and be a part of the school community.”

On the question of moral values

In the declaration of human rights, everyone has the right to live. And, there is a commandment in the Bible, “Thou shalt not steal.” The Roma community cannot reconcile these two values. The Roma would starve if they try to live by that rule. For example, in a Hungarian village, of say, 650 inhabitants where 250 are Roma, there can be a situation of 100% unemployment among the Roma community. With odd jobs and begging, the other 400 inhabitants of the town cannot possibly support the 250 Roma living there. In order to live, in order to feed their families, Roma resort to stealing. The Roma have been completely marginalized and left out of the positive democratic changes that have happened in Eastern Europe. And, at the same time, many have been cut out of the benefits of the previous system. Where state-owned properties are being privatized, how many Roma people have been able to become owners? The majority of Roma have not managed to gain any property.

The Soros Foundations can give money, but it must be looked at as a complex integrated approach. Health, social issues, job training, all must be considered or also it’s just throwing money out the window. We must show Roma people that it is worth it to live like *gadzos*. Roma are accused of not taking a role in helping themselves, but how can they be active if they don’t understand how to? If we are going to work with the Roma community, we must do it as we would work with children: in basic steps that can be understood and built upon. In a peasant community in this region, the peasants are limited in the kinds of ways they can operate. But the Roma community is not even part of the peasant community. Peasants are part of the mainstream in that role, while the Roma lives outside, they are marginalized.

Educators must understand the values of the Roma community.

The first thing educators need to know and understand is what the Roma community is about. They must know and understand the values of the Roma community. They must understand the fact that the values of the Roma community and the *gadzo* community don’t work together. We must get to the point, through teacher training and other programs, where the two values can work together. We must take the positive values of the Roma community and work them into the pedagogy. School must be a multi-cultural environment where Roma children feel safe to step in and be a part of the school community.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. What motivated you to become an educator?

I was afraid you would ask that! I have a complicated past. I was born in Romania, and as a child my parents moved to Hungary. We settled in a Romanian town, and my parents did not speak Hungarian. The surrounding villages were Hungarian, and the Romanians had similar problems as a minority. We were a minority within a minority.

When I left my village and went to Budapest, I wondered what was wrong with me. Why didn't I have any friends. I kept looking to myself, and I kept trying to prove myself. I talked to my teacher at gymnasium whom I showed my poetry. He asked if I was going on to the teachers college. Like a normal Gypsy talking to a *gadzo*, I nodded "of course, teacher college! That's what I'm going to do!"

„Like a normal Gypsy talking to a *gadzo*, I nodded.”

I wanted to be Hungarian at teachers college, I realized it wasn't possible because of my skin colour. But there was no road back anymore.

My first job was in a school of 1500 students. I felt like a fly in the milk. Children would ask "is this a human being?" From a child it could be kind of sweet for a while. But the feeling when I talked to teachers -- they were astonished that I could put together a sentence in Hungarian; that it was possible that this Roma could be an educator. I thought I was stupid and I had to prove myself.

2. You spoke of the need for educators to understand Roma values. What are the values that you think are important for them to know?

Roma people, like all people, have values. We look at the values with different perspectives. For example, I will talk about love as a concept. In the Roma family, the relationships are more tightly knit than in European families. Roma parents are very close to their children and love them dearly. In most European cultures, we want children to grow up and be independent. In Roma families, there is not this break. Many generations will live together. The elders in a Roma community have every important role. Roma families do not discard their old people. I have never seen an old Roma person in an institution. The structure of family relationships is very different. There is a very strong community feeling. If they meet on the street, they have strong feeling that they belong together. Europeans tend to walk by each other.

Love

This also applies financially. If I have it, you have it too. They share the wealth. Maybe this is why there is no private property. They will not let each other starve. In the community where I grew up, children were not allowed to starve. Bread was first distributed to children. Children are brought up by the community, not just the parents. In terms of their trade, and other areas.

„There is no private property.”

One of the roles of the elders is storytelling to children. This is a positive value -- the literary and folk traditions. Positive values still exist in the Roma community and are fast disappearing in the European world.

Storytelling

Roma children have excellent gross motor skills -- to climb, make a fire, or cook. Although, they do not possess the fine motor skills like holding a pen. The practical aspects of life are learned early. These gifts could be built upon in the pedagogy.

3. How can these facts coexist with the fact that there are 50,000 Roma children in Romania who have been abandoned and institutionalized?

I was waiting for this question. In Hungary, we don't find old Roma people in institutions, but the institutions for children are full. Roma children are not deserted, they are taken away. The state (local governments) are given the function of child

Roma children are not deserted, they are taken away.

protectors. A *gadzo* woman from the state is given the responsibility of going into the family with a checklist of what a baby should have. How many square meters of space, how many shelves, a crib, etc. They conclude that the child is in danger and the child is taken away. Eighty percent of the children in the institutions are taken away from their parents.

But in Romania, I think some of the values you spoke of earlier have been lost.

When you disperse the communities, you lose the community values.

In Hungary, there was a ruling in the 1960s that had three goals: a) to get rid of Roma hovels, b) to get Roma children in school, and c) to get jobs for Roma. When they eliminated the hovels, they eliminated the communities. When you disperse the communities, you lose the community values. Now, Roma are moving to more individual lifestyles. Roma girls are giving birth at ages 12 or 13, and they are no longer surrounded by a supportive community. The values are in trouble and the young Roma are lost. Young girls often bring their babies to institutions out of necessity. This is result of societal interventions.

4. Are there still Roma who are nomadic?

Not in Hungary, and none that fit the colourful stereotypes. Up until the 1920s, a lot of Roma were considered wanderers. The definition was that they were not registered anywhere and had no citizenship. There are still reports of “travellers” in Northern England, but as far as I know, these travelling Roma do not exist in ‘Eastern Europe. Most have citizenship and homes. I may get in a car and go somewhere, but I come back. Wanderers used to go and keep going.

5. You spoke of children being treated as small adults. What does that mean on a practical level? Does it mean that, if the family would move to a new apartment, they would ask the child if he agrees?

The child models the behaviour of the parents -- the father does not go to work, the child does not go to school.

Exactly. But, it is not a matter of being asked, but the fact that in the discussion, the child gives opinions. Whether the child’s opinion prevails is another question. It is not expected that a Roma child goes to bed at a certain hour. It’s part of a discussion. This leads to a more serious issue -- it becomes a problem for the child to get up. There is no tradition of punctuality or time. When does he go to school? When he gets up. He may arrive at school during the third lesson. When the teacher asks, the child would say, “What? I got up, my mother went to the market, and I came here.” The child models the behaviour of the parents -- the father does not go to work, the child does not go to school.

Particularism, Universalism and Teaching Someone to be Different

By **András T. Hegedűs and Katalin Forrai**

Source: **Cigány gyermekek szocializációja [The Socialisation of Gypsy Children]**, Aula, Budapest, 1998

Intercultural education has been criticised since its first introduction. Generally speaking, the criticism does not centre on its basic principle but – quite naturally – on its implementation and results. There seem to have been no astounding results that could prove that intercultural education in the past one quarter of a century has significantly contributed to the enhancement of the school results or integration skills of the target groups, i.e. immigrants and other minorities of bad socio-cultural situation. In fact, the studies that we have examined do not describe any empirical results of this kind. (In defence of the Hungarian researchers we admit that the first such initiatives can only be traced back to a couple of years ago.) It is not only due to the fact that – as *Allemann-Ghionda* (1995) suggests – the national educational policies of the different countries do not urge the spreading of such initiatives. Obviously, it is also a fact that the data indicating results cannot unambiguously be interpreted as indicators of school progress. And also, research and the daily practice of schools have still not found suitable ways of co-operation. And above all, something that would be worth contemplating is what this attitude provides society with – as this is the most important use of schooling, after all.

Lack of empirical results in the studies.

Still, the questions about the results and the efficiency can also be formulated in such a way that what we ask is what we can choose between. These are theoretical questions of principles that indicate the advantages and disadvantages of the two extremities for the society. The debate over the intercultural vs. multicultural paradigm has recently been presented as a compulsion to choose between particularism and universalism. In this context the support of different cultures strengthens particularity while the declaration of the unity of culture represents universalism. The danger of the former one is that it may take the form of agnosticism or indifference originating in provincialism and ethical relativism. Universalism, on the other hand, may lead to ethnocentrism, nationalism, moral absolutism or religious fanaticism. A systematic survey can clearly demonstrate that a universalistic educational policy (favouring assimilation) may lead to ethnocentrism and fanaticism similarly to cultural pluralism and the educational policy emphasising the protecting of cultures (*Allemann-Ghionda*, 1995).

Universalism and particularism

THE ADVANTAGES AND DANGERS OF THE UNIVERSALISTIC APPROACH

EDUCATIONAL POLICY BASED ON ASSIMILATION

its advantages: non-existent	its dangers - the disadvantageous situation of minorities - it does not question the monolingual routine of education - the strengthening of interethnic conflicts
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REJECTING INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

its advantages - The rejection of the central role of “culture” and “ethnicity” - The neglect of the effects of the “community”, a greater attention to class and power structures - The emphasis on the principle of equal opportunities	its dangers - the strengthening of the monolingual and monocultural quality of schooling - educational policy favours assimilation (see above) - the declaring of the values of the receiving country to be universal values: ethnic absolutism
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ADVANTAGES AND DANGERS OF THE PARTICULARISTIC APPROACH

THE CONCEPT OF CULTURAL PLURALISM

its advantages - The strengthening of minorities - “majority” and “minority” appear as alternatives - the rejection of xenophobia and racism - the rejection of monocultural and monolingual education	its dangers - “hyper culturalisation”, trivial multiculturalism - the neglect of the socio-cultural factors - the neglect of equal opportunities - particularism becomes a dogmatic principle - the strengthening of interethnic conflicts - the strengthening of nationalism - the ignoring of potential conflicts between intercultural tolerance and “universal” principles - moral relativism
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TEACHING SOMEONE TO BE DIFFERENT

its advantages - the recognition of the role of cultural and socio-cultural factors - the interpretation of the cultural dimension as a factor of being different - being different is “normal”	its dangers non-existent
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We can see that the two extremities of the scale of advantages and dangers are non-existent: we do not know of any advantages of an educational policy based on assimilation or any disadvantages of teaching someone to be different. Obviously, it can be implied that the advantages of educational policy based on assimilation were proved in the last century (as most progress assessments show). Still, one has to bear

The complete failure of the educational policy based on assimilation.

in mind that the failure of the multitude of minorities of disadvantageous situations in the educational system – and consequently in society - can also be interpreted as the complete failure of the educational policy based on assimilation. Although the educational policy based on assimilation can be regarded as a success for the majority from the point of view of education as it is narrowly defined, it does not have any advantages from the point of view of social coexistence while its disadvantages are so much the more well-known. Focussing on the ethnic viewpoint is also a source of great potential danger, not least because it neglects the economic and political viewpoints and can lead to growing ethnic tension.

Pedagogically, it may be a forward step if ethnicity stops being defined as the only identity, isolated from the several possible identities of an individual or a group (by the school or educational system) and is not regarded as an issue of prior importance. Education should encourage the development of a sense of identity as complex as possible and support the assumption that being different is normal. This obviously cannot mean that cultural differences should be regarded as non-existent: they constitute the basis of one (in certain cases maybe the most important) possible identity of a person. This obviously cannot mean that ethnicity should be regarded as a kind of “deviance” similar to drug addiction, homosexuality and crime. It can only mean that we wish to raise awareness to make people accept the fact that all societies are complex and have intricate structures, and people, even though they accept their identities, may belong to different social dimensions at the same time.

Education should support the assumption that being different is normal.

The next step seems to be the following: the concept of intercultural education should be superseded by the pedagogy of teaching people how to be different. This means that cultural diversity should not be overemphasised (due to the dangers of hyper-culturalisation for example). Instead, the education concerning it should be integrated into the curriculum together with education concerning other forms of differences (such as linguistic, religious, social and sexual differences).

cultural diversity should not be over-emphasised

Lastly, we would like to refer back to the thoughts connected to “bicultural socialisation”. Intercultural education should not by any means lead to disputing anybody’s right to double or multiple identities. Even if it is much easier in one’s own case than in that of other people, we need to consider it to be a natural fact that people belong to several groups, cultures and sub-cultures at the same time.

For an Equalisation of Chances

By Vasile Burtea, Sociologist, Faculty of Social Work, Bucharest
Source: Rromathan, Studii despre Rromi, 1997

The author raises certain problems the Roma people from Romania are facing, emphasising the social variables that explain the peripheral situation. The application methods for programs dedicated to the Roma and the lack of a coherent strategy are criticised. He urges an urgent intervention for stopping the degradation process of the life circumstances of this population category, after which an integrated programme is recommended.

SOME ASPECTS THAT UNDERMINE THE CHANCES OF THE ROMA POPULATION AND ELEMENTS OF A PROGRAMME FOR THE PREVENTION OF CERTAIN ANTISOCIAL EFFECTS

The problems the Roma population faces are the same, irrespective of the numbers we use.

The 1992 Romanian national census determined a number of 409.723 people of ethnic Roma¹. In our estimation this number is a bit higher than the Roma population of Bucharest, thought to be of 350,000. Apart from the real situation we consider that the phenomena defining and characterising this population differs in volume, but not intensity. Namely quantitative differences cannot produce qualitatively significant distortions. The problems the Roma population faces are in fact the same, irrespective of the numbers we use. In this moment our intention is to point out this problem, to draw attention to it, and to suggest a solution method, noticing the dangers of ignoring it. Thus we will operate with the results of the census, but, as far as possible, using their theoretic (calculated) form in order to avoid a too big withdrawal from reality. For making operations easier, in calculating percents and data connected to the Roma, I have used the census results, rounding it to 410,000 those of Roma origin.

Our conviction is that generally the Romanian Roma problem has to be treated by taking into account two aspects: an internal and an external one.

Internal aspect

1. From an internal point of view, life of the Roma is structured based on some serious elements of demographic, social and labour- nature. These are determined by a specific way of life, based on a simple but original philosophy. In contrast to philosophies that have as central categories such verbs as "have" and "can", the Roma philosophy is essentially marked by the verb "to be", meaning "to exist" (Burtea, 1996). In other words this way of life and the above mentioned elements are structured upon a philosophy of poverty and marginalisation (Burtea, 1996).

Although a bit more independent of the political factor (at least at first sight), the solution of the above-mentioned serious elements requires first of all political will, decision and intervention. Thus:

a.) From a *demographic aspect* we mention that:

¹ Population and Dwelling Census (preliminary results) 07.01.1992., National Statistics Committee, Bucharest, June 1992, p.5.

- The average age for marriage is 17 years for girls and 18 years for boys. The national average (including the Roma population) for the same event is 21.3 years for girls and 22.8 years for boys.
- One fifth of the Roma women give birth to children before the age of 16, and more than 50% up to the age of 18.
- Birth-rate is 5,10 children/ women, while the national average is 1,9 children/ women
- The Roma population under 16 gives the proportion of 43,31%. On a national level the same factor reaches only the number of 28,2%, including also the Roma population.
- The average number of person in a family is of 6,6 members, that is more than double the national average, which also includes the Roma population (Elena Zamfir, Cătălin Zamfir 1993: 66-92)

Conclusion: The Roma population in Romania is a young population, with a high demographic potential. Fertility and birth-rate much beneath the major population's average maintain these features. Thus in a very close future, their request for jobs, dwellings and life- circumstances is going to be an even more vital topic than in the present, but much more difficult to satisfy.

- b.) From a *social aspect* the situation is the following (Elena Zamfir, Cătălin Zamfir 1993: 101):
- The Roma population mainly lives in traditional forms of different degrees. The enlarged family gives home for 2-3, or even 4 generations.
 - Inhabiting takes place in bad conditions: generally there are 3.03 persons/ room, while the general average for the whole population is 1.29 persons/ room (including the Roma). In 10.7% of the families 5 or more persons are sharing one room. There are cases of 12-14 or even 21 persons living in a room.
 - 58% of men and 89% of women have no profession (either traditional or modern).
 - 80% of people have no qualification and 60% of the employed work as unqualified labourers.
 - 32% of "head of the family"-men are unemployed. It's only 3% of the Roma population that gets unemployment benefit.
 - Schooling situation is extremely bad. The number of illiterates is of 27%. A research in county town Ploiești shows 22% of illiterates. Whatever the truth is, it is a fact, that an alarming proportion of the ethnic Roma is lacking the capacity of writing, reading, appealing to the local and national administrative organs and of learning and understanding norms of coexistence, morality and law. What's even more important, this population is lacking the possibility of learning a modern profession. Thus even the hope to participate with equal chances in the contest for obtaining a job that provides them a decent everyday life is cancelled. The percent of children under the age of 8, who never went to school or who abandoned it sooner or later, is of 40%. The lack of cloth, food and the possibility of obtaining requisites, and, a more important factor, the lack of perspectives after finishing school, being associated with the disinterest, indifference and despair of families, have lead in an accentuated way to the phenomena of absenteeism and abandonment of school.
 - There are no material conditions for acquisition and practising of traditional crafts by the rural or even urban craftsmen.

Social aspect

Conclusion: At first sight the problems of the Roma are not ethnically determined. Their origin is of social nature, infused, as a matter of fact, in an ethnic co-ordinate. Thus they require a serious intervention with socially originated means, determined and directed by a political will, decision and intervention.

Labour and
property
relations

- c.) *Labour and propriety relations* constitute the kernel of the social problems the Roma population is facing.
- While the working-aged population represents 51,02% of the whole, the employed population is only 22,56%. Thus we get an employment rate of only 44,20%.
 - Active population represents only 48,15% of the Roma population, while the unemployed represent 25,62% of it.
 - Out of the whole the Roma population in Romania it is only 12,53% that is employed, 0,43% have become owners, while 9,58% “find their way” on the pretext of private affairs (Elena Zamfir, Cătălin Zamfir 1993:115)

The picture presented in a)-c) sections determines the researchers and analysts to ring the bells because of the process of aggravation of problems the Roma deal with (Elena Zamfir, Cătălin Zamfir 1993:160). They prove that the phenomena is produced in proportion with the way these aspects are ignored or left out of any considerable official control or intervention. It is the value of the most complex demo-economical and social indicator, the relation of dependency, that answers more objectively the question whether this warning is justified or not. Its values indicate very high levels – no matter if it has been calculated in connection with the working-aged population or in connection with the employed population. Calculated in function of the employed population, its value reaches 278,09%. This value is standing for a social pressure with no precedents in the case of European populations.

These data become even more relevant if, in addition to unemployment, lack of pensions, the great dimension of families etc., we consider the defective, even discriminatory application of the Land Law.

The land-
deficiency of the
Roma population
narrows down
their possibilities
of existence.

The serious land-deficiency of the Roma population narrows very drastically down their possibilities of existence and maintenance of their numerous families. At a first analysis the situation seems to be at least weird. A population that has connected its existence even in the slavery-era to agriculture is deprived of land at the end of the 20th century. While before December '89 there was approximately 48% of the active the Roma labour-force who had worked in agriculture, after this date their existence has been in fact detached from this dominion, having considerable consequences, that is the serious effects overloading the existence circumstances.

The rural Roma population, who has never been landowner, didn't obtain allotments after 1989 either, because they have never been working within agricultural co-operatives. As they became unemployed, practically they have remained with no means of maintenance. Those who were landowners before the co-operativisation of agriculture, but worked in the industry, didn't claim in time for land, being afraid of not getting the unemployed. Their naivety has been misused, and when they became unemployed, they didn't get land, as they have not demanded it in time. The Roma, who worked in agriculture, but were employed in other co-operatives or state-owned farms, not in the local agricultural co-operatives, didn't get land because of the same reason. If to all this we add those who, because of ignorance or negligence, didn't claim for land although they had the right to do so; and the abuses against the ethnic Roma (as also against a not inconsiderable part of the majority population) when applying the Land Law, then we get a complex image.

The Roma being employed at the moment are neither satisfied with their situation. 74% of them obtain the economically minimal salary.

The immediate consequences of this situation are represented, on a social plan, by the delinquent way of living a part of the Roma population is driven to. Real misery and poverty heaps are created.

On a plan of interethnic relations we assist at a serious deterioration, through the transfer of economical-social difficulties within the ethnic domain. Thus the possibility of losing control and social explosions are created. Up to November 1995, the number of collective attacks against the Roma communities in Romania has raised to 37 (Rora Roirita 1992), and this has not been ended in 1995. As a matter of fact the intensity of these conflicts has decreased, but they have not been stopped yet. The effects roll on a scale that starts with personal attacks, deterioration of goods and ends with arsons of houses and murders.

Social
explosions

2. From an external point of view, the Roma problem is oscillating between illusion and hope. A considerable part of the members of the Roma ethnicity is convinced that international institutions from abroad already do or intend improving their situation. It is difficult to state how good or bad this conviction is. Important is the existence of this opinion. In their formation many factors had contributed. Just to mention a few:

External
aspects

- The avalanche of foreign "visitors" (journalists, anthropologists, O.N.G. members) who have been interested in the Roma communities in Romania after 22 December 1989.
- Aid promises to the Roma communities or their representatives, made by a great part of the "visitors".
- Materials about the Romanian the Roma situation published in the West are more or less documented. A small part of these have been brought to the knowledge of the Roma in several ways.
- The presence in Romania of different O.N.G. and international institution members, who have treated certain aspects of the Romanian Roma situation along with the Romanian government institution members.

For a part of the Roma, all these factors gave the impression that their problem has become a question of "image", which makes us observed and interpreted abroad besides the sensible problem of minority. The Roma consider that Romania, a nation with European aspirations, at an ending phase of the transition process, consolidation of democratic institutions and constitutional state, is going to be pushed (or determined) to deal in some degree with the improvement of their social status. By right. At a certain moment, there was an intention of seriously treating the Roma problem. These intentions have been received satisfactorily, on one hand by the Roma organisations, on the other hand by other Romanian minority organisations. Foreign observers, special reporters of European and O.N.G. institutions dealing with minority problems and human rights have sensed and appreciated this fact. Unfortunately beginning with the second half of 1991, the interest for this problem has constantly decreased, this process being accelerated by the failure of the Roma in the 1992 parliamentary elections. These demonstrated that the Roma do not represent the force that they had suggested, and that they have serious organising, homogenising, structure, tribe conscience, and etc. problems. Practically the Roma is a nation that debuts in ethnogenesis. Probably that is why the problem of the Roma has been practically abandoned after Romania became a fully entitled member of the European Council.

Roma is a
nation that
debuts in
ethnogenesis.

This change of attitude worried the Roma organisations² determining them to conclude that the initial attitude had only a propaganda aim.

We might say that the problems raised by the Hungarian minority have concentrated the official efforts. Though, we might say at the same time that the Hungarian minority by its global social situation and structures is able to solve its problems much more easily. Their power to solve their specific problems has considerably raised, since the

² Evaluation of the reception and application phase by the Romanian government in *Conclusions and Recommendations of the O.I.M. Research Committee about Labour Discrimination In Romania, 1991*, referring to the Roma population in the period 1991-1995, Bucharest, The Roma Associations, June 1995.

representatives of this minority take part in governing. Anyway, sooner or later, the problem of this minority will not need such attention.

The social and labour problems the Roma are facing, will constitute a long-lasting problem for the Romanian society.

We cannot state the same about the Roma problem. This will persist and negatively influence not only the Romanian society's general perception abroad, but also the improvement of this society, in case the attitude remains ignorant. We want to make comprehended the fact that the serious social and labour problems the Roma are facing, will constitute a long-lasting problem for the Romanian society, in case they will not be objected to an official programme. The Global Work Organisation proposed to the Romanian Government in 1992 a series of solutions in a special document. That is the *Conclusions and Recommendations of the O.I.M. Research Committee about Labour Discrimination in Romania*.³ The recommendations of this document were meant to assure equality of chances and of treatment of all members of Romanian society, besides the labour problem.

Concerning the Roma population, the document stipulated the following:

- Elaboration of "methods meant to assure equality of chances and of treatment regarding work and preparation for the members of this minority" (par.601., p.236.), as this objective has been formulated in the 111/1958 Convention, ratified by the Romanian Government as well.
- Development of a "vast campaign" (par.617/13, p.243.) for making the traditionally negative attitude towards The Roma (Gypsy) vanish from mentality".
- Par.617/14., p.243. recommends that "the Roma's social situation should be ameliorated within an integrated programme, conceived together with their representatives, which should contain in a whole education, labour, dwelling and all the other elements necessary for their progress. "
- Furthermore, the document prescribes in par.617/17. (p.244) a series of "special procedures" as the ones controlled in the art. 5 of 111/1958 Convention."

Unfortunately, since the reception of the document by the Romanian Government up to the present, neither of the cabinets succeeding in government took any "special care" for assuring "their progresses" and they have not developed any "vast campaign" with a benevolent aim. Moreover the integrated programme conceived by the representatives of the Roma has not been submitted either to a group or public debate, as it has been recommended in par.617/14 of the report. (p.243.) Immediately after receiving the report the Roma representatives agreed about compelling a programme (Vasile Burtea, 1993:27), as a recommendation, in order to give a common discussion and action base. It has been approved to build a partnership relation that should assure the success of the action. As already mentioned, this programme, presented to the executive, the presidency, and to the parliament, has not been objected to any discussion, corrections, additions until now. In turn, they acted for easing and boycotting even the shy actions that were initiated:

- The Roma inspector employment was cancelled for the jobs obtained by the Roma organisations in order to solve certain social and labour problems of the Roma.
- The employed Roma inspectors were submitted to pressures, for they should abandon the already occupied working places.
- As a consequence of the extremist party's press offence, the places accorded in pedagogical high-schools (normal schools) for forming the Roma educators and teachers have been withdrawn in the years of 92/93, 93/94 and 94/95. When these places were offered again in the year 95/96, the Roma children did not show up because of the bad experiences of their colleagues.

Erasing or boycotting actions

³ *Report of the O.I.M. Research Committee*, Official Bulletin, supplement 3. , Vol. LXXIV, B Series.

- With the exception of one single Roma organisation, extradited to power, that has got a headquarter, none of the Roma organisations obtained any office.

All these factors urge for a quick and serious intervention in order to stop the degradation process of this population's life circumstances. It seems absolutely necessary to start the gradual process for improving their situation and approaching the level of other populations living within the national borders of Romania. A first step would be debating and applying the integrated programme proposed by the Roma representatives. This could be completed, facilitating the access of this population to projects that would be addressed to them, to direct external financing, instructing, etc. An important step would be to instruct the Roma communities how to create, present and maintain projects for solving the problems they are facing, to support a promotion of these projects. Democratisation of the access to projects would mean surpassing the monopoly controlled by 2-3 representatives of this ethnic group, which leads to dependence of the whole Roma population in need, and other persons aspiring the improvement of their fellow-beings, but who lack lobby, experience, expertise. Nothing can substitute serious, official action of the executive, sustained by political will, decision and intervention.

Steps to be taken

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School Development and Individualised Education

By **Adela Rogojinaru**, Scientific Head Researcher, Educational Sciences Institute

Source: **Rromathan, Studii despre Rromi, 1997**

In collaboration with other institutions, the Foundation for an Open Society supports schooling development programmes for communities with Roma inhabitants. Adela Rogojinaru presents the principles of this programme and expounds an interesting critique of the Romanian pedagogical-hegemonic model. Her study is an excellent argumentation of the fact that a liberal education requires anthropologically well-informed educators.

Preliminaries – Initiation of a Complex Intervening Programme for Communities with Roma Inhabitants⁴

A change

The initiatives for priority actions in zones with Roma inhabitants have increased as a result of the political openings after 1989, and, no doubt, under the pressure of European policies. Moreover, the Romanian educational actuality has always described the schooling marginalisation phenomena only at a level of principles. Besides, or perhaps as a consequence of these facts, individualisation of pedagogical procedures seems to be a familiar, depleted, even worthless practice to the teacher. Because of the ideological stiffening of the para-scientific schooling discourse and the invocation of circumstances, especially when obtaining didactic degrees and during inspections – the principle of individualisation has effaced its vocation: that one to offer situations of learning that truly match each individual and are not built on a pedagogical or social prototype.

Non-individualised and elitist approaches

The peripheral state of a school-aged population category is not easy to accept. The statement that in certain peripheral or “outskirts” schools there is a poorer education than in the urban zones or that in the rural areas there are fewer qualified pedagogues than in the cities has been for a long time a symptom of depreciating the quality of education. Moreover, an assertion that teachers, parents and authorities all agree on is that not all children are capable to realise the performances of a school programme in the same degree. All the same, the conception about education, even in the variants of the process reform, continue to treat the child engaged in the school system in the spirit of a fake school-“egalitarianism” concept, whether inseparably (thus non-individualised) or elitist (discriminatory).

At the beginning of the school-year 1996/1997, the initiative of the *Foundation for an Open Society* for extending the social action programmes to the underprivileged areas has luckily coincided with the plans of the *Educational Sciences Institute* to launch primary educational programmes, as well as with the proposition of the *ECOLECT Project of the Romanian Lecture Association* for an alternative methodology of reading-writing and lecturing. The initiation of an intervention programme is neither new nor unexpected, being required today by reasons of political correctness. However, it is

⁴ The presentation deals with the interventions processed in the period September 1996- September 1997 for preparing teachers in district Ferentari, Bucharest, Schools No.2, and No.136. The interventions had two levels:

- Inter-curricular, for teachers treating the democratisation of pedagogical relations.
- Extracurricular, for children, where we watched the development of the intercultural dialogue and the motivation for listening and lecturing (“Tale Club”)

new and favourable the complex treatment of the Roma's situation including diverse categories of specialists, trainees, and volunteered social workers in order to accomplish through education the coexistence of different, but conciliatory values.

Project for an alternative methodology

The first observations, results of collecting empirical data in the investigated communities⁵, have drawn attention to the role of *institutionalised education* in defining the social coexistence forms of Roma families from poor or peripheral environment. Public opinion polls and assigned groups organised by volunteered students pointed to the fact that school is an institution formally respected, but with no direct influence on the professional aspirations of families or of the children themselves. Far from offering self-formation examples or from directing social aspirations, school has become an artificial medium that is attended by children because they are obliged to⁶. Some answers mirroring the aspirations of Roma children show that the social realisation level does not exceed the preference for pseudo- professional occupations offering easy profits. In spite of the pedagogical insistence for a competent and long-lasting education, the options of children and parents assume no form of communal commitment. Connected to this the fact that pedagogical procedures as well as teacher education are based on a national curriculum determines very slightly the option of teachers for adaptation to the local context. Fading of the communal identity in semi-urban or outskirts areas, inhabited by settled Roma, take a stand on the cohesion of values and of minority groups' aspirations.⁷ The discussion of the identity problem becomes even more delicate when considering the special status of the settled Roma, whose children attend the district-schools: the assimilation of majority norms is contrasted to the preservation of customary rights.

School has become an artificial medium that is attended by children because they are obliged to.

The aspects of *communal civilisation* not connected to schooling, but with concerning the social protection, sanitary education and legal forms offer a different type of observation. By the extension of social actions, included in the schooling programmes for Roma children, partly conceived by different Roma organisations, the schooling development programme launched a global procedure of communal aid, thus providing a method to control different intervention types. The beneficent co-operation of the UNICEF and the local institutions with decisional right (the district's town hall and the school inspectorate) could cover within the programme of the Soros Foundation different problems as well, such as family education, connected especially to counselling and implying women into public life. Paying no special regards to the ethnic emancipation of the Roma minority, the educational programme is still constructed upon the hypothesis of improving inter-group cultural relations (Romanians- Roma). Although supported with data, the "majority- minority" distinction assumes in a fake way a superiority that generates conflicts. It is not the argument of "integration" (nomina odiosa!) that sustains the structure of educational procedure, but the one of the cultural individuality's respect.

Communal civilisation

2. EDUCATION FOR ALTERATION: FORMS OF CO-OPERATION IN EDUCATION

⁵ The preliminary investigations realised with the help of students of the Sociology and Social Work Department, Bucharest, in the first two trimesters of the school-year 1996/1997, have offered general data about the social-cultural state of Roma families whose children had their school results under or at the limit of the promotion level, and a rare school-attendance.

⁶ Similar discussions are to be found in the study *Education of Gypsy Children: Representations, Hypotheses, Difficulties* by Teodor Cosma, Constantin Cucos and Mariana Momanu and in *Minorities, Peripherals, Excluded Ones* by Adrian Neculau and Gilles Ferreol (Iași, 1996).

⁷ See Adela Rogojinaru *A Way Out of the Crisis of Work: Community Self-Education*, in ALPHA'96 (edited by Jean-Paul Hauteceur) UNESCO, Institute for Education, Hamburg & Culture Concepts Publishers, Toronto, Canada, 1996.

Making teachers able to organise co-operative education, has been, both hypothetically and as a result of empirical data, the effective method to modify the inner culture of the pupils' class. The excessive competitive spirit and individualism arising from the family's ambitions have led to a deterioration of the co-operative atmosphere within a collective. If, in addition to this, the group is also culturally heterogeneous, and intercultural disagreements are to be found on a social plan, then the pupil-collective will divide in function of the dominant cultural model. In a group of Romanian and Roma children, the dominant model will be the "Romanian" one, on one hand because the teacher imposes it, on the other hand because the Roma, even when forming a majority, do not have a good communal reputation (there are individual exceptions, which sometimes can determine a coexistence rule). Moreover, the school curriculum, both the one prescribed as a school-policy document and the one that is actualised in the class, do not produce any methodological instrument to allow particularisation of the content in relation to the reference-culture of children⁸. Thus individualisation of education remains a pedagogical illusion. Individual values are prototyped in the lectures through characters of no relevance for a considerable part of the children-group, who could evoke their own heroes, if they were allowed to. The practical abilities – such as counting – are also scientifically canonised. The Roma children, capable enough of counting their money when shopping, can not promote in Mathematics. Although orally excellent, the same children prove to be incapable of telling a story at the reading- classes or to express themselves coherently at the "Communication" classes. The effects are shift onto the parents' negligence for school or onto the intellectual incapability of the children. As a matter of fact we, educators, only want to perpetuate the lapsed gesture of the "similar" and to exclude, consciously or ignorantly, the education of the "not similar" ones. Categorisations connected to the unsociability or abnormality of the Roma in terms with the Romanian majority originate from the unusual judgement of the "different" treated as distortion of the "normal". Above all cultural anthropological values, we can state that, generally, the public schools' practice restores the elimination of differences, based on an instruction "equal for all".

The Roma, even when forming a majority, do not have a good communal reputation.

the public schools' practice restores the elimination of differences, based on an instruction "equal for all".

Considering this, the workshops for preparing pilot class-teachers from the Ferentari schools had examined a few restructuring methods of learning:

Restructuring methods of learning.

1. by analysing the personal model of the teacher's value;
2. by analysing the personal model of the children's value, from each community's classes, and by comparing both universes of reference;
3. by creating certain alternative learning situations: starting with individual and highly competitive learning, up to learning co-operatively, in group;
4. by partial reprocessing of the didactic act and exchanging the guided teaching forms for co-participating⁹ teaching forms.

Contrary to the normal procedures, this re-thinking of the organisational ways of learning does not annihilate individual learning or the acts of originality. The objectives of this shaping transition were primarily subjecting the teacher's professional qualities, and by this, encouraging the teacher to adopt teaching methods, that would lead the children:

1. to know each other through dialogue;
2. to relate to each other without emitting discrimination;
3. to co-operate on a common cause;

⁸ In the synthesis seminar in Ilieni (Covasna) 11-20 July 1997, teachers for the programme's pilot classes, at a national level have discussed the text "*Porojan*" from the alternative schoolbook *Limba română pentru clasa a 2-a*, Teora, which does not have any reference to the authentic hero from the letter of Vasile Alecsandri. Such a treatment of the text might easily be categorised as a form of literary censorship, both cultural-ethnic and moral.

⁹ See *Teaching Strategies. A Guide for Better Instruction* by Donald C. Orlich, Robert J. Harder, Richard C. Callahan, third edition, D.C. Heath and Company, Lexington, Massachusetts, Toronto, 1990.

4. to evaluate reciprocally in terms of a common cause;
5. to approach their own achievements considering each other's opinion.

An educational individualisation programme involves particular, but not exclusive procedures. The benefit of the programme does not exclusively refer to Roma children, but the whole community of children's group. The positive discrimination of the minorities seems to be as much injurious as the separation. The programme proposes itself to follow the dynamics of intercultural groups and to educate the communal behaviour, even more now, when, on a social level, Romanians and Roma live together in a peripheral, or so to speak condemned community (just like the Ferentari district). On the other hand, the efforts of schooling the Roma as well as the ones of alphabetising in Roma language, which are undertaken nowadays on a large scale by all the important Roma organisations, remain imperceptible, concerning the affirmation of the minorities worth in assorted communities. Re-gaining the language does not automatically restore the group identity of the Roma living in community. Adopting the group assets in a local school's curriculum and their inclusion into an individualised education are within the few normal forms, through which, by the members of a majority collective, a micro-culture is recognised and comprehended. Prior to a political dialogue, the multicultural condition is assumed at a pedagogical level, even by simple schoolbook illustrations with faces of different children, which do not hide (like in Porojan's case) that the one, whose friendship is so much appreciated by the narrator, happens to be "Gypsy".¹⁰

The benefits of an educational individualisation programme.

2. EXPANSION OF THE PEDAGOGICAL PROGRAMME:

The Lecture Club

The pedagogical type of intervention, focused on assuming identity assets to the level of communal transfer's model – role assumed by the institutionalised educator – had been sustained from the beginning through a complemented activity, which should encourage children's personal culture. The objectives of the *Lecture Club* aimed:

1. cultivating a micro-culture of group;
2. cultivating personal expression and interpersonal communication;
3. development of artistic expression;
4. activating the traditional cultural base (familial) by artistic expression and lecture.

The club had invited children from classes I-IV of the 136th School from Ferentari, Roma as well as Romanians, and had worked with them in weekly gatherings. The coordinator of the club's activities, schoolteacher Mihaela Zătreanu, had followed the children's activity in the following domains:

- narrator;
- reader;

¹⁰ The way schoolbooks retain classical text and fragment them, is twice as injurious: on one hand because the fragment obtained from a tendentious retelling loses the esthetical value of the original work; on the other hand, because retelling rebuilds the message in a vulgar didacticism, which, tending to be moral at any price, is sinning by the lack of the initial moral content. It is the same in case of retelling *Letters* by Vasile Alecsandri – *Vasile Porojan*, where the absence of the ethnic relation between the two friends transforms the original message into an incoherent evocation of universal features of a hero without identity.

- listener;
- creator.

Ethnic narrating

The children narrated, sketched their tales, read and listened to each other's tale. The unconventional narrating had constituted the first phase of the club's process. Extracted from the life-experience of children, those merge the realistic with the fantastic, helping free self-expression. A second phase of story-elaboration, which starts with school-year 1997/1998, will cultivate the ethnic narrating, trying to cite the thesaurus of traditional images still active in Roma communities. Both types of narration are destined to create a portfolio of literature for children, publishable in an anthology. Such an anthology would constitute an authentic didactical support to develop the functional capacities of lecture and writing within primary classes and would offer a first intervention upon local adaptation to the recommendations of the school's curriculum. If such pedagogical expansion is able to create sufficient support to restore the identity of small and peripheral cultures, it can be generalised to the level of the educational system – to the level of optional curricular areas.

4. SOME CONCLUSIONS

Any kind of influence through education has chances to transform in effect on long term.

The domains of the school-process' programme in Roma communities related or only sketched here, represent, at the same time, faces of a different social procedure: one, in which the person, for whom help is offered, takes part of the global action directed towards him. This type of investigation through action (close to the research-action procedure, but less evident in the bases of the investigation and more clear in the ones of intervention) seems to be one of the few which, nowadays, can be successful in the process of changing mentality and of displacing assets. The interest for marginal areas seems to discover not only the potential of communal micro-cultures, but also the central system's capacity itself (system of social, cultural, moral, etc. assets) to regenerate in flexible structures. The educational field, most vulnerable while changing, receives and induces at the same time an important generative influence for the rest of the social system. From this point of view, any kind of influence through education has chances to transform in effect on long term, in spite of any other results, immediate and more pronounced, which we are able to obtain from economical assistance or from unanimous financial maintenance.

The Ombudsman's Report

Report edited by **Lajos Aáry-Tamás**

Source: **Report by the Ombudsman in Charge of Minority Affairs** Regarding the Comprehensive Survey of the Education of Minorities in Hungary, 1998

'The language, material and intellectual culture, the historical traditions of national and ethnic minorities living in the area of the Republic of Hungary with a Hungarian citizenship, as well as all other particularities related to their minority existence are a part of the individual and communal identity.

All these represent a special value and their protection, sustenance and enrichment is not only a basic right of national and ethnic minorities but represents a vested interest for the Hungarian nation and, ultimately, for the international community.'

(Preamble to Act LXXVII of 1993 on the rights of national and ethnic minorities)

LAUNCHING THE SURVEY

It has become evident on the basis of the experiences of the last two years that the content and quality of minority education is of special importance for members of Hungary's national and ethnic minorities. This is proved by the complaints submitted to the ombudsman in charge of national and ethnic minority rights in which teachers, parents and minority representatives report on abuses occurring in minority education and request remedies for these malpractices. The office has received almost a hundred letters in which plaintiffs itemise offences against minority rights related to minority education. The majority of plaintiffs complain about omissions and breaches of law by municipal governments but several complaints also refer to shortcomings in, or to the complete lack of, legal regulation in certain areas. Many of the complaints request my opinion regarding the interpretation of the law or the form in which it is to be enforced.

Complaints to the Ombudsman's office

As ombudsman in charge of the rights of national and ethnic minorities, I have always paid special attention to the handling of complaints regarding the education of minorities since, through § 68 (2) of the Constitution, the Republic of Hungary ensures members of national and ethnic minorities the right to an education in the mother tongue. § 43 (2) of Act LXXVII of 1993 on the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities (henceforth: Act.n.e.m.) leaves it to the child's parent or carer to decide whether the child is going to participate in national or Hungarian education and the parent or carer must not be limited in practising this right. Act.n.e.m. devotes a separate chapter to the cultural and educational self-management of ethnic and national minorities. The free choice and retention of identity may be significantly furthered if the person belonging to the minority is acquainted with the culture and language of their minority group. In Hungary entire generations of minorities have lost their mother tongue in consequence of the assimilation process. To put an end to the process of assimilation or, in a positive approach, to help the retention of minority identity, is one of the prime objectives of the Act on minorities. Schools and nursery schools, which are perhaps the most important means of attaining this objective, may help children as well as their parents in finding and retaining their identity and in stopping the process of assimilation.

The free choice and retention of identity.

The Hungarian system of general education is in a state of transition. The amendments to Act LXXIX. of 1993 on General Education (henceforth: Act.gen.ed)

came into force as of September 1st 1996 and after September 1st 1998 the new National Base Curriculum is being progressively introduced. Minority education is an organic part of the Hungarian education system - the changes to this system, which will determine the education and upbringing of their children for decades to come is not indifferent to members of national and ethnic minorities. I consider the reform of the education system a timely and necessary process and I agree with its basic objectives. Yet, even at this early stage in the transformation process there have emerged shortcomings of legislation and the application of the law which it is not too late to remedy. For this reason I have ordered ex officio a national comprehensive survey in order to detect abuses of legislation and the application of the law in the area of the education of minorities.

THE AIM OF THE SURVEY

Is the legal regulation of education in harmony with the regulations?

In the process of the survey we were seeking to answer the question as to whether the legal regulation of education is in harmony with the regulations defined in the Constitution and in the Act defining the rights of national and ethnic minorities. It was also the aim of the investigation to determine whether in the course of the application of the law the rights of national and ethnic minorities to cultural and educational self-management were being enforced in accordance with the pertaining legal regulations. It was a separate objective within the survey to detect whether negative discrimination against minorities was being practised in the course of education.

The aim of the survey was not to find scapegoats but to unveil abuses in the area of education and formulate suggestions and initiatives for their eradication in order to create an institutional system which could properly ensure the rights of Hungary's national and ethnic minorities.

METHODS OF THE INVESTIGATION

Open days and professional forums

Hungary's minorities live scattered throughout the country and consequently institutions of minority education can be found in almost all counties. Thus it would have been an impossible target for the office to examine all schools and nursery schools where members of national and ethnic minorities are being educated. The amendments to the Act of General Education only came into force as of September 1st 1996 and the National Base Curriculum is only being introduced since September 1998. Thus there has not accumulated enough practical experience on the basis of which empirical examinations could be conducted. In spite of this fact the ombudsman in charge of the rights of national and ethnic minorities has received a steady flow of indications according to which abuses occur in the legislation or the application of the law in the area of minority education. For this reason, beside handling complaints submitted to the Ombudsman's office, we also organised 'Open Days' and professional forums in Pest, Baranya, Békés and Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén counties. At the 'Open Days' the Ombudsman in charge of the rights of national and ethnic minorities listened personally to the complaints of people while professional forums were organised with the participation of teachers, parents, minority representatives and the representatives of local municipal governments. The aim of these latter was to give the users and providers of general education services to make their complaints, worries and observations known to the ombudsman in charge of the rights of national and ethnic minorities. Beside the personal participation, several written complaints were also submitted on these occasions. Meetings have also been organised with the

representatives of offices of public administration. Institutions of minority education have been visited.

Questions regarding the financing of minority education have been submitted in a circular to the heads of county administration offices and the answers have been incorporated in the survey.

We involved members of the National Minorities Committee in professional discussions. This committee is the advisory body assisting the Minister of Culture and Education and consists of one delegate from each of the central minority self-governments of this country. In the area of minority education we made use of the results of several surveys and research projects. Commissioned by the Ombudsman in charge of the rights of national and ethnic minorities, leading experts have carried out further research projects the results of which we also made use of in the survey.

„We made use of the results of several surveys and research projects.”

Experts of the Ombudsman's office have analysed Hungarian and international legislation regarding minority education.

The present, rather unusual survey, so far as its genre is concerned, on the education of national and ethnic minorities was compiled using the information that was collected in the above described fashion. It contains the analysis and evaluation of problems that emerge and the initiatives or suggestions regarding the solution of abuses wherever these could be detected.

CONSTITUTIONAL, NATIONAL AND ETHNIC MINORITIES' RIGHTS UNDER EXAMINATION

- the right to education in the mother tongue - Const. § 68 (2)
- the prohibition on negative discrimination - Const § 70/A (2)
- measures in the interest of the eradication of inequality of opportunities in order to ensure equality before the law - Const. § 70/A. (1)
- the right to the free choice of identity - Act.n.e.m. §7 (1)
- the right to the knowledge, maintenance, enrichment, and passing on of the mother tongue, history, culture and traditions of persons belonging to national and ethnic minorities - Act.n.e.m. §13 a)
- the right to participation in education and general cultural life in the mother tongue - Act.n.e.m. § 13. b)
- the right to the protection of personal data connected to the person's belonging to a minority group - Act.n.e.m. - §13. c)
- the right of opinion and the right of consent of local and central minority self-governments and of the local spokesmen of minorities - Act.n.e.m. § 29, § 38, § 40, Act.g.ed. §8 (3) and (10), §9. (2), §84 (6), § 88 (1) and (10), § 90 (4), § 93 (1). § 94 (1), (4) and (5), § 102 (3) and (10), § 107
- the right to self-management in education and culture - Act.n.e.m., Chapter VI.

LEGAL REGULATIONS APPLIED

A. Hungarian regulations

- The Constitution of the Republic of Hungary

- Act LXXVII of 1993 on the rights of national and ethnic minorities
- ActLXXIX of 1993 on general education and Government Decree No 20/1997 (Feb. 13) on its enforcement
- Act LXV of 1990 on Municipal Governments
- Act CXXIV of 1996 on the budget of the Republic of Hungary for the year of 1997 as well as the joint decree of the Ministries of Finance and Home Affairs regarding the per capita allowances, national and ethnic supplementary support sums, allocations of personal income tax collected, and official contribution to the operation of the fire brigade payable to municipal governments in the year of 1997.
- Act CXLI. of 1997 on the budget of the Republic of Hungary for the year of 1998,
- Act XXXVIII of 1992 on State Finances as well as the Government Decree No. 156/1995 (December 26) on its enforcement.
- Government Decree No. 130/1995 (Oct. 26) on issuing the National Base Curriculum,
- Government Decree No. 47/1990 (December 15) on the sphere of authority and of responsibility of the Minister of Culture and Education
- Government Decree No. 137/1996 (August 28) on the national foundation programme of nursery school education
- Government Decree No. 1093/1997 (July 29) on the middle range package of measures aiming at improving the living conditions of Gypsies.
- Directive on the nursery school education of national and ethnic minorities and Decree No. 32/1997 of the Ministry of Culture and Education (Nov. 5) on issuing the directive on the school education of national and ethnic minorities,
- Decree No 11/1994 of the Ministry of Culture and Education (June 8) on the operation of institutions of education
- Decree No 1/1994 of the Ministry of Culture and Education (Feb. 3) on the system of the approval of books as textbooks, of supporting the cost of textbooks and of supplying schools with textbooks.

INTERNATIONAL REGULATIONS

UN documents

- UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education 1960. (Introduced in Law Decree [equivalent to US executive order] No 11/1964.)
- Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to national or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities 1992.

CSCE documents

- Charter of Paris for a New Europe 1990
- Report of the CSCE Meeting of Experts on National Minorities 1991

Documents of the Council of Europe

- The European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms 1950,
- directives Nos. 285, 814, 1134, 1177, 1201
- The European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages 1992,
- Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities 1994

Regional documents

CEI Instrument for the Protection of Minority Rights 1994

The survey was led, under the personal supervision of the Ombudsman in charge of minority affairs, by Lajos Aáry-Tamás.

Participating in the preparation of the report was Peter Radó sociologist.

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MINORITY EDUCATION

The education system is one of the most extensive services provided in the country which, besides having to fulfil mandatory tasks, must also adapt itself to the particular needs and requirements of those using this service. This is also true of minority education.

The system of minority education functions not in isolation but as a part of the national system of general education. It is the duty of the state to organise minority education wherever the necessary legal framework is provided. The concept of minority education necessarily includes nursery school education as well.

The system of minority education functions as a part of the national education system.

In the analysis of regulations pertaining to minority education three regulations of special importance have to be given consideration. One of these is the Constitution of the Republic of Hungary, the others are Act LXXVII of 1993 on the rights of national and ethnic minorities and Act LXXIX of 1993 on General Education - it is through the joint interpretation of the regulations of these that it becomes possible to analyse the framework and content of minority education and the educational self-management of national and ethnic minorities. At the same time, we cannot leave out of consideration the regulations of Act LXV of 1990 on Municipal Governments (henceforth Act.m.g.), of Act XXXVIII of 1992 on State Finances (henceforth Act.st.fin.) or of the regulations pertaining to the Act.gen.ed.

Three important regulations

The minority model outlined in the Act.n.e.m. intends to create a form of cultural autonomy in which the educational self-management of minorities plays a significant part. The current form of educational autonomy consists in the right of consent and of opinion in decisions where matters concerning minority education are under discussion. Thus according to the main rule the national minorities (their self-governments) do not themselves make decisions in matters regarding their interests but practice a right of consent and of opinion in order to influence decisions made by others.

To create a form of cultural autonomy

It is the task of the state to operate the system of general education. The Act.gen.ed. also makes it possible for legal and natural persons (within this for local and central minority self-governments) to run educational institutions. Still it is true to say that regulations of the Act have a tendency to conserve the currently existing educational system. The method whereby institutions of education may be transferred from one operator to another and the way in which they are to be operated are prescribed by strict rules. Knowing the present financial conditions of the self-governments of the minorities it is hard to imagine how any of them could take advantage of their right to found new institutions as it is defined in the Act.gen.ed. The only solution open to them would be the transfer of already existing institutions. There are no legal barriers in the way of such processes but the costs of running such an institution would not be

Minority self-
governments

covered by the joint sum of the educational per capita allowances and the national minority supplementary support offered by the state. Although it is possible to make an agreement with the local municipal government in order to maintain an educational institution but municipal governments have not so far taken advantage of this opportunity. The above regulations of the Act.gen.ed can also be interpreted as a legal possibility for occasions in which minority self-governments are successfully enforcing the interests of the given minority and are also successful in the practical 'networking' activity that enforcing these interests entails. The possibility of signing a general education agreement with the local municipal governments is also open to central minority self-governments. On the basis of § 81. (1O) of the Act.gen.ed the central minority self-governments can sign a general education agreement with the Minister of Culture and Education. The minister is obliged to sign a general education agreement with a central minority self-government if the school or boarding service of those belonging to the ethnic minority is not provided for within the services offered by the local municipal government. The central minority self-governments, however, can only make use of this right if they already qualify as institutional operators, i.e. if they have already founded an educational institution or had one transferred to them.

Influencing
decisions by
practising the
right of consent.

Thus most minority self-governments influence decisions concerning minority education not as maintainers of institutions but by practising the right of consent with regard to institutions which are maintained by local municipal governments. One reason why this is justified is that the majority of ethnic schools provide pupils who belong to a national minority with education in their mother tongue, usually in mixed schools. The amendment of the Act.gen.ed came to include, at the minorities' ombudsman's suggestion, the definition of a minority institution. This assured the application of §29 (2) of the Act.n.e.m. which concerns the nomination of heads of minority institutions. It was necessary, however, to arrive at a clear understanding as to which are those decisions of local municipal governments which concern the education of minorities and which require the consent of the minority self-government in question. The answer to this question can be found in §102 (1O) of the Act.gen.ed. This regulation lists the cases in which the consent of local and central minority self-governments is required in the case of institutions maintained by local municipal governments. Minority self-governments practice their right of consent not only in the case of minority institutions but in the case of all institutions which participate in the nursery school education, school education and instruction, boarding school education and instruction of national and ethnic minorities. With regard to this regulation it is necessary to note that it covers only institutions maintained by local municipal governments. It is necessary to explore whether the right of consent might be extended to institutions which are not maintained by the state or local municipal councils (except of course for those institutions which are themselves run by minority self-governments).

Setting up a
committee

With regard to the right of consent it is important to note that the regulations of the Act.gen.ed contain regulations concerning cases in which no agreement had been reached between the local municipal council and the minority self-government and the debated question cannot be solved through negotiation. In this case a committee of nine members is to be created into which the education board and the organisation practising the right of consent delegate three members each and a further three are invited by the organisation maintaining the school from among the experts listed in the National Experts' List. The committee makes its decision with a simple majority and the decision supplements the agreement between the parties. The application of a simple majority makes it advisable to suggest that at least one of the experts should be a minority expert.

On the basis of Act.gen.ed §93 (1) the Minister of Culture and Education issues the "Directive for the nursery school education of national and ethnic minorities" and the "Directive for the school education of national and ethnic minorities" and fulfils the tasks related to the supervision of these.

Decree No. 32/1997 (Nov. 5) of the Ministry of Culture and Education contains the "Directive for the nursery school education of national and ethnic minorities" and the "Directive for the school education of national and ethnic minorities."

The most recent comprehensive modification of the Act.gen.ed contains several regulations which concern the education of minorities and which are finally in harmony with the regulations of the Act.n.e.m. The amendments eradicated shortcomings of legislation, extended the sphere of application of the right of consent and the right of opinion and also came to include the expectations of the National Base curriculum. The Act has made it clear that the language of education is Hungarian or the language of the national or ethnic minority in question. The language of examinations can also be that of the national or ethnic minority and the final certificates have to be produced in both languages, in Hungarian and that of the national or ethnic minority.

The language of instruction and examinations

The Act has also clarified that the foundation documents of any institution of general education must contain the type, name, basic activity of the institution, its ethnic minority related and other tasks, its subsidiary institutions, the funds on which it relies in order to fulfil its tasks, the basis for the right of control over these funds, the authorisations related to the financial management of the institution, the name of the founder, the address of the institutions headquarters and sites, in the case of educational and teaching institutions the name of special faculties, in the case of a school the number of years that the course consists of. This latter regulation assumes special importance with regard to the financing of minority education since according to Appendix No 8 of the Act CXLVI of 1997 on the Budget of the Republic of Hungary for the Year of 1998, supplementary support may be applied for if

The foundation documents of institutions of general education

a) the nursery school education, school education and instruction of national and ethnic minorities is taking place at the parents' request on the basis of educational and teaching projects, programmes, curricula for the education of national and ethnic minorities as forwarded or approved by the Ministry of Culture and Education, after September 1st 1998 in the first and seventh years of school on the basis of the educational directive for the school education of national and ethnic minorities or on the basis of local curricula and plans that were made on the basis of the Directives for the nursery school and school education of national and ethnic minorities. In the case of the education and instruction of those belonging to the Gypsy ethnic minority a further criterion is that if the education and instruction is not taking place on the basis of the local curriculum then at least six sessions a week, whether during or outside of normal lessons time, need to be provided for the realisation of the programme.

b) the foundation document of the educational and teaching institution contains the fact of the institution fulfilling tasks in the education of national and ethnic minorities.

An educational institution may be maintained by a local or a central minority self-government alike. The national and local minority self-governments may practice the right of consent and opinion in a great number of cases. Before determining the catchment area of the operation (admissions) of the institution it is necessary to obtain the consent of the local minority self-government or, in the case of a school which fulfils a national or regional function, that of the central minority self-government.

As we have already indicated, the law has created a specialist body called the National Minorities Council which contains one member delegated by each central minority self-government. The legal status of the committee is equal to that of the National Council of General Education i.e. it is a body whose function is to prepare decision making, to offer opinions and to make proposals. Before submitting to the Government the national Base curriculum and the examination regulations of the school leaving examination and before the issuing of the Directives of the nursery school education and the school education of national and ethnic minorities the consent of the National Minorities Committee must be obtained. This right of consent, however, may not supplant the right of consent practised by central minority self-governments.

If the educational institution in question is maintained by a local municipal council then the consent of the local minority self-government, or in the case of an institution of

Minority self-governments may practice the right of consent and opinion in a great number of cases.

general education fulfilling a regional or national function, of the central minority self-government, must be obtained for the founding, closing down of educational and teaching institutions participating in the nursery school and school education and instruction or boarding education of national or ethnic minorities as well as the modification of their function, the determination of their name, the drafting and modification of their budget, the evaluation of their professional activity, the approval or their organisational and operative regulations, the approval and execution of their educational programme, the pedagogical programme or pedagogical and cultural programme. In the case of minority educational institutions the consent of the minority self-government must also be obtained before the head of the institution takes up or leaves office. (See appended - the regulations of the currently valid Act.gen.ed regarding minorities.)

§4 (7) of the Act.gen.ed contains general regulations regarding the prohibition of negative discrimination. According to this, 'in general education a prohibition extends to negative discrimination on any grounds, particularly on that of the colour, sex, religion, national and ethnic background, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, financial and income position, age, the lack of or limitation on their disposing power, their birth or other position or on the basis of the maintainer of the institution of education and instruction.'

The legal regulation contains no sanctions for cases when the prohibition is broken.

This legal regulation, however, contains no sanctions for cases when the prohibition is broken. The procedural rules (§83-84) contain the concept of 'request for ascertaining legality' which may be submitted with reference to a breach of law which is judged on the second instance level and the whose revision by a court of law may be requested. The court handles such cases with urgency. It is our conviction that negative discrimination ought to be distinguished from felonious activity so that the burden of demonstration may be reversed. In other words, the person charged with discrimination should be the one forced to prove that they have committed none, rather than the reverse. We shall later return to the question of negative discrimination.

OUTLINING AND ANALYSING THE ABUSES OCCURRING IN MINORITY EDUCATION.

I. Nursery School education

1. As we mentioned above, the range of minority education extends to nursery school education, as well. According to §43 (4) of the Act.n.e.m., if a request is made by the parents or legal representatives of no less than eight children belonging to the same minority, it is mandatory to launch and operate a separate minority class or study group. This regulation suggests that minority education can only be organised in schools, but §43 (3) renders the question obvious when it prescribes that the education of minorities in the mother tongue or learning the mother tongue may happen in minority nursery schools, schools, school classes or study groups as determined by local facilities and requests. The wording of the Act.gen.ed is in harmony with this latter when it speaks of institutions of teaching and education, as well as about nursery schools, schools and boarding institutions. Accordingly, the right of consent and opinion of local minority self-governments and the institution of co-management is also valid in the case of the nursery school education of minorities.

Conditions for setting up a separate minority class or study group

Nursery schools

2. At professional forums nursery school teachers have complained that the delay in the appearance of the ministerial decree regarding the Directive concerning the nursery school education of ethnic minority puts them into a difficult situation since it means that they will have to produce and gain acceptance for their educational programme in a very short period of time. On the basis of the number of children receiving their education according to a national minority nursery school education programme, local municipal councils are entitled to a national or ethnic extra support allowance. According to the regulations of the Act.gen.ed, this sum may not be used for any other purpose but the education of national minorities. As we shall show below in a separate chapter, we have found errors in legislation and in the application of the law in the financing of minority education and what is described under this head is also valid for the nursery school education.

Extra support allowance for local municipal councils

3. Nursery school teachers complain of a legal regulation the application of which, according to them, creates a very disadvantageous situation for many of them. The regulation in question, which is mentioned on every possible occasion, is the one which prescribes that nursery school teachers can only be employed if, by the year 2000 they obtain specialist qualifications as national minority nursery school teachers. This involves a financial outlay which most of them cannot afford and the time left for obtaining the qualification is anyway so short that many of them fail to fulfil the requirement contained in the law.

Nursery school teachers can only be employed if, by the year 2000 they obtain qualifications as national minority nursery school teachers.

According to §128 (1) if a teacher's qualifications are not up to the standard defined by the law and at the time when the law came into force then if the teacher

a) has less than ten years before reaching the age of retirement then they may be employed in the same sphere of employment until that time

b) has more than ten years before reaching the age of retirement then, after five years from the date of the law coming into force they can only be employed as a teacher if they have commenced their studies at an institution which provides tertiary level teaching qualifications.

The law contains more severe regulations regarding teachers who have teaching qualifications but no specialist qualifications in national minority education, only a state foreign language certificate of type 'C'¹¹. According to § 128 (3) teachers in possession of appropriate teaching qualifications and a state foreign language certificate of type 'C' or an equivalent document can be employed in teaching a foreign language and in teaching and education in a foreign language or in the language of a national or ethnic minority up to September 1, 2000, or in the case of new employment as defined in §127 (9). The comparison of the above two regulations reveals that after the date when the law came into force, teachers of national minorities have three and a half years in which to start their courses at an institution which provides the required qualification while teachers who are not working with minorities have five years in which to start their studies. We believe that it is unjustified to discriminate between teachers of national minorities and other teachers as, according to the above regulations, teachers of national minorities are in a disadvantageous situation compared to others. The above regulation is against the prohibition of negative discrimination as recorded in the Constitution, in the Act.n.e.m. and the Act.gen.ed. This disadvantageous situation originates from a shortcoming of legislation and thus the Ombudsman in charge of national and ethnic minorities is going to suggest that the legislator modify the law accordingly.

4. Several surveys have shown that a high percentage of children belonging to the Gypsy minority does not participate in nursery school education, 11% of Gypsy children do not go to nursery school or pre-school preparatory courses even after the age of five. This is partly responsible for the generally poor performance of Gypsy children in their later school career. We believe that it is important to conduct surveys into the

11% of Gypsy children do not go to nursery school or pre-school preparatory courses

¹¹ A type C language examination is one which includes an oral and a written test.

question as to why Gypsy parents do not send their children to nursery school and on the basis of such surveys educational policy-makers ought to elaborate systems of incentive and communicational strategies in order to alter the present situation.

SCHOOL EDUCATION

The regulations do not distinguish between the educational area of Hungarian Language and Literature and the minority language and literature.

1. The most frequent complaints at professional forums have been that teachers feel a lack of harmony between the rules regulating general education and the regulations of the Act.n.e.m. Teachers working in minority education are particularly concerned about the National Base Curriculum. In the chapter on the Particular Principles of the Education of National and Ethnic Minorities, the NBC prescribes that in the type of minority school whose special profile is language teaching, the language of education is Hungarian and the teaching of the minority mother tongue happens from the first years onwards, following the criteria prescribed by the NBC for living foreign languages. At the same time, for the years 1 to 6 it prescribes a rate of 32-40% for the educational area of language and literature. The regulations do not distinguish between the educational area of Hungarian Language and Literature and the minority language and literature. It ascertains no proportion for living foreign languages in these years. According to the school teachers, the problem with this regulation is that the time frame of compulsory school lessons excludes the allowance for the minority language and literature which, considering we are talking about minority education, they consider unacceptable. Alternatively, the teaching of Hungarian language and literature will be excluded from the language teaching type of institution which means that minority students will not be able to answer the requirements of the NBC. Some teachers see a solution to this in raising the number of classes but this is not allowed by the regulations of the Act.gen.ed. They believe that minority language and literature could be organised as optional study classes but this would mean that minority students are at a disadvantage compared to their non-minority fellow-students. The long-term effect of this may be that parents do not enter their children to institutions of minority education and may thus lead to the loss of the future intellectual section or group of the given minorities. Teachers believe that the contradiction in the regulations indicated above ought to be resolved because in its present form it indirectly 'fosters' the assimilation of minorities.

§52 (3) of the Act.gen.ed. defines the upper limiting number of compulsory lessons for schoolchildren. This is done in the interest of children, so that they cannot be obliged to participate in more classes than the number there defined. Divergences from this could only be made possible if the legislator modified the regulations of the law. It is to be feared however, that even so, parents of children belonging to minorities would decide, precisely on account of a raised number of study sessions, not to enter their children into minority schools as this would expose them to a heavier work-load than that of non-minority children. Although the work-load to which students may be subjected is the topic of serious professional debate, this extent has not yet been measured in any way thus far. Such measurements however will definitely have to take place in the future as it is only when we are in possession of the experiences of the future years that we shall be able to revise the relation of valid regulations to the rights and interests of national and ethnic minorities and thus to arrive at the desired ends of minority education. (E.g. to prevent further assimilation and to encourage minorities to find and retain their identity.)

Minority parents decide not to enter their children into minority schools as this would expose them to a heavier work-load than that of non-minority children.

What needs to be examined is whether it is possible to organise the education of students belonging to minorities in such a way that the programme could remain within the available time-frame as defined by the law and should simultaneously answer the requirements of the National Base Curriculum and the Directive for the Educational

Questions concerning the curriculum

National and Ethnic Minorities. For this purpose the analysis of the already mentioned Acts is inevitable.

In its arrangement of the various areas and sub-areas of instruction in accordance with the peculiarities of the two educational phases, the National Base Curriculum follows proportions which indicate the 'weight' or 'role' of various areas of instruction within the NBC and which are also meant to orientate the drafting of variant or local curricula. The proportions between various areas of instruction cannot be expressed in terms of the number of study sessions only in terms of approximate percentages. This is because areas of instruction may be organised into school subjects in various ways. On the other hand these proportions are defined by the individual schools in their local curricula on the basis of the total of the available number of compulsory and non-compulsory study sessions.

The areas of instruction defined by the NBC may be organised into school subjects in different ways by different local curricula. Some of the areas may in themselves constitute a subject. At the same time, certain spheres which belong to more than one area of instruction in the NBC may be organised into one subject.

In the case of compulsory sessions, schools formulate the number of sessions and the lesson plans of the local curricula in view of the proportions indicated by the NBC, while in the case of non-compulsory sessions these are formulated entirely freely by the individual schools.

The compulsory character of the National Curriculum

The compulsory character of the NBC means that

- the main principles are to be enforced in different local variant curricula, in subject programmes, school books and other auxiliary educational material,
- areas, sub-areas and themes of instruction must be taken cognisance of,
- emphasis should be given to study material and activities which may serve as a basis for realising general and partial developmental criteria,
- that the attainment of at least the minimum standards is to be ensured for every student.

The National Curriculum is a basis for local curricula.

The NBC is not a curriculum in the traditional sense but a basis for local curricula and subject programmes. A local curriculum is a plan of school education for the whole of the educational cycle. According to the regulations of the Act.gen.ed., as a part of the educational programme defining the teaching and educational objectives of the institution it primarily contains the compulsory and optional subjects and study session activities which are taught in each year, the numbers of these sessions, their main topics and the outlines of the requirements in these, the criteria for stepping up into a higher year, the substantial and formal requirements of assessment and evaluation, the modes of differentiation, the decisions regarding the school books and other study material that may be used. The programmes of the subjects of the individual years are connected to these. Local curricula are assembled by the teachers of individual schools either by borrowing or adapting ready-made curricula and subject programmes based on the NBC or by their own initiative.

Among the special principles of the education of national and ethnic minorities we find the regulations which are perhaps most important from the point of view of the present problem and these are those according to which it is possible to diverge from the proportion among areas of instruction recommended by the NBC in the curricula of schools which work on the basis of a minority programme.

From comparing the above regulations it may be ascertained that teachers working in institutions of minority education enjoy a great deal of freedom in formulating the minority pedagogical programmes.

We are convinced that the local conditions for minority education can only be formulated in such a way as to serve the rights of the minorities in question and at the same time to answer the requirements of the National Base Curriculum if the management of the school establishes a close connection with the parents, with local minority self-governments and with the local municipal government and also if the local government shows a high degree of co-operation with the teachers and the heads of institutions. It is only in this alliance that they will be able to create the educational programme and local curriculum which best serves the interest of the minorities that live in the given town or village. The local conditions for such a successful co-operation are available.

2. Uncertainty in the above question was created by the fact that the Ministerial Decree containing the Directives regarding the Nursery School and School Education of National and Ethnic Minorities was delayed by more than eighteen months. This delay brought institutions active in the teaching the education of minorities into a disadvantageous situation as the educational programmes of schools and nursery schools could be formulated and accepted only by taking into account what is included in the Directives. The first version of the draft for the Directives was considered unacceptable both from a legal and from a professional point of view and the version was thus withdrawn. In the meantime the National Minorities Committee came into existence which practices a right of consent, alongside the central minority self-governments, before the issuing of the Directives. After the next draft was accepted by the NMC, the consent of central minority self-governments also had to be obtained. The Central Government of Germans in Hungary indicated to the Ombudsman that officials of the Ministry fail to involve the minority self-government in elaborating the Directives. The final outcome of this was that both the Central Self-Government of Germans in Hungary and the Central Self-Government of Serbs in Hungary refused to endorse the draft until their suggestions came to be included in it. In the end, the valid Decree came into being with the consent of all central minority self-governments.

The Directives are intended to create the professional basis for the nursery school and school education of minorities in harmony with the National Base Programme for Nursery School Education and with the National Base Curriculum. However, at the time of the completion of the present survey that part of the decree which is supposed to contain the detailed requirements broken down into details for the different minorities and described both in Hungarian and in the minority language had not yet appeared. Failing these, the local curricula for the minority language and literature cannot be formulated in any of the available forms of minority education, except the form called intercultural education.

Professional basis for the nursery school and school education of minorities

Consequently, neither teachers, nor the representatives of minority self-governments nor even the representatives of municipal governments nor the officials working for them are clearly and adequately acquainted with their tasks and rights which also means that local debates cannot be organised regarding the question. Responsibility for the emergence of the present situation clearly lies with the heads of the Ministry of Culture and Education since delayed legislation has caused teachers of minority schools to have a far shorter period of time in which to prepare for the new kind of work, while their duties, tasks and responsibilities are the same. Our experience has been that another reason for this kind of misunderstanding and uncertainty is in the faulty circulation of information. In questions of such great importance as the organisation of minority education, teachers were expecting a far greater amount of information and assistance from the Ministry of Education and from the National and Ethnic Minorities Office. The time left till the beginning of the new academic year might just be enough for the two offices to make up for this shortcoming by various programmes and information booklets and by professional discussions in which they must involve educational specialist services and pedagogical institutes.

Unsatisfactory flow of information

3. We must deal separately with the education of students belonging to the Gypsy minority. As we mentioned in our introduction, the basis of minority education is the regulation of the constitution of the Republic of Hungary which creates the possibility for the education of national and ethnic minorities in their mother tongue. Local municipal councils must organise minority classes or groups if requested by at least eight parents belonging to the same minority. While students of national minorities study their mother tongue and national culture following a minority programme within minority education, in the case of Gypsy children only a small proportion participate in education organised according to a minority programme and even within that most of them work according to a 'catch-up programme'. But such 'catch-up' education is usually not initiated for these children by the Gypsy parents. According to §45 (2) of the Act.gen.ed it is possible to create special frameworks of education in order to reduce the educational disadvantages of the Gypsy minority. We consider the above regulation of the Act.gen.ed. as extremely disquieting in its wording, since it talks about the disadvantages of the Gypsy minority and not of certain students. Thus it practically suggests that the Gypsy minority as a minority has disadvantages in terms of education which is indubitably untrue. We believe that the basis for organising catch-up programmes for Gypsy children is not the possibility of reducing disadvantages but the constitutional requirement of ensuring the equality of opportunities. The prime aim of these catch-up programmes is the reduction of disadvantages in this sense. We consider the organisation of such programmes as a measure aiming at eradicating inequalities of opportunity which consequently serves the fulfilment of the constitutional requirement of the equality of rights (Const. § 70/A (3)). Naturally, minority education as such is aiming to create also an equality of opportunities but the success of minority education is different in the case of the national minorities and within the Gypsy minority.

The law discriminates the Gypsy minority as a whole.

It is worth examining the question of organising separate Gypsy classes from this point of view. After examining the pertaining regulations it may be ascertained that the organisation of education in separate classes is not per se anti-Constitutional since education in separate classes and groups is a general characteristic of minority education. The crucial question is how, why and by whom this separated education was organised and whether it led to or leads to the attainment of the Constitutional objective in whose interest it was organised. In the case of students belonging to national minorities it may be declared that separate education fulfils its purpose which is the finding and retention of national identity and the passing on of the national language and culture.

Organising separate classes for Gypsy children

The situation is fundamentally different with Gypsy students. There are very few Gypsy education programmes which make the finding and retention of identity and the passing on of Gypsy language and culture their aim. Some of the reasons for this are the lack of internationally recognised standards for the Gypsy language and culture, the low social prestige of Gypsy culture and Gypsy people generally, the powerful pressure arriving from the majority in the direction of assimilation and finally the fact that Gypsy people themselves are divided regarding their own culture.

Low social prestige of Gypsy culture and language

The above reasons, however, do not justify the education of Gypsy children in separate classes without any special educational programme and without the approval of their parents. We have no precise information as to the number of Gypsy classes of this type functioning in Hungary but after comparing legal regulations we may declare that the organisation of separate Gypsy classes which are operated without a Gypsy catch-up programme, or on the basis of a programme which is not in accordance with the Directive for the School Education of National and Ethnic Minorities, as well as run without the knowledge and agreement of the parents is against the law, since it constitutes the negative discrimination of Gypsy students. The restoration of legality may take place in different ways according to local conditions and parameters. Where separation is not justified either for reasons of minority rights or for educational reasons, the organisation of students into integrated (mixed) classes is advisable.

General requirement: Gypsy children should adapt to the expectations of Hungarian schools.

It has been (and in many places still is) a general requirement toward Gypsy students participating in integrated education (mixed classes) and catch-up courses that in the interest of integration they should in every way adapt to the expectations of Hungarian schools. The final outcome of this sort of attitude and practice was that although after 1990 the number of Gypsy persons completing primary education increased (70-75%), the rate of those entering further education remained low. While more than half of non-Gypsy students continue their education in some form of secondary school, the rate of Gypsy students accepted into secondary education is just under 3% while in tertiary education the rate of Roma students is 0.22%.

The social background of Gypsy children doubtlessly plays a part in their low rate of success in education. In Hungary only 30.8% of Roma men of a working age, between 19 and 59 has found employment, the rate among women is as low as 17.5% (Kemény-Havas, 1994). One out of every three Gypsy students is being brought up in a family where both parents are unemployed. The parents' chances of reintegration in the labour market are dropping lower and lower and this has its effect on the education of the children. In order to eradicate this intolerable situation the Government constructed a package of measures the aim of which is to improve the life conditions of Gypsies. We wish to monitor the realisation of this project in the future. At the same time the Hungarian system of general education does not take into account the difference in the cultural background of Roma people. The pedagogical methods of the catch-up courses have not yet become clarified, their evaluation has not taken place, and their efficiency has not been tested. At the same time Hungarian general education is becoming increasingly competitive thus leaving less and less of a chance for such programmes as they necessitate the mobilisation of further budgetary resources. Under such conditions neither the integrated, nor the segregated education of Gypsy students is able to attain the constitutional objective of eradicating the difference in the equality of opportunities. Besides, as we shall see below, the organisation of Gypsy classes may lead to negative discrimination. In the education of Gypsy students, Hungarian general education and within that the catch-up courses organised for Gypsy children have proved to be a failure. As the Minister of Culture and Education himself admitted, the professional and legal background for the education of the Gypsy minority is non-existent.

The professional and legal background for the education of the Gypsy minority is non-existent.

We believe that general education as a public service ought to take into account the needs and interest of its users. At the present time it has become a clearly recognised expectation that parents need to be much more involved in decisions regarding the education of their children than previously happened. At the moment there is a lack of communication between Gypsy children and the schools in a great number of places. The eradication of this communication failure could be the task partly of teachers and partly of the minority self-governments which mediate between the Gypsy communities and the maintainer of the school. The legal framework for such a process is provided but the mediation can only be successful if the representatives of the minority self-government are also in possession of the necessary professional information and expertise. Besides this we strongly encourage the heads and maintainers of educational institutions to involve the representatives of other professions in this joint effort in order to increase the efficiency of the teaching work and to attain more efficient communication. Graduate experts of social work may be able to represent points of view which had been equally ignored by representatives of the minority self-government and by teachers. Social workers and social educational experts have a joint knowledge of the educational process and the family conditions with which to contribute to the efficient resolution of the characteristic problems of children belonging to this minority.

At the moment there is a lack of communication between Gypsy children and the schools.

One reason why parents have to be involved in decisions is because Gypsy catch-up programmes cannot be organised without the parents' knowledge and approval. The practice in this regard has not so far been obvious since we received complaints whereby Gypsy pupils are receiving Gypsy catch-up education without their parents' knowledge and that the local municipal government in possession of data regarding the pupil's belonging to a minority had applied for extra national and ethnic minority per capita allowances. In connection to one concrete case I sought out the Ombudsman in

Gypsy pupils are receiving Gypsy catch-up education without their parents' knowledge.

charge of data protection and requested his opinion regarding the questionnaire that members of the Gypsy catch-up course had to fill in. The opinion of the Ombudsman in charge of data protection was that questionnaires inquiring into the pupil's ethnic background can only be used if the programme serves the reduction of the disadvantages of the Gypsy minority and is in agreement with the regulations of the Directives for the Education of National and Ethnic Minorities. According to §7 (1) of the Act.n.e.m. it is the individual's exclusive and inalienable right to state and declare their belonging to an ethnic group or minority. No one can be forced to make a declaration regarding their belonging to a minority group. In view of the above regulations filling in the questionnaire can only be voluntary.

On the basis of §2 (2) of Act LXIII of 1992 on the protection of personal data and the publicity of data of public interest, data concerning national and ethnic background qualify as special data. On the basis of §6 (1) and (2) the person concerned or their legal representative must be informed about the voluntary character of data recording, as well as of its aim and the mode of handling of the data. Gypsy catch-up courses must thus be organised in such a fashion that they should fully comply with the above outlined legal regulations. We believe that for this to take place it is inevitable and necessary to involve parents and teachers in intensive communication and co-operation.

protection of
personal data

A decentralised
system of general
education

According to the currently valid regulations a decentralised system of general education is to emerge in Hungary but the success of minority education requires that the Ministry of Culture and Education should create, with the involvement of those concerned, the professional foundations for the education of members of the Gypsy minority. It is also necessary to circulate information in order to help publicise those educational programmes which have been operating and proved successful, to help the acquisition of knowledge about Gypsy culture through further training courses. In the interest of the educational self-management of the Gypsy minority the local minority self-government must be given the opportunity to come to understand their rights regarding minority education and the conditions for the enforcement of these rights.

FINANCING

Per capita
allowance

The most important alteration in terms of the financing of minority education is that the 1996 amendment of the Act.gen.ed has declared the national and ethnic minority supplementary per capita allowance supports as 'not to be used for any other purpose' (Act.gen.ed Appendix No. 1., Part Two, Point 2.) In formulating their 1997 budgets, local municipal governments had to apply this regulation. Act CXXIV of 1996 on the Budget of the Republic of Hungary for the year 1997 contains the following regulations regarding normative state supports,

§19 (1) Parliament defines the pretexts and sums for the various types of normative state supports in Appendix 3.

(2) Normative state supports are publicised by the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Home Affairs in a joint decree before 31 January 1997, on the basis of task indices and other indicators based on the data provided by the local municipal councils.

§20 Parliament establishes state supports with mandatory utilisation (..)

e) for the support of the nursery school education, school instruction of national and ethnic minorities and for the support of bilingual instruction according to conditions as

defined in Appendix 8. These supports are publicised on the basis of task indices and other indicators based on the data provided by the local municipal councils.

Was it spent on minority education?

The decree defined in §19 (2) is the joint decree of the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Home Affairs 1/1997 (Jan 28) whose §1 (3) declares that the description of supplementary supports which local municipal councils may claim for the year 1997 on the basis of §20 (1) point e) of the Budgetary Act and its Appendix 8. for encouraging the education and instruction of members of national and ethnic minorities, taking into account task indices and other indicators based on the data provided by the local municipal councils is contained in Appendix 2, broken down into municipal governments and types of support. In 1997 municipal councils received almost HUF 3.25 billion as supplementary support for national and ethnic minorities. It is of no small interest as to whether a financial support which amounts to such a significant sum has actually fulfilled its mission, that is, whether it has been spent on minority education or not. §44 of the Act.n.e.m. admits that instruction in the mother tongue or of the mother tongue involves extra costs which must be covered by the state or the local municipal government as prescribed by law. It is this extra cost that is supposed to be covered by the national and ethnic minorities supplementary support.

In my 1996 report I indicated to Parliament that the realisation of the above regulation will not be without difficulties. My predictions proved correct, as early as the first quarter of 1997 we received complaints whereby some local municipal councils subtract the sum of the supplementary support from the sum that is allocated to minority institutions, claiming that no more is needed for the institution to fulfil its function. The other problem is that the budget of minority institutions does not include the sum of the supplementary support under a separate heading thus heads of institutions do not know how much they can spend on minority education. This is what happened in the case of one minority school in Baranya county. Since the complaints allowed us to judge that the problem is characteristic of the entire country, we contacted the heads of country administration offices and requested that they examine whether similar cases had occurred in their county and to submit their opinion as to the legality of the above described state of affairs.

Local municipal councils subtract the sum of the supplementary support.

At the same time we contacted the central minority self-governments and requested them to inform us whether they know of the occurrence of such instances. Next, we contacted the members of the National Minorities Committee and requested them to issue a professional opinion. Last, but not least, we sent a letter to the Minister of Culture and Education, to the Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Home Affairs, requesting them to describe their opinion regarding the system of normative support for national and ethnic minorities and regarding the information that we had received in connection with it.

1. The heads of county administration offices were most helpful and ready to co-operate with our office and investigated the problem we had indicated in a short period of time.

The head of the Baranya County Administration Office investigated the complaint of the school headmaster of the township in question regarding the national minority supplementary normative support. After reviewing the Budget of the local municipal government all that could be ascertained was that the sum of the per capita allowance appeared on the credit side. In the school's Budget the sum of the general education per capita allowance, which is provided without obligation of utilisation, and the national and ethnic minority supplementary support appears jointly in the bracket 'institution's income, financing'. The head of the Office established that the sum of the national and ethnic minority support does not appear individually either on the credit or the debit side. According to the opinion of the Head of Office, the significance of the indicated problem reaches far beyond the range of task and authority of his office and the National Auditing Board ought to be involved in its resolution.

The above described instance raises the question as to how educational institutions can utilise the sum of the allowance for the education of national and ethnic minorities if their budget does not reveal the end to which they are obliged to utilise it.

After the analysis of the pertaining regulations it can be established that the supplementary per capita allowance cannot be separated on the debit side because neither the prescriptions of Act XXXVIII of 1992 nor the Government Decree 156/1995 (Dec. 26) issued for its implementation contain the specialist task of such denomination for Budgets prepared according to their guidelines.

One head of office suggest the amendment of the pertaining regulations so as to ensure clearly the possibility of control both in terms of the appearance of the support in the budgets and in term of its utilisation.

Budgetary
issues

The head of another office draws attention to the fact that local municipal councils act correctly if they pass the entire sum of the support stipulating mandatory utilisation is passed on to the educational institution. In the opposite case, according to §21 (5) of the Budgetary Act the allowance must be repaid with interest after the acceptance of the final settlements. According to their opinion a factor of decisive importance in this matter is the existence or otherwise of good working relations between the head of institution and the local mayor. In any other case it is possible that the local government ensures the per capita allowance state support with mandatory utilisation for the institution but reduces the annual budget of the given institution by redistributing the support which is received without mandatory utilisation. This possibility is left open for the mayor by §84 (2) of Act LXV of 1990 on local municipal governments.

According to point 2. of Appendix 1 of Act LXXIX of 1993 on General Education, 'the nursery school education and school education of those belonging to national and ethnic minorities as well as bilingual education must be supported by supplementary professional per capita subsidies which may not be utilised to any other purpose.' According to the opinion of the head of office in question, the relating regulations are difficult to interpret clearly. If the supplementary per capita support related to national and ethnic minorities must be passed on to the institution on top of the normative per capita support without mandatory utilisation, this should be clearly declared so in a legal regulation, which also ought to regulate clearly the addressee and precise method of the obligation to account for the sum.

All heads of county administrative offices, without exception, find the participation of the National Auditing Board necessary in order to investigate the problems of financing minority education.

2. The educational experts of central minority self-governments (who are in most cases also the members of the National Minority Committee) were also most ready in responding to our request and indicated the abuses that they themselves had experienced. In the following paragraphs we are going to describe a few of these.

Abuses
experienced by the
national minority
educational experts

According to the experience of the headmaster of the Hungarian-German Bilingual School in Pécs, Chairperson of the NMC, in the case of educational institutions which beside the normative per capita support without mandatory utilisation are also entitled to national minority supplementary support, the contribution of the local municipal council was reduced by approximately the same sum as the sum of the national minority supplementary support. He believes that the solution could be achieved if schools could plan to use the supplementary support to cover the extra costs entailed by national education (breaking classes into smaller groups, student-swaps, special national projects) and they need assistance in protecting themselves from the above described actions of local governments. Thus this budgetary item could not be used for covering material costs that occur in any type of school.

According to the Education Committee of the National Slovakian Self-Government, local municipal governments usually spend far more on the maintenance of their national and minority school than the total sum of the school and the national minority

normative per capita supports, so that they can always prove utilisation. 'This is only a play with figures' - the quote is from the head of the financial manager of the municipal council. This means that the national minority normative support is still swallowed up by basic maintenance, even though it is separated. The person who is the source of this information suggests a change of law to ensure the solution which would render it possible to control that the sum of the minority support is actually utilised for purposes of minority education.

The head of the Training and Educational Committee of the Central Self-Government of Croats in Hungary describes in their answer that their committee is in direct contact with the heads of the institutions of Croats in Hungary and on the basis of the information that they supply it can be declared that the minority normative per capita allowance is utilised for purposes other than that of minority education and that the control of the course of these sums is almost impossible. They believe that the reasons for this are that the utilisation is not under any control. The heads of institutions public servants' councils, school boards and minority self-governments do not practice their rights and the representatives of minority self-governments lack the knowledge of the legally assured rights.

3. As we indicated above, we also contacted the Ministers of Culture and Education, of Finance and of Home Affairs and requested them to express their opinions regarding the system of supplementary per capita normative allowance of minority education and regarding the complaints we received in this regard. All three Government Ministers assured me of their support and readily gave their points of view on those problems which were indicated. In his answer, the Minister of Culture and Education admitted that it is a basic criterion for the practical enforcement of rights related to the education of national and ethnic minorities that the supplementary per capita normative support should be utilised in the appropriate fashion. The head of the educational portfolio considers it a success that the mandatory utilisation of this sum has been recorded in the letter of law. He, too, has been informed that in spite of this there are institutions carrying out minority education which do not receive a sum increased by the sum of the supplementary per capita normative support from their maintaining body.

Ministers' replies to the Ombudsman's questions

He considers it one of the basic problems that minority self-governments cannot always and in every place enforce their wide-ranging legal rights and their right of consent. A great proportion of schools are maintained by local municipal governments and it is they that apply for the per capita normative allowances, they decide the budgets of educational institutions, they have to accept the educational programme of schools and practice the rights of the maintainer. It is in co-operation with them that self-governments of minorities could and should ensure that the minority per capita normative allowance should actually be provided for institutions of instruction and education as an extra resource for financing the extra tasks that flow from the peculiarities of minority education.

According to the Minister of Education the other significant problem is that although the professional conceptions regarding the education of other minorities was developed years and even decades ago and Ministerial regulations subsequently appeared on the basis of these, the minority education of Gypsies still lacks the appropriate professional and legal background. This makes it excessively difficult to examine and control the appropriate utilisation of the supplementary per capita normative allowance for Gypsy minority education. According to the Minister the desired resolution may emerge through the enforcement of the Ministerial Decree regarding the Directives for the Nursery school and School Education of National and Ethnic minorities, since on the basis of this and the National Base Curriculum it will be possible to create those local educational programmes which record the system of requirements for minority education in a fashion which is easy to control. In future they wish to tie the provision of national and ethnic minority supplementary per capita allowances to the realisation of these programmes.

Difficult to examine and control the utilisation of the per capita allowance for Gypsy minority education.

The Minister of Home Affairs, in agreement with the Minister of Finance, informed me that according to the currently valid regulations the financial and economic regulation system of local municipal councils is of a credit interested nature, i. e. it does not define or detail expenditures. Local municipal councils handle their incomes independently, within the frames defined by law, and they finance their legally prescribed compulsory tasks as well as their voluntarily undertaken tasks from a unified budget. Consequently the realisation of the various compulsory tasks, mainly prescribed by law, which are financed by municipal councils from various sources of income can be examined, in effect, on the basis of their compliance with the rules of occupational branch and profession related regulations. A sure point of reference is provided for such an examination by §38 (1) of the Act.gen.ed according to which institutions of public education must possess the resources they need in order to fulfil their function. Institutions of education must ensure the fulfilment of their tasks on the basis of resources provided by the founding and maintaining organisation and arising from other sources. The cost of the operation and maintenance of institutions of public education must be prognosticated in a budget which is compiled annually and is established by the maintaining body. According to the Minister of Home Affairs and the Minister of Finance since §102 (10) of the Act.gen.ed also contains that for the formulation and modification of the budget of institutions of education and instruction which also participate in fulfilling minority related tasks the consent of the minority self-government in question must be obtained, all legal guarantees are available to ensure that the budget of the institutions in question should be formulated in accordance with the minority-related function and as described above.

Finance and
income at local
municipal
councils

The Ministers of State also remark that supplementary supports with a mandatory utilisation such as the support of the nursery school and school education of members of national and ethnic minorities is related to the extra tasks (e.g. a higher number of language lessons, special professional requirements) which occur in this particular area in the process of education. The legally correct utilisation of this sum can, naturally, be separated from the total support received by the institution but this does not mean that this supplementary support needs to appear over and above the institutional 'base support' as a kind of extra development resource.

On the basis of the above analysis it can be ascertained that the legal regulations regarding the financing of minority education are far from self-evident and thus their application is in no way a unified practice, either. We cannot accept the approach according to which the budgetary resources which the state has allocated with a mandatory utilisation only reach their target, the institutions of minority education, if the ability of the local minority self-government displays efficient interest enforcement techniques. The institution of the rights of consent and opinion ought primarily to serve co-operation rather than confrontation. For this, however, clear legal regulations are needed, and this is also required by the constitutional requirement of legal security. The legislator was also aware of the problem we indicated since Act CXLVI of 1998 on the Budget of the Republic of Hungary for 1998 contained a regulation in its Appendix No 8 according to which the support must be utilised for fulfilling the extra tasks entailed by minority education, for ensuring the time frame necessary for the study sessions and for breaking classes into smaller groups as is necessitated by teaching the language of the minority or for instruction in the minority language, and for ensuring the material and personal conditions of minority education. At the same time harmony must be created between the regulation of the law and the regulations of the laws prescribing implementation so that the state support should indeed be utilised for the purpose of minority education.

"The legal
regulations
regarding the
financing of
minority education
are far from self-
evident."

The abuse that has been indicated goes back to a shortcoming in legislation and I shall request the State Auditing Board to carry out expert investigations from the points of view of legality and practical purposefulness.

TEXT BOOK SUPPLY

The poor supply of textbooks is a general problem of minority education. The existence of textbooks and other study material which is in harmony with the National Base Curriculum, the National Minority Education Programmes and the aims of National Minorities education is a condition without which National Minority education cannot integrate itself organically with the new system of public education. A particularly damaging fact for teachers of national minorities was the delay in the publication of Directives for the School Education of National and Ethnic Minorities since it is only in the knowledge of the system of requirements based on this directive that the Ministry of Culture and Education intends to subsidise national minority textbook supply. As regards a system of textbook supply which is subsidised on a competitive basis, there is only a plan whose realisation, according to the Minister of Culture and Education, is currently underway. Thus new developments of publishers and the publication of much needed textbooks which are out of print are presently subsidised by the Ministry. We know of a national minority school which did not receive its national textbooks by the beginning of the 1997/98 academic year. The reason for this was clearly that 'due to the alteration of the system of subsidies this year and to the more circumspect preparation of agreements, related business contracts were signed later this year than has been customary.' (The quote is from a letter by the Minister of Culture and Education.) At professional forums publishers' representatives and teachers likewise declared that the present system of textbook supply and subsidisation is untenable. In several schools teachers are commissioned to translate textbooks and in other places they use books which are imported and incompatible with the National Base Curriculum or simply out of date. In the absence of textbooks and other study material it is useless to create educational programmes and local curricula, as there is no hope for their realisation. This may cause a contradictory situation in national minority education and the Ministry of Culture and Education must instantly act in order to remedy it.

Poor textbook supply

New developments of publishers and the publication of textbooks.

TEACHER TRAINING AND FURTHER-TRAINING

The future of national minority general education is tied in with the development of national minority teacher training. National minority general education can only answer new challenges and rising expectations (this latter is proven by empirical surveys) if there is an adequate number of suitably qualified national minority teachers available. The system of national minority teacher training is also in a state of transition. The present comprehensive survey now proceeds by examining the system of national minority tertiary education and the system of in-service training. It is only possible to secure the standard of national minority public education on a long term scale if the machinery of tertiary education is also prepared to face this task.

NEGATIVE DISCRIMINATION

1. The content of negative discrimination

The definition of negative discrimination

The definition of negative discrimination is contained in the UNESCO Convention on the battle against discrimination in education (announced in Law Decree 11 of 1964). According to Article 1. of the Convention 'by the term "discrimination" we mean any sort of distinction, exclusion, limitation or favouritism according to race, skin colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social background, wealth or birth the aim of which is the eradication or curtailment of equality of treatment in the field of education, such as

- a) the exclusion of any person or group from participation in any type or grade of education
- b) the curtailment of the education of any person or group in one grade and the demotion to a lower grade,
- c) the establishment or maintenance of separate systems or institutions of education for certain persons or groups, maintaining the reservations included in Article 2. of the present Convention or
- d) causing persons or groups to come into situations which are incompatible with human dignity.

2. For the use of the present Convention 'education' means all the types and grades of education and includes the sense of the possibility of participation in education, as well as the standard and quality of education and the conditions among which the studies are carried out.'

According to Article 2. 'it is not considered discrimination if certain states allow

- a) the establishment and maintenance of separate educational systems of institutions for students of the two sexes as long as these systems or institutions provide equal opportunities for participation in education, each working with teaching staff with equal qualifications, possessing school rooms and equipment of equal quality and facilitates the completion of identical or equivalent courses of study,
- b) the establishment and maintenance of separate systems of institutions for religious or language reasons which provide such education as satisfies the requirements of students or their legal representatives as long as the participation in these systems or attendance at these institutions is open to free choice and the education here provided is in harmony with the norms that might be accepted or prescribed by the pertaining authorities especially in terms of education of the same grade,
- c) the establishment or maintenance of private institutions of study so long as the aim of these institutions is not the exclusion of any particular group but to broaden the choice of educational opportunities offered by the public authorities, provided that their practical operation is in harmony with this theoretical objective and that the education there provided is in harmony with the norms that might be accepted or prescribed by the pertaining authorities especially in terms of education of the same grade.'

The above regulation is an organic part of Hungarian internal law and thus we consider it a starting point for the examination of negative discrimination in education.

When is it not considered discrimination?

An undue simplification of the problem.

Negative discrimination against students belonging to different minorities is usually traced back to the prejudices or racism of the members of the majority society. This approach, which assumes a negative motive in each case, is unjustified and is an undue simplification of the problem. Pedagogical practices which are disadvantageous for students often arise from pure ignorance and are the result of the fact that teachers or decision makers of educational policy are not suitably prepared for their mission. (Pertaining literature distinguishes between the concepts of intentional and unintentional discrimination.) Since the intentions are different if not from the point of view of possible modes of therapy then certainly from the point of view of results, in our discussion of practices which lead to negative discrimination against minority students we shall also include cases which may even have been the result of good intentions.

The concept of negative discrimination has three possible interpretations which are again not unrelated to the intentions involved, (1) according to the narrow interpretation it only includes cases in which the disadvantage experienced by minority students is the result of negative discrimination, (2) a broader interpretation includes all educational practices which create a disadvantage for students coming from a national minority as students coming from a national minority or (3) which does not help to clear up the disadvantages which arise from the minority positions of these students.

Three possible interpretations of negative discrimination

Although the third approach clearly blurs the boundary between disadvantage and negative discrimination, this is still the definition we are going to use, for the following reasons.

- (1) As we have already discussed, the disadvantages discussed by these students are not in every case the result of prejudice or racism or consequent segregation and discrimination.
- (2) In the following it will become clear that in all cases discrimination is only one element of the disadvantages which affects students to a varying extent from minority to minority. These disadvantages are inseparable from each other and they cannot as a rule be demonstrated or remedied in a pure form.
- (3) The Hungarian system of minority related legislation goes further than the mere prohibition of negative discrimination but also prescribes the application of a system of positive measures which serve to balance out various disadvantages.

We clearly cannot consider as negative discrimination those disadvantages which equally affect students belonging to both the majority and the minority, (e.g. certain social problems) or those which cannot be eradicated by the system of means that are available to the law or educational policy (e.g. educational segregation which emerges on a systematic level as a result of residential segregation) or those which although affecting minority students are the result of decisions made by members of the minority in question. (Poorly functioning minority institutions.)

Since negative discrimination is very much a contextual phenomenon we consider it necessary to outline the system of relations within which certain educational situations can be considered the source of disadvantages for students belonging to minorities. From this point of view we have to take into account the following three criteria.

Negative discrimination: a contextual phenomenon

- the avoidance of all forms of discrimination.
- the 'translation' of minority rights into educational practice. (e.g. acquiring language and culture, free choice of identity, etc.)
- equal opportunities for progress within the educational system.

On the basis of the above we consider as negative discrimination the following:

- such features of the educational system as limit equality of opportunity,
- inadequate and disadvantageous solutions in the organisation of education,
- inadequate and disadvantageous educational practices.

Negative discrimination in education

Minority students may be classified into three groups

Practices within public education which qualify as negative discrimination do not affect all minority groups in Hungary and affect them to different degrees. On the basis of typical problems minority students may be classified into the following three groups,

- students participating in school level minority education
- gypsy students participating in school level minority education,
- students belonging to minority groups with no school level education.

Students belonging to the larger national minorities (Croatians, Germans, Slovaks, Rumanians) participate in minority programmes, in educational institutions maintained

by the local municipal councils. Since these groups are not 'visible' minorities, (i.e. not recognisable by exterior signs) by students belonging to the minority group we mean the students who participate in the minority programme. Gypsy students belong to a visible markedly distinct group but only some of these of students participate in minority 'catch-up' programmes. Students belonging to smaller national minorities do not usually study in institutions of minority education instead the minority education characteristically takes place in so called 'Sunday schools,' on a training course basis.

NEGATIVE DISCRIMINATION IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

The Hungarian system of education displays several structural features which may be the source of negative discrimination for certain minority students (thus not entirely for the entire minority group.) These structural features are the following;

1. The problem of minority programmes which are impossible to complete in the period of time defined for basic education.
2. The lack of educational institution models which are suited to serve specialist requirements and are adaptable to various minority situations.
3. The disadvantageous function of the system of special needs education for gypsy students,
4. The lack of an adequate system of professional development and services.
5. The dissatisfactory standard of regulation and educational policy aiming to eradicate negative discrimination.

Structural features of the educational system

2.1 In the new system of practical educational regulations, basic education is not completed at the end of the eighth year of primary school but by a Basic Education Examination which is to be taken at the end of the tenth year. In the present system of minority education, however, minority programmes usually come to an end at the end of primary school, except for national minority grammar schools which offer the opportunity of further education to an average of 15% of minority students most of whom belong to the larger national minorities. This means that the great majority of students participates in an incomplete minority programme. More precisely, in the ninth and tenth year they do not participate in a programme which would prepare them for taking the Basic Education Examination in their minority language. This language is the very reason why the present system of general education is not permeable from the point of view of minority education. This is in spite of the fact that in terms of the totality of the system of general education various guarantees of permeability help to resolve the tensions between school structures which are at odds with levels of regulation as regards practical realisation.

The great majority of students participates in an incomplete minority programme.

The extended duration of basic education can also be a source of disadvantages for Gypsies, for a different reason. Since the proportion of Gypsy students who continue their studies in institutions of secondary education is incredibly low, it becomes even more difficult for them to participate in occupational training for which at the moment a completed ten year course of basic education is a criterion in most cases. This may have a dramatic effect on the already disastrous level of education of the Gypsy minority and thus on their position on the labour market.

2.2 The question of models for educational institutions which satisfy specialist, minority requirements is something that concerns, to varying degrees, all three minority groups that we identified earlier. It is a shared feature among these models that in view of the disadvantages flowing from a minority position they are supposed to ensure equal opportunities for students belonging to minorities in terms of progress within the system of general education.

2.2.1. The disadvantages afflicting Gypsy students are of such an extent that a solution whose only target are institutions maintained by municipal councils will not be able to reduce to the desirable degree the vast difference between the level of education of Gypsies and of the majority society. For this it is also necessary to create special institutional models whose conception takes the special position of Gypsies as its starting point and whose educational programme is formulated accordingly. (From this point of view it is indifferent whether these institutions are maintained by local municipal councils, minority self-governments or non-profit organisations.) The possible educational models are already available (six and a half year secondary grammar schools, technical schools, study courses, local collegiate schools for small villages etc.) We need a whole national network of so-called Gypsy minority educational institutions which ought to be formulated not by introducing one model all over the country but by building on local initiatives in a way which is adapted to local characteristics, in harmony with the principles of the free choice of identity and of educational autonomy.

It is necessary to create special institutional models for Gypsies.

2.2.2. So called 'Sunday schools' cannot be transformed into a school system education, mainly because of the insufficient number of students attending them. Nonetheless permeability between 'proper' general education and a course-based minority education could be created with the help of examinations and suitably formulated examination certificates.

2.3. According to the data of the school statistics of the academic year 1992-93 the rate of Gypsy students in Hungarian general education was 7.12%. The residential-geographical structure of the Gypsy minority and their segregation within individuals towns and villages causes the proportion of Gypsy students to be quite different in certain educational institutions than in others. In the year just mentioned, over 70% of Gypsy children studied in a school where their proportion exceeded 10% and, within this, 42% went to schools where their proportion exceeded 22%. (Segregation within the school system has only got worse since that time.) The tendency of segregation cannot be stopped by mere anti-discriminatory measures and regulations - it can only be reduced through a complex government programme which embraces the entire set of problems related to the Gypsy minority. In view of this fact we place a special emphasis on the realisation of the package of measures whose aim it is to improve the life conditions of Gypsy people.

In 1992-93, the rate of Gypsy students in Hungarian general education was 7.12%.

The channelling of Gypsy children into special needs schools or classes originally organised for mildly mentally handicapped children is a method for the segregation of Gypsy children which is not unknown in other Central European countries. According to estimations, about half of the children studying in such institutions are Gypsy which means that their proportion there is six to seven times higher than their proportion in the whole of the system of general education. The rules of transfer to special needs classes have been repeatedly tightened but even this failed to prevent the use of such classes as massive 'deposits' for Gypsy children. The great number of Gypsy children in this type of institution which cuts them off any chance of further study or employment is not a sign of the intellectual unsuitability of Gypsies but of the discrimination that is practised in regard to them and of the pedagogical failure of the regular institutions of general education. Thus a possible package of measures aiming to eradicate this phenomenon must simultaneously serve the eradication of discriminative practices and the improvement of 'ordinary' institutions of general education which expels from itself a great number of Gypsy children. In 1998 we wish to conduct a comprehensive national survey in order to map out the negative discriminations that afflict Gypsy children in special-needs schools.

Special schools: a method for the segregation of Gypsy children.

A comprehensive national survey to map out the negative discriminations against Gypsy children in special-needs schools.

2.4

It can be considered a problem present throughout the entire system that while there exists a legal prohibition on negative discrimination, there is not a system of educational development and services which could offer effective help for educational institutions to supplant practices of school organisation and educational practice which

are disadvantageous for minority students with other solutions. The two years that have gone by since the re-organisation in 1995 of the minority education development and service system have proved that the system of minority services which is integrated into the system which offers its services to the entire Hungarian system of general education has become overly fragmented. This causes their work to be uncoordinated and its achievements hardly ever reach the targeted institutions.

2.5

The lack of a central conception on policy.

A problem related to those summarised in the above points is the lack of such a central conception, or local regional conceptions, of educational policy which might include all the related tasks of regulation, control, institution development, educational development, evaluation, research and financing and as such might visibly reduce the extent of the negative discrimination of minority students within a reasonable time.

NEGATIVE DISCRIMINATION IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

The targets of practices which may be qualified as negative discrimination in individual educational institutions are almost always Gypsy students. At the same time, students who belong to national minorities do not always receive the minority education that is available to them on the basis of the existing system of minority legislation. The language and cultural content offered by national minority programmes often falls short of satisfying the right of students to acquiring their own language and culture. The language teaching efficiency of typically language-oriented minority educational programmes is, to say the least, doubtful and in many schools the teaching of the area of education which is called 'minority nation studies' is entirely absent. The solution to these problems necessitates the launching of educational development programmes which are of a satisfactory standard without exception and the procurement of the required financing.

The targets of negative discrimination are almost always Gypsy students.

The negative discrimination of Gypsy students takes two forms - one is segregation and the other is the unsuitability of educational methods used in their education. The reason for negative discrimination within the school is often other than prejudice against the Gypsy students. Lacking the necessary conditions and skills many schools and teachers use methods which are unsuited to offer Gypsy children a sense of achievement, indeed they usually act to increase their disadvantages and to make the student more acutely aware of them.

Negative discrimination in schools has various degrees. School practices which merit the above qualification range from education of a reduced value through segregation of varying degrees to the practice of getting rid of Gypsy students entirely (making them fail, exempting them from studies, referring them to special schools or classes.) Education of reduced value does not necessarily entail segregation, it can be achieved by 'differentiated conducting of classes and evaluation'. This process is characterised by partly reducing the requirements facing Gypsy students and partly reducing the time devoted to their education and also to the entire lack of special, out-of-class education which is offered to other students (swimming, foreign languages, computer skills etc.).

Degrees of discrimination

In its mildest forms segregation means physical separation within the class room, in worse cases the organisation of Gypsy classes for students of various ages. In 1995 out of 840 data-providing schools, 132 operated one or more Gypsy classes. We do not know the precise number of Gypsy classes but it is likely to be over 150. In these classes the students do not receive a higher quality of education than those studying in integrated classes. The development of Gypsy children educated in these segregated classes usually comes to a halt and after one or two years their re-integration in the normal course of education is no longer possible. Segregation strengthens the children's sense of distance between the minority and the majority and conditions them in this respect. This also means that it has an immeasurably harmful effect on children

Segregation

who belong to the majority society. These Gypsy classes can be called the dead-end streets of general education no less than the special-needs classes.

A recent form of negative discrimination is the re-classification of students as 'private students'. We have received signals to the effect that the parents of 'problem children' have been persuaded to apply for their children to be permitted to complete their studies as privately educated students. Phenomena like this must most urgently be surveyed and recorded.

Private students

CONCLUSIONS

The statements of this survey have hopefully highlighted the fact that there are serious shortcomings and malpractices in legislation and in the application of the law as regards the education of national and ethnic minorities in Hungary. These malpractices may be remedied by the modification of legal regulations or by the creation of new regulations or by the correct application of already existing regulations. This is the aim of the proposals and initiatives formulated in the following chapter.

We should like to draw attention most emphatically to a few main points of view. It has been our experience that most of the complaints addressed to our office emerge because the people directly involved in minority education (teachers, students, parents, municipal and minority self-government representatives) have very little information at their service to help them to understand how local education is to be organised in the future and what role they are to play in this. It is our conviction that the post-communist transition can only genuinely take place in the education system if all its participants are clearly aware of their rights, duties and opportunities. For this, however, it is not satisfactory to master the mass of legislation that regulate general education. As we have mentioned in our introduction, institutions of minority education are operated jointly by local municipal councils and local minority self-governments. They are right to expect assistance in this effort. According to the Act on General Education, the national organisation of educational-professional services which are instrumental in assisting minority education and instruction must be taken completed. To the date of the completion of the present survey this system of institutions has failed to emerge and consequently teachers and representatives feel that they have been abandoned and left to their own resources. According to the signals that reach our office, the Ministry of Culture and Education cannot on its own cope with the task of mediating the mass of information which is necessary to implement the Act yet they cannot confer this task on any other authority. In a stable democracy it is a requirement urged by the state of law and order in the course of creating laws of higher importance that before a regulation comes into force, a satisfactory amount of time should be left in which to make preparations to implement the new law in the proper fashion. In the period of the post-communist transition we reconciled ourselves to the situation that the time available to those applying the nascent regulations is, as a rule, too short for preparation. This situation can only be considered in any sense acceptable if this short period is characterised by an intensive circulation of information, if we see the organisation of training programmes, and if the state organisations use the widest repertoire of communicational strategies in order to supply the users of the law with the necessary amount of information. The National and Ethnic Minorities Office must accept a far greater share of this effort than heretofore, since one of its functions according to the legal regulation defining it is to foster the flow of opinions and information between the Government and the minority organisations.

Remedy:
- modification of legal regulations
- creation of new regulations
- the correct application of existing regulations.

Central minority self-governments can be of great help.

Although the duties related to the above mentioned tasks are primarily the responsibility of state organisations, the central minority self-governments can be of great help in this work. They can use their own means to further the preparations of local minority self-government representatives since it is in their joint interest that minority education should function in an adequate fashion and that minority interests should be enforced within the system of general education.

Involve parents to the greatest possible degree.

Teachers as well as representatives of municipal councils, local and central minority self-governments must make efforts to involve parents to the greatest possible degree in educational decisions. The legislative framework for this is available since the institutional framework of general education and, within that, of minority education facilitates the participation of parents, students and minority self-governments in decisions or in the preparations of decisions.

PROPOSALS, RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of §25 of Act LIX of 1993 on the Ombudsman of citizens' rights I make the following proposal to the Minister of Culture and Education.

Sanctioning negative discrimination.

1. As the minister in charge of the preparation of the legal regulation of general education to propose the amendment of (3) §128 of Act LXXIX of 1993 on General Education in order to put an end to the negative discrimination of the teachers of national minorities in regard to the conditions of obtaining specialist qualifications,
2. to propose the amendment of Act LXXXIX of 1993 on General Education in order to include regulations regarding the definition, surveying, sanctioning and demonstration of negative discrimination in education in the Act.

On the basis of §25 (1) of Act LIX of 1993 on the Ombudsman of citizens' rights I make the following proposals to the Minister of Culture and Education.

1. To accelerate the process of legislation so that the detailed regulations of the Directives for the school education of national and ethnic minorities, broken down according to individual minorities, may be completed within the shortest possible amount of time.
2. In accordance with §36 (6) of Act LXXIX of 1993 on General Education to take steps to ensure the organisation of a nation-wide system of educational-professional services in order to assist the education of instruction of national minorities in nursery schools, schools and boarding institutions.
3. To elaborate the system of competitive support for national minority text books in order to put an end to the presently prevailing dissatisfactory situation in the area of national minority textbook supplying.

On the basis of §20 (1) of Act LIX of 1993 on the Ombudsman of citizens' rights I make the following recommendations to the Minister of Culture and Education.

1. To conduct investigations in order to explore why Gypsy children absent themselves to the present high degree from nursery school education and on the basis of these investigations to elaborate educational policy systems of incentive and communicational strategies in order to change the present situation,
2. To conduct a nation-wide survey in order to map out the discriminative practices in the organisation of education prevalent in the system of general education which

Surveys and investigations

afflict students belonging to national and ethnic minorities and to elaborate measures with which to eradicate these.

3. With reference to §1 of Government Decree 47/1990 (Sept. 15) to elaborate programmes, using the complete arsenal of communicational strategies, in order to provide adequate training for local minority self-government representatives who participate in decision making related to minority education, in order to put them in possession of information regarding their related legally guaranteed rights, thus assuring the practice and enforcement of the rights of national and ethnic minorities.

On the basis of §18 (3) of Act LIX of 1993 on the ombudsman of citizens' rights I make the following request that the Head of the National Auditing Board examines what sort of malpractices of legislation or of the application of the law may be detected in the utilisation of the per capita normative supplementary support for national and ethnic minorities as regulated in Appendix 1., Part Two, Point 2 of Act LXXIX of 1993 on General Education and on the basis of the findings of the examination, if necessary, to initiate the amendment of the law by the legislator.

Per capita

On the basis of §20 (1) of Act LIX of 1993 on the ombudsman of citizens' rights I make the following recommendation to the head of the National and Ethnic Minorities Office to elaborate a programme on the basis of §2 (4) point b) of Government Decree 34/1990 (Aug. 30) for furthering and making more efficient the flow of opinions and information between the Government and minority self-governments in order for local minority self-government representatives to gain adequate knowledge of the rights that they may practice in the area of minority education, on the mode of practising these right so that they may participate in training programmes regarding questions of minority education.

Flow of information

Training for the staff of public administrations

On the basis of §20 (1) of Act LIX of 1993 on the ombudsman of citizens' rights I make the following recommendation to the heads of Capital City and County Public Administration Offices, whereby they are requested in the course of dealing with the tasks of training and further training as laid down in §18 of Government Decree 191/1996 (Dec. 17) to place special emphasis on ensuring that the staff of public administrations fully respect the rights of members of national and ethnic minorities as laid down in the pertaining regulations. As far as possible, representatives of local minority self-governments should be given the opportunity to participate at these training courses.

February 1998 Budapest
Dr Jenő Kaltenbach

APPENDIX

THE MAIN REGULATIONS OF ACT LXXIX OF 1993 ON GENERAL EDUCATION.

Preamble

In order to assure the practice of the right to culture and education on the basis of equal opportunities, to ensure the freedom of conscience and conviction and of religion, in order to ensure that the love of the country is provided for within the course of general education, in order to ensure the right of national and ethnic minorities to education in the mother tongue as well as the freedom of learning and teaching, in order to define the rights and duties of children, students, parents and the employees of general education and in order to ensure the management and operation of a system of general education which provides up-to-date knowledge, Parliament makes the following law.

§3

(2) Institutions of general education may be founded and maintained by the state, by local minority self governments, by central minority governments, by legal persons registered in the Republic of Hungary and by economic organisations, foundations, associations and other legal persons which were founded in the territory of the Republic of Hungary, which have headquarters in this country and finally by natural persons if they have acquired the right of carrying out such activity as prescribed by the law.

§5

The language of nursery school education, school education and instruction, and of boarding education is Hungarian or the language of national and ethnic minorities. Children and students belonging to national and ethnic minorities, may receive their nursery school education, their school education and instruction and their boarding education in their mother tongue, or in their mother tongue and Hungarian or in Hungarian depending on the choice they make as defined in the Act on the rights of national and ethnic minorities. Education and instruction may also take place, partly or entirely, in a different language.

§8

(3) The educational practice of nursery schools is based on the nursery school's educational programme which is, in turn, based on the National Base Programme for Nursery School Education. The National Base Programme for Nursery School Education is issued by the government. Before submitting the National Base Programme for Nursery School Education to the government, the consent of the National General Education Council and, in questions concerning the nursery school education of national and ethnic minorities, the consent of the National Minorities Committee and, finally, the opinion of the General Education Policy Council must be obtained.

(8) The National Base Curriculum defines requirements according to areas of instruction for the end of the fourth, sixth, eighth and tenth year. The National Base Curriculum also contains the base principles for the special curricular criteria for

- a) the school education and instruction of national and ethnic minorities
- b) the school education of students of physical, sensory, speech and other disabilities.

(10) The National Base Curriculum is issued by the Government. Before submitting the National Base Curriculum to the government, the consent of the National General Education Council and, in questions concerning the school education and instruction of national and ethnic minorities, the consent of the National Minorities Committee and, finally, the opinion of the General Education Policy Council must be obtained.

(11) Nursery schools providing national and ethnic minority nursery school education and schools providing such education and instruction apply the contents of (1) - (9) with the alteration whereby in preparing the nursery school education programme and the local school curriculum they take into account the Directives for the Nursery School Education of National and Ethnic Minorities or the Directives for the School Education of National and Ethnic Minorities, respectively. These Directives are issued by the Minister of Culture and Education with the consent of the National Minorities Committee and after requesting the opinion of the National General Education Council and the General Education Policy Council.

§9

(1) The Basic Education Examination and the Secondary Grammar Final Examination are state examinations which must be conducted according to nationally unified examination criteria (henceforth: central examination requirements). The central examination requirements of the Basic Education Examination are based on the National Base Curriculum. The central examination requirements for the Secondary Grammar Final Examination are to be defined on the basis of the general requirements of the pertaining examination regulations. The general requirements of the Secondary Grammar Final Examination contain the compulsory and uniform subject requirements

of the education and instruction that are provided in the 11th and 12th year of school education. The central examination requirements of the Basic Education Examination and the Secondary Grammar Final Examination may be supplemented by extra examination requirements by the school, on the basis of their local curriculum and as defined in the examination regulations. The establishment and announcement of the central examination requirements and the definition of methods of evaluation is the responsibility of the state. The examination, unless otherwise instructed by the regulations of the Secondary Grammar Final Examination, are organised by the school. Oral examinations are open to the public. The chairperson of the examination may limit the participation of the public if this is justified by the need to maintain law and order at the examination. The examination takes place in the language which is the language of instruction - in Hungarian, in the language of the national or ethnic minority or in another foreign language. The examinees may inspect their examination papers and may submit their opinions regarding the evaluation of the paper.

(2) Regulations regarding the organisation, general procedure, general requirements of examined subjects, the evaluation of the performance of the examinees, application and administrative procedures of the Basic Education Examination and the Secondary Grammar Final Examination are defined by the examination regulations of the Basic Education Examination and the Secondary Grammar Final Examination. The examination regulations of the Secondary Grammar Final Examination defines the subjects which must be taught at schools from the 11th year onwards. The examination regulations of the Secondary Grammar Final Examination are issued by the government in a Government Decree. Before the submission of the examination regulations of the Secondary Grammar Final Examination, the consent of the National General Education Council and, in questions concerning the school education and instruction of national and ethnic minorities, the consent of the National Minorities Committee and, finally, the opinion of the General Education Policy Council must be obtained.

(5) At the Secondary Grammar Final Examination the student's performance is examined in compulsory and in optional subjects alike. Compulsory subjects are the following, Hungarian Language and Literature, History. For those participating in national and ethnic minority education the mother tongue and its literature. Unless otherwise ordered by law, further compulsory subjects are mathematics and, except for those participating in national and ethnic minority education, one foreign language. Examination in the subjects of the Secondary Grammar Final Examination may be conducted in two tiers comprising different standards of expectation.

§17

(1) Unless otherwise ordered by the present Act, persons employed as teachers in institutions of education and instruction must hold tertiary (university or college) qualifications as prescribed by the present Act and specialist qualifications. Acceptable tertiary qualification and specialist qualifications are the following,

a) at nursery schools - nursery school teacher's qualifications,
b) within the first four years of primary school education, infant school teacher's, conductor-infant school teacher's (henceforth, for the joint qualifications of conductor and infant school teacher we use 'conductor'), if, on the basis of the local curriculum, the school provides a raised standard of instruction in certain areas of instruction, infant school teacher's or teacher's qualifications may be required for the subjects which comprise the areas of instruction of the various arts, foreign languages, national and ethnic minority languages and literatures, physical education and various sports.

(3) If the language of nursery school education or school education and instruction or boarding education is the language of the national or ethnic minority or any language other than Hungarian then the person employed as teachers for education and instruction in the given language must hold

- a) qualifications as national minority nursery school teachers or national minority infant school teachers or
- b) the tertiary qualification defined in (1) as well as language teaching qualifications and specialist qualifications as infant school teachers, as school teachers or as language teachers of the given language.

Conditions for heads of institutions of education and instruction are the following.

§18

(1) The person who is to be the head of an institution of education and instruction must hold

- a) such tertiary and specialist qualifications as are necessary to be employed as teacher in the given institution of instruction and education as defined in §17 (1)-(2) as well as specialist teaching qualifications. In secondary schools, unless otherwise ordered by the present Act, the requirements are university level teaching qualifications and specialist qualifications as well as specialist teaching qualifications,
- b) no less than five years of professional experience (as teacher) except in cases as defined in (6),
- c) tenured employment as teacher in the given institution of education and instruction or tenured employment as teacher during the term of office as head of institution.

(2) If nursery school education or school education and instruction takes place in the given institution of education and instruction purely in the language of the national or ethnic minority or more than half of the students conduct their studies in two languages simultaneously, that of the national or ethnic minority and in Hungarian, then the person employed as head of institution must fulfil, beside the criteria defined in (1), the requirements as described in (3) of §17 of the present Act. In the case of equal qualifications priority must be given to the applicant who belongs to the national or ethnic minority in question.

Secondary Grammar Schools

§28

(1) Secondary grammar schools, except in certain exceptional cases defined in (2)-(3), consist of four years. In four year secondary grammar schools, education and instruction begins in the 9th year of the educational cycle and ends with the 12th.

(2) A secondary grammar school may operate with six or eight years if on the basis of the prognosis of the medium range school entrance plan (§88 (2)) this is necessary for fulfilling the requirement of compulsory education and if on a county or capital city level other students can be provided for who wish to start their grammar school education in the 9th year. In six-year grammar schools education and instruction begins in the 7th and in eight-year grammar schools in the fifth year of the educational cycle and ends, in both cases, with the 12th year.

(3) if in secondary grammar schools as defined in (1)-(2), education and instruction takes place in two languages (Hungarian and one foreign language including the languages of national and ethnic minorities) (henceforth - bilingual education), the course of education offered by the school may end in the 13th year of the educational cycle, according to the Directive for bilingual schools and the Directive for the school education of national and ethnic minorities.

Secondary Comprehensive Schools ('Szakközépiskola')

§29

(1) Secondary comprehensive schools, except in the cases defined in (2) and (8)-(9), have four years in which to provide a basic general education (henceforth: secondary school years). Education and instruction in the secondary school years of secondary

comprehensive schools begins in the 9th year of the educational cycle and ends in the 12th year.

(2) If instruction and education in the secondary comprehensive school takes place in two languages - according to the Directive for Bilingual Schools and the Directive for the School Education of National and Ethnic Minorities, instruction and education at the secondary school years may end in the 13th year.

§32

It is the task of boarding schools (dormitories) to create the conditions necessary for carrying out school studies for those who

- a) do not have the opportunity to practice their right to studying, the free choice of school or to study in their national or ethnic minority language or to study in institutions for the education and instruction of the mentally disabled at their own place of residence or
- b) whose parents lack the means to ensure the conditions necessary for studying.

§36

(6) The organisation of educational services including nursery school education, school education and instruction and boarding school education of national and ethnic minorities at a national level must be ensured, according to a division of tasks as regulated in (5).

§37

(5) The foundation documents of institutions of public education must contain the type, name, basic activity of the institution, its national and ethnic minority related and other tasks, its subsidiary institutions, the funds on which it relies in order to fulfil its tasks, the foundations for the right of control over these funds, the authorisations related to the financial management of the institution, the name of the founder, the address of the institutions headquarters and sites, in the case of educational and teaching institutions the name of special faculties and in the case of a school the number of years that the course consists of.

(10) Unless otherwise ordered by law or government decree, institutions of public education founded and maintained by the local minority government and the central minority government are managed according to the regulations pertaining to schools founded and maintained by local municipal governments.

§47

The programme of nursery school education must contain

- a) the educational functions which will ensure the children's development, their preparation for life in the community, for the integration of those with a disadvantaged social background and
- b) in national or ethnic minority nursery school education the tasks which are entailed by fostering the culture and language of the given minority.

§48

(1) The educational programme of schools must determine

- a) the aims of the education and instruction taking place in the given school,
- b) the local curriculum of the school and within that
 - the subjects taught in the individual years of the school, the mandatory and optional study session activities and the number of sessions in which they are taught, the curricular material prescribed and the related requirements,
 - the principles for selecting the textbooks, auxiliary study material and equipment which may be used,
 - the criteria for entering a higher year at the given school,
 - the requirements and form of school assessment of the taught material, the criteria for the evaluation and qualification of the students' good behaviour

and working progress and, within the frames defined by law, the form for the evaluation of the students' good behaviour and working progress,

- in the case of the school education and instruction of national and ethnic minorities the material related to the given minority in the areas of mother tongue, history, geography, culture and civilisation,

for students participating in national and ethnic minority school education and instruction the study material necessary for acquiring Hungarian language and culture, for students who do not belong to a national and ethnic minority the study material that serves their understanding of the culture of the national and ethnic minorities living in their village or town.

§60

(3) One representative each may be delegated into the school board by the

- a) maintaining body
- b) boarding school, child protection institution
- c) local minority government, in the case of schools fulfilling a regional or national function the central minority self government unless it is the maintaining body of the school
- d) in technical schools and secondary comprehensive schools the regional economic chamber in question.

§66

(2) Primary schools, including the nominated school, are obliged to accept the entry or transfer from another school of school-age students whose domicile (or if they have no domicile, their place of residence), is in the school's catchment area (schools with compulsory acceptance). The maintaining body may nominate technical schools in the 9th and 10th year as a school with compulsory acceptance. Nominated schools (§30 (4)), if they are not schools with compulsory acceptance, can only deny admission by reference to lack of available places. The entry or transfer from another school of applicants belonging to national or ethnic minorities must be accepted into schools (branches, classes, groups) where the language of instruction is that of the national or ethnic minority or the language of instruction is that of the national or ethnic minority and Hungarian, so long as they fulfilled the entrance requirements.

§72

(1) Students receive a certificate about completing the requirements of the individual years, of the Basic Education Examination, the Secondary Grammar Final Examination and the Occupational Examination. The certificate is a public document. The certificate is to be issued in Hungarian or, where the school instruction takes place partly or fully in the language of a national or ethnic minority or in another foreign language, it is to be issued in the language of the national or ethnic minority or in the given foreign language. The certificate form must contain the Coat of Arms of the Republic of Hungary.

§81

(10) The Minister of Culture and Education can make a public education agreement with the central minorities self governments. The Minister of Culture and Education must make a public education agreement if the school education and boarding of members of national and ethnic minorities is not provided for by the local municipal government.

§83

(3) With regard to institutions of public education maintained by central minority self governments the legal functions described in §80 and (1) of the present act is fulfilled by the chief notary in charge at the headquarters of the institution.

§84

(6) Persons who are entitled to the right of consent with regard to decisions concerning public education in institutions of education and instruction may make their statements within thirty days. This deadline may be prolonged by a further thirty days before the

expiry of the first deadline, through a declaration made to the other party and on no more than one occasion. Missing the deadline entails forfeiture of the above right and no justifications are accepted. Deadlines are to be calculated according to the regulations of the Act on the general rules of state administration procedures. If in the course of practising the right of consent a point of debate between two interested parties cannot be solved by direct negotiation, a board of nine members must be established at the institution of education and instruction. In this committee three members are delegated by the teaching staff, three by the party practicing the right of consent and another three are invited by the maintaining body of the institution of education and instruction, to the debit of the budget of the institution of education and instruction, out of the experts who are listed in the National Experts' List. The committee defines its own order of procedure with the one limitation whereby it must make its decision with a simply majority. The decision constitutes agreement between the parties.

§86

(1) The municipal councils of villages, towns, capital city districts and county-right cities are obliged to provide for general nursery school and primary school education which enables students to complete their mandatory course of education, and in townships inhabited by national and ethnic minorities for the nursery school education and for the primary school education of those belonging to the minority in such a way as to enable them to complete their mandatory course of education.

(2) The obligation described in (1) also includes the obligation to provide for children and students with such physical, sensory, slight mental, speech and other disability as permits them to be educated along with other children or students.

(3) County Municipal Councils and, unless otherwise regulated in (4), Capital City Municipal Councils must provide for

- a) general education and the boarding school education of national and ethnic minorities,
- b) secondary and technical school education
- c) the secondary and technical school education of national and ethnic minorities
- d) adult education
- e) basic level education in the various arts
- f) higher education and career choice counselling, educational counselling, speech therapy services and therapeutic physical education in cases in which the municipal councils of villages, towns or capital city districts refuses to fulfil the function in question or the function is not provided for in the area of the capital city or the county.

§88

(1) The capital city municipal council or the county councils make a plan for fulfilling its function, for operating its network of institutions and for further developments (henceforth: development plan) after requesting the opinion of and with the participation of the capital city districts or the local municipal governments operating in the county's area, respectively, which serves the preparation of local government decisions necessary for organising the function of public education. In preparing the development plan the opinions of the capital city or county statistical office, labour centre (henceforth, jointly: participants), the regional economic chamber, the parental and student representative organisations of the capital city or the county, of maintaining bodies of institutions other than the state or the local municipal council and the capital city or county level trade unions of teachers. The development plan is formulated by the county council and county town for its own area and then is accepted jointly in a mediating committee. Local minority self governments may attach their opinion to the development plan under preparation and may participate in its preparation. The opinion of the central minority self government must be acquired for the preparation of the development plan. At the request of the capital city council or the county council the participants are obliged to provide such data as are necessary for the preparation of the development plan. The capital city development plan is issued by the capital city

council, the county development plan by the county council as a decree, in the form of a Recommendation. In the application of the present section by parents' and student organisations and teachers' professional organisations, these are organisations which have been registered with the capital city or county council after presenting their Articles and court registration certificate.

(10)

If a nursery school or school is in charge of the education of national or ethnic minorities, then for decisions as described in (6)-(8) the local municipal government is obliged to acquire the consent of the local minority self government at the headquarters of the institution and the opinion of the central minority self government.

(11) If the institution of education and instruction comes into existence as a result of legal succession, the cessation of the former organisation does not affect the children's place at nursery schools or the legal status of students at schools or the membership of boarding students at boarding institutions. In cases when the parent does not want to enter his or her child in the newly emerging institution of education and instruction, or if the institution of education and instruction ceases without a legal successor, the local government appoints, as described in (6)-(7), the institution of education and instruction in which the parents can request the transfer of their child before the cessation of the institution of education and instruction. The head of the appointed institution of education and instruction can only refuse the acceptance of the child/student in question by reference to a lack of vacancies.

§89

In order to ensure the proper and uninterrupted flow of the affairs of public education, capital city and county councils make a co-operation agreement with the local municipal councils that function in the area of the capital city or the county about organising the regional type services related to general education, with special emphasis on the following,

- a) on fulfilling the tasks related to completing the course of compulsory education (formulating the network of schools, ensuring education in the 9th and 10th year), registration, transfer, the operation of educational specialist services),
- b) ensuring the nursery school and school education of children and students belonging to national or ethnic minorities and of children or students with physical, sensory, mental, speech or other disabilities,
- c) creating the conditions for participating in compulsory education, operating the service of travelling specialist teachers for mentally disabled children, of travelling speech therapists and conductors,
- d) ensuring the opportunity for changing schools without a transfer entrance examination or without having to repeat a year of their course for those whose school education and instruction to the end of the period of compulsory education is not provided at their place of permanent residence,
- e) settling questions related to secondary and technical school entrance examinations, solving particular problems,
- f) establishing the catchment (entrance) area for institutions offering regional services (schools and boarding institutions for the education and instruction of disabled children or students, speech therapy institutions etc.) and establishing the contribution necessary for the maintenance and operation of the institution.

§ 90

(4) Before establishing the catchment (entrance) area of institutions of education and instruction in charge of the nursery school education, school education and instruction of children or students belonging to national minorities the local municipal government must obtain the approval of the local minority self-government or, in the case of schools

offering regional or country-wide services, the approval of the central minority self government.

§ 93

(1) The Minister of Culture and Education

- a) issues, at the recommendation of the National General Education Council and after requesting the opinion of the General Education Policy Council, the Directives for Bilingual School Education, the Curricular Directives for the School Education of Disabled Children and the Requirements and Curricular Programme of Basic Level Education in the Arts. The Minister also issues, with the consent of the National Minorities Committee and after requesting the opinion of the General Education Policy Council, The Directives for the Nursery School Education of National and Ethnic Minorities and the Directives for the School Education of National and Ethnic Minorities and is responsible for the supervision of these
- b) regularly, but at least once every three years, evaluates, with the participation of the National General Education Council and the National Minorities Committee, the experiences related to the introduction of the National Base Programme for Nursery School Education and the National Base Curriculum and, if necessary, in questions concerning children belonging to national or ethnic minorities, the national General Education Council, with the consent of the National Minorities Committee and after requesting the opinion of the General Education Policy Council, suggests the necessary modifications to the Government. The Minister also ensures the elaboration of nursery school education programmes and school curricula - in the case of national or ethnic minority nursery schools and schools this means involving the central minority self government in question.

§94

(1) The Minister of Culture and Education regulates

a) the introduction and issuing of Directives for the nursery school education of national and ethnic minorities, Directives for the School Instruction of National and Ethnic Minorities, Directives for Education in Bilingual Schools, Directives for the Nursery School Education of Disabled Children, Directives for the School Instruction of Disabled Children, Requirements and curricular Programmes of Basic Level Education in the Arts, adhering to the procedural rules defined in §93 (1) point a), and obtaining the consent of the central minorities self government before issuing the Directives for the Nursery School Education of National and Ethnic Minorities and of the Directives for the School Instruction of National and Ethnic Minorities.

(4) Before submitting the National Base Programme of Nursery School Education and the National Base Curriculum to the Government, the consent of the National General Education Council, and in matters concerning the nursery school education and school education and instruction of members of national and ethnic minorities that of the National Minorities Committee and the opinion of the General Education Policy Council must be obtained.

(5) Before submitting the Government Decrees defined in points a)-c) and point f) of (3) to the Government, in questions regarding the nursery school education and school education and instruction of members of national and ethnic minorities the consent of the central minority self governments must be obtained.

§ 97

(2) The members of the General Education Policy Council are four delegated representatives from each of the following organisations

- a) teachers' national professional organisations
- b) national teachers' trade unions
- c) national parents' organisations
- d) national students' organisations
- e) interest protection organisations of local municipal governments
- f) central minority self governments
- g) non-state and non-municipal school maintainers

- a) and one delegated representative each from

§ 98

(1) The National Minorities Committee participates in preparing those decisions of the Ministry of Culture and Education which concern nursery school education, school instruction, and the boarding school education of national and ethnic minorities. The National Minorities Committee consists of one delegated member from each of the central minority self governments. The legal status of the National Minorities Committee is the same as that of the National General Education Council.

§ 102

(3) Before decisions regarding the closing down or reorganisation of institutions of general education, regarding a change of their function, the establishment of their name, the drafting or modification of their budget, the appointment of their head or the withdrawal of such an appointment, the maintainer of the institution obtains the opinion of the community of employees at the institution, of the School Board, of the school's parents' organisation (community), of the Student Society, in the case of institutions of education and instruction where instruction takes place in, or partly in, the language of a national or ethnic minority and partly in Hungarian, the opinion of the local minority self government, unless this body has the right of consent, if there is no local minority self government, the local speaker for the minority or if there is not such a person, the local organisation of the given minority, or, in the case of secondary comprehensive and technical schools, the opinion of the relevant capital city of county economic chamber.

(4) Demand for preparation in the Hungarian language and for education and instruction in the languages of national or ethnic minorities must be surveyed by the body of representatives (general assembly) annually, involving in the process the local self-government of the relevant minority or, in the case of a general assembly the central self-government of the relevant minority.

(10) If the maintainer is the local municipal council, for the

- a) founding, closing down, modifying of sphere of activity, establishing the name
- b) establishing and altering the budget
- c) evaluating the professional work carried out by the institution
- d) approving the rules of organisation and operation
- e) the approval of the educational programme, educational and cultural programme and the evaluation of the realisation of these in institutions of education and instruction participating in the nursery school education, school education and instruction or boarding education of national or ethnic minorities or of institutions offering special educational services related to the service of the children in question, the approval of the relevant local minority self-government or in the case of institutions of education fulfilling regional or national functions that of the central minority self-government. In the case of institutions of minority education (§ 121 (6)) the approval of minority self-governments must also be obtained, according to the division of labour as defined earlier, before the head of school comes into or leaves office.

§ 107

(1) Participants of the professional inspection of institutions of general education must be listed in the National Experts' List, with the exceptions as specified in (2) point b).(2) If the professional inspection takes place in institutions of general education fulfilling a national or ethnic minority function,

- a) the professional inspection may be lead by an expert who speaks the language of the national or ethnic minority or if there exists no such expert, the inspection must be carried out with the participation of a teacher who speaks the language of the national or ethnic minority,
- b) the central minority self-government must be notified of the professional inspection and can send a representative who satisfies the conditions defined in § 101 (3) of the

present Act, to participate in the inspection even if he or she is not listed in the National Experts List.

c) At least seven days before starting the professional inspection the head of the inspection must agree with the head of the institution of general education and with the initiator of the inspection the duration of the professional inspection, its form and methods, its time and the way in which those interested may express their opinions regarding the findings of the inspection. In cases as defined in a) - b) of (8) at least seven days before the beginning of the inspection notification must be sent to the maintainer of the institution of general education in question, informing the latter that he or she may be present at the professional inspection.

(4) The findings of the professional inspection are to be sent to the person concerned in the professional inspection as well as by the person on whose initiative the inspection was implemented as well as the maintainer except as defined in (8) point f). If the inspection is taking place in an institution which fulfils a national or ethnic minority function, the findings of the professional inspection must be sent to the relevant local minority self-government and to the central minority self-government.

(8) Professional inspections may be launched, with the obligation to cover the costs,

a) at a national regional county and capital city level - by the Minister of Culture and Education, with regard to professional training - by the Minister of Labour, or by the Minister in charge of the relevant occupational qualification in order to prepare setting the objectives of national training policy or in order to gain an overview of the realisation of these objectives or by central minority self-governments in order to evaluate the fulfilment of the national and ethnic minority related tasks of general education,

b) on a county or capital city level by the county or capital city municipal government in order to prepare, or gain an overview of the realisation of, the county or capital city development plan and of the objectives of educational policy,

c) on a local municipal level by the local village, town, county city or capital city district council in order to prepare the objectives of the local educational policy, to gain an overview of the realisation of these or by the local minority self-government in order to overview the realisation of tasks related to the nursery school education and school education and instruction of the national or ethnic minorities of the municipal area,

d) on the institutional level by the maintainer in order to prepare the objectives of the local educational policy, to overview the realisation of these and to evaluate the standard of the educational and instruction work carried out in the individual institutions,

e) by the head of institutions of general education in order to evaluate the standard of the educational and instruction work carried out in the institution or in order to gain an evaluation of individual employees by an external expert,

f) by the employees of institutions of general education in order to gain an evaluation of their own work.

§ 121

(1) In the application of the present Act

4. 'state organisation' means - an organisation operating according to the order of planning, management and reporting prescribed for budgetary organisations, with the exception of local municipal governments and minority self-governments,

10 'maintainer' means - the legal person (local municipal government, state organisation, clerical legal person, institution of tertiary education, company, co-operative, foundation, civil organisation, interest-enforcement organisation of national or ethnic minorities, minority self-governments, associations and other legal persons) or natural persons which or who possess the authorisations necessary for offering general education services and provides for the conditions required for the operation of institutions of general education as defined in the present Act.

20. 'further provision on an adequate standard' means - that the material and personal conditions of nursery school education or school education and instruction or boarding school education within the new circumstances satisfy the official standards and the regulations defined in Appendices 1. and 3. of the Act on General Education and that

the existing educational services are still available. (E.g. nursery school education, school education and instruction of national and ethnic minorities takes place in the context of the relevant language, special educational sections remain available, specialist education and instruction of disabled children and students continues.)

31. 'special educational section' means - a separate institutional unit within nursery schools and schools, established in order to provide one of the following services: adult education identical with the institution's original function, nursery school education for disabled children, school instruction for disabled students, nursery school education for members of national and ethnic minorities or bilingual education.

§ 121

(6) In the application of the present Act, minority institutions as defined in §29 (2) of Act LXXVII of 1993 on the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities means

- a) nursery schools, schools and boarding school institutions
 - which according to its foundation documents was founded as a national or ethnic minority institution of education or instruction or
 - in which the nursery school education, school education and instruction or boarding school education takes place according to national minority requirements (nursery school educational plan, school educational and instruction plan, boarding school institutions' plan of education, nursery school educational programme, school educational programme, boarding school institutions' educational programme)
- b) nursery schools, schools and boarding institutions
 (institutional unit, subsidiary institution) is thus qualified even if over the average of three year periods, the nursery school education, school education and instruction or boarding school education of more than 25% of the children or students attending the institution is organised according to the national minority requirements listed under point a), second '-'.
 -

§ 128

(3) Until September 1, 2000, teachers in possession of adequate teaching qualifications and of a state language examination certificate of no lower than intermediate level, type 'C' or an equivalent document or, in the case of new employment as defined in § 127 (9), may be employed to teach foreign languages or to offer education and instruction in a foreign language or in the language of a national or ethnic minority .

Appendix 1. Part II.

2. within the sum defined as normative per capita budgetary contributions in (4) of § 118 of the present Act

- a) the nursery school education, school education and instruction or boarding school education of members of national and ethnic minorities as well as bilingual education must be supported by a supplementary professional normative per capita allowance with mandatory utilisation.

The organisation of classes and groups

2. nursery school groups and school classes must also be organised and maintained for members of national and ethnic minorities if this is requested by the parents of eight or more children or students belonging to the same minority.

Education Policies: A Concrete Hope

Minority Rights Group International

Source: MRG International Report, 1995/4.

In the course of confirming a cultural space for Roma/Gypsies, scholastic questions as well as those of a broad educational nature, figure prominently. It is these which have occupied pride of place in the attentions of the European Union, the Council of Europe, and a number of national governments over the past decade, and which continue to do so. These are delicate and sensitive issues, but among the most crucial in developing a positive future, and several points should be noted:

Teaching practice is often in opposition to in-family education, instead of complementing it.

First, the gap between in-family education and the school world as it is most often proposed, must be taken into account. To date, too little attention has been paid to ascertaining the educative values and dynamics operating within the Roma/Gypsy family. As a result, teaching practice is all too often in opposition to in-family education, instead of complementing it. Second, the manner, in which Roma/Gypsy parents educate their children must not be judged according to the criteria employed by surrounding societies in educating theirs; to do so is to adopt an ethnocentric, deprecating attitude. Indeed, in many regards, the education Roma/Gypsy parents give their children corresponds to many of the values which the professional educators around them wish to convey to the children of their own society: autonomy, responsibility, community values etc. Finally, in developing the scope and duration of schooling, European countries have sometimes allowed it to take over much of the role of in-family education, with a correlative transfer by parents of their educative role to the school; gradually, 'schooling' and 'education' have become virtually synonymous. Yet if this is the reality for most, it is not so for all, and it is worth pointing out that for some, including Roma/Gypsies, school is merely a part (and sometimes less than that) of their children's education.¹ Jean-Pierre Liegois describes the current situation:

Living conditions

The situation is very grave. All Roma/Gypsy communities are deeply affected by difficult living conditions. Throughout Europe, rejection in a variety of forms remains the dominant characteristic in relations between Roma/Gypsies and their immediate environment: accommodation difficulties, health hazards, evictions, denial of access to public places etc. Tension can rapidly escalate into open conflict, particularly during periods of economic difficulty and widespread unemployment; for Roma/Gypsies, the upshot is harsh treatment in a climate of perpetual insecurity.

Parents may feel that the school may culturally estrange their children.

In such a context, and given the fact that the school as an institution is often part of what Roma/Gypsies perceive to be an aggressive environment, education may be seen as yet another imposition, and one whose quality leaves much to be desired. Parents may feel that the school's proposed formation of their children may de-form, that is, culturally estrange them. And for many, this analysis is well-founded. Parental persistence of these communities are a sign of the strength of Roma/Gypsy culture and of parents' capacity to educate their children over the generations.

As a consequence, we must not take the effects of the overall situation (disinterest, absenteeism, outright refusal) as the causes of scholastic failure. As long as relations between Roma/Gypsy communities and surrounding society remain conflictual, parents' and children's relations with the school remain largely determined by the negative profile of these broader relations.

We have thus identified a very strong primary link between the general situation, and that pertaining in the schools. In the member states of the European Community in the late 1980s, only 30-40 per cent of Roma/Gypsy children attended school with a degree of regularity; over half received no schooling at all; a very small percentage got as far

Statistical numbers: countries of the EC

as secondary level. Scholastic achievement, particularly as regards the attainment of functional literacy, is not in keeping with the amount of time spent in schools.

Study and reflection indicate the existence of a second link, just as strong as the first, between the general situation and that pertaining in the schools. Roma/Gypsies' age-old adaptability is currently being tried to the limits, and their established strategies for adapting to their environment are becoming inadequate. Therefore, their difficulties in surviving as a cultural minority group are on the rise. Today any activity, particularly of an economic nature, demands a basic grasp of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Illiteracy no longer provides protection from the aggression of other cultures as channelled through the school and what is taught there, but becomes a serious handicap in an environment in which the written word is an unavoidable reality.

Gypsies' difficulties in surviving as a cultural minority group are on the rise.

Lack of schooling is a serious handicap for economic reasons, but equally serious for social and psychological reasons as well: for example, dependence on the social services, a situation which is incompatible with the Roma/Gypsies' legitimate pride in handling their own, and their children's affairs. For Roma/Gypsies, schooling is synonymous with autonomy, and providing them with it will ensure significant savings for the public purse: the cost of adapted school provision is far less than the expense of providing social assistance which Roma/Gypsies by and large reject.

In other words, the future of Roma/Gypsy communities depends to a large degree on the schooling available to their children. Active adaptation to the environment, in social as well as economic terms, today requires a grasp of certain basic elements which enable one to analyse and comprehend a changing reality. On the cultural plane these same elements can serve as tools for those wishing to conserve, affirm and develop their own unique identity.

Parents are aware of this, and are increasingly willing to send their children to school. Here we find a crucial second link between the general situation and the schools: The transformation of living conditions for economic activities, entails a necessity for basic schooling, and with it, parental desire to ensure that their children receive it. At present, there is widening rift between Roma/Gypsy children and those of surrounding society, and many already difficult situations will deteriorate rapidly and dramatically with the concomitant risk of certain forms of marginality and/or delinquency.

Parents are increasingly willing to send their children to school.

The analyses carried out nonetheless emphasise that it is possible to envisage a more positive future:

- Measures associated with intercultural education open the way to new practices validating the different cultures present in the classroom, taking each child's own capabilities and experiences as their starting point. Such measures make it possible to adapt the school to Roma/gypsy children.
- Every state has attempted, through diverse experiments and/or programmes, to respond to Roma/gypsy parents' wishes regarding school provision for their children. Some aspects of these efforts have been successful, others less so. It is important to identify, analyse and publicise those approaches which have demonstrated their value, to support innovative projects implemented in partnership, and to suggest new ones. The broad evaluation made possible by the study prepared for the European Commission clearly demonstrates that the recommended holistic, structural approach (through cooperation, coordination, and information) has a significant impact on overcoming the major obstacles blocking Roma/Gypsy children's access to school.

A more positive future

In many ways Roma/Gypsies demonstrate better adaptation to present changes, and to future ones, than other sections of the population: due to their economic flexibility, geographic mobility, in-family education, and communal lifestyle linking the individual into a network of reciprocal security and giving him or her a solid identity. Their society is young, with as many children as adults. Schooling is gradually on the rise. The children will read – and then they will write, enriching

European culture with their contributions. These children must have the opportunity to get into school, and to be personally and culturally respected while there.

There are possibilities for action. After six centuries in Western Europe, Roma/Gypsies are still waiting for a coherent, concerted, respectful policy concerning them to be drawn up and applied. Scholastic policy is part of the package, and must indeed be a driving force. The means of achieving this are both simple and inexpensive.

Educational Policies and the Hungarian State: The Case of the Roma

By: **Nidhi Trehan**
Paper, 1995

“How Does It Feel to be a Problem?” -- the 'unasked question' by W.E.B. Dubois

Much has been written about the social and legal disadvantages that the Romani populations of Europe face today in the changing political and economic face of Central and Eastern Europe. The educational disadvantages which ultimately translate into poor employment opportunities have also been well documented. Given the well established premise in Europe today that the State is responsible for the education of its citizenry, the next step is to analyse which programs and/or reforms the governments of the region can initiate to address these disadvantages, including the *de facto* educational segregation of the Romani minority. In this piece focus will be placed on the policies of the Hungarian state with respect to Romani children's education. Since 1985, the government of Hungary has initiated a spate of reforms in education which allow for alternative schooling as well as innovative pilot projects spearheaded by various non-governmental organisations (NGOs). In 1992 the Hungarian government financed the creation of Gandhi Foundation in order to establish the nation's first secondary school (*gimnázium*) for disadvantaged youth (primarily Romani youth). While the Hungarian state's experiences can offer lessons vis-a-vis Romani education, a commitment to the training of specialists in the field as well as sponsoring further research in the specific developmental (linguistic, etc.) needs of Romani children needs to be made. In addition, better coordination with regional and local educational bodies needs to be initiated so that the top-down structure of the Hungarian educational system takes into account local realities.

EDUCATIONAL SEGREGATION: MYTH OR REALITY?

While “educational segregation” may seem strongly worded and conjure up images of apartheid in South Africa or of the separate schools for African-American pupils prior to *Brown v. Board of Education* in the United States, this phenomenon continues to exist in Hungary. The remedial schools in which many Roma have been placed because the educational system has failed to address their needs are a poignant example of this form of segregation. Though detailed studies have not been performed, it is estimated that between 40-50% of the students in remedial education programs in Hungary are of Romani origin. This means that a highly disproportionate number of Roma are beginning their academic lives on an unequal footing with their non-Roma peers, and many Romani activists believe this is tantamount to cultural genocide.

Remedial schools
as a form of
segregation

There are a number of reasons why Romani children have difficulty in adjusting to Hungarian elementary schools, and are thus shifted to “special schools”. For approximately 30% of these children, the language of instruction in the school (Hungarian) is not their mother tongue. Linguistic experts and child psychology experts agree that for this cohort of children, the learning of basic Hungarian grammar and other exercises at the smaller grades is problematic unless some form of mother tongue instruction is included in the curriculum. This could come in the form of tales and nursery rhymes in both Romani (or Beash) and Hungarian for the younger children

Language and
linguistics
problems

Kiskunhalas

project:
teaching
Romani along
with Hungarian
in the
classroom
increased
educational
success.

so that the transition for the home language to that of the school is a smooth one. There has already been a pilot project attempted in the town of Kiskunhalas under the auspices of the County Pedagogical Institute of Kecskemét. Engineered by Ms. Kate Oppelt back in 1990, the results of this program clearly indicate that teaching Romani along with Hungarian in the classroom increased educational success as well as improved relations between educators and parents. Furthermore, it improved community relations as ethnic Hungarians were exposed to Romani culture, and gained and appreciation for it. Learning from the results of bilingual educational programs could be of benefit for Hungarian educators as well (for example, the Spanish/English projects in Florida, California, Texas and New York). For these programs to be successful, both the parents and specially trained teachers must be fully behind them.

Low attendance
of Romani
children in the
kindergarten

Kindergartens not only provide 'day-care' services for working mothers, they are also opportunities for the young ones to learn socialisation skills within Hungarian society. The low attendance of Romani children in the *óvoda* or kindergartens of Hungary places them at another disadvantage. Many Romani mothers prefer to care for their children in the home or to leave them in the care of relatives. From the Romani perspective, learning socialisation skills within the family is equally, if not more important than school-based learning.

While some Romani children do have learning disabilities, the studies indicate other reasons for why Romani students remain at the bottom of the educational status quo. For many Romani children, attending schools (which are for the most part run by non-Roma) can be a frightening experience. The cultural values of the school are starkly different from those taught in the home and many are suspicious of the influence of the school upon their children. Moreover, many Romani parents object to the incorporation of Romani in the classroom because they fear it will actually disadvantage their child's Hungarian language acquisition. In fact, study after study on bilingual education reveals just the opposite. Inclusion of the mother tongue actually enhances learning ability of a second language as the child gains confidence in his/her learning. 8% of Roma are Beash (an old form of Rumanian language) speakers. For them too, it would be logical and practical to incorporate lessons and stories in the Beash language right from the preschool level. Particularly in the south-western counties of Zala, Somogy, Tolna, Baranya, etc., Romani children could reap great benefits from this progressive form of instruction. There is a small Sinti speaking minority as well, and bilingual instruction could be attempted in some of the Sinti villages in western Hungary.

School
teachers are
ethnic
Hungarians
who know
precious little
about Romani
cultural
practices.

For the 70% of the Romani children who are monolingual Hungarian speakers, various handicaps arise when it comes to succeeding in the mainstream educational system. For those children from poor households, the purchasing of clothing and school supplies inhibits them as they may face ridicule by their peers if their appearance is different. Young children intuitively sense the tone and respect with which a person is addressed depending on their appearance. Another problem is the cultural gap. The majority of school teachers are ethnic Hungarians who know precious little about Romani cultural practices such as the relatively strict separation between male and female roles. They also bring into the classroom certain biases which are manifested in how they speak to or look at a child. Children are highly sensitive to body language and tone. Sometimes such prejudice reaches blatant proportions when a teacher asks a child to sit at the back of the class or singles out a child for ridicule in front of his/her peers. The child may eventually lose interest in the school and in learning by the school methods, thus becoming a natural candidate for remedial education. Research on remedial schools and their effectiveness should be a top priority for the Ministry of Education and Culture.

In Budapest, some of the inner city schools have special programs for the instruction of Romani children. In the 8th district, there is a school for Romani children where the majority of teachers are ethnic Hungarian. The few Roma that become certified teachers usually get recruited into other fields which are more lucrative (such as in administration or politics). Nevertheless, teachers' training programs for young secondary-school educated Roma could be initiated.

The few Roma that become certified teachers get recruited into other fields which are more lucrative.

GENERAL DATA ON ROMANI PUPILS' ACHIEVEMENT

According to a study sponsored by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Sociology, and researched by István Kemény, Gábor Havas and Gábor Kertesi completed in 1994, there are about 550,000 Roma or about 5% of the population of Hungary. In 1971, 39% of the Romani population of Hungary over the age of 14 was said to be illiterate according to a representative data survey. The 1993 survey recorded an increase in literacy among the Roma but still confirmed the widening gap between the Romani and non-Romani population (p.8). The new data reveals that 76,5% of the 25-29 age cohort finished elementary school (8 years in duration in Hungary), while this rate among the 50-54 year old generation (aged 28-32 in 1971) is 30%.

In 1971, 39% of the Romani population of Hungary over the age of 14 was said to be illiterate.

Upon completion of elementary training, a pupil is tracked in several ways: vocational schools (*szakiskolák*); secondary schools (*gimnáziumok*); grammar schools (college preparatory schools). Of the total number of students completing eight years of elementary school, which was approximately 57% of the Romani population, 35% continued their education. Out of this number, the majority are tracked in vocational programs, usually completing a course of training resulting in a certificate whose market value is questionable. Indeed, in many parts of Central and Eastern Europe today, the vocational education programs are considered outdated and in need of reform.

As in Western European nations, the correlation between education and unemployment is rather strong in Hungary. In 1993, the unemployment rate in Hungary was 13,3%. Out of this figure it was estimated that those citizens having completed 6-7 grades had an unemployment rate of 43,6% while for those having a university degree it was 3,7%. Another indicator of academic achievement is the school drop-out rate, which for Roma is 40%, and for non-Roma is 14%. Furthermore, Kemény, Kertesi, and Havas make a troubling observation. The rate of those Roma who finished secondary school who are in the 50-54 age group is 1,1% and that for the 20-24 generation is 1,2% an almost negligible difference. Basically, "this means that the chance for continuation of studies has not changed since 1971" (p. 10.)

School drop-out rate for Roma is 40%, and for non-Roma it is 14%.

Financially speaking, under the socialist regimes, students from disadvantaged backgrounds had better opportunities to attend higher education. Today, in Hungary, with the changes in state-funded education, and the budgetary cuts in academia, it seems likely that Romani students who wish to pursue a university degree will face even greater obstacles than before. However, there are now several NGOs as well as private foundations who can provide supplemental income for these students. The real question is one of access to these funds. How will the average Romani student learn of these opportunities? As of today, only 0,6% of the Roma population is attending university.

Today, 0,6% of the Roma population is attending university.

INNOVATIVE EDUCATIONAL VENTURES

1. County Pedagogical Institute, Kecskemét

It is necessary to use the child's vernacular and simultaneously incorporate the Romani culture into the classroom.

Based on seven years of research which studied the use of 'Romani children's vernacular for more effective development of personality, this project relies on the premise that it is necessary to use the child's vernacular and simultaneously incorporate the Romani culture into the classroom. It also sought to discover and develop the values and talents of the children. The activities included teacher training programme for kindergarten teachers, including pedagogical, psychological and methodological training; introducing them to the Romani culture, customs and education, and placing emphasis on teaching them Romani. Another important element was the creation of drafts for personality development in kindergartens taking into account the customs, communication habits and various talents of the children (including but not limited to dancing, singing, music, etc.). The language development program was based on the 1000 most commonly used words. Visual aids such as pictures were used to help the children expend their language skills from the word level to the sentence level. Perhaps most significantly, the majority of children who participated in this program were successful in their primary school exams.

2. Csenyete, Schools (Primary and Elementary Schools)

In a little secluded village which time (as well as the Hungarian Government) has forgotten, the Csenyété Foundation education project is taking place, Director Ladányi János, a sociologist begun his efforts with the goal of bringing hope to this economically depressed rural area and its people.

An education project

Facts on the elementary program: As of July 1995 there were 3 sessions to the afternoon, and 2 in the morning with between 13-17 students in each session. There are also merged sessions. This was for the 1-4 grades which the school serves. Currently, money is being raised for a 4th classroom. The demographic growth figures for this area are noteworthy. While in 1990, the age colorit of children ages 6-10 contained only 9 children, today, in 1995 there are at least 40 children in that colorit. Each session is 45 minutes long.

Unfortunately, only a few area parents are active participants in the school's work and progress.

A new óvoda or pre-school has also been built recently. The teachers were all Hungarian. There does not appear to be any program for Romani language instruction as most of the Roma here are presumably monolingual Hungarian speakers.

3. Gandhi-School

Located to Baranya County, this primarily Beash Roma college preparatory school was initiated for disadvantaged Hungarian students in 1993. As an alternative school for students who otherwise would not have the opportunity to prepare for university, this school lays strong emphasis on the language and cultures of Romani people (both Beash and Romani are taught). The students also study the history and traditions of Romani and Beash communities in Hungary besides general such as Hungarian history, literature, science, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, etc. In addition, mythology, philosophy, sociology, psychology, and film studies courses are offered. In the school catalogue, it's mission is clearly defined. "We believe it is absolutely

The school lays strong emphasis on the language and cultures of Romani people.

necessary to promote the development of a well-educated, professional, and self-confident Gypsy intelligentsia, whose members will be able to define and defend their cultural identity". Unfortunately, the past year at the school was mired in politics and many of the original teaching staff is no longer with the program. The establishment of a teachers' orientation program in the early weeks would be of great benefit. The teachers should be exposed to the Romani and Beash languages as well as the cultural backgrounds of their students in order to facilitate more effective teaching in the classroom.

Fostering the Home-School Connection

By: **Alma Flor Ada** Professor of Education, School of Education, University of San Francisco, California

Source: **Reclaiming Our Voices, Bilingual Education Critical Pedagogy and Praxis**; ed. Jean Frederickson



Bilingual educators, from the early efforts of the late 60's to the present, have maintained a steadfast commitment to serve children, and a determination to find the best means to do so. We have come a long way in many areas: the preparation of bilingual teachers, the design of model programs, the development of curricula, and the production of educational materials. Research has proven, over and over again, the value of additive bilingualism.

The educational concerns and suggestions offered here are applicable to any classroom.

Of course, as our commitment to bilingual education develops and deepens, we find ourselves needing to further our analysis and to add new dimensions to our concerns. It is not enough that we defend the right of children to be educated in their home language, or the bilingual aspect of bilingual education. We also need to look at the educational aspect of bilingual education as well. This is what will be addressed here today. And while I am an outspoken advocate of bilingual education, the educational concerns and suggestions offered here are applicable to any classroom.

Life today is very difficult for many of us, and especially so for children. Even in the midst of our own wealthy and highly technological society, we still do not protect all children adequately from abuse and mistreatment, from poverty, from early unwanted pregnancies, from life-threatening diseases. Within the confines of the home, children are subject to bombardment by the violence on the TV screen, while racism, sexism, homophobia, linguisticism, ageism, and all the other isms, including materialism, consumerism, and greed, insidiously are present in many of their social encounters.

Greater responsibilities and bigger challenges for schools.

As our society becomes increasingly more complex and demanding, many of the societal institutions we depended on in the past to help children deal with the challenges of growing up -- the small town, the closely knit neighbourhoods, the community organisations, the churches, the extended families -- are disappearing or changing. As a consequence, schools are faced with greater responsibilities and bigger challenges.

Children's lives are an integral whole, of which schooling is only a part.

The magnitude of these challenges surpasses what the school can directly assume. Yet that does not lessen the responsibility we have to help and protect children. While the contradiction may seem insoluble, it has prompted many of us to begin looking differently at the role of education. Paradoxically, we need to begin by acknowledging that have a more powerful effect on the lives of the children we teach. We need to begin by truly recognizing that children's lives are an integral whole, of which schooling is only a part; hopefully a meaningful and significant part, but still only a part of that whole.

If we believe that children need the support of their parents and family, if we believe that it is important that they be aware of and cherish their family history, if we believe that it is important that they communicate and discuss values and ideas with their families, then we need to reexamine what we as educators are doing to acknowledge and validate the home and family. What are we, as educators, doing to ensure that there is indeed a vibrant interaction between parents and children, between families and young people?

If we are to facilitate the growth of our students as integrated persons, if we are to help them develop their full potentials, we need to have the educational process extend beyond the classroom and the school walls. Most importantly, we cannot allow the

school to disenfranchise the family, as happens all too often in the case of language minority and economically disadvantaged students.

In a highly literate society such as the United States, we grant a great deal of prestige to the printed word in general and to books in particular. We also tend to hold formal education in high esteem; unfortunately in the process, traditional knowledge is often devalued.

Many language-minority students come from homes in which their families believe that because of their own limited formal education, they have no significant role to play in their children's education. These parents have internalised the oppressive premise that schools own the rights to learning, and that therefore, if one has not had many years of schooling, or if one has been labelled "unsuccessful" in schools, one has little to contribute to education. Often these parents hold enormous respect for the school as an institution. They believe that teachers know best about the education of their children. Frequently, they come from countries with very rigid class structures, in which people from the lower socio-economic strata have been taught to look up to those in positions of power. They have been taught to be humble and to respect those who are perceived by society to be intellectually superior.

"They believe that teachers know best about the education of their children."

When there is no ongoing contact between the school and the parents, and no authentic incorporation of the child's home and community into the curriculum, schools, whether consciously or unconsciously, perpetuate the idea that parents cannot contribute to their children's education. In fact, the children themselves come to believe that their parents have little to offer in this regard.

When children begin to discover the tremendous discrepancy between what the school proposes as accepted models of conduct and behaviour, what the school chooses to present as curriculum content, and what they experience as life and reality at home and in their community, there cannot be but a profound inner conflict. Since our society tends to present life as dichotomised between good and bad, acceptable and unacceptable, children in these circumstances are left with few options but to make tough, painful decisions about their families, their communities, their schools, and their own identities. When the schools do not go to great lengths to affirm the value of and the respect due to the student's home cultures when instead they unthinkingly perpetuate the school's Eurocentric and middle-class biases, children whose home life does not reflect those biases experience strong conflicts. Schools organised around traditional pedagogies can be detrimental to human growth by insisting that there is only one way to do things, and discouraging any process of questioning or discovery that the students might initiate to explore the discrepancies that they perceive around them.

Children experience strong conflicts.

Students, even very young ones, can tell when the curriculum does not fully respect their home culture. Some weak efforts to pay lip service to pluralism only obscure the issue. The fact that the school does not acknowledge and value the learning and knowledge of the home culture has a detrimental effect upon students' appreciation of themselves as members of that home culture, and a negative effect on the image that they hold of their parents.

A detrimental effect on students' appreciation of themselves.

This, then, is an example of the process of analysing the "hidden curriculum" of the school; the underlying messages that the schools convey about the relative power and importance of the different people and different cultures that compose the school community, and the larger community of which the school is a part.

Yet there is always some room for creative activity, even within the ever-present limitations and constraints. Schools do not have to remain oppressive, especially when we analyse how it is that the oppression functions and then use our knowledge to influence the values that are promoted by the school.

When there is an authentic effort to include parents in the education of their children, administrators, teachers, students, and parents themselves can come to realize that

the parents or primary caretakers have a lifetime of learning and knowledge. This knowledge includes values and traditions; it includes an extensive oral literature composed of legends, folk tales, songs, poems, games, and stories. It also includes practical everyday experiences and an awareness of the processes by which people interact and learn.

Throughout their lives, parents have developed an ability to know, an ability to learn and grow. They are capable of confronting new situations and making the best of them. They can enrich their children's lives daily by analysing situations, providing examples, engaging in discussions, showing how to learn. But if they feel disenfranchised or if the children internalise that their parents are "less than" as a result their lack of English or lack of formal schooling, the potential of this rich interaction will be jeopardised or impeded.

Questions to ask
as an educator

This, then, is a plea to teachers, to administrators, to teacher educators, to curriculum and material developers, to ask themselves every day, in each educational act, in each lesson:

1. What am I doing to ensure the development of each student's first language, whether I can speak that language or not, as the vehicle for home interaction?
2. What am I doing to acknowledge the parents' lives, experiences, and knowledge and their ability to construct knowledge?
3. What am I doing to foster communication at home between parents and children?
4. What am I doing to use the printed word as a means of validating and celebrating parents?
5. What am I doing to encourage parents and students to act as agents of their own liberation?

As I reflect further upon these questions, I will present some ways that they can be addressed in practice. Although each question will be examined individually, in actual practice there are many interrelationships: the activities we choose to meet any one of these needs will tend to support the others as well.

DEVELOPING THE STUDENT'S FIRST LANGUAGE AS THE VEHICLE FOR HOME INTERACTION

We know that most children growing up in the US tend to internalise very early the awareness that any language other than English has a secondary, nonacceptable status. As a consequence, children often internalise feelings of shame and rejection of the first language. But the first language is precisely the first language of their home, their parents, their family. The possibility of the child having a healthy interaction with his or her family is affected by the child's mastery of the language the parents feel most comfortable using.

It is not enough for school to offer a bilingual program. It is not for teachers to say children that their language is beautiful, or that is better to know two languages than one. Language does not need to be only accepted. It needs to be explored, expanded, celebrated. It is unacceptable to pretend that given dialectal or regional form is "more acceptable" than another; when we do so, we impose language criteria that contribute to disempowering parents.

Language does not need to be only accepted.

We need to embark upon a journey of learning and discovery for all of us – since all of us, regardless of which language or languages we speak, can increase and enrich our

own knowledge of language. The exploration of language is a journey that our students and their parents have to undertake with us, but one in which they also need to be acknowledged and respected as the teachers of their own particular vernacular, as knowers of their own individual usages and needs. Classroom-made dictionaries and lexical charts, classroom compilations of sayings and regionalisms, classroom collections of proverbs, riddles and songs provided by the family and community, are some examples of how this multiple exploration of language can be carried out in the classroom. Of course the respect due to the parents' language does not hinder students' learning other languages, nor academic dialects of the same language.

At the school, district, or state level the message will not be clear until we secure the right of every student who speaks a home language other than English to receive advanced placement and high school or college credit for that knowledge for the moment they enter school. Doesn't a six year old who has been raised speaking a language other than English speak more of that language than first-year student taking that language as a foreign language in college? Why should one obtain credit and not the other? Is it because school retain the monopoly on knowledge?

This is not a far-fetched idea. If we do not denounce and seek to dismantle these double standards, what messages are we giving students?

We also need to reconsider the voluntary-enrolment nature of bilingual programs. We frequently hear the complaint that parents don't want their children in bilingual programs. But we ask ourselves what message we – the educators, the experts – give the parents when we put the burden of the decision of whether their children should be in bilingual programs or not on them? We do not give parents any other curricular choices of this kind. No one asks parents whether they want their children enrolled in math class; why do we ask them whether their children should be in bilingual classes? What are we telling parents when we do that?

And finally, how we want children to love and respect the language of their parents when the whole emphasis of so many bilingual programs is on “exiting” the children. On “transitioning them out” as soon as possible? If something is good and beneficial, we don't promote abandoning it. First-language development is the only academic area (because we must not forget what is “home language” to one child is a foreign language deserving college credit to another) that students are encouraged to abandon and forget.

Even though I know nothing of jurisprudence, it seems to be a matter of simple justice that as long as language skills have a marketable value, districts that encourage abandoning and losing those skills should be liable for having harmed the students in their care. And these are issues educators and parents should jointly explore.

THE CURRICULUM CONNECTION: PARENTS AS CONSTRUCTORS OF KNOWLEDGE

One of the most disempowering and disenfranchising aspects of contemporary technological society is the emphasis on knowledge as a commodity. Through the process of schooling this knowledge is purchased or acquired by some people and thus becomes their private property.

To maintain the “market value” of school-generated knowledge, there is a generalised devaluing of the kind of knowledge that arises from the experiences, lives, and reasoning of people. For example, introspection as a way of knowing is very much de-

emphasised and undervalued. Students are not asked to reflect upon what they already know, nor to ask themselves what they can know with the resources they have available.

As individuals go through the schooling process, validity is attached only to learning and knowledge that has been written in books and presented by recognised authorities. In the classroom, teachers often perpetuate the attitude that some forms of knowledge are more valid than others, and other societal forces do the same. Meanwhile, people in positions of power continually seek sources that appear legitimate in order to back up their own opinions and attitudes, and to support the beliefs that they themselves want to perpetuate.

Devaluing your own knowledge and language.

The result is that people who come from the disenfranchised classes, people who have not had an opportunity for schooling, or only limited opportunities, will tend to devalue their own knowledge and even their own language. They will tend to think that they are ignorant, that they don't know anything. Frequently they arrive at the false conclusion that not only do they not know, but that they are incapable of knowing. The ensuing low self-esteem further perpetuates a feeling of insecurity towards schooling along with a sense of helplessness.

Alienation

Since students identify strongly with their parents, families, and communities, they also might tend to perceive themselves as people without access to knowledge, without the ability to know, without the right to know. Therefore, many of them will tend to give up on schooling. Even if they continue to attend school, often they will not truly believe that they are a part of the learning process. This is an experience that has been voiced by many people from disenfranchised groups. They attest to the fact that while in school they always felt that the process or product belonged to the rest of population, but not to them. They felt that the teacher was addressing the other students but somehow not addressing them. In the case of language-minority students, the mere fact that instruction takes place in a language other than that of their parents, and that the language of their parents is seen as less valuable than English increases these feelings of alienation.

Estranged from their families

In other cases, some children become intrigued by the educational process. They somehow develop a sense that they can indeed learn and become successful in school. This interest is more likely to develop if the teacher fosters the belief in the potential of all students. We need to make sure, however, that these students do not as a result end up looking down at their families or feel embarrassed that their parents do not have the kind of knowledge that is acquired in schools. There is a real possibility that the children's internalisation of the school's values can cause them to feel estranged from their family and ashamed of their heritage. We should be particularly concerned about children who seek to distance themselves from their families. Often unconsciously, these children begin to reject their home language. Anglicise their names, and disassociate themselves from any cultural identifiers. This rejection of one's ethnic identity, family, and culture is damaging to students, regardless of the fact that they may be getting good grades. In spite of an external appearance of success, the loss of these student's identities as proud members of their communities of origin is an unnecessarily high price to pay.

To avoid having students feel rejected by schools, or feel pressured to reject their own culture, we need to find a way to bring the two worlds of home and school closer together. One of the best means to do so is for the schools to validate the informal education that all parents have. Parents can be encouraged to understand that, regardless of their level of schooling, they have graduated from the most demanding university of all, the university of life. For many language-minority parents, the story of their life in the United States is the story of overcoming many difficult obstacles. They are experts in the field of the struggles that they have faced in their lives, and of their own personal histories. We must begin to counteract the pervasive societal forces that disenfranchise people by qualifying knowledge as private property belonging only to some and not to others. But to do so, it is not enough must to say these words to

Schools should validate the informal education that all parents have.

parents. It is much more effective to demonstrate these ideas daily, in a multitude of ways, throughout the entire academic year.

The purpose then, is to conceive of projects in which the knowledge that the parents already have or can generate and reflect upon will be valued by the class and will become an integral part of the curriculum. All parents have a wide repertoire of stories and anecdotes about events that have happened throughout their lives. Teachers can encourage students to ask parents about their childhood and their process of growing up. What was life like when they were young? What lessons about life have they learned from their experiences?

Parents can also be asked to talk about their work. What happens in their work and how is it useful? How is it regulated and organised? Who controls it? How does it contribute to the well-being of society? Farm workers can talk about agriculture and the work in the fields. And immigrant parents can be asked to talk about their lives, which reflect both the history of this country and the histories of their country of origin.

Involving
parents

When carried out with sincere respect and appreciation, these kinds of activities model the belief for parents that they themselves possess valid forms of knowledge. As a result, students will appreciate their parents as a source of knowledge and information, and parents will begin to see themselves in the same light, as their life experience is acknowledged and valued.

FACILITATING COMMUNICATION IN THE HOME

Communication in the home today is surprisingly limited. National studies indicate that, statistically, the time parents spend in direct meaningful conversation with their children can be as little as three minutes a day for the mother and less than a minute per day for the father. Of course, there are many factors at work here. Many children live in a one-parent family with a mother who is struggling very hard to make ends meet. Even in two-parent homes, most parents are overworked, underpaid, and frequently live far from their jobs. But while it is essential to analyse these social conditions and struggle to change them, the question remains. What can we begin to do now, with the parents of the students who are in our care, to foster more communication between parents and children?

Direct
conversation with
children: three
minutes a day for
the mother; less
then a minute for
the father.

If children at every grade level are encouraged to return home daily with something to share with their parents and/or questions to ask of them, communication at home is bound to increase. And if the information own childhood, they will in the process develop a greater understanding of their own children. Inviting parents to share childhood memories with their children thus not only provides a framework for communication, but also promotes better parenting.

Every day, children could take home an extension of the whole language activities of the classroom. Just as we ask children to predict the content of a book we are going to read to them -- from the title, the cover, the name of the characters, or the first paragraph -- we can ask children to invite their parents to offer similar predictions. Just as we engage children in writing a sequel to a story, we can invite them to retell a story to their parents and then ask for the parent's sequel. If we have a classroom discussions of a given topic, say friendship, we can have the children ask their parents to share with them the name of a childhood friend, what kinds of games they played together, how they resolved mutual conflicts. Or we can ask the children to bring back a word from their parents that represents friendship, or have the parents complete a sentence, "Friendship is..."

Ways to involve
parents in
activities with the
child

When we take the contributors offered by the parents, record them on charts, or collect them in classroom books, we show our interest in and appreciation of the parent's thoughts and experiences, and thus encourage children to continue asking for their parents' input and perspectives.

Using the home language

And in encouraging parent-child interaction, we are of course also facilitating the maintenance and development of the home language. We emphasise to children that they can talk with their parents and obtain information in the home language. Later, they will bring that information to class, either in the home language or in English, depending on our own ability to understand the home language. Thus, we are simultaneously encouraging the use of the home language as a valuable resource, validating the parents as important sources of knowledge and experience, and fostering greater communication in the family.

Support from teachers

It is important for me to re-emphasise here my conviction that all teachers, regardless of ethnicity or language skills, can function as powerful allies for children and their families by providing strong support for the above-mentioned goals. Of course it is essential for children to have strong role models of their own ethnic heritage, and of course it is vital for them to have their home language validated by being used in the schools and in other loci of social prestige. Yet teachers who have true respect and appreciation for their students' lives, families, and cultures can as a consequence be of benefit to their students, even when they don't share the same ethnic heritage, and even when they do not speak the student's home language.

While it is ideal for the home language to be used in the classroom, all of the activities described here can take place at home in the home language, and their results shared in the classroom in English. In this way, the home language can be validated and encouraged, the parents' lives and experiences valued, and family communication developed and fostered, regardless of the teacher's linguistic repertoire or circumstances of birth. What is important in all circumstances is the teacher's integrity and commitment.

PARENTS AND CHILDREN AS CO-AUTHORS

Many children come to school without the advantage of a literate home environment. Many families cannot afford to buy books, nor have they had much experience with writing them. Yet upon entering school, children are immersed in a highly literate world. Books are prestigious instruments in schooling. They are presented as the storehouses of knowledge and the primary tools for learning.

In many language-minority homes, the storehouses of knowledge are the elders of the community, and knowledge is transmitted orally. Imagine the thoughts of a child whose parents seldom write, do not read, and perhaps cannot afford to buy books. When the child enters school, the subliminal message is "books are the repository of knowledge." It is all too easy for the child to conclude that "since my parents do not write, read, nor own books, they must not be part of the repository of knowledge."

Storehouse of knowledge: Books or the knowledge of elders?

Schools have traditionally placed much more emphasis on fostering reading abilities--which implies a passive and receptive acceptance of the ideas presented by other--than on writing abilities, which implies the active projection of one's own thoughts. While most of us have been encouraged to read many books, very seldom have we been encouraged to write one.

One way to help children integrate the two worlds of home and school is by having them write books in which they and their parents are the protagonists. Extending the ideas we have been developing even further, the children and parents can participate jointly in co-authoring a book on a subject of mutual interest.

Children and parents should write books.

A book need not be reproduced a thousand times in order to earn status and respect. Parents and children (with the help of the teacher) can publish one or several copies of a book on a topic that is important to them.

Writing a book together allows parents and children to learn about each other's worlds. It provides an opportunity for children to have a greater sense of their parents. It is also an excellent opportunity to have parents share insights, thoughts, and childhood experiences. Through co-authoring a book, parents and children have a chance to share moments of mutual understanding that might not otherwise take place.

Children can also author books in which they are the protagonists, using information they have first obtained from their parents, for example: "How I got my name," "My autobiography," "The day I was born," or "Something big that happened when I was little." Or they can interview parents and dialogue with them in order to write books in which their parents are the protagonists; for example: "My father's (mother's) childhood friends," "To make the world a better place, my mother (father) suggests...", "A day that changed my father" (mother's) life..., "My mother's (father's) best advice for life."

Topics for the books

Producing a book will give parents, children, and teachers a feeling of empowerment and accomplishment. As the spoken word is given permanence, it takes on greater meaning.

These kinds of activities are not costly. They require no outside assistance or special permission, and all parents and children can participate. And it is important to realize that these activities are not meant as something to add to the existing curriculum as an extra burden on the teachers. Our hope is that teachers will discover that these activities can become a major and integral part of the curriculum, which allows for the development of basic skills by providing a project that captures the interest of both students and parents.

Teachers can best encourage this activity by modelling it themselves. Sharing one's personal stories involves a certain amount of risk. If children and their families see the teacher take that risk first, writing a book about his or her own life, family, or children, and sending the book home with the students so that they can share it with their families, the students and their parents are more likely to open up and share their personal stories as well.

For a teacher to model this process is not necessarily easy, but certainly worthwhile. Teachers at the institute spoke about how, in the process of reclaiming their own voices as authors, they were discovering the ways in which they had been silenced, in which their own attempts at writing had not been validated in the process of their schooling, and how they themselves had not been acknowledged as writers.

Teachers should show a model in writing a book

At the institute, teachers who had been presented with these ideas at the previous year's institute reported that they had, in the interim, begun the process of applying these ideas into practice. They had written books themselves, shared the books with their students' families, and successfully encouraged the parents and children to begin writing books of their own that reflected their lives, their histories, and their experience. The teachers also stated that the suggestions included here had been useful to them as a concrete way to begin a process that had then branched out in different ways, depending on their particular circumstances and interests.

It strengthens
parents' and
children's self-
esteem and self-
identity

As parents and children engage in writing books of their own, the process of producing a book is demystified. Perhaps one day they will conceive and produce their own books, independent of the classroom. Writing from their own life experience contributes to and strengthens parents' and children's self-esteem and self-identity. This is an example of what is meant by "finding one's own voice." Having someone to listen to us, someone who believes that we have something worthwhile to say, is fundamental to that process. And the more that our experience is denied or deemed worthless by others, the more important it is that one experiences that it is like to be truly heard.

No one becomes an author unless they feel that they have something significant and valuable to say. Teachers need to communicate to children and parents their stories and voices are important and meaningful. By producing books, we provide a constant validation of the parents' thinking, language, and history. Thus parents are helped to realise the valuable role they have as educators and teachers of their children. They are encouraged to recognise that regardless of their own level of schooling, they have important contributions to make to their children and to the learning process. Parents are persuaded by our actions that their personal history is important and worth sharing. In many instances they might have painful memories and scars connected with their school experience. It will be extremely significant for them to discover that the school values and recognises what they have to say.

TEACHERS, PARENTS AND CHILDREN AS AGENTS OF THEIR OWN LIBERATION

As we were all reminded in the discussions at the institute, for the ideas presented here to have an authentic value, the ultimate goal of all these practices must not be forgotten. What we have presented here are not activities to be carried out for activity's sake, nor for the sake of the final material product. Our aim is not to have a lot of "cute family books" to show and tell, but instead for students and parents to recognise themselves as the authors not merely of books and texts, but of their own lives, to recognise themselves as protagonists not only of the stories of their past, but also of their present-day struggle.

We want parents and students to be able analyse their reality, to understand the structures and forces that constrain them, and free enough to engage in solidarity with others in order to shape and transform that world. In order for our work to have a meaningful effect, we need to be present constantly to the purpose behind what we are doing. We need to adapt the activities and undertake them in a way that is authentic and meaningful to us, in order that they might be authentic and meaningful for the parents and families. We need to be aware of our own attitudes and assumptions, in order for us not to be paternalistic towards the parents we are working with, but instead to communicate a deep respect for who they are. And we need to model for ourselves the kind of risk-taking and growth that we want to facilitate in others.

We want
parents and
students to be
able analyse
their reality.

As educators who practice this kind of education, we invite you to join us in the process of discovering our own inner strength and freedom, as we witness the transformative energy that arises from affirming the power and potential present in everyone.

Supporting the Vocational Training of Gypsy Children

(A proposal to the Department of Ethnic and National Minorities of the Ministry of Culture and Education)

By **Ilona Liskó**

Source: **Educatio, 1996**

AN OUTLINE OF THE PRESENT SITUATION

Sociological research proves beyond all doubt that nowadays the distribution of jobs and the sizes of salaries tend to depend on the applicants' or workers' schooling to an extent even larger than before. In other words, people with more schooling are definitely less likely to become unemployed and are better paid. (*Kertesi 1994, Györgyi 1994*).

Vocational training and the labour market

Gábor Kertesi has used his analysis of the data provided by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH) to prove that the risks of becoming unemployed of those with secondary education, those graduating from vocational secondary schools and those with only primary education are 2.5, 3.5 and 5 times as high as of college or university graduates, respectively. People who have not completed their primary education have to face a risk to become unemployed 10 times as high as college or university graduates (*Kertesi 1994*).

The worsening situation of Gypsies in the labour market.

In 1993 István Kemény and his colleagues conducted a sociological survey on Gypsy people's circumstances (*Kemény, Kertesi, Havas 1994*), and concluded that nowadays Gypsies have a far higher risk of remaining unable to find work than at the time of the 1970 comprehensive survey. The researchers find that the main causes of this are the following: the backwardness of Gypsies' schooling, the regionally disadvantageous situation of the Gypsy communities (an excessive proportion of the Gypsies live in regions of employment crisis) and social discrimination against them (*Kertesi 1994*).

As far as the backwardness of Gypsies' schooling is concerned, the researchers have pointed out that even though there has been a significant increase in the proportion of Gypsy pupils' completing their primary education over the past 20 years (44 % of those starting school in the school year 1985/86 have finished the eighth grade), their chances for further education have worsened and they have an increasing risk of dropping out from all types of secondary schools. (At present a Gypsy child has a 50 times smaller chance for graduating from a secondary school and a 6 times smaller chance for obtaining a skilled worker's certificate than their non-Gypsy fellow students. This shows that Gypsies are even farther away from equal opportunities than before, especially in those aspects of schooling that could significantly improve their chances in the labour market (*Kertesi 1994*).

Understandably, the researchers cited all conclude that it is by the raising of the Gypsy community's level of schooling that their chances within the society and their positions in the labour market may be enhanced.

Undoubtedly, a twofold objective for raising the Gypsy community's level of schooling should be set. Improving the standards of their general education is essential while securing their participation in vocational training in a higher proportion and providing

greater chances for them to finish training are also necessary for their attainment within the society and in the labour market.

The efforts to improve the standards of their general education and increase the proportion of Gypsy pupils participating in vocational training are very closely linked. In the last years, Gypsy skilled workers have accounted for a very low proportion within the Hungarian industry. The reasons for this are the following: Firstly, a relatively small number of Gypsy pupils finish primary school, which is a prerequisite for admission to vocational schools. Secondly, even those finishing it have very poor results, which makes it impossible for them to continue any further. Thirdly, even those who start vocational training have a very high chance of dropping out, due to defects in their general education. Yet another difficulty is that the 1993 State Education Act requires the accomplishment of ten instead of eight years of general education for the commencement of vocational training. Thus providing further assistance for Gypsy children becomes indispensable, as the accomplishment of the previously sufficient eight years of general education also proved extraordinarily difficult for them. In other words, we need to acknowledge that in order to increase the proportion of skilled workers among Gypsies it is necessary to intervene during the period of general education, as without providing quality general education, it is impossible to enhance their vocational training.

The links between general education and vocational training

Furthermore, exceptional significance is to be attributed to vocational training. First of all, because even in today's rather saturated labour market, those with a skilled worker's certificate have a higher chance of finding work than those without it. Secondly, because among the different institutions of secondary education, the one offering vocational training is still relatively the most accessible for Gypsy children. Thirdly, because it will remain impossible to curb the trend of the gradual falling behind of the Gypsy ethnic group and secure their integration into the Hungarian society until a large Gypsy middle class is formed, mostly of skilled workers, who can ensure their own existential security, thus being able to secure the small-scale upward mobility (and a chance to participate in secondary and further education) for the next generation, thus maintaining continuity for Gypsy professionals.

The need for a Gypsy middle class

As for the success of the projects, we cannot cling to illusions, as the acute backwardness concerning the schooling and vocational training of Gypsies has several historical, economic, financial and socio-cultural reasons that can hardly if at all be influenced by the educational authorities. Gypsy children's successful vocational training is being hampered by the circumstances described below.

1. Traditionally, Gypsy families have had a bad relationship with schools that they regard as institutions belonging to the majority society. Gypsy parents themselves had little schooling, preserve memories of school failure and are unaware of the behaviour patterns that could enable them to communicate successfully with the school. Consequently, they are unable to co-operate successfully with the school (and the teachers) and their attitude is characterised by fear, insecurity and, when hurt, aggression. Gypsy parents in general are unable to manage their children's schooling, and they are likely to pass their negative attitude on to their children, thus guaranteeing their failure at school at an early stage.
2. Gypsy children must face the prejudices of the majority society in school communities. The pressures, humiliations and failures stemming from this hurt even those children of exceptional abilities who are able to comply with school requirements. However, typically, Gypsy children come from a culturally non-stimulating environment of poor and disordered families and often have linguistic difficulties. They start falling behind at the start of their school career and often have learning difficulties from the very beginning. In their case, the frustration caused by their failure to do well at school together with the rejection by their environment that is full of prejudices often lead to giving up, escaping from the hardships and dropping out from school at an early stage.

The reasons behind the backwardness of Gypsy vocational training

Families with a background of vocational training have better chances

3. Among the pupils of vocational schools, even as far as non-Gypsy children are concerned, the ones whose families have a background of vocational training tend to do best. As, in most of the cases, the families of the Gypsy pupils are not among these, they have a higher chance of failure. In addition, socially, the subculture of the community of skilled workers contains a strong element of racial prejudice against Gypsies. (According to a survey carried out among pupils of vocational secondary schools in 1994, 41% of the children classed the Gypsy-Hungarian conflict as one of the most common conflicts in the society. Interviews with pupils of vocational schools prove that a large percentage of the children back skinheads, who hate Gypsies. (*Csákó-Liskó 1994*) Over the past decades, typically, Gypsies have taken jobs as unskilled auxiliaries assisting skilled workers. The reason for this is that the jobs available for them have mostly been auxiliary positions in the industrial sectors of low prestige, e.g. in the construction industry. Presumably, these traditions also explain why pupils of vocational secondary schools seem reluctant to accept Gypsy children as their fellow pupils, even to an extent larger than in other areas.

The practice in the socialist era and its consequences

4. Even in the socialist era (i.e. the expansion of vocational training), Gypsy children, coming from the lowest social layers, used to have the opportunity to become skilled workers solely in the mass industrial sectors of the lowest prestige. The large state companies organised training for semi-skilled or auxiliary workers under the name of "vocational training" with the intention of later employing the trainees at their own companies. Due to the poor working conditions and the low wages, anybody who applied was admitted to the training courses, and companies even mustered trainees. This was the segment of vocational training that got hit in the worst way by the economic changes that followed the change of the political system. Upon the collapse of the socialist economic structure and the large state companies, it became obvious that there was no demand for this model of vocational training, which trained skilled workers to be employed in the large factories of heavy industry and mechanical engineering. In other words, if the goal of vocational training was not to train a large number of potential unemployed people, training in these sectors needed to undergo serious downsizing. Moreover, the majority (80%) of trainees' workshops in large factories, where pupils had been provided with practical training in the socialist era, also closed down due to the economic changes. The pace of the workshops of small businesses beginning to take part in the process of vocational training did not follow that of collapse of the state training centres in factories of mass industry. (The owners of small businesses are reluctant to take trainees because their businesses are as yet insecure and also due to the lack of incentive schemes.) Thus a place at a training workshop has become a highly demanded, merchandisable commodity within the vocational training system in Hungary. In the last few years, the only way for a pupil to find a place at a training workshop has been to get their parents to "buy one" for them by paying exorbitant "tuition fees" to business owners in an ever-increasing number of professions. As parents from the lower layers of society (e.g. Gypsies) have not been able to do so, the doors of vocational training schools have closed in front of their children, so to speak.

5. Research into educational sociology has proved that the motivation to learn has as great a role in school achievement as student's abilities. However, children coming from Gypsy families tend to have a rather weak motivation to learn. It is so partly because schooling had a fairly unimportant role in their parents' careers, and they do not prove very demanding as far as their children's school results are concerned. Also, the professional attainments of Gypsy families (e.g. the skills of traditional Gypsy professions) are not primarily based on knowledge learnt at school but to a far greater extent on techniques taught by family members while working. In addition, the experience of the last few years seem to have proved that in this incipient stage of capitalism even people of relatively poor social standing may build a more or less successful "career" by utilising clever commercial tricks (finding their ways around the maze of law and order) and by shrewdness, flexibility and resourcefulness, which qualities are not taught in school and do not require

Gypsy parents conclude that their children can expect a more successful career if they teach them their own almost unlawful business.

school training. This is another reason why ambitious Gypsy parents often come to the conclusion that their children can expect to develop a more successful career if they teach them the professional attainments of their own almost unlawful business activity than if they send them to a school providing vocational training.

6. Even though state education in Hungary is still free of charge, nobody would suppose that sending one's children to school does not cost any money. As a significant part of Gypsy families scrape along on an income that is under the official subsistence level, a new school year is a heavy burden for them (with the rising prices of children's clothing, schoolbooks and study kits and the gradual rising of school lunch fees) even though they receive benefits from the state. It is not in the least surprising that in many cases, financially speaking, it is in the families' interest that their children should drop out from school as early as possible and start earning their living. Since Gypsy families have a higher than average number of children, it is rather frequent that in the family's interest the older daughters abandon their studies and take charge of the upbringing of their younger siblings in order that the parents can go to work.

Education is a financial burden for the family.

Maybe this inventory of the current problems clearly shows that the lack of Gypsy children's thorough training is at least as much of an ethnic or minority problem as of a social one. Consequently, a solution to this problem (or the easing of it) can only be found by the closer co-operation of the educational, minority and welfare authorities.

SUGGESTIONS CONCERNING THE METHODS OF PROVIDING SUPPORT

In accordance with the experience of educational financing in Hungary and abroad, it seems expedient to create a separate fund to finance Gypsy children's vocational training, which is to be financed by the Central Budget and managed by the Ministry, thus providing financial support for those concerned, upon their application (through a board of trustees).

Financial support

It seems vital to set certain basic principles before deciding on the actual method of providing support. These include defining whom to consider to be a Gypsy child. In this respect it may seem best to follow these guidelines: as far as supporting individuals is concerned, those who regard themselves as Gypsies are to be accepted while when supporting schools, the education of the children whom the school regards as Gypsies should be supported.

The target group of the programmes should be those having an interest in Gypsy children's vocational training. In other words, we ought to initiate programmes that on the one hand provide assistance for schools and teachers in achieving better results in the vocational training of Gypsy children and can also make them interested in providing greater care for these children while on the other hand we ought to make the children (and parents) interested in adopting a more positive attitude towards the school and studying.

As the prerequisite of starting vocational training is the accomplishment of 10 classes of general education, it seems reasonable that the supporting of Gypsy children's education should not be confined to the years of vocational training but take effect while the children study in grades 9 and 10.

There exist at least five different forms of vocational training within the Hungarian educational system (*speciális szakiskola* - short-term vocational school, *szakiskola* - vocational school, *szakmunkásképző iskola* - trade school, *szakközépiskola* - vocational secondary school and *technikum* - industrial technical school), thus the programmes should be advertised in a way which makes it possible for any of these institution and for children educated in any of them to participate.

Support available
for all kinds of
schools

Since the Hungarian educational system is a pluralistic one as far as the operation of the educational institutions is concerned (schools are operated by the state, churches and foundations), the programme should be organised in a way that makes the support available for any of these.

In order that the support should reach the children who are mostly in need, when providing support for institutions, the group of institutions receiving support should be restricted to those institutions or groups (classes) within an institution where the ratio of Gypsy children is over 30%.

Within the framework of this programme we should mainly concentrate on giving support that, apart from helping their more adequate education at present, provide assistance for Gypsy children in handling their problems with greater success in the long run.

Taking all the above factors into consideration, we suggest that the following forms of support should be offered:

1. In certain cases, Gypsy children's successful general education (i.e. the accomplishment of 9 or 10 classes) and vocational training requires coaching programmes and special pedagogical methods. Considering this, it is necessary to provide support for both the school operators who wish to establish special institutions for this purpose and for the institutions which are running groups (classes) of this kind.

(This form of support could provide the opportunity to apply for operators and existing institutions.)

"Special
hostels" for
Gypsy students
to avoid
prejudice

2. In several cases, the failure of Gypsy children's participation in vocational training is due to the fact that the prejudices of the majority society make it impossible for them to integrate into the communities of student hostels, although staying there would be necessary for them to be able to study in a vocational school in a big town. In fact, it is the lack of suitable accommodation that hampers their vocational training in these cases. Considering this, it seems imminent to urge the establishment of special hostels for Gypsy students and support the running of such institutions (even those with accommodation for a small number of students). Accommodation in a special hostel would grant Gypsy children an environment that is free from the prejudices of the majority society while their vocational training could be run integrated into the majority society. The establishment of special Gypsy hostels would also provide an opportunity to compensate for the insufficiencies of the cultural heritage within the family and provide coaching in order to help the children achieve better results at school. (This form of support could provide the opportunity to apply for those wishing to establish or run these kinds of institutions.)

3. It is a peculiarity of the education of Gypsy children in Hungary that the programmes organised for supporting them have always been characterised by the use of more meagre and insufficient resources than the average. For this reason, it is necessary that by the assistance of the programmes managed by the Ministry, the conditions in the institutions that train Gypsy children should be improved, both materially and concerning personnel. By the improvement of the material conditions we mainly mean the purchase of modern educational aids (teachers' manuals, printed curricula, textbooks, visual aids, tools and equipment to be used at the

The conditions in the institutions that train Gypsy children should be improved.

practice lessons of vocational training, computers, etc.) while on the personnel side we find it necessary to employ extra staff consisting of coaching tutors, experts of socio-pedagogy, psychologists and pedagogical assistants to help the teachers' work.

(This form of support could provide the opportunity to apply for entire schools as well as organisational units, i.e. classes within the schools.)

4. The special pedagogical skills to be used when dealing with Gypsy children are hardly incorporated in the curriculum of teacher training as yet, so a lot of teachers are professionally unprepared when facing this unexpected task. For this reason, programmes providing up-to-date and ready-to-use professional guidance on dealing with Gypsy children's special problems within the framework of both teacher training in colleges and universities and further training for practising teachers should be supported.

Teacher training and in-service training for teachers

(This form of support could provide the opportunity to apply for colleges and universities, institutions that provide educational services, teachers' professional associations and local governments.)

5. One of the main obstacles to the vocational training of Gypsy children is their parents' inability to "buy" them places in training workshops. Because of this, their application is rejected even by the vocational schools that would otherwise admit them, taking their abilities and previous school results into consideration. In order to change this disagreeable situation we recommend that either a system of support that compensates for the financial situation of the children's family should be established or financial support should be provided for craftsmen and owners of businesses on condition that they are ready to participate in the training of Gypsy children. (This form of support could provide the opportunity to apply for craftsmen and owners of small businesses.)
6. And lastly, another frequent problem in connection with Gypsy children's education is that they lack the proper family background and consequently the motivation that could help them adopt a positive attitude towards learning and schools. Very often, their vocational training is simply made difficult by the fact that their families cannot afford to do without the modicum income that they could earn by taking temporary jobs instead of studying. For this reason, these programmes should aim at strengthening their motivation to study and removing the obstacles that impede their learning by providing grants as a form of financial support for Gypsy children studying in grades 9 and 10 of the general education system and in vocational schools.

Strengthening their motivation to study

(This form of support could provide the opportunity to apply for the children themselves.)

APPENDIX

THE PROGRAMME FOR ENHANCING GYPSY PUPILS' EDUCATION

I. THE CURRENT SITUATION OF THE EDUCATION OF GYPSY PUPILS (A GENERAL SURVEY)

1. THE RANGE OF PROBLEMS THAT THE GYPSY ETHNIC GROUP FACES

While the particular educational problems that national minorities need to face are basically of linguistic and cultural nature, Gypsy pupils' education is confronted with the challenges of a large set of problems, whose origins are far beyond the scope of general education. There is not a single sphere of some importance

There is not a single sphere concerning the situation of Gypsy people that is not affected by crisis.

concerning the situation of Gypsy people that is not affected by crisis. A large part of the Gypsy ethnic group live at or near subsistence level. The ratio of unemployment among them is substantially higher than the national average due to the segregation in the labour market. The state of their health and housing is extremely bad. The backwardness of their education as compared to the majority population is becoming greater and greater. Their cultural traditions are gradually disappearing. Their traditional forms of social organisation have already disappeared and its modern forms are just beginning to establish themselves. In addition to all these factors, the prejudices of the majority society have a greater and greater impact on their lives.

All these distressing circumstances signalling a crisis cannot be regarded or treated as separate problems. The disadvantages that Gypsy people have to face stem from and reinforce each other. They constitute a range of problems that are impossible not only to eliminate, but also to comprehend without taking their correlation into account.

A wholistic approach

This needs to be mentioned to make it apparent that tackling the issue of Gypsy pupils' education is impossible solely within the framework of public education. This issue has to be confronted with the whole range of problems that Gypsy people face. Viewing it from this perspective, education is undoubtedly of supreme importance for the Gypsies. This is the only area whose development may make it possible to eliminate the whole range of problems in the long run, as education has widespread effects: directly affecting Gypsy people's position in the labour market and through that in all the areas mentioned above.

2. GYPSY PUPILS IN THE SYSTEM OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

2.1. The number of Gypsy pupils and their advancement in public education

In the school year 1992/93 (the last school year in which the Ministry of Culture and Education collected statistical data on the number of Gypsy pupils), 74,241 pupils, i.e. 7.12% of the primary school pupils were of Gypsy origin. The distribution of Gypsy pupils in primary schools according to counties – in accordance with the geographical distribution of the Gypsy population of nearly 500.000 in Hungary – is rather disproportionate. Their proportion is far higher than the national average in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, Heves, Nógrád, Somogy, Szabolcs-Szatmár and Szolnok Counties. Similarly, the distribution of Gypsy pupils according to the type of settlement is also disproportionate with 56% learning in schools in small villages. 70% of Gypsy pupils go to schools where the ratio of Gypsy pupils is over 10%. There were 1061 such schools in Hungary in 1992. In 42% of these schools, the ratio of Gypsy pupils was over 22%. In contrast, nearly 50% of non-Gypsy children go to schools where the ratio of Gypsy pupils is under 2%. This shows the rather strong segregation of Gypsy pupils at schools.

The clearest picture of the changes in the schooling of the Gypsy population can be obtained by comparing the results of the national representative surveys of 1971 and 1993. According to the data collected in 1971, 26% of the Gypsy people then belonging to the age group 25 to 29 had finished the 8 grades of primary school, while by 1993 that proportion within the same age group had risen to 77%. The percentage of those (23%) who had not accomplished their primary education is still impermissibly high, still at this level of education the difference between the Gypsy population and the majority population had decreased. Still, on the whole, we can observe the widening of the gap between the two groups considering that while the proportion of those with vocational or secondary education grew conspicuously in Hungary in the 1980s, only 13% of the Gypsy population had a certificate of vocational training and only 1% had passed the final examination of secondary education according to the 1993 survey. (By now even a certificate of vocational training proves rather insufficient as far as finding a job is concerned, as the restructuring of vocational training hardly followed the dramatic changes in the labour market, which means that a large number of potentially

Comparing the results from two representative surveys

unemployed people is being trained in vocational schools.) Thus, the data above shows that Gypsy pupils' chances of getting admission to secondary education have not improved in the least bit since 1971!

2.2 THE REASONS OF GYPSY PUPILS' FAILURE AT SCHOOL

If we compare the achievement ratios of schools educating a large number of Gypsy pupils with those of other schools, we find the former ones far worse. They are characterised by a high proportion of pupils' failing to fulfil the requirements and repeating classes and a large number of over-age pupils. Analysts find that the most important cause of Gypsy pupils' poor achievement is not the low quality of education at these schools. On the contrary, the high proportion of Gypsy pupils has an adverse effect on the achievement ratios. The main reason for Gypsy pupils' bad achievement at school is not the disadvantageous educational situation of their towns or villages or the low quality ratios of their schools but Gypsy children's poor pre-school socialisation within the families. The socialisation of Gypsy children in their early childhood does not secure school success for them and their schools are not able to help them adapt to the circumstances either: one pattern of socialisation gets contrasted with a different one at school. Therapy providing assistance in reaching the maturity necessary for school education for Gypsy children in itself cannot solve the problem if it is not accompanied with "therapy" that directs itself towards adapting to schooling. Apart from making Gypsy children suitable for fulfilling the expectations of schools, schools should also become suitable for being able to handle the differences that stem from the subculture of poverty and from belonging to a minority group.

Gypsy children's poor pre-school socialisation within the families.

The prevailing attitude of Gypsy families towards schools is negative. One of the reasons for this is the parents' previous failure at school while another is that the school is an institution of *gádzsó* (non-Gypsy) society. This does not only manifest itself in the school's expectations that seem extraneous in view of the Gypsy tradition and culture but also, and more importantly, in the prejudice of the pupils and even teachers belonging to the majority society. These problems adversely affect children of fair or exceptional abilities, and multiply so those of average or poorer abilities. Thus and so Gypsy children's originally low motivation to learn weakens and in the case of a large number of 7th or 8th grade pupils this leads to estrangement from the school and even dropping out. A reason for this is that at this age their families treat Gypsy children as young adults while they feel that they are treated as very small children at school. (The dropping out of Gypsy pupils is of substantially higher proportions than that of the non-Gypsy pupils in primary as well as in vocational and secondary schools.)

The prevailing attitude of Gypsy families towards schools is negative.

Failure at school and abandoning their studies at a young age has social reasons, too. Free education does not mean free nurseries, schoolbooks, study kits, clothing or food. A large proportion of Gypsy families living on the breadline cannot afford to shoulder these burdens, and they also need the children's assistance in earning the family's living.

3. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES FOR GYPSY PUPILS

3.1. COACHING PROGRAMMES FOR GYPSY PUPILS

Since 1991, the local governments maintaining educational institutions have had the right to apply for supplementary normative support for organising coaching

programmes for Gypsy pupils. As the regulations do not precisely define the required curriculum of such programmes and schools are not provided with curricula or textbooks specially compiled for Gypsy educational programmes, the organisers of the programmes have set a wide range of different objectives and applied organisational and curricular solutions of different kinds.

Coaching programmes are partly integrated, i.e. in some schools Gypsy pupils are not segregated from the rest of the pupils. The programmes are often based on tests conducted at the beginning of the school year, according to the results of which the different coaching, assistance or special tutoring programmes are conducted throughout the school year. Individual coaching is often provided to develop pupils' speaking, reading or writing skills, while coaching for small groups is usually organised for each school subject separately. Generally, teachers provide two hours of coaching per student. The total number of sessions is higher for pupils in grades 1 to 4 than in grades 5 to 8.

The organisationally differentiated programmes providing support for certain separate groups of Gypsy pupils are usually conducted along with integrated solutions. Mostly, they are arranged by schools if, for a certain reason (e.g. pupils having a poor command of Hungarian or being over-age), a part of the Gypsy pupils greatly differ from their schoolmates. The differentiated programmes offer a large scope of activities, too. The possible solutions include afternoon activities in small groups, achievement groups dealing with one school subject, groups learning Hungarian in a higher than average number of lessons, joint activities for pupils in grades 1 to 4, skills development classes, special classes for over-age student of different grades run every four years and running a pre-school preparatory grade.

Even special tutoring programmes are organised for talented pupils, though they are quite rare. They have different forms such as development programmes for individual pupils, activity groups, preparation for school contests and the support of music school tuition.

One of the most important shortcomings of the regulations concerning providing support according to the number of minority pupils is that they do not oblige schools to teach pupils Gypsy civilisation, culture and traditions. This would be a necessary part of educating Gypsy pupils, similarly to the case of national minorities. Making this kind of education generally available could heighten Gypsy children's self-esteem, enhance their emancipation within the school community and, in certain cases, could lead to the amelioration of the relationship between Gypsy parents and the school.

Although no regulation prescribes it, some schools provide their pupils with the opportunity to study the Gypsy culture. In most of the cases this happens outside the regular curriculum in afternoon activity groups, special club sessions or incorporated in the activities of folk music, folk dance or drama groups run by the school.

3.2. MINORITY EDUCATION FOR GYPSY PUPILS

At present, there exist 15 educational institutions that provide kindergarten and/or primary school education for the Gypsy minority in Hungary, which number is rather humble, taking the size of the Gypsy population into consideration. Four of these are operated by foundations or associations while the other eleven are operated by local governments.

Too few educational institutions for Gypsy minority.

The educational programmes of these institutions are greatly varied. Some of them consider special coaching and tutoring to be their most important tasks. Other institutions try to prepare pupils for coping with the challenges of the labour market or for admission to institutions of secondary/higher education. Some tailor their educational programmes to suit the characteristics of the Gypsy children, who form the majority of the pupils in the institution. An outstanding example among the educational institutions of the Gypsy minority is Gandhi High School and Students' Hostel in Pécs, under construction but functioning since 1994, which provides six and a half years of tuition.

A common characteristic feature of all the institutions that have a Gypsy educational programme is that apart from helping Gypsy pupils at school, they also intend to overcome the challenges of the whole range of problems that Gypsy people face. Regular feedback from them and the analysis of the effects of their activities would provide aid for outlining practicable models for the education of Gypsy pupils. Another characteristic feature of these institutions is that all of them strongly emphasise the importance of providing information on and preserving the Gypsy culture.

The importance of providing information on and preserving the Gypsy culture.

Each and every one of these institutions struggle with financial difficulties. Apart from the individual problems, the main reason in each case is that they need to provide welfare services to a much larger extent than the average lest they might lose their pupils. They reimburse their students' travel fares, provide them with free schoolbooks and study kits and ask for very little or no money at all in return for food and accommodation. They receive no state subsidies to cover these rather high welfare expenses.

II. THE PROGRAMME FOR ENHANCING GYPSY PUPILS' EDUCATION

1. THE STRATEGIC AIMS OF THE PROGRAMME

The strategic aim of the Programme is to provide the conditions that are necessary to compensate for the backwardness that Gypsy pupils need to cope with and to enhance their chances of school success within the whole range of the public education system. In order to achieve this aim it is necessary to establish a system of protective and preferential measures at three junctures of public education:

1. It is necessary to assist Gypsy pupils in adapting to schooling by enhancing and supporting kindergarten, pre-school and primary school coaching programmes. At the same time – primarily by organising training programmes for practising teachers – it is necessary to enhance the capability of schools for providing such assistance.
2. It is necessary to secure that a significantly larger proportion of Gypsy pupils receive school education and fully accomplish their primary studies during the period of compulsory schooling than at present by developing coaching programmes and building up and operating a network of special tutoring.
3. It is necessary to secure that a significantly larger proportion of Gypsy pupils receive secondary comprehensive education or vocational training and fully accomplish these studies by building up and operating a network of tutoring programmes and hostels and providing grants for pupils.

To establish a system of protective and preferential measures at three junctures of public education

2. THE MAIN CONSTITUENTS OF THE PROGRAM

In order to achieve its strategic aims the Programme provides support for the following programmes and calls for the development of these conditions:

1. Support pedagogical, linguistic, ethnological, historical etc. research in order to modernise the contents of Gypsy education.
2. Update the curricula, schoolbooks and study aids used in different Gypsy educational programmes and institutions.
3. Modernise and support kindergarten and pre-school preparatory programmes to assist children in reaching the maturity necessary for school education.
4. Modernise and support coaching programmes for pupils with poor school results.
5. Outline a network of countrywide tutoring programmes and hostels for the pupils.
6. Improve the system of grants for pupils in public and tertiary education.
7. Support teacher training and similar programmes in tertiary education.
8. Organise and support training programmes for practising teachers, social workers and educational counsellors.
9. Support the Gypsy minority's educational institutions.
10. Develop and support intercultural educational programmes.
11. Develop pedagogical/professional services.

2.1. RESEARCH

It is necessary to allocate funds for the Research Centre of the National Institute of Public Education (OKI) for having the research indispensable for the modernisation of Gypsy education carried out in through tenders and by engaging researchers and experts.

A research committee needs to be established by inviting the educational experts and representatives of the Romani Research Institute, the university and college departments concerned and other research organisations in order to establish the top priorities of a research programme of several years of length and put forward recommendations in connection with the tenders and the research commissions.

Setting up a research committee

2.2. UPDATING CURRICULA AND PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

It is necessary to allocate funds for the Office of Curriculum and Programme Development for Minorities of the National Institute of Public Education (OKI) so that it can finance the setting up of a variety of different Gypsy educational programmes within the school curriculum and organise the projects necessary for their development. The development concerning the contents of the educational programmes should have the following primary objectives:

- Collect and assess the programmes and curricula currently in use.
- Update the curricula, textbooks, schoolbooks, teachers' manuals and study aids used in the education of the Gypsy culture.
- Update the curricula, teachers' manuals, manuals and study aids used in kindergarten and pre-school preparatory programmes.
- Update the teachers' manuals, manuals and study aids used in the coaching programmes.
- Update the teachers' manuals, manuals, and study aids used in the special tutoring programmes.

- Outline educational programmes for students' hostels.
- Update the curricula, teachers' manuals, schoolbooks and study aids used in the intercultural educational programmes.
- Update the textbooks and manuals used in Gypsy language teaching.

2.3. A COUNTRY-WIDE NETWORK OF TUTORING

The main tasks of the country-wide network of tutoring are the following: find the well-endowed pupils, provide tutoring for individual pupils and small groups, make sure that these well-endowed pupils continue their studies in the public education system and support their further studies. The network is established and run by the Gandhi Public Foundation with the participation of the County Pedagogical Institutes.

The scope of activity of the network should be gradually spread to all institutions educating Gypsy pupils in a large number. Comprehensive surveys of the non-Gypsy pupils studying at these schools need to be conducted at the same time. If possible, it is necessary to organise special classes for individual pupils or small groups, summer study camps and preparatory courses for the entrance exams of colleges and universities in order to enhance the opportunities of talented Gypsy pupils. It is necessary to make it possible for them to apply for grants and accommodation in students' hostels.

2.4. A COUNTRY-WIDE NETWORK OF HOSTELS FOR GYPSY STUDENTS

A country-wide network of hostels accommodating talented Gypsy pupils with good school results is being established and run by the Gandhi Public Foundation in order to help to enhance these pupils' secondary education. Hostels for Gypsy students providing accommodation during a period of six years (for students in grades 7 to 12) need to be established in the five biggest towns of the country. Apart from accommodation, these institutions would also be able to provide continuous coaching for the pupils, whose actual education would be carried out in the existing schools of the town, thus integrated into the majority society. The hostels would also function as the regional methodological centres of the countrywide network of special tutoring programmes.

It is necessary to establish five hostels with accommodation for approximately 100 pupils in each. The recruitment areas of these hostels should be drawn in such a way that they could all provide the same number of Gypsy children with the opportunity of studying. It is expedient to locate the hostels in relatively large towns with a wide variety of institutions of secondary education. It is also necessary to offer the pupils accommodated in the hostels preparatory courses for the entrance exams of colleges and universities with the assistance of the colleges/universities in the same town.

The detailed plans concerning the location of the hostels have been prepared. The preparatory phase of the construction is to be completed and Gandhi Public Foundation is to be allocated the resources necessary for the construction in 1996. Also, the local governments' and educational institutions' willingness to participate is to be secured. The first hostels would be able to start functioning at the beginning of the school year 1997/98.

2.5. BUILDING UP A DECENTRALISED SYSTEM OF AWARDING GRANTS FOR GYPSY PUPILS IN THE PUBLIC EDUCATION

Help to enhance pupils' secondary education

Preparatory courses for the entrance exams of colleges and universities

Drop-out from school is rather frequent among the pupils receiving grants, too.

At present, 797 Gypsy pupils are receiving grants from the National and Ethnic Minorities Public Foundation (Formerly: Public Foundation for the Hungarian National and Ethnic Minorities). 28 of them are university undergraduates, 63 are college undergraduates and 706 are pupils of comprehensive and vocational secondary schools. It would be expedient to continue having the system of grants for student of tertiary education run by National and Ethnic Minorities Public Foundation. In contrast, the system of awarding grants for pupils of secondary education requires widening and the process of making decisions concerning the awarding of the grants should be decentralised. County committees should be set up to award grants for Gypsy pupils, in co-operation with the County Pedagogical Institutes. The sum to be allocated should be considerably raised. In 1996 it should be doubled. The distribution of the Gypsy pupils who receive grants studying in the different grades of secondary education shows that dropping out from school is rather frequent among the pupils receiving grants, too. It ought to be made possible that all the Gypsy students who receive grants studying in the public education system should automatically have the opportunity of participating in the special tutoring programmes.

2.6. PROGRAMMES FOR TRAINING TEACHERS AND EDUCATIONAL EXPERTS

The present system of teacher training is almost completely unsuitable for preparing prospective teachers to deal with the special problems of educating Gypsy children. Zsámbék College is the only institution of tertiary education with a Department of Romani Studies. Apart from supporting the establishment of such institutions, it is vital that a teaching module dealing with the Gypsy minority should appear in teacher training. Research into the Gypsy culture within the framework of tertiary education, to establish the fundamentals for the training programmes, should be supported. It is vital to raise the number of Gypsy students participating in tertiary education, especially of those training to be teachers and social workers, by organising special tutoring programmes for them, widening the scope of scholarship programmes and supporting the preparatory courses organised by institutions of tertiary education.

A teaching module dealing with the Gypsy minority should appear in teacher training.

2.7. TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR TEACHERS

Training programmes dealing with issues of pedagogy and of the Gypsy culture need to be organised for practising teachers in accordance with the modernisation of Gypsy education. Also, training programmes dealing with issues of the Gypsy culture need to be organised for experts working for local governments, the national health service and in human politics. These training programmes may be organised in the form of traditional courses, in-service training programmes and correspondence courses according to demand. The updating of the curricula, manuals and study aids used in the different training programmes and the organisation of a wide selection of different programmes should be supported.

2.8. THE SUPPORT OF THE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS OF THE GYPSY MINORITY

Following the assessment of the educational process and the physical conditions of the existing educational institutions of the Gypsy minority, their operation should be secured using separate financial resources.

2.9. THE REORGANISATION OF THE SYSTEM OF PEDAGOGICAL AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

In the course of the reorganisation of the background institutions of the Ministry of Culture and Education and of the system of pedagogical and professional services, it is necessary to secure the organisational, personal and financial framework of the activities of research, assessment, curriculum and programme development, training, organisation and quality control services connected to Gypsy education.

1. It should be secured that the County Pedagogical Institutes and the county councils should employ experts to work on the projects of modernising Gypsy education, either by employing the former employees of the dissolving District Educational Centres or by recruiting new staff.
2. The Research Centre of the National Institute of Public Education (OKI) should employ a researcher and a research manager to co-ordinate all the research activities necessary for the modernising of Gypsy education and also develop and operate the database of Gypsy education.
3. The Evaluation Centre of the National Institute of Public Education (OKI) should employ staff to develop the assessment system of Gypsy education.
4. The Minority Curriculum and Programme Development Office, to be established later within the Curriculum and Programme Development Office of the National Institute of Public Education (OKI), should employ staff to organise the updating of the contents of Gypsy Education.
5. The training programmes for practising teachers/experts are to be developed and organised by the National and Ethnic Minority Department of National Institute of Services in Public Education (OKSZI).

2.10. HARMONISATION OF LAWS AND WIDENING THE SYSTEM OF PREFERENTIAL REGULATIONS

A team of experts should be invited to review the effective legislation connected to educational matters in order that they can put forward recommendations in connection with the harmonisation with the Act on the Rights of Minorities and the possible introduction of further preferential regulations and procedures.

2.11. THE CONSTRUCTION OF A UNIFIED SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS AND SERVICES

It should be secured that supports and services aiming at modernising Gypsy education coming from diverse resources should reach the individual educational institutions in a highly synchronised way, in a unified system and securing the participation of the Gypsy minority councils. For this purpose, it is necessary to set up and operate a National Programme of Public Education for Gypsy Pupils.

The Education of Gypsy Children in the Kindergarten

By Mrs József Szemán

Source: *Iskolakultúra*, 1995/24.

The majority of Gypsy children live in large families and are open to relationships within the community. However, they do not easily become fond of the kindergarten, since they find company in their own community. Gypsy children are generally well developed in social terms, although they are afraid of strangers. Nevertheless, the presence of only one Gypsy child is sufficient for them to regain their courage and friendly nature. They feel secure among their brothers, sisters, family and relatives, and at family gatherings they have experienced that they are in the centre of attention as small children. Thus, integration of Gypsy children in the kindergarten may be assisted by their brothers, sisters, older friends, family members and more distant relatives separately from each other.

The integration of Gypsy children in the kindergarten may be assisted by their relatives.

HELPING TRANSITION FROM THE FAMILY ENVIRONMENT TO THE KINDERGARTEN

Gypsy children are breastfed for a longer time than children in general, they spend a lot of time with their mother, the family takes them everywhere they go, and in a bigger company children are passed around from hand to hand. They are not afraid of being left alone. The fear of separation and the need for body contact do not hinder their integration into the kindergarten community. The procrastination of the "let me get down" period (Jenő Ranschburg) is hardly observable in the case of Gypsy children. Whenever they become fond of someone, they usually show their affection by cuddling up to them, and the older ones usually express it verbally as well.

Some Gypsy families are not eager to send their children to kindergarten, because they are concerned that the children might be bullied by their peers. They often check up on the safety of their children and they want to be able to call in the kindergarten from time to time. As if they had more trust in their own way of bringing up children.

Gypsy families are not eager to send their children to kindergarten.

The integration of Gypsy children is also impeded by the diverse values of the family and the kindergarten. Children must be made familiar with the rooms and objects of the kindergarten gradually. It should be talked about each day when coats are taken off and put on, in case at home with their family, due to poor heating, this practice could not develop. (The threshold of Gypsy children's sensation of warmth is high, and they like wearing clothes and caps even if it is warm.) The use of devices they were not familiar with at home should not be forced on them before they get used to their noise or size (e.g. toilet, loud household devices, etc.).

The integration of children is made easier if there are several Gypsy children in one group, or one or two older girls in a homogenous group, since girls in the family learn to take care of smaller children at quite an early age, and can help smaller ones bridge language difficulties as well.

The integration of Gypsy children is impeded by the difference in eating habits. Gypsy children can be extremely tidy even when eating without using a plate, but they might have difficulties at the beginning with the use of cutlery and with chewing (e.g. at home

they eat the pulpy food given to a smaller sibling). They soon get accustomed to the use of napkins, while having more difficulty using toilet paper.

Except for a few cases, regular sleeping in the kindergarten does not present a problem for them; they like placing beds close to one another. Due to the circumstances in their homes and the poor material conditions they are sleepier than the others, and fall into sleep easily.

Different daily routine of their families

One of the crucial factors of their integration is the different daily routine of their families, and a life ensuring more freedom than the kindergarten. Thus, they feel really happy when they play outdoor games and can move a lot. They are attracted by the abundance of toys in the classroom; and sometimes even young mothers sit down to play with kindergarten toys. This interest might be favourably exploited in the period of habituation. For instance, we can organise game sessions for the children and their families to develop a fondness of the kindergarten. Parents are happy to be assigned with tasks for the kindergarten; they repair toys and prepare embroidered tablecloths to decorate the classroom. While carrying out these tasks, not only do they come to like the kindergarten, but their trust in it and sense of responsibility towards it will also be enhanced.

This trust may also be built by playing ball games with the participation of the child, the family and the kindergarten teacher, or by playing with puppets, or organising a party where the whole family is invited. In Gypsy kindergarten classes the employment of Gypsy nannies or nurses could also have a favourable effect on the integration of children.

Tackle the differences between individual families with more delicacy than usual.

If the child attends a majority class and not a homogenous Gypsy child community, at the beginning it is expedient to use the circumstances and interests of Gypsy families as a starting point (for instance, in the first days we might not ask for towels, pyjamas, training clothes or money for cinema tickets of non-Gypsy families either). Naturally, it does not mean that the favourable effect of more wealthy families on education should not be utilised; we simply should tackle the differences between individual families with more delicacy than usual.

In majority groups, parents often display their prejudices. It is important that positive potentials (e.g. dancing and playing together) of a mixed child community are made good use of, in order to contribute to the prevention of separation. Although it is difficult in the case of families, we should try to view children from a uniform perspective – namely, that potentially they are the geniuses, inventors, artists, the honest and hard-working engine drivers, or highly responsible zoo caretakers of the future (since it is rather difficult to decide now what will be needed more in twenty years' time).

The issue of integration of Gypsy children into the kindergarten may only be solved relying on the co-operation of their families. This involves that parents should be allowed to come into the class in the mornings, as well as making it possible for them to contact us any time during the day, should their distrust gain ground. On such occasions they can get ascertained that their children are not bullied by the others. From time to time, the teacher should see the Gypsy child home, thus beginning family visits gradually.

At the beginning of the school year, teachers should be careful in Gypsy classes not to receive lots of children simultaneously. Instead, they should organise that children living in the same community or large family may arrive at the same time. Special attention should be paid to setting up classes so that brothers and sisters (which, in the case of Gypsy children, does not necessarily mean brothers and sisters by birth) become members of the same class.

It is best when children of kindergarten age are taken by kindergartens in the vicinity of their homes. Teachers should never refuse Gypsy children living near the kindergarten

due to the lack of vacancies, because wealthier families have more opportunities to overcome the problem of distance.

The poor financial circumstances of a family should never be an obstacle to Gypsy children attending kindergarten classes regularly. In such cases, organisations should be contacted whose function is to help children living under modest conditions. With regard to the issue of the children's admittance to the kindergarten, it is a good idea to ask for the advice of the minority local governments.

All possibilities must be exploited so that Gypsy children living in colonies could start going to kindergarten after reaching the age of 3, in the most responsive period of their lives (the first 4 years). The reason is to offer them primary preventive opportunities, compensation at an early age for an inadequate family background, and preparation for primary school.

Children of Gypsy families living under better conditions must be spotted one year before school age. It is to avoid cases when children who already reached the age of 7 turn out not to have been to any kind of community yet, although for their age they should be attending school.

Children are tolerant, do not discriminate and accept otherness. Adults are different in this aspect. Either consciously or unconsciously, they bring up their children to be racists. Prejudices may be equally found in Gypsy and non-Gypsy families. It would be desirable to achieve that Gypsy families can decide whether they want separate kindergarten schools for their children and separate classes within them, or they want to send the children into majority kindergartens. This is not the case today.

Children do not discriminate and accept otherness. Adults are different in this aspect.

MAKING THE DAILY ROUTINE AND PRACTICES KNOWN AND ACCEPTED

The daily routine for Gypsy classes in the kindergarten should be adjusted to the lifestyle of their families. In heterogeneous classes, those routines having hygienic aspects should be introduced in the first year of the kindergarten (for instance, the hygiene of the periods between meals). By inviting a hairdresser or organising a competition with practical knowledge in the focus, this programme can be made more colourful. Self-helping community activities might be encouraged in the field of clothing habits, as well as getting familiar with and following traditions and minority cultures.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EDUCATION IN THE KINDERGARTEN

The kindergarten education of Gypsy children has been dealt with more intensively since 1973, but there are still no precise statistics of their proportion in kindergarten schooling. In several towns (e.g. in Hajdúböszörmény, Northeast Hungary), where there are Gypsy classes at present, there had been no Gypsy children in kindergartens before 1983, and they only took part in the 192-hour long compulsory school preparation course. There is hardly any experience gathered about the kindergarten education of Gypsy children, neither are there explicit results of education in homogeneous and heterogeneous (Gypsy and non-Gypsy) classes.

In the past few years, kindergarten teachers have been working in accordance with local educational programmes in Gypsy classes. Several kindergartens employ speech therapists and teachers specialising in development, and they make more use of the Education Counselling Service (for instance in the case of decisions concerning schooling). In Gypsy classes, the social function of the kindergarten has increased in the past few years (e.g. providing the children with towels, sheets and pyjamas). At the same time, the self-organisation of families sending their children to kindergarten has also become manifested in the more aesthetic clothing of the children.

Due to better material conditions and the provision of meals Gypsy families are more willing to send the smaller children to kindergarten (school), while they wish to keep the older ones at home to help them with their work. Whereas formerly the assimilative impact of state education, the suppression of ethnic culture and the problems of linguistic education kept the Gypsy population away from the kindergarten, today's experience is that there are only one or two children in each village or town whose existence is unknown before they reach school age. Gypsy families are happy to send their children over three to kindergarten (with the exception of those still breastfed), although, due to frequent illnesses, they are absent more often and they spend less time in the kindergarten. (Due to the smaller number of those having a job and the fact that several generations live together, parents take their children home earlier and often bring them in later; or even do not bring them in at all from time to time because of family occasions.)

Increasingly regular attendance of Gypsy children in kindergartens

As a result of the increasingly regular attendance of Gypsy children in kindergartens (e.g. in Tolna County it is up to 85 per cent) and the introduction of the compulsory school preparation, 96 per cent of children of the official school age start their schooling in primary schools. (Attentive enrolment procedures to school make some of them overage, but still in compliance with legal regulations.)

Formerly, children with less experience about life, underdeveloped build and proneness to illnesses were sent to special schools in greater proportion. (In the past few years their replacement has been restricted, and they were given the opportunity to be exempted from certain subjects.)

The primary preventive potentials and expertise of the kindergarten is more increasingly accepted by Gypsy families as well. Kindergarten teachers strive to organise the life of Gypsy children so that the traditions and values of Hungarian kindergarten education are alloyed with the reinforcement of the cultural and linguistic identity of Gypsies, while also paying attention to the abilities of Gypsy children (e.g. outstanding musical skills, good sense of rhythm, manual skills).

Kindergartens as family help centres

Since the enactment of the Act on Social Issues (1993), kindergartens accepting Gypsy or socially disadvantaged non-Gypsy children have been operating as family help centres as well. Kindergarten teachers getting integrated into the lives of families have become excellent partners for the staff of the network of social institutions.

THE ORGANISATION OF PLAYING, WORKING AND STUDYING

The way Gypsy children play is affected by their living in large families and in close contact with nature (e.g. playing with younger children, cooking together with their mother and elder sister, preparation for cooking, visiting other households, celebrating, hunting for rabbits with their father, gathering plants). Since gender roles are differentiated more in Gypsy families, the imitation of the parent of the same gender is more intensive, but the relationship with siblings and the frequent gathering of relatives convey a more general form of adult behaviour to children. The choice of

A close contact with nature

themes in the games of Gypsy children in the kindergarten is rather rich: cooking, eating, looking after children, daddy-mummy games, travelling in groups, jumping, hunting for rabbits, fishing, running around, playing ball games, playing Indians, fighting games, driving a car, playing with dolls, playing cards, chess, etc.

Almost every Gypsy family has a television set and a record player, and watching video films is frequent. Children in the kindergarten relive their television experiences with an even more passionate intensity while playing (partly due to housing problems). They like films which connect to their lifestyle in one way or another. While playing, they mainly identify with characters similar to them (e.g. an oppressed black American), which refers to their developed emphatic skills.

Developed emphatic skills

The social sensitivity of Gypsy children in a peer group is adequate, which is also manifested while they are playing. They accept one another, and Gypsy children excluded from the game for violating the rules have the social technique which helps them get back to the playgroup. Gypsy children's consciousness of games and reality is good, but their knowledge of rules, due to their upbringing focussing on practicality, is somewhat lagging behind their peers', but it can be developed.

Social sensitivity

Children who have less toys at home start playing at a level of getting familiar with them, and so they seem less developed than the others – which, nevertheless, does not mean that they are lagging behind in personal development. In a personal development programme they soon catch up with the others.

Due to their practical education at home, organising work in Gypsy children does not pose problems. Little girls help their mothers and grandmothers with the cooking at home, although laying the table is more neglected than in the kindergarten. Children get used to serving themselves soon, and their good manual skills make up for the blanks in their experience. However, more emphasis should be placed on work processes which are not repeated in their homes frequently enough.

Organising work in Gypsy children does not pose problems.

The motional activity of Gypsy children can be well utilised when organising work in the kindergarten. The advantages of mixed ages become apparent while carrying out certain tasks, because Gypsy children are used to watching the older ones and imitating them.

When assigning tasks for work, the principles of graduation and regularity becomes more significant in Gypsy classes, since there will be elements in implementing the task which are missing from the family model. The physical ability of the children are good, and results might be achieved easily with regular feedback, praise and patience (e.g. in keeping the tidiness of the classroom, or in gardening work or looking after animals).

In the organisation of work it should be taken into account that the children have different experience of life. The missing elements should be made practised even when playing, and teachers should not give up teaching these at least at an elementary level even if the children will not have the opportunity to apply these at home (e.g. a wardrobe and towel of their own, or using the toilet).

By making the children like working and by developing the necessary skills, the kindergarten should have an effect on Gypsy families through the children; and an opportunity should be given to them to observe working processes in the kindergarten and also to undertake tasks. (E.g. the families can plant flowers and bushes by the fence of the kindergarten for themselves, participate in their care, or the kindergarten can encourage the organisation of jobs in the environment of the families.)

The kindergarten should have an effect on Gypsy families through the children

The involvement of Gypsy children and families in the cleaning of the kindergarten or its yard and in the protection of its equipment may make the kindergarten more attractive, promotes the sense of responsibility and urges reproduction. Thus, everything should be done, with love and patience, so that the basic skills and practices of carrying out work are enriched and deepened in the children as an impact of the kindergarten. All this must be done even in cases when the teacher does not receive reinforcement from

the family. "The faith of teachers is more a question of nature than view, and it assumes two things: that people can be educated (to be better than they are now) and taught (for more than they know now). Great teachers regard the first one more important," wrote László Németh, the great Hungarian writer and educator.

In the learning process of Gypsy children the effect of the family are the most prominent: imitating, following models and little verbalism. In a Gypsy family, social, emotional, behavioural and exploratory learning is more powerful, and the use of the cognitive (intellectual) sphere is not that important. The involvement of children in the game of the adults, their work, promotes spontaneous learning.

The function of the kindergarten is getting familiar with a totally different way and effect of experience and knowledge, as well as providing for the supplementation of missing parts. The kindergarten helps children arrive from an acting or scenic thinking at an imaginal and then conceptual thinking.

Organise all sessions in a free form.

In a Gypsy class it is advisable to organise all sessions in a free form, and perhaps change to the introduction of fix-scheduled sessions from the middle of the last year. The organisation of guided learning (workshops) in a class of homogenous age and composition (Gypsy) assures that children of families with better speech skills and more readiness for intellectual activities do not push the Gypsy children's activity into the background. It is probable that the plentiful variations of homogeneous and heterogeneous age and group composition not known so far must be found out, and these must be adjusted to the needs of parents and the possibilities of the kindergarten (e.g. individual and differentiated group workshops within the Gypsy class, ability to move here and there between homogeneous and heterogeneous classes, etc.).

Give preference to freedom in education

The function of guided learning (workshops) is the complementation of the spontaneous learning opportunities inherent in the playing and working of kindergarten children, the correction of deficiencies found in family education, and the creation of equal opportunities before starting primary school. In the kindergarten education of Gypsy children it is worth giving preference to freedom in education, also followed by the family at home, within the framework of classroom and outdoor games and spontaneous learning. However, during the free and compulsory workshops, as children are getting older, more emphasis should be given to making them get used to persevering by certain elements of the activity. The success of this objective is mainly dependent on the personal appeal of the kindergarten teacher and the impact deriving from her impressive personality, rather than resorting to "strict" techniques.


Wide Open School

(Škola dokorán)

By: **Éva Končoková**

Source: **Nadácia Škola dokorán, Slovak Republic, 1996**

The experimental verification project of methods and forms of upbringing and education in the kindergarten and in the first grade of basic school



INTRODUCTION

The substance of transforming process of our education comes out from two main principles - democratisation and humanisation. These principles are placed in the Law amendment of the Basic and High School System from 1990. Besides, the School Law has created appropriate conditions for differentiation of our educational system. Centralised state monopoly in education is gradually decentralised. Private, religious and alternative schools come into existence. The school headmasters got the power (to change curricula, insert other subjects, use alternative textbooks, etc.) by the approval of the Law of State Administration in Education. The teachers have the possibility to make an objective to be concrete, contents, methods, organising forms and the means of upbringing and education. The parents and children have the possibility of a free choice of school.

Two main principles - democratisation and humanisation.

THEORETICAL STARTING POINTS

An access to the upbringing and education requests changes in more basic levels. The changes in the field of upbringing and education philosophy, in educational process and in preparing education and other teacher education have to be realized in harmony with changes of organisation and with changes in the control of whole school system.

The submitted project of the Wide Open School is oriented for verification of effectivity of process changes of pedagogical work in kindergartens and first grade of basic school (from the first year). The research will be realised longitudinally.

Verification of effectivity of process changes of pedagogical work in kindergartens.

When we create the project, we come out from traditions and from the high level of institutional pre-school and school upbringing and education in our country, from complex analyses of effectivity of newly drawing educational contents, theoretical accesses of pedagogical thinking classics J. A. Komenský, D. Lehotský, J. J. Rousseau and foreign conceptions and models of upbringing and education (J. S. Bruner, E. Erikson, M. Montessori, J. Piaget, L. S. Vygotský).

The philosophical and theoretical base is an access of taking the upbringing and education like a process, the objective of which is related to anthropological assumptions. The human being is thinking to be a primary biosocial being, that need to develop its cognitive, emotional, social and physical side in harmony and interaction, in the process of upbringing and education.

The development of an individual, a gradual change of biological being to independent and socialised human being is characterised by Piaget like a sequence of three systems of activities (constructions). Sensomotoric activities, semiotic function and

thinking operations follow in stable order and each of them has its own structure. This development of and individual depends from an organism maturity, learning and getting experiences during subjects manipulation, social interaction and socialisation and last but not least from the creation of an auto regulation system that can help him or her to keep the balanced state in the world.

Our accesses to an educational process comprehension and surrounding functions, where this process is realized, correspond with such conception of development of an individual human being. Because the child from its birth is manifested like an active individual, with a natural longing to know the surrounding world, it needs to be intentionally created such surroundings for it that motivates it to the active learning by means of some activity.

On the base of mentioned we can say, that the new philosophy of upbringing and education, that is supported by the principles for humanistic pedagogy, has the place that cannot be replaced, mainly in pre-school upbringing and later in the first grade of the basic school.

In the process of learning, teaching and educating, the great emphasis is given to a generally not enough valuated giant brain capacity, its abilities to receive extensive information range, an ability of a human being to enter the social life from an early age, psycho dynamic specialities of an individual, etc. The unity of psycho social characteristics creates conditions for an optimisation of development process, upbringing and education. In the foreground of an interest is an individual or personal point of view. Individualisation and orientation for a personality is reflected by substantial way also in the submitted project. It consists of:

- a subject activation in the process of upbringing and education, in orientation for the values of all people (upbringing to inner freedom, to looking for own identity, knowledge and reception of responsibility, to an ability to make decision, to look for a correct solving, to the social orientation in tolerance sense, to the patience to other people, to their life and culture, to the fellow belonging etc.);
- an orientation on an independent, critic and creative thinking and opinion;
- enlarging of the task and responsibility of the family for upbringing and education of children (larger family law to enter their process and organisation).

The basic factor for the teaching activity of a teacher and learning activity of the pupil is an appropriate specific atmosphere created (in a classroom, walk, etc.). It is characterized by:

- the partner relationship between the teacher and the child/pupils mutually;
- the confidence between the teacher and the child/pupil, children/pupils mutually;
- manifestations of a sincere teacher interest to know the child/pupil and its family;
- the teacher willingness to develop interests and needs of the child/pupil, to support voluntary educational activities of the child (the development of perception abilities) and its curiosity without the pressure of the teacher;
- the willingness of the child/pupil to speak about its experiences, problems, etc.;
- the teacher willingness to create the possibilities for the children/pupil entry to activities during making decisions, taking part to solve problems etc.
- The teacher doesn't teach in traditional word sense. He only controls and organises the pupils activity in such way that he prepares conditions for their activity. The reach of objectives is realised by means of various roles and determined rules.

By means of a play, the teacher is preparing conditions for a creative activity. Prepared didactic situation supports not only an emotional side of survival, but also ethical and aesthetic one. The teacher leads pupils to receive various roles. For example, what "thinking pupils" think about their activities (old and new ones) and in the same time they connect previous and new knowledge; what "problems solving pupils" search and

suggest the alternative solving ways after giving them a task (problem); what "manual active pupils" develop manual skills by means of aids and tools; what "communicating pupils" formulate and express their own thoughts and opinions by means of various media; what "organising pupils" co-operate with others and in the same time they respect their opinions; what "partner pupils" protect and take care of others and in the same time they find that they also depend from the care and protection of others.

The didactic situation on one side enable to check abilities, knowledge and skills by an acceptable way, on other side it doesn't expel the competition, but it can bring the pleasure, remove the tension and fear. The teacher makes his expectation evident by various ways, for example:

The use of the didactic situation

- he creates a suitable surroundings for children/pupils to receive the learning role;
- he defines roles and he asks children/pupils for partnership during various activities (e.g. like observers, recorders);
- he expresses his expectation, e.g. by the modelling of such behaviour way, that he assumes the children/pupils to reach.

The ensuring of wanted results is possible only after the assumption that the changes in organisation of teaching and control activity of teacher are accepted. The classroom and the lesson like a basic organising unit are not only traditional but also confirmed from many sides. In spite of it, in the interest of increasing of the teaching effectivity, it is necessary:

Necessary steps:

- a) to change the organisation of the classroom surroundings in the kindergarten and basic school by the way that the classroom is divided to two parts. One part is equipped by school benches (benches are arranged for 4-6 pupils), the second classroom part is equipped by a carpet. It is usually used at the beginning of educational activity or lesson. Children are sitting on the carpet and debate about their feelings and experiences, they suggest and organised together with their teacher the school work what will makes better contact between them;
- b) to create "the rules" (that will be kept during occupation, learning, during breaks, on walks, etc.), for pupils and teachers. All participants share by the same part in creation of them;
- c) to divide the school work between the teacher and the teacher assistant;
- d) to arrange the classroom outfit in such way to arise the activity centre in the classroom (e.g. the literature centre contains not only books, tape records, but also some bookmarks for marking the read book part, the games supported the reading development, pillows, etc.);
- e) to ensure material and technical outfit of each experimental classroom (variety of materials and teaching aids).

An purpose of didactic material, the experimental classrooms will be sufficiently equipped with, is to encourage the child/pupil interest. The structure of this material enables the progress in certain "order", that the child could process it. The teacher task is to arrange it in such way, the child makes progress from concrete to abstract things and in the same time to think in intentions of solving of problematic task. Knowledge, that pupils will get on the base of their own work, activity, is more durable, deeper, the pupil better manages practically to use it. The significant phenomenon is also the fact

Encourage the child/pupil interest

that the pupil success in education influenced positively his self-knowledge and backward motivates him to the next activity, to the next learning.

AN OBJECTIVE OF THE EXPERIMENTAL VERIFICATION IS:

1. to find what will be the measure of contribution of the Wide Open School Foundation methodology during the work with the state Educational Work Program for kindergartens for increasing of co-operation and effectivity;
2. to find what will be the measure of contribution of an application possibility of methods (first of all activity, independence and creativity) and organizing educational forms (first of all for groups) for being better prepared, independent and to the pupils orientation in the solving of various problems and also to increase their knowledge level;
3. to get enough quantity of valid information for completing of methodology with accepting of requests of valid curricula and plans.

SUBJECTS OF THE EXPERIMENTAL VERIFICATION ARE FOLLOWING:

1. methods and means of educational work with children in the kindergarten;
2. methods and organising forms of education on the first grade of basic school;
3. methods of co-operation between the school, family and wider social surroundings (of local community);
4. verification of process changes effectivity of pedagogic influence in kindergartens and first grade of basic schools when basic requests of our pedagogical documents concerning to educational contents are respected.

HYPOTHESES OF THE EXPERIMENTAL VERIFICATION COME OUT FOLLOWING ASSUMPTIONS:

1. children in experimental classrooms of kindergarten will be better prepared to enter the basic school opposite children in the control group if teachers, during the work with them, will systematically use methods aimed at development of independence and creativity (H_1);
2. the children life in the surrounding rich for impulses of the kindergarten, where individual children needs are respected, offers less opportunities for the manifestation of their aggressiveness as opposite to children in the control group (H_2);
3. learning results of pupils in experimental classrooms in the first grade of basic school will be better as of pupils of the control group in the same year of the same school, if teachers in educational process will activate the knowledge activity of pupils, to form their independence, creativity and orientation ability to solve various situations (H_3);
4. forms and methods of the work of the school, family and local society will reflect in a better co-operation of the school and family and also in an increasing parent's interest for upbringing and education of their children (H_4).

EXPERIMENTAL VERIFICATION TASKS ARE FOLLOWING:

1. to find the effectiveness of prepared methodology in the harmony with practical teacher needs;
2. to find the level of pupils preparation to school;
3. to find the knowledge pupils level in experimental and control classrooms in main teaching subjects (the Slovak language and mathematics);
4. to find the development pupils level in some pointers of psychological character;
5. to value the real state of using methods and organising forms of education;

6. to find the opinion of parents and teachers for the verifying methodology of upbringing and education of own children and for co-operation with schools and local community;
7. to elaborate the suggestion (model) of educational work methodology and methodical materials for first lessons.

THE METHODOLOGY AND REALISATION OF THE EXPERIMENTAL VERIFICATION

The choice of methods is determined by the need to get information from children/pupils of experimental and control classrooms, their parents and teachers. We will use in the research:

1. a direct observation of children activity by teachers, research worker;
2. an observation of children behaviour and acting in circumstances intentionally prepared by the research worker;
3. an analysis of children works;
4. a comparison of school children maturity in the experimental and control group;
5. a debate with children aimed for finding of reached level of an perceptiveness of image and text;
6. school maturity tests (acquiring of reading, writing and mathematics);
7. a non-verbal CHIPS test aimed at finding of cognitive development level;
8. a verbal test of thinking abilities and a G-test aimed at finding of reading with comprehension;
9. a sociogram aimed at finding of social relationships;
10. writing tests from the Slovak language and mathematics for finding of knowledge pupils level;
11. questionnaires for teachers and parents aimed at finding of opinions for investigating methods and organising forms of education, at co-operation of the school, family and local community.

Beside of a collective data collection, questionnaires offer possibilities of effective statistic processing of obtaining information, the quantitative and qualitative analysis of them.

THE SAMPLE OF THE RESEARCH

There will be 16 kindergartens and 13 basic schools inserted to the research (see Appendix 1). From quoted number of kindergartens and basic schools, the experimental verification will take place in 5 experimental and 5 control classrooms in the same school in an appropriate locality, where the education will not take place according to the submitted project. Delivered points of view of individual experimental schools founders create the Appendix 2. Individual schools archive the documents about the parents consent with placing the child to the experimental classroom.

THE TIME SCHEDULE OF THE EXPERIMENTAL VERIFICATION:

1. The finding of school maturity of pupils in the first year of basic schools, term: IX/1996
2. The valuation of tests, editing of data and statistic processing, term: X, XI/1996
3. The report about the level of children being prepared for school, term: XII/1996
4. The report about the results of children observation, about debates with them and analysis of their works, term: VIII/1997
5. The finding of the developmental pupils level, term: V, VI/1997
6. The tests valuation, editing of data and statistic processing, term: VII-VIII/1997
7. The report about the developmental level of the first year (of basic school) pupils, term: IX/1997

8. The finding of the knowledge pupils level from the Slovak language and mathematics, term: V-VI/1997
9. The valuation of writing tests, editing of data and statistic processing, term:
10. VII-VIII/1997
11. The report about the results of knowledge level of pupils from the Slovak language and mathematics, term: IX/1997
12. The finding opinions of parents and teacher about the verified methodology and co-operation with schools and local community, term: V-VI/1997
13. The report about the finding opinions of parents and teachers concerning to the verified methodology and co-operation with schools and local community, term: VIII/1997
14. The final report from the first year of experimental verification, term: IX/1997

Pedagogical Activities in the School of Nyírtelek

By: Mrs József Krajnyák and Péter Lázár
Source: Nyírtelek School, 1996

The village of Nyírtelek is in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County, at a 10-kilometre distance from the town Nyíregyháza. It is on Route 38, between Nyíregyháza and Tokaj.

Our school is of medium size, with 327 pupils educated by 30 teachers. Our situation can be considered unusual in the sense that the pupils attending the school live in 14 separate farming settlements.

1. In what way are they disadvantaged when they first come to school?

1.1. The disadvantages that stem from the location of Nyírtelek within the country and the structure of the settlements

- We live in the north-east of Hungary, in a crisis area with hardly any opportunity for people to find employment
- The students live in *farming settlements far from each other* (half of our pupils are day pupils living in these settlements)

1.2. *The disadvantages that stem from the families' living conditions*

- The income per person is between 5001 and 8000 Hungarian Forints per month (Many families live on childcare allowances or unemployment benefits.)
- The parents' low level of schooling:
Mainly physical workers (64.3%)
- Single parents
- Bad housing conditions

1.3. *Biological reasons*

- Slow learners, retarded children
- Dyslexic children
- Their level of motivation is low
- They belong to an ethnic group (Gypsies)

As these disadvantages can easily lead to failure at school, - if we teachers are to take our profession really seriously – they cannot be ignored!

What initiatives have we taken so far to provide these pupils with a chance to continue their studies, too? In other words, what have we done in order that their skills and abilities may provide a reliable basis for their secondary education?

2. A success orientated school

Upon an overall assessment of their circumstances, we concluded that one of the tasks of our school concerning these children is to eradicate certain defects. We need to provide the children with all that their families have not been able to.

In order that a child can become a successful person, it is necessary to create a certain *environment* or *milieu* where they can feel good because they are loved and paid attention to. So we built a children-centred school (taking their abilities, defects, needs and naturally, our requirements into consideration).

We regard these two maxims as the guidelines for our educational activity:

“ONLY THE HEART CAN SEE CLEARLY...”
“AND LET THEM BE PLAYFUL...”

The failures caused by the children’s disadvantaged situation may lead to learning disorders and conflicts concerning the children’s integration into the community. Consequently, the methods and circumstances of the educational process ought to be considered very important factors in the life of a school. This is what led to our initiative to establish a school where children can feel at home, where, by reviewing the traditional authoritative teach-pupil relationship, we can do tremendously much to prevent the failures.

3. Special educational programmes

3.1. Approximating the KINDERGARTEN and the SCHOOL

AIM: To build confidence

Getting acquainted by organising playful activities in which this year’s and next year’s 1st grade pupils participate jointly in the school.

The advantage of building this kind of relationship is that children are open and less strained when they come to school in September, since their teacher can start working with a group of children whom she has met previously.

3.2. The project called “AT HOME IN THE CLASSROOM”

Our motto is: “A smile is the shortest distance between two people.”

AIM: To leave sufficient time for the children to develop their abilities and personalities. We find it essential that children should not consider schoolwork burdensome. Also, we are convinced that apart from the education of the separate school subjects, the importance of a wide-scope, genuine, personal curiosity should be emphasised.

The conditions that the school provides: Our classrooms have a cosy atmosphere, they resemble the rooms of a family home (they are furnished with carpets and shelves and have play-corners). There are plants, pets and decorations made by the children. The children can play, tell stories and listen to music sitting and lying on the carpet.

The educational activities of the different classes of the same year are synchronised. A team of three teachers teaches the classes in each year. Their co-operation is essential. They have weekly meetings to discuss and plan the tasks of the following week.

The grouping of the school subjects is regarded as *the basis of the scheduling of the educational activity* (i.e. the education concerning main topics plus additional activities). The daily framework of the activities is created based on different topics linked together. Everything is largely dependent on the children’s capacity to work (their attention span and their ability to concentrate).

We need to provide the children with all that their families have not been able to.

Cooperation between teachers

THE GROUPING OF SCHOOL SUBJECTS

1. Core Subjects

▪ Mathematics	▪ Singing
▪ Writing	▪ Art
▪ Reading	▪ Physical Education
▪ Writing compositions	
▪ Science	

2. Practical skills

3. Free leisure activities (Optional)

- Music
- Dancing
- Drama classes
- Sports, games

THE WEEKLY SCHEDULE

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8.00- 9.00	“starting a new week”	opening the day	opening the day	opening the day	opening the day
9.00-10.00 10.00-11.00	The presentation of the new teaching material			Systematic practice and revision, evaluation	
11.00-12.00	PLAYING GAMES				
12.00-13.00	LUNCH				
13.00-14.00 14.00-15.00	Additional activities				Weekly evaluation “closing the week”

The daily and weekly schedule: The daily study activities last from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. These include the presentation of the teaching material, practising and additional relaxing activities. After 3 p.m. the children can choose to attend specialised activity groups according to their interests.

The curriculum has weekly units. These include the activities called “starting a new week” every Monday morning and “closing the week” every Friday afternoon.
(What have we learnt this week? What are we going to learn next week?)

Weekly units

Establishing a relationship with the parents: Parents are invited to come to the school, visit the classes, see the life of the school, find out what the children have learnt and how much they have developed on the last Friday of each month. Parents have the opportunity to consult each other and the staff in a casual atmosphere. In addition, they are (continuously) informed on what their children have learnt in weekly written reports.

Our results: Our children have become more humane, their interests have become manifold and specific. Their second home has become their own; they look after it and care for their treasures. The vandalism and negligence have disappeared.

The vandalism and negligence have disappeared.

COACHING PROGRAMMES IN THE SCHOOL

AIM: To foster the children's abilities so that they reach the level required. To facilitate the integration that is to follow.

The Gypsy children are taught by Gypsy teachers in their own community in the preliminary phase of their schooling. This is the so-called **phase of socialisation**.

- Flexible scheduling
- Setting specific tasks for each pupil
- Differentiated teams

When the Gypsy pupils' abilities have reached a certain level which makes it possible for them to be taught together with the non-Gypsy pupils, they may continue their studies in the 3rd grade.

This is the **phase of integration**. From this point on, the class master's or class mistress's role will be more important, because it is their responsibility to facilitate the children's integration into the new community and supervise the further coaching projects concerning the different school subjects.

3. Special coaching scheme for multiply disadvantaged Gypsy children

AT THE SCHOOL

The phase of **SOCIALISATION** (1st and 2nd grades)

(Teaching the basics of good manners and communication skills. Fostering the children's abilities so that they reach the level required. Facilitating the integration that is to follow.)

A special remedial curriculum

A special feature of this phase within the educational process is that Gypsy children do not start their studies in the normal classes but follow a special remedial curriculum (which process is controlled by a teacher of Gypsy origin). Since the majority of these children have not at all or very infrequently attended kindergartens, they fall below the average level of children of their age. At the start of their schooling (especially in the first two years) it is very important to provide them with **playful skills development schemes**.

These include:

- the enlargement of vocabulary
- the development of speaking skills
- the development of the skill of abstraction
- the development of the attention span and memory
- the refinement of locomotive skills
- the development of remembering speech
- the development of remembering sounds
- the development of the sense of rhythm
- the development of drawing skills

With these skills development schemes we intend to make the process of their integration into the normal classes at the end of the 2nd school year as smooth as possible.

The phase of **INTEGRATION** (3rd and 4th grades)

(The pupils in the 3rd and the higher grades are placed in normal classes. It is very important that the skills that have been developed earlier should be consolidated and further developed in this phase of their school careers.)

Skills that have been developed earlier should be consolidated.

In order to secure this, a special coaching scheme has been put into operation in addition to the curricular activities. The teachers participating in the scheme provide each pupil who needs this kind of assistance with specifically outlined coaching plans.

BOARDING SCHOOL education

(The knowledge acquired through social learning is added to that acquired at school, which makes it possible for the pupils to change their worldviews.) Boarding from Monday to Friday is provided for the Gypsy children studying in our school in a building (functioning during the week), which follows the family model.

The most important tasks of the boarding school programme are to promote values that serve to improve the efficiency of school education, secure the harmony of the development of the children’s personalities, foster their sense of identity, enable them to develop a positive vision of their future and create the basis of their integration into society.

Promote values that serve to improve the efficiency of school education.

		SCHOOL	BOARDING SCHOOL
Phase of SOCIALISATION	1 st grade	Preparatory phase Habituation (Pre-socialisation) Development of the basic skills Coaching schemes *Gypsy Literature	Visits to the boarding school, participation in different activities together with the parents
	2 nd grade	Reinforcement Skills development (remedial + normal requirements) *Gypsy Literature	Starting at boarding school Creating certain social and hygienic circumstances and assisting children in forming certain habits (rules and regulations, activities, values)
Phase of INTEGRATION	3 rd grade 4 th grade	Integration into normal classes Follow up schemes (led by tutors) Skills reinforcement and skills development	Sense of identity, vision of the future Assessment system *Gypsy Literature and Civilisation

What makes this programme **unique**?

The fact that the work that we carry out at the school is assisted by a social background institution, the **House of Kindness**.

The building: a detached house with a garden.

How does it function in practice?

AFTERNOON SESSIONS

(They are run by members of the school staff.)

- Playing games, drama classes

- Music, dance
- Manual activities
- Gardening
- Household science

EVENING TALKS

- Telling each other what happened at school and who was praised by the teachers
- Talking about family and school matters
- Discussing the stories that the children have read

Relationship with the children's parents

An annual schedule serves as the basis of maintaining the relationship with the children's parents.

A. Maintaining a direct relationship

(We wish to involve parents in the everyday life of the boarding school by organising e.g. cooking sessions, excursions, etc.)

B. Organising talks on health matters

(about motherhood, pregnancy, giving birth, different lifestyles, one's goals in life)

THE STAFF OF THE "HOUSE OF KINDNESS":

- the principal (a qualified teacher of Gypsy origin)
- a permanent night-time supervisor (a female primary school teacher of Gypsy origin)
- a teacher in charge of leading the afternoon study activities
- a kitchen worker
- a nurse
- a janitor

The aim of the educational process in the boarding house: to provide knowledge based on social understanding, which is supposed to change our Gypsy pupils' **views on life**. (It is possible to lead a different life!)

Co-operation between the "House of Kindness" (boarding school) and the school

In the phase of socialisation the same teacher who teaches the children at school takes care of them in the boarding house.

In the phase of integration the children's class master/class mistress is in charge of leading the boarding school activities.

The main aim of the co-operation is the enhancement of the children's future **integration into society**.

4. The positive way of leading one's life (this topic is integrated into the curriculum of the weekly sessions of talks led by the class master/class mistress)

AIM:

Provide access to essential information on addiction to smoking, alcohol and drugs. Encourage children to develop their self-knowledge. Prepare children to form groups and participate in teamwork. Assist children in their orientation and inform them on the psychological aspects of human relationships. Promote the values of a healthy and safe life. Prepare children for potential dangers. Teach them about the possibility and responsibility of knowing how to defend themselves.

Encourage children to develop their self-knowledge.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSIONS

- Self-knowledge
- Me and my place within the world surrounding me
- A healthy and safe life
- Protect yourself
- Project work

5. The relationship between the process of education and the different activities organised in the school

The principle that it is the school's task to awaken and promote the need for culture and a thorough education, which is also backed by the school's image of the pupils and their sociological background, was regarded as definitive when the different phases of the educational process were outlined.

As far as the teaching process is concerned, especially in the 1st-4th grades, we intend to help the children to get to like learning by using methods based on playing (e.g. in the workshop activities).

We do our best to secure that each child can develop and spread their knowledge in accordance with their individual abilities. We help those falling behind to catch up with the rest of the class in a special study group (within which we separate smaller groups) as well as within the framework of traditional classroom activities (by setting different tasks for the different children).

According to the experience that we have gathered so far, the difficulties concerning integration and the learning problems of disadvantaged pupils can be best handled by making sure that the children concerned become more and more active at school. The most efficient way to do so is introducing **workshop activities**.

HOW DOES THAT FIT INTO THE CURRICULUM?

In the 3rd and 4th grades:

“Days of complex activities”

The teams teaching all the pupils of one year within the school organise so-called *days of complex activities* (once a fortnight or once a month), when the different activities are centred around the four seasons. The *essence* of these is reading, mathematics, music, movement, playing and manual activities, all linked to *one single topic*.

In the 5th-8th grades:

COMPLEX EDUCATION CONCERNING ART

The complexity of the programme derives from the integrated curriculum comprising those of three traditional school subjects (literature, music and art). (Thus children have the chance to view the whole of the teaching material in its own complexity.)

The aim The “days of complex activities” organised for these pupils (twice a month) enable them to absorb knowledge on the different branches of science at the same time.
The aim *of the activities*:

- To enhance the children’s ability to engross in art emotionally and spiritually so that they can better understand it
- To encourage the children to develop a modern perspective concerning visual arts
- To develop the co-operation between pupils, between teachers and pupils and between teachers
- To help the children develop a sound critical sense based on their own experience
- To teach the children to become independent

HOW ARE THE WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES RUN?

The schedule of these days is not built on 45-minute class sessions. The activities last from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. The three teachers do not teach the children consecutively but all stay with them together during the day. (Teamwork)

Cosy atmosphere, creative work

This method is perfect for the absorption in one’s work and for introducing group activities. The scene of the activities is a classroom furnished and equipped in a way that creates a cosy atmosphere and enhances creative work. To complete the daily schedule, the children may exhibit their works (drawings, puppets, decoration, models, plasticine figures, etc.).

The advantages of team work: the joint planning and activities as well the joint success increase the chance of “good” co-operation and also serves to motivate the staff members.

6. Training programmes for teachers

In order to run the school along these guidelines it is essential that the staff members can think together. Teamwork, though, is not easy to introduce and the traditional attitudes of teachers do not change from one day to the other, either.

Teamwork

Passing on new pedagogical contents and teaching the children to spend their spare time usefully require a “different kind” of training. Training programmes organised for staff members in and outside the school can facilitate the change of attitudes.

For this reason, several members of our staff have studied drama pedagogy and information technology, participated in training programmes for teachers of dance, eurhythmics and folk dance and attended courses on recognising dyslexic children. We are to arrange for other staff members to get training on the education of handicapped children and socio-pedagogy because dealing with disadvantaged children can only be successful if we can count on the work of qualified experts as well as on our teachers’ patience and problem solving skills.

The training of staff members

SUMMARY

WHAT IS THE TASK OF A PRIMARY SCHOOL?

Teaching skills (reading, writing and counting) and abilities (i.e. knowledge that pupils can apply in practice), enabling pupils to continue their studies at a secondary level. For this, it is also important to prevent children from dropping out.

STARTING PRIMARY EDUCATION (1st and 2nd grades)

“To provide equal opportunities at the start of schooling!”

Coaching schemes may include:

- organising separate classes (as early as in the 1st grade!)
- dividing the classes into groups

Running a *separate class for backward children* can only be successful if (within a period of 2-3 years) the abilities of the children improve to an extent that makes it possible for them to **integrate** into “normal” classes when they start learning in the 3rd grade. INTEGRATION!!!

CONSOLIDATION, MONITORING (3rd-6th grades)

- establishing small groups

Within the traditional framework based on working in traditional classes

- differentiating

COMPLETING PRIMARY EDUCATION (7th-8th grade)

- working in small groups based on the pupils’ choices concerning their secondary education (from the 7th grade on)
- preparatory courses in the subjects relevant for the pupils’ secondary education (in the 8th grade)

The "Flower of Seven Colours" in the town of Marcali

By: Lajos Miksa

Source: *Köznevelés*, 1998/39.

Making strings of beads, attending artisans' workshops, participating in football teams, drama classes, playing folk games, learning computer science, brainpower games, modelling, therapeutic gymnastics, and playing with puppets are the activities that children in grades 1 to 4 can choose from. Those in grades 5 to 8 have a larger choice including cookery, graphics, enamelling, learning about the Highway code, attending the club sessions called "around the world in a year", physiotherapy, chess, origami, classes on good manners, language games, mathematics games, ceramics, making jewellery, weaving, making strings of beads, dance, felt-making, hygiene classes, ethnology, gardening, situational games, hiking, Beash choir, learning Beash folk tales, Beash language classes, Gypsy dancing, Gypsy music, puppet making, religious education, crocheting, knitting, sewing, spinning, basketball, football, table tennis, basket weaving, DIY, afternoon study room, library, journalism, computer science. That was what they had last year.

A very wide range of activities

Children ask for them.

And this year – fulfilling the children's wishes – some new items appeared in the list of afternoon activities. "We would like more bicycles," they wrote. And so they have more. "We would like to have piano lessons." And so they do, and even have guitar lessons into the bargain.

A children-centred school, with a programme of personality development.

Most of this can be read about in last year's newsletter of *Hétszínvirág* (*Flower of Seven Colours*) *Elementary School* in Marcali and the rest can be found out while talking to Lajos Orosz, the headmaster, during our visit to the school. The building is in the street that leads to the railway station. Once it belonged to a bourgeois family, and nowadays it is the home of a singular institution. From the outside, it looks rather battered, but inside the building we find the school, which, as stated in its pedagogical creed, is a *children-centred* school, with a programme of *personality development*. *Children-centred* means that it is the pupils' choices that shape the list of the activities on offer and as far as *personality development* is concerned, there exists *The Box*, the pedagogical programme of the school.

"Our aim is to educate successful and happy people."

We started our experiment of development seven years ago. It concluded in the compilation of our pedagogical programme last year. The aim was to create a "system of boxes", which consists of class logbooks, students' report books and a computerised database on students' progress. This is a hidden form of *quality assurance*. As for the contents, our aim is to educate successful and happy people, i.e. people who have good communication and problem solving skills and have reached a fair level of socialisation. Our system is able to pinpoint problems and search possible solutions. The logbook contains information on the progress of each student. We spend the first month of the school year talking to the children, building their sense of security, and helping them adapt to school life. We outline overall and individual tasks based on our observations and the system provides us with assistance. Our teachers have accumulated a vast amount of intellectual wealth and experience, which we have gathered and filed systematically. It is available on the World Wide Web, too, states the headmaster.

What is the teachers' role in this process? At which stage do their personalities come into the picture?

In my opinion, teachers' role is providing *assistance*. We make a diagnosis and offer our assistance in the course of the therapy. It is up to the teacher what use they make of it. Because, in a children-centred school, *children* are free to decide which activities they wish to participate in. We assume that it is the children who can best decide what they need. Children teach each other. Generally speaking, only a small part of the knowledge derives from what teachers teach.

In a children-centred school, *children* are free to decide which activities they wish to participate in.

What are the results of this period of seven years?

I consider it a great success that children *like coming to school*. Absenteeism has gradually diminished. We have created an atmosphere that makes it possible for the pupils to live their own lives happily. 83% of our pupils are Gypsy children and our institution is supposed to be a remedial school. 98% of the Gypsy students would like to continue their studies and I think this is enough to say. On the other hand, it is a fact that most of our pupils who go on to secondary schools drop out.

Children like coming to school.

Why is that?

Firstly, parents cannot afford to buy them the schoolbooks or pay for their travelling and food. They prove unable to keep up. Secondly, the pupils *cannot tolerate the conflicts*. We provide them with personality development programmes, while secondary schools, even the special ones established to support underprivileged youths called short-term vocational schools, function in a different way: teachers enter the classroom, present the teaching material, leave and eventually give pupils marks.

This is what 8th grade pupil *János Bogdán* said last year. Good teachers "are kind and helpful, teach children a lot of things and take good care of them. They show children how to deal with problems and set an example. They take part in sports and games. They are not strict. They are kind to us. If they have problems concerning the class, they tell us about it. I don't like nervous teachers. Good teachers like us and we like them. If we tell them to come and play football with us, they are ready to. I like teachers even if they hit me because I know that I deserve it. Good teachers spend time talking to children. They don't come late to the classes. They arrive on time. They are not strict and do not smoke. Bad teachers give oral tests every day, good teachers rarely do. Good teachers are understanding, take their jobs seriously and care about the children. They do not only teach but also concentrate on children's problems. If a teacher is like that, the children will take them seriously and will get to like them."

Good teachers do not only teach but also concentrate on children's problems.

János Bogdán was a pupil of exceptional abilities. He passed the advanced level language examination of Beash. He was the only Gypsy member of the National Pupils' Parliament, personally corresponding with ministry officials. He was the Student Mayor of the school, where they even have this particular title. *He dropped out from vocational school during the first term of the first year.*

János Bogdán's case is typical of the dilemma that alternative public educational institutions, claiming to be children-centred and to provide personality development often face. Catching up with the socialisation process, the delay of which is due to their socially disadvantageous situation, takes time, patience, personalised caring and a larger than average amount of love.

The pedagogical programme of the institution is built on this. But it turns out that eight, ten or even twelve years may prove insufficient for the rehabilitation. Headmaster Lajos Orosz has tried nearly everything. He has organised an association of twelve village primary schools with the objective of spreading on the goals of his institution. By applying to endowment funding, he obtained different grants for his pupils so that their financially disadvantageous situation did not hamper the continuation of their studies.

He is considering setting up an educational institution to provide a place and one more chance for catching up for students who drop out from vocational schools.

We cover the extra costs by applying for institutional grants.

Let the society decide how they wish to deal with socially marginal groups, he says in an impassioned way. Our children have no chance whatsoever for catching up. They live in constant frustration. Let us decide then if we wish to build prisons or schools. The selection in society and within its educational system is based on a single point of reference: the acquisition of a certain amount of knowledge. The layers of society who are in financially advantageous position set the criteria of the selection and they make every possible effort to maintain their advantages. Even linguistically speaking, there is a special atmosphere that is created according to this. I do not say that everybody should have schools like ours, but they should let us live even if running our school costs more than the average. We cover the extra costs by applying for institutional grants.

Preparing children for schools

It is obvious that the children at different stages of socialisation of different depths need an infinitely flexible educational system. But such a system has proved impossible to set up anywhere in the world, either abroad or in Hungary. At the same time, it is a fact that even children-centred schools need to let go of the children's hands at one stage. Wouldn't it then be more sensible to spend at least the last one or two years preparing them for life outside the schools or at least for the new type of school they are about to attend? This could include organising visits to their future schools, explain the different sets of rules that these schools apply, and tell them that they will have to adapt to them. Wouldn't it be possible to find teachers who are ready to take these children craving for security by the hand at those schools?

It is very difficult. I cannot get the teachers there to start thinking in a new way. Still it is true and it has been like a weight upon me for a long time: we must take this direction.

And there is a sign for this, the examination in fundamental knowledge, which is not compulsory but children have the option to take it. As former deputy head mistress *Zsuzsanna Lőrinc* (currently writing her second thesis), a member of the team working on the project says, the school also takes care of pupils who do not want to or are unable to continue their studies. She lists a number of activities that are supposed to teach children practicalities such as basket weaving, different kinds of craftsmanship, or the household basics. Children put their artwork on sale and the earnings are given to the student's council. The wages of the cleaners that are substituted by the pupils also are given to the students' council.

What is the daily routine of the pupils? Mrs. Éva Matykó Nagy, the current deputy head mistress relates.

Pupils come here from within a circle of 20 kilometres in diameter. The first students arrive at seven, when one or more adults are already in the school. The classes last from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Then children plan what activities they would like to participate in in the afternoon. They clean their teeth and wash their hands before lunch. The canteen is about a mile away from here. They need to walk there alone, in pairs or in small groups. We have nothing to complain about, the only problem I can think of is that they tend to come back late. They clean their teeth and wash their hands again. The afternoon activities finish at 3.45 p.m. Then they have a snack and after that they give a thorough cleaning to the classrooms. The first bus leaves here at four o'clock and the last one at 5:10 p.m. Our pupils spend most of their days here. The buses take them home in thirteen different settlements. To what kinds of homes? To "sites" in many cases, where there aren't even proper houses to live in. Their poor lodging is only covered with plastic sheets. Our teachers often visit them. And we have already got to

the stage where even parents start to be interested in their children's schooling. There is a slight ray of hope that comes from our school.

Gypsy Classes and "Mixed Classes" – In View Of the Facts

By Zita Réger

Source: *Valóság*, 1978/8.

Is it correct for them to exist? Do we need Gypsy classes and if so, what should they be like? – Heated debates on this topic are recurring again and again (the latest of these in the weekly *Élet és Irodalom (Life and Literature)* in the autumn of 1976¹²). Undoubtedly, the relatively new form of educating Gypsy children, which appeared approximately 15 years ago, i.e. the establishment of Gypsy classes and Gypsy schools, was institutionalised in answer to real pedagogical difficulties which had largely determined the school careers of these children having to struggle with socio-cultural, hygienic, psychological and sometimes linguistic problems over the previous decades. The acuteness of these problems has been highlighted by the slightly if at all improving statistics over the years: the failure of a large number of primary school children, and a high proportion of pupils dropping out from school every year. (The statistics of the school year 1974/75 exemplifies this: while 15.1% of all primary school pupils were 1st grade pupils and 11.8% were 8th grade pupils, 22.7% of all Gypsy primary school pupils were 1st grade and only 5.3% were 8th grade pupils. In the same school year, 41.1% of the 1st grade Gypsy children failed to comply with the minimum requirements at school. As compared with the school year 1970/71, little progress had been made.)¹³

The objectives and characteristics of the separate Gypsy study groups and afternoon study groups to be established are described in the Government Decree Number 19, 12598/1962. "The separate Gypsy study groups and whole-day classes are established on a temporary basis. The objective of their establishment is to make it possible for the pupils to continue their studies successfully in normal classes after one or two years (Point 3)". It also states that "a student whose attitude towards learning shows such progress by the end of the school year that enables him or her to achieve in the normal classes and whole-day schools should be directed to continue his or her studies in those classes. (Point 4)"

Those involved in the debates¹⁴ have rather varied opinions whether this organisational form, the "Gypsy class", established on a markedly temporary basis in order to remove disadvantages, will ever achieve its aims and does really serve the purpose that it had originally been established for.

Some argue that a six-year-old Gypsy child, whose original environment is rather non-stimulating and whose command of Hungarian is also insufficient, requires education that is based on perspectives and methods that are different from those of the education of average six-year-old non-Gypsy children, and this can only happen in a separate class for Gypsy children. Children achieve far better results and a significantly lower proportion of children drop out from school if they attend Gypsy schools or classes than if educated in classes where Gypsy and non-Gypsy pupils study together.

¹² *Élet és Irodalom*, Issues 33,35, 39 and 40, 1976

¹³ Faragó L.: A cigánygyermek rendszeres nevelésének-oktatásának helyzetéről és feladatairól. In: *Tapasztalatok a cigánygyermek nevelésének és oktatásának köréből*. Oktatási Minisztérium (Ministry of Education, Hungary), Budapest, 1975. pp. 7-15

¹⁴ See also Points 2 and 3 of the Ministerial Order of the Ministry of Education 18 435 / 1967 and the Official Standpoints concerning the municipalities agreed on at the session of the Inter-Departmental Coordination Committee of 28 April, 1970.

The establishment of Gypsy classes and Gypsy schools was institutionalised in answer to real pedagogical difficulties.

The objectives of Gypsy classes

The establishment of separate study groups – as a special organisational form – is advantageous for Gypsy children's development for other reasons as well: instead of the cumulative failures that they would experience in the circumstances of "mixed" education, here they have a real sense of achievement and do not have to suffer from prejudices against them, either.¹⁵ (I also shared this opinion myself until a couple of years ago.¹⁶) Therefore, according to these arguments, it is necessary to maintain Gypsy classes and schools and it is beneficial to establish more.

On the other hand, despite the fact that theoretically, their establishment is based on a correct idea, practically, Gypsy classes are a dead-end-street. Even in villages where non-Gypsy children studying in different grades attend separate classes, the Gypsy classes are all established for children of different grades with different curricula. Therefore the children are disadvantaged as far as their learning conditions are concerned from the very beginning of their school careers. Due to their isolation, the assessment of their achievements is inaccurate and their results cannot be compared to those of pupils studying in normal classes. After years of isolation, it is even more difficult for the children to integrate into "mixed" classes. Schools tend to be reluctant to receive the often over-age pupils with inadequate knowledge and the isolation of Gypsy children is typically prolonged. Thus, in practice, Gypsy classes, originally established to remove the children's disadvantages, often become "primary schools for Gypsy children", with all the disadvantageous consequences concerning the children's education and social position. And lastly, it is rather frequent that Gypsy classes cannot fight the problems of children often having to repeat classes, becoming over-age pupils and dropping out from school in the long run¹⁷.

Practically, Gypsy classes are a dead-end-street.

They often become "primary schools for Gypsy children".

In this debate it is not easy to decide who is right because we can avail of very scarce reliable data. Both those in favour of and those rejecting the idea of maintaining Gypsy classes notice one crucial defect: the lack of carefully designed and monitored pedagogical experiments of several years' length that could reassuringly clarify the issue of the efficiency of Gypsy classes.

As it has become apparent in the course of the debates, the only point of reference concerning the efficiency of these classes is still the success or failure measured by analysing the school marks that the children receive.

However, educators endorse the public opinion that is based on facts and daily experience that the marks that pupils are given do not constitute an *objective* system of assessment. Different standards and achievements may be behind the same marks in different schools¹⁸.

In order to assess the efficiency of the different methods, it would be absolutely necessary to make measurements based on objective methods, i.e. numerical comparisons of the achievements of different groups of children whose knowledge, abilities and level of education in the general sense were the same at the beginning of the educational process but have studied in different organisational forms, i.e. in Gypsy and "mixed" classes. Such measurements have not been carried out as yet. As for the assessment of the efficiency of the approximately 200 Gypsy study groups run nationwide, we cannot even rely on data from comprehensive surveys on their work, educational circumstances or true achievements, either.

The present case study, comparing certain aspects of the achievements of Gypsy children of homogeneous socio-cultural and linguistic background learning in different

¹⁵ Szegő L.: Kellenek-e a cigányosztályok? In: Élet és Irodalom, Issue 35. 1976. p. 8

¹⁶ Réger Z.: Kétnyelvű cigánygyerekek az iskoláskor elején. In: Valóság, 1974. pp. 50-62

¹⁷ Solt O.: Még egyszer a cigány osztályokról (About Gypsy Classes – Further Thoughts) In: Élet és Irodalom, Issue 40. 1976 p. 2

¹⁸ Irányelvek az értékelés és az osztályozás korszerűsítéséhez (Publication of the Országos Pedagógiai Intézet / National Pedagogical Institute) 1973. p. 6

organisational forms (in Gypsy and in "mixed" classes), wishes to contribute to the settlement of debate described above and also emphasise that it is necessary to carry out a nation-wide survey of the pedagogical efficiency of Gypsy classes. (I will only present an outline of my study here. A detailed analysis of the data collected will be published in my monograph on bilingual Gypsy children.)

THE CHILDREN EXAMINED

Forty Gypsy children (26 boys and 14 girls) learning in the Kossuth Lajos Primary School in Esztergom (a town 50 kilometres from Budapest) comprised the first group of children in the survey. In the school year 1976/77, these 1st-7th grade schoolchildren attended two Gypsy study groups taught by one teacher each. (The pupils of the 1st and 2nd grades comprised one group and the pupils of the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th grades comprised the other. The two afternoon study groups were attended by the same two groups of pupils.) Approximately two-thirds of the children examined came from an isolated Gypsy environment. They live in the 9 semi-detached houses in Ságvári Estate and in the "CS Houses", not far from the estate, built closely next to each other. The families of approximately one-third of them – 15 children – live among "Hungarian" families.

A small town school

20 Gypsy children (10 boys and 10 girls) learning in the 1st-7th grades in the Bécsi úti Primary School in Óbuda (three 3rd district of Budapest) comprised the second group. In this primary school the gradual eradication of the special study groups for Gypsy pupils of different grades started in this school with the guidance of the Budapest Pedagogical Institute and the financial support of the Municipality of Budapest in the school year 1974/75. As a first step, they tried to improve the circumstances and raise the educational standards of the existing study groups substantially by different measures (e.g. by establishing classes with a whole day study programme, providing better material circumstances, recruiting new teachers and providing better hygienic facilities). Then the children were placed into the different normal classes of different grades. A separate afternoon study group for 1st and 2nd grade Gypsy pupils was operated for a year after the introduction of the reforms while the Gypsy pupils of higher grades attended "mixed" afternoon study groups from the beginning.

A Budapest school

Among the Óbuda children, there are also some coming from a more isolated Gypsy environment and some from a more "mixed" background, the proportions being roughly the same as in the case of the Esztergom children. 12 out of the 20 pupils live in a small settlement built near the gas works and the railway that is mostly inhabited by Gypsy families. 8 live in different buildings built in not specifically Gypsy areas and in the barracks-like blocks of the Csillaghegy brick factory.

The large majority of both the Esztergom and Óbuda children participating in the survey were over-age. The mother tongue of all of the children was a Gypsy language and they could speak no or very little Hungarian when they first went to school.

I intended to work with as high a number of children among those more or less regularly attending school in the school year 1976/77, the year of the survey, as possible. Comparing the socio-cultural situation of the Esztergom and Óbuda children, I concentrated on two aspects that – according to a recent pre-school maturity test carried out among Gypsy children¹⁹ – profoundly influence children's development (and whose correlation with the children's chances to succeed at school are well-known). These are the parents' level of schooling and the families' housing situation.

In these two aspects no significant differences can be observed between the Esztergom and Óbuda children's circumstances. None of the parents of the pupils

¹⁹ Csongor A.: Cigánygyermek az iskolaérettségi vizsgálaton. In: Budapesti Nevelő

participating in the survey accomplished their primary education. In Esztergom, the ratio of illiterate parents is "only" 42% while 81% of the Óbuda parents are illiterate. 42% of the Esztergom parents finished at least one of the 5th-8th grades, which constitute "upper primary" education. None of the Óbuda parents finished any of these grades. On the other hand, as far as their housing is concerned – although the housing conditions of the families of both groups of children are characterised by a relatively high number of people sharing the rooms – the situation of the Óbuda families is somewhat more advantageous: 45% of the Óbuda children and 65% of the Esztergom children live in housing conditions with over 7 people/room.

Coincidentally, and also luckily for the survey, a certain circumstance further increases the similarities between the socio-cultural backgrounds of the two groups of children. Namely, the Óbuda and Esztergom children have very close family relationships: due to extensive endogamy, the majority of the children in Óbuda and Esztergom in the survey have cousins and second cousins also participating in the survey. The reason for this is that the families of the Óbuda children – with only a few exceptions – migrated from Esztergom to the capital city (actually, several of them from the semi-detached houses of the Ságvári Estate) not so long ago. *15 of the 20 children examined in Óbuda were born in Esztergom.* Those people who remained in Esztergom and those who migrated to Budapest still maintain close relationships and the families frequently visit each other.

Thus, assumedly, apart from the similarities in the socio-cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the children compared in the survey, there were great similarities in the customs and lifestyles of their families and the whole process of their socialisation. Consequently, the differences between the achievements of the two groups of children must have occurred mainly due to the different circumstances at school and the different standards and forms of education.

Similarities in the socio-cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the children.

I used three tests to assess three aspects of the children's level of maturity and their skills. The *test of vocabulary* applied in the test, adapted by myself following foreign examples, served to measure the children's Hungarian and Gypsy language proficiency. (Although this test was carried out among children whose mother tongue is a Gypsy language, we must emphasise that *the mother tongue of the majority of the Gypsies in Hungary is not a Gypsy language but Hungarian*²⁰. Many Gypsy classes are in fact attended by children whose mother tongue is Hungarian.) There are various reasons for our choice to carry out the survey among these children. Firstly, the official documents concerning Gypsy classes (and the public opinion) largely emphasise the linguistic aspect. Secondly, among Gypsy children of similar socio-cultural background, the integration into the school community is undoubtedly the most difficult for those whose mother tongue is not Hungarian. Lastly, methodologically, it is useful to examine children whose mother tongue is a Gypsy language because it makes it easier to separate the knowledge acquired at home (the language of which is a Gypsy language) and the knowledge acquired at school (and for this reason – in certain cases – they can only relate it in Hungarian). The second test utilised in the survey was a test frequently used by psychologists in Hungary, the so-called *Bender Test*, which provided a picture of the degree of children's skills of perception of forms and concerning the reproduction of these, i.e. their "visual-motor maturity". Thirdly, the test of their reading skills directly assessed their school achievements.

The three tests applied in the survey

The tests were administered from May to June in 1977, partly at the schools and partly in the children's homes. Thus, the data collected in the survey and the description of the teaching/educational environment describe the state of affairs in the school year 1976/77.

²⁰ Kemény I.: A magyarországi cigány lakosság. In: Valóság, 1974. Issue 1 pp 63-72

THE TEST OF VOCABULARY AND ITS RESULTS

I compiled the test of vocabulary following the example of a test administered by the American psycho-linguist S. Ervin-Tripp examining bilingual American adults whose languages were Japanese and English and Italian and English^{21 22 23}.

The test

In the course of the test children had to name 100 simple objects and things. These were mostly illustrated in pictures (the majority of these pictures can be found in the A-Z children's encyclopaedia called *Ablak-Zsiráf* and the reader of the first grade pupils) but a small set of small-sized objects was also used (a nail, a needle, a mirror, etc.). The 100 test items were glued onto six sheets of paper. They were arranged in a special way, i.e. the items contextually related were preferably placed next to each other (e.g. the kinds of fruit, different animals, the needle and the thread, the hen and the egg). By such classification of the test items, a part of the objects, things, plants and animals to be named were placed in an "environment" and thus gained a context.

The children participating in the test were instructed to name the different objects, things, plants and animals in two languages, i.e. first they named the first 50 items in Hungarian and the second 50 items in their Gypsy mother tongue, and then the first 50 items in their Gypsy mother tongue and the second 50 items in Hungarian. I measured the time that these 4 stages required with a stop-watch. Children who were unable to give the name of a certain object, thing, plant or animal in approx. 15 seconds were asked to describe what it served for or where they saw it (naturally, they were to answer these questions in the language being tested).

The whole of the vocabulary testing was recorded on tapes. The results of the test administered in the method described above answer the following two questions:

1. Which language is the children's so-called dominant language, i.e. the one that they speak better / more fluently? This can be determined by comparing the amount of time necessary for the children to name the 100 test items in the two languages. Obviously, it takes bilingual children or adults shorter to name the items in the language that they speak better and are more proficient in. So, the test primarily measures the "fluency" of the process of naming the items and the relative speed of activating the vocabulary items. Analysing its results, it is possible to draw conclusions concerning the "linguistic dominance" relations and the bilingual child's or adult's relative language proficiency.
2. Do children know – and can they name in both languages – the different objects, things, plants and animals in the test? From the frequency of errors of naming the items in Hungarian we can draw direct conclusions concerning the linguistic difficulties of the educational process, since the majority of the 100 items turn up – some of them quite frequently - in the 1st grade reader used in Hungarian primary schools.

Questions answered by the results of the test

At the same time, the test data is informative concerning the efficiency of the educational process, for the children are supposed to have learnt about the majority of the items to be named, e.g. types of fruit, animals or parts of the body at the natural science lessons in the 1st-4th grades. As for the data concerning the children's Gypsy language proficiency, it throws light on the material circumstances and linguistic and

Information about the efficiency of the educational process

²¹ Ervin, S. M.: Learning and recall in Bilinguals. In: American Journal of Psychology, 74. (1961) pp 446-451

²² Ervin-Tripp, S. M.: And Issei Learns English. In: Macnamara, J. (ed.): Problems of bilingualism. The Journal of Social Issues, 23. (1967), no. 2. pp 78-90

²³ Slobin, D. I. et al.: A field manual for cross-cultural study of the acquisition of communicative competence. University of California, Berkeley, 1967. pp 218-220

cultural influences that have shaped the mental development of the children tested and were formative concerning their mental and linguistic maturity.

I administered the test of vocabulary in a control group of children whose mother tongue is Hungarian. 10 Óbuda children of working class families attending the 1st grade of primary school and 20 kindergarten children of 3 to 6 years of age (4 groups of 5 children of the same age in each group) comprised the control group. The 1st grade schoolchildren attended a primary school in Bécsi út, the kindergarten children attended the kindergarten in Munkácsy Mihály utca, a street located in the 6th district of Budapest.

RESULTS

(The ratios of linguistic dominance)

The ratio of linguistic dominance is the quotient of the lengths of time necessary for the children to name the test item in Hungarian and in their mother tongue. I calculated it by dividing the length of the time necessary for the children to name the test items in Hungarian measured in seconds by the length of time necessary for them to name the same items in their mother tongue. Consequently, a quotient over 1 refers to a dominant proficiency of their mother tongue, while a quotient below 1 refers to the dominant proficiency of the Hungarian language. Thus, a quotient of 2 means that naming the 100 test items in Hungarian required twice as much time as the same process in their Gypsy mother tongue. A quotient of or around 1 means that the child's proficiency of the two languages is approximately the same. In psycho-linguistics, this is called *balanced bilingualism*²⁴.

Balanced
bilingualism
and
bilingualism

The test results of vocabulary dominance show that the average ratio of linguistic dominance of the children attending parallel grades belonging to the two groups largely differs. The average ratio of linguistic dominance of the group of the Esztergom 1st grade pupils is 1.96. The ratio approximates 2 in the groups of the pupils of higher grades. This indicates that the *relative level* of the children's Hungarian language proficiency only slightly improves during the years and their Gypsy mother tongue is still their dominant language when they attend the higher grades of the primary school.

Their Gypsy mother tongue is still their dominant language when they attend the higher grades of the primary school.

The results in the Óbuda groups of 1st and 2nd grade children (where the average ratios of linguistic dominance are 1.25 and 1.32 respectively) already indicate more balanced levels of proficiency. The ratios of linguistic dominance of the groups of 3rd-4th and 5th-7th grades pupils are below 1 (0.88 and 0.89, respectively). (However, the ratio of linguistic dominance of 2.06 of seven-year-old Mária S., the only non-over-age Óbuda 1st grade pupil, approximates the average ratio of linguistic dominance of the Esztergom children!) The data shows that the Hungarian language proficiency of the Óbuda children in the 1st and 2nd grades (i.e. after two or three years of schooling) usually approximates, and that of the children in higher grades reaches and in certain cases even surpasses their proficiency in their Gypsy mother tongue – at least in the respects tested. (The ratio of linguistic dominance slightly below 1 does not necessarily indicate that the children's command of their Gypsy mother tongue is poorer than their command of Hungarian. Their having poorer results in the Gypsy language may have had certain socio-linguistic reasons, e.g. the aspect that the test was administered in the school, where they usually speak in Hungarian or the fact the administrator of the test was a person belonging to the Hungarian-speaking community.)

Poorer results in the Gypsy language may have had certain socio-linguistic reasons.

²⁴ Macnamara, J.: How can one measure the extent of a person's bilingual proficiency? In: Kelly, L. (ed.) The description and measurement of bilingualism. University of Toronto Press, 1969.

It is worth comparing the average period of time necessary for the members of the groups of Gypsy children attending parallel classes in the different schools and for the 1st grade and kindergarten children in the control group to name the 100 test item in Hungarian. The average period of time necessary for the pupils in the 1st and 2nd grades in the Óbuda school to name the test items in Hungarian was the two-thirds of the time necessary for the pupils of the Esztergom school attending the same classes. The average period of time necessary for the pupils in the higher grades in the Óbuda school to name the test items was less than half of the time necessary for the pupils in the Esztergom school attending the same classes to do the same. (However, the result of 838 seconds of the already mentioned seven-year-old pupil, Mária S., is very near the average result of the Esztergom 1st grade pupils.) It is worth noting that in this respect, even the average result of the Óbuda 2nd grade pupils (352 seconds) largely surpassed that of the pupils of the 5th-7th grade Esztergom pupils (414 seconds). On the other hand, the control group data shows that even the Óbuda Gypsy children had serious disadvantages at the beginning of their schooling if we compare their results with those of the Hungarian children.

(Details concerning the naming of the test items. Problems of perceptual and notional nature.) Another aspect of the differences of the Hungarian language proficiency of the Óbuda and Esztergom children originating in the different educational circumstances is highlighted by the different proportions of correct answers concerning the names of the different objects, things, plants and animals listed among the test items. (The children's answers concerning the names of the test items were considered incorrect if they did not know the name of the different objects, things, plants and animals or if they named them in the wrong language or using the wrong word.)

In the course of analysing the results, another aspect that I took into consideration apart from the average number of incorrect answers in the two languages was the number of the items that the children belonging to the parallel classes of the different schools were unable to name in either of the two languages. Examples for this "absolute error ratio" are the answers of an Esztergom schoolgirl who called the goose in the picture *csibe* (chick) in Hungarian and *khajnyi* (hen) in her mother tongue.

Significant differences in the achievement

The difference between the two groups' achievements proved rather significant. The rate of errors of the Hungarian naming process in the case of the groups attending different classes in the Esztergom school was two, three, or in the case of the pupils of the 3rd and 4th grades, even 10 times as high as that of the groups of children attending parallel classes at the Óbuda school. (Again, the results of Óbuda schoolgirl Mária S., who had only been attending school for 1 year at the time of the testing concerning her Hungarian language achievement (43%) and her absolute error ratio of 11% approximate the respective results of 49.7% and 11.7% of the Esztergom 1st grade pupils!)

If we compare the Hungarian language achievement of the Esztergom group with that of the kindergarten control group, we have to acknowledge that, although it is almost unbelievable, the average rate of errors of the Esztergom 1st and 2nd grade schoolchildren (49.7% and 37%) is higher than that of the three-year-old kindergarten children whose mother tongue is Hungarian (32.2%) and the results of the pupils of the 3rd-4th and 5th-7th grades (19.2% and 13.2%) are lower than those of the four-year-old kindergarten children (12.8%).

Results of the pupils of the 5th-7th grades are lower than those of the four-year-old kindergarten children.

If we compare the Hungarian language achievement of the 1st and 2nd grade pupils of the Óbuda group (their rates of errors are 21.3% and 11.3%) with that of the control group, we find that their backwardness is also rather significant. However, this disadvantage seems to diminish considerably in the higher grades.

(...)

It is remarkable that the types of grammatical mistakes that the children belonging to the two groups made when answering the questions about the test items were often very similar. This clearly shows that the children in Óbuda have to fight the same struggles as their cousins in Esztergom as far as the development of their language skills is concerned. The active vocabulary of even the older children in the Esztergom group, i.e. of those in the 4th and 5th grades, proved insufficiently small. They quite often lacked the words that they wanted to use to describe the functions of certain objects and their grammatical mistakes made the meaning of their sentences almost impossible to decipher several times. In contrast, the 1st and 2nd grade pupils of the Óbuda school, who had spent as little as two years at school, usually found it easier to express themselves and the grammatical mistakes that their speech contained hampered understanding to a considerably smaller extent.

The types of grammatical mistakes are very similar.

The answers classified as "absolute errors" mostly reflect notional defects. However, probably, the failure to answer correctly stems from perceptual as opposed to notional difficulties in some of the cases. The type of the answers that the children gave suggests that the child failed to recognise the "meaning" of a picture, in other words, they were unable to identify the drawings consisting of lines, dots and colours with objects or phenomena which they originally met as particular things or objects. For example, one of the 1st grade pupils (Mária S. in the Óbuda group, who had spent one year in school) described the picture of "snow", depicting snow falling and houses with white roofs, in this manner: *house, dots.* (...) A 1st grade pupil in the Esztergom group described the same picture saying (in the Gypsy language) *points*.

Notional difficulties of Gypsy children

The children's *notional* difficulties can be well illustrated by the test data concerning naming different household animals. In almost half of the cases (42.5%) the Esztergom Gypsy children were unable to give the correct names of *the rooster, the hen, the duck and the goose* that they saw in the pictures in either of the two languages. The answers that the 1st and 2nd grade pupils gave seemed rather shocking in this respect: about one third of the children gave the same one name to three of the four farmyard birds (and sometimes to all the four of them) in Hungarian or in the Gypsy language. E.g. they called the rooster, the hen, the duck and the goose that they saw in the four subsequent pictures *khajnyi* (hen).

These notional and grammatical difficulties seem to prevail to a large extent in the case of the pupils in the higher grades of the Esztergom school. As compared with the results of the control group's: the results that the 3rd and 4th grade Esztergom children achieved in naming the four birds equalled the results of the 3-4 year-old kindergarten children and the results of the 5th-7th grade Esztergom pupils *fell below the level of the results of the 5-6 year old kindergarten children*.

Parallel data concerning the Óbuda group of the Gypsy children: in their case only one sixth of the answers concerning the four items demonstrated their ignorance of the names of the farmyard birds. The error rates of naming the four test items in Hungarian in the whole of the Óbuda group was 22.5%, while *the error rates of naming them in their mother tongue was just twice as high as that: 45%*. (I will come back to this point later.) However, the answers that the children of different grades gave to the same questions demonstrate that within the group of the Óbuda children, it is in fact mainly for the 1st and 2nd grade pupils that these four test items caused considerable notional or (Hungarian) language problems. (As for the absolute error rate, in respect of telling the four test items apart, they achieved about the same results as the 5-6 year old kindergarten children.) It is worth noting that the ten Óbuda working class children in the control group were all able to give the names of the 4 farmyard birds correctly without a single error.

It is remarkable that the rate of errors concerning the Gypsy language answers of the 1st grade pupils belonging to the Óbuda and Esztergom groups (62.5% and 61.1%, respectively) were almost identical. This fact clearly shows that within their own mother tongue environments, the Óbuda and Esztergom children *had equally little chance to acquire these notions*. (Actually, the adults living in the estate found it natural that the

The rate of errors concerning the Gypsy language answers were almost identical.

children could not tell the four animals apart in the course of the test. As Bori K. (62), one of the Esztergom grandmothers said: *"The little children all say khajnyi (hen), it is a word that children use. Those who know more say different things like "papiny", "ráca", khajnyi" (i.e. goose, duck, hen).*

At the same time, it is interesting to note that many of the Óbuda children only knew the Hungarian name of the test items that the Esztergom children were unable to give the name of either in the Gypsy language or in Hungarian. The reason why they knew the Hungarian names of these things is that they learnt them at school. In other words, the educational facilities of the Óbuda school – as opposed to those in the Esztergom school - ensured the successful acquisition of the new notions. This is why the Gypsy language rate of errors is twice as high as the Hungarian language rate of errors in the test results of the Óbuda children concerning the test items concerned.

THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE BENDER TEST

The *Bender test* examines the children's degree of maturity concerning "visual-motor" skills (i.e. the harmony of perception and movement²⁵), using the procedure of reproducing different forms. In the course of the testing, the person tested has to copy 9 complex geometric figures. The figures that they copy are evaluated from these 3 points of view: 1. the rendering of the angles, 2. the directions of the figures and their constituents (orientation) 3. the relative position of the figures and their constituents²⁶.

The Bender test (Series B) is suited for testing children between the ages of 6 and 12. However, during the survey, I administered the test among children over 12 as well, since their disadvantages and general achievements made it probable that – at least for some of them – solving the tasks in the test would prove somewhat problematic despite their age.

When administering the test and evaluating the results I used the chart that evaluates the achievements of the children according to their age as well as the methodological manual compiled during the use of the test in Hungary²⁷. As for the achievements of the children over 12, I considered the achievements of the children of 12 to be their "appropriate for their age" achievement.

Again, the Bender test showed considerable differences between the results of the two groups. While as few as 8 of the 40 Esztergom children (20%) reached the "appropriate for their age" level, the majority of the Óbuda children, i.e. 12 out of 20 (60%) reached the same level of achievement.

The rate of backwardness of further 8 children belonging to the Esztergom group could be calculated as the equivalent of 1 or 2 years, while the achievements of the majority of these children, i.e. of 24 out of 40 (60%) could be calculated as of 3-4 years or even more below the "appropriate for their age" level. (The children in the Óbuda group who were 1-2 and 3-4 years below the "appropriate for their age" level comprised 20-20% of all the children tested.)

A high rate of backwardness

Also, while the average rate of backwardness of the 7-10 year old children in the Esztergom group was only about 2 years, that of the 10-12 year old children was nearly

²⁵ Mérei F.: A Bender próba. Óvodások vizsgálata. OIE. Pszichodiagnosztikai Laboratórium, 1969. Vademecum Sorozat (Vademecum Series)

²⁶ Mérei F. – Szakács F.: Klinikai pszichodiagnosztikai módszerek. Medicina, Budapest. 1964. p 62

²⁷ Herpai A. – N. Somogyi – Tóth Zs.: A Bender próba. Iskolások vizsgálata. OIE. Pszichodiagnosztikai Laboratórium, 1969. 37. Vademecum Sorozat (Vademecum Series)

4 years and that of the children over 12 was nearly 6 years. Considering the fact that this rate of backwardness is typical of the majority of the children belonging to the different age groups (70.5% of the children aged 10-12 and 62.8% of the children over 12 fell in these categories), we can confidently claim that *the relative backwardness of the majority of the Esztergom children conspicuously grew over the years*. A similar tendency can be noticed in the parallel age groups of the Óbuda pupils, which, however, concerned a *much smaller group* of the children belonging to the separate age groups, i.e. 40% of the children aged 10-12 and only 22.5% of the children over 12.

Thus we can see that a psychological test consisting of non-verbal tasks used in the survey has the same results as the test of vocabulary: the majority of the children educated in the Gypsy study groups where pupils belonging to different grades studied together were halted in their development and their relative backwardness increased over the years. In contrast, the development of the Óbuda children who studied in separate classes proceeded in a far more favourable manner. The majority of the children were capable of approaching and in certain cases even catching up with the average level appropriate for their age.

The psychological test consisting of non-verbal tasks used in the survey has the same results as the test of vocabulary.

THE RESULTS OF THE READING TEST

I used a reading test consisting of 20 tasks (a Hungarian adaptation of a test based on "silent reading", originally devised for testing French children²⁸) to measure the reading skills of the children. The same test had been used for measuring the reading skills of Hungarian 1st grade pupils at several institutions, e.g. at Budapest remedial schools and in the experiment of native language teaching at the Kaposvár Teacher Training College. (The monograph that presents the results of the Kaposvár experiment contains the complete test and the reading skill ratios of the experimental class and the control group.²⁹) We compared the data collected by testing the reading skills of the Gypsy children with the data concerning the average result of these two 1st grade classes.

Each task in the reading test contains a sentence and a picture that belongs to the sentence. The person tested has to read the sentence (silent reading) and modify the picture according to the (hidden) instruction in the sentence – either by adding something or by colouring something. E.g. in Task 10, where the sentence is "I put a flower in the vase", they have to draw a flower in the empty vase in the picture. For each correct solution the pupil is given 1 point.

The reading test

The results of the reading test in the Esztergom group were shocking. *7 out of the 9 1st grade pupils, 5 out of the 10 2nd grade pupils and 5 out of the 9 3rd year pupils were unable to solve one single task*: which means that nearly half (42.5%) of the Esztergom children could not read at all, while *in Óbuda, there was only one test that scored 0 point*: that of Mária S. (aged 7).

By comparing the results of the Gypsy and non-Gypsy children, evaluated in the same manner, it becomes clear that the average test result of even the 4th grade Esztergom Gypsy pupils (74.2%) is below that of the Kaposvár experiment control group, i.e. the non-Gypsy 1st grade pupils who achieved *worse results* in the Kaposvár experiment (78.9%). On the other hand, the average test result of the 2nd grade Óbuda pupils (90%) is over that of the pupils of the Kaposvár experimental class, i.e. the "Hungarian" 1st grade pupils who achieved *better results* in the Kaposvár experiment (85.3%).

²⁸ Inizan, A.: Le temps d'apprendre à lire. Bourrelier, Colin, Paris, 1973.

²⁹ Zsolnai J. (ed): Anyanyelvtanítási kísérlet a kommunikációkutatás eredményei alapján (1971-75) Kaposvári Tanítóképző Főiskola, Kaposvár, 1976. pp 93-94, 215-216

THE STANDARDS OF GYPSY CHILDREN'S EDUCATION IN THE TWO SCHOOLS

The significant differences between the test results of the two groups of children of similar socio-cultural backgrounds draws our attention to the standards of education in the two schools.

The unacceptably low achievement of the Esztergom group of Gypsy children suggests that since the beginning of their school career, *serious disadvantages* had been added to those originating in their circumstances. The factors that contribute to their disadvantages at school are these: pupils of different grades studying in the same classroom, great fluctuation of teachers, extremely badly equipped classroom, total and permanent segregation of children. Also, as a result of all these, as it is reflected in the very high ratio of the 3rd grade pupils still unable to read, another factor is the more or less inevitable abandonment of the imposition of the appropriate minimal requirements concerning each school grade, which are also prescribed by law.

Factors that contribute to the children's disadvantages at school

As far as pupils of different grades studying in the same classroom is concerned: children belonging to two/five different grades study together in the two Esztergom study groups while all 700 of the non-Gypsy pupils of the school go to classes of different grades. In the school year 1976/77, *one third of the Gypsy children registered in the class logbooks and obliged to attend school according to the regulations did not attend school at all and more than half of the children failed at the end of the school year.* Pedagogically speaking, in the year of the survey the educational circumstances secured for the two Gypsy study groups were so adverse that if the children who were regularly absent had attended school, it would have become totally impossible to carry out any schoolwork. The classes and the afternoon study activities of the two groups were held *in the same classroom* and – according to the information in the logbooks – *at the same time* on certain days of the week in the school year 1976/77. Had all 64 of the Gypsy children registered in the logbooks turned up on such occasions, there would only have been enough seats for all of them if three or four of the children had been seated at each school-desk for two pupils. (Fortunately, the situation has changed in the present school year. Gypsy children got their classrooms back, and the conditions of the educational process have somewhat improved in other respects, too. Pupils of different grades study in the same classroom and the disadvantages that originate in the permanent segregation of the children, described below, still exist.)

The situation of the pupils in the higher grades of the primary school is extremely controversial, too. In the same educational institution where all non-Gypsy pupils attending the higher grades of the primary school receive education from qualified teachers in each school subject and can study the different subjects in different, specially equipped classrooms, Gypsy children of different grades have a common study group and e.g. during their physics and chemistry classes they only have the chance to *imagine* the experiments – looking at the illustrations drawn on the blackboard – while their non-Gypsy peers can observe and even administer them in reality in the physics and chemistry classrooms. While their non-Gypsy peers in the higher grades of the primary school are taught Russian by qualified language teachers, Gypsy children do not learn Russian at all. However, I have the impression that the majority of the Gypsy children who *get as far as the higher grades of the primary school* are rather intelligent and eager to learn, which is not only typical of the schools surveyed. The results of the IQ tests examining 873 Gypsy children by the Department of Hygiene of Children and Young People of the National Public Health Institute³⁰ clearly show that among Gypsy children, only those with the best abilities get as far as the higher grades of the primary school. Rather typically of the eagerness of the group of the Esztergom pupils of the higher grades, one day they got to surprise their teacher

Gypsy children of different grades have a common study group and e.g. during their physics and chemistry classes they only have the chance to *imagine* the experiments.

³⁰ Tomai É.: Adalékok a cigánygyermek társadalmi beilleszkedésének kérdéséhez. Magyar Tudomány, 1977. 7-8. pp 537-546

by claiming that they also wanted to learn Russian. (Unluckily, their teacher was unable to take on this task for want of proper command of the Russian language.)

Being a pupil in a Gypsy study group does not only mean disadvantages of an educational nature in the strict sense. It also means that their PE lessons are held in their classroom or in the schoolyard assigned for this purpose instead of the school gym. They have lunch sitting at the uncomfortable classroom desks, the surface of which is slightly slanting, instead of the more civilised school canteen. Basically, as for the relations of the practical daily contacts they are almost totally separated from the other children. At the same time, the circumstances of the Gypsy classes have also failed to provide solutions for the special educational tasks that are very important in the case of Gypsy children (e.g. accustoming children to cleanliness, raising the level of personal hygiene). As for the facilities concerning washing in the school, the 64 children could only avail of one metal washing basin and the cold water in the bathrooms).

In these circumstances, it is not in the least surprising that, as it is reflected in the analysis of the answers of a questionnaire and the description of the situation in a college student's thesis³¹ about the problems concerning the education of Gypsy children, the relationship of Gypsy and non-Gypsy children and their comportment towards each other is full of mutual fear and suspicions.

The fact that the *isolation of the children* is apparently a *permanent* state of affairs even aggravates the problems: not a single pupil originally placed in a "Gypsy" class has been later directed to attend the "mixed" classes over the years, although the teachers have put forward several recommendations concerning the transfer of certain pupils and some of the parents also asked the school to do so. The only way from the study group of the pupils of the 1st-4th grades leads to another study group for pupils of higher grades, where education is even less directed towards the specific curriculums and requirements of the different grades of primary school.

The integration of Gypsy children into the school community can be basically successful.

The results of the Óbuda Gypsy children prove that by implementing certain adequate and purposeful measures, the integration of Gypsy children into the school community can be basically successful. Due to the favourable circumstances the teachers of the school have managed to achieve the following: the majority of the children were able to comply with the compulsory requirements of primary school education, if at a poor level. Only 1 of the 20 children evaluated according to the generally compulsory norms and educated in "mixed" classes (Mária S., aged 7) failed to comply with the minimum requirements at school in the year of the survey.

One of the factors that enhanced their success was surely the school's positive attending to the special educational and pedagogical tasks to be undertaken in the education of Gypsy children. A shower room was installed next to the room where the afternoon study group activity for the Gypsy children was carried out. The Municipality of Budapest offered a position for a social worker assisting Gypsies within the staff of the school. The tasks of this social worker were ensuring the appropriate level of hygiene among the children, assisting their health care, helping their families in all matters that can lead to the enhancement of the circumstances of the children's schooling (arranging help for them in matters of employment and housing, finding places for the younger children in kindergartens, etc.). The children, whose circumstances concerning washing at their homes were not much better than of those living in Esztergom, got washed from top to toe and were made to put on clean clothes at school every day. As a result of the social worker's conscientiousness work, the frequency of the conflicts and problems originating in Gypsy children's poor level of hygiene and the potential of infections has largely diminished.

As for the 1st and 2nd grade pupils' integration, another important aspect was the establishment of the afternoon study group for a small group of pupils, led by a teacher

³¹ Timár É.: Nevelési problémák az esztergomi cigányiskolában (Thesis) Ho Shi Minh Tanárképző Főiskola, Eger. 1976

with great experience in coaching and assisting children in afternoon study activities. Meticulous attention was paid to the choice of the right person, whose task was in fact implementing a daily individual coaching programme. The teacher checked the homework of all the 13 pupils studying in 5 different grades on a daily basis, asked them to report orally on what they had learnt and explained to them all that they failed to understand during the lessons. Special emphasis was placed on reading: apart from the texts in the children's readers assigned for homework, they also used the texts in the anthologies of poetry and tales placed on the shelves of the classrooms. Maybe it is mainly due to these efforts that the 2nd grade pupils developed exceptionally good reading skills. (It is also worth noting that no special methods were used – and such methods could not even have been used as special methods for educating Gypsy children are not outlined or developed at all. Simply, this teacher *did a good job working within favourable circumstances* with children who, during the morning lessons in the mixed classes *received education of the same level and intensity* as the other pupils attending the same school.)

The free activity sessions, which had a markedly enhancing effect on the children's general aptitude, were successful in the well-equipped, friendly and not at all crowded classrooms. During such sessions, sitting down on the playtime carpet, the children were free to choose what they wanted to play with: sewing clothes for dolls, weaving or reading tales, playing didactic games, using plasticine, drawing, etc. They could use the rooms of the schools used for common activities, i.e. the canteen, the classrooms specially equipped for teaching certain subjects, the pioneers' room, the doors of which used to be closed in front of Gypsy children in the same school in the years before the initiations of the Budapest Pedagogical Institute, when Gypsy pupils had separate study groups of pupils of different grades. The relationship of the Gypsy and non-Gypsy children also took a favourable turn. I witnessed their lighthearted playing together in the break-time between two lessons several times while working on the survey.

Consequently, the results of the survey and the experience gained during the administering of the tests definitely confirm the opinion that *questions* the rightness of maintaining Gypsy classes as an organisational form. They show that ethnically, linguistically and sociologically, such treatment of the issue that wishes to make the education of Gypsy children in segregated groups permanent is especially unacceptable.

Other people's accounts, which we rely on for want of data, back the impression that the situation of the school in Esztergom is not unique. The person quoted in the introduction – a sociologist participating in carrying out the nation-wide survey of the Gypsy population in Hungary in 1971 – has experienced that the circumstances in Gypsy classes at several places all over the country are very similar to those in Esztergom. I have also witnessed phenomena similar to those described here, i.e. the deteriorating standards of originally well functioning separate study groups in several schools. It is worth noting that the documentary film entitled "*Mit csinálnak a cigánygyerekek?*" (*What are the Gypsy children doing?*) presents a similarly controversial picture of the functioning of Gypsy classes.

Even though we have not gathered a sufficient amount of facts to serve for generalisation on the basis of the situation in Esztergom, we can claim with all responsibility that the problems described here are typical of the majority of the Gypsy classes and prove the assumptions concerning the dangers and controversy of segregated education and the justify the worries concerning them.

Basically, certain factors of segregated education create a disadvantaged situation at the very beginning of the educational process. It is usually unavoidable to place pupils belonging to different grades within the study group, as there are very few settlements in the country where Gypsy children could fill whole separate classes. In these circumstances, it is not in the least surprising that the policy that directs Gypsy children to attend segregated Gypsy classes often triggers the disapproval of the more

Free activity sessions had a markedly enhancing effect on the children's general aptitude.

The results of the survey show that a treatment of the issue that wishes to make the education of Gypsy children in segregated groups is unacceptable.

demanding Gypsy parents living in orderly circumstances. Although Point 2 of the 18 345/1967 Ministerial Order clearly states that the school needs the parents' approval of placing the child into a separate class or afternoon study group in every case, in practice, it often happens that the school ignores the parents' protests, even in the case of families that have reached quite a high degree of social integration. It has been widely experienced that in schools that run separate Gypsy classes, normal classes do not receive Gypsy children at all or only in the course of a rather cumbersome process.

I assume that it is needless to add anything to prove that this factor – and permanent segregation in general – is and will be an obstacle to Gypsy people's integration into the society.

The success of the children's further school career remains rather uncertain, even if they are transferred to other classes. Pedagogically, the children coming from a segregated study group, where education is less efficient, do not have much chance to achieve among their non-Gypsy classmates if they are not given any assistance. The test results also make it obvious that after a certain period of time it is impossible to transfer the children studying in Gypsy classes similar to the one in Esztergom to normal classes, *as the process of their falling behind has become irreversible in the Gypsy classes, originally established to compensate for the backwardness of the pupils.*

I am convinced that it would be possible to achieve incomparably better results in the education of Gypsy children if the authorities concerned decided to spend the amounts that the maintenance of permanent Gypsy classes which often bring about discouraging results cost on the organisation of intensive pre-school education, health and social care and coaching programmes. The Óbuda experiment definitely proves that this is the practicable way of assisting the integration of Gypsy children.

The formation of hundreds of thousands of illiterate and semi-illiterate people within the Gypsy population by the end of the century needs to be prevented.

In whatever way we try to conceive the rise of Gypsy people, we should consider it vital that their disadvantaged circumstances should not be reinforced within the school community. The formation of hundreds of thousands of illiterate and semi-illiterate people within the Gypsy population by the end of the century needs to be prevented. Not only is it the interest of the Gypsy community but also that of the whole Hungarian society.

Gypsy Children's Language Problems and Their Chances to Manage at School

By: Zita Réger

Source: Valóság, 1974/1

This is what I have experienced over the past few decades: when teachers are asked to name the single largest problem that they encounter when teaching Gypsy children - either during my visits in schools or at different training workshops - the problem that they mention first is that of language and language skills in almost every case. Teachers say that Gypsy children have a limited vocabulary, the range of notions that they work with is rather narrow, they are not able to understand the language of schoolbooks, the questions, the tasks, what the teacher is saying - so goes the list.

The biggest problem teachers mention first is that of language and language skills.

The obvious response to this from someone who is not aware of the linguistic diversity of the Gypsy community in Hungary or someone jumping to false conclusions based on partial knowledge of the facts could be this: the source of the linguistic difficulties is their different mother tongue. In other words, Gypsy children acquire a language that is different from that of the educational system at home. But those who are familiar with the findings of the research carried out on the Gypsy ethnic group in Hungary - such as the nation-wide sociological survey of 1970 - must be aware of the fact that linguistically speaking, the Gypsy community in Hungary is far from being homogenous. Not more than one third of Gypsy children grow up in an environment the native language of which is a Gypsy language while another 8-10 % come from a Beash community (speaking archaic dialects of the Romanian language). Furthermore, the knowledge of Hungarian of the schoolchildren coming from these communities can be rather diverse, spreading from (less and less frequently encountered) monolingual children whose mother tongue is a Gypsy or Beash dialect to a dominant knowledge of Hungarian. Teachers often encounter special linguistic forms, the use of which originates in the influence of the children's mother tongue. The reason for using these forms is that these children imply the phonological and grammatical rules of their mother tongues to their second language (which, in this case, is the Hungarian language) in a spontaneous way. (Actually, we tend to do the same, unconsciously, when learning a foreign language). The forms *ézika* instead of *őzike* or *csúk* instead of *tyúk* are examples of mother tongue interference of phonology. In the same way, the use of grammatically incorrect word order or of the wrong suffixes originates in the automatic translation of Gypsy or Beash sentences. (As for details concerning the problems of linguistic interference see³².)

The source of the linguistic difficulties is their different mother tongue.

Children imply the phonological and grammatical rules of their mother tongues to their second language.

The fact that children are brought up learning a language that is different from that of school education raise a number of problems and may result in great difficulties at school - but it does not necessarily happen so. (A similar situation not causing any problems is the case of diplomats' children who travel abroad with their parents and attend a school in a foreign country. They tend to adjust themselves to the new linguistic environment quickly and without any trouble.) As far as the case of Gypsy children is concerned, a number of factors suggest that their language problems are manifold. Moreover, according to teachers' reports, the children of Gypsy people whose mother tongue is Hungarian, i.e. the majority of the Gypsy ethnic group in Hungary, also seem to have great linguistic difficulties.

³² Réger Z.: A lovári-magyar kétnyelvű cigánygyermek nyelvi problémái az iskoláskor elején. (The problems of Lovari-Hungarian bilingual Gypsy children at the beginning of their schooling.) Nyelvtudományi Közlemények, 1974 (76). 1-2. pp 229-255.

Similar cases
for different
situations

One may wonder what this almost universal and unanimous flood of complaints concerning Gypsy children's Hungarian language skills originates in. What is the common source of the difficulties, while the children are of rather diverse backgrounds as far as their families, the occupation of their parents and their lifestyles are concerned? What makes the case of the children having a Gypsy mother tongue, socialised in a linguistic environment of rich and distinctive oral traditions³³ similar to the case of children whose mother tongue is Hungarian, i.e. the children of the so-called Hungarian Gypsies or Romungo musicians or the children of the well-off town tradespeople, the children of the impoverished and outcast layers or the children of Beash wash tub makers or basket weavers?

Linguistic
socialisation
from an
anthropological
point of view

The answers to these questions may have been found by the modern research conducted in the last two decades: the analysis of linguistic socialisation from an anthropological point of view³⁴. The most important characteristics of the new method can be summed up in this sentence: apart from learning the grammar of their mother tongue, small children also learn the socially and culturally determined ways of using the language in the linguistic environment of their mother tongue. This procedure – the so-called linguistic socialisation – is a part of socialisation in the general sense, i.e. the procedure in the course of which small children become culturally and socially competent people, full members of a certain community. The examination of the linguistic socialisation of children from different social layers or ethnic groups and of their chances at school has shown that the ways of using a language that are learnt at home may count as advantages or disadvantages at school. In this perspective, several signs indicates the following: Gypsy children's linguistic backwardness is mostly caused by the fact that the linguistic patterns that children can avail of and acquire at home usually fail to refer to the written language and literacy.

To be able to understand the importance or weight of this factor, it may not be unnecessary to outline what the knowledge connected with literacy that small children growing up in a schooling-oriented environment absorb consists of and what kind of knowledge it is.

What Gypsy children's linguistic training lacks: the socialisation preparing the learning of reading and writing at a pre-school age

Psychological research of reading habits conducted in families of good schooling has shown that as a result of parents' and elder siblings' conscious teaching and training, pre-school children gather a large amount of experience concerning the use of written and printed texts. They learn various linguistic and interaction, i.e. contact making and co-operational skills, which will prove to be essential for learning reading and writing as tools of communication as well as for the communication in connection with written and printed texts at school.

Literacy
event:
socialisation
preparing reading
and writing

In linguistic anthropology, a key notion of this procedure of teaching and learning, in other words the socialisation preparing reading and writing, is *literacy event*. Any occasion when the co-operation between the partners (i.e. the adult and the child) or the common or solitary activity requires the use of texts that are read out or written down can be regarded as such events. The literacy events of a pre-school child's everyday life are looking at picture books, or parents' reading out advertising headlines or tin labels loud or interpreting the rules of board games in a language that the child can understand.

In school-oriented families several objects that surround infants (such as the inflammable plastic animals that look like fairy tale characters or the folding picture books in the child's cot) serve to establish the relationship with books at a very early

³³ As for these children's linguistic "education", see Réger, 1987, 1990.

³⁴ Heath, S. B.: Ways with words: Language, life and work in communities and classrooms. Cambridge, 1983, Cambridge University Press

Establishing the
relationship
with books at a
very early age.

age. As early as at the age of six months, children take notice of books or information that come from books and are able to react to questions relating to these in a certain way. Reading stories – as part of the ritual of going to bed in the evening or at other times – is one of the recurring activities that adults and children share, and to which certain fixed sentences and sequences of question and answer relate (What is it? What is it like? And later: Why?). Later – at around the age of three – the activity of reading stories together gets transformed: from this time on children are expected to behave as “listeners”, i.e. be quiet while someone reads out a text or story to them, remember what they've heard and be polite as far as turn taking in communication is concerned.

Children brought up in this way also become aware of the great respect that is culturally linked to literacy in their social circles at quite an early age. They see their parents and other adults around them read and write. Slowly they find out how the written word functions, e.g. they learn that the writing on an object is likely to be the name of the object. All this happens well before they start learning how to read and write in the conventional way. They find out that written and printed texts can be interpreted orally while spoken words can be written down and that the written text of a fairy tale read out from a book sets its own time structure just like the tales or stories orally communicated to them (“Once upon a time...”). At the same time they learn a number of techniques that are related to literacy (such as how to turn a page or the directions of literacy – i.e. the right direction of reading hand-written or printed texts. (E.g. Hungarian writing goes from the left to the right and not the other way round.) By the time they go to kindergarten, children often start to learn some letters of the alphabet and start spelling out the words which the hand-written or printed texts around them consist of (names of streets, number plates of cars, greeting cards, etc.). All this helps them learn how to divide speech into sounds and match sounds and letters. In addition, children's drawings also start to contain shapes similar to the letters of the alphabet.

By the time they go to kindergarten, children often start to learn some letters of the alphabet and start spelling out the words.

The linguistic and factual knowledge coming from books serves as a topic of conversation between children and the people around them from a very early age. Children understand questions and references relating to the contents of books and can respond to them: they behave as partners or readers having something to say in connection with books. A lot of details in their oral performance stem from written sources. Their utterances often follow patterns and turns of the stories that they learnt from books and the questions about them. Both their factual knowledge and the way they speak about it very often originate in books and their experience in relation with reading books. The first stage of this progress is looking at children's books, followed by many more well defined stages during the pre-school years, as the patterns of kindergarten education strongly resemble those that children encounter at home.

By the time children growing up in such families go to primary school, they have spent years gathering experience in acquiring and practising the basic knowledge and the ways of communication and behaviour relating to written sources. These linguistic and non-linguistic forms of behaviour are in many respects parallel with the communication at school and the interaction patterns that surround learning reading and writing and using written sources. The continuous contrasting of the knowledge learnt from books and the knowledge acquired in real life – together with other factors – help children develop decontextualized speech and the use of abstract notions^{35 36}.

As far as the above skills are concerned, Gypsy children acquire hardly any at all. In traditional Gypsy communities the set of objects that surround children does not include children's books (or, very often, toys either). The activities that adults and children share and the everyday situations typically lack the element of literacy events in the sense described above. This means that being brought up in their original linguistic

³⁵ Bernstein, B.: Linguistic socialisation and In: Pap M. – Szépe Gy.: Társadalom és nyelv (Society and Language). 1975, Gondolat, pp 393-431.

³⁶ Pap M. – Pléh Cs.: A szociális helyzet és a beszéd összefüggései az iskoláskor kezdetén. (The Correlation of Social Position and Speech at the Beginning of Schooling.) Valóság, 2.

As far as the above skills are concerned, Gypsy children acquire hardly any at all.

environment as illiterate or functionally illiterate parents' children, Gypsy children will lack all the factual and linguistic knowledge, notions as well as behaviour and interaction patterns that children growing up in the culture surrounding theirs learn from books with the help of adults and from activities related to using books.

Schools expect children to have learnt this kind of factual and linguistic knowledge related to literacy and counts on it from the very beginning. At the same time, the particular ways of using the language that children brought up in the environment of the traditional Gypsy culture have been taught are completely irrelevant as far as the expectations of schools are concerned. (We have experienced that schools are either completely unaware of or ignore the cultural and linguistic knowledge of children who come from families still guarding the traditional oral culture of the Gypsies.)

The fact that the expectations of their families and of the education system concerning the ways of using the language radically differ is a source of considerable difficulties and frustrations for schoolchildren. This one factor itself almost seems to "guarantee" failure at school.

The lack of any experience concerning literacy is an almost universal feature of the pre-school education of Gypsy children of the most different linguistic and social backgrounds.

Bulding
bridges The *sine qua non* of creating an education system that is more efficient than the present one is "the building of bridges", i.e. making efforts to overcome the difficulties that stem from the differences in the ways of communication as learnt at home and as expected at school and to make up for the lack of experience concerning literacy.

The optimal way of treating the above situation – well known in the "third world" – is providing pre-school education for children at a very early age without taking them away from their families. International experience conclusively proves that pre-school education starting at a sufficiently early age can cover distances larger than those originating in the "traditional Gypsy" and "non-Gypsy average" differences of socialisation. (Examples include that of children of families moving from Ethiopia or Arab territories to Israel, who, having undergone intensive pre-school training, are prepared to be educated in the Israeli, basically Western-type system of education.)

From this point of view, it is particularly unfortunate that pre-school education in Hungary has reached a critical stage and its chances to improve are scarcer and scarcer. As for its beneficial effects, no experimental forms of coaching that aim to help children catch up with their peers at a later stage can be as efficient as that starting well in time. The reason for this is that the lack of proper training at an early age results in having to restructure basic cognitive and linguistic patterns, which are already solidified. Without pre-school education, a very large number of Gypsy children will inevitably fail at school, which brings along (as a strategy of defence on the part of schools) the different, open as well as hidden, forms of segregation. (This phenomenon in Hungary today is of a proportion typical of apartheid in South Africa. I have recently visited a village – not in the economically poor area but in the relatively prosperous Fejér County - where over 90% of Gypsy children are educated in special schools for children with slight mental handicaps.

As a consequence of the situation described above, any project concerning providing better schooling for Gypsy children should mainly aim at establishing the right forms of institutionalised pre-school socialisation, connected with the education within the family. In order to outline the right methods of solving the problem it would be beneficial if the special nation-wide projects that aim to improve the educational system relied on the experience of similar Western European projects to a larger extent and could utilise the findings of these adaptable in Hungary. The institutes of educational research need to set up separate departments in order to systematically survey and document the international experience gained when assisting children of similar ethnic background in studying and adapting to the institutions of society and to outline how to adapt and

Projects for better schooling for Gypsy children should aim at establishing institutionalised pre-school socialisation.

utilise these. Offering scholarships and postgraduate programmes in foreign countries for Gypsy and non-Gypsy young people could ease the chronic shortage of experts in the long run.

Also, it is high time that multicultural education were introduced. However, it seems more realistic to introduce it in a passive way, offering optional rather than obligatory programmes. The aim is to educate children and teachers to accept the values of Gypsy culture that are already available for them at present and to fight prejudices. Above all, perhaps Gypsy children would feel more at ease at school if their acceptance were clearly signalled by the school community. Placing Gypsy story books on classroom bookshelves, hanging a copy of a painting by a Gypsy painter on the wall, using Gypsy folk music cassettes, organising Gypsy folk dance groups and providing a chance for them to perform at school events and setting up activity groups with projects concerning Gypsy folk art could all help building bridges over the emotional and attitudinal gaps and those originating in the differences of socialisation between Gypsy and non-Gypsy children. (Such treatment of multicultural problems have been institutionalised in some Western European countries, e.g. in the United Kingdom) Naturally, the nascent Gypsy cultural movements and literacy also need to take a part in this³⁷.

In a certain sense, the educational planning concerning Gypsy children seems to have reached a crossroads. It is vital that its scarce resources should not be spent on a quest of illusionary aims or in dead end streets but utilised for the outlining of the educational strategies that can serve as a basis for future development.

The decision-makers as well as the executive bodies should be aware that the decisions that are being made at present are in a sense decisive for all the municipalities inhabited by Gypsies as well as for the coexistence of Gypsies and Hungarians and as such, for the future of this country.

³⁷ From this point of view, it is very important that the nascent Gypsy literacy should take notice of the demands of the targeted readers. There is a large amount of data that suggests that the currently widely used system of spelling, based on the rules of the English language (and also recommended by the Gypsy World Association) constitutes an insurmountable obstacle for Gypsies with little schooling and poor reading skills, which means that they are unable to read texts written in a Gypsy language. More in detail, see: Réger, 1988.

Teachers on the Gypsy Culture

By: **András Hegedűs T. - Katalin Forrai**

Source: **Cigány gyermekek szocializációja [The Socialisation of Gypsy Children],
Aula, Budapest, 1998**

“**G**ypsy people have no culture that we should respect. Actually, they are the ones who had better adapt and change.”

“Gypsy culture needs much more publicity, their values should be made better known. By this, their non-Gypsy companions, i.e. the society would be able to accept them to a much larger extent. The points where the two cultures meet should be detected.”

Teachers are still regarded as authorities.

Both opinions represent existing views, they are at opposite poles. We cannot call them the extremities, as, unfortunately – especially as far as the negative aspects are concerned – one can find more impatient and ruder remarks even in the material that we have gathered. We do not know how frequent the certain views are among teachers and can only hope that it is those of the second type that are to spread. It is but doubtless that teachers’ views (especially if reflected in their actions) weigh more than those of many other professionals. First of all, teachers – especially in a village-like environment – are still regarded as authorities, their views are formative concerning for the local public opinion and thus they are public figures. Their utterances in a sense are public utterances. Apart from this, they have explicit power within the school, which means that if they want their views on the parents and families of the children belonging to different ethnic groups can be expressed in their actions.

Negative opinions of teachers who teach Gypsy children concerning Gypsy people weigh more than those of other people.

By no means do we wish to get entangled in the theoretical discussion about the correlation of opinions, attitudes and behaviours. Naturally, we do not think that everybody that speaks about Gypsies with reserve or aversions is ready to take action against them. But we claim that the negative opinions of teachers who teach Gypsy children concerning Gypsy people weigh more than those of other people. The reason is, apart from the above-mentioned factors, that teachers themselves are aware of all this and in the course of an interview, where there exists a certain incentive that pushes the speaker towards the direction of the responses that society expects, a teacher who expresses prejudice against Gypsies openly defies the social requirements.

In the material that we have collected one can find more shades of opinions than expected and the teachers’ impatience is usually rather hidden. We were not mainly interested in general opinions but in those on Gypsy children’s relationship with education or educational organisations. Still it was impossible to avoid talking about the teachers’ attitude towards the Gypsy community as a whole or the local Gypsy community as a whole even by asking straight questions. We did not intend to ignore this aspect and it would have been impossible, too. Every teacher ready to answer our questions found it necessary to define the Gypsy issue and their own relationship with the Gypsy community, for their own sakes and for the sake of the interviewers.

Moreover, as it has already been made clear – teachers themselves find it difficult to mentally isolate Gypsy children from the Gypsy ethnic group. (We even met people who furiously argued against the classification of Gypsies as an ethnic group as such, but their readiness to argue itself can only be interpreted as the acceptance of the classification to at least a certain degree.)

The teachers were asked in what sense they regarded Gypsies as a homogenous and in what sense they regarded Gypsies as a heterogeneous group. Most of them, similarly to Gypsy families themselves, see differences among Gypsy people as far as

“There exist the orderly ones (who can “hardly be called Gypsies”) and then those who are responsible for their own misery.”

their lifestyle, work ethics and consequent living standards are concerned. It is difficult to assess the extremely frequent occurrence of this attitude (in the first case three quarters of those asked, while in the second case two thirds of those asked mentioned it). In itself it would only indicate that according to teachers it is work and material goods that separate the different layers within the Gypsy community just like in the whole of the society. But the teachers' further comments very often contained elements of just the opposite views. Namely, that work ethics and living standard have such an essential role in the human quality that they do not define layers within the Gypsy community but very simply divide it into two parts. Firstly, there exist the orderly ones (who can "hardly be called Gypsies") and then those who are responsible for their own misery. Secondly, there are the well-off ones, the millionaires and the outcasts. Although we share the opinion that integration at work and an endurable living standard are important milestones and the social and material prerequisites of integration into modern society, we find that setting this dimension as absolute can easily create the overly simplified black and white picture which majorities often use to justify their views on minority cultures.

While 71% and 42% of those interviewed could see differences within the Gypsy community in the above two respects, it was only a third of them who were aware of any ethnic and traditional professional differences. Only a slight proportion of those asked (6%) judged the differences according to the time that had elapsed since the settlement of the families to be essential. Although aversions to the Gypsies emerged in the answers throughout the interview, here – although the interviewees were not instructed to set an order of importance – they did so, probably unconsciously, and as a result the difference between emigrants and original settlers seemed slight when compared to the more important differences of work ethics.

Eleven of the teachers said that the Gypsy community is homogeneous in all respects. This response definitely indicates indifference, if not rejection. Were they not teachers, and teachers who are in the closest relationship with the Gypsy community, we could even find the number of those sharing a view of indifference and/or rejection rather low.

Indifference,
rejection

Education in a Gypsy language and the education of the Gypsy culture cannot be conducted against the will of teachers. This is the reason why we considered it very important to find out about their opinions – and their reasons – on these issues. In view of the answers, we do not find the introduction of these subjects impossible even though rejection and hostile opinions were also expressed.

There were only two people interviewed who did not answer the following question: "Do you find it appropriate that Gypsy children should attend separate classes at school?" That means that there is only a slight difference between the number of those asked and those who answered. Two-thirds rejected the idea of "Gypsy classes", 26% were definitely for it and 10% had reasons for as well as against it. Twenty of those asked were for it because this would make it possible for the rather backward Gypsy children to receive special support that would make it possible for them to catch up. Three were for it because it would be easier to keep discipline among the Gypsy pupils in that way and – unfortunately – four teachers would favour this solution because Gypsy pupils could thus be isolated from the Hungarian pupils.

The reasons for rejecting the idea of separate "Gypsy classes" were quite varied, too. Five of them argued that "teachers would break down if they had to teach Gypsy-only classes"(!) –, which must be the reason why their answer to the first question was "partly". One of them hinted that Gypsy people and their political leaders would not allow it to happen, however favourable it otherwise would be.

The other reasons are already well-known from the answers of those concerned. 23% of the teachers considered mixed classes important and mentioned learning through following a model, 17% said that establishing separate classes would be discriminative, 16% feared that this organisational solution would strengthen the existing separatist

tendencies among the Gypsies. (This anxiety is justifiable, remember, it is their desire for separation that motivates the want of separate classes among the children, too.)

Three quarters of teachers rejected the idea of learning the Gypsy language at school.

Four teachers were unable to answer the question concerning the opportunity to learn a Gypsy language at school. Three quarters of those who answered rejected the idea, while one quarter were for the introduction of teaching Gypsy languages at school – with or without certain conditions. One quarter is not so low a proportion if we consider that the estimated proportion of Gypsies speaking a Gypsy language is even lower and in the sample examined, i.e. the teachers' surroundings the proportion is even lower than the estimate above. On the other hand, it is noteworthy that few of those who gave a definite answer wanted or were able to give detailed reasons for their choices. And it also becomes apparent how delicate an issue the education of the language (i.e. a minority language) at school is: representatives of the majority society often feel that providing such extra service for minorities would mean that Hungarians deprived themselves from something.

Few people gave reasons why they were for the introduction of the education of the Gypsy language. Five said it was the mother tongue of Gypsy people, five mentioned the prevention of the dying out of the language, four said it was a valid reason that, as they were convinced, Gypsy people themselves would like it to be introduced.

Those rejecting the education of the Gypsy language mostly argue that it is not any more the mother tongue of the Gypsy people (i.e. of those living in their region or in Hungary) and they should also learn it as a foreign language (40%). 13% of those answering the question consider the Gypsy language (as such) to be unnecessary, two feared that Gypsy people would regard such a measure as discriminative and would protest against it anyway. (As we have seen, this viewpoint does exist and those who decide in favour of the introduction of teaching a Gypsy language at school should be cautious indeed!) Finally, seven people (7.5%) argued that the teaching of the Gypsy language was not one of the responsibilities of the school. Their arguments only slightly differ from those of the Gypsies who do not wish to make their intimate, family language public. The difference is not so much in the logic of the argument but in the power relationships. Obviously, the self-imposed isolation of a minority builds walls similarly to segregation. The situation of the Hungarian minority at the time of the writing of this book makes this way of thinking painfully topical. The impassioned words of a teacher in a Hungarian small town are strikingly similar to those one can hear on the other side of the border: "They have their own clubs, they should maintain their culture there if they wish. And if they want to speak their Gypsy language, let them speak it at home and teach it to their children at home. They live in Hungary and they are supposed to learn the school subjects in Hungarian here."

"They live in Hungary and they are supposed to learn the school subjects in Hungarian here."

The topic of the previous chapter was how teachers view Gypsy children. All in all, almost two thirds of those asked said that Gypsy children had certain characteristics that schools should in one way or another tolerate and teachers should adapt to. What seems especially striking in their description of the positive relationship and teachers' competent behaviour is that those presumed special characteristics are in fact not at all typical of Gypsies.

Among the special characteristics, teachers mention the need for the otherwise well-known personality-centred behaviour, which they apply when dealing with the pupils (and their parents). This is characterised by having to participate in the verbal and non-verbal communication as in situations influenced by the supportive attitude enhancing emancipation rather than showing hierarchic, directive attitudes during interactions. This is how a teacher characterised the behaviour that was found efficient when dealing with Gypsy children. "They need special treatment, a special tone of voice. Their personalities should never be hurt and one should not behave in an official way. If I approach them first, their reaction is always positive. A friendly and convincing tone of voice, sincerity – this is the only way to achieve results with them."

Teachers who think like this have discovered the right behaviour which psychologists and educational psychologists have theoretically and empirically proved to be efficient and recommend when establishing the teacher-pupil relationship, in an autodidactic way. Why do they feel that this behaviour is primarily efficient with Gypsy children? Probably because the teacher and the teacher's behaviour is less important for pupils of an "average" background, who are less defenceless in their interactions with teachers and consequently their reactions to this behaviour of the teacher are less noticeable.

Others feel that deeper understanding would be necessary for dealing efficiently with Gypsy pupils. "We do not know Gypsies well enough. Teachers do not come to work to this school because they are afraid of the many Gypsies and do not know them. Gypsies are also afraid, they are distrustful, and they fear everybody. But it is not so difficult to deal with them. The only thing is, you should not reject their invitation and kindness."

"We do not know Gypsies well enough."

Here again, we do not quote the rudest utterances to illustrate the negative aspects. Teachers of this attitude see special characteristics in connection with morality, work ethics, and lifestyle. "They have different morals – vigorously supporting the wicked ones is very typical of them, they even support burglars – it is difficult to make them understand that there exist such things as sense of duty or sense of responsibility."

The way in which the relationship between the school and the Gypsy families appear in teachers' observations does not seem to characterise the children but the way they see the whole ethnic group. "Gypsy people stick together. If something bad happens, all of them appear immediately. Gypsy parents do love their children. They are more sensitive. If the children are in any way hurt, they are up in arms. This is what one should adopt a more positive attitude towards. And the children being absent for one or two days should not be taken so very seriously. We should accept that they still do not precisely understand what schooling being compulsory means."

We also asked teachers what they consider to be the most important reasons for the backwardness of Gypsy children as far as their school results are concerned. The answers contain some motives mentioned above but interestingly, while answering the questions in the questionnaire, they more frequently referred to Gypsy people's bad financial background than when answering more open questions and during the whole interview. A reason for this may be that when using the questionnaire, we "made the teachers repeat certain notions" that they may have read in newspapers or heard at lectures or different training sessions. Their answers are presented in the table below.

Reasons for the backwardness of Gypsy pupils

Supposed reasons of the backwardness	The number of those answering the question	The percentage of
The family's lifestyle	50	53.8
The socio-cultural situation	67	72.0
Non-stimulating surroundings	56	60.2
Bad traditions	17	18.3
Negligence, laziness	61	65.6
Mental backwardness	56	60.2
Lack of interest	43	46.2
The children being physically	11	11.8

underdeveloped		
Lack of necessary basic knowledge	42	45.2
Linguistic defects	30	32.3
The school being not attractive enough	12	12.9

Teachers also blame the families for the children's defects.

The most frequently mentioned reasons for the backwardness relate to the families' circumstances and lifestyle. We are hardly mistaken supposing that the teachers also blame the families for the children's defects that are mentioned in the list. It is conspicuous that very few people regard the school as the source of the failures. This is illustrated by the low number/proportion of the answers. Also, as compared to the number of those blaming the families' circumstances, a low number of teachers answered *yes* when asked about reasons that belong to the school's responsibility, such as the lack of necessary basic knowledge, the children's indifference towards the school and studying, and their linguistic defects. Most teachers have the image of a school that is practically powerless to deal with those who come from disadvantageous socio-cultural background. Even though we are aware of the fact that this is a generally valid statement, proved by sociological research, we find it alarming that the teachers interviewed (with special qualifications and interests) identify with this idea to such a large extent.

This applies to questions about the employment situation of the parents and the families' inclination to have a large number of children. "The majority of the Gypsy people here do their best to live like Hungarians. Women also go to work. We don't have so much trouble with the children either. One thing breeds the other."

"Gypsy people ought to be forced to take jobs. They look into our eyes and laugh at us. They are given flats and laugh at the rest of us who spend 15 years working and have nothing at all."

"I consider the fact that they have been propagating in such large numbers at many places to be the problem and the state even supports them. In our village there is not such propagation but I hear that there is at other places."

Quite in contrast, it is also important to notice that the fact that they cannot fully comprehend let alone solve the problems of the backwardness of sizeable groups of pupils causes unbearable tension for a large number of conscientious and sensitive teachers. There is a strong connection between the situation of the Gypsies and the children's school careers. We quote two teachers:

"A solution should be found about how to involve them more in school work. But research does little good. Support is necessary. Because while the attitude towards them remains that they should stand in a line and be shot with machine guns, there is not much we can do."

"Something should be done and if anyone can, schools can. I swear I do not know what. I would find it right if they could educate a layer of professionals among themselves. If the primary school teacher or the representative of the local guardianship authority is a Gypsy, they are more likely to accept them. It can only be started within the family and by establishing a relationship with the family. They are family-centred to an extent that we cannot even imagine. Surely they come here with innumerable grievances inside. And if they feel that we do not only demand but also consider them to be human beings... But there are cases where the families themselves dissolve, traditions do not function, and then there is no school or research institute that can put the ground back under their feet!"

It can only be started within the family and by establishing a relationship with the family.

The Roma in the Synchrony and Diachrony of the Contact Population

By: **Vasile Burtea**, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection

Source: European Centre of Studies in Ethnical Problems and Social Communication;
Training Course of Experts in Ethnical Problems and Social Communication

1. BRIEF HISTORY

The lack of "ancient" documents mentioning in one way or another the Romanian Roma population trammels the retracing of life, behaviour and tradition of this people living on this land, as it seems, from the beginning of the second millennium.

A more ample bibliography can be found only around 1848, but the writings before the 19th century are extremely poor.

Roma are mentioned for the first time in 1385

The Roma are mentioned for the first time only in the year of 1385 in the documents of the local chancellery, namely in an *enfeoffment* to the Vodița monastery.

Together with the land and outbuildings with which the monasteries were supplied, there were given also "forty gypsy shacks"³⁸ that undoubtedly constituted an important part of the fortune and inventory ceded to the monastery.

"Amazed by the unusual picturesque of our Gypsies"³⁹, the foreign travellers mentioned in their diaries or notes small events with the Gypsies as well. They appear as yet another decor to the crossed land, which they enriched with their "art and picturesque, part of their original character brought from their native country, India".⁴⁰

The specific note of the existing documents is given by the fact that, taken as a whole, these refer to the Roma that were already slaves and had been oppressed. Or, if we take into consideration the *historical process of oppression* of the Romanian peasants, through their becoming serfs, this does not appear to us suddenly, as a result of a "campaign", on the contrary, it was rather a *slow process* with turnings and twisting and social distress, that presuppose, first of all, time.

The Roma, not being owners of land (the primary property and means of production of that time), the process took place faster than in the case of the Romanian landowner peasants, but not fast enough to obtain a campaign character.

Departing from this truth we can affirm, without being suspected of going too far, that the existence of the Roma in the Balkans and on the current Romanian territory dates way back before the year of 1385.

Even if we give credit to the variant that the Roma might have made their way into the Romanian Principalities through the North and East of Moldavia (as M. Kogălniceanu,

³⁸ George Potra: "Contribuțiuni la istoricul țiganilor din România" (Contributions to the history of the Romanian gypsies), Published by Editura Regele Carol, Bucharest, 1939, p.19

³⁹ Idem, p.96

⁴⁰ Idem, p.6

N. Iorga and H. H. Stahl claim) as Tartar servants (thus as oppressed), their penetration – passing from one master to another and crossing the distances as far as the south – around the Tismana monastery where they set up a sum of "shacks" (poorish homes unfit for dwelling), meant already a history passed off in a prolonged time. Considering the technical means and of transport of the period and the dimensions of time of the epoch, the claim of antiquity has a lot more ground.

Moreover, George Potra, commenting on the fact that only after three years from the mentioned document, Mircea cel Bătrân (Mircea the Old) had given the monastery of Cozia (in the year of 1388) among many others also "300 gypsy shacks", concludes on his part that "this means that the gypsies were quite numerous and long-established in the principalities".⁴¹

No matter how abundant the migrating flow might have been, we do not believe that it could have been possible for so many people to be concentrated around a single property (in order to be handed over). Such a concentration presupposes a time when the demographic laws (first of all the birth rate) leave their mark through the manifestation of the effects.

On the other hand, the comparative philology "presumes that the date of their appearance in Europe might be the year 1000. And it is possible that this date could involve some truth, since there is no other way to explain the mode they spread so fast in all the countries of Europe".⁴²

Comparative philology "presumes that the date of their appearance in Europe might be the year 1000.

In fact in the south of the Danube, in the Balkans, on the territory of the Byzantine Empire, the Roma are mentioned in documents as early as years of 1000-1100 A.D.

1.1 ORIGINS

The hypotheses and theories concerning the origins of the Roma constitute in themselves a research subject. Historians, ethnographers, more recently anthropologists and other researchers have made a serious goal in trying to unravel the origins of this "enigmatic people" (A. Russo), "bohemian" (Vaillan), omnipresent in Europe, and many times hard to understand and to explain.

It was believed for a long period of time that the Roma have their origins in Egypt. For this reason the English, and after them others, named them Gypsies, but there were also hypotheses and opinions, which claimed that the Roma had been Persian, Phoenician, Tartars, Turks left after the wars waged on this land.

Old beliefs

The "folklore" of the problem comes even to "label" them (mocking allusion to the origin from Egypt), the inhabitants of the antique Rome or of the Roman Empire (from romaioi = Roman citizen), and even ... ancient inhabitants of Dacia that preserve with unconscious holiness, elements of language, habits, traditions etc. etc.

If most of the writings (in fact descriptions) about the Roma belong to ethnologists or have a declared ethnographic-ethnologic content, still the most credible explanation of the origin and the beginning of the Roma' exodus belongs to the linguists.

Just like the hypothesis of the Roma's ancience in the European space (spread also by linguists), based on the compared analysis of the language, the conclusion concerning the Roma's origin and the date when their migration started, as well as the Indian area from where the whole migration started, was also founded based on the analysis of certain linguistic units.

The whole migration started in India.

⁴¹ Idem, p.19

⁴² Idem, p.25

The logical procedure started from the explanation of the word gajo, gaje, which means, first of all, enemy or (in a more recent interpretation) stranger (therefore it has nothing in common with the connotation of the Romanian "version" of gagiu (guy) or gagică (babe)).

This word can be found in all the dialects and languages spoken by the Roma all over the world, and indicates the same relationship (being, situation).

Ancestors of
Roma people

Searching for the origin of the word, the researchers have come to the conclusion that it is connected with the existence of Mahmud of Ghazni's (from Ghazna, Ghazny) soldiers, a Muslim leader, being in a continuous campaign of invasion and subjugation of the north-west of India (approximately the state of Punjab, today's Punjabi), the place where it is presumed that the ancestors of the actual Roma lived their life.

He had invaded, around year 1000 A.D., the above mentioned regions several times, and the population, incapable of holding out, was forced to retreat, and eventually, to give in by leaving for good the native lands, and to start off towards other horizons, if not friendly, at least less hostile.

The explanation has the gift to persuade, and this is why we accept and acquire it, specifying one more time that gajo has the meaning of the one from Ghazna (Ghaja), that is, our enemy, or with reference to our enemies.

To this argument of a linguistic-deductive nature others can, by all means, be added as well with a complementary and supporting role.

The language of the Roma, taken as a whole, comes to complete the argumentation, being very similar to the language spoken in the present as well by certain groups that are in contact even today in the Indian regions that we have already mentioned.

Linguists, the experts in the Romany language⁴³ agree that, in spite of the dialectisation of this language, it still remains homogeneous, representing an excellent means of communication among the quasi-totality of the Roma in the world. All the linguists affirm that the main stock of the words and the basic linguistic root are of an Indian origin.

The Roma (gypsies) from Western Europe (Germany, Italy, France) are called Manusi or Sinti. The last name (of Sinti) given to the Roma from Italy and Germany comes from the river Sind from India and it indicates the fact that they have remained with the "conscience" of their origin in the regions dominated by this stream of water (the land of Sind).

Similarly, manus, in the Romany language, has the same meaning as the word Roma, both belonging to the same stock of words.

The colour of many of the Roma's skin, the traditional national dress, appear as elements that are strikingly similar to the one of the Indian population, traditional through excellence.

The gesture and movements, centuries after the Europeanisation, have not changed compared to that of the Indian population. If we take into consideration the nuptials of

⁴³ -Marcel Kurtiade: French linguist (Occitania) assigned by the International Congress of the Roma (RRomani Unia) to discuss the standardisation of the Roma language, author of a manual of the Romany language; supports this aspect, as well as
 - George Sarău: Romanian linguist, professor of the Romany language at the Normal School from Bucharest and at the University of Bucharest, author of the "Pocket Dictionary of Romany-Romanian", Published by Editura Kriterion, Bucharest, 1992 and of the "Romany Alphabet", same edition, 1994.

the Roma population, which kept the traditions, the national dress, the language and the traditional way of life, we are amazed by the resemblance with the identical phenomena found at the Indian population.

Even in our days, although there is a strict legislation that does not allow the young Indians to marry earlier than at the age of 17 (boys), and respectively 18 (girls), owing to the undesirable rapid growth of the population (India being the second demographic giant of the world), still 10,000 consumed marriages are recorded between children.⁴⁴ Or in the case of a considerable part among the Roma (Coppersmith, Platers, Bear-leaders, as well as Through-makers from some regions), the marriages between children represent a normal act, they being "contracted" with the approval and knowledge of the parents.

Similarities between Indian and gypsy traditions.

Similarly, the manner in which the Roma women swaddle and carry their infants is strikingly similar to that of the Indian women.

In what way was it possible to keep so many similarities? The answer cannot be the subject of these pages, however it is useful to know that in the present an answer of this sort can be given.

1.2. THE MOTIVES AND PASSAGES OF THE MIGRATION

As we have seen, the migration of the ancestors of the actual Roma departed from India as a result of a military boom completely unfavourable. It is possible that initially they withdrew in order to regain their strength, or to procure enforcement and military or political support, so that they would be able to return and win back the lands they had been forced to leave, and of course, to retrieve their freedom without which life would not have been possible.

It is clear that the fortunes were not on their side, and the desire to return remained, for most of them, only a dream. Defeated, exhausted physically, materially and morally, they still had to find a way out, a way of existing. Naturally, Europe, the Byzantine Empire, Byzantium represented not only well known economical, cultural and political opportunities, but for them at the same time, the chance to survive in a moment when they were in distress. And they made the best of the situation.

Coming to exist, to co-exist, without intentions of conquer and destruction (after all, they came from one of the most profound and well developed cultural centres, where the knowledge of the world had been already accumulated in enormous and acknowledged libraries even from the time, when in other premises people were wandering without any specific goal and with no place to return to), they were used according to the needs and habits of the land that had adopted them, and the adoption took place in proportion of their skills and capacities to meet and adjust to the requirements and necessities of the time and place.

Byzantium did not represent a land that had been devastated by the ancestors of the Roma. They had known it even from ancient times, just like in the case of India, whose extremely developed commerce constituted an essential part of the economy of the Indian states. Even from antiquity, this branch of the Indian economy had all along been in the attention and under the rule of the Indian leaders.

For commerce there existed a whole legislation, protection and control on the part of the state⁴⁵, even from ancient times. No doubt, among the partners of the navigating

⁴⁴ "Population Headliner", Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific, No. 168, March 1989, subtitle: "The marriages between children".

⁴⁵ Jeannine Auboyer "Viața cotidiană în India antică" (*The Everyday Life in the Antique India*), Published by Editura Științifică și enciclopedică, Bucharest, 1976, p. 85-110.

Indians, there were also Byzantine merchants, whose flourishing commerce, to which other opportunities were added as well, offered by this part of the world, attracted the majority of the ancestors of the actual Roma.

It is said, even in the present, among the Roma people that it was commerce that had brought them to Europe.

We say majority, since not all of them reached Europe and, eventually the Romanian Principalities, on the same route.

Starting point
for mis-
interpretations

The ignorance by the Roma's ancestors of the possibility of several passages in Europe, and implicitly, in the Romanian Principalities, represented a starting point of some interpretations that do not correspond with the truth, or of some explanations (even in what the history of the Roma in the Principalities is concerned), based on unimportant and insignificant aspects, without foundation, in order to constitute the explicative and scientific support of the phenomenon.

We refer, of course, to the statement according to which the Roma in the Principalities (and they constitute the object of the following lines) might have had as entrance-gate the east and north-east of Moldavia, and their social condition might have been as that of servants (term of Slavic origin) or Tartar slaves (term of Latin origin).

This statement, which we do not reject as a whole, was supported by M. Kogălniceanu (the first great expert of the problems and language of our Roma, to whom the Roma owe and attribute their enfranchisement from slavery as well) and later on adopted by N. Iorga and the sociologist H. H. Sthal (in his studies on historical sociology).

Our convictions, however, are directed towards the more "sociological" explanation, with a social-economic support that is more solid and logical at the same time, offered by the sociologist Nicolae Gheorghe.⁴⁶ Moreover, we attribute total credit to the thesis according to which the ancestors of the Roma penetrated in the space among the Danube, the Black Sea and the Tisza, in their astonishing majority, through the southern part of the territory.

At the same time, we agree with the idea that they found their *necessary* place and role in the social and economic context of the society they entered by meeting some of the requirements of the majority populations with whom they were in contact, populations we shall now call *contact populations*.

This fact granted them both in the south-east of Europe and on the territories of the Romanian Principalities a status of *economical complementation*, meant to augment the picture of the social-economic life satisfying some requirements that had to be fulfilled in the diachrony of the respective society.

The economical complementation represents the status upon which the process of *cultural symbiosis was structured*- characteristic of what we call the *Romany culture* - and this was possible through structures and levels, although different, still compatible,

⁴⁶ Nicolae Gheorghe, sociologist with a thorough documentation and serious studies of anthropology, appears to us as the most authentic "authority" from Romania in what the Roma and their theoretical and practical problems are concerned.
A part of the presented ideas in this chapter were structured after numerous changes of information and ideas with the great expert, to whom I thank on this occasion for his support he gave me regarding my justification over the origins of the Roma people.
He himself being a Roma (quite like myself), and a leader of the ethnic Roma, has the merit to get involved and involve others as well, (for instance the undersigned) not only theoretically but also practically in the solving of some of the current and perspective problems from the multitude of the serious problems with which these people, taken as a whole now as well as in the future, are confronted with, he himself displaying a persevering documentation and an original and profound thinking

through suitable mediums in order to ensure a sort of reciprocity that have stood on the basis of allowance and not passive acceptance, indifferent or unintentional.

The fact that we do not totally support the idea of the penetration of the Roma in the Principalities through the eastern and northern-eastern side of Moldavia (not considering it to correspond with the reality of the concrete-historical course of the phenomenon) we do not want it to suggest that we reject the statement as a whole.

We only sustain that the main decisive migrating tendency took place in the south of the Danube, and the one in the east or north-east was unessential or not definitive. Moreover, if the Roma immigrants from the southern territory were moving at the beginning as free people (their dependence being the result of a social-historic process of a certain length occurring at the "place of destination") the others, coming from east, had lost their independence *before* reaching the regions of the Principalities.

The main
decisive
migrating
tendency

Analysing the psychology of the defeated in general, as well as the lack of political and functional harmony of the Roma people (both of the Roma of today and the ones from earlier times), nothing keeps us from thinking that there was no unity of opinions concerning the path to be followed right after the military and political disaster they had suffered.

It is highly possible that the dissension started earlier among their ranks, and very soon after leaving the native places they had probably separated in order to follow the paths proposed by the "casual leaders", who had blamed one another for the burden of the defeats and for having been forced to leave the native lands. It is not excluded that some of these "convoys" had crossed their paths with those of the Tartars (found in full dynamic and expansion) and became their slaves.

The Tartars during their wanderings (including the Romanian Principalities) also "carried" with them the servants who were serving them. Being forced to retreat in disorder on several occasions, they had to abandon their servants (slaves) along with their weapons, prizes of war, etc., which was perhaps even easier than leaving these behind.

On the other hand, the servants themselves took advantage of the situation (panic, rush, carelessness) and did everything in their power to "lose" their master, with the hope of freedom or of finding gentler, more settled masters etc., in one word improving their fate and living conditions.

Mahmud of Ghazni himself, following the traits of the time and the rights of the winner, carried with him as a war prize, among goods and assets, also a great number of servants. They, on their part, eventually followed different and specific routes and histories depending on the situations and mediums that they had to face and pass.

It doesn't seem accidental to us the fact that great groups of populations, similar to those of the Roma (clothing, language, habits), can be found in other parts of the world as well, especially in the Muslim part.

Not to mention the *insignificant migrations*, which passed off normally, spontaneously and for the self-interest of the migrants, that happened long before the year 1000 A.D..

This way, in Persia it is mentioned as early as the 7th century (AD) a population very similar to that of the Roma, that is three centuries before the "great migration". These, too, had routes, roles and fates that, analysed in this context, would not have other goal than that of complicating things even further.

The seventh
century in Persia

Therefore we shall leave them aside for the time being, as being insignificant for the discussed problem, stating, however that these realities do not have the power to contravene the hypothesis according to which the main migrating wave had passed through Small Asia and had as final goal Byzantium, and the possibilities that this had

offered them, both as great economical and commercial centre, and as an empire where the living conditions were better than in the places they had left behind.

The *denomination of the Tsigani* itself, which is given to the Roma from the Central and Eastern Europe, is of a Balkan (Greek) origin.

The
„untouchable”

Owing to the fact that the ancestors of the today's Roma did not salute after the roman fashion, namely by shaking hands, but rather after the Hindu fashion, by joining the hands under the chin and by bowing the head, they were called *Athinganoi*, *Athinganos*, that is, *untouchable*.

Many of the old men in our country remember, and some of the old writings or documents preserve the designation of *Atsigani* (and not of *Tsigani*), given not long ago to the Roma from different areas of the Romanian Principalities, but especially in Oltenia. This *Atsigani* has a direct connection with *Athinganoi* - initial denomination that the ancestors of the actual Roma have received at their contact with Byzantium and the Balkans.

Both *Athinganoi* and *Tsigani* (*Atigani*) are names of external origin, coming from outside of the group, and not from the inside of it.

The Roma have always called themselves *Roma*, word that means people, men designated in Sanskrit through *rama*. Subsequently, the names coming from the outside have lost their initial sense. They have received pejorative, social-negative meanings that suggested poverty, misery, different habits, not known and understood by the ones around, and thus, unpleasant, unaccepted - why? -, clothing or different customary rights, lacking "quality" (sic!), people being on the edge of society, in social inferiority.

2. THE ROMA TRIBES

2.1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The sociological approach of the aspects regarding the Roma population, considering the *tribe* to which various members (who have become subjects of sociological investigation) of this ethnic group belong, would be a procedure without precedent. This kind of approach has been undertaken neither in foreign scientific literature nor in the local literature.

Among the Romanian inquiries one can find attempts to make certain classifications, but the unstable use of criteria, though it has brought some of the researchers close to categories resembling the one we call tribe, has not lead to a clear definition of the category in such a way as to highlight its characteristics and to proceed to an investigation that starts from the obtained classifications.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Popp-Serboianu C.S. "Les Tsiganes. Histoire-Ethnographie-Linguistique-Grammaire-Dictionnaire", Payot, Paris, 1930 and Ion Chelcea "Țigani din Romania - monografie

We estimate that by the study of the Roma population concerned with its distribution in tribes - correlated, of course, with modern elements that charge the modern individual's life: the area or the geographical region to which they belong, the type of community in which they live (rural, urban, big town, small town) - we surpass the stage of ethnographic, ethnological and anthropological approach and we objectively situate the study on the ground of sociological analyses.

Questions of the study of the Roma population

This method refers *volens-nolens* to causal explanations, introspection which emphasise a whole - entirely not linear - social history and, implicitly urges for (and allows the) ordering, describing, looking for trends, and establishing typologies.

The necessity for approaching the study of the Roma in relation to tribe had already been recognised in the years of the Second World War. Ion Chelcea, trying to explain the discrepancies between the data gathered during the census from 1930 (regarding the number of the Roma population) and reality, concluded: "both from theoretical and practical point of view the study of gypsies by categories (s.n.) is recommended. This is why Mr. Flăcăoaru has already evaluated as early as 1935 the number of gypsies from our place to 400.000, showing that the number of 262.501 gypsies, given by the Central Statistical Institute, refers "probably" to nomadic gypsies. In our country, such an examination has not been done yet".⁴⁸

We intended to follow this urge, methodological in its character, in the research, which took place during the last eight months of 1992, and the results of which were published in 1993⁴⁹, but the lack of theoretical construct appropriate to the needs of the research, the lack of a unitary literature oriented towards this domain and especially the lack of time, determined by the "pressure" of the social demand did not allow us the elaboration of a rigorous methodology that would have the tribe as its conceptual centre.

Although, the above mentioned research has not succeeded in definitely following in what way different aspects of the Roma issue vary according to the tribe to which they belong, "it certified", in a way, that this approach is possible and it may offer interesting conclusions.⁵⁰

However, during the fieldwork, in the moments when most of the subjects, speaking about various behaviours or customs, wanted to emphasise or to render something more accurately, he/she used as an introductory formula the expression: "you know that there are more than one races (nations) among the Roma (gypsies)".

In fact, the Roma constitute a single race, but what our interlocutors wanted to emphasise was the idea of *tribe* – an entity conceived by us as a relatively distinct *social category*, which presupposes a certain historical charge, that accounts through the more tinted information and explanation it may offer for the "profile" of the social actions and behaviours of different members.

In the case of the Roma the tribe is not restricted to kinship relations, but it does not exclude kinship, on the contrary it contains it. Kinship retains its importance and functionality, but the Roma tribe has been formed on other, powerfully rooted social

etnografică" (The Gypsies from Romania – Ethnographical Monography), Bucharest, Published by Editura Institutului Central de Statistică, 1994

⁴⁸ Ion Chelcea op.cit., p.73

⁴⁹ Elena Zamfir, Cătălin Zamfir, "Țiganiii între ignorare și îngrijorare" (*Gypsies between ignorance and anxiety*), Published by Editura Alternative, Bucharest, 1993

⁵⁰ Idem, chapters: 7 (the family), 8 (birth-rate), 11 (life conditions), 13 (dwelling)]

In fact, the Roma constitute a single race.

basis, which constructs complex psychological, behavioural and of action profiles. Therefore, in our perspective, it has special importance.

2.2. THE COMPLEXITY OF THE PROBLEM

Today, the study of the Roma belonging to different tribes is not a simple problem anymore. The difficulty stems both from the researchers' perspective and from the perspective of the population subjected to study.

The contemporary researcher confronts a total lack in the treatment of the problem. He/she has to cultivate on an unploughed land and his/her work appears as a *reconstitution*. A reconstitution, for which we do not have an "Initial Plan" or "scheme" to suggest, even if only in very general lines, the overall perspective of the original.

The image of this original does not manage to draw, in very clear shapes, even the subjects of the study - and at this point we reach the second threshold of the difficulty - from the perspective of the studied population.

For a great majority of the Roma people, the tribe does not constitute a living fact of conscience.

As the above mentioned research has demonstrated, *for a great majority of the Roma people, the tribe does not constitute a living fact of conscience anymore*. Most of them have real difficulty in indicating, more or less accurately, the tribe they are part of or which their parents or forbears belonged to.

In case in which the researcher is not armed with sufficient knowledge about tribe in order to present to the subject some definite elements, characteristic to the tribe he/she "intuits" the respective subject would belong (with the purpose of helping the subject to "think" and to define him/herself), it is less probable that he/she will succeed to significantly correlate the information he/she gets.

That is why during the research a number of 577 subjects, representing 31.42% of the respondents could not (were not able to) point out the tribe they are part of. In other words, almost one third of the subjects, with whom a working dialogue took place, did not have the conscience of belonging to a tribe, declaring themselves, simply, Roma. If we add to them the respondents who deliberately or by ignorance have indicated the subgroup (sub-tribe) instead of the proper tribe, we ascertain that more than a third of the subjects of the investigation do not know or do not want to know (harder to accept in totality) the tribe they belong to. It is a warning signal that indicates the vast proportion of the "forgetting" or ignoring phenomenon of the belonging to the tribe among the Roma ethnic group in our days.

And this in spite of the fact (confirmed by all the Roma "connoisseurs" consulted during the research)⁵¹ that not long ago the Roma tribes were almost rigidly delimited realities, easy to perceive and to characterise.

This process of social division and differentiation reached its "classical" form (on Romanian territory) between the two World Wars.

Social division and differentiation

This statement does nothing but to increase even more our regret for the insufficiency of an original Romanian contribution which would have achieved a systematic description (if not a large-scale sociological analyses) in times when the theoretical and

⁵¹ Elena Zamfir, Cătălin Zamfir (co-ordinator), op. cit. The persons named here as Roma "connoisseurs" appear in the book at page 2 designated as "Roma councillors"

scientific possibilities were sufficient to reveal a "legible at first sight" phenomenon, since the concerns for the study of the Roma had been already started.

Today the Roma tribes may appear as products of memory even for a part of the Roma who want to collaborate with the researcher, but we have to mention the fact that there are also enough Roma who avoid to make public or to acknowledge the tribe they are part of, though they know it.

The motivation of this behaviour is very different and hard to state circumstantially or de facto, but we believe that it will be more accessible (comprehensible) after we have proceeded to a description of the main Roma tribes from Romania.

Returning to the difficulty to designate the tribes that most of the Roma belong to, we consider that the fact has not a bewildering quality, even if we bear in our minds only the period of four and a half decades of "social homogenisation", of struggle for the constitution of the "unique people" etc., etc., doubled by a merciless industrialisation, which destructively shook a series of specific crafts that were decisive for each of the Roma tribes. But not only that!

In what regards the researcher concerned with the Roma tribes, these appear to him as mental constructs obtained with great difficulties and enough inexactitudes, but with an instrumental-cognitive role which cannot be neglected.

2.3. THE CONSTITUTION AND DYNAMIC OF THE TRIBES

Coming from a place within which the division of the members of the society was made, above all, into a-priori castes⁵², it is difficult to suppose that the Roma's forebears would have another axiological model of social differentiation. Considering the fact that the great mass of the society did not belong to the caste of the Brahmins or to that of the warriors (kshatriya), we do not have any reason to believe that this model was an extremely approved one. On the contrary, we have reasons to believe that this division did not appeal to a great many people, who insured the base of social existence and who were thought of as inferior, impure (chandala), as they dealt with hunting, tanning, liquor trade, they were executioners, grave diggers. Even those who dealt with agriculture or had their origins in agriculture (vaisya), not to mention the servile class (sudra), were not looked at with more appreciation. Through these aspects is explained the easiness (leaving aside the almost insurmountable hardships of life in the actual territory), by which the forebears of the Roma "accepted", getting in contact with Europe, to have so-called "protectors" to "assist" them and to allow them to move, sell their products, etc. as dictated by their interest, and settle down when the fate seemed less harsh; in a word to live together or to "*cohabit*". The reason becomes more obvious if we do not forget that these "concessions", beside others, were acquired even along with a serious limitation of freedom, which, for them, represented the essence.

The role of the castes for ancestors

⁵² Jeannine Auboyer, "Viața cotidiană în India antică" (Everyday life in the ancient India), Published by Edit. Științifică și Enciclopedică, Bucharest, 1976, p. 35

Although the division into castes inside the Indian society appears rigid enough, Jeannine Auboyer leaves us to believe that "the access", mostly downwards, made it possible to build a somehow specific, through its asymmetry, form of social mobility.⁵³

The caste of worriers (kshatriya) constituted, of course, the "refugee's" majority, but this does not mean that the worriers constituted, in order to avoid the Muslim conqueror's massacre and slavery, the only refugee category.

The migratory flux, as it appears to us, was a large-scale social movement, embracing vast masses of people from all castes. It is not impossible that the Brahman caste was represented among the migrant masses!

The worriers themselves were organically linked to the other castes, the social contribution of which was indispensable and not replaceable.⁵⁴ Regardless of what the situation was, the fact that the social division or stratification of the country they had left does not find its equivalent, functionality or the acceptance on European land, remains certain.

However, social differences still existed, either in reality or in the communities' and individuals' imagination (as reminiscences of their existence in entirely different regions), but these differentiations already had another structure. A first overturn of values had been occurring right before their eyes.

In the actual conditions, the differentiations derived both from the concrete way, by which various individuals succeeded in making the advantages and shortcomings of the migration and destination places profitable, and from an overturn of values and social conditions imposed by the current norms and circumstances of the world, which they came in contact with.

It had also been created the need to express these differences. This need, combined with the manifold and specific ways of finding the place and the forms of relation and integration in the European society, generated the division through which the *Roma tribes* were constituted.

As it occurs in the conscience and descriptions of the elders, the "connoisseurs" from within the Roma ethnic group, the tribes were constituted around occupations, trades and professions. For example the "Cocalarii", or Bone-preparing men (from the word *Kokalo* which in the Romany language means *bone*). Whoever produced, by processing bones, various objects needed by the economy of that period, belonged, together with his family, to this tribe.

The importance of occupations, trades and professions

These objects had the use, extension and value conferred by the social demand, "formulated" according to areas, groups, social categories or levels.

From the known objects we mention the following: needles, knitting needles, combs, hairpins, small vessels, ornaments, brooches, clips, engravings, meshes for knives, hatchets, swords, sabres, etc., handles, chest of drawers, cases, candlesticks, various lighting objects, etc.

It can be admitted that in Europe this craft represented an adaptation of the famous ivory-workers from the ancient India to the materials, conditions and necessities of the European societies. Jeannine Auboyer tells us that "the ivory sculptors were among the most distinguished people. They were able to process blocks of stones in mass and in bas/low-relief too, incising and scraping them with delicate and steady hands. They preferred to work with the ivory that was obtained from the living elephants instead of

⁵³ Op. cit. p. 45

⁵⁴ We will return to the possibilities of self-management when we will speak, bearing in our minds the norms, responsibilities and mental rigidities "imposed" by their caste, about the Netoti (*Different From The Rest*).

that obtained from the dead ones⁵⁵, but this was already not the case in the new conditions. These craftsmen were also able to model horns, shells and bones⁵⁶.”

It is important to mention that the Roma people, like the old Indians, transmitted the profession and all the secrets connected with it from generation to generation and from father to son. As the above quoted author points out “the crafts were almost always inherited and were practised in the family” – fact that can be observed in the Romanian territory too, at least in the case of those several crafts that survived until today. This was the result of a practice that was identified with the organisational structure of the society in question: “a characteristic feature of the ancient India’s craft and commerce organisation is revealed in the professional classification into corporate groups or “sereni”. This is another aspect of the social structure that reshaped the cast division and seemingly had a higher significance than the latest⁵⁷.”

“from father to son”

The necessity to adapt to the materials, conditions and necessities of the places where they went through, constituted a definitive factor of the way in which they practised their crafts, of the “dose” of improvisation or professionalism they had to invest in their work, respectively of our research about the way in which various professions had changed, adapted or got nuanced. In other words, this is the zone where the key that determined the evolution, change and dynamic of the professions and the constitution of tribes has to be found.

The presupposed “transformation” of the Indian ivory and carved-stone workers in the Roma constructors or bone-processors could be an example in this sense. The case of the Throughmaker Roma’s tribe that was largely debated in the scientific literature (to which the Romanian literature made its own contribution) seems even more edifying. This tribe, sympathised by all the researchers that dealt with them, provoked so many discussions and suppositions that it was considered “an ethnographic enigma⁵⁸”, or it was supposed that it does not belong to the Roma, but it might be something else, an autonomous entity. Moreover, some researchers and theoreticians claim that the Throughmaker Roma are a Romanian tribe that preserved the very old customs and language⁵⁹.

An ethnographic enigma

In our opinion, from the perspective of social diachrony, the Throughmaker Roma are the same thing (tribe) with the Lingurari, or the Boyash, or the Caravlahs, or the Blidari, so on and they are the descendants of the early goldsmith's and forest product collectors from the ancient India. We have to add to this the following notes.

At the beginning of their appearance in this territory the Throughmakers' ancestors, as in India, were searching for gold in the rivers or waters with gold containing sand, or sold the products obtained from the rich and large local forests. They brought this ancient craft from the far-away India, where “the gold was extracted from the “ganga” or “collected from the sand of the rivers”. “All day long the Goldsmiths were hammering for them (the buyers) gold bars with the help of little sonant hammers”²³. However, this resource became less and less profitable both because of the decrease of the quantity of gold that could be produced, and because the exploitation became more difficult. Due to the lack of raw material they (the Throughmakers) had to go more and more up, upstream, where the waters ran faster, and the landscape was less friendly, and all these constituted a serious difficulty in practising their trade. In this way their isolation from their own groups increased in favour of the intensified contacts with the local population of cutters and shepherds. They began to satisfy these groups' demands of vessels and small articles from softwood that were not produced by the local craftsmen.

⁵⁵ Jeannine Auboyer, Idem., p. 118

⁵⁶ Idem., p. 126

⁵⁷ Idem., p. 125-126

⁵⁸ Ion Chelcea “Rudarii o enigmă etnografică” (The Throughmakers, an ethnographical enigma), în Revista “Neam și țară” (in the “Nation and Country”), no. 2/1939, p. 11

⁵⁹ Chelcea, Ion “Țigani din România...” (The Gypsies from Romania), p. 57-59

²³ Jeannine Auboyer, Idem. p. 118

The loss of language and customs

The reducing, until disappearance, of the contacts with their co-ethnic, the “Silversmiths” (Argintarii), for whom they used to sale traditionally the products of their work, the gold, and also with other groups and Roma tribes, resulted in the loss of their language, some specific customs and customary rights. These were substituted by those customs that were overtaken from the population with whom they co-existed, together with the language in which they used to get the orders and used to sale their products, namely the language of the local population.

This early loss of language, connected with the massive assimilation of norms, customs and values, specific for the local majority population, constituted the factors that determined many researchers to doubt the Throughmaker Roma's belonging to the Roma ethnic group, or at least to abstain from declarations in relation to their ethnic belonging.

Why did the Throughmaker Roma adopted only the Romanian language?

However, there is a question here. Why did the Throughmaker Roma adopted only the Romanian language, and not also the language of the other majority populations (compared to them), as it happened in the case of other tribes of the Roma who were coexisting with Hungarians, Turks or even Germans? The answer is simple and it is based on historical realities. These ethnic groups, with the exception of the Romanians, were not living in the valleys with forests from the hills and mountainous areas, where the Romanian population of shepherds and stone-cutters (masons) used to live, but they settled down in large areas with open spaces, areas that were suitable for their crafts and trades. For this reason the Throughmaker Roma were not “suspected” to be Germans, Hungarians, Turks, so on, but only to be Roma, Dacian, Romanians, or in the best case a specific autonomous tribe.

Beside the psycho-physical characteristics and features that bespeak the Throughmakers as being Roma and not something else, there is also the mode in which they were treated in relation to the monarch (they being servants of the monarch). They were submitted, like other monarchic slaves as well, to pay annual taxes for performing their craft, exactly in the same way as other Roma from this category. Because the gold of the rivers represented the property of the monarch, whose necessities were increasing, the required quota of gold that had to be delivered to him was established at a quite high level. While at the beginning “the Roma were running to it as to a product offered by nature”, later the “annual contribution in gold of each Throughmaker went up to 4 Florins (gold-powder/dust)”²⁴.

Are Throughmakers Roma?

The increasing number of gold “diggers” both in the Throughmaker Roma's groups and in the local population, who also practised this craft for a very long time, increased the competition. The desire to get rid of the contribution in gold that increased more and more often and more and more in proportion, pushed the Throughmaker Roma to find solutions that would make them being forgotten and disappeared from the eyes of the monarch's servants. They found a solution for both problems by migrating along the rivers towards the sources from the mountainous areas. That is how it happened that those who went in the west and north-west direction, as experts, ended up working in the precious-metal mines, like the local people themselves, becoming “Băieși”, which is another name for the Roma from Transylvania and Banat. (bae = mine, whole.)

This isolation and division of the groups had as a result the very rapid loss of their language and, in many cases, even the loss of their identities. Having no permanent contact with other members of the Roma community, they did not have the opportunity to use their own language but were forced to use the language of the local population instead. This process took place in the same way, or with certain particularities, in the case of the majority of the Ironsmiths or in the case of other isolated craftsmen, as otherwise in the case of the majority of the settled, with the difference that in the latter case this process was a lot slower and it happened with a remarkable delay.

The results of the isolation and division of the groups.

²⁴ Chelcea, Ion. Idem. p. 149

On the other hand, the Throughmaker Roma, being pressed all the time by the necessities of everyday life, did not manage to survive only by searching for gold. In winter and in some other periods of the year it was not possible to continue this activity. "The exploitation of gold through washing was made in a relatively discontinuous rhythm, not only because the amount of the collected gold depended on the rainy weather, when the waters became huge and carried with them the gold-containing sand as well, but also because of the cold weather, when the washing of gold had to be suspended almost entirely."²⁵

In order to satisfy their daily needs they had to deal secondarily, and some members of the family even in exclusivity, with other crafts too, the crafts that were most accessible for them, those that were practised by the Indian ancestors, too. These were the crafts, for which they had enough raw material provided by the places where they settled down, namely, the soft wood, the potter, the water and the collecting of the forest fruits, that were also practised, as a traditional trade by other co-ethnic of the Throughmakers as well.

Far from being a "characteristic feature of the underdeveloped populations"⁶⁰ the collection of forest sub-products (fruits, twigs, branches, medical herbs) constituted highly recognised and valued crafts in ancient India. The view according to which only "the primitive people from non-European countries" end up to do such things cannot be but "balcano-ridiculous"⁶¹, but it also proves the lack of information referring to the crafts from the West and Central European region. Marx's first articles, that made him known in the journalist-circles of that time, were referring exactly to the problem of the branches and woods collected by the peasants in the German forests, but this is another issue.

Jeannine Auboyer tells us that "there were other professions, *catalogued* like the previous ones, but which, in our occidental eyes, were difficult to imagine on the list of merchants or craftsmen. It can be mentioned, for example, those who were collecting twigs from the forest. They collected these twigs in bundles and brought them on their back in baskets in order to sell them for housewives. Or those who were collecting leaves for several purposes, those who were cutting the grass with a sickle and those who were collecting honey."²⁸

Parallel with the searching for gold they practised these crafts as well, and as the collection of gold became inefficient, these crafts won more and more space, becoming, later, predominant.

While the collection of the forest sub-products' was regarded in Europe as we pointed out before, the preparation of the softwood in order to be transformed into articles that were necessary for the local economy did not produce indignation. Even more so, since this work was materialised into something that was necessary on a larger scale, it was greeted with sympathy. Therefore, the Throughmaker Roma were looked at with sympathy both by the researchers and by the populations with whom they co-existed.

They transformed the lime-, poplar-, willow-, alder- or willow-wood into spoons, all kinds of girdles, washing tubs, knead-through, ladles, dowry-coffers, coffer, granaries, bobbins, forks (for spinning and hay-forks), rakes, hangers, frames for sieve, peasant power-lams, chopping boards, cases and other articles described by Ion Chelcea with so much sympathy.⁶²

²⁵ Idem, p. 145

²⁶ Idem, p. 117

⁶¹ Idem, p. 116

²⁸ Jeannine Auboyer, Idem., p. 119

⁶² Chelcea, Ion. "Țigani din România" (*The Gypsies from Romania*), p. 119-136

Throughmaker Roma were looked at with sympathy both by the researchers and by the populations with whom they co-existed.

The way the Throughmaker Roma were named in different regions depended on the articles they produced predominantly. For example in Moldavia, where the production of spoon was great they were named "Blidari" or spoonmakers.²⁹

When people started to leave their huts, and began to build houses from bricks, the pottery of the valley started to be transformed in sun-dried bricks, and the Throughmaker Roma from this region (Vrancea, Buzău, Brăila) were named Brick-makers.

It has to be remarked that the Roma, depending on the craft they practised, also found their role (utility) in the feudal economies of the places where they went through. Also depending on this they won their position in relation to their masters and co-ethnics as well.

The Scribe, the educated, the teachers, as well as the cooks, artists, clowns, musicians, became in their vast majority "house gypsies" and they received a totally different treatment than those from the stables, or those who were working on the fields, or those who were working in the processing of the metals or non-metals. At the same time, they had other obligations too, that, in the majority of the cases, meant the limitation or even the loss of their freedom.

We have to take into account that the profession represents the most important factor of socialisation. It shows the concrete modalities in which people assure their existence. Due to this fact it becomes a determining component of the way of thinking, acting, relating and behaving of the majority connected with it. The particularities appear in function of the individual features of temperament and personality, and depends on the place and conditions where and in which the professions are practised.

Profession represents the most important factor of socialisation.

From the perspective of this specific differentiation, we must take into consideration the fact that the new differentiation was produced between the Roma people when for some of them the process of "settling" near to a residence or to an estate got started, while the other Roma people continued to peregrinate from place to place in order to obtain the necessary things for life. Among the characteristics offered by the safety of the residence and the ones offered by the continuously changing "horizon" - a source of information and new experiences - differentiation appeared that were imprinted in the whole psychology of these groups.

The differentiation was materialised in the ways of obtaining the needs for life, in habitation patterns, in their positions in relation to the landowner, in the effort invested in finding and "showing" their benefit and it had continued quite to the conception about world and life, about the relationship with Divinity, about the system of standards and values, respectively the set of the adopted symbols.

If at the beginning the differentiation among groups had an emphasised, easily remarkable "*specific romanes*", in the course of times this have been transformed, through "saturation" with customs, traditions, standards and other elements of culture and life-style of the contact populations. The process was possible and was emphasised as being asymmetrical because the contact populations were always in majority, independently of their ethnicity (Romanians, Hungarians, Germans, Turks, Tartars etc.)

To understand what kind of internal mechanisms took place, and in what social circumstances were they going on in order to rebuild and to retransform themselves through their historical development (that represented also the social history of the Roma tribes), a more nuanced analyses and more wide-ranging documentation is necessary.

The nature of internal mechanisms

³⁰ Mihai Meșteșaru "Țigăniile – integrarea socială a romilor" (*The Gypsies – the social integration of the Roma*), Published by Editura "Bârsa", Brașov - 1991, p.24

The investigation, description and explanation of these mechanisms need, without doubt, special research and a more exact theoretical detailing and deepening, respectively a more adequate methodological stock.

We believe that the category of “tribe” itself will be able to open new perspectives for studying the social history of the Roma people and for gathering deeper knowledge about the so-called “problem of the Roma population.”⁶³

According to the above mentioned facts, we can note for the time being that the belonging to the professional group in the identification of a member of an ethnic group (thus as Roma people) constituted the main element for a long time (and in many cases it still does) that acted as a social-historical priority in the self-identification and in the reciprocal identification of the Roma ethnicity members.

However, the most important element of their identification as citizens was their belonging to a coexistent majority group, from which they acquired behavioural, cultural, social standards.

Persons identified from outside (by the other citizens) to be Roma people identified themselves with the majority ethnic group

Continuing the previous idea, it seems to be extremely important the belonging to the majority linguistic group. In this way it is possible, that both the previous researchers and those who conducted the research from the summer of 1992, have had the opportunity to ascertain that in different regions of the country the persons identified from outside (by the other citizens) to be Roma peoples, declared themselves Romanians, Hungarians, Turkish, Tartars etc., therefore they identified themselves with the majority ethnic group in which they lived. 19,13% among the subjects of the research from 1992 are included in this category.

The motivation of such an option wasn't established yet in adequate argumentative manner. What is the proportion of the prestige-reactions, how much represented the fear for aftermath, where started the identification with standards and values belonging to the majority group in a way that the others were felt as “strangers”? These are problems awaiting for an answer. And this answer cannot be a linear one.

Temporarily, the arguments of the language and (in many cases) the arguments of religion remain available.

The classification according to this perspective was called “classification by nationality”, and together with the division by the historical-legal criteria (monarch, monastery and landowner) or by criteria of stability (settled and nomadic)⁶⁴ constituted the classification forms of the Roma people that offered (and can offer now as well) a certain operability.

And these criteria managed “to grip” something that reflected in the life-style of the aimed individuals, but the classification according to tribes formed a more deeper penetration in the “intimacy” of the former mechanisms that outlined a psycho-social profile of different groups.

If from the years of the 1848 up to the end of the 1950s, the mentioned division was easier to handle (since the process achieved its maturity by becoming an *evidence*), now it represents, in most of the cases, a reflection of the past, an “indicator” appealed to only in the last resort. The reason for this is the gradual disappearance of traditional trades and occupations specific for the Roma people who were struck by the industrial expansion that substituted them with modern, unspecified professions and with occupations suitable for new demands and social contexts.

A “reflection of the past”

⁶³ Elena Zamfir, Cătălin Zamfir (coord.), op. cit., p.156

⁶⁴ Ion Chelcea, Op. cit., p. 22-63.

The marriages between partners belonging to different tribes became more and more possible also for the reason of the social transformations determined by the industrialisation, commuting, and the modernisation of social life.

If in the above mentioned period the marriages between different tribes' partners generated small social "crises", and the communities were concerned about them for a long time, then in the period after the '50s and especially in the second half of the sixth decade of our century, when all of the Roma communities were forced to settle by administrative measures, a similar action resulted, in the worst case, in the indignation of traditionalists.

We must mention that in the framework of traditional tribes (Ironsmiths, Boot-makers, Musicians, Coppersmiths, Tinmen, Bear-leaders, Bone-preparing men etc.), under the pressure of industrialisation, modernisation and the change of structure of demands, there appear a great number of "specifications", be it in the inside of professions at a global level, or depending by regions or by other criteria, creating *sub-tribes* with new names and new determinations.

This way the Ironsmiths of smaller calibre "specialised" themselves only in the making of horseshoes (with a reduced material consume and facilitated sales), constituting the *sub-tribe of Farriers*.

One part of the bone-preparing men who made combs got the name of *Combers*, and the people who couldn't make a living from bone-preparing specialised themselves in the trading of fluffs and feathers, getting the name of *flutters*.

The Roma settled in Transylvania who were dealing with the commercialisation of carpets and silk were named *gypsies of silk*. To this designation contributed their relatively good manners, forced by the long trips abroad and their connections with the clients who came from a more civilised world (not everyone could afford to buy carpets and silk), as well as their clothing of "widely-travelled people" that was clearly different from that of their co-ethnics, who struggled on the estates or depended on the farming works and necessities of the dwellers of different communities.

The names derived from the names of localities where such communities lived and live do not mark the occupation of the group and do not represent a tribe in the sense given to this category in this paper. These indicate first of all the place or the region where the respective person, and sometimes also another characteristic came from that gives them something specific in comparison with others, but this characteristic has nothing in common with their occupation. This can refer to their material position, to their group-solidarity, to some customs, but not to the occupation. From this respect we note that there are a number of Roma people who are called Tismanars - a name derived from the Tismana Monastery around which lived a numerous Roma population who had lost their language a long time ago. The name *Tismanars* (Oltenia region) was got by all the people who no longer speak the Romany language, namely all the people being similar from the perspective of spoken language to the people that belong to the Tismana Monastery and who had lost their language.

Tismana
Gypsies

A number of the Roma people from other regions of the country also lost their language quite a long time ago (a great part of the settled) but this name was given (from inside the Roma group) only in Oltenia. In fact, beside the mentioned region, almost neither of the Roma people were aware of the existence of the Tismana Monastery or of the loss of the Romany language.

In accordance with the regions the Roma are named (in most of the cases by inside of their ethnical group) simply people from Banat, Oltenia, Dobrogea etc. An exception are the *Boldeni Roma* people, whose name comes from the Bold locality near Bucharest, but now by "Boldeni" they mean the florist Roma (who deal with the trading of flowers - thus a profession) from the area and from the territory of Bucharest. When they say

Boldeni
Gypsies

Boldeni Gypsy no-one thinks of the Bold locality but of the *florists* who live in Bucharest mainly in the districts of "Tei" and "Colentina" or in the areas nearby.

In the dynamic of the development of the Roma tribes it is the gypsy musicians that represent an interesting situation. Up to the middle of the '60s in this respectable tribe only the settled Roma people were included. Otherwise, the clients who employed them at different celebrations wouldn't have been able to contact them. As in the case of other trades practised by the Roma people, also in the case of musicians the profession was transmitted from father to son, and the cases where a member of another tribe became musician were very rare.

The musician trade ceased to be important.

By the time the prestige of this profession increased compared to other professions, and the process of settling extended, they joined the musicians belonging to almost all tribes. Moreover, for a part of musicians from the countryside who were caught in the process of agricultural co-operativisation, the musician trade ceased to be not so important any longer, and some of them even abandoned it definitively according priority to agricultural activities, which, though harsher, offered them much more safety and stability.

The new wave coming from other tribes had the aim to revitalise the Roma workers through the infusion of specific elements better retained among the ex-nomad or semi-nomad tribes, which seemed a return to the authentic sources of their music. Their music was deprived by some of the traditional musicians of the specific Roma elements in favour of the elements demanded by social command.

In this way can be explained the fact that now at the celebrations among the Roma people who were ex-nomads or semi-nomads, the appreciated and preferred musicians are the ones who belong to their group and not the traditional musicians who practised the profession before and right after the Second World War.

While the old musicians had their clients mostly from the community of the majority contact populations, the ones coming recently to the scene of this profession have their clients almost exclusively from the Roma communities.

This aspect leads us to the idea that the legal situation and the administrative position of the people can definitively mark the professional distribution of individuals, too. Or in case of the Roma population, the dynamics of the conditions and the influence of the booms have worsened the conditions of living more than in case of other populations during their whole existence.

2.4. THE TRIBES INVOLVED IN THE RESEARCH

During the first treatment of the informative material gained from the fact-finding fieldwork, we "discover" neither more nor less than 28 Roma tribes. We got this number after examining the "declarations" made by the subjects in the moment of their questioning referring to the tribe they or their ancestors belonged to.

The statistical classification of these declarations appears in the following table, which we will call "the table of the Roma tribes deducted from the declarations of the subjects to the research".

Apart from the classification of the research data the table contains mistakes of "decoding " of the information received from the subjects to the research, too.

Crt. no.	Declared tribe	Abs. Figs.	Proportion	Crt. no.	Declared tribe	Abs. figs.	Proportion
0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
1	Roma	577	32.0	16	Turks, Tartars	18	1.0
2	Bone-preparing men	8	0.4	17	Boot-makers	17	1.0
3	Settled	251	13.9	18	Nomadic Camper gypsies	11	0.6
4	Musicians	20	1.1	19	Gold-washers	5	0.3
5	Teişani, Florists, Boldeni	22	1.2	20	Silk-weavers	59	3.3
6	Brush-makers	3	0.2	21	Combers	13	0.7
7	Riddlers	3	0.1	22	Featherers	5	0.3
8	Platers	68	3.8	23	Tinsmiths	4	0.2
9	Silversmiths	15	0.8	24	Crab-sellers	3	0.2
10	Throughmakers Spoon-makers	81	0.8	24	Borers	6	0.3
11	Bear-leaders	49	2.7	26	Copers	213	11.8
12	Wandering	9	0.5	27	Romanised	120	6.6
13	Brick-makers	28	1.5	28	Hungarianised	63	3.5
14	Gabors	25	1.4	29	No answer	63	3.5
15	Coppersmiths, Ironsmiths, Farriers	108	6.0	30	Total	1,804	100,0

In one part there are grouped in the same class (position 15) the people with a very different way of life, belonging to distinctive tribes; in the other group there are separated the people from the same tribe (positions 8 and 23).

In the position 15, the Ironsmiths and Farriers are quite the same thing. Both categories work with hot iron (including the iron used to make horseshoes) with the remark that the Ironsmiths make any metal objects (and in some cases there were Ironsmiths who made the woodwork of the objects with wooden parts e.g. carriages), while the Farriers specialised in only, or mainly in making horseshoes, which they applied onto the animals' hoofs (horses, oxen, donkeys).

There is only a difference of quality, and it is dictated either by the wish to earn money easier, or by the conditions of practising their professions, or by the abilities and skills each of them managed to practice his profession with.

Both "professions" enter into the Ironsmiths' tribe, which is also included into the big family of the Settled. They cannot be included by any means into the same group of classification (or tribe) with the Coppersmiths who went on leading a nomadic way of life, worked with totally different materials (non-ferrous metals) and most importantly, even these days they have absolutely different way of life.

In present it turned to better for both the two tribes, their professions have been required again, especially in the world of the villages.

Things change when we have a look at the positions 8 and 23. Both the Platers and the Tinsmiths worked with the same material (the same as in the present those who went on practising their profession), namely the Tinsmith who was given the job to plate the vessels in the household up as well as forecasting the future, healing epilepsy and

pains. These "quackeries" were practised mainly by the Tinsmith women who were in direct contact with their customers either when they took the "orders" or handed in the "finished" products.

We must mention that both categories belong to the Tinsmiths (typical semi-nomadic tribe) with the remark that in some parts of the country they were called Tinsmiths instead of Platers.

Going back to the data and considering the descriptions and explanations of the "experts", we obtain a condensation of the data around only 12 tribes in the literal sense of the word, and there are added the Settled to them, a category with a more complex significance.

The following four categories (the Gabors, Turks-Tartars, Crab-sellers, and Hungarianised) have other significance which will be discussed later.

In the following we present the "normalisation" of the previous table, and it will be called "The table of the Roma tribes obtained after the *reinterpretation* of the fields-work data".

Crt. no.	Tribe	a. f.	r. f.	Crt. no.	Tribe	a.f.	r. f.
0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
1	Ironsmiths	107	5.9	11	Coppersmiths	29	1.6
2	Boot-makers	17	1.0	12	Throughmakers	109	6.1
3	Musicians	20	1.1	13	Silk-weavers	59	3.3
4	Florists	22	1.2	14	Settled	1,047	58.0
5	Copers	2	0.1	15	Gabors	25	1.4
6	Riddlers	1	0.1	16	Crab-sellers	18	1.0
7	Silversmiths	15	0.8	17	Turks-Tartars	18	1.0
9	Platers	72	4.0	18	Hungarianised	120	6.6
10	Bone-preparing men	26	1.4	19	No answer	63	3.5
11	Bear-leaders	49	2.7	20	Total	1,804	100,0

The table was constructed on the basis of the previous one with the following modifications:

1. The single Coppersmith was moved from the position 15 and was added to the Gold-washers, Wandering and Nomadic Camper gypsies, thus we obtained the Ironsmiths' tribe, who were said that "produced with the same perfection arms and light chain armours, scissors, and surgical instruments. For the farmers they made ploughshares, chains, spades, sickles, poles to handle the oxen; the carpenters also came to buy axes, hammers, saws, gimlets, and wooden nails. The hunters were also their frequent customers, asking for strong knives, poles, swords to cut... The barbers came for razors, and the tailors for needles."⁶⁵ "He also knew how to transform iron into steel."⁶⁶ For all these above mentioned reasons, the Ironsmiths had their own place in the feudal economy of the Romanian village, and they were also the wealthiest from among the Roma, too.

The Ironsmiths had their own place in the feudal economy of the Romanian village

It was again the profession (and the instrument they worked with) that imposed (and permitted) the Ironsmiths to work in a permanent place. They were one of the firsts settled, but they were also among the firsts who lost their language. In this chapter they were "surpassed" by the Throughmakers, only. However, some descriptions put the Ironsmiths into the group of the Wanderings! What is the reason for this? We can get

⁶⁵ Jeannine Auboyer, op. cit., p. 113

⁶⁶ Idem, p. 112

the explanation if we closely examine another tribe, namely the Bear-leaders. They were the descendants of the old circus artists who used to travel from one place to another and offer open-air (street) performances. In European and especially Romanian grounds, this type of performance did not gather much audience, and the performers were not offered the sure minimal means of existence, either. This is the reason why some of them started rearing and taming bears (this is the origin of their name, too); others joined the workshops of the Ironsmiths for a period of time, while the others stayed with the same professions. None of them renounced the pleasure of free wanderings they had practised in their native country - India.

Those who passed through the workshops of the blacksmiths as well, not only did help them for a piece of sure bread in some certain periods of time, but they also learned the craft to such an extent that a part of the "trifles" stolen from the blacksmith master's time became "objects of production" for the bear-leaders. The blacksmith being busy with the production of the tools and equipment so necessary for the agriculture, finally left the production of keys, locks, hoops, dust-pans, knitting needles, needles, and breech-blocks to them. Besides the fact that these things were not too often demanded, they did not need too much material, they were light and could be produced without being previously ordered, and later they could be carried in the carriage or in the satchel to be offered to those who needed them in different places. Thus, they permitted Bear-leaders to travel, and if the performance offered by the bear and tamer did not ensure enough for the living, the handicraft products constituted some supplementary source. They managed to learn the craft so well that finally the metalwork or the production of arms and pistols were ensured almost exclusively by the members of the Bear-leaders.

Bear-leaders

This co-operation between the Blacksmiths and Bear-leaders within the domain of the craft, as well as the periods of cohabitation in the same workshop in some periods of time, made some researchers include the Blacksmiths too in the group of the nomads where the Bear-leaders came from. For many times the Bear-leaders, in order not to lose their clients (for being rather ill-famed) introduced themselves as Locksmiths or even Blacksmiths.

However, the Blacksmiths, having a large scale of heavy and big instruments (hammers, sledgehammers, flint-stones, bellows, and all sorts of pincers) could not travel from one place to another. On the other hand, their craft being demanded, they did not have to come out in the reception of their customers, but they had to have a permanent place where they could be found whenever their services were required.

Blacksmiths, having a large scale of heavy and big instruments could not travel from one place to another.

Being directly linked to the agricultural production of the villages, many of the Blacksmiths had their own land, in most cases they were bought and added to the one obtained through the redistribution of land.

When their craft was shadowed by the industrial production, the majority of them became farmers, but in the same time they made themselves useful in the heavy industry (foundries, forges, iron metallurgy in general) and in the constructions (blacksmiths and concrete workers).

The descendants of the Blacksmith families started out towards industrial schools (generally iron processing), but towards theoretical and university studies, too. Nowadays very few of them admit to be Roma.

Those who remained Blacksmiths at the co-operatives, after the changes in 1989 were the first to get the orders of the villagers for carts and tools.

2. The tribe of the Platers emerged by the union of the so-called different tribes: of the Platers and the Tinsmiths. Both of them form the tribe of the Platers, but the two terms are the different reflexes of the two entities in different areas.

Platers: the poorest Roma

To this naming contributed the self-naming of one of the parties from among the Platers as Tinsmiths (mainly originated from the name of the material used) due to the

fact that the Platers (with a few exceptions in the area of Giurgiu-Bucharest) were the poorest Roma. They spent their lives in covered wagons dragged by little buffalo, and apart from the milk obtained from them they did not have any other source of food. They ensured their living with the food received (by the women) from the farms of the communities they settled down nearby periodically, as a means of payment for the things plated or the help offered to the housewives in the farm, or sometimes for their work in the fields. Begging for food for themselves or the buffaloes had an important impact on the way of life of this tribe, that never possessed a piece of own land through none of its members. In order to ensure their living they commuted between a reduced number of localities near each other.

Most of them did not make an option for any religions, and they practised the christening of the sun.

It seems that the Platers are the descendants of the Roma from Turkey who were either prisoners or were left here as spoils of war, either fugitives or settled here.

After 1965 a significant number of the members of this tribe (and in some areas the total number) became good farmers, working in the co-operatives with the production of vegetables, root crops, but especially in the livestock farming. Nowadays the authentic intellectuals originating from this tribe can be found in the wealthier areas (Bucharest, the Agricultural Sector of Ilfov, Giurgiu).

Becoming
farmers, working
in the co-
operatives

3. The tribe of the Bone-preparing men about which there were said a few things in the sub-chapter "The constitution and dynamics of the tribes" was established adding to the ones who called themselves Bone-preparing men those who declared themselves Combers.

Here we must mention that some of the Bear-leaders who had adopted from the crafts of almost all the tribes, also sold and made combs, but the real Combers were the Bone-preparing men, or the real Bone-workers (Kokalo).

When the products made of bones (and partly enumerated above) were replaced by the big, more varied, and cheaper industrial serial, a part of the Bone-preparing men who had not gone to the unqualified jobs of the plastic industry (especially) or other fields, they tended towards the sanitation of the cities or the acquisition of feather for which they offered money or kitchenware (pots, saucepans, mugs, cutlery etc.) purchased from different co-operatives or institutions.

4. In the tribe of the Coppersmiths there are included all who declared themselves as such, and there are added those who called themselves Gold-washers ("Zlatari", from the term zolot = string, gold coins tied in the hair), Wanderers, Nomadic Campers or Brush-makers.

The tribe of the
Coppersmiths

All of them have had a long nomadic life, they took shelter in tents (and its nostalgia is still present when it is "laid down" when they want to work, even in their own courtyard or in the field), and their main material for work was a plate of copper which was used to manufacture cauldrons, frying pans, pots, saucepans, stills, ornaments, articles of cult, trays, glasses etc. More recently these materials have been replaced by the rustproof plate that has been used for the same purpose.

They travelled in colourful carriages with a high wicker framework, dragged by horses or donkeys. From the hair obtained after cutting the tails and manes of the horses and donkeys, which dragged their carriages with the tents and tools from place to place, they made brushes and lime brushes, which they sold in the localities they passed through or stopped in.

The selling and mostly the manufacturing of lime brushes were the women's jobs about who Ion Chelcea said: "the lime brush and fortune telling are their professions", and he

goes on saying: "the lime brushes are made of "mixed" hair of pig and horse". Magic among the camper women has a significant usage... Magic is mixed with fortune telling"⁶⁷.

The christening of the sun was present within this tribe, too, and the name "bulibasha" (leader) has been preserved until the present days.

The practice of customary right of the gypsy judgement is called Kris by the Coppersmiths, where the judges are the oldest and most thoughtful members.

5. The Throughmakers who had already been discussed in details in the sub-chapter "The constitution and dynamics of the tribes" were "re-processed" by being included those who declared themselves as such, together with those who named themselves Brick-makers. The christening of the sun was a reality with them as well.

6. The tribe of the Settled includes all those subjects who declared themselves Settled, Borers, "Romanised" or just simply Roma without being able (or willing) to indicate their affiliation to a certain tribe.

Settled

There is the possibility that a part of the subjects who declared themselves as such not to be part of the big family of the actual family of the Settled. They either did not know which family they were belonging to, or did not wish to acknowledge their affiliation to a certain tribe. Thus, they may belong to any Roma tribe. But as there were no signs regarding the fact that the subjects did not wish to reveal their tribe, we have remained at the assumption that not declaring the tribe is due to ignorance.

As the settled (of the village, linked to the centre of a certain locality) were the first to renounce the traditional way of life, who left the compact Roma communities and lost most of the language and customs specific to the ethnic group, we were inclined to believe that the origins of the ignorance of those questioned consist of the above mentioned elements which determined us to include them in the Settled tribe.

The first to renounce the traditional way of life.

The Roma who call themselves (or who are called) Romanised are those who suffered an acute process of "Romanianisation", borrowing all or the majority of the customs, norms, and behaviour of the Romanian population they had been living together with.

These people who have totally lost their language and costumes, do not speak "with accent" any more; they have adopted the religion of the Romanian communities who they had been living together with in the same village or town. They have only the conscience of tribe that - as it has been ascertained - reveals itself. As we already stated, there are Roma who from very early times have been linked to a certain place, to the "centre of the village" where they worked and lived either on their own responsibility (in craftsmen's workshops, or on their own land), or in others' workshops or land.

The category of the Settled is in a way identified with the category of the sedentary, but in the same time, in a more restricted and more authentic way it involves the Roma whose lives have been connected to the village, the agriculture, and the craftsmen's workshop which were auxiliary to the agriculture and village life. In one word, they served agriculture and the farmers before the oppression, when it became a mass phenomenon, and after liberation, too.

Later on any Roma could become Settled who got hold of a permanent address, a job, and a flat to serve him as a residence for the majority of the periods of time of a calendar year.

A Settled could become one who acquired the right of property over a piece of land or managed to establish a workshop where he could work and earn constantly the means

⁶⁷ Ion Chelcea: *Țiganiii din România (The Gypsies from Romania)*, p. 137/140

of existence without being forced to travel continuously from one place to another in order to obtain the things necessary for his living, as the similar ethnic group, the Nomadic Campers did.

They quitted the nomadic life as well as the craftsmen, and settled down. Apart from the traditional craftsmen from the centre of the town or village (the Boot-makers or Shoemakers, Musicians, Bricklayers, Florists, Silk-weavers etc.) together with the families of the settled, those with no profession and property represented the highest percent in this category. After being in oppression, they quitted the nomadic life as well as the craftsmen, and settled down in certain centres where they offered their arms to work at houses and in the fields, or they lived on what the nature could offer them or remained after the harvest. They have always been a cheap work force, any time at hand.

The Settled represent the category whose members were assimilated by the populations in majority in the highest number from among the Roma.

Its members can be found in each level of the country's social-economical and political life. This category has offered the society its members ranging from the humble unqualified and the criminal up to the head of state.

The Gabors 7. The Gabors do not represent a tribe characterised by a certain profession, but it originates its name from their last name. All of them have the name of Gabor for their last name. There are Roma from Transylvania who took over the name of Gabor from the families whose land they were working in.

In present their vast majority deals with commerce, but there are also Tinsmiths on the constructions, Coppersmiths, and who deal with modern professions, too.

The Crab-sellers 8. The Crab-sellers owe their name to a locality and we do not dispose of enough data to make a minimal description, either.

It is possible that they are a tribe in course of formation, but their specific aspects have not been formed, or we did not manage to find them.

9. The Turks, Tartars, and the Hungarianised are the Roma from Dobrogea who speak Turkish, Tartar, and Hungarian languages as fluently as their mother tongue, and use Romanian language only with those who do not understand any other language.

They have lived along with the Turkish, Tartar, and the Hungarian population, attaining their customs, norms, behaviour, even their religion.

In general they do not speak Roma language.

The other categories can be included into the category of the tribe and they were grouped according to the researches.

10. The Boot-makers or Shoe-makers belong to the Settled family, and they worked in either small (even humble) own workshops, which was often one room of their own house, or in bigger workshops which generally did not belong to them.

The Boot-makers or Shoe-makers

Nowadays their number has fallen, their descendants are more interested in agriculture or modern professions.

11. In the late 50s the Musicians belonged to the Settled family. The best professionals who had the chance to live in the city could lead a better life; an elite social and artistic group grew up from among them.

Musicians

After settling down, the Musician tribe was "enlarged" with the members of other tribes. A large part of the rural Musicians had a double status: they were farmers for the weekdays and musicians for the holidays.

A great quality of this tribe (in the traditional sense of the word) is the preservation of the Romanian melodies and folk songs. "The gypsies, willy-nilly have contributed to the preservation and distribution of our songs, as well as to their amplification. The ballads have disappeared, we can hardly hear them from the old. However, the Musicians still preserve them."⁶⁸

Moreover, the quality of the preservers does not stand for the Musicians only, but it also characterises the whole ethnic group. Alike their ancestors from India, the Roma seem to be traditionalists par excellence. For this reason we are inclined to believe that even their "access" to the modernism of the life today, apart from a series of other factors with objective character, they show the signs of this rigidity which is due to their loyalty towards tradition.

The author quoted above goes on saying: "the gypsies show themselves as a social class preserving some certain goods of the folk culture... Our old national costumes have disappeared in many regions, they are hardly ever worn by the gypsy women... And let's go further on. Take the folk customs. Nowadays many of them are in the process of being forgotten and as a result of this, they are ridiculous, and only the gypsies dare to turn against ridicule, executing them the same as they practised in the past. Their names are: the "turca" (goat), "vasilca" (prim head of a pig), "paparuda" (rainmaker girl) etc."⁶⁹

It was the gypsies who on the occasion of the winter celebrations went with the *Siva*, a custom they had brought with them from the heart of India and which is still practised in some communities.

In the foreword of the work "Everyday Life in the Ancient India", our attention is called upon the fact that "we must pay attention to the character traditionalist par excellence of the Indian civilisation. For that very character, the division between the real and conventional is nuanced, not to say subtle."⁷⁰

When listening to some certain Roma say, the "incursions" like "blather on a dead horse", or I'm "along with the road" make the "outsiders" amused or indignant, but they are in fact nothing but specific "inclinations to fill their own sayings with all sorts of meanings, ... with the mixture of concrete definitions and fairy-tales."⁷¹

Never ever will a Roma, who has been living in a traditional community say his thoughts or problems directly, clearly, and in a rational way: he will always make an appeal to a fable, will use a metaphor, or will tell a story in which he has never been involved, and with their help he will "suggest" what he really wants to say.

12. At the moment the Florists are the most homogenous from among the Roma. Their legal occupation is d.p.d.v. from the administrative point of view and is regarded with sympathy. Due to this fact, they have shown a fast economic and social development.

Florists have shown a fast economic and social development.

The Florist tribe is a relatively new one. They date back from the period between the two World Wars, and for many people, including the Roma as well, it is identified with the Roma who live in the quarters in Bucharest: Tei, Colentina, and the surrounding areas, but we can find florist Roma in much more areas, too.

This activity also has its origins in the ancient Indian times. "Practising a special Indian profession the garland traders (malakara) were numerous and appreciated... they

⁶⁸ Ion Chelcea, op.cit., p. 115

⁶⁹ Idem

⁷⁰ Jeaninne Auboyer, op.cit., p. 10

⁷¹ Idem

made the garland (mala) with a large variety of patterns, and they used the grass munja, reed, cotton stalk as a support.

This support was assembled with perfect artistry, since it is an art being present in the list of the "sixty-four arts", with flowers, peacock feathers, ornaments made of horn, shells, leaves, fruit, and seeds. This was a remunerative trade, as the mala (garlands) played a significant role in the Indian life."⁷²

When the "role" of the flowers grew larger in the Bucharest society as well, this occupation was developed by the wives of the Bricklayer gypsies (Zavragii (*Quarrelsome*)) from the locality of Bold near Bucharest.

This trade became a remunerative business, and as it was paying more than their own occupation, it was taken over by the men, too. The next step was the change of the permanent address to one as close to the market as possible, which was dominated by the wives with authority. Thus, they moved to the two Bucharest quarters or very close to them.

Horse
dealing

13. The Copers - settled Roma whose main occupation was horse dealing. Apart from their activity of buying-selling, on a more reduced scale, they were also horse breeders, but they were dealing with "rejuvenating", "repairers", or "curer" of horses, too. "Under his hands, a lazy, apathetic, meagre horse turns miraculously into an irrepressible, lively horse that eats the ground; an old horse seems young, full of life... There is an illness caught by horses only and it is called sigh. The horse coughs badly, and if taken to work, it goes as much it can and dies on the very spot. It is said that only the Copers possess the secret of healing sigh."⁷³

Of course, the other tribes were also trading with horses (the Coppersmiths, the Bear-leaders etc.), but in their case "copering" was not a permanent occupation. Their basic occupation fits in the occupation of their tribe, while for the settled Copers their occupation was a way of life, a main source of existence. This tribe has disappeared.

If it was possible that the horses sold by Copers from other tribes could have originated from theft (they might have been stolen by themselves or by other people from the population in majority, who sold them for a ridiculous price, and the dealers re-sold them at a much higher cost), this thing would have been almost impossible with the settled Copers, since they were known, they had a permanent address, were kept in the records of the police and administrative authorities etc.

14. The Riddlers – a tribe of nomadic campers who alike the Copers have also disappeared with the expansion of the industry and the generalisation of the big agricultural production performed on large territories suitable for motorization.

The Riddlers

Their main activity consisted of manufacturing riddles and sieves for different purposes (to select seeds, to sift maize or wheat flour, to riddle ballast, to obtain different kinds of sands etc.).

The materials used were specially prepared animal skins. They used any kind of skin, but preferred pig and calfskin.⁷⁴

15. The Silversmiths still exist, but their number has been decreasing more and more. Nowadays we can meet Silversmiths (or Ringmakers - another term for this tribe) in the areas of Teleorman and Alexandria, Bucharest, Ialomița, and very few of them in the area of Tulcea. There are approximately 1,000 families (information given by Dumitru Ion-Bidia, member of this tribe and president of The Community of the Ethnic Roma - organisation established on ethnic criteria).

The
Silversmiths

⁷² Idem, p. 118-119

⁷³ I. Chelcea, op.cit. p.142

⁷⁴ Idem, p.139

This tribe is characterised by processing precious metals (gold and silver), and they produce ornamental goods (earrings, rings, bracelets, buttons, brooches, buckles, cassettes etc.) or cultic objects (candlesticks, frames for icons, bells etc.). They are called Silversmiths because the basic material was silver, but they also wanted to be distinguished from the gold-washers that called themselves Goldsmiths. Outstanding craftsmen with a reduced, but archaic range of instruments, the Silversmiths formed the elite of the travelling tribes. The Silversmiths also practised the gypsy judgement known as "to take one out for speech", and marriages are similar to the ones found with the Coppersmiths, Bear-leaders, another traditional Roma, with no legal documents, but as a result of an agreement between the families and/or partners.

16. The tribe of the Bear-leaders is the descendant of the old tamers and circus artists. The members of this tribe used to entertain the families of the masters in the quality of stage players, magicians, tamers, dancers, tightrope walkers etc. They got their name after the bears they tamed and trained to travel with them through the villages and towns. The tamer (bear-leader sang and played the drum while the bear danced - a reason why its master was given money, food, or crops.

Bear-leaders

In return for some money, the bear was also used to trample on the backs of the people who suffered from ache in their spine and back.

As in our country there were rarely any circus shows performed in public markets, the appearance of the bear-leader and his bear stirred the curiosity of the old and the children, and the young people were eager to measure their strength with the strong bear which had been taught by his master to let himself defeated.

The members of this tribe (with an extremely high rate of childbirth) worked hard to "steal" a little bit from the occupation of the other different tribes, but not as much as to be forced to give up their travelling way of life. It seems that they learned the most from the Ironsmiths, and this is a reason why some researchers put them into this category.

After settling down, even though the bears disappeared from the "requisite" of the members of this tribe, their vast majority has lived in relatively compact communities, speak Roma language, preserve their special traditions and customs, and have kept the gypsy judgement called "stabor". They practised the christening of the sun, and marriage is without documents.

In spite of the very reduced percent of assimilation into the populations in majority, there are as many intellectuals present as those descending from the Settled (their number can also be compared to the Settled).

The Silk-weaver
Roma

17. The Silk-weaver Roma are in fact settled Roma from Transylvania whose main occupation was carpet and silk trade. They set off from the area of Braşov and Rupea and arrived as far as the coasts of France, Italy, or even further.

These were the Roma tribes we "met" during our research, but they do not qualify as the totality of the Roma tribes still in existence or who existed in Romania.

The tribe of the
Bricklayers

In the above we spoke about the Zavrajii (Quarrelsome) - a denomination given to the Bricklayers in different areas, especially in the zone of Bucharest and its environs. They were called so because work in the constructions is rough and tiring, and this is a reason of the growth of nervousity, quarrels which lead to a lot of uproar produced by some exhausted workers who started quarrelling. This is how they were finally called Zavrajii (Quarrelsome) (who make "zarvă" = uproar and quarrel). However, they are not a tribe of their own, but represent the tribe of the Bricklayers with a different regional name.

There was also the tribe of the Netoţi (*Different From The Rest*) whose courage and slyness made them very different from the other categories of gypsies. These

The tribe of the
Netoţi

characteristics were sharpened by the difficulties they suffered from. Since the Netoți have a cruel nature, setting even the smallest misunderstandings with knives and axes, some historians who studied the life of the gypsies believe that they are the descendants of the old leaders who led the gypsies from India. The Netoți could not bear oppression and if once caught they did not stop until they managed to escape, and could not rest until they ran to the only master – freedom".⁷⁵

The obsession of freedom, reinforced by the regime there were subordinated those who had lost it in a way or other, determined these people not to be the same as the rest, but to be as their leading ancestors had taught them to be rebellious. In other words, they were different from all the others, this is a reason why they were called Netoți (*Different From The Rest*).

As freedom in itself did not appease hunger, they understood to satisfy it by theft and robbing, the same as the fighters did, even though they were not in war any more.

But as these tribes were not included in the research and some of them also left the scene of history, we will not insist on them any longer.

FINAL REFLECTIONS

In their continuous fight against the new brought by the scientific and technical progress and the development of history, the Roma tribes appear, develop, and disappear. In the didactic sense of the word, they cannot be found anymore as they were presented above. On the other hand, the modernisation of the productive life led to several mixtures and interference between these tribes.

Modernisation of the productive life led to several mixtures and interference between these tribes.

In these conditions, it is natural to ask why there is a need to study and know them.

The answer cannot avoid mentioning that in a not too far period of time, these tribes were real and distinctive, and they left their mark on their members. However, what is more important, appears in the fact that these influences still exist, and their examination allows us a more profound understanding of the way of life of the Roma from the different communities, and implicitly, it permits us to think and imagine solutions to decrease the tension of the crisis going on between the traditional way of life of the Roma of the different communities and the norms of modern life.

This understanding would permit a better understanding in explaining the present situation of the Roma in order to stabilise some priorities and actions to operate the change that is absolutely necessary in the way and conditions of life of the vast majority of the population belonging to this ethnic group.

Only being so drastic, can the problem of the Roma find a solution, which is rational and operational in the same time.

The recent study co-ordinated by the Zamfir professors concludes with the encouragement of a conception of a "strategy to examine the problems of the Roma".⁷⁶

⁷⁵ George Potra: " Contribuțiuni la istoricul țiganilor din România" (Contributions to the history of the gypsies from Romania" p. 34.

⁷⁶ E. Zamfir, C. Zamfir: op.cit., p. 172

There is a correlated programme, with the aim to produce quality changes within this population, and it was made rather widely known both in the country and abroad.⁷⁷ This programme, together with the proposal of a suitable structure to implement and realise its contents was sent to all the governments after 1989, but so far no one has found the necessary time to study and analyse it so that it could be put in practice.

We remain optimistic, and we are convinced that necessity is a more imperative factor than disinterest!

⁷⁷ Vasile Burtea: "La promotion sociale et solutions aux problemes d'emploi de la population rom", in Claire Auzias "Le familles roms d'Europe de l'est", Paris, IDEF, 1993, p.27

Growing up as a Gypsy

By: Sinead Ni Shunear

Source: *Children of Minorities - Gypsies*, edited by Sandro Costarelli, Unicef, 1992

THE ISSUES

OVERVIEW

The world is currently in ferment, with contradictory trends creating widespread uncertainty and disquiet. On the one hand, there has been a vast cultural levelling: music, clothing, food and lifestyles are becoming more and more uniform, and this has been paralleled in the political sphere, with the major ideological divisions gone. On the other hand, there has been a resurgence of regionalism and ethnic conflict. Either trend, taken to extremes, may result in cultural impoverishment for all. There is an increasingly urgent need to find a middle way: a way to break down barriers and pool the resources of all without losing diversity in the process. In this context, the Gypsy issue is particularly relevant. Gypsies are the minority *par excellence* a permanent minority, familiar for centuries in every European country but also in the United States, Latin America, Asia and Australia. The Gypsies present a microcosm of the challenge of intercultural coexistence. What we learn in the process of interacting with Gypsies can also help in our relations with other minorities. This may also provide insights of use in other contexts in which a 'folk' minority confronts an 'urban' majority, such as in the developing countries where interethnic urban situations are becoming increasingly evident. Most importantly, the Gypsy experience can teach us that seemingly straightforward questions - such as health care, accommodation, school provision, vocational training - can become incredibly complicated in the context of interethnic dynamics. To ignore this fact is to condemn both cultural sides to an impasse of inappropriate responses, wasted resources and spiralling resentment.

A further valuable insight may be gained by looking into the 'Gypsy question': here is a people - or rather, many peoples - who have been absorbing what they consider useful from alien cultures for centuries, while remaining uncompromisingly themselves. Isn't this precisely the balance to aspire towards in the 'new world' of intercultural coexistence? In this context, the Gypsies may really have something to teach us.

THE GYPSY CHILD

Few topics are so emotive as childrearing, and small wonder: it is the means by which we perpetuate our way of life, shape our own future, pass on our dreams.

Over the past century, scores of scientific studies have been undertaken on the processes which transform infants into well-adjusted and responsible adults. But even a cursory review of the literature reveals that there is absolutely no practice which has not, in some period, been promoted as indispensable and, in another, condemned as irreparably harmful (Hardiment, 1983). Even a seemingly straightforward question like breastfeeding has long been a focus of heated controversy.

There has, however, been a generally unanimous condemnation of Gypsy childrearing practices. Glimpsed in the most superficial and fragmented ways, the common perception of Gypsy children sees them either 'running wild' in groups or sitting alone

They have been absorbing what they consider useful from alien cultures for centuries, while remaining uncompromisingly themselves.

for hours pleading for money from passers-by. There is no apparent sign of parental supervision or any sort of education in practical or vocational skills.

Furthermore, there is a general conviction that Gypsy parents spend their ill-gotten cash on drink and gold jewellery, while the best their malnourished, ragged children can hope for is not to be beaten. If such a picture were even close to the truth, its victims would desert *en masse*: Gypsy children would be only too anxious to assimilate into the non-Gypsy world, or at least to escape such intolerable home situations. But even those Gypsy children judged by social workers to be at risk, and removed into care by authorities, remain fiercely loyal to their parents and families. The Gypsy family must be doing something right!

A misconception

"The child occupies a central position in the social and cultural world of Gypsies regardless of group affiliation or national origin. Researchers unanimously praise the care bestowed upon the Gypsy child by all members of the family and the community. This intensive care exists in tandem with distinctive respect for the child's independence: the Gypsy child eats, sleeps, and plays when he wants subject only to the requirement of remaining within sight of family or community members." In contrast to the patterns of industrial culture, "socialisation [of the Gypsy child] is carried on by the group rather than the nuclear family... Children live in a climate of freedom within the extended family, where affective warmth and permissiveness dominate. Early on, young children participate in communal life and wish to accede to the status of adult. The feelings of belonging to a family, the way of life that brings together all the family in a very small space, and participation in the parents' professional activities reinforce the wholeness of the group, often opposed to the hostility or the incomprehension of external society" (Charlemagne, 1983).

The child occupies a central position.

The Gypsy child lives in a community which supports and reinforces his sense of belonging: he is never alone. And like all members of his family, the Gypsy child lives in a perpetual 'now'. He expresses his moods, his needs, his wants directly; and receives an immediate and attentive response. The Gypsy model is one of immediacy, generosity and mutual assistance. Needs are met as they arise; so too, the Gypsy socio-economic system as a whole (as will be detailed later) is based on cultivating flexibility in order to respond to demands and opportunities as they arise.

Both on a physical and emotional level, the Gypsy child's needs are looked after not just by his immediate family, but by the community as a whole. This creates an intense emotional bonding and identification with the group, all the more so as it is surrounded by hostile outsiders. The independence of the Gypsy child does not contradict the norms and values of the group but conforms to them, placing the child at a distance from the non-Gypsy world, if not directly at odds with it. Moreover, the time the Gypsy child spends in non-Gypsy environments is educational for him; increasing his knowledge of the alien world enables him to make it work more effectively to his advantage.

Gypsy child's needs are looked after by the community as a whole.

HEALTH

Jan Yoors, a non-Gypsy who ran away with the Gypsies at the age of 12 and stayed with them for 10 years, tells the story of how he strutted proudly back to camp one day showing off a brand-new, expensive jacket. His adoptive father reached out and ripped the lapel as a reminder to him that it was, after all, merely an object, and should be kept in perspective (Yoors, 1967).

Gypsies make a clear distinction between superficial appearances which they largely ignore, and the invisible, intangible essence which is all important for them. Without an understanding of this differentiation, Gypsy children in ill-fitting, ill-matched or ragged clothing are all too often judged as neglected. On the contrary, the shirt may well be a couple of sizes off, but it has certainly been washed separately from foodstuffs and eating utensils. This refusal to mix objects belonging to different categories of cultural meaning is so crucial that it forms an impenetrable barrier between the Gypsy and those who do not share the same cultural distinctions. Surprisingly, this includes not only other Gypsy groups who do not observe identical principles, but all non-Gypsies, who are seen as pervasively 'dirty' (regardless of how clean they might **look**).

Gypsies ignore superficial appearances

Nonetheless, the health needs of Gypsies are far from being met. They need to live in conditions which are not endemically unhealthy, but the rat-infested garbage dumps or cramped, prefabricated dwellings with no clean water or sewage that Gypsies are often forced to live in can literally be life-threatening. Statistics from country after country show that certain types of environment related illnesses (especially of a gastric or respiratory nature) are particularly prevalent in Gypsy communities and that the incidence of these is typically several times higher for Gypsies than for the general population (see "Gypsy Children in Europe"). The question of Gypsy health is essentially the question of Gypsy accommodation, as the root cause of sickness and low life expectancy is so closely linked to environmental conditions.

The health needs of Gypsies are far from being met.

The Gypsy **is** his family and community, which means that the individual's health—and most particularly the child's health — must be addressed within the community context, taking full account of both objective aspects, such as unhealthy location and lack of facilities, and subjective ones, including beliefs about sickness and health.

On the surface, health-related questions, especially those of a serious and traumatic nature like infant mortality, offer common ground for Gypsy and non-Gypsy values. But Gypsy culture is folk culture in which the realms of medicine and religion remain closely intertwined. Hence, prevention and treatment may have more to do with faith and ritual than with scientific theories and practice. Such attitudes may, for example, explain the typically low take-up rate for immunisation of Gypsy children: the relevance of these practices may very often not be appreciated by Gypsy parents. The result is, however, that services often remain inaccessible to Gypsy children, and this applies not only to health care but to many fields affecting Gypsy welfare.

A further health-threatening factor for Gypsy communities is their reluctance to place themselves at the mercy of the non-Gypsy world. Medical intervention is typically sought as a last resort, and this is likely to be in a hospital emergency ward. There are a number of reasons for this: it is visible and accessible even to people who may be unfamiliar with the locality; it provides an immediate response to need; it is open 24 hours a day; it is impersonal, and thus not perceived as directly threatening; it is generally free of charge; and finally, it is large enough for the extended family group to gather in and keep vigil over the sick member. This solidarity is important for the Gypsy community as the combination of illness and displacement into the non-Gypsy world is extremely traumatic for both the patient and the extended family. It is, however, often a cause of major tension with non-Gypsy staff.

Reluctance to place themselves at the mercy of the non-Gypsy world.

An important exception to this avoidance of non-Gypsy institutions occurs in the life-or-death situation of newborn and/or sickly babies facing the harsh winter months in all too frequently subhuman conditions. In such circumstances, it is not uncommon for Gypsy - parents to place the at-risk child into foster care or hospital until the worst of the danger has passed. Unfortunately, an insufficient understanding of regulations often means that Gypsy parents are accused of child abandonment and therefore have great difficulty regaining custody.

EDUCATION

The Gypsy family has retained substantial responsibilities across a wide range of services - recreational, health, educational, economic, religious and so on - that are normally identified as functions of the traditional family and for which, among contemporary house-dwellers, responsibility has been transferred to [external] institutions. It is partly the non-transference of these functions to external institutions that has identified the Gypsy family as anachronistic in the eyes of local and central government officers" (Adams, et al.). Of these family functions, the one which excites the most emotive debate is education: the process through which the child is prepared for full participation in his community.

From a non-Gypsy perspective, the Gypsy family fails to impart many indispensable skills. Therefore, Gypsy children are frequently classed as 'backward' in school either as 'cognitively deficient' or as mentally retarded — and school provision is tailored accordingly (see "Gypsy Children in Europe"). Strangely, illiteracy among Gypsy children is perceived as far more alarming than Gypsy infant mortality rates, and schooling is therefore considered a more urgent need than accommodation. Indeed, education is often promoted as the panacea to Gypsy problems: in the popular imagination, it will eliminate illiteracy, familiarize Gypsies with mainstream culture and values, and eventually enable them to get jobs and better themselves financially.

Strangely, illiteracy among Gypsy children is perceived as far more alarming than Gypsy infant mortality rates.

However, despite considerable efforts made by school authorities, the picture is the same for Gypsies everywhere: only about a third of Gypsy children of primary school age are enrolled in school, with many of these attending only irregularly. Attendance ceases altogether at about age 12, when Gypsy pupils typically leave school still functionally illiterate. Why does this happen?

Part of the answer lies with Gypsy parents' attitudes and practices: they see school as synonymous, not with 'education for life' (since the family provides that), but with 'literacy'. And as Gypsy culture is a non-literate, oral one, their attitudes to literacy are complex and ambivalent: literacy is suspect, because it increases contact with alien ideas; it is also seen as 'difficult'. Coming from non-literate homes, Gypsy children do not have the cultural expectation that literacy will be painlessly acquired in primary school, nor do they have access to story-books or parental help with homework that are common features of non-Gypsy children's home life (at least in middle-class families).

But Gypsy parents are also pragmatic. Their children generally remain non-literate until they decide that it is an essential skill. In the meantime, resistance to literacy — whether conscious or not — is a form of ethnic self assertion. Seen in this light, it is clear why the child's 'failure' in school may be viewed by his parents as a successful resistance to acculturation into an alien, suspect and hostile world.

Gypsy parents' attitudes to non-Gypsy education are further complicated by the need for their children to learn skills which are of use to their own community. This they do by watching and copying their parents and other older members of the extended family. Moreover, children's help, including minding younger children, fetching water and earning money, is a crucial contribution to the family and community. From this perspective, it becomes evident that the time Gypsy children spend in school is time spent away from — and to the disadvantage of — their families.

Conflicts with Gypsy emphasis on immediacy, flexibility and shared authority.

Furthermore, school as an institution within non-Gypsy cultures serves a primary function of socializing children to take their place in non-Gypsy society. This process entails a great deal that is at odds with the goals and methods of the Gypsy socialization process. Strict timetables, immobility, group discipline and obedience to a single authority figure all conflict with Gypsy emphasis on immediacy, flexibility and shared authority. Moreover, and strangely for the Gypsy child, school treats him as an

individual rather than as a member of his family: brothers and sisters are separated by age, and parents have no say in the classroom.

While at school, the Gypsy child is immersed in an alien world. From the Gypsy parents' perspective, this has its positive side: their children must get to know and understand the non-Gypsy world in order to coexist with it. On the other hand, it is also threatening for them: their children may begin to internalize non-Gypsy cultural models. Therefore, the school experience is seen as best kept to a minimum, and normally ceases altogether when, at puberty, the Gypsy child reaches the point of adulthood within his culture.

Yet many Gypsy parents are adamant that their children should master non-Gypsy skills, and are willing to send their children to school. The fact that their children emerge illiterate is probably due to the school's failure to take their particular needs into sufficient account. In every European country, a highly disproportionate number of Gypsy children spend their entire school career in 'special' classes specifically for them or, even more detrimentally, for the mentally handicapped. In either case, it is unlikely that the teacher has had any training in the realities of Gypsy culture. The Gypsy child's cultural difference is generally greeted with hostility by schoolmates, and not infrequently by teachers as well. As a general rule, teachers' expectations of Gypsy children are so low that little effort is made to teach them.

This assumes, of course, that the Gypsy child can get into school in the first place. In reality, bureaucracy and discrimination frequently combine to leave many willing Gypsy pupils — even fully sedentary ones — outside the school gates. Additional practical problems, such as school transport and the cost of uniforms and books, also have the effect of deterring many children.

The trend among Gypsy families is towards an increased demand for non-Gypsy skills, with a view to incorporating them into the Gypsy life-style. There is therefore a growing need for these skills to be made available with no cultural strings attached. This requires a recognition and redressing of the problems outlined here, and more: an actively multicultural vision both of the classroom and, naturally, of the broader social organization it reflects.

ACCOMMODATION

"Nomadism is as much a state of mind as a state of fact" (Liegeois, 1987). Indeed, the great majority of Gypsy communities have been sedentary for centuries. Yet nomadism remains a fundamental element of Gypsy culture, even for sedentarized groups. Gypsy families develop little attachment to their dwelling and little sense of involvement in local issues. Their society is in fact organized along lines of kinship rather than geographical proximity.

The prevalence of sedentarism is often cited as proof that Gypsy families themselves have recognized the advantages of the non-Gypsy lifestyle. But such an interpretation ignores the 'push' factors that have forced people off the road: even where nomadism has not been prohibited outright, nomadic groups have always been subject to harassment and are often disqualified from the most basic health, education and social services.

There are also a number of 'pull' factors, however, which make decreased nomadism compatible with the Gypsy lifestyle. One of these is motorization, the advantage of which is that a vastly expanded area can now be reached from a single base. Another is urbanization: with the move by the non-Gypsy population — the economic base for Gypsy communities — towards larger concentrations. Gypsy families have followed. Furthermore, seasonal (autumn/winter) sedentarism coincides with school terms. Gypsy families therefore can and do choose to stop travelling for prolonged periods.

Nomadism

It is unlikely that the teacher has had any training in the realities of Gypsy culture.

Problems arise when the option of moving on is removed. Long-term forced sedentarism has proved to be dangerous even when it has occurred in tolerable physical conditions. As the number of stopping places dwindles, members of rival groups — and of rival clans within a single group — are thrown together. The result is an explosive rise in disputes, without the traditional safety-valve of separating the warring factions. Meanwhile, each small group, cut off from the wider family, is thrown in on itself: there is less economic and social cooperation, restricted choice of marriage partners, and fewer social sanctions to help keep members in line.

Interestingly, the very word 'housing' reveals prejudices regarding accommodation. While Gypsy communities consider a whole range of accommodation options as potentially appropriate according to their circumstances, non-Gypsy cultures use only one measuring-stick: the house. Gypsy families commonly live in tents, wooden caravans, trailers, shanties, private and public housing and flats, and, most importantly, may frequently move among these options, but governmental housing policies make no provision for such flexibility.

Gypsy communities consider a whole range of accommodation options as potentially appropriate.

Halting sites are planned not for the accommodation of Gypsy families with an alternative, but equally valid, lifestyle, but as part of a policy of 'settlement', a stepping-stone into standard housing and absorption into the 'wider community'. Even on legal sites, therefore, living conditions are usually very poor. Sites are often located on unwanted, unusable land: beside dumps and cemeteries, on swampland or under high-tension electric pylons, in the middle of nowhere.

In reality, legal sites tend to be inappropriate in a number of ways. Economic activity on-site is usually banned, with the result that Gypsy families either become passively dependent on social welfare payments, or manage to retain a degree of economic autonomy by breaking the site rules or by moving out. Site layout is invariably based on the conviction that Gypsies are 'all the same', which means, for instance, that rival groups may be lumped indiscriminately together on an open site more closely resembling an abandoned car-park, or extended family group members may be separated from each other in single trailers surrounded by high walls. Although Gypsies spend most of their time out of doors, official sites usually provide very little space between caravans or common ground for work, play and socializing. Finally, sites are usually grossly over-crowded.

For all their imperfections, legal sites are still the exception. No European country has matched site numbers to the national Gypsy population, let alone provided the extra places which would make nomadism between legal sites possible. Yet accommodation, in a range of forms, is the key issue on which all aspects of Gypsy welfare hinge. How can families living near open sewers, with no access to clean water, possibly stay healthy? How can families make a living if they are refused permission to work on-site, or are unable to travel in order to take up opportunities as they arise? How can a family under constant threat of eviction send their children to school in the morning, knowing that they may have been towed away by the time they return?

THE GYPSY CHILD AND FAMILY EMPLOYMENT

The Gypsy family is an economic unit in which every member (including the baby in arms, an essential accessory when begging) is expected to play an active role.

Therefore, it is normal for the Gypsy child to participate in the family economy. What is not normal is for him to have to support parents who are prevented from economic activity. Indeed, as more and more obstacles are placed in the way of Gypsy parents' making a living, the family may come to depend disproportionately on what the children bring in. Moreover, if the Gypsy family's day-to-day survival depends on the children's earnings, they will have no time to learn new skills, either in-family or in school. Thus, these children too face a future of unemployment.

What is unemployment from the Gypsy cultural perspective?

But what is unemployment from the Gypsy cultural perspective? Unlike non-Gypsy cultures which generally define work as "a job" (security) or better still "a profession" (specialization), Gypsies see work as anything and everything they can do to make money. In fact, Gypsies survive by identifying and supplying a broad range of non-Gypsy demands. This makes Gypsies — commercial nomads — fundamentally different from other nomadic groups who exploit nature either directly (as hunter/gatherers) or indirectly (as herders). Opportunities may arise on a seasonal or occasional basis (agricultural labour, chimney cleaning). or because the work is dirty (scrap), or because the skills are not available locally (whitesmithing, mending jobs, horse-dealing, music). Clearly, such a self-structured approach to work demands mobility and a broad, flexible range of marketable skills. Self-employment and work flexibility are also essential to the Gypsy life-style: the individual must be able to drop every-thing to meet unpredictable family obligations, such as keeping vigil by a relative's sickbed or travelling to attend a relative's wedding.

Several countries have established training schemes for Gypsy adolescents, but a misunderstanding of Gypsy work patterns means that, from the Gypsy cultural perspective, they acquire few useful skills. For example, because Gypsies have traditionally been metalworkers, young boys may receive training in wrought ironwork—a craft requiring bulky, expensive equipment which precludes working from home. What makes a type of work or skill relevant to Gypsies is the way that it fits into their complex cultural patterns of life.

Nowadays, a number of factors collude to prevent Gypsy adults from playing an active economic role. Market changes, the loss of traditional income-generating activities and prejudicial attitudes in hiring practices make it increasingly difficult for Gypsies to survive economically, and the overwhelming majority, in every country, live well below the poverty line. The fact that virtually 100 per cent of Gypsies are in receipt of social welfare benefits should therefore be interpreted within Gypsy parameters.

Generally speaking, Gypsies see social welfare payments as simply one economic option in a broad and flexible range of income-generating possibilities. Accepting assistance does not imply a total and passive dependence, although this may be the condition on which it is granted. Where Gypsy parents have been prevented from supplementing social welfare payments with their own employment initiatives, the results have been disastrous. Gypsies are compulsive wheeler-dealers, constantly devising new ways of making a profit. While few are consistently successful, the possibility of exercising economic initiative is psychologically crucial for them.

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

The critical situation of disadvantage and deprivation faced by Europe's Gypsy communities is by no means new: what is new is a growing recognition of the right of Gypsies (and indeed all minorities) to an equal place in a pluralist society and a greater willingness to reassess ways in which this can be brought about. To date, commitment to these ideals has been more in evidence at international than at local level, but the moral — and perhaps legal — force of such a lead should not be underestimated.

New: a growing recognition of the right of Gypsies

The Council of Europe first took up the question in 1975 with its Resolution on the Situation of Nomads in Europe, followed by a further Resolution on the same subject in 1981. In 1984, the European Parliament passed a Resolution on the Children of Parents of No Fixed Abode, and another on the Situation of Gypsies in the Community. In 1986, a synthesis of reports from all Member States of the European Community, **School Provision for Gypsy and Traveller Children**, was published. It focussed on school-related issues within their broader context, giving particular emphasis to the issues of accommodation and recognition of Gypsy culture.

Throughout the 1980s, the Council of Europe called a number of conferences on questions relating to Gypsy education, the results of which were published as reports.

The 1990s have seen the pace quicken. At European Community level, an ad-hoc Group on school provision for Gypsy and Traveller children brings delegates together from the Ministries of Education of all Member States. The European Parliament has introduced a new budgetary heading, "Intercultural education", with an allocation of 700,000 Ecus specifically for Gypsy children. An EC quarterly newsletter, **Interface**, aims to increase awareness of developments by publishing the texts of relevant resolutions, details of exchange programmes and grant schemes, and so on. In 1991, the Conference on the Human Dimension of the Council for Security and Cooperation in Europe published a major document, which specifically mentions Gypsies in connection with minority rights.

United Nations involvement began in 1992, with the UN Economic and Social Council Commission on Human Rights Resolution 1992/65, On the Protection of Roma (Gypsies).

Local, regional, national and international non-governmental organisations have also played an active role in generating greater awareness. In 1990, the International Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, one of the most influential NGOs, launched an ongoing programme to investigate the situation of Gypsies in Europe; six national studies were published in 1992.

ACTION FOR AND WITH GYPSIES

"To be born and to grow up a Gypsy should be normal human destiny, not a martyrdom" (Haisman, 1992). Both in studies and in interventions, the Gypsy child has commonly been considered in isolation, not only removed from his immediate family and community but also from the complex interethnic dynamic which affects all aspects of his life. But no child lives in isolation. He or she is always part of a family, and of a wider community. While it is universally true that it is their vulnerability which makes children so special, this is particularly so with regard to ethnic minorities: the cultural, political and social dimensions of an interethnic situation transform superficially simple questions, such as health care, education, accommodation and employment, into complex ones.

Recognising this complexity, the participants at the 1992 'Growing up as a Gypsy' Workshop proposed a two-pronged, ongoing approach to further study and action: 1) **Information Base**: through which information will be collected, analysed and disseminated; 2) **Proposals for Action**: in order to constructively apply information.

Information base

Three distinct but closely linked areas need to be developed in order to establish a solid information base, in the absence of which action is mere guesswork: data collection, analysis and dissemination.

DATA COLLECTION

All workshop participants were acutely aware of the need to involve Gypsy communities in all three phases of developing a sound information base. Both in papers presented and in follow-up discussions, participants identified the difficulties

involved in generating the active participation of Gypsies themselves as a major obstacle to the success of interventions targeting these communities.

Gypsy communities reluctant to cooperate with non-Gypsy groups.

Frequent negative experiences which authorities have made Gypsy communities reluctant to cooperate with non-Gypsy groups. Past approaches to interethnic relations, usually comprising the unilateral involvement of the majority population group in identifying the minority's problems as well as in developing and implementing policies for their solution, have done little to promote greater trust on the part of Gypsy communities. Instead, a 'pluralist' approach is needed, involving an ongoing process of dialogue initiated by the majority population group with a request for the minority to identify its own problems as a first step towards a cooperative approach to developing responses.

Who should represent the minority population group, however, in such a process? Its political structures may be very different from those of the majority, and this can contribute to its exclusion from the decision making process. This is certainly the case for Gypsy communities. They have kinship based political systems, but there are also 'non-Gypsy-style' organizations and pressure groups which represent Gypsy communities in every European country. The workshop participants therefore agreed that effective consultation should involve both types of representation. At the same time, recognition was made of the difficulties in identifying single individuals to consider representative of the whole Gypsy community. It is important, though culturally difficult, to recognize and consult the minority's own leaders; it is culturally easier to interact with groups which have adopted familiar structures, but this is risky as issues of mandate and motivation will colour their input.

In order to overcome these obstacles and limitations, the proposal to form national **Mediating Teams** emerged from workshop discussions. Such teams - made up of Gypsy representatives and non-Gypsy specialists collaborating as equals - could fulfill a range of functions on an ongoing basis. The overall goal would be to interface the Gypsy minority and the majority population group in each country, facilitating communication, mutual understanding and action.

To this end, a profile of each 'non-Gypsy-style' organization should be compiled—and subsequently updated—on both national and regional levels, with a view to evaluating their input. The following data should be included:

- Did the original initiative to set up the organization come from Gypsies or non-Gypsies?
- If non-Gypsy, was it linked with any existing group or movement, e.g. a professional or religious body?
- What are the organization's stated goals?
- How many members does it currently have?
- What is the Gypsy/non-Gypsy ratio in the membership?
- What is the Gypsy/non-Gypsy ratio on the executive?
- Are there other national/local Gypsy organizations?
- If so, what prevents this group from amalgamating with others?

A profile of each 'non-Gypsy-style' organization should be compiled.

These last questions serve both to guard against organizations 'slipping through the net' and to piece together an objective view of their policies. In addition to this self-assessment, each organization should also be asked:

- What initiatives/projects have you undertaken in favour of Gypsy children and families?
- What evaluation would you give to each, specifying the criteria by which 'success' or 'failure' is judged?
- What are the major problems facing Gypsy children and families in your country/region?

- What suggestions and proposals would you make for their solution?

In this way, it should be possible to eliminate organizations with little or no grass-roots mandate. A representative cross-section of groups, together with specialists skilled in intercultural dynamics, such as anthropologists, developmental psychologists, legal experts and educationalists, would form the Mediating Team at national level. The primary function of teams would be to undertake research on the situation of Gypsy children and families in each national context, consult existing bodies and disseminate research findings. In addition, teams could be active in the following areas:

1. **Social Action:** Acting as a sort of national 'Ombudsman', the Team could deal with questions and grievances from both Gypsy and non-Gypsy parties in relation to the welfare of Gypsy children and families. It could, moreover, take an active role in developing greater mutual understanding: training opportunities for Gypsy communities in non-Gypsy political procedures would enable them to participate directly, and input into teacher-training and social-work courses, as well as through local authorities and for the general public would enhance the non-Gypsy community's cultural familiarity with the Gypsy world.

2. **Law:** The Team would evaluate existing national legislation impacting on Gypsy communities (i.e., in relation to discrimination, nomadism, and so on), monitor its implementation and lobby for additional legislation as required. It should promote awareness of the law in terms of Gypsy children's and families' legal rights. Moreover, the Team could also provide free legal aid to Gypsy families, to help make the law work for them.

3. **Media:** The Team would monitor national/regional media in order to detect biased reporting on Gypsy children and families, taking legal action, if necessary, when existing legislation (if any) is breached. In addition, the Team could issue press statements, highlighting 'good news' stories such as inter-community cooperation, progressive local authorities, and so on. It could also provide assistance (technical, financial, etc.) to Gypsy media initiatives: for a largely non-literate people, radio and video are an obvious (and relatively low-cost) choice. Irish national radio, for instance, runs a weekly 45-minute all-Gypsy programme, combining music requests, news and interviews.

4. **Networking:** National and regional Mediating Teams would network with each other and with concerned international bodies, such as the International Romani Union, the Gypsy Research Centre, and so on.

DATA ANALYSIS

The primary goal of the workshop was to develop a research design in order to conduct an international study, the aim of which would be to effectively inform policy-making targeting Gypsy children and families. To date, the vast majority of research done on Gypsy communities concentrates on 'folkloric' aspects of their culture. Far less attention has been devoted to practical social questions concerning their welfare. Any such studies have focussed almost exclusively on school-related topics. There was agreement among workshop participants on the existence of large knowledge gaps concerning Gypsy culture and welfare, and on the major challenge of collecting and bringing information both to the general public and to those working with Gypsy children and families.

Workshop discussions emphasized the fact that information is an essential precondition for the acceptance of Gypsy children and adults on their own terms. Failure to recognize Gypsies' own cultural patterns and values ensures that

interventions trip up on these invisible but very tenacious realities, instead of plugging into and harmonizing with them.

Development of a Gypsy-specific scale, by which their psychosocial and behavioural development can be evaluated on their own terms.

A first requirement in relation to Gypsy children should therefore be the development of a Gypsy-specific scale, by which their psychosocial and behavioural development can be evaluated **on their own terms**. The formulation of this scale should clearly involve close consultation with Gypsy parents in order to take into account what they regard as 'normal' child development. Conversely, research should also be done on the Gypsy community's notions of normal and abnormal development through observation of children that the community regards as having behavioural problems.

Recognizing, however, the broad heterogeneity of the Gypsy 'community', workshop participants proposed the elaboration of a number of developmental scales. These should then be 'field tested' on Gypsy groups, and modified as necessary until both Gypsy parents and non-Gypsy specialists on child development consider them accurate. The different Gypsy developmental scales should then be correlated with more familiar non-Gypsy-specific scales for use by non-Gypsy teachers, paediatricians, social workers, and so on.

In this way, the widespread practice of automatically equating 'Gypsy' with 'educationally subnormal' can be effectively challenged and replaced with realistic assessments enabling the identification of genuinely backward, problematic or otherwise abnormal children so that they may be given the special attention they need. Such assessments should not be restricted to infants, but should be maintained for the full length of the non-Gypsy period of compulsory schooling.

Workshop discussions also focussed on the common tendency to classify Gypsy children as 'delinquent' (see "Gypsy Children in Europe"). However, cross-cultural research showing that the norms of the two groups are genuinely at odds in some respects, for example regarding school attendance and marriageable age, highlights the need to identify what types of child behaviour the Gypsy community itself regards as delinquent. How does the Gypsy community discourage unacceptable child behaviour? And, on the contrary, which social behaviours are valued in the Gypsy child? Which methods are used to promote these? These questions prompted Workshop participants to propose that, by means of the methods already outlined, a

Gypsy-normal behavioural scale(s) should also be elaborated, thus enabling the two communities to work together in dealing with forms of child behaviour which both regard as deviant.

Issues of sex-role differentiation were pointed to as another area requiring further study. Gypsy parents firmly disagree with views promoting gender-free child development. They regard their children as small men and women, and social expectation, acceptable behaviour and obligations are defined accordingly. This much is known, but what are these different models? Workshop participants concluded that greater understanding of Gypsy responses to the various quandaries of parenting is needed.

Gypsy parents firmly disagree with views promoting gender-free child development.

There was a general feeling among participants, however, that understanding the Gypsy child only within his own cultural terms does not provide a sufficient basis for the development of useful programmes and initiatives. They went further, emphasizing that a deeper understanding of the ways in which the Gypsy child perceives and evaluates the non-Gypsy world can make our interaction with him much more effective.

Workshop participants identified a number of other areas requiring research.

Health: What concepts of illness do Gypsies have? What are their views and beliefs on causes, prevention and cures? What are Gypsy parents' attitudes to nutrition, water,

disposal of bodily wastes? Again, it is vital to recognize that Gypsy parents have fundamental convictions with regard to these crucial questions.

Accommodation: Research on Gypsy families' living conditions has by and large been done. Further research is now needed— in consultation with the users — on how to meet Gypsy families' accommodation needs, as they define them. Firstly, negatively perceived aspects of existing accommodation provision should be identified. These will range from the 'obvious' (rubbish-dump locations) to the 'not-so-obvious' (erratic rubbish collection) to the 'invisible' (layout which offends cultural concepts of cleanliness or family links).

Secondly, existing accommodation provision which has proved successful from the Gypsy families' perspective should be analysed. Research should cover all types of accommodation, from transit sites to group housing schemes. This should also include illegal encampments in order to observe how Gypsy communities themselves order their space and family groupings. How can these cultural patterns be incorporated into legal, i.e. non-Gypsy-provided accommodation?

Education: Ethnic stereotypes persist in school textbooks: one children's reader, for example, offers "The gypsy stole the goose" to illustrate the letter G. Negative cultural messages need to be identified and replaced with material of a more positive pluralist nature.

Work: What makes economically successful Gypsy parents? What types of work are practised locally? This information would provide guidelines for training and enable a pooling of ideas so that Gypsy parents in one area with innovative schemes could share them with Gypsies in other areas.

Community mobilization: It is important to identify, analyse and share information on successful community mobilization projects in each country, in close consultation with the groups themselves. Since the people concerned are likely to be ill at ease with the written word, more culturally appropriate forms of communication, such as video or audio tapes, should be favoured.

DATA DISSEMINATION

Information bases exist, but seem to have difficulty in disseminating its materials.

Workshop discussions emphasized the fact that a great deal of urgently required information on Gypsy children and families is already available, but remains inaccessible. Unless efforts are made to disseminate information, it is likely to be unnecessarily duplicated. A number of information bases do already exist, but even the largest of these seems to have difficulty in disseminating its materials. By way of example, the major report on education, **School Provision for Gypsy and Traveller Children**, has been published by the Commission of the European Communities in a number of languages, yet many educationalists remain unaware of its existence.

There was general agreement among workshop participants on the fact that information collected and analysed on Gypsy children and families should be made available to concerned institutions and organizations.

PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

LEGAL ISSUES

Workshop discussion pinpointed the need to assess the complex (and often controversial) legal reality of Gypsies. Their legal position may be anomalous for a variety of reasons, as "Gypsy Children in Europe" elucidates. As a first step,

requests should be made to both state and local authorities as well as NGOs and Gypsy organizations for information on: the number of Gypsies in the country/region; their legal status; problems as they are perceived; initiatives already undertaken to rectify these problems. This approach will also provide information on both the national/local authorities' commitment to provision, and the extent to which it is being maintained.

Secondly, an overview of the existing legal situation is necessary, including: anti-Gypsy laws (whether specifically aimed at Gypsies or particularly applicable to them); legal recognition of Gypsy-specific rights, such as the right to nomadism, etc.; general laws and their relevance to children's and families' rights to schooling, health care, accommodation, etc. as well as legislation on discrimination/incitement to hatred.

Anti-Gypsy laws

Workshop participants pointed out that in many countries there are instances in which law enforcement and public representatives are involved in acts of incitement and even physical attack, which are then justified as citizens' retaliation to Gypsy provocation. The ethnic nature of such attacks needs to be recognized; they are generally aimed indiscriminately at entire Gypsy communities, not individuals. Measures should be taken at the highest state levels to prevent further displays of ethnic intolerance, and to condemn such practices when they do occur.

With regard to accommodation, it was noted that a majority of local authorities throughout Europe are likely to be in contravention of their own legally-binding standards and of nationally— and internationally agreed policies on Gypsy accommodation. Standards often openly flouted include housing Gypsy families in areas zoned unfit for residential use, allocating condemned dwellings to Gypsy families, and constructing accommodation in breach of legal specifications on materials, clean water provision, space per inhabitant, and so on. Until there are at least enough legal sites to match the needs of Gypsy families, some nomadic Gypsies will continue to be considered 'criminal' by their very existence. Accommodation provision comes nowhere near this mark at present, and yet families may still be evicted from illegal sites with literally nowhere to go.

Paradoxically, the rights of Gypsies are becoming increasingly recognized at international level, without any discernible improvement at national and local levels. Yet international agreements have been signed by — and are binding on — national governments. If moral pressure proves inadequate, recourse to international law may become necessary.

ACCOMMODATION

- As has been noted, suitable accommodation is the hinge upon which all aspects of Gypsy welfare turn. The following are some of the points to bear in mind with respect to Gypsy accommodation:
- Adequate standards should be met with regard to space, materials, design and domestic services (regular rubbish collection, access to fire-fighting equipment, etc.);
- Access to normal public services, including public transport, shops, telephones, and so on, should be readily available;
- Accommodation should be designed to respect Gypsy cultural reality, not to change it. Gypsy social patterns, economic activities, hygiene regulations and life-style must be taken into account in planning accommodation, preferably by means of ongoing consultation between local authorities and the target Gypsy family groups.

SERVICES

Services generally refer to the range of local and national provisions established to meet basic human rights in the fields of accommodation, education, health care, social welfare, and so on. But Gypsy families rarely make full use of these, and the need to find out the reasons for this was highlighted by the Workshop participants.

Gypsy families rarely make full use of provisions.

Low take-up may in fact be due to objective problems, such as residency requirements, bureaucratic obstacles, access difficulties, or poverty. There may also be subjective factors at work, such as fear, lack of information, hostility or apathy.

An evaluation needs to be made of current levels and types of service use by Gypsy families with the dual aim of enabling the services to adapt to meet their needs, and of identifying gaps requiring attention. In the health field, for example, the need to address immunization, dental care and baby feeding practices have already been identified.

Lateral thinking in service provision and delivery is urgently required, and increased input from Gypsies themselves should facilitate this. Nomadism, for instance, has always been seen as a barrier to school attendance; the possibility of distance learning and other means of adapting school provision to the nomadic child (rather than only expecting the reverse) are just beginning to be explored.

SOCIAL MOBILISATION

Society should accommodate a range of 'difference': religious belief, skin colour, ethnic identity, sexual orientation, disability, and so on. Recognizing the right of nomadic Gypsy families to decent and appropriate accommodation is essentially recognizing the right to be different. Integration is the normalization — not the eradication — of difference. But how to make this come about?

For all minorities, the 'pluralist' response demands recognition of the existence and validity of different needs and values; ascertainment of the nature of these needs and values: consultation and compromise to accommodate them.

Pluralist
response,
pluralist society

Mobilizing for change, both on the objective level of living conditions for Gypsies and on the subjective level of attitudes and beliefs, means reaching the majority with accurate information. In particular, it is vital that authority figures (policy makers, teachers, police, social workers, nurses etc.) and schoolchildren receive undistorted messages on the Gypsy reality. At the same time, it is essential that the simplistic (and inaccurate) 'we are all the same' approach be avoided, in favour of "infinite diversity in infinite combinations".

Promoting a 'pluralist' society also means opening the way for Gypsy children and families to see themselves as a part of it. Gypsies are potentially their own best mobilizers, but they need to be facilitated in developing practical skills through such means as training courses for community workers, teachers and health workers. It is important that no strict timetables for this process be imposed as this would favour existing organisations already attuned to 'the system', i.e. the most non-Gypsy-like groups and individuals.

Finally, a further step towards promoting pluralism in society — at once concretely and symbolically — would be to assist in the setting up of Gypsy cultural centres, at national and/or continental level. A similar aspiration, already expressed at many Gypsy conferences, is for a creation of a European Gypsy university, along the lines of the successful example provided by Native American universities in the USA.

The insights and perspectives of the Workshop participants were many and varied. Different Gypsy community situations in different countries call for careful analysis at national and local/regional levels. In general, however, participants found that they had more in common than might be expected in an international Workshop of this nature,

giving rise to expectations of the considerable advantages to be gained, not least in the political sphere, from pursuing this critical topic on an international as well as a national and more local basis.

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Czech School and "Romipen"

The core-identities of a Rom child

By: **Milena Hübschmannová**, The Charles University, Prague
Paper, 1998

If a decent citizen sees a graffiti *Death to Roma* painted on a house-wall, he will most probably feel indignant and condemn racism. However the next moment he may say without hesitation: "the *Roma problem is serious*" or "we have to solve the *Gypsy question*" because "gypsy-criminality is really high. You can read in newspapers every day".

Stereotype phrases like that, which are currently used in the mass media, by official authorities as well as by the general public, are of course not such an aggressive form of racism as the above mentioned graffiti - but are they really "racist-free"? Doesn't the expression "Roma/Gypsy problem" imply that the Roma are those who cause problems to the rest of the society? Doesn't this hidden implication hinder "us" to admit that it is also "we" who can cause problems to Roma?

It is also "we" who can cause problems to Roma.

Similar statements are used if education of Roma children is discussed? "*problems with Roma children at school*", "*backwardness of Roma children*" "*unadaptability of Roma children to the educational system*". "*negligence of Roma towards the value of education*", etc.

It is the century's lasting syndrome of gadžo-superiority which brought this terminology into existence. And it is this ethnocentric terminology which is cementing and perpetuating the gadžo-superiority syndrome. Like a tight frame it makes it difficult to come over the limit of the ethnocentric stereotype and to ask: is not also the "*unadaptability of the educational system to Roma children*" guilty for the educational shortcomings?

The gadžo-superiority syndrome

Who or "what" is a Rom-child? It is a multidimensional complex of identities. Some of them are permanent some temporary, some individual some shared with others, some can be considered as basic or core-identities.

The most invariable or permanent and at the same time the most "visible" identity of Roma children is their anthropological type; other basic components of their common identity is their ethnicity (including language, cultural habits but also the common origin and history of the Roma people, etc). All this is designated by a Romani term romipen (Romhood). Romipen is the core of the identities shared more or less by most of the Romani children. By their romipen - "nationhood" they differ from their Czech school mates.

What is the attitude of the Czech school towards the romipen-identities of Roma children? To what extent are they respected in the educational process? I shall try to treat the most important ones one after another.

RESPECT OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM TO THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL IDENTITY OF THE ROMA CHILDREN.

Leeuwen-Turnovcová (1993) in her excellent study about Czech argot brings 36 derogatory appellations used for Roma. Most of them are based on the "black colour" of the Roma (*black mouth, black coal, rubber, black gum, Brazilian, black hose, black shoe polish*, etc. p. 144)

In the year 1992 the editors of the Roma monthly *Amaro lav* distributed a questionnaire (Qu92) among the Roma correspondents asking them about their personal experience of a Rom pupil in the Czech school. One of the eleven questions was: *did ever some of your gadžo school fellows call you "black mouth" or some other bad name of this kind? What did you do? Did you tell it to the teacher? How did he/she react?*

Abused by bad names ridiculing their "black colour".

Out of 41 respondents who filled the questionnaire 38 were frequently/currently/often abused by bad names ridiculing their "black colour". What was their reaction? We shall quote some representative examples:

(1) I was ashamed and did not understand what all this meant. At home I was a beloved child - and all of a sudden I became a >black hose<. Why? (2) We simply beat up the Czechs. The teacher came and a11 of us were punished. (3) I was unhappy. (4) I hated the Czechs. (5) I was used to it, what can we do? Just yesterday when I was passing through Vaclavské náměstí (one of the main streets in Prague) a person whom a I had never seen before started to shout at me >black mouth back to India!< I just didn't pay any attention to it.

What was the reaction of the teachers if a Rom child complained about his *romipen* being offended by some of his Czech school mates? Most of the respondents did not complain. We quote some answers from those who did: *(1) I was lucky I had a good teacher and she said to the Czechs that we were honest people. Some of them stopped ridiculing us. (2) Our teacher said: if some of you Gypsies were not so dirty, you would not be so black - I felt very offended because my mother was a >fanatic devil< of cleanliness! (3) The teacher said: you guys don't bother me! Solve your problems yourselves.*

The complex of "black colour" is one of the very deep Roma-complexes. It is very old; it reaches may be as far back as to the times when 1 500 BC the "white" aryan invaders invaded the Indus valley with its fantastic Mohenjodaro civilisation, which was created by "blacks". Krishnam tvaccam (black complexion) was one of the derogatory epithets which the white victorious invaders used for the conquered; it is preserved in the Vedic scriptures (in Rig Veda). Today we may be nearly sure that the pre-ancestors of Roma belonged to the adivasi population, to the natives who inhabited India in the period of the glorious Mohenjodaro civilisation.

Two thousand years later the dark colour put Roma to the danger of being hanged, drowned, beaten up, mutilated or evicted. Several centuries of Roma's European history are marked by genocidal attempts. On the other hand in some countries and in some periods the gadžos came to terms with Roma who were supplying them with their musical services, black-smiths' products or services of agricultural workers, and in times like that the dark complexion of Roma became "only" a target of condescend mockery and a theme of numerous wits laughed upon in village pubs (*You were four month in your mother's womb and five months you were being smoked, weren't you?*).

Unfortunately the genocidal attempts are not over. One would have believed that they ended for ever after the nazi empire collapsed and its racist ideology was indignantly condemned by the whole world. But the brutal murders of Roma by skinheads in the post-communist countries show that Roma - and humanity! - are in danger all the time.

Neither the disdainful mockery has stopped. And thus there is no wonder that dark colour of complexion is connected with a feeling of danger and with a deep complex of inferiority. This complex is manifested by traditional sayings like: *oj šukar sar rakli* (she

is beautiful like a "white" non-Rom girl), *džungalo sar kalo Rom* (ugly as a black Gypsy), etc. Even today a girl who is of fair complexion has a better chance to get "well married" than a dark *čhaj* (Rom girl).

Are teachers and pedagogical authorities aware of this fact? How do they try to face it in the educational process? We may be sure that ninety-nine percent of teachers do not abuse their Roma pupils on the basis of their "dark colour". Let us believe that a majority of teachers would even admonish the "white" pupils if they call their Roma school-mates *black mouth*, *black nose* and the like. But is that enough? What sort of **active** means are there incorporated into the educational process to teach children from their very young age that people in the world are of different anthropological types and that colour of complexion, colour of hair or eyes does not make human better or worse?

Offences against Roma by ridiculing their anthropological identity, their "black colour", can be qualified as a sort of aggressive discrimination. But the anthropological type can be offended in a much more unobtrusive, subtle, let us say "non-violent" way: if it is ignored, neglected, silently excommunicated from the public. This silent discrimination is manifested by excluding pictures of Roma from the textbooks used in Czech schools, from the colourful, attractive decoration of class-walls and school corridors. As to my knowledge not a single picture of a Rom can be found in any of the school books. Not even in books for the elementary class where illustrations are so important (they replace the written information, motivate the child to get interested in learning, etc.) I believe that the absence of Roma in the pictorial pedagogical materials is rather "absent-mindedness" than intention, absent-mindedness caused by the stereotype ethnocentric thinking of the Czech educational authorities, but its effect is similar.

Most of the Roma children are probably not fully conscious of the fact that their anthropological identity is ignored by the Czech school. However this *negligence*, *unadaptability*, *failure* of the school system supports subconsciously their traditional feeling of being inferior because of their "colour". It is one of the demotivating factors which makes them consider the school a "Czech school" with which they, as Roma, do not know how to identify themselves. It makes them paint all the "beautiful princesses with blond hair and blue eyes" and suffer for not being ever able to look like them.

As to the Czech children the official negligence of the Roma's anthropological type supports the traditional syndrome of "white ethnic" superiority. The school misses one chance to put a barrier to the constant flow of verbal offences like *black mouth*, *black nose*, *black shoe polish* - which of course provoke a justifiable defence on the side of the Roma children. And if the retaliation bursts out as an "improper" aggression, it is the Roma children who are punished.

RESPECT OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM TO THE HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL IDENTITY OF THE ROMA CHILDREN

If one goes through the *Citanka* for the fourth and fifth grade of the elementary school (Praha 1997) one is impressed by invention of its authors, by the illustrations and by the quality of selected texts. *Citanka* - literally "a reading-book" - is a textbook which intends to make the pupils of ten, eleven years acquainted with the most precious "jewels" of literature, most outstanding writers, poets, painters, with the

The major part of the books is implicitly or explicitly

glorifying Czech history, Czech culture, Czech literature, Czech art.

treasures of folk art, with traditional legends and with the most important and glorious historical events. All items are of course selected with respect to the age of the "young reader". Some of the little poems, riddles, songs or legends are most probably known to the pupils in an oral form as they are communicated in Czech families. Though that in these two inspiring "reading-books" we can find short literary pieces written by R. Kipling, J. Prevert, R.L. Stevenson, H.Ch. Andersen, R. Desnos, the prevailing majority of authors are Czechs, nearly all the folklore items are Czech, Moravian or Slovak. The major part of the books is implicitly or explicitly glorifying Czech history, Czech culture, Czech literature, Czech art. These two *ditankas* brought also one Romani song, one little poem, three proverbs and two riddles (4th grade) and one Romani song and five riddles (5th grade). Until 1997 there was not a single reference to Roma culture or history in any school-book. In comparison with the former situation are the two *ditankas* "pioneers" deserving the highest praise. But are the two and a half pages of Roma folklore an adequate information about "national" history and culture which should Roma children get to be equal to their Czech school fellows?

One question in the QU92 was: *Did you come to know something about the history and culture of Roma at school?* A complementary question tried to find out what would the respondents like to learn if they had chance to attend school again. These questions were answered by all the respondents. Only in two cases the teacher told her pupils that Roma have originate from India. Five other respondents praised their teachers for letting them sing some gypsy songs publicly. Mr. V. Cina (40 years in 1992) wrote:

(1) I was so proud when the teacher told us that Roma come from India. When I told it at home, my grandmother said: nonsense, we come from Stropkov in Slovakia. But my father was extremely happy and he made me to talk about our origin again and again in the gatherings of adult Roma who came to us "pro paramisa" (to tale-telling sessions). Other answers are rather depressing. (2) How could the teacher teach us anything about Roma culture when she herself did not know anything about it. (3) At school we were never taught anything about Roma. Neither culture, nor history. Sometimes the teacher would say to a Czech child: go and wash your hands. you are dirty as a gypsy. (4) yes we were taught about Roma culture: the teacher looked into our hair whether we are not lousy. She never inspected the hair of the Czechs. I believed that we have "lousy culture". (5) I don't remember that ever during my school years I would have heard anything about our history or about some famous Rom. My father wanted very much that I should learn. Today I know that I was doing a great mistake: I was running away from school, we went with other Rom boys to the park and we smoked and played guitar I hated school. Today I would like to learn. If I could know something about our history I would be the happiest person in the world. The Rom journalist Jan Horvath wrote: (6) I would like Roma history to be taught not only to us but to the Czech children too. I am sure they would have more respect for us if they come to know that even among Roma there were famous personalities like Cinka Panna [the famous violinist from Slovakia, 18th century), Mateo Maximoff, the Polish Rom poet Papusha, etc.

Only the recent mass emigration of Roma from the Czech Republic made the official authorities think how to fill the gazing gap of ignorance with adequate information about Roma's culture, history, language and the positive values of their *romipen*. Of course, the immediate impulse to emigrate is not the absence of ethnocultural information at school. It is the fear of the skinheads, the discrimination in the labour market, discrimination in public places which makes Roma try to find a more secure place to live. But the major catalysis-factor of all the discrimination is the totally imbalanced information about the negative and positive aspects of the Roma community. People (Roma and gajos both) are currently informed by mass media about the "gypsy criminality" - but the general public has very little chance to get informed about the connection of Roma's ancient history with the glorious Mohenjodaro civilisation (3000-1500 BC), with famous musicians who used to play at royal balls and at kings'

weddings, about Roma writers like Mateo Maximoff, Katarina Taikon, Filomena Franz, Papusha, Ilona Lackova, Leksa Manush and dozens other, about Roma painters, film directors, theatre directors and other great Roma personalities. It is at first place the school which should communicate these information to Roma children as well as to their gadzo school-mates. The absence of information about positive values of Roma has a disastrous effect on Roma as well as on gadzos. It supports and fosters the deep complex of inferiority on the part of Roma, it makes them to imitate the surface values of the gadzos, it leads them to apathy or to aggression. And the gadzos are supported in their ethnocultural superiority, in their traditional despise for Roma.

Recently the agency *Median* did a research of patriotic feelings among Czechs. The initial hypothesis was that patriotism would decrease due to the present political scandals in the Czech Republic, to growth of inflation and unemployment. However the results of the research showed the opposite: about 80 % Czechs are proud of being Czechs. The reason why is very interesting: 78% are proud because of the *rich Czech history (!!!)*, 72 % because *the Czech country is beautiful*, 71 % because of *Czech culture*. This research shows clearly that even the *Czech criminality* - which at present is very high - has not endangered the self confidence of the Czechs, the integrity of their personalities. Neither members of other nations would probably say that the Czech nation is a *nation of criminals*. It is due to positive values of Czech history and culture which compensate the present negative "behaviour" of the Czech nation. The positive values are propagated. Children learn about them at school. Everybody is made to know about them and to appreciate them. While the positive values of Roma culture and history are totally ignored. And thus they seem not to exist.

Gypsy
criminality

RESPECT OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM TO THE ROMANI LANGUAGE

On the 8th of April 1958 at the meeting of the central committee of the Communist party of former Czechoslovakia the official policy towards *the citizens of gypsy origin* was formulated. It was a policy of total ethnocultural assimilation. According to the communist ideology ethnic assimilation was the *conditio sine qua non* for raising the social and cultural level of Roma, The heaviest pressure was concentrated on full destruction of Romani. In a document *O práci medzi cigánskym obyvateľstvom v CSR* (About the work among the Gypsy population in Czechoslovakia) it was written: *It is necessary to reject a11 the artificial attempts of some cultural workers who try to create a literary language from the gypsy dialects, to create Gypsy literature or to establish classes where the Gypsy language would be used... Such an effort would slow down the process of reeducation (!) of the Gypsies. it would isolate the Gypsies from the working masses and it would help to conserve the old, primitive gypsy way of life.* (A. Jurova, 1993, p. 52).

The prohibition of Romani was exerted with "creative invention". Some teachers introduced fines for each gypsy word pronounced at school. Mr. Jan Sikl who worked as an educational assistant in a Children's home witnessed that Roma children were clean-shaved for using Romani. In Rokycany they were threatened to be excluded from the pioneer organisation. I could go on enumerating examples like that on many pages.

Two three generations ago Roma children would come to the first class of school with perfect knowledge of Romani which was fully sufficient and efficient as a means of communication of a six years old child. Communication within his own Roma community. But it did not help him in the ethnocentric Czech school.

The respondents of the QU92 have presented a shocking testimony about their language experience at school. (1) *The most difficult thing for me at school was to speak Czech. I was afraid to say a sentence not to make a mistake. Often I guessed what the teacher asked me but I did not reply simply because I was stressed and was not sure whether I shall use the correct Czech word.* (2) *We had a good teacher. If*

Language
problems

some child did not understand something she would stand by him or her, she would pat us and try to explain us what she had said. She was very kind to me but I understood half of what she was saying. I was extremely ashamed that I could not have made her happy. (3) At school they wanted to turn us into Czechs. Every day I heard again and again: don't speak the gypsy lingo! Don't you want to become civilised? The experience of Mr. Stefan Miko from the town Rokycany (West Czechia) was recorded in Romani. I would like to quote the transcription of the interview. Mr. Miko was 36 years old in 1992. He is an excellent musician but earns his living as a bricklayer. (The translation of the interview is shortened)

Until the age of six years I was the happiest child in the world. My family did not live in luxury, on the contrary. My father had to earn livelihood for ten people - because we were eight children. My father was a professional bricklayer - there were not many professional bricklayers among Roma that time! - but still he had to do his best to buy food and cloths for all of us. But we didn't mind our poverty. We lived happily. Every evening Roma were gathering in our flat, they were talking singing, playing. I was not yet six years old when I tried to play the guitar.

Then I came to school. and for the first time in my life I experienced how it feels to be shifted aside. I found out that I was something different than other children. I found out what it means to be unhappy. First of all I did not understand at all about what the teacher and the Czech boys were talking. My parents would speak Romani with us but Czech too. I was convinced that I knew Czech. But the Czech of my mother and the Czech of the teacher was completely different. The teacher was not bad. When the Czech children called me >black mouth< she was angry with them. But I did not understand her. When we wanted me to do something I did not know what she wanted.

I was constantly afraid that the teacher will ask me something. When she asked I was shocked. I was just standing as a stupified fool and other children were laughing. And my teacher was saying in a sad voice: Stephan, Stephan, you do not learn! You do not pay attention. Today I would know how to explain my condition to her - but when I was a child of six seven year I did not know!

At home I knew perfectly well what was I expected to do, to say, how was I expected to behave. I knew that in the presence of my mother, father or some elderly person I was not allowed to say a single dirty word. It would have been a terrible shame. Among us boys we used dirty words and considered it a sort of bravery but in the presence of adults it was out of question!

If it happened that my mother or my father rebuked me, I knew perfectly well why. I knew that I deserved to be rebuked. My parents were never beating us. Roma parents would never before beat their children - this bad habit they have learned from the Czechs.

But when the teacher shouted at me I didn't understand why. At school I lost my place among other people. I started to hate the school. I was running away from school. My mother and father were very angry because as a punishment they did not get the children allowance. Besides I was in danger that the social worker will send me to the children's home as it happened to so many Roma children who did not attend school properly. My mother was weeping and said: I will kill myself if they steal you and send you to the children's home. Go to school, please, for heaven! And I said: Daddy, at school I don't understand anything! The bloody Czechs call me >black mouth<. " But you are a black mouth! " my father said. "We are Roma people. We are different from them. Don't you hear that at home we speak a different language?" "But tell me, why don't they speak at school the same as we do at home?" "Because the qadjo people are more than we are and because they are many, the power is in their hand." "The boy

is clever" said my mother who was listening our discussion. Yes. at home I thought I was clever, at school I taught that I was the silliest of the silliest.

Then I continued to go to school because I was so sorry for my parents who suffered so much that I hated school.

After forty years of heavy handed assimilation many Roma children know Romani only passively. Few parents speak Romani to their children because they sincerely and ardently want them to "get civilised". The assimilators have inflicted into their mind conviction that the only way to "civilisation" is to forget Romani and *romipen*. But the deprivation of Romani does not bring in its wake an adequate knowledge of Czech. The Czech used by most of the Roma children is a Romani ethnolect of Czech: the deep structure of Romani translated to the surface structure of Czech. Inadequate pronunciation, inadequate grammar, limited vocabulary, incorrect use of words and improper stylistics.

Besides the Roma children and many Roma in general have acquired a schizophrenic attitude towards their language - as towards the whole complex of their basic identities, to their *romipen*. In the Romani "sector" of their personality they are proud of it, they love it - in the "gadzo sector" of their bilingual, bicultural and biethnic personalities they despise it, detest it, they are afraid of it and they would like to get rid of it as of a heavy burden, as of a stigma which hinders them to be accepted by "the society".

In the past the share of the "gadzo-sector" in a Rom was very limited. Roma lived their life in their community and its values and evaluations were relevant for each individual. The values and evaluations of the gadzos were relevant only to the extent whether they enabled Roma to survive. Today the situation has changed. Isolation of ethnic minorities. more over dispersed ethnic minorities as the Roma are, is hardly possible. The gadzo societies try to integrate Roma by all means but at the same time they make the integration impossible by recurrent waves of hostility, antagonism and discrimination - and by continuous disregard to *romipen*. By ignoring the complex of Roma's basic identities.

This "subtle" form of discrimination, the continuously exerted syndrome of the gadzo ethnocultural superiority perpetuates a phenomenon which has existed since Roma appeared in Europe and which constantly holds back the solution of the "gadzo-Roma problem". There always have been individual Roma who by the stroke of good luck, by strong will, by extraordinary intelligence succeeded to become "integrated" into the society as priests, generals, doctors, teachers, etc. They trespassed the limit of their traditional *jati* (cast)-profession of blacksmiths, musicians, basket weavers, horse-dealers, they adopted the gadzo language and culture in such a way that it enabled them to become rich, educated, prestigious, accepted. But by leaving the persecuted, ignored, derogated gypsyhood, they left also their romhood - their *romipen*. They emigrated from the stigmatised ethnicity to the prestigious one. They were lost for their community. Social prestige was incompatible with being a Gypsy. When Franz List wrote about the fantastic Rom musician János Bihari, he qualified him as the best *Hungarian* music interpreter of all times. When in the Expo 1967 in Montreal the Roma blacksmiths from Podunajské Biskupice (dist. Bratislava) exposed their artistic product, these were presented as *Slovak* folkart. In a conference about education of Roma children in Nitra, Slovakia 1995 it was stated that 6000 Roma have accomplished University education. How many of them pass as Roma?

"Emigration" from the disrespected Roma ethnicity often does not protect the "emigrant" from the danger of racism.

The trouble is that the "emigration" from the disrespected Roma ethnicity often does not protect the "emigrant" from the danger of racism. When Mr. Berki was killed by a squad of skinheads on the 12th May 1995, his wife said in a TV interview: *we are not Gypsies! We do not consider ourselves to be Gypsies!* And could not understand why her husband, an "integrated" citizen, a decent baker appreciated by all the neighbours was killed. The Rom writer Ilona Lacková, the Rom lawyer Emil Scuka, the ex-member of parliament Mr. Ondrej Gina and many many other educated, decent Roma,

University graduates were refused the entrance to restaurant - not because being thieves, criminals, asocial persons - but because being Roma.

The constant escape of educated, "integrated", "decent" Roma from the Roma community does cement the disastrous false believe that Roma are a marginal group of uneducated people on the edge of criminality, of people who cause the *eternal Gypsy problem*.

There is a strong feed-back between the perpetual negligence and non-acceptance of Roma's ethnocultural identity by the gadzos and between the perpetual escape of Roma from their ethnocultural identity. This feed-back creates a vicious circle of cumulative cause.

Where should this circle be cut? Who should cut it? The representatives of the gadzo society who do not want to "suffer from the Roma-problem" or the Roma political representatives, the educated Roma, who do not want to suffer by the problems which the gadzo society is causing to them?

I leave this question open - but still I would like to express my opinion. It is the school and the educational system which is committed to the task of "educating" people. It is the school which is a decisive agent in forming the mentality, opinions and attitudes of people from their very childhood. It is the school which should give children information necessary of becoming really human and efficient members of the society. There fore the teachers, the pedagogical workers and the educational authorities are those who should know and realise what are the real reasons of the unsatisfactory communication between Roma and gadze, the unsatisfactory results of communication between a Czech teacher and a Rom pupil. They have no excuse in indulging in their syndrome of ethnic superiority. They have no excuse in thoughtlessly using stereotype phrases like *unadaptability of Roma children to the educational process*. Their duty is to think about the *unadaptability of the educational process to the Roma children*.

POST SCRIPTUM

It would be unfair not to mention positive attempts which aim at introducing more information about *romipen* into the school system. These attempts could start only after 1989 when the policy of assimilation was rejected. At least officially as a declaration. Of course, in eight years the stereotypes lasting eight hundred years cannot be changed rooted out. any little positive step is important.

In 1991 Romani and romistics became a university subject and is being taught in a five years' course. The first two graduates of this subject are working in a foundation *Nová Skola* (New school) the activities and results of which are remarkable: training of Roma assistants in classes with Roma children, lectures about *romipen* for (Czech) teachers, a literary competition in Romani for children from 7-15 years, etc. More detailed information yields the paper of Helen Jirincová. One of the graduates in romistics teaches this subject at a pedagogical faculty in the town Usti nad Labem. There are optional lectures in Romani at the pedagogical faculty in Prague. The pedagogical faculty in Olomouc has published several very good books about Roma history and culture. A fantastic experiment is running in the private school of Premysl Pitter in Ostrava directed by the directress Helena Balabánová: Roma parents take part in the educational process as assistants.

A most useful requalification course for adult Roma has started in September 1997. It is organised by the Foundation of Rajko Djuric. Roma attend lectures of sociology, psychology, Czech and also of Romani history and language. Eighty students have recently passed successfully the first exams and proceed in further studies. In their evaluation of the course many of them express deep gratefulness for the information about Roma history and about famous Roma personalities which they never ever before had chance to get. *At last I found my identity and only now I am really proud of being a Romni* wrote a 19 Years old girl from Milevsko. The ministry of education as well as some publishing houses are interested to incorporate information about Roma and their history, culture and famous personalities in school-books. There are not enough specialist who could meet all these demands and it definitely will take time to fill the gap of ignorance by valid, reliable and non-ethnocentric information. However there is good will - and as it is said: where there is will there is also way.

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