

## Conference Proceedings



Photo by Poppy Szaybo

An international conference to launch two new reports:

**DENIED A FUTURE?  
- THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION OF ROMA/GYPSY AND  
TRAVELLER CHILDREN' IN SOUTH-EASTERN AND CENTRAL  
EUROPE'**  
&  
*Research on Selected Roma Education Programmes  
in Central and Eastern Europe*

**European Youth Centre Budapest, 28-30 November 2001**



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**Save the Children**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<a href="#">Introduction</a> .....	4
<a href="#">Acknowledgements</a> .....	6
<a href="#">Some comments from the participants</a> .....	7
<a href="#">The Conference Programme</a> .....	8

### I PLENARY PRESENTATIONS

#### Conference Opening Addresses

<a href="#">Judy Lister, SC-UK – Introduction</a> .....	15
<a href="#">Peter Jakab, Ministry of Education, Hungary</a> .....	15
<a href="#">Mike Aaronson, SC-UK</a> .....	17
<a href="#">George Soros, OSI</a> .....	20
<a href="#">Mary Robinson, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights</a> .....	21

#### [Plenary 1 - Main Findings of SC-UK's 'Denied a Future?' report and OSI/IEP's Roma Education Research Project](#)

<a href="#">Katherine Pinnock, SC-UK</a> .....	23
<a href="#">Martin Kovats, Consultant to the 'Denied Future?' project</a> .....	29
<a href="#">Christina McDonald, ESP/OSI</a> .....	30

#### [Plenary 2 - Investors in a Future for Roma children?: Clarifying the role of intergovernmental organisations](#)

<a href="#">Alexandros Tsolakis, European Commission</a> .....	35
<a href="#">Rosa Maria Guida, European Commission</a> .....	38
<a href="#">Dena Ringold, World Bank</a> .....	40
<a href="#">Francoise Kempf, Council of Europe</a> .....	44
<a href="#">Consuelo Holtzer, Council of Europe</a> .....	45
<a href="#">Rob Fuderich, UNICEF</a> .....	48
<a href="#">Comments and Questions</a> .....	51

#### [Plenary 3 - Education for us](#)

<a href="#">Prof. William Kornblum, City University, New York</a> .....	55
<a href="#">Young People's Contributions</a> .....	56

#### [Concluding Remarks](#)

<a href="#">Marion Molteno, SC-UK</a> .....	59
<a href="#">Prof. Jean Pierre-Liegeois, Gypsy Research Centre, Paris</a> .....	67

### II QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSIONS

<a href="#">A – The Role of Intergovernmental Organizations</a> .....	71
<a href="#">B – Innovations in Schools</a> .....	72
<a href="#">Paper #1</a> .....	74
<a href="#">Paper #2</a> .....	79
<a href="#">Paper #3</a> .....	84

<u>C – Building on Existing Models</u> .....	88
<u>Paper #1</u> .....	89
<u>Paper #2</u> .....	94
<u>D – Needs of Bilingual Children</u> .....	100
<u>Paper #1</u> .....	102
<u>E – Pre-School Education</u> .....	111
<u>Paper #1</u> .....	113
<u>F – Out of School Support</u> .....	119
<u>Paper #1</u> .....	120
<u>Paper #2</u> .....	133

### **III WORKSHOP SESSIONS**

<u>#1 Interactive Photography Workshop</u> .....	139
<u>#2 Developing Dialogue using Drama and Role-Play</u> .....	139
<u>#3 The Role of the Media in Advocating for Diversity</u> <u>and Promoting Responsible Reporting</u> .....	139
<u>#4 The Educational Needs of Children with Adult responsibilities</u> .....	139
<u>#5 The Educational Needs of Refugee and Displaced Roma Children</u> .....	140
<u>#6 Policy Implications of the Roma Education Research Project IEP, OSI-BP. Beyond</u> <u>Projects: How can successful pilot initiatives and research inform policy development</u> .....	141
<u>Paper #1</u> .....	142
<u>Paper #2</u> .....	144
<u>#7 Focus on collecting data and evaluation the success of Roma education programs</u> .....	154

### **APPENDICES**

#### **Appendix 1**

<u>Invitation letter</u> .....	161
<u>List of delegates</u> .....	162

#### **Appendix 2**

<u>Links/web addresses to e-versions of DAF? and ESP reports</u> .....	172
<u>Summary of Denied a Future? report in Romanes</u> .....	174

#### **Appendix 3**

<u>Media coverage</u> .....	178
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#### **Appendix 4**

<u>Recommendation No R (2000) 4 of the Committee of Ministers</u> <u>to member states on the education of Roma/Gypsy children in Europe</u> .....	181
<u>Appendix to Recommendation No. R (2000) 4</u> .....	182

## INTRODUCTION

The 'Denied a Future?' conference on the right to education of Roma children and young people in South-Eastern and Central Europe brought together policy-makers, practitioners and users of education services to apply their expertise and experience to the findings of two significant new pieces of research in the field of Roma education: the 'Denied a Future?' report by Save the Children (SC-UK) and the Roma Education Research Project by the Institute for Educational Policy (IEP) of the Open Society Institute.

The conference ran over three days from 28 to 30 November 2001. Nearly 200 participants attended from more than 20 European and North American countries. Delegates included representatives of intergovernmental agencies, education ministries, Roma leaders, international and grass roots NGOs, academics and experts. The participation of Roma young people to provide their perspective as users of education services was particularly important. Young people were included in each of the country delegations attending the conference. The fact that all of the key stakeholders in the education reform process were present made this a unique event, characterised by honest and thought provoking discussions and informed by the aspirations and expectations of Roma people and experts in the field of education on the one hand, and the financial, practical and technical constraints experienced by governments and schools on the other.

The two reports that provided the background to the conference clearly outline the barriers that Roma children face in accessing quality education services, and also provide clear guidelines and descriptions of approaches that have successfully overcome these in recent years. Case studies that were examined in the 'Your Chance to Ask' sessions provided a wealth of additional detail on how change can be successfully introduced, while also demonstrating the complexity of this task and the substantial efforts and resources that need to be committed for discriminatory school cultures to be transformed into inclusive ones. The creativity of NGOs and their important role as catalysts, fundraisers and advocates of innovation were recurring themes.

One of the main concerns raised by the reports was that many national governments' efforts to address discriminatory policy and practice were neither visible nor strategic. It was therefore encouraging to hear from government representatives from Hungary, Czech Republic, Romania and elsewhere of initiatives that indicate the beginnings of a systemic, rather than an ad-hoc approach. The commitment of several governments to co-finance initiatives alongside European agencies also did much to assuage long-standing concerns that governments had become over-reliant on European funding. The willingness of government delegates to be open about the obstacles and constraints that they face was much appreciated, as was their evident commitment to overcome these.

The presence of international and intergovernmental organisations was essential. The European Union, the Council of Europe, the World Bank and agencies of the United Nations such as UNICEF are significant actors and investors in safeguarding human rights and supporting institutional reform. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights' address to this conference provided a robust, clear and succinct summary of what the right to education

means in fact and in practice. However, there remains much misunderstanding about what their mandate is - and isn't - where their responsibilities end and those of national governments begin, and what grass roots organisations can reasonably expect of them. It was therefore immensely useful that these matters were discussed, explained and clarified. In particular, participants were encouraged to hear of the continuing attention being paid to the issue of education provision for Roma children's in the negotiations leading up to EU enlargement and of the World Bank's recent engagement with this issue. As was clear from discussions in the 'Your Chance to Ask' sessions, international institutions can (rightly or wrongly) be perceived as being remote and inaccessible. The presence of representatives from so many agencies, their openness and willingness to answer questions, was an important demonstration of their commitment to accountability.

The presence and high visibility of Rome young people at the 'Denied a Future?' conference was extremely important. Many stereotypes still prevail in the discourse about problems that Roma youth might face in accessing a good quality education. The presence of the young people ensured that some discussions began with 'we' as opposed to the usual 'they'. Their participation as group leaders, film-makers and presenters, as volunteers assisting with the event's organisation and as hosts for evening events was a constant reminder to all delegates of what Roma young people are capable of when they are offered positive educational experiences.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Save the Children UK and the Open Society Institute would like to thank all of the donor agencies that helped to make this conference possible. These include the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation and the US State Department who provided support to the conference via the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe Quick Start Package; KulturKontakt and UNICEF; the Canadian and British Embassies in Budapest.

We would also like to express our gratitude to all the speakers, facilitators, chairs and translators and the many individuals who put so much effort into making this conference a success. Particular thanks are due to Patricia Coelho, Poppy Szaybo, Judit Kovacs and Hayo de Vries, without whose ceaseless hard work, this event would not have been possible. Thanks also to the students and graduates of the Gandhi Gymnazium whose evening of music was one the highlights of the conference programme.

## SOME COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS



“George Soros’ message was very direct and mobilizing. It was great to have the Hungarian ministry of education present.”

“The conference is full of useful topics and is very well organized. Congratulations!!!”

“Excellent music in the evening.”

“Useful opportunity to gather information and to discuss about Roma educational situation AND NEEDS.”

“Strength of the Conference was the high number of Roma representatives and NGO members”

“Integrative approach to solving problems”

# 'DENIED A FUTURE?' CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

**28-30 November 2001**  
**European Youth Centre Budapest (EYCB)**

## **Conference aims**

The 'Denied a Future?' conference on the right to education of Roma children and young people in South-Eastern and Central Europe will bring together policy-makers, practitioners and users of education services (Roma young people) to apply their expertise and experience to the findings of two significant new pieces of research in the field of Roma education: the 'Denied a Future?' report by Save the Children (SC-UK) and the Roma Education Research Project by the Institute for Educational Policy (IEP) of the Open Society Institute.

## **Conference working methods**

- *Plenaries* will present the findings, conclusions and recommendations of SC-UK and IEP's work, examine the role and impact of inter-governmental agencies as investors in education reform and provide a forum for Roma young people themselves to present their views on the education services that are currently on offer to them and new initiatives that are emerging
- *'Your Chance to Ask'* are structured thematic discussions resourced by policy-makers and practitioners whose work in promoting the successful management of diversity in education is at the forefront of innovation in Europe and North America. To ensure that delegates have the information they need to ask detailed and informed questions. Discussion Papers for 'Your Chance to Ask' sessions will be distributed to delegates before the meeting.
- *Workshops* will offer opportunities for practitioners to learn about and try out methods of working with groups of children and young people from diverse backgrounds using photography, role-play and drama.
- *Working Groups* are discussion fora on themes that present particular challenges to education systems such as provision for working children, provision for refugee and displaced Roma children and the barriers to 'scaling up' good practice from projects into mainstream provision.

## **Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> November**

- |               |                               |
|---------------|-------------------------------|
| 14.00 - 20.00 | <b>Registration</b>           |
| 19.00 - 22.00 | <b>Welcome buffet at EYCB</b> |

## Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> November

- 08.00 - 09.00 Registration
- 09.00 - 10.00 **CONFERENCE OPENING ADDRESS**
- Chair: Judy Lister, Save the Children UK  
**Peter Jakab**, Ministry of Education, Hungary  
**Mike Aaronson**, Director General, Save the Children UK  
**George Soros**, Chairman of the Open Society Institute (via video)  
**Mary Robinson**, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (via video)
- 10.00 - 10.30 Coffee Break
- 10.30 - 11.30 **PLENARY I - Main findings of SC-UK's 'Denied a Future?' report and OSI/IEP's Roma Education Research Project**
- Chair: Judy Lister SC-UK  
**Katherine Pinnock**, Save the Children UK  
**Martin Kovats**, University of Birmingham  
**Christina McDonald**, OSI/IEP
- 'Your Chance to Ask' - preparatory sessions (6 groups)**  
Delegates will have the opportunity to join one group on Day 1 and one group on Day 2. See below for themes.
- 12.30 - 14.00 LUNCH
- 14.00 - 15.30 **Workshops and Working Groups (7 groups)**  
Delegates can attend one session on Day 1 and one session on Day 2. See below for themes.
- 16.00 - 17.00 **'Your Chance to Ask' - Discussions**  
Questions on issues of policy and practice from the morning's preparatory session put to the panel members for discussion.
- 18.00-20.00 **Evening drinks at EYCB**
- 22.00 onwards **Party at EYCB - all welcome!**

## Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> November

- 09.30 - 11.00            **PLENARY II: Investors in a Future for Roma Children?**  
Clarifying the role of intergovernmental organisations
- Chair: Maria Anduszkiewicz, Save the Children UK  
**Alexandros Tsolakis**, European Commission  
**Dena Ringold**, World Bank  
**Consuelo Holtzer**, Council of Europe  
**Rob Fuderich**, UNICEF
- 11.00 - 11.30            Coffee Break
- 11.30 - 12.30            'Your Chance to Ask' - Preparatory Session
- 12.30 - 14.00            LUNCH
- 14.00 - 15.30            Workshops and Working Groups
- 15.30 - 16.00            Coffee Break
- 16.00 - 17.00            'Your Chance to Ask' - Discussion
- 17.30 - 18.15            Chairs and facilitators meeting (Marion Molteno & Jean-Pierre Liégeois)
- 18.00 - 20.00            Reception at British Embassy (by invitation only).

## Friday 30<sup>th</sup> November

- 09.30 - 11.00            **PLENARY III: Education For Us**
- Chair: Bharti Mepani and Poppy Szaybo  
**Introduction by Prof. Kornblum**, City University of New York, USA  
**Youth led plenary session** - Roma youth delegates convey their vision of inclusive education.
- 11.00 - 11.30            Coffee Break
- 11.30 - 12.45            **Closing remarks and conclusions**
- Chair: Elvis Ali  
**Prof. Jean Pierre Liégeois**, Director, Gypsy Research Centre, Paris  
**Marion Molteno**, Education Advisor, Save the Children UK
- 12.45 - 13.00            **Evaluation of the conference**

## **'Your Chance to Ask ...' Discussion themes**

### ***A: The Role of Intergovernmental Organisations***

Chair: Judy Lister

Given that one of the main findings of the Denied a Future? report was that most funding for Roma education initiatives in Central and South Eastern Europe originate from external donors and in particular inter-governmental agencies, this session will enable delegates to consider and discuss in depth issues relating to this as addressed in the Plenary II session. Representatives of organisations featured in the Plenary will be available to answer delegates' questions.

### ***B: Education for All (I): Innovations in school management and teaching practice***

Chair: Michelynn Lafleche

A significant part of the Denied a Future? report deals with aspects of good practice that primarily exist in the NGO sector. In order to explore this further, practitioners from Central and Eastern Europe, Western Europe and North America will present examples of successful initiatives from schools serving students of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Can principles and practice that have been developed elsewhere to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse populations contribute to the goal of providing Education for All in South-East and Central Europe?

### ***C: Education for All (II): Strategies for building on existing educational models***

Chair: Marion Molteno

The Future Development of Roma Educational Programming in South-East and Central European countries - Based on the outcomes of OSI-BP's research project on Roma education programming, this session will discuss the concrete outcomes and lessons learned about direct educational programming and institutional change efforts, and the implications for further program development in the region. The concept of an "integrated program approach," a project model that covers the age spectrum for children from K-12 and that meets the array of needs, will be introduced.

### ***D: The needs of bilingual children***

Chair: Maria Andruszkiewicz

The failure of many schools to appreciate bilingualism as an asset in today's Europe is evidenced by the high numbers of bilingual children being channelled into Special Schools for the mentally disabled. Issues discussed in the Denied a Future? report to be considered include teacher training, classroom support, curricula and textbooks, the challenges presented by and benefits of mother-tongue provision. Resource people for the session will include a policy advisor, practitioners and Roma young people who work as 'cultural interpreters' in the classroom.

### ***E: Effective Preparation for School - the importance of pre-school***

Chair: Rob Fuderich

The Denied a Future? report demonstrates that pre-school education is an important component of inclusive education. This session will discuss a number of areas including the impact of fees and charges being introduced for pre-school services and practice models that successfully serve children from majority and minority communities enabling them to enter the first grades of primary school on an equal footing.

### ***F: Out-of-school support for children and their families***

Chair: Martin Emerson

The need to address the context in which children learn and for developing a holistic approach to education is highlighted in the Denied a Future? report. This session will consider the contribution of community involvement and outreach programmes that aim to involve parents more actively in their children's schooling, programmes designed to overcome practical barriers to learning (homework clubs, supplementary weekend and evening classes) and other initiatives that seek to influence the wider learning environment.

## **Workshops and Working Group Themes**

### ***#1 Interactive Photography Workshop***

Facilitators: Poppy Szaybo, Beata Olah and young people from Gandhi College, Hungary

Using photography in and outside the classroom breaks down barriers and enables adults and young people to see the world through each other's eyes. This workshop will be facilitated by a professional photographer and led by Roma young people for adult and youth participants.

### ***#2 Developing Dialogue using Drama and Role-Play***

Facilitator: Bharti Mepani

Drama and role-play are communication media that rely as much on non-verbal as verbal messages. Sensitively used, drama and role play are powerful tools for addressing difficult and sensitive issues such as the stereotyping, discrimination, bullying and the effect of peers and teachers' behaviour on minority pupils' self-esteem. This workshop offers an opportunity to try out practical exercises and techniques that practitioners can adapt for use in their own classrooms.

### ***#3 The Role of the Media in Advocating for Diversity and Promoting Responsible Reporting***

Facilitators: Gabor Miklosi and Andrew Stroehling

The media are powerful shapers of public opinion. Negative reporting or the absence of certain groups from mass communications can create a hostile political climate for policy-makers seeking to introduce measures promoting equal opportunities. Journalists, NGOs, politicians and others have a vital role to play in reminding media outlets that the public interest is not served by promoting a divided and xenophobic society beset by stereotypes. This workshop is for anyone whose work entails making the case for equal opportunities. It will explore ways to use the media to overturn stereotypes, challenge biased reporting and raise public awareness and support.

### ***#4 The Educational Needs of Children with Adult responsibilities***

Facilitator: Miranda Kazantsis

The reality of some children's lives is often ignored in the design of education provision and curricula. Being a young parent, needing to work, or having caring responsibilities for elders or younger family members should not automatically disqualify a young person from taking up their right to education. As yet, there are few initiatives that address the challenge of developing education services for children and young people who are unable to attend school, or attend only irregularly, due to their family responsibilities or economic circumstances. What would such services look like, how would they be financed and how could they be made appealing to young people who already have many pressing demands on their time?

***#5 The Educational Needs of Refugee and Displaced Roma Children***

Facilitators: Rasa Sekulovic and Roza Ilic

Refugee, returning refugee and displaced Roma children are a presence in many communities throughout South Eastern and Central Europe. The 'Denied a Future?' reports document how refugee and displaced Roma children can be subjected to discrimination in schools and kindergartens, in addition to their families being disadvantaged with regard to access to housing, welfare and health assistance. Refugee children returning to their home countries may have not received schooling for months or years, or been educated in a different system and/or language, sometimes for a period of several years. With support they can re-integrate successfully into the schools they return to but such support is rarely provided. This session will examine the particular educational needs of Roma children whose schooling has been disrupted by the experience of displacement.

***#6 Policy Implications of the Roma Education Research Project IEP, OSI-BP.***

***Beyond Projects: how can successful pilot initiatives and research inform policy development***

Facilitators: Christina McDonald and Peter Rado

This session will begin to explore how to scale-up the impact of Roma education projects studied in the IEP Roma Education Research Project. It will also discuss how successful pilot initiatives and research inform policy development.

***#7 Focus on collecting data and evaluating the success of Roma education programs***

Facilitator: Noe Medina

This session will look at procedures, standards, and challenges.

# I

## PLENARY PRESENTATIONS



## OPENING ADDRESSES

### Introduction: Judy Lister,

**UK/Europe Regional Director, Save the Children UK (Chair)**

Judy Lister opened the conference by thanking the participants, especially those who had travelled from North America and across Europe in difficult weather conditions, making this is unique gathering of experts. She expressed special thanks to the Romani young people and the many Romani communities and organisations that had been involved in the research for both Save the Children's 'Denied a Future?' And OSI's research project. She stressed the seriousness of this meeting and its aim of drawing productive conclusions.

She also thanked the donor agencies that had supported both the 'Denied a Future?' Project and this conference. These included the Swiss Development Agency and the US State Department via the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe Quick Start Package; KulturKontakt and UNICEF and the Canadian and British Embassies in Budapest.

### Peter Jakab,

**Director of Education, Hungarian Ministry of Education**

Thank you, Ladies and Gentleman, dear colleagues and friends,

First of all let me welcome you all here in Hungary on behalf of the Hungarian Ministry of Education. I would also like to thank you for the invitation - we were pleased to accept it as the topic of the conference is extremely important and relevant. It is our common aim to ensure the right to learning for everyone both in the life-long and the life-wide sense. I would like to emphasise that the role of NGOs in this field has been extremely important especially here in Hungary. The role of the Soros Foundation should be emphasised.

We all know that there are still a lot of problems and challenges in this field of Roma education today, but we are pleased to see that the regular report of the EU acknowledges the efforts made and measures taken so far by the government. Let me mention some examples - I do not want to take your precious time by quoting figures and a lot of data but let me just mention a few. In the 2000/2001 school year, 2,840 pupils were supported in secondary education, costing more than 14 million Forints. While in higher education, 630 students were supported by a grant of 55 million Forints by the Hungarian Foundation for National and Ethnic Minorities. The Foundation for Hungarian Romas provided grants for the 2000/2001 school year in primary, secondary and higher education for 10, 556 students with a grant of 338 million Forints, which included the purchase of educational tools

The modification of statutory provision aimed at providing education for Roma children includes the following: Kindergarten –Roma cultural education;

Primary education – Roma minority education is ensured according to the demands of parents, teachers or nursery teachers. I would just like to make the point that Romani and Beashi languages can be taught today, but the system of requirements is still to be elaborated.

The minimum budget of 2,000 Forints which has been determined for separate supplementary expenditure for remedial teaching is aimed at the promotion of socially disadvantaged youth and children. It is very important to emphasise the modifications to the public education law in 1999, which amongst others aimed at those children who, because of social disadvantage or cultural differences, could not gain access to auxiliary schools or special schools. The preparatory year and the personal development programme in primary schools increased the chances of those children facing difficulties or struggling during the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the schooling. During the first 4 years these special personal development programmes can be followed. This is very important for all disadvantaged children but particularly for the Roma who, of course, have cultural differences and difficulties when they start their schooling.

In order to promote the vocational training of children, any student who cannot finish the 8<sup>th</sup> grade can start a preparatory year in vocational education. So, although they couldn't finish 8<sup>th</sup> grade by the end of compulsory school attendance, they can start the 1<sup>st</sup> year in vocational education and then, if they finish this successfully, they can start vocational education like other pupils. Passing the so-called 'General Knowledge' exam is no longer a condition of acquiring vocational training, and obtaining a second vocation is also free of charge.

Public Education Law also ensures the prohibition of discrimination. More overtly, further modifications of regulations are planned to describe cases of discrimination in a more precise and detailed way. The creation of statutory provisions at local level completes the above mentioned measures. As local governments exercise their right to maintain schools - and local governments in Hungary have a great deal of liberty in this respect - the role of local government is extremely important.

Some other programmes I would like to mention include the Arany Janos National Talent Promotion Programme and the various European Union PHARE programmes of 1999-2001. The Ministry is currently planning to launch a third one for 2002-2003. Both programmes bear the title of 'Social Integration of Disadvantaged Youth' with a particular emphasis on the Roma minority. Let me mention some projects of these programmes. The main projects of the 1999 programme are: 'Reduction of the Primary School Drop-Out Rate' with a special focus on the Roma; 'Secondary education with supportive schooling' and 'Social promotion and integration of the Roma minority'. Sub-projects include: 'Planning and realisation of special nursery teacher training programmes' which means Roma nursery teachers for kindergartens and pre-school education; teacher training and in-service training courses; pre-school and primary school development in the frame of educational associations; remedial and vocational programmes inside the school system; drawing up employment training programmes outside the school system; establishment of two new special promotion secondary school hostels; planning and realisation of higher education preparatory courses and other talent promotion programmes for Roma students. The budget for the programme is 9.6 million Euros and was recently increased to 12.5 million Euros. The Hungarian co-financing is 45%.

Projects of the 2001 PHARE programme include the establishment of information and training centres in disadvantaged areas that could undertake educational, cultural, employment and other tasks. The operation of these centres will be assisted by mediators. Another sub-project is the elaboration and application of pedagogical programmes that promote the reduction of the number of children in special schools who got there, as we all know, because of their social situation and not for any real reason.

The introduction of Romology in Higher Education for policemen, teachers, lawyers – people who can usually meet the problems and needs of the Roma communities is extremely important, as it is our aim to make these people as open and knowledgeable as possible.

Finally, another sub-project I would like to mention is the 'Equal Component' – the promotion of employment of socially disadvantaged youth, mainly members of the Roma minority. This is the first time that Hungary has participated in the 'Equal Community' initiative of the EU. The budget for this programme is 10 million Euros and the Hungarian Government is co-financing 50% of this.

In terms of bi-lateral projects, we currently have French-Hungarian and British-Hungarian co-operation. But we are also planning new ones, for example with Sweden. Alongside the Ministry of Education a new PHARE monitoring and resource centre has begun its operation. Its main activities include the improvement of social integration of young people with multiple disadvantages through planning, operating and supporting programmes and strategic development. A vocational guidance association operates together with the resource centre in the framework of which there are different organisations. Government, Roma organisations, NGOs and schools can cooperate and elaborate proposals for the Ministry of Education. We hope that through this wide variety of cooperation of institutions and organisations, working on different levels and in different fields, the results of our work can be enhanced. Such cooperation is probably new but certainly very important in this very difficult and interrelated field.

Research workers of the Hungarian Ministry of Education have read and studied the regular report of the EU as well as the report of the OSI. Both of them render great help to the elaboration of future measures. The 'Denied a Future?' Report of Save the Children should be praised for its very personal voice, the voice of the people is very well captured and reflected in this report. I am sure that this conference will give us full details of the problems discussed in the report and I hope that proposals to solve them and answers to some difficult questions will also be found during the conference. As we all know it is very difficult to assess the effects of educational measures because on the level of society these are visible much later. Sometimes we can only see the effects after a decade or even later. We do hope that steps taken now will lead us to a free and open society based on the equality of all its members.

Finally I would like to wish the conference successful discussions, and let me ask you to pass all the thoughts, proposals, suggestions of these discussions to our Minister so that we can collaborate in the frame of this co-operation and develop new measures to further ensure the right to learning for everyone. It is a right that is among the fundamental rights in the constitution of the Republic of Hungary. I believe that our joint efforts will contribute to a process that will make learning accessible for everybody and will give an opportunity for everyone to have competitive knowledge and a marketable profession. Thank you very much for your attention.

**Mike Aaronson,**  
**Director General of Save the Children UK**

Good morning everyone. I would like to add my thanks to everyone for being here and also thanks to everyone who has contributed to this project, of which this conference is a culmination. I would like to start by telling you a little about my organisation and to explain why this piece of work is very important for us. We are Save the Children UK. There are

currently 33 Save the Children organisations who come together as members of the International Save the Children Alliance.

Save the Children UK in its own right has an international programme. We work in the UK, Europe and all the continents to make a reality of children's rights. The way we work is a combination of very practical work on the ground - supporting local organisations, local partners and young people themselves to deliver tangible benefits for children - we back that up by trying to understand, through analysis, the causes of the problems that children face. Armed with that knowledge we take part in advocacy through lobbying governments, through public education, communication and campaigning to try and achieve change for children.

The 'Denied a Future?' report combines these three areas of activity. It is informed by our practical experience of working with young people on the ground, which tells us certain things about their situation. So, this research is an attempt to understand more profoundly what their situation is. Then we have a responsibility to take the messages from that work to try and achieve some lasting change. The context for this is the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which has been signed and ratified by all European governments, indeed by all governments in the world, except for the governments of Somalia and the USA. The UNCRC is a benchmark – it defines standards for all children regardless of where they are, what their ethnicity is, what their gender is. For Save the Children it provides the yardstick against which we operate. We are proud of the fact that the woman who founded Save the Children-UK in 1919 came up with the first definition of child rights. She founded SC-UK because, after the First World War, children in Austria and Hungary were dying of starvation due to a blockade. In 1923 she drafted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. This was adopted by the then League of Nations in 1924 and subsequently by the UN after the Second World War. This Declaration became the UNCRC - the universally accepted benchmark of children's rights.

One of the core principles of the Convention is the principle of non-discrimination. I would say that for SC-UK and all of us here, the principle of non-discrimination is one of the most important things guiding our work. It certainly has always been a key issue for SC-UK in many different contexts. In the UK, Europe, Africa and Asia we are dealing with different forms of discrimination against children and these are many and varied. The 'Denied a Future?' report describes discrimination and segregation that is particularly shocking and shameful to us, because it is so close to home. Discrimination towards Roma/Gypsy and Traveller children is happening in our own country, the UK, and in all countries in Europe.

In the report, children describe incidents of discrimination and segregation that really are shocking. But I do not just want to emphasise the negative aspects. The report also contains much to encourage us. Indeed, we have heard already from Peter Jakab the commitment in this country to introduce models of good practice and there are many other examples of good practice that are emerging in other countries too. We do need to be angry about discrimination, but we also need to be positive about the possibilities of doing something about it.

The reason why Save the Children UK decided to publish this report is that the different examples of good practice are isolated. They are happening in different countries; they are being carried out by different organisations; the learning from them is not brought together and there has not been, until now, a solid body of evidence that shows what needs to be done and what can be done. When we started looking into this issue a few years ago, we tried to

find information about what was happening to these children's education. We soon realised that a body of evidence that described their situation did not exist. We decided do this project to try to understand why Roma/Gypsy and Traveller children are being denied the right to education, one of the most basic human rights and particularly crucial to children, to find examples of good practice and to bring these together in the 'Denied a Future?' report.

It is worth emphasising that many of the problems described in the report apply equally to other sectors. They apply to the health services that are offered to Roma/Gypsy and Traveller children; they apply to housing and to opportunities in the labour market. So, although this report focuses on education, we need to understand that it is part of wider social problem and, if we want to deal with the issues around education, we have to understand those issues in the wider context and look at the issues of discrimination and equal opportunity across the board.

It is very important to stress that, although this conference is concerned with Central and South Eastern Europe, the lessons learned apply equally to Member States of the European Union. One of the statistics, which I find particularly shocking, is that in the EU about 50% of Roma children never attend school. So although here in Budapest we are discussing these issues in the context of probable accession to the EU, we must not overlook the fact that this is a Europe-wide issue. There are issues of discrimination to be tackled in the EU member states as much as in the EU candidate countries and others in the European region. In all of the European states, we have a duty enshrined in international law and in the UN CRC to respect the right of all children to an education that is inclusive and relevant to the reality of their lives. This means an education that meets children where they are and offers them something that is useful to them, as well as real opportunities to participate in and contribute to Europe's future. There can be few more worthwhile or challenging causes to adopt than this one.

In this report, the most powerful voices are those of children and young people themselves describing the reality of their lives. This conference is an opportunity for young people to tell us how they see their future; what sort of education they would like to see. I hope everyone here will take advantage of the fact that there are young advocates, young visionaries, who will share their ideas and aspirations with us. We need to listen to what these young people have to say. Too often, policy makers see young people as the problem. The fact that children are not in school *is* a problem, but policy makers do not see the young people as part of the solution. If we listened better and acted upon what young people have to say, we could come closer to providing an education that is appropriate to their needs and then maybe we would have less of a problem.

The 'Denied a Future?' report describes what needs to change and what is already changing to offer a better future for Roma children in Europe. It draws upon a very wide range of experiences. The people in this room have a very wide range of different experiences and the reason we are all here is to learn from these - from each other. I am sure we all share the commitment to offering equal educational opportunities to all Europe's children.

I would like to finish by reading you one paragraph from report's Summary and Conclusions. This is the message, which governments in particular, but everyone who has an influence in this area should take on board:

*"Education services provided free of charge by the State can in part compensate for disadvantages and inequalities that can arise from poverty or difficult family*

*circumstances. They are also an important means of promoting respect from an early age for citizens from different cultural, linguistic, religious and ethnic backgrounds."*

This really is about respecting all of Europe's citizens and providing, through education, an environment where our young citizens can develop to build a Europe of which we can all be proud.

Thank you very much for your attention and I wish you the very best for a successful conference.

**[Video Message by George Soros,](#)  
Chairman Open Society Institute**

I'm very glad that Save the Children UK and the Open Society Institute got together to organize this joint conference on the education of Roma children, because this is an urgent and pressing issue which ranks very highly among our priorities as a foundation.

I have personally been very concerned with this issue. The treatment of Roma is the last, most pressing, unresolved minority issue in Central and Eastern Europe and indeed in the whole of Europe. About a third of Roma children are put into special schools for the mentally retarded and that, of course, is an unacceptable policy. The most effective way to address it is through the education of Roma children. This has been a main objective of the Open Society Foundation Network. We are supporting a number of imaginative new approaches, which, for instance in Hungary, have brought very good results, where we give some small support to a teacher who takes up to four Roma children and mentors them through their school career. But, its not something that private foundations alone can hope to solve. Improving education, not just by spending more on it, but by integrating Roma children, providing some additional tutoring support that enables them to hold their own in the mainstream educational system, is an excellent investment for the government to make. It is going to take, I think, many years, but this is something that is already producing results and something absolutely necessary to do on a larger scale.

Naturally, there are many other things that need to be done. You can't just educate children without doing something for those families from which these children come. If we could create a generation that is better educated and genuinely equal to the rest of the population, I think we will be able to overcome the prejudices, which currently dominate the scene. The treatment of Roma is, of course, one of the major outstanding issues in the accession process. Particularly for the countries that are otherwise well qualified, the Czech republic, Hungary and Slovakia.

I'd like to use this opportunity to call on the governments to give higher priority to this issue and devote larger resources to it than they doing currently.

I wish you a successful conference. Thank you for participating in it. I look forward to hearing the results.

[Video Message by Mary Robinson,](#)  
**United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

It is a pleasure to greet all of you gathered in Budapest for this conference on the right to education of Roma children and young people. I wish to express my thanks to Save the Children for organising this timely event. I recall vividly the personal accounts given by Roma children and youth at the World Conference against Racism in Durban, and their hope and expectation that things would really change.

Discrimination against Roma is not a new phenomenon. The Roma have for centuries been subjected to hatred, ill-treatment, rejection, exclusion and discrimination in various forms. The majority of Roma, whether nomadic or sedentary, today live in Europe and discrimination against them is often seen as a European problem. But the experience of Roma is mirrored, in the experience of other ethnic and national minority groups elsewhere in the world. It is a positive development that States today are ready to recognise the existence of discrimination against Roma. For decades the problem was either ignored or denied, or even worse, attributed entirely to the Roma themselves.

This year's World Conference against Racism constituted a historical benchmark in the fight for the eradication of racial discrimination in all its forms. Education is one of the fundamental and indispensable tools to continue the struggle against intolerance. However, education is more than a means of promoting tolerance and respect for racial, ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity. It is also a human right.

The forms of discrimination Roma suffer may vary from country to country, but the evidence shows clearly identifiable common concerns with regard to their right to education. The enrolment rates and level of attendance of Roma children in schools are far below that of the average population. The level of achievement is low and drop-out rates alarming. It is not surprising then that unemployment among Roma reaches 80 to 90 percent in some countries.

The reasons for low attendance at school are many. They range from the quality of existing, education to the lack of physical access to school facilities. Roma history and culture is rarely, or erroneously, reflected in training materials. This aggravates the sense of alienation among Roma children and young people.

Alienation is also reinforced by segregation. Among the worst examples of segregation is the practice in some countries of placing Roma children in schools or classes for the mentally disabled. I should like to emphasise that the Convention on the Rights of the Child guarantees the right to free primary education for all children without discrimination. Segregation is discrimination.

States have an obligation to ensure the human right to education. Primary education should be compulsory and free of charge. The Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, Katarina Tomasevski, has defined this right as having four elements; availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability. Primary schools and educational infrastructure must be in fact as well as in law available for all children, whether settled or nomadic, whether girls or boys. Likewise, access to available education must be ensured. Children with lack of knowledge of the language of instruction in the classroom are in practice deprived of equal access to education, whatever the law may say. Education must be acceptable also both to parents and children in terms of their moral or philosophical

convictions and it must be adaptable to the specific needs of the child, including his or her life-style and cultural heritage. This analysis of the right to education applied to Roma children and their parents may prove useful to pursue in your conference.

Today, in a world of advanced technology and sophisticated science, between 110 and 140 million school-age children are without access to primary education. Some of these children are Roma. If the World Conference against Racism was an occasion to call for a global mobilisation of conscience, let this conference be a call for regional action for the education rights of Roma children.

**Judy Lister,**  
**Regional Director UK/Europe Region – closing remarks and questions**

Judy Lister thanked the delegates for their attention and also thanked the speakers for their presentations. Martin Demirovski (OSCE) raised a question and expressed a concern about the terminology used during this conference i.e. 'Roma/Gypsy and Traveller'. He wished to make the point that has been made previously in other contexts, such as the World Conference Against Racism, that he believes it is not appropriate to use Travellers or Gypsies alongside Roma. In response, Judy Lister stated that there are many different views on this matter, and that the workshops and discussion groups should present opportunities to take this discussion further. She explained that for the conference, as for the 'Denied a Future?' report, the organisers elected to use the term 'Roma/Gypsy and Travellers' in order to reflect the different ways in which individuals and groups featured in the report refer to themselves and to recognise the many and varied groups that are subject to the discrimination documented in the 'Denied a Future?' report.

## Plenary 1

# **MAIN FINDINGS OF SAVE THE CHILDREN UK'S DENIED A FUTURE? REPORT AND THE OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTES ROMA EDUCATION RESEARCH REPORT**

**Katherine Pinnock**, *UK/Europe Policy and Research Officer, Save the Children UK*

### ***MAIN FINDINGS OF SAVE THE CHILDREN UK'S 'DENIED A FUTURE?' REPORT***

#### **INTRODUCTION**

For the first time, this report gathers in one place all of the available information that could be found on education provision for Roma children in 14 European countries. The report covers several Western European countries, most countries in Central Europe and all countries in South Eastern Europe. We do not see this as the final word on the issue, but more the beginning of a process. It offers a snapshot in a dynamic period and establishes a framework for on-going evaluation. Equally important, the report itself offers a methodology that governments, inter-governmental agencies and other international NGOs can adapt for evaluating other Roma targeted programmes for example in the areas of health, social welfare, employment etc.

We expect different kinds of readers to use the report in different ways. For international and locally based NGOs we hope that it will be useful as an advocacy tool. For inter-governmental agencies and international NGOs, we expect it to be a useful planning and briefing resource. We hope that policy makers will find the report a useful source of information about developments in other European countries. Although some of the country reports are critical of the records of governments to date, the intent in producing 'Denied a Future?' is constructive – we are aware that there are significant financial and other barriers impeding policy implementation and also that a number of positive initiatives are underway. On-going monitoring will hopefully be able to show the progress made by governments in the future.

The 'Denied a Future?' project has consisted of many different strands from advocacy to field research and has involved and relied upon the commitment of a vast number of individuals and organisations from across Europe, including many Roma young people. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the many contributors including report authors and the young people who agreed to be interviewed as part this project.

## **THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION**

**“School is good for the future, we can achieve something” Roma girl, 12, Croatia**

Education is both a fundamental human right in itself and a means of realising other rights. Legislation in itself is often not enough to fulfil the right to education - appropriate mechanisms and resources are needed to implement legislation and make it a reality.

The report shows that throughout Europe, regardless of their varying cultures, contexts and histories, Roma/Gypsy and Traveller communities continue to experience disproportionate levels of poverty, discrimination, lower quality service provision and lack of personal security, freedom of movement and choice. The absence of effective redress mechanisms leaves individuals disempowered and distrustful of official structures and institutions. These factors combine to create many barriers preventing particular groups of children from accessing their right to education.

## **POVERTY**

**“ I have two kids and they are just finishing 8<sup>th</sup> grade, but only one can go to high school. It’s too expensive”**

**Roma mother, Hungary**

**“I pick cherries ... [and] after school, I go and sell them to buy notebooks, shoes, clothes”**

**Roma girl, Romania**

Many Roma communities in different countries experience high levels of unemployment and job insecurity and are concentrated in low paid, low status jobs. For Roma in Central and South Eastern Europe in particular, this situation has worsened in the last decade with the loss of jobs associated with the former Communist regimes. Although some countries in Central and South Eastern Europe are undergoing economic growth, unemployment rates for Roma remain high at around 70-80%. In addition to this, we have seen since 1989 the introduction of fees and charges of various kinds in relation to education provision. This has been most detrimental for pre-school services, but has also affected families' capacities to pay for textbooks and school materials. In the case of families living in extreme poverty, this additional financial pressure has forced some parents to withdraw their children from school. Many parents, for example, simply cannot afford for all if not any of their children to attend school beyond the primary level.

**“ I would like to continue, but my parents don’t have enough money for the books...”**

**Roma boy, 16, Bosnia**

**“I’d like to continue school but I know it is impossible because I’m too old. I stopped because we couldn’t afford the books...”**

**Egyptian girl, 15, Kosovo**

Increased poverty and unemployment in Roma communities across Europe has also led to ever-larger numbers of children leaving school in order to work, or in the case of girls, to help in the household while parents work. While children may acquire skills when working, these do not transfer easily back into the school setting – thus it becomes increasingly unlikely that working children return to school.

## **DISCRIMINATION**

Discrimination, both direct and indirect, is another issue identified time and time again by the children and young people we interviewed as part of the research for 'Denied a Future?'

**“... my teacher always wants me to sing for her, saying all Roma know how to sing”**

**Romani boy, 8, Macedonia**

Children soon become aware that people outside their community regard them as different and in some way inferior:

**“I'd like to be a pilot when I grow up. I hope people won't mind having a Roma driving the plane”**

**Romani boy, 10, Montenegro**

Why should we mind? And how is it that a child of 10 is already aware that we might?

Prejudice often results in the physical segregation of Roma children. At worst, this is evidenced by the very large numbers of Roma children attending special schools in many Central and Eastern European countries. In several countries, non-Roma parents have protested where there have been attempts made to merge Roma and non-Roma schools. Even in integrated classrooms, the practice of seating Roma children at the back of the classroom is common.

**“ ... in my classroom, I sit behind everybody else and sometimes I cannot see properly what the teacher is writing on the blackboard.”**

**Roma child, 7, Macedonia**

Bullying and harassment of Roma children was reported with distressing frequency. Appropriate support for teachers appears to be widely lacking in this regard.

Roma are rarely visible in mainstream textbooks and classroom resources even where they contain references to other minority groups. Although some textbooks that include Roma have been developed, these have often not been widely disseminated or used.

## **LOWER QUALITY SERVICE PROVISION**

**“ You can't learn anything in this school, there aren't enough rooms, we study in three shifts...the teachers don't care...”**

**Roma student, 15, Roma school, Bulgaria**

In all the countries studied, state funded education, housing, health and welfare services offered to Roma people or those situated in neighbourhoods with a high Roma population, were of a lower standard than those offered to the majority population. This appears to be as true in most rich countries as it is in poor ones. Examples cited in our country reports include:

- Closure of schools and kindergartens in Roma neighbourhoods
- School buildings of visibly lower quality in Roma neighbourhoods

- Failure to include Roma settlements in plans to extend transport and other infrastructure

Over stretched and under resourced teachers and school directors across Europe have experienced successive reforms in recent years, but often lack the resources and support needed to implement them.

**“With a small budget we can’t achieve anything, equal opportunities are just empty words”  
Kindergarten teacher, Hungary.**

Many services are designed exclusively to meet the needs of the majority population e.g.:

- lack of Romani speaking staff in schools and kindergartens
- Lack of provision that reflects bilingual and multilingual needs

**“I can understand Croatian well ... but I don’t know how to answer back so that they can understand me ... This is very difficult for me because they think I know nothing”  
Roma girl, 9, Croatia**

**“When I was in 4th grade we studied the mother tongue...but we don’t have this anymore. We haven’t had it for four years”  
Romani child, Bulgaria**

## **LACK OF PERSONAL SECURITY, FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT AND CHOICE**

Harassment and verbal abuse are part of the daily experience of many Roma across Europe. Hostility on the part of local communities often interferes with children’s school attendance.

**“...with their dogs [the neighbours] make it uncomfortable for us to go to school”  
Egyptian girl, Kosovo**

If parents fear for their children’s safety they will keep their children at home.

**“In school, our kids have been beaten up and now they are afraid to go to school”  
Roma parent, Albania**

Fear that the child will be harassed is also a factor in the low take-up of day care and kindergarten facilities. Ensuing lack of contact between different communities from such an early age allows stereotypes to thrive and can foster the escalation of mutual distrust. Measures undertaken to improve conditions in schools and kindergartens are less effective once segregation and mutual distrust are entrenched.

## **LACK OF REDRESS**

**“... they tell you there are no vacancies ... how can you check if this is true or not? Who can you complain to?”  
Roma student, Roma school, Bulgaria**

In almost every country surveyed there is at least an adequate legal and policy framework guaranteeing basic rights including equal opportunities. However, in the face of sub-standard service provision and institutional discrimination, many Roma still have few channels in which they can feel confident when seeking redress. The country reports cite many examples:

- Inadequate investigation into disproportionate numbers of Roma in special schools
- Inadequate investigation of racial violence and police brutality
- Lack of redress for discrimination in the labour market
- Lack of accountability on the part of service providers, for example in the provision of substandard housing and infrastructures

## **SIGNS OF HOPE**

The 'Denied a Future?' report identified many examples of good practice in all the countries surveyed. For example in

- teacher training
- establishment of summer schools
- development of curricula
- establishment of preparatory classes
- de-segregation
- Romani classroom assistants
- Pre-school and higher education initiatives

## **SIGNS OF HOPE?**

Most of these initiatives, however, remain:

- short-lived
- locally based
- funded by external donors
- and not evaluated

Governments to date have not funded Roma programmes on any significant scale. In addition to this, most of these initiatives are not evaluated and are rarely accountable to the Roma communities, that is to the intended beneficiaries of these projects. The huge potential for scaling up successful practice is therefore often wasted.

After decades of under-investment in education for Roma children and investment in education which actively excludes Roma children from mainstream education, the initial cost of reforming existing systems will be high. While external funding provided by foreign donors has undoubtedly played a vital role in stimulating reform, reliance on such funding in the long term is unsustainable and inequitable. Indeed, we have to ask, what will happen once external support dwindles and financial responsibility for Roma education falls once more on governments?

## DENIED A FUTURE? RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the report findings, Save the Children makes a number of recommendations. Many of the recommendations are ultimately the responsibility of national governments. However, Save the Children also recognises the important role of school directors, teachers, community leaders and non-governmental organisations as well as intergovernmental organisations and the media. Given that all children, regardless of their ethnic or cultural background, have the right to an inclusive and relevant education Save the Children calls for the following:

- The urgent need for a realistic appraisal of what reformed provision will demand from public budgets in the long term. **A long-term commitment** is needed on the part of governments not only to adequately resource reforms aimed at ending discrimination, but also to ensure that systems are in place **to effectively monitor and evaluate outcomes.**
- The **active consultation and involvement of Roma community members.** This is essential in developing services or adapting practices to meet the needs of local communities.
- **The development of more flexible curricula** and the removal of all derogatory references to Roma/Gypsies and Travellers from school texts; the inclusion of references to ethnic and other minority groups in a positive and balanced manner; and wherever relevant and possible, the Romani language should be offered in schools alongside other languages.
- **Changes to teacher training,** for example, children's rights, human rights and equal opportunities training should be included as mandatory elements of pre-service and in-service teacher training curricula; such training must also ensure that teachers are familiar with the skills and approaches needed to work with children from different ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural backgrounds.
- **The deployment of more teachers, teaching assistants and classroom assistants, especially drawn from Roma/Gypsy and Traveller communities** in order to ensure higher visibility of role models
- **The more effective use of school buildings such as offering after-school and weekend activities** for children and young people in poor-quality housing and also to create opportunities to bring other family members onto school premises.
- **Research to develop a clearer understanding of the respective roles of economic, social and cultural factors in the withdrawal and self-withdrawal of children from formal education.**
- **Further and more visible efforts are needed to establish schools as places where all children are safe from physical and verbal abuse.** The whole school community must be involved in developing strategies to address racist bullying, physical and verbal abuse.
- **All governments should acknowledge the value of pre-school provision** and adopt strategies that would enable pre-school facilities to be accessible, available, and free of charge for all families that need them.
- **Governments must take urgent action to end the practice of segregation for Roma/Gypsy children particularly in the special school system.**

In terms of next steps, we hope that this report will trigger a process of on-going monitoring and evaluation of Roma education programmes at both the country level and at a European level. Ultimately, we hope that this report contributes to the debate among policy makers and practitioners on education provision for minorities in Europe by identifying the shortfalls but also by pointing towards current good practice.

[Martin Kovats](#), consultant to the 'Denied a Future?' Project and Research Fellow, University of Birmingham

## ***'DENIED A FUTURE?' A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE ISSUES***

My name is Martin Kovats and I am currently an Honourary Research Fellow at the University of Birmingham in the UK.

I have been involved with 'Denied a Future?' almost from the start and I would like to commend the way in which the project has been managed by Save the Children and especially Maria Andruszkiewicz, Kath Pinnock and Federica Donati.

As Kath has mentioned, 'Denied a Future?' is not the last word on the subject, but is part of an ongoing process to provide a comprehensive overview of the educational circumstances of Roma, Gypsy and Traveller children throughout Europe. This is an important aspiration as public discourse about Gypsies has long been characterised by subjective perceptions and incomplete information. The comparative approach of the report helps to draw attention to the similarities of how discrimination is manifested and experienced, but also, importantly, to the differences that exist between Roma/Gypsy populations and between different states.

In some countries, the circumstances and prospects of Roma communities have been dramatically affected by war. In others, by the impact of social and economic re-structuring since the fall of Communism, in yet others the primary challenge is to connect physically isolated and sometime mobile populations with the school system.

There is also enormous diversity amongst Roma, Gypsy and Traveller communities. Some speak different dialects of Romani, others don't speak Romani at all and there are varying degrees of proficiency in mainstream languages, as well as in the degree to which cultural values affect attitudes to formal education. Some communities enjoy relative economic independence, whilst others live in destitution. There is a broad spectrum ranging from extreme isolation to close integration with mainstream society and its institutions.

One of the more consistent features is the low social status of Gypsies in all European societies. The negative attitudes of others certainly blights the lives and reduces opportunities for many Roma/Gypsy people. But it is dangerously simplistic to consider that discrimination exists only in the head – is a product of 'bad thoughts'. Anti-Roma/Gypsy prejudices are as much a symptom as they are a cause – the cultural manifestation of objective inequality, the pernicious effects of which are compounded by generalisation. Therefore, in the struggle against discrimination, it is important to consider the full context of disadvantage, but also to avoid replacing one set of stereotypes with another. Roma/Gypsy people are not all the same, neither are their circumstances, needs or aspirations. Fundamentally, education is about enabling the individual to fulfil their potential as a human being. To be effective, policies, programmes, initiatives and practice must be based on a full understanding of those who are affected by them. This understanding can only be obtained through communication, the pre-condition for which is for service providers to establish confidence in themselves amongst those whom they seek to serve.

At the start of the third millennium, it is not just the educational prospects of Roma, Gypsy and Traveller children which is at stake, but also the meaning of and our commitment to equal opportunities.

## **THE OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE'S ROMA EDUCATION RESEARCH PROJECT: FROM PRACTICE TO POLICY**

### **Rationale for Research**

#### **State of Emergency:**

- 50% of Roma children never enter school
- 30% of Roma children drop out of school by the age of 13.
- 2% of Roma young adults finish secondary school
- 0.05% of Roma finish university

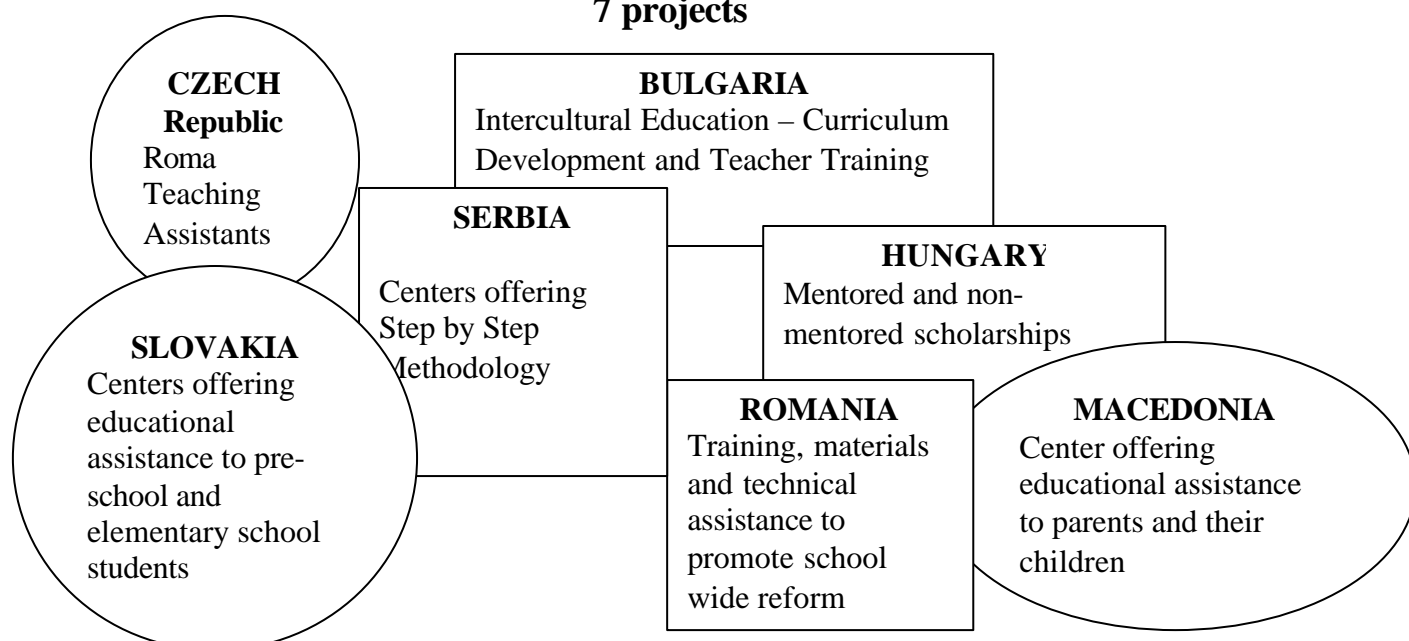
#### **OSI's Commitment to Equal Education for Roma**

#### **Need to learn more about good practice**

### **Goals of the Project**

- What Works?  
To examine and learn from existing educational programs serving Roma children.  
To Provide Solutions rather than sticking to the problem!
- Share Information!  
Make information available about good practice to OSI, the International donor community, practitioners and governments.
- Policy  
To use the models as a basis for policy making, informing governments about ways to overcome the problem in their countries.

### **7 projects**



## **Project Outcomes for Roma Children**

- Higher rates of school enrollment and completion,
- Regular and improved school attendance,
- Higher marks,
- Greater competence in the majority language,
- Connections with Roma cultural traditions,
- Greater motivation to learn,
- Improved self-confidence.

## **What Did We Want to Know?**

**Question #1** – Have the selected Roma education programs succeeded in (A) getting and keeping more Roma children in school through graduation and (B) improving the educational attainment of Roma children?

**Question #2** – Have the selected Roma education programs succeeded in promoting (A) changes in attitudes toward Roma children among teachers and other adult school staff, (B) changes in attitudes towards Roma children among non-Roma children and their parents, and (C) changes in self-characterization by Roma children?

**Question #3** – How have the selected Roma education programs promoted institutional or policy changes in the national education systems which advance the goals of equity and educational success for Roma children?

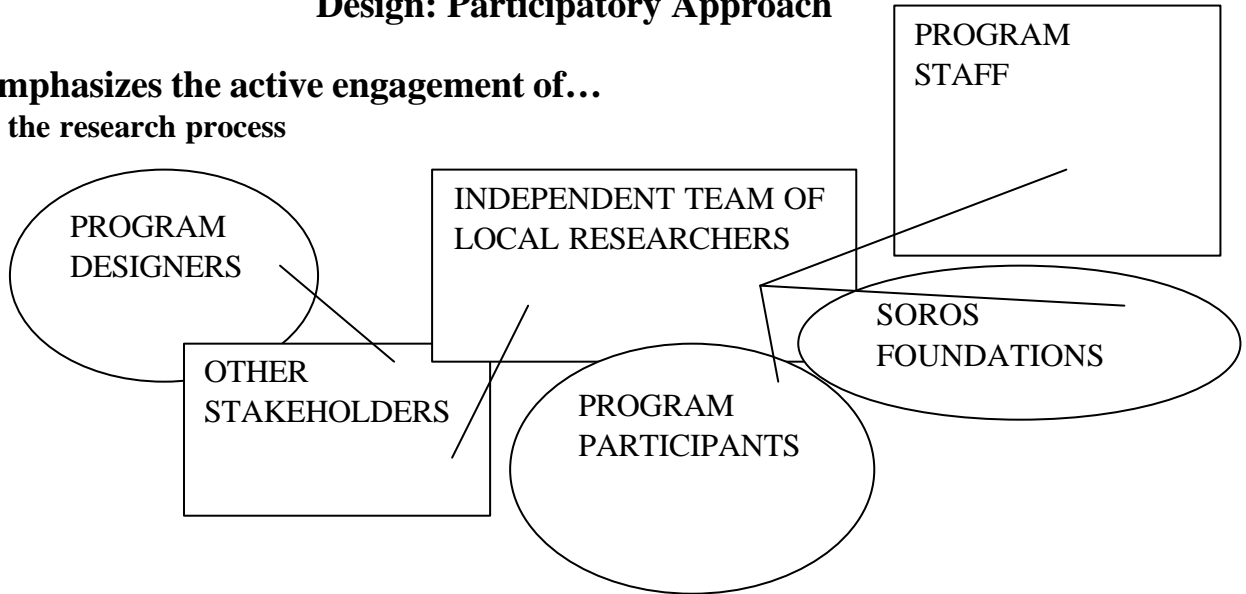
**Question #4** – What is the feasibility of replicating aspects or elements of the selected Roma education programs at other sites in the same country, or in other countries within the region taking into consideration factors such as cost, resource needs, institutional support, and culture?

## **Research Approach**

- An Open Process
- Emphasis on both Qualitative and Quantitative Data
- Local Research Teams Coordinated by a Central Researcher

## Design: Participatory Approach

**Emphasizes the active engagement of...**  
**in the research process**



## Major Research Findings

Direct Educational and Related Services	Direct Service Programs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short-term Measurable Outcomes (three to five years).</li> <li>• Target smaller population of Roma children</li> <li>• Higher average cost per child</li> <li>• Community-based centers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional Change</li> <li>• Longer-term Measurable Outcomes (five to eight years).</li> <li>• Targeted a much larger population of Roma children</li> <li>• Lower average cost per child</li> <li>• School Based</li> </ul>

### Direct Educational and Related Services

- Preschool services.
- Homework assistance and tutoring.
- Mentoring for students.
- Scholarship programs.
- Enrichment Activities
- Parent training, education, and support
- Humanitarian assistance to families

## **Institutional Change Models – Build the capacity and commitment of...**

- School communities - changes in school structure, school operation, and classroom teaching
- Teachers - to employ new and appropriate teaching strategies
- School Administrators and Staff - to develop sustained working partnerships with Roma parents and the community.
- Non-Roma educators and students regarding the history, experiences, and diverse cultural traditions of the Roma.
- Support the recruitment and preparation of Roma adults as educators in public schools.

## **Major Research Findings I**

### **#1: Impact of Projects on Educational Attainment of Roma Students**

#### Educational Centers Project (Slovakia)

- 50% increase in school readiness
- Average marks one point higher

### **#2 Impact of Projects on Students/Teacher Attitudes**

#### Roma Teaching Assistant Project (Czech Republic)

- Changes in attitude of some non-Roma teachers towards students
- Fewer cross-cultural tensions and problems existed in schools

### **#3: Contribution of the Projects to Institutional and Systemic Change**

#### Intercultural Education Project (Bulgaria)

- Laid the foundation for additional, more expansive intercultural education efforts in the public schools.

### **#4 Feasibility of Replication**

#### Program for Educational Support (Macedonia)

- Has the capacity to support efforts at program replication in the same country and possibly in other countries.
- Requires adaptation to particular needs of the specific target audience and the conditions of that particular country.

## **Major Research Findings II**

- The seven Roma education projects limited themselves to one or two age groups, with one exception.
- Only one of the projects offered the entire spectrum of direct services

- Institutional change efforts focused primarily on that, with little effort at direct services
- Direct services offered this with little effort at institutional change.

### **Major Research Findings III**

- By itself, none of the individual program models can respond to the entire spectrum of educational needs of all Roma children in any single country.
- However direct service and institutional change programs, in combination, may offer comprehensive solutions to meet the educational needs of Roma children across the continuum of ages, K-12 Program models developed, adapted or expanded to offer a continuum of services in response to an array of needs and across various age groups (K-12).

### **Overall Recommendations**

- Projects designed to promote change in the schools to ensure that they more effectively meet the educational needs of Roma students.
- Strategies for promoting linkages and coordination among direct service projects and those supporting institutional change in the schools.
- Plans for assessing the effectiveness of projects and for promoting long-term continuation of effective projects.
- Regional fund to support the implementation of appropriate Roma education models. Receive support through matching funds provided by the appropriate national Soros foundation, other private funders, or the national government.
- Fund to support the dissemination of this knowledge and experience
- Sponsor continuing research on the development, operation, and impact of Roma education projects
- Policy Work – Work with successful models and make appropriate policy choices based on these models.

### **Next Steps...**

- Bulgaria and Croatia– supporting programs – experimenting with linking or expanding services
- Build capacity in countries for evaluation of programs
- Policy work with governments – going through the analytical policy analysis process based on the good practice

## Plenary 2

### INVESTORS IN A FUTURE FOR ROMA CHILDREN? CLARIFYING THE ROLE OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

Alexandros Tsolakis, Adviser, Education DG European Commission

I would like to make a purely informational point: the title of this session is *Intergovernmental Organisations* but I think it is important to say that the European Union, and the Commission as part of the Union, is not an intergovernmental affair and it is not an international organisation. It is, I would say, a *sui generis* supranational body that acts more and more as a government in many areas. But there are boundaries and limits to the competencies to what is today the European Union (and was the European Community ten years ago), the nation states and further down at the regional and local levels. This separation of competencies is at the centre of today's reflections, and all of this is linked to the enlargement process. Of course it is very important to recognise that we, as representatives of the Union and of the Commission that proposes and executes legislation, cannot enter into areas in which we do not have a legal basis. Areas that are constitutionally permitted are where we can act.

In the case of education, one has to realise that the EU had no competence whatsoever in education until 1994 and the Treaty of Maastricht. What happened before happened mainly on account of the necessity, provided by the Treaty, to take care of the special needs of people that were mobile within the Union. So that was the main reason for intervention and vocational training-oriented approaches.

The first generation of Community programmes in education, training, and in favour of youth, started mainly as mobility programmes at the end of the 1980s. This was also the time when Jean-Pierre Liègeois (and I am very happy to see that he is here to answer on any historical details) started, in 1984, to work with Domenico Lenarduzzi on the specific issue of educational provision for Gypsies, children of occupational Travellers and of Romany origin. The results of this study gave rise to a very important Resolution of the Council in 1989 on school provision for children of Gypsies, Travellers and Roma being adopted by Ministers of Education (see Appendix 4). This in turn led to the setting up of EU budget lines specifically to implement projects on Roma education for the first time ever. This was a very significant moment and it has to be understood that at this stage we were working without any kind of legislative security net. Nevertheless, the work done at this time was extremely important because it set the first elements of real co-operation between administrations of education in the Member States and focused attention on the specific issue of education for Roma children.

The follow-up to this was what we call the first generation of education, training and youth programmes incorporating practically all the different actions that the Union used to bring together. The three main programmes: Socrates, Leonardo and YOUTH took over. Within the framework of Socrates, which was the education programme, was what we used to call the 'intercultural education approach', which included the Roma education.

It is important to state that as part of this process the EU also started a very important process on anti-discrimination measures – not directly linked with education but horizontal anti-discrimination measures. (Mrs Guida will elaborate more on that). It is a very impressive set of legislation, and other types of documentation, from the Charter of Fundamental Rights, which was approved last year, to specific legislation on, for example, racism and non-discrimination. New legislation is due soon, for example, on penal liability for racist offences. In this context, the approach of the Commission has been to mainstream issues of concern, for example Roma or minorities, into the normal Community instruments. The result specifically for the education sector was that, while up to 1999 specific provision for the Roma education was provided within the Education Programme, in the current programme we have a different approach in which mainstreaming elements of intercultural education is a cross-cutting issue within the programme. It is important to say, given that we are in Budapest, that all the candidate countries have been participating in these programmes fully for the past 2 or 3 years..

The education of Roma children remains a priority for projects in schools and for pre-school education, including exchanges of education staff. The programme also supports activities to support the educational needs of hard-to-reach social groups, including Travellers, in order to improve their employability and enhance their capacity to enter or re-enter formal education. Associations and other organisations working with Roma and Travellers can also apply for projects and the programme also provides funding for networks of locally based adult education providers. This is a new aspect that has been developed. Adult education is very important, especially in the case of the Roma and hopefully in the future there will be specific networks working on adult education of Roma across Europe.

But what we can also see is that this mainstreaming most probably had negative effects in terms of number of projects and in terms of involvement.

What we have witnessed, specifically in the way that the Socrates programme has taken up the idea of mainstreaming and the effect of this regarding the specific activity of Roma-oriented projects is something that merits attention and analysis. Today we are trying to promote a global concept of a European space of knowledge and education in terms of a lifelong educational process and increasing chances of access to education through different approaches. Of course, formal education is part of this global concept, which also includes vocational training-oriented, adult formal and informal education approaches. In the case of the Roma, I think that links between formal and non-formal education are essential if we want to make progress. Therefore the use of other programmes like the YOUTH programme may help by providing links between the formal education system and the Roma communities.

Within the enlargement process, my colleague will give you many more details, but it is important to note that the mainstreaming approach that I mentioned also to a certain extent linked to the enlargement negotiation approach. As you perhaps know the enlargement negotiation process is a bilateral process between the Union and each one of the candidate

countries. Therefore, while the basic issues and principles concerning the respect of minorities have been one of the cornerstones of the enlargement process, it is important to note that the Roma issue has not been dealt with as a cross-cutting issue, but as a national issue. This is essential in order to understand the way we can work in future with respect to Roma education. It is important to know that our role in education is limited to fostering co-operation between the Member States.

Education and national education systems, especially in Europe, have historically had one very basic role and that was to create the conditions for a nation-state to exist. Therefore they were rather assimilationist systems. One has to understand this and also the fact that opening up education systems is a long and difficult process. It is also true that educational systems have developed in very different ways and in relation to different problems in the different countries. Therefore we cannot apply any kind of harmonisation measures in the field of education. Each country is fully responsible for its educational system and the Union has absolutely no grounds to interfere with that. The only way that we *can* act is by bringing together countries and all the operators in the educational context in order to share ideas and perhaps move towards what we have recently been calling 'the convergence' of educational systems.

This context is important because although enlargement participate in education programmes, these programmes themselves are only co-operation oriented, the real needs of education in terms of infrastructure belong to other types of instruments. And let us remember here that it is quite clear from previous discussions that you cannot isolate education from living conditions and other things. So once the enlargement process is over, the countries that will have acceded to the Union will no longer have instruments specifically linked to enlargement like PHARE but will enter the normal way of working of the European Union. The main elements that might allow considerable investment in education will come mainly from the Structural Funds: the Regional Fund and the Social Fund. These are extremely powerful instruments with much bigger capacities of finance and which could be used if there is enough will, and if we can explain to the accession countries that their interest is to finance concrete and coherent plans for the Roma populations through these instruments.

There is one example of doing this, with which I will finish because I think it is a very interesting example. Greece is one of the poorer countries of the Union and therefore has quite a lot of Structural Funds support. Within what they call the Support Framework Programmes, the Greek government has committed 250 million Euro over 6 years specifically on a coherent plan that will be implemented with a network of municipalities with Roma settlements. This plan will take on board all aspects of integration of Roma from issues ranging from property rights, sanitary issues to education.

It is important therefore to be able to develop all the necessary arguments in order to convince the *governments* first of all. When entering the Union, investment in education for the Roma is and should be a priority if we want to be able to say in ten, fifteen, twenty years time that we have met the primary objective of the Union, which is to give equal access to all its citizens. The Roma in member states today are full citizens of the Union and tomorrow so will those that will be in the Union. It is important to ensure that citizens of the Union have equal access to education and to mainstream society in a respectful way, which accommodates differences and can build on these differences and diversity.

Thank you.

[Rosa Maria Guida](#), *Head of Unit, Enlargement DG European Commission*

I am pleased to be here today to explain the policy of the EU in the enlargement process and if there is time, also in other areas. There was recently a Communication of the Commission to the Council explaining the role of the EU in human rights in the world and the EU is indeed taking this important role in the world. But I will start with the problems that we have faced in the enlargement process for the Roma communities and afterwards if there is time I will go further than the enlargement countries.

To explain the importance of the Roma issue in the enlargement process I must start from the figures - they give the dimension of the problem. We have, according to our estimations, 6 million Roma in the acceding countries out of the 8 million Roma in the whole of Europe. This population is concentrated in certain applicant countries as follows:

- Bulgaria with a population of about 800,000;
- the Czech Rep with a population of about 300,000;
- Hungary with a population of about 500,000;
- Romania with a population of between 1,8 or 2.5 million – this is the largest population in the applicant countries.

These populations face a realm of difficulties. More than in the Western countries they suffer from poverty, discrimination, racism, social exclusion and marginalisation. The most important problems that the Roma population faces are the low level of education, the high level of unemployment which affects between 50% and 90% of the population; health standards well below the mainstream population; and very poor housing conditions. The Roma are also victims of violent attacks (from skinheads and others of the majority population) and sometimes of inadequate protection and even violence from the police. This situation has also given rise to large-scale migration by the Roma population in particular from the Czech Republic and Slovakia, towards other countries such as the UK and Canada. The situation of the Roma population has been made even more difficult by the transition of economies to the market system. Difficulties have also arisen from the fact that there is no 'nation state' for this minority and so it is more difficult for them to have the necessary representation to fight for their rights.

This situation has been taken very seriously by the EU. As you know, the European Council of Copenhagen in 1993 established the conditions for entry into the EU. It was decided at this time that the states of Central and Eastern Europe would enter the EU once they had complied with the accession criteria. Among this criteria it was established that these countries had to establish stable institutions, guarantee democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and respect for and protection of minorities. I must also add that these Copenhagen principles have been translated into the Amsterdam Treaty and reinforced by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, which was proclaimed in Nice last December.

On the basis of the Copenhagen criteria the Commission had to assess the situation of the applicant countries in order to provide the Council with an Opinion. And in this Opinion the status of minorities was assessed according to the principles of the most important international conventions, and also on the basis of the Framework Convention of the Council of Europe. Substantially, not formally, the provisions of this Convention were essential. The principle was established that minorities have a right to maintain their cultural identity, to have equal treatment in the social and economic life (employment, education, social security,

housing), and that they have a right to protection against violence from the rest of the population, as well as from the police and other forces of the State. The conclusion was that their fundamental rights were not respected completely in the applicant countries.

The Commission and the other EU institutions did not stop with this assessment but took a dynamic position - for it is not enough to state the situation, we have to look forward and see how we can address this situation. In this way the role of the Commission and of the EU developed. This was a dual role: a monitoring role and a 'therapeutic' one. The monitoring role was established through an agreement that the Commission would follow year by year the situation in the applicant countries, in order to see what progress had been achieved towards meeting the accession criteria – not only the political ones but also the economic ones and the *acquis* (the role of the European legislation). So we started year on year to examine the situation of the Roma population and the last report was taken on the 13 November 2001. It states that progress still has to be made in the applicant countries. On the therapeutic side, it was decided in 1997 to give assistance above all through the PHARE programme which has increased year on year the amount of money and technical assistance given to applicant countries so they can improve their fulfilment of the accession criteria.

Thank you for your attention.



## **WORLD BANK INVOLVEMENT IN ROMA ISSUES**

### **CURRENT ACTIVITIES**

Policy and Strategy Development: The Bank supports policy development related to Roma at the country level. In Hungary, the Bank is working with the Office of National Minorities and other government and NGO partners on a strategy for implementation of the government's Medium Term Framework. Similar work is underway in Slovakia.

Institutional Development Fund (IDF) grants in Bulgaria and the Slovak Republic support the governments' new offices for ethnic minorities and include capacity building activities and development of information bases and mechanisms for monitoring projects and policies. In the Slovak Republic, the Bank is supporting the establishment of the new Roma Office of the Council of Government for Minorities and Ethnic Groups, and in Bulgaria a grant has recently been launched for the National Council for Ethnic and Demographic Issues. While there has been a lot of project and program activity by governments and NGOs, there has been virtually no evaluation of experience and lessons learned. We have tried to address this by supporting analysis of projects (e.g. in Hungary and Spain), and disseminating the experience/lessons learned to other countries. A workshop held in Bratislava in April discussed project experience in Hungary and Slovakia and aimed to transfer experience across countries.

- Operations: Bank operations address Roma indirectly through its support in different sectors. Social development funds in Bulgaria and Romania, while not explicitly targeted at Roma, support Roma sub-projects. In Bulgaria, the Regional Initiatives Fund (RIF) required that ten percent of sub-projects should come from minority communities. To date 20 percent of workers hired under the RIF projects are Roma. In Romania, the Romanian Social Development Fund (RSDF) currently supports a family planning project for Roma. A Child Welfare project in Romania, which supports the transition from institutions to community-based alternatives for care does not target Roma, but includes many Roma beneficiaries, because of their over representation in child welfare institutions. A Child Welfare project, recently negotiated for Bulgaria will target children from Roma and other ethnic minorities through education initiatives (Hristo Kyutchukov, Secretary General of the IRU, has been involved in the project). In Bulgaria, from 60-80 percent of children in institutions are estimated to be Roma. The project will include initiatives to support deinstitutionalization, as well as measures to prevent children from entering into institutions in the first place (e.g. preschool programs with language training). The project is supported by a Bank loan and a grant from the Japan Social Development Fund. The Bank's post-conflict grant for FYR Macedonia supports Roma youth and families in the Suto Orizari neighborhood of Skopje, including activities to improve school attendance and improve the quality of education.
- Direct support to NGOs: Through the Small Grants Program - managed by the Country Offices in the field - we support a number of Roma projects directly (from \$2,000-\$5,000). In Hungary, support has been provided for education, employment

and media related projects. A list of projects approved for 2001 is included at the end of this note. In Slovakia we are supporting a housing project. We were also able to support the IRU's 2000 Congress through the Small Grants Program and the World Gypsy Festival held in Prague in May 2001.

- Analytical work: Bank analysis of issues related to Roma has a number of objectives, including identifying issues, determining the appropriate role for the Bank, and providing a basis for policy dialogue with countries. There are numerous gaps in the available information on Roma. The Bank has sought to identify and fill some of these gaps through commissioning studies and evaluations. A qualitative study is underway of poverty in Roma settlements in Slovakia. The report examines the characteristics of poverty in Roma in the country and will be a major input into the Bank's Poverty Assessment. The report is being prepared with support from the Open Society Institute. A list of publications follows at the end of this note.
- Partnerships: Bank involvement in Roma issues is closely coordinated with partner organizations, including the European institutions, local Roma NGOs and the Open Society Foundation. Joint activities include:
  - Participation as an observer on the Council of Europe's Specialist Group on Roma/Gypsies.
  - OSI support for the Slovakia Country Study of Roma.
  - Joint OSI-INEKO-Bank workshop on Roma in Slovakia (Bratislava, April 2001)
  - Joint Government-OSI-Bank workshop on Roma projects in Hungary and Slovakia (April 2001)
  - Participation in the OSI-Albert Schweitzer Institute conferences on Roma Health (2000 in Sofia, Bulgaria; 2001 in Sibiu, Romania)

In 2001, through its Development Grant Facility (DGF), the Bank has begun to support the work of the Autonomia Foundation, an NGO based in Hungary. The objective of the grant is to support the Pakiv Fund, established to provide income generation and employment activities for the Roma. The Fund will operate in four countries in the region: Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Slovakia.

### **CONSTRAINTS/OPPORTUNITIES:**

Because the Bank lends directly to governments, our opportunities for providing lending assistance directly to Roma communities/NGOs are limited. Social development funds (e.g. Bulgaria and Romania) do support small community based projects.

- Demand for Bank assistance is low in some of the middle income EU accession countries with significant Roma populations (e.g. Hungary, Czech Republic). In these countries, we can act as an information broker - sharing information on policy approaches and programs across countries, and raising issues with institutions which do have resources (e.g. the EC, Council of Europe Development Bank).
- Some governments have begun to address ethnic issues in the context of Bank operations (e.g. the Bulgaria Child Welfare project, approved 2/OI, mentions minorities explicitly, also Macedonia Youth). The Roma issue is addressed in new Country Assistance Strategies for Slovakia and Romania.

- Non-lending instruments provide opportunities for addressing Roma issues: (i) Institutional Development Fund (IDF) grants for building policy-making capacity in Bulgaria and Slovakia; and (ii) the Development Grant Facility (DGF) for the Pakiv Foundation.

**Annex 1:  
BANK PUBLICATIONS/STUDIES ON ROMA ISSUES**

- "Roma and the Transition in Central and Eastern Europe: Trends and Challenges," by D. Ringold, 2000. The study brings together the available evidence on the welfare status of Roma in the region and their access to social services. The report was launched at the Annual Meetings in Prague in September 2000, and has been disseminated throughout Central and Southern Europe.
- "Evaluation of Alternative Secondary Schools in Hungary," by E. Orsos and Team, 2000. This study evaluates the experience of six recently established secondary schools for Roma students in Hungary.
- "Health Needs of the Roma Population in the Czech and the Slovak Republics," by the Eitropean Centre on Health of Societies in Transition (ECOHOST), 2000. A comprehensive literature review on health in the Czech and Slovak Republics.
- "Bulgaria, 6 Case Studies," by I. Tomova, and Team. 2000. Case studies of Roma settlements in Bulgaria, prepared as background for the regional study on Roma.
- "Roma in the Transition in Romania: 9 Case Studies," by C. Rughinis and M. Preda, 2000. Case studies of Roma settlements in Romania, prepared as background for the regional study on Roma.
- "The Health Status of Roma in Hungary," by L. Puporka and Z. Zadori, 1999. A comprehensive review of the literature on the health status of Roma in Hungary. The study was published in English and Hungarian by the Budapest Country Office of the World Bank

**Annex 2:  
HUNGARY, SMALL GRANTS PROJECTS APPROVED FOR 2001**

Zala County "The Nostru" Association for Roma Rights: "Catching-up" weekend college for talented Roma youth US\$1300

Roma Leader's Association - Bagamer:  
Family and health care office for the Roma population US\$700

Roma Association - Somodor:  
Advising Roma on mental health and life style issues HUF 200.000 US\$700

Autonomia Foundation:  
Employment and income generating projects. US\$2700

Collegium Martineum Foundation:

Secondary education and extracurricular activities. US\$2700

Kurt Lewin Foundation:

Develop and monitor the Hungarian Roma web site. US\$1400

Romano Glaszo Roma Association: Support for social workers.

US\$1000

Jozsefvaros School Foundation:

Information database on the learning opportunities for Roma youth US\$1700

Public Roma Women Association: Support group for Roma women. US\$850

Caritas "REV" Drug-Inveterate Association: Drug-addiction/rehabilitation program US\$1300

Mediator Foundation: Information and advisory services US\$1800

Bankers for Development Foundation:

Networks between Roma and non- Roma entrepreneurs US\$1200

Roma Civil Rights Association: Media activities.US \$1000

RomArt Foundation: Roma Painters Catalog US\$1000

[Francoise Kempf](#), Deputy to the Co-ordinator of Activities on Roma/Gypsies Migration and Roma/Gypsies Department, Council of Europe

Thank you very much and thank you for inviting us to take part in this very important conference. My name is Francoise Kempf and I have been working for the Council of Europe's Department of Roma issues for more than 7 years. I will give you a brief overview of the policy of the Council of Europe towards Roma issues and then I will give the floor to my colleague Consuelo Holtzer who is working specifically in the Education Department of the Council of Europe. I will start by saying that the Council of Europe has been dealing with Roma issues in one way or another since the 1960s. Here I could underline that the way that the Council of Europe chose to tackle Roma issues until the 1990s was mainly through the question of education. There was no systematic policy towards Roma issues and no systematic and continuous work. However, the question of education if Roma was a subject that was dealt with quite regularly.

The situation changed in the 1990s with the accession of a number of new Member States to the Council of Europe. We are now 43 Member States stretching as far as Russia and Armenia. With these many new Member States, the issue of Roma became politically much more important for our organisation. It was gradually recognised over the course of the 1990s by Member States that there was a human right problem in most of them. We could see that the basic texts of the Council of Europe's, basic conventions dealing with human rights, democracy and the rule of law, were violated for one particular group - which is Roma. So that is the reason why the Council of Europe began to have a systematic policy on Roma issues.

In the middle of the 1990s, we started to develop work on minority issues. The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities was developed, which relates very much to Roma, as does work which has been done in the field of social cohesion, to combat social exclusion. I would add that even if it is the accession of new Member States from central and eastern Europe which boosted the activities of the Council of Europe with regard to Roma, we should never forget that we have 43 Member States. In our view, the problems facing Roma in the east and in the west are related and are in a way similar. I would say that the root causes of the problems are the same all over Europe. The magnitude of the problem depends of course on where you are. In accession and eastern countries, the problems might be worse but we consider the same roots of the problems exist also in western Europe and that is why we try to be active also in this part of Europe.

So what was undertaken in the 1990s in response to the recognised need for awareness raising and the need to start with positive action policies? First of all, a Coordinator of Roma activities was appointed at the Council of Europe and this Coordinator is implementing a number of programmes. Perhaps the most visible and important event was the creation of the Specialist Group on Roma/Gypsies. This is a small group of experts appointed by Member States and it is the translation into fact of the willingness of Member States to recognise that the Roma issue is a political issue - that it is a matter of political importance for them. The existence of the Specialist Group also means that Roma issues will be dealt with on a continuous basis in our organisation rather than programmes and projects that deal with a question for 2 years, stop and then start again in a different way 3 years later. Also, the formation of the Specialist Group meant that for the first time, Roma had a way of entering the policy making of the organisation. Even though this is not perfect yet - there are not as

Roma representatives in the Specialist Group as there could be - this was one way of their having a voice at the European level in terms of policy making.

So what has the group been doing over the last 5 years? Besides field visits to various countries, I would like to underline the work that was done in the area of devising policy recommendations. For the Member States, this group has the role of helping them to develop new policies towards Roma and advising them on how to improve the situation of the Roma.

The first issue that was dealt with by the Specialist Group was education. With the help of a number of NGOs and experts, some of whom are present in the room today, and in cooperation with the Committee on Education of the Council of Europe, the Specialist Group elaborated Recommendation 2004 on the Education of Roma/Gypsy and Traveller Children in Europe. This recommendation is important because it covers a number of areas such as curriculum, teaching materials, recruitment and training of teachers, information and assessment, consultation and so on. The most important point is that the Recommendation covers all 43 Member States in Europe.

Now that this text has been adopted, the main question is, of course, its implementation. As you know, Council of Europe Recommendations are not legally binding texts. It depends on the good will of the Member States to translate these Recommendations into fact. This is why our colleagues in the Council of Europe Education Directorate have now started to elaborate a 3-year programme on Roma education, the main aim of which is to try to implement and translate into reality the Recommendation. Just before I give the floor to Consuelo, I would like to add something. It is not exactly related but I think it will be interesting for many of you. A second recommendation on Roma and employment policies, prepared by the Specialist Group, was adopted yesterday by the Committee of Ministers. I will be happy to answer your questions and to give you more details later on in the panel discussion.

**Consuelo Holtzer**, *Chief Administrative Officer Directorate of School, Out-of-School and Higher Education; Directorate General of Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport, Council of Europe*

I would also like to thank you for inviting us to this very important conference. My name is Consuelo Holtzer. I am from the Education Directorate of the Council of Europe. First of all, I would like to give you some very brief background on some of the education work that the Education Directorate does, some of which is relevant to Roma in Europe. One of our basic principles is the promotion of European awareness in education, and one aspect of this is promoting the transition from a multiethnic to a multicultural society through education. This entails encouraging and producing material that promotes the teaching of multiple viewpoints, such as minority viewpoints, the inclusion of minority history into the curricula, and approaching events not exclusively from a national viewpoint but from a European point of view. In the field of history teaching, a lot of our work over the past three years has been to condemn the misuse of history, such as appropriation of history teaching for political purposes or history teaching based on aggressive nationalism.

We are quite new to the field of Roma education. This is the first time that we have initiated such a project. As my colleague pointed out, the origins of the project are in the Recommendation to the 43 Member States and more than half of the drafting team for this

Recommendation were Roma education experts. The draft was also sent out to Roma NGOs and organisations for comment before it was sent to vote.

The background to this project is a situation that I think all of you are familiar with. Roma comprise Europe's largest - 7,8 million, maybe even 10 million people - but least formally educated ethnic minority population. Many Roma are either denied access to mainstream education altogether and/or governments are not meeting specific needs that have been identified. The numbers of children who drop out of school are very high and long-standing illiteracy or semi-literacy plagues almost all Roma communities. Less than half of Europe's Roma population completes primary education. There is no other population group in Europe that presents figures as alarming as these. The implications of these figures are long-standing unemployment, a waste of human potential and an eventual threat to the social cohesion.

The fact that this Recommendation was adopted shows that there is political will to change the situation. But I don't think we can say yet that Roma education has become an urgent priority in Europe. A lot of activities have been generated by the candidate countries for the European Union but the general impression is that there is still a large gap between "efforts and aims" and the "real situation in the field". Specific education projects for Roma have been initiated both by governments and by NGOs but, as was pointed out by OSI yesterday, these do not have a broad enough impact nor are they comprehensive enough in approach. The result is that improvement in Roma education is still quite fragmented.

One of the aims of this project is to help rectify this situation. First of all, projects of the Council of Europe are run by Steering Groups. The Steering Group for this 3 year project will be 9 or 10 people, the majority of whom will be Roma experts. They will be working in full partnership with the Council of Europe - we would not invite Roma to participate in a project that has been pre-defined for them. They will be active in formulating the policy and strategies for implementation of this project, as they were in formulating the Recommendation. Rather than add on another layer of activity to a lot of good things that are already being done in Europe as we saw yesterday, this project will aim to approach the Roma education situation globally: as an intergovernmental organisation we will assist and guide Member States to set up a global and comprehensive programme taking into account specific measures and needs that have been identified to integrate Roma into mainstream education. This means into mainstream schools and into mainstream classes, not separate classes that have been set aside for Roma. The programme should be sustainable. It should be backed by secure funding from ministries and it should be implemented uniformly throughout the education system. Particular attention will be paid to combating forms of racial prejudice, which are often institutionalised at local level and where the strongest obstacles to implementation are sometimes found. The project also will pay attention to the emerging issue of gender in education. We would like to explore work that has been carried out on this issue and develop a strand in the project that will be devoted to Roma women. The themes that we will be working on are basically set forth in the Recommendation. We have talked about a lot of these already, so I will just go over them briefly.

It is quite clear that a Roma education policy that relies upon traditional teaching and learning approaches to improve things have failed so far. Roma have specific needs in schools. Many also have out-of-school problems related to their social situation that have to be attended to by governments if children are to achieve in school. These have been identified as follows:

**No place to do homework and no practical way of getting to school**

This is mainly due to Roma 'ghettoisation'. Many Roma communities have been relegated to ghettos in a deliberate effort to separate the races, usually far from schools and public transport links. Housing conditions are generally sub-standard. In some member states even electricity cannot be taken for granted and there an average of 9 people live in each dwelling.

### **School-related expenses, particularly for pre-school**

Many Roma families cannot find the money for transport – when they have access to it, nor books, nor school materials.

### **Prejudice and racial attacks**

The cliché that Roma parents are not interested in sending their children to school can cover the fact that they are often afraid to do so. Roma children are frequently victims of racial violence on their way to and from school and violence or prejudice at school, sometimes even on the part of educational staff. Teachers need special intercultural training in working with Roma in dealing with conflict situations in the classroom. This is mostly being assumed by NGOs today. Specific teacher training should be incorporated by governments for teacher training institutions for new teachers and provided by in-service training in schools with Roma populations. Some of the elements that should be emphasised are good classroom practice with Roma. Not sitting them at the back of the room, having the same expectations for Roma children as they do for others. Teachers also have to know about Roma history and culture.

### **Multicultural curricula**

Romani history and culture must be given a place of value in the school and should be taught at all levels to both Romani and non-Roma children.

### **Teaching materials and classes in Romanes**

This will give children the possibility of learning in their own language and of keeping up and improving their knowledge of their language. It contributes to strengthening their identity and it places a value on their language in the eyes of other children.

### **Pre-school provision**

This is very important for Roma children. Roma children, like all children, perform better in school if they have had some kind of pre-school activity. This is particularly important for Roma children because they are often behind in the language of the majority culture. If they speak the language, they often can't yet express themselves well in it, or it is mixed up with the language they speak at home. Language education should be an important element of pre-school and language support should continue in primary school.

### **Roma teaching assistants**

Roma should be part of the school authority, not just to assist teachers with Roma children in their classes but to assist all teachers with all classes.

### **Working with Roma families**

School can be an alien place for many Roma families. They fear racial prejudice, cultural assimilation and they don't always appreciate the benefits of education, particularly when employers are prejudiced. In some Council of Europe Member States, Roma have 4 times less chance of finding employment than people from the majority population with the equivalent schooling.

### **Roma mediators**

Roma mediators and Roma social workers need to be in regular contact with families to follow the achievement and attendance of children from the beginning to the end of their schooling and to show that the school has a special commitment to them.

NGOs, Roma organisations and governments have approached these problems, attending to the specific needs on a small scale, often in an innovative fashion. So the first step that we want to do is to call upon civil society and call upon governments, to build on the work of OSI and Save the Children and to put together a compendium of good practices on solutions and approaches to these problems in different Member States. I have to stress that this compendium of good practices has to be used actively to set standards, to induce policy change at national level.

High visibility and dissemination of the compendium should be one of the major efforts of this project as will its use as a political tool to help and guide member states define a course of political action. If this does not happen, this work will fall into the wayside – like many compendiums of good practices that have been used only for consultancy purposes.

The project's work will be documented on the Council of Europe's internet site under the work of my colleague's Directorate – that is DGIII under the title of 'Roma/Gypsy and Traveller activities'. The information will be in English, in French and as much as possible, translated into Romanes so that Romani-speaking communities throughout Europe can follow the activities.

Thank you very much.

**Rob Fuderich**, *Monitoring and Evaluation Adviser, CEE/CIS Regional Office, Unicef*

First of all I would like to congratulate SC-UK and all their partners that contributed to this very valuable report. This is going to provide critical information for governments, parliamentarians, Roma organisations, human and children rights' organisations, UN organisations and all others concerned and involved in ensuring that all children have a right to quality education. I'd like to thank Save the Children and all those who participated for this very important report.

I represent the regional office of UNICEF based in Geneva and we cover the 27 countries – very similar organisational coverage to the World Bank – and as a result of our new involvement in the region we are relatively new to Roma issues. So I have come to learn, to see how we could make sustainable interventions to regional problems. I do not want to go through the activities we have in all the country offices due to lack of time and I know that the panel would like to answer your questions but I would like to highlight two issues.

One is what is referred to as UNGASS (United Nations General Assembly Special Session). All of you may know that this was due to be held in Sept in New York, but due to the events in New York it has now been postponed to May but it will happen. I think what is important is that what the UN and the Secretary General is planning to do is report on the progress of children in the last decade. And from that report and from the lessons learned that we have gathered from the last decade there is another report that will come out with very time bound goals for the next decade, and it's called *A World Fit For Children*.

I would like to thank Dena Ringold for mentioning this whole aspect of putting in benchmarks. It is so important to find out the progress that we are making. So this report will set the benchmarks for 2000-2010. As a result of the complex issues facing children in the world today UNICEF has decided to take this World Fit for Children and take organisational priorities, similar to the World Bank's fault lines. The organisational priorities that we will cover – and this is important because, as all of us know, we cannot do it all- so we will pull back from some of our activities and focus on five very important issues. The reason we are focusing on these five is because of the lessons we have learned from the decade, from what we feel is UNICEF's added value and from what we see are issues that have leverage – that if we do something in one issue it will cause a change in other issues, it will have a ripple effect.

The five issues we would like to concentrate on are:

- 1) Expanded early childhood care and development;
- 2) Immunisation Plus
- 3) HIV AIDS
- 4) Girls' Education
- 5) Child Protection

And I'd like to go through quickly what the implications are for the Roma communities.

### **1) Expanded early childhood care and development**

In this area we would like to ensure that all children's births are registered – notice I did not start with pre-school but birth registrations – as this is often an important impediment to consideration for health benefits and school admission. We must ensure that all children have a good start in life, which includes physical development - health and nutrition as well as mental and social development. This includes ensuring that all Romany children have access to quality early childhood development opportunities, both at the home and at the community; that they have the opportunity to develop language and other prerequisites so they are not placed in Special Schools. And also an emphasis on parental skills: it's interesting to see that throughout the region parents are re-learning basic child-rearing practices. In a mixed study in several of the countries of the region we found out that there was a very low level of understanding of preventative health care in the home. So we realised that parents need support and new knowledge in a new society. In the past the State took care of that – this is no longer the case. This is also particularly problematic as families face the economic difficulties brought upon by the transition.

### **2) Immunisation Plus**

This is the promotion of universal coverage of children for vaccine preventable diseases. As you may know in Bulgaria two cases of polio were reported this year, both within Roma communities. This was a disease we thought we had wiped out. It is now rearing its ugly head. I think this has a lot to do with education – if children are not immunised they cannot learn.

### **3) HIV AIDS**

I think it's the first time it has been mentioned in this meeting. It's not only an issue of access to quality school but also the quality of the education, and quality means relevance. We would like to ensure that the life-skills information, which includes information for young

people on how to protect themselves, is available in all schools. And the communication method is one specific area of UNICEF support together with UNAIDS. We just had a meeting in Turkey and we had several UNAIDS experts from Africa join us. And as the people in our region were speaking about some of the issues on HIV AIDS the experts from Africa said this is where we were 10 years ago – we thought it could not happen. And it has happened and we now have an epidemic and it will affect everyone and all children, including Roma children.

#### **4) Girls' Education**

A very important priority for UNICEF and it is something that often people say it does not relate to our region – it does relate to Roma communities. We would like to learn more about this and support efforts so that we can do something about equal access for both boys and girls in quality education.

#### **5) Child Protection**

The fifth priority which is prevention from abuse, violence, exploitation, separation from family and war and conflict – all issues that face the Roma community. It is no coincidence that these issues are among those that come out in the report very strongly. For example it is noted very strongly that Roma children comprise a disproportionate amount of children in state institutions including detention centres. It is a priority to prevent these situations as well as to ensure the rights of these children are protected.

One other thing that I would like to mention is that I think we have a window of opportunity. In the UN family, which is sometimes a very dysfunctional family but nevertheless a family, we are trying to work more closely together. As a result we have major efforts going on in UN reform, and in each country where there is a major UN presence we are told to form UN theme groups and UN country groups. This presents us with opportunities to address some of the very important issues being discussed at this conference and examined in the Save the Children UK and OSI reports.

Thank you very much.

## **PLENARY 2: Comments and Questions**

### **Questioner did not give his name**

One of the things that is mentioned in one of the papers – on Hungary I think, is that education has become more marketised, with the introduction of fees, private purchase of text books and so on. I can see the logic of this to some extent in terms of making things more efficient, but what is the World Bank's position in terms of guaranteeing access on the one hand and guaranteeing efficiency through privatisation, marketisation and so forth on the other? What is seen to be the proper role of government in striking this balance as opposed to abdicating responsibility to local Government, families and to the private sector?

DR: This is an excellent question because this is something that we have been quite concerned about. The incidence of fees, both formal and informal, is an area of growing concern. In many of these countries, their constitutions guarantee free education. But when you talk to people, you find out that they are having to pay for books and also pay other kinds of fees. I should say that the World Bank has been increasingly pressured to come out with a position on fees in education, but at this point we don't have one. We work on a country-by-country basis. Basically, the issue for us is ensuring access. This means that no-one should be prevented from accessing education because of cost and countries should adopt mechanisms to subsidise the things that need to be subsidised, providing materials and uniforms and school meals through social assistance if necessary. So our policy is not to support the dumping of these expenses onto families, but rather to work out how you can support them. But this is a challenge for countries where the overall resource envelope for education has really declined. Many countries' budgets are really squeezed. So the trick is to find out what they can and cannot afford while ensuring access. It is a very challenging optimisation problem.

### **Questioner did not give her name**

We have heard here what the European Commission and other organisations are doing, but I haven't heard about the results. We know what we need and what we want – but are there any examples from any country of the results of these programmes – in schools, in government - over these last two years or even just the past year?

### **Elvis Ali, Macedonia**

I am very happy - actually all of the Roma who are here are very happy - that all of the organisations represented here have or will have programmes for Roma. So my question is: how many of these organisations have Roma professionals working on their programmes that intend to tackle issues affecting Roma? I have a 2<sup>nd</sup> question for the Council of Europe. You said that a new employment programme had been accepted, please could you give us more information about this programme.

## **Avdullah Qafani, Kosovo**

We discussed yesterday how high levels of poverty affect the Roma minority and other minority groups. What can international bodies do to establish a new intellectual class? Concretely, are there programmes to promote a higher level of education among Roma? In Kosovo, one of the reasons we have so few intellectuals with higher education is because the conditions for studying are very poor.

## **Rob Fuderich**

On what is being done – because we were running so late and I was the last presenter, I didn't have time to go into any detail in my presentation. I could mention quickly here that in Macedonia, Romania and Bulgaria we have early childhood education programmes. They are all based in the country and run by local people in the country offices. In FRY we are very involved in basic education which is relevant to the Roma community. We have policy research going on in Slovakia and in Hungary we are co funding a project with AFSC on Roma culture. We have non-formal educational programmes especially for Roma women in Macedonia, Slovakia and FRY and advocacy information sharing on issues which effect Roma children through the regional office. I can give you more detail later, but for the sake of brevity, that is a quick 'sweep' through some of our work.

Also, on the question of Roma staff, this is a very interesting point. One of the things we are doing now in Kosovo is to conduct an ethnic audit. There is someone in our office looking at all of the issues that prevent various ethnic groups from working in the same office. It's a very interesting approach to this whole problem. .

## **Consuelo Holtzer**

I agree that this is a very important point. Fortunately or unfortunately, to work at the Council of Europe you have to pass a competitive exam and we have no Roma permanent staff for the moment. My colleague will tell you more about what we are hoping to do about this. For the time being, in the Education Directorate it is very important for us to work in partnership with Roma. As I said before the Steering Group for our new project be made up of a minimum 50% of Roma experts, but for now, they work with us on a consultancy basis.

## **Francoise Kempf**

Yes I would like to talk about the question of Roma working as staff of international organisations. I think it may partly answer too the question about a new intellectual class. As Consuelo said, working in partnership with Roma NGOs and experts is one way. We do a lot of this in the course of our different activities and programmes. This is something that has completely become part of our normal practice. Usually when we prepare something, we have a consultation and we work jointly with Romani representatives. Another way is to have Roma people working permanently within the structure. This is a point which is very often addressed to us. I suppose my answer and that of my organisation has two parts. One the one hand, we recognise that in our organisation there is not a fair representation of all the population, not only of Roma, but of other minorities too. It is true that the staff are all quite

similar to each other. We all we come from certain schools, certain backgrounds. It's true that these kinds of organisations are not very open to minority groups and something should be done in terms of recruitment procedures. But the second part of the point is that when we work as civil servants of an international organisation, we are not representing any one country or any particular group of the population. I am French, but I do not work for France. Consuelo does not work for her country and the people from a minority background who work there - and yes, there are some - are not working for their minority group. In that same spirit, I think the goal is not to have Roma there working for Roma but to have Roma working in the structure everywhere. I mean that there should be Roma working in the legal Directorate, doing work on bio-ethics, everywhere in the organisation. But to reach a stage where we have Roma represented fairly in our organisation, we need positive steps. So we have started two things. On the one hand, in order to recruit Roma staff ... well first of all I should say that right now at the Council of Europe we are not recruiting due to the financial constraints, but we are hoping that Member States will second some Romany people to work with us. I cannot tell you more for the time being because this is not yet policy, but we hope that this will happen. Also - again this is not yet worked through so I can't tell you very much today - we are hoping to have an internship scheme for Roma so that young Roma can get trained to work as civil servants in international organisations. The first step would be to have these young people to work in my Department but the objective finally would be to have young Roma enter the Council of Europe as trainees - in the same way that other trainees do, and work in all departments. The ultimate goal is to have the young Roma able to enter the competitive exams to enter and be employed by these institutions. We know we have to take special positive steps now, but the ultimate aim is not to have Roma selected just because they are Roma and to for them to work just for Roma. At the at the end of the day, this would not be right and I don't think this would be sustainable.

### **Alexandros Tsolakis**

As for this last question, this is also linked to the previous question about how organisations can develop the technical know how not only to propose projects but also to run them. I think it is a very complex and difficult aspect. What Françoise just said was beautiful - just a dream! But it is very difficult. For example, at the Commission we tried also to have an internship scheme in the same way that Françoise proposed. The thing is that there is absolutely no discrimination allowed in our recruitment practices. Because of that, it is impossible to say that people of such and such an origin must be given priority. So it is very difficult to do in terms of managing such things. But I do believe that it is an essential element to have Roma enter the different levels of administration. I would say that local administration is going to be paramount and education does make a big difference. I think that it would be a bad idea if Roma enter the administration to take care of Roma. I think here should be a de-coupling of the idea that Roma should take care of Roma and non- Roma take care of non-Roma. No! Roma should enter administration precisely to open up mentalities and do this by working in sectors other than Roma-oriented sectors. So there is a long way to go. Extrapolating from the figures we discussed yesterday, I calculate that there are only about 20,000 university graduates who are Roma - that is very few. It is true that there must be efforts on all sides so that in a few years this can be done. I think also that organisations have to open up and have not exactly positive discrimination, but preparing themselves to offer access on an equal basis.

On the other question on what has concretely been done, very simply I will give you one fact. In the past 3 years the PHARE Programme has allocated 30 million Euro to Roma education-oriented programmes. There are a very large number of projects. We have all of this information available and at the end of the year a very specific briefing on Roma in the accession countries is going to come out. There is a lot being done, but this should not be used as an excuse to say that this is enough. This is just drop in the ocean.

### **Rosa-Maria Guida**

Just one quick comment about the representation of Roma inside the administration. As you know, in Brussels we have civil servants from candidate countries coming to us to train. We from training and we are and we envisage asking governments from the candidate countries to send us some Roma representatives. Even if these civil servants come not from central, but from local administrations. This is not completely sorted out, but this is our general idea. Also, we are starting to think about more general training for working in the Commission services.

### **Dena Ringold**

We try to involve Roma as much as possible and in fact all of our projects do involve Roma. When the World Bank does a project in a country we don't implement the project ourselves. We work with the NGO or the government team on the design and then they implement the project. In all of the projects we are involved in regarding Roma issues, Roma have been involved and we have also involved Roma in some of our analytical studies. It's been very useful and I hope that we will be able to do more on education. There is a poverty-alleviation programme that we are supporting. It's only a small project but I am very excited about it because from what we have heard from the organisers, it has been very successful in developing the leadership skills of a small group of young Roma. I think that this is really important and I really hope that these young people will go on to become leaders in their own countries.

## Plenary 3

### EDUCATION FOR US

The youth plenary on the final day was, to an extent, the most important aspect of the conference. The young Romani people who had been involved throughout the conference, now had an opportunity to present their thoughts, ideas and conclusions in a plenary to the conference as a whole. Having Romani young people at the centre of this plenary had a significant impact on the participants. With the support of Poppy Szaybo and Bharti Mepani they presented in a number of different and creative ways. The session began with some words from Prof. William Kornblum, who, based at City University of New York, has worked for many years on issues of youth and minorities particularly in urban settings.

Professor William Kornblum, *Graduate Center, City University of New York - Introduction*

Professor William Kornblum began by thanking Poppy, Bharti and the young people for all their work and the organisers for inviting him to participate in this stimulating conference. He wished to make some personal observations about the conference and the issues under discussion. Firstly, in his view, securing the right environment for the youngest children is the key. He cited US research which all points to the urgent need for enriching the environment for children as young as possible. The older they are, the more difficult it becomes to improve their chances. Children need an environment that guarantees security, love and learning. He argued that schools and learning have to be flexible; if Roma boys and girls cannot get to school, then the school has to go to them. He acknowledged that this is a controversial view in many ways. Indeed, for most it is much more desirable to be part of an integrated education. But, if children cannot access school from an early age then we have to re-evaluate where schooling takes place. If this means that we have separate institutions, this does mean though we do not really have a community that spans the populations we're talking about. Ultimately, he argued that we have to create educational systems that make it fun for children to be in school – we want our children to come home from school happy. While this is very idealistic particularly in the context of extreme poverty, exclusion and isolation, it has to be the goal.

His second observation was that each of us as individuals has responsibilities and opportunities in the models of change being discussed at the conference. It cannot be a case of waiting for the Ministry of Education to make the decision. NGOs, foundations, for example, as well as young people and teachers can also be the change agents. The issues of how we change the situation needs to be addressed by all on a daily on-going basis. He then made some final remarks addressed to the young Romani people themselves. He said that there are ways to turn disadvantage to advantage and the ways that Roma are able think about their culture in developing a Romani identity are vital to this whole process. He said that having been with the young people at the conference for the last 3 days, he could see that they had already begun to do this. He concluded by expressing thanks to the young Romani woman from Macedonia who had given him a book as a gift. This he will cherish and he

hopes that the next time they meet, the book she gives him will be one that she has written herself.

The students' presentations at the final plenary (which they designed themselves) demonstrated how creative activities can enable young people to advocate for themselves.

## **YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONTRIBUTIONS**

### **'Five Days in the Life of the Gandhi Gymnazium'**

#### ***Film presentation***

The Gandhi school has been described as the most high profile educational initiative for Roma youth in Hungary in Europe. Due to its reputation, the school and the presence of its students at the conference were a focus for the interest of many delegates attending the conference from elsewhere in the region.

The film 'Five Days in the Life of the Ghandi Gymnazium' was made by Imre Orsós, a student at the Gandhi school. This short documentary film is to be part of Imre's application portfolio to train as a cameraman at film school.

The film is an observant, witty and honest portrayal of attending the Gandhi Gymnazium, showing the day-to-day life of a group of students in a residential school environment. The film also offers an insight into how strongly the students identify with, and are at ease with, their cultural backgrounds. The documentary demonstrated the emphasis that the school places on providing a supportive environment with high academic standards while ensuring that students are actively encouraged to develop their skills in music and the arts in their free time. At the same time, the film conveyed how similar the experience of being a student at the Gandhi school is to student life anywhere, assuaging the curiosity of delegates who wondered whether Roma students required some kind of special programme.

#### ***Photo presentation***

Poppy Szaybo was commissioned by Save the Children as Project Leader to work with a group of Roma young people in preparation for the 'Denied a Future?' conference which took place in Budapest in November 2001. Her main activity, funded by the Canadian International Development Agency, was to involve young people from the Gandhi Gymnazium school in Pecs in an interactive photography project, which was presented at the conference. Their presentation demonstrated how creativity can be used not only to enhance young peoples communication skills, but also to enable them to advocate for themselves. The students welcomed the opportunity to use photographic imagery to offer an insight into Roma youth identity in Hungary.

#### ***A drama about school***

Bharti Mepani, a development officer for Save the Children UK and who is currently seconded to the Children and Young People's Unit in the UK Government, supported the

young people in organising this part of the Youth Plenary. She has a long history of working creatively with young people particularly using drama and role-play.

The young people wrote and acted a sketch based on some of their own experiences to illustrate some of the issues Roma children come up against in relation to education. They invited the audience to think about these issues and the solutions portrayed.

A young Romani boy wants to go school and asks his mother if he can go. But the mother asks 'why?' The boy says 'because others do'. 'But why?' She persists. He says he wants to learn in order to study to be a doctor. Unimpressed the mother replies 'Sure! All Roma who go to school become doctors!'. 'Come on, please let me go' he begs. She finally agrees.

On arriving at the school, the teacher shows the Romani boy to a seat at the back of the room and proceeds with the class. Not understanding what is going on, the boy jumps up and tries to attract the teacher's attention. After a few more interruptions, the teacher, now annoyed, decides to get through the class without answering. The boy is increasingly baffled and upset as his efforts to attract the teacher's attention continue to be ignored. Unable to hear from his seat and giving up on the teacher, the boy tries asking other pupils to explain, but they get annoyed by this and eventually begin to laugh at him and pick on him. Exasperated by the breakdown in discipline, the teacher asks the boy to leave the classroom because he is distracting the other pupils and disrupting her class.

The teacher then phones the Principal to inform him that she has asked the Roma child to go home and doesn't want him back. At this point the Principal tells her that she is not allowed to do this, and that the child has legal rights which include a right to education. The teacher is shocked to discover that she may face disciplinary action for excluding the boy from her class without good reason. She is advised by the Principal to visit the boy at home and see what can be done to get him to come back.

The teacher visits the boy's home – knocks on the door and apologises to the mother about a misunderstanding that has led her son being removed from school. The mother is upset about what has happened to her son, suspicious of the teacher's motives and wants her off her doorstep as quickly as possible 'Go away, no, he isn't coming back!'. The embarrassed teacher makes a considerable effort to convince the boy's mother that she is concerned about the difficult time that her son had on his first day at school. Gaining the mother's trust, the teacher eventually persuades her that she wants to help her son settle in to school. They eventually discuss what they can do to support the child so that he can learn alongside the other pupils. The mother finally agrees to allow her son to go back to the school: "Why not? We have nothing to lose."

### ***General discussion***

In the discussion that followed, a member of the audience made the point that teachers can change their behaviour when faced with difficult consequences. Another participant asked why the play did not feature a Romani teacher as then the child would have understood the teacher. The young people replied that this school was an example of a common situation where a Romani child attends a mainstream majority school that has no Romani teachers. It was then put to the young Romani woman who played the mother – "wouldn't she herself prefer to be in a Romani school?" Her answer was "no" – Romani schools mean segregation, even Romani schools in Romani neighbourhoods, and she does not want that. In her view it is

better for Romani children to attend schools outside their community. She would like to see Romani teachers teaching Romani and non-Romani pupils.

In contrast, the Romani students who attend the Gandhi school felt very strongly that having the chance to attend a school with a programme geared to meet the needs of Romani students, often from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, was very important for them. Given that other minorities in Hungary have their 'own' schools, why shouldn't they be entitled to such a school like, for example children from the German community? They chose to attend this school and benefited greatly from an approach that which encourages them to be proud of their culture and to continue their education.

Maria Andruszkiewicz of Save the Children commented that these different views demonstrated how important it was to offer choices for Roma young people. The Gandhi school had been established because other schools did not offer good provision for Roma young people. The high achievements of the pupils at the Gandhi school demonstrated what adopting a different approach could do. Roma children need to have choices and whether they elect to attend a Roma or majority/mixed school. There will be a need for schools like the Gandhi for as long as 'mainstream' schools remain unable or unwilling to offer a quality education for minority pupils as well as majority ones.

### ***Final thoughts***

The audience were asked to close their eyes and think over their experiences and discussions of the last few days. They were asked to remember that these discussions were about the futures of three million young lives. The young people then concluded with their own hopes and visions:

- “The chance to explain to people that we are human beings as well”
- “Our dream is to have chance to live without discrimination”
- “Our dream to stop discrimination of Roma population”
- “ My dream is for all Roma to be happy – to grow up in society without stereotypes”
- “My dream is for all people to have equal rights to live a free and normal life – to have my right of education – to educate myself as others –to create my own family freely. I wish to live in a normal environment and to die normally as any normal man.”
- “If I had the chance to help a person in any way, especially a Roma person, that chance I would never miss”.

## Concluding Remarks

Marion Molteno, *Education Policy Adviser, Save the Children UK*

As we have a lot of very complicated thoughts to bring together at the end of this very complex few days, I thought it would help if I could try to create a framework for the conclusions and recommendations we have made and the questions we are taking away.

I couldn't possibly cover all of the points that came back from the discussion groups, but I have tried to summarise these into a general framework that we can use in our thinking to take forward this work on Roma education, whatever our own job, whatever our own starting point.

### **Discussions at the conference:**

- How did the practice examples discussed over the course of the conference help in overcoming barriers and difficulties faced by Roma children?
- Would any of these examples work in other national contexts - are they 'translatable'?
- What was it about these practices that made them work?
- Were there unforeseen negative effects that could have been avoided?
- Can the examples discussed have an impact on the educational system more widely, rather than remaining isolated examples of good practice?

The resources that we had at the beginning of the meeting were some reports and papers - and our own experience. Our own experience if we are Roma people, or if we work with Roma people tells us a lot about the barriers which Roma children face, both in trying to get an education and in trying to get a *good* education. The 'Denied a Future?' report looked at this aspect in particular. I usually find that it is easier to read reports after a meeting. Once you have met people, the content of the report is much more alive and it's easier to read it. I hope you will take time to read the reports and will use them in your own thinking and your own work afterwards. If we can identify very clearly the barriers to education, we know which points to work on to find solutions.

When we were trying to look at solutions, we were helped very much by the OSI research, which looked at concrete examples of how people have tried to overcome these barriers. Hearing about experience elsewhere, sometimes in other continents, of working with very mixed ethnic communities and marginalised groups has also helped us. From these we asked ourselves: 'Did those experiments work?' That means did they take away the barrier? If they did not take away the barrier, did they help to lessen the negative impact of the barrier, so that children with determination could succeed in getting something from what we know to be not a very good system. If they did work, why? If the examples were from another context - not a Roma context - but another context of work with excluded groups or to challenge negative attitudes to minorities, can we see why they worked? Are there any thoughts there on how we could try to work on our particular barriers? Once we had asked those questions, if we

found that yes, for that small group those experiments worked, and if we could work out why they worked, we could discuss if they would work for us, maybe by changing them a little bit for our own local context.

So our first aim was to look at those experiments, at that experience. Then, if we think that something really is a good idea, that it really helps to remove the barriers, is there a way to influence the whole system so that many more children can benefit? This is the thought process we have been going through this week, both together and individually.

Some of us have had much more to say about the barriers, because we have strong personal experience of them. Some of us have had more to say about possible solutions, but possibly these people have less experience of the barriers? It has been very important to have arguments in our discussions and to hear particularly from people who say: 'Well that looks alright, but it would never work where I am because you don't properly understand the barriers'. These discussions have sometimes been quite angry and disagreements have sometimes been very strong because people feel passionate about what is happening - or what is not happening. But these are very constructive arguments, because only if we are honest about the problems and difficulties can we get somewhere.

So, using the feedback from the people who chaired the different discussions, I want to quickly look at the main issues that emerged.

## **BARRIERS**

Of the barriers, it seems that there are three kinds and I think that it is useful to separate them when planning actions.

### **What stops Roma children from:**

- **attending (any) school?  
attending mainstream school - as opposed to 'special school' for disabled or school attended only by Roma children?**

Some of these barriers are about the things that stop children getting to school at all: poverty is the one that comes up all the time.

Sometimes it is negative attitudes. The short play that the young people performed today demonstrated that really clearly: if you think that your child is going to experience negative attitudes in school, why send them?

Sometimes, it is not a barrier about getting to school, but it is a barrier about getting to a *mainstream* school. And for that we need a different set of solutions.

- **staying in school for the period needed to complete basic schooling?  
getting something useful from attending school?  
(getting an education if they are not in school?)**

Sometimes getting to school is OK, but staying there long enough to get something useful out of it is the problem. Maybe even if you stay there a long time, you won't get anything useful

out of school because what that school does is not very useful: because you just sit there and you don't understand anything, because no-one is helping you to understand. For those children who are in school but who are not getting very much out of it, there are specific barriers for which we need solutions because these children will drop out for sure - and without much that is useful for them.

- **doing well in school?  
going on to secondary or higher education?**

And then there is a third set of problems: if you get to school and you stay, but you are always at the bottom of the class. Why is it that those children are not doing well? What could be a solution to help them do well?

**What are the particular problems/barriers for children who:**

- use a language at home that is different from the language of school?
- are refugees or internally displaced?
- have to earn income for the family or care for other family members?
- are girls?

I can tell you that one thing that I am taking away from this conference is the huge impact it has had on me to meet so many Roma people who are so well educated and are thinking so creatively about education. After reading the reports describing all the barriers to education, I think that the people who have faced all of those barriers, but made such good use of all available opportunities are very special people and I have learned a lot from them.

But society will not change unless there are thousands, tens of thousands of these kinds of special people. We don't want a system that just makes sure that Roma children sit in school for a few years, we want a system that produces many thousands of people like those who have participated in this conference, so that you will not be the exceptions any more. To meet with many educated Roma people will be a normal situation. Different solutions are going to be needed for all of those barriers.

## **THINGS THAT HAVE BEEN TRIED**

If we look at some of the solutions that have been described in these reports and that people have offered in our discussions from their own experience, it seems to me they fall into four different groups.

**Solutions / ideas on what can be done to.....:**

**...relieve economic pressure?**

- **via parents/particular communities**
- **to individual children (free meals in school, with school materials, scholarships)**

One group gave examples of tackling the economic barriers. We heard from Macedonia for example, about a scholarship programme to help children to stay in secondary school. Here is a case of tackling the last two kinds of barrier because we want children to stay at school

long enough to get something useful from it and to do well. If there is an economic barrier that is stopping children from doing this then only economic support is going to solve it. But if the government does not have much money and it is difficult to find outside funding for the things that are needed, then how do we deal with it? When economic solutions are what is needed, these pose big problems for funding.

An issue raised here is that there are other children who are poor but who are not Roma. There were discussions about how singling out Roma children for help could cause resentment from other groups. It was felt to be better to target all poor children or families, then the poorer Roma children would benefit but they were not singled out.

### **...challenge negative attitudes...**

- in teachers and other children: in classroom and outside - sometimes by starting with behaviour - making it clear that certain kinds of behaviour are unacceptable
- in the whole school ethos (what is taught, reinforced/rewarded)
- in the school system (testing and classifying children, requiring birth/residence certificates)
- by challenging stereotypes held outside the school (influencing how media portray Roma people)

We discussed a whole set of solutions to do with tackling the negative attitudes that exist in society and in the school system towards Roma. We heard about some very inspiring examples where people have tried to challenge negative attitudes and to turn them around. In the drama that the young people did earlier, there was a wonderful example of the teacher's negative attitude being challenged and because it was, she had to replace it with practical behaviour that was more positive. As somebody correctly said, maybe the first thing you can change is the behaviour. For some people that change in attitude will come more slowly. There is a saying that I like very much from Martin Luther King, the US civil rights activist. Somebody said to him: 'Why are you bothering to change the law? The problem is not the law, the problem is people's negative attitudes towards black people.' In his answer, he used the word 'lynch', which was a particular thing that was happening in the southern United States - a very violent attack by whites on blacks. He said: 'The law cannot stop people hating me, but it can stop them lynching me.' This is very important. If we can stop negative behaviour and create a culture in the school where negative behaviour is not acceptable, then gradually there will be an impact on negative attitudes.

Negative attitudes in the wider society can also be influenced. From the media workshops we had some good examples and good suggestions about using the media creatively to tackle the attitudes of society as a whole as well as within the school system.

### **...create positive alternatives...**

- working with Roma children to prepare them for school and build their confidence so that they get off to a good start
- working with parents to change negative attitudes to education

- working with the whole community where the school is based
- using concepts of human rights to explain that certain standards should be respected: for example informing people about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- using other kinds of 'leverage' - offering grants/resources to schools that have good practices

In addition to combating and challenging negative attitudes, it is also really important to create positive attitudes. So it is not just about stopping people hating me, it is also about explaining to them why it might be fun to get to know me. Currently there is only one positive stereotype for Roma, which is common right across the region, and this is to do with music. There are so many more that could be there. Every community produces wonderful people with wonderful things to contribute. Those positive alternative attitudes need to be created, also within Roma people so that young Roma people feel positive and strong and feel that they have got things to offer. One of our young participants said this morning: 'If I have a chance to help anybody in society I will not turn away from that chance. If I have a chance to help my own community, that too.' So let's focus more on the contribution that Roma can make to their own and the wider society and create positive attitudes. An education process with young children is the best time for those things to begin.

### **...improve teaching and learning...**

- by starting young - pre-school schemes
- employing classroom assistants
- offering extra tuition out of school hours
- using teaching methods that are effective for all children

There were lots of examples to do with the solution of how you can affect the teaching and learning context so that the children can get the most out of it. Again, the young people's drama gave those suggestions very strongly. You can have interpreters in the classroom, you can have extra support for pupils who are finding it difficult to study, you can make sure that the teacher does sensible things in the classroom instead of stupid things and welcoming things instead of insulting things. That will create an atmosphere in which children are released to learn.

The final point from our discussions was that while it is usually impossible to do everything, it helps if you do a few of these things simultaneously.

### **WHAT WORKS AND WHY?**

So, when we looked at the different examples and experiments, what works out of these and why? Many of them were an outstanding success. Some were quite successful, but there were complicated reasons why they weren't more so. It's important to know not just the answer to 'did it work', but also to 'why did it work?' and 'if it didn't work, why?' Of the principles that emerged out of the discussions, it seemed that there were four that came up again and again in many of the groups.

## **Basic principles:**

### **Involve the community and generate local solutions ...**

- Involving the whole school community including pupils and parents to identify local problems and generate local solutions
- Schools should make good use of the help that credible Roma NGOs can offer
- Ownership and transparency - anyone who wants to be involved can join in

Firstly, it is no use trying to do something just in the school. The community - both communities - the Roma community and the other community, are essential. In particular, in many communities, the help of Roma local organisations was essential to making something work.

### **Principles before practice...**

- A 'whole school' approach
- Careful planning, monitoring and documenting outcomes for children
- Awareness that diversity is not merely 'tolerated' but accepted and celebrated

Principles are critical. It is no use only having practice. In the young people's drama, the School Director called the schoolteacher up to explain that her behaviour to the Roma child was not acceptable and the schoolteacher was surprised to be told '...he has a *right?*'. Once you have the principle in place, you can get the behaviour to follow and then, in many cases, the attitudes will eventually change too.

### **Be reflective and responsive...**

- Respond when things change or are not working out
- Flexibility - a new system should not inherit the rigidity of the old one
- Sensitivity to the needs of all children - all children at the school should benefit from changes that are introduced
- All staff and volunteers have high professional standards

Once you have established new principles and new practice, try not to carry these out as rigidly as the old system was carried out. You should try something, see if it works, respond to what does not work so well. You change it if necessary. This is how you get a good educational process.

### **Start young, keep going...**

Lastly, you must start young. All of these things happen best if you start young. Developing positive attitudes, confidence in learning, learning a new language if you need to. All of these things are important and they are easier to do if you start young.

- But it is no good having wonderful pre-schools if you have no impact on the school system that the children will go on to later.
- Pre-school provision can be more flexible than primary school and therefore more locally and culturally responsive. This is provision at a prime 'influencing time'.
- However, funding for pre-school provision is often not available. Despite the fact that pre-school is so influential, it has a low priority in educational funding terms and governments are taking funding away from early years provision. How do we resolve that?
- The good work of pre-schools can be compromised when children move from a good pre-school to a rigid and unwelcoming school system. What can we do to help the transition so that children keep going?

## **LANGUAGE**

### **No simple solution: the issues and solutions vary from locality to locality**

Everybody agreed that the language used in education is an important factor in whether children can succeed. But I sat in on the language workshop and any statement that somebody made - which was true - was immediately contradicted by a statement that somebody else made - which was also true. The situation is very complicated and the solutions have to be worked out locally. You can look at these in three ways.

#### **Need to ensure:**

- identity/confidence
- understanding for learning,
- succeeding at school and later on

Firstly, language is important to a child's sense of identity and to hold on to their culture. Children's confidence in their linguistic and cultural identity is enhanced by their language being 'visible' in their school. For example, by having teaching materials available in their mother-tongue or having staff at the school who speak the child's home language or dialect. So how do you make sure of that?

Secondly, for a quite different reason, language is important because you should be able to understand what is going on in the classroom in order to be able to learn. Children need to be able to understand and use the school language to get the most out of school. Some children do not have too much of a problem, others have a big problem, so you need to distinguish.

Thirdly, to succeed in society you need a good introduction to the language that you will need to get jobs and to get by in society. The school language is often also the language that children will need to access employment and other opportunities as adults

Finally, early years are critical. The earlier the age that children receive language support, the more they benefit.

So somehow, you have to try to ensure all of these things.

These two areas - language and early years support - are the ones that for me, came out as needing the most careful work in the future, because we still are not clear about what to do about them, about how to go forward. But they are vital for breaking the cycle of exclusion and inadequate education provision.

Thank you very much.



Jean-Pierre Liegeois, *Director Centre de Recherches Tsiganes, Université Paris Sorbonne*

Thank you. Rather than give conclusions, I would prefer to offer some remarks about what I have felt over these past two days. I shall try to avoid repeating what Marion has already said very well - this was a very good summary of what has been discussed in the different groups. So I shall come back to some of the points which she presented and put them in a broader context. If there are questions later I will be happy to try to answer them.

My first point will be to mention some other reports that exist on some of the issues that were discussed over these days. As Marion said, it's never too late to read a report. The first European report on this subject was produced in 1984 entitled "On the Situation of Gypsies in the Community" which set this issue in the context of the European Union. On the basis of this report, an important text was adopted: the resolution of the Ministers of Education of the European Union. This covers all of the member states of the European Union and it gives some very important input, but no obligations. An evaluation report was produced a few years later on the implementation of this resolution. It provides many ideas and urges commitments to teacher training, as well as training and employing Roma in schools as teachers, assistant teachers and school mediators. This report still has implications for learning in this context. Meanwhile, the UNICEF research centre in Florence produced another important report about the situation of Roma children which included reference to education in a number of countries. Then, in 1999 the Council of Europe Specialist Group on Roma produced a report about school provision for Roma children which was adopted in 2000 and was the basis of the text presented yesterday by Françoise Kempf. We now have two new reports: the Save the Children report, which covers 14 states and OSI's new research report. What is important when reading these different reports is that every one has its own way of investigating and of researching, but also there is complementarity between the different reports. Although different countries are presented from different viewpoints, through different eyes and using different methodologies, they do broadly point to the same conclusions, the same recommendations and the same priorities. Each new report reinforces the findings of previous reports. For example, the Council of Europe text adopted the same structure, profile and recommendations as the EU text. This is important as well as clever. By adopting the same profile, the Council of Europe could apply a framework originally designed for the 15 member states of the European Union to the 43 member states of the Council of Europe.

Another important point is that there is increased interest on the part of the international institutions on the situation of Roma and in particular on how to improve their situation. Just to give you an idea: in 1994 we published a reader of all of the texts directly concerning Roma by the Council of Europe, the OSCE, the European Union and the UN. In 1994 we had 80 texts in total. We are now publishing an updated edition. Our findings show that since 1994 - in just a few years - we have as many texts again as there were since the beginning of the 1960s. But this massive rise in the number of publications on Roma as it is not necessarily all a positive development. Most of them are simply not implemented.

Another key issue is that the situation of Roma in candidate countries has become a very important aspect of the accession process especially since 1999 when the Finnish Presidency of the European Union decided to put it as a very high priority for the accession states. Portugal which had the Presidency after Finland pushed the question of Roma to be one of

the highest priorities for the accession. With this prioritisation came an increase in funding for candidate countries to deal with this issue. This has had a very positive effect but also some negative ones.

Another important factor has been the development of Romani organisations at national, regional and international levels, particularly since the 1970s with the first International Romany Congress in London and then the others in Warsaw, Geneva and so on. As Marion said, the development of partnerships with Roma organisations is a key part of the question. But considering all of these developments, all of these texts and reports, an obvious major concern is the complete lack of any real implementation. Implementation is very difficult. Why? And here we come back to some of the points that were raised by Marion.

One of the key points is discrimination. There are a lot of things that lie behind this term, which I haven't the time here to go into in depth. There are deep historical and ideological roots to discrimination and it is very difficult to eradicate these and still have a significant influence on policies. Although there is not time to describe these policies in detail, it is possible to say that they are all characterised by negation - negation of Roma culture, language and so on.

We come now to another point that has previously been mentioned, which is that of stereotypes or mis-representation as we sometimes call it. We can conclude that Roma are not defined as they are or according to their lived reality. Rather, they tend to be defined, as it is necessary to define them in order to justify the policies and the behaviour that is directed at them. This tendency of misrepresentation presents an important challenge to the implementation of new policies. It highlights the importance of the media and of training for all educational programmes not only for teachers and Roma but also for civil servants and for people working in the different ministries, also for the police. It is very important, as Marion said, to change attitudes and then behaviour, or behaviour and then attitudes - both sides. The lack of implementation and need for evaluation has come up in many of the discussion groups but especially in the groups discussing the role of intergovernmental and supra-national organisations. This is particularly important given the risk of duplicating programmes resulting in wasted resources and money. At the international level, it is so common to see the use of the term 'pilot project', but a pilot project should be a pilot - that is an exploration with the aim of developing further projects. However, there doesn't appear to this exploratory or driving function anymore. .

From the economic point of view it is also very important to mention the administrative difficulties that some organisations face when applying for funds. It has been mentioned in one and maybe more of the working groups that when applying for the funds there exists a very high administrative complexity surrounding access to certain programmes. These difficulties block smaller organisations from participating. The issue of external funding also brings us to think about the issue of dependence. These funds not only represent a lot of money, in fact millions of Euros, but the hopes and the expectations that they raise are likewise enormous - and failure is not an option. Someone said this morning that it is the task and duty of all of us, from administrators, governments, teachers and so on, to try and do the best for these projects and programmes whether in defining or implementing actions. For that I come back to an earlier point, that is, the need for mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation as well as for developing working guidelines, devising strategies, and establishing principles.

I will end on a positive note by saying that at the national level in many states and at the international level, everything that has been done so far for school provision for Roma children has had a paradigmatic effect. For example when you consider all that has been done for Roma children in the context of the Council of Europe and the EU, it has not been done to the same degree for other peoples or communities such as Basques or Armenians. The thinking applied to education provision for Roma has been significant and has had a paradigmatic effect on school provision for this minority and all other children.

We speak a lot about intercultural education and I would say that a lot has been achieved thanks to the activities that were developed for Roma children. It is important to mention this aspect of the picture because it is a positive aspect that can be easily proved. It is very positive when Roma people say that we used to speak of the Roma question or even the Roma problem - but because of the issue being addressed it has been possible to develop activities and to make significant improvements and developments in intercultural education and in education for all children. This is an important point that needs to be emphasised.

I have a lot more that I would like to say but time is running out. To end, I would like to say that this meeting was a very good opportunity to bring together many people from different institutional backgrounds. Many meetings are organised for teachers or for policy makers only and so on, but what was important about this meeting was that it brought together people from different areas. That was very important and it was also very clear that the discussions, both the informal and formal ones presented rare opportunities for exchanging information and experiences. There is a lack of such opportunities to meet, to develop and exchange ideas and to build a base of common knowledge among a broad range of people whether they be administrators, teachers, Roma, non-Roma, and so on. This is crucial as a means for working together to improve the situation of Roma and the situation of society in general.

## II

### QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSIONS



# **A: THE ROLE OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS**

**(Chair: Judy Lister)**

Given that one of the main findings of the Denied a Future? report was that most funding for Roma education initiatives in Central and South Eastern Europe originate from external donors and in particular inter-governmental agencies, this session was aimed at enabling delegates to consider and discuss issues relating to this as addressed in the Plenary II session. Representatives of organisations featured in the Plenary were available to answer delegates' questions.

## **Key points**

Many national and local NGOs believe that intergovernmental organisations are inaccessible and do not work in a transparent way. While some of them are now issuing statements about local-level participation and consultation, local groups still find it difficult to find information about how plans and priorities are devised and how they can get involved in these processes.

There is a perception some that international and intergovernmental agencies have a low level of commitment to communicating with NGOs and grass-roots organisations. The language and form in which information is given is technical and jargon-filled - difficult for people who work outside these structures to relate to.

The procedures for applying for funds are difficult and bureaucratic and smaller organisations in particular have difficulty meeting the needs of funding agencies' bureaucracies. Decision-making and funding transfers are slow and often delayed.

Monitoring and evaluation by intergovernmental organisations of the impact of their work is noticeably lacking. Even though funding agencies insist that implementing agencies monitor and evaluate the projects that they fund, they don't seem to do this for their own programmes. Or if they do, the findings of these evaluations are not widely available. Therefore it is difficult to establish what benefits have come from expenditure by international and intergovernmental organisations.

## **B: SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND TEACHING – GOOD PRACTICE FOR A MULTICULTURAL SCHOOL**

(Chair: **Michelynn Laflèche**)

A significant part of the Denied a Future? report deals with aspects of good practice that primarily exist in the NGO sector. In order to explore this further, practitioners from Central and Eastern Europe, Western Europe and North America presented examples of successful initiatives from schools serving students of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Can principles and practice that have been developed elsewhere to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse populations contribute to the goal of providing Education for All in South-East and Central Europe?

Three examples of good practice from different countries/contexts were discussed. Three elements that contributed to success in all of the case studies considered were:

1. **Innovative and creative pedagogical approaches:** the case studies demonstrated the value and necessity of teachers and schools adopting a variety of pedagogical approaches to meet the needs of different pupils in their schools. Some of the key examples discussed and agreed to be of value to achieving equality in education provision were *reflective practice* and an approach underpinned by concepts of *multiple intelligence, talents and learning styles*.
2. **A whole-school approach to bringing about positive change or to resolve conflicts:** a whole school approach was defined to mean the *involvement of all stakeholders* in education in the setting of strategies to produce positive change and resolve conflict. This meant the school director, all teachers in the school, youth and community workers in the area (voluntary sector organisations), parents and the pupils themselves.
3. **Strong leadership from the school Director or Principal:** It was agreed that support for individual teacher commitment to achieving equality had to come from the top as well. The role of the school director in *supporting teachers already themselves committed and in encouraging the commitment of all of their teachers* was vital to success.

While the discussion groups concluded that it is not possible to directly replicate models from other places, it was useful to compare the challenges faced by these models and how they were addressed. While local problems need locally-devised solutions, some useful ideas, about broad principles rather than detailed practice, could come from other contexts.

One of the main challenges is the working culture of schools. If existing practices are manifestly failing some children, how do you challenge school management? It is difficult to achieve positive change unless there is leadership from the school Director. In particular, principles of equality need to be established at the senior level of school management.

Otherwise changes to, for example, teacher training will not feed through into practice in schools.

When planning changes at the school, there needs to be a consultative structure in place involving parents and pupils and other community representatives. Issues over what 'community leadership' meant, and how to ensure an inclusive approach to involving the community stakeholders were discussed in detail. Again, general agreement that a locally sensitive approach was necessary, but learning from experience from other contexts, such as through this seminar, was useful and valuable.

## Paper #1

### School Development in Roma Communities – Equal Opportunities for Roma children through Education

By: Catalina Ulrich, Program Coordinator, Educatia 2000+, Romania

**COUNTRY:** Romania

**DURATION:** 36 months

**IMPLEMENTING ORGANISATIONS:** The project is a joint effort of Center Education 2000+ Romania, SLO National Institute for Curriculum Development - The Netherlands, the Dutch government (MATRA program)

**RECIPIENT ORGANIZATION:** Centrul Educatia 2000+ (member of Soros Open Network) is a Romanian NGO committed to promoting educational reform within the Romanian school system.

#### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

##### **PROBLEM DEFINITION**

The project was launched in 1998, as a supporting initiative for schools in their effort to address the educational needs of Roma children. The program mission statement is to create equal chances for Roma youth and children through education in order to improve their opportunities for social integration.

The starting point for this program was an assessment of the difficulties that Roma children face when starting school. This was also an important issue for Romanian educational reform more widely. The main problems that are to be overcome by Roma children of school-age (low attendance rates, high drop-out rates, poor results and motivation, failure to complete a course of study) are due to various causes:

- cultural and historical aspects influence children's attitudes towards school and learning processes in schools. This can lead to tensions between the family culture and the school culture, particularly where the curriculum is mono-cultural.
- some communities do not value education or consider educational institutions to be useful or important. Romany culture is mainly oral and parents who are illiterate are less likely to encourage their children to become literate even though writing skills are essential for progress in school. As a result there are low levels of parent and community involvement in the educational process.
- children are bilingual (Romany and Romanian) and not proficient in the school language when they start school. Teaching methods do not take into account pupils' needs and a few children are offered extra support.
- families in poverty depend on children contributing to household expenses
- elements of the non-Roma population are prejudiced and informed by stereotypes rather than facts. This contributes to the development of low self-esteem in pupils.

**TARGET GROUP:** 28 schools located in communities with a large number of Roma families.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The project provides training and support to administrators and teachers in Romanian elementary and secondary schools in order to change teaching practices, curriculum content, and school organization and operation. These changes are intended to:

- (1) improve the educational environment and opportunities for Roma students in Romanian elementary and secondary schools;
- (2) increase the involvement of parents and the community in the development and operation of the school;
- (3) assist Roma students in building a positive sense of their own cultural identity.

## **"3 A" MODEL**

The project's training and support activities sought to change teacher and school practices in order to directly or indirectly address several of the barriers to improving Roma educational attainment. Given the nature of the project goals, all of the participants in the project were aware that change would not occur overnight.

A model was developed for implementation of the activities and to assist project management staff as well as school staff to design, implement and evaluate project activities. The "3A" model involved three stages:

- **Awareness:** To take actions that enable the community to learn about and discuss the current social position of minority groups and the problems related to minority education.
- **Acknowledgement:** To take actions that enable minority group members to become full participants in the school community while maintaining and strengthening their own distinct cultural identity.
- **Achievement:** To take actions that result in measurable improvement in access to a quality education for Roma children and in their level of educational achievement and attainment.

## **ACTIVITIES**

### **A) Training**

1. National training sessions for school administrators and teachers from Romanian elementary and secondary schools participating in the project. Training sessions were conducted on six topics:

- **School Management & Community Partnerships** – These sessions focused on project design and implementation, the change process, organizational cultures, motivation, negotiation and conflict resolution, and team-building. Sessions involved school administrators and regional inspectors.
- **Classroom Management - Cooperative Learning** – These sessions presented and demonstrated cooperative learning including pedagogical strategies for use by elementary and secondary school teachers.

- Intercultural Education – These sessions emphasized the value of intercultural education as a cross-curricular theme that could be integrated across all academic subjects, as an optional curriculum, and as extracurricular activities. Sessions involved teachers of different subject matters.
- Oral History – These sessions demonstrated pedagogical strategies which use oral history techniques as teaching tools in the classroom, particularly with minority ethnic groups. These sessions involved elementary school and social science teachers.
- Remedial Education – These sessions presented strategies for mentoring children who are behind their peers in reading and writing. Sessions involved elementary school teachers.
- Parental Involvement and Parent Education – These sessions presented approaches for improving communication and cooperation between teachers and minority group parents, particularly Roma parents. These sessions also suggested activities that could meet the educational needs of Roma parents. Sessions involved teachers, Roma parents, and non-Roma parents.

**2) Local training** sessions as a follow up to national training activities. These sessions were planned by project staff based on needs expressed by teachers and school administrators during site visits to schools and communities. These local training sessions sought to strengthen the capacity of school teams to plan and implement school-based activities built upon the topics discussed at the national training sessions. The local sessions also sought to increase cooperation between the members of the school teams and other school staff who did not attend the national training activities.

**B) Instructional materials** created by the project to advance and support the school-based implementation of concepts introduced in the training.

*a) Teacher' guides*

A series of guides was published to support teachers' activity in schools. Theoretical aspects were combined with practical exercises and suggestions in order to enhance and support reflective thinking, effective analysis and activities in schools. Discussions and activities organized in cooperation with school teachers and managers involved in the program were that main input in designing these guides. Guides were created on 6 topics and used during the national training sessions. These guides included examples of school or classroom activities, case studies and a theoretical background to the activities. Guides were developed to accompany all the training topics: school management, cooperative learning, oral history, remedial teaching, intercultural education and parental involvement:

*b) Romani language materials* aim to help Roma children to develop their cultural identity. The following books take into consideration both the complexity of Roma culture and the methodological requirements for teaching and learning Romani language.

- **8 childrens books** with Roma content "First steps in reading and writing" these books are used by teachers in remedial teaching and language development for Roma students. These materials targeted students in elementary school level and were written by Roma teachers (Mirena Cionca, Elena Eigel, Salomeea Romanescu) and a non-Roma author (Elena Beldea).

- **Romani language ABC - Anglutno Lil** (author: Mihaela Zatreanu, illustrations Ana Costef)  
The book helps Romani language teachers by providing an up-to-date methodological resource in common (standard) language. ABC Anglutno Lil balances elements of traditional communities with contemporary society, addresses many concerns important in Roma culture: mixed communities, urban and rural areas, occupations, gender relations, etc. The book is approved by the Ministry of Education and Research as curricular support material for teaching the Romani language in schools.
- **Bilingual book in Romani/ Romanian** – "Events in my life" written by Isabela Banica  
Written in the form of a diary and in a bilingual format, the book is aimed at encouraging Roma children and youngsters to study Roma culture and language. The Romani version makes the book an effective teaching instrument for all Romani language teachers and it also provides the students with the opportunity to enrich their vocabulary with words from the literary language.

Special attention was paid to the involvement of Roma teachers and experts (Mihaela Zatreanu, Elena Eigel, Mirena Cionca, Salomeea Romanescu, Vasile Ionescu, Delia Grigore, Cristian Radulescu, Letitia Mark, Mariana Buceanu, Nicoleta Bitu, Nicolae Ghorghie).

C) School-based implementation activities were designed around selected topics discussed during the national and local training sessions. The school teams who participated in the national training activities were collaborated to identify issues of importance in the school, create plans to address these issues, and implement those plans. Each school received a small financial grant to support implementation - about 750 USD per year for each school. One purpose of the second round national training sessions was to assist the school teams in designing their implementation plans.

The trained teacher teams in each participating school were expected to lead the change effort in their school, actively disseminating their training experiences and demonstrating their accomplishments to their fellow educators.

#### D) Information materials

- **6 newsletters in Romanian and 2 newsletters in English (with Romani abstract)**  
The newsletters aimed to facilitate sharing of experience and networking. The newsletter's main goal was to bring people and their ideas together, to promote the creation of a network and to promote activities within the framework of this program.
- The **resource book** "Steps toward success" presents examples of good practice for the development of Roma education in Romania: different program components, case and studies from schools in Chiliseni, Humoreni, Bals, Miinesti, Varias, Maguri and Iasi. (Written by Ciprian Fartusnic and Catalina Ulrich, in Romanian and English)
- a **short movie** presenting the program
- a **poster**
- a **leaflet**
- A **web site** <http://www.impreuna.com>

E) Monitoring visits to participating schools. Project staff visited each school for information and assessment purposes. These visits were used to identify accomplishments

and needs in each school. The results of these visits were used to help school teams develop their plans and improve their activities. These results also served to inform the content of the second year national training sessions and the local training activities.

These monitoring visits were conducted in all the pilot schools, about one every 6 weeks. Evaluation activities were based on the school activities assessment, monitoring reports, feedback from schools based on self-evaluation instruments. A national conference took place in July 2000 in order to evaluate project implementation in the 28 pilot schools. Participants included school representatives, implementing organisation representatives, the Ministry of National Education, county School inspectorates, Roma NGOs.

## **PROJECT TEAM**

**2 co-ordinators** (Dutch, Romanian) and several experts. These experts were responsible for different project components and for delivering three types of professional services:

- provide training
- develop instructional materials
- monitor schools
- report on a specific project area

At the school level, more than 250 teachers, inspectors and CCD experts, parents and community representatives were involved.

## **LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURE**

- implementing organization (CEDU)
- pilot schools (first wave and second wave schools, 28 in total)
- county inspectorates (Roma education inspector, primary education inspector, in-service teacher training inspector)
- Teacher Training Centers (in-service teachers training institutions) - CCDs experts
- Roma and non-Roma NGOs
- Roma and non-Roma parents and local leaders
- Representatives of Local Authorities

Paper #2:

Clayton Park Junior High A School for Diverse Learners

By: Max Moulton, Clayton Park Junior High Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

**IMMIGRATION BACKGROUND OF NOVA SCOTIA:**

**17th century** - The first European settlement was founded at Port Royal in Acadia in 1604. Throughout the century, French settlers established homes in Nova Scotia.

**18th century** - Growing numbers of immigrants from England, Scotland and Ireland settled here seeking a better life. After the American Revolution in 1776, United Empire Loyalists fled to Canada to maintain their loyalty to Britain. These were our first refugees. Our first 'free' Black refugees came to Nova Scotia during this period as well.

**19th century** - British immigration continued. Later in the century Nova Scotia welcomed immigrants from central and Eastern Europe to develop the land. During the war of 1812 another immigration of Black settlers took place.

**20th century** - Immigration boomed during the period leading up to World War, reaching a peak in 1913. Immigration has fluctuated over the years, depending on pressures abroad and Canada's needs. After a lull during the Depression and Second World War, many Europeans displaced by war and persecution settled in Canada.

**1950's and 60's** - A number of Greek and Italian immigrants settled in Halifax.

**1978** - Canada began resettling thousands of Vietnamese boat people.

**1980s** - Canada accepted growing numbers of people fleeing oppression and civil war in countries such as El Salvador and Chile.

**1990s** - Immigration from Asia has increased in recent years.

**1999** - In the spring of 1999, Canadians welcomed more than 5000 refugees from Kosovo, under an emergency evacuation program. Many of these settled in Halifax.

Halifax until the 1990's was a city of European background with the second largest Black population in Canada. The relationship between these two cultures has been at times rocky.

**OUR SCHOOL:**

Clayton Park Junior High is located in the northwestern section of Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. The school draws mainly from the communities of Rockingham and Clayton Park.

The school has grades 7-9, with students whose age's range from 11- 15 years. Our present school population is 350.

Over the last four to five years our area has experienced the largest growth in our Metropolitan area. This growth has brought with it a dramatic change in the demographics of the area. The area has become very culturally and socially/economically diverse. This area is one of the few areas near the Halifax peninsula that has land for new growth. Many new homes and apartments have 'sprung' up. This has provided opportunities for people from around the world to move into Halifax. Many New Canadian immigrant entrepreneurs have moved here with their wealth and talents.

There are also many apartment buildings that are used by the government to provide needed accommodations for refugees who have come to this country to seek a new beginning.

Clayton Park Junior High reflects these demographic changes that have taken place. Over the last six years, our school culture has become a very multicultural one.

The second largest language group in the school is Arabic. We teach students from all the major Arabic countries in the Middle East; Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Syria, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

- We also have students from most of the 'troubled' spots of the world; Iraq and Kuwait; Israel and Palestine, Syria and Egypt. The school also teaches students from both sides of the Bosnian Crises – Serbs and Albanians.
- Students from Africa are also represented: Somalia, Nigeria, Ghana, Egypt, South Africa Zimbabwe, Somalia, Uganda, Eritrea and Kenya.
- Eastern and Western Europe is also well represented: France, Germany, Italy, Spain, England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Denmark, Russia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Malta, Romania, Yugoslavia, Bosnia, Romania and Albania.
- The East is also represented by India, Hong Kong, China, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Philippines, South Korea, Vietnam, Japan and Australia
- From The Southern Hemisphere, we have students from Brazil, Venezuela, Cuba, Argentina, Costa Rica, Barbados, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Bolivia, and Bermuda.
- And of course The United States and Mexico.
- We have the four major religions of the world represented.
- We have over 30 languages spoken in the school.

As you can see from the statistical analysis of the school's diverse population, Clayton Park Junior High plays a unique role in the educational role of the Halifax Regional School Board. The '**norm**' at Clayton Park is '**diversity**'. The staff and school community have become the cultural center for the neighborhood. We try to help both students and parents in their difficult adjustments to a new country and a new culture. This has been new to Halifax and we are learning as we go. "Diversity enriches the life of the school but it also tests the imagination and will of education systems to respond to the expressed needs of different language, ethic and religious groups, men and women, affluent and poor. We must assure the equity for all students. We must present a vision of a community in which everyone is included and respected." (Secondary Schools in Canada: The national Report of the Exemplary Schools Project, Canadian Education Association, 1995)

In doing so, it has been imperative that Clayton Park Junior High develop a concept of a 'community school' unique to our demographic area. Caring about the progress of students means understanding the problems they are trying to overcome outside as well as inside the classroom. It requires the school to become a vital support for all the members in the school 'family'. We are not only taking care of our students; we are supporting the entire family unit in whatever ways we can – legal help, medical help, employment help. By helping the entire family to best utilize the services available in our broader community, we are creating a framework for learning. Through student awareness of their role in the broader community, we are facilitating the growth of responsible citizenship, positive personal development, and communication skills.

All of this has required a variety of programs that respond to the challenge. We need to redefine our concept of 'schooling'. However, creating a respectful climate that adapts, in various ways, to the increasing diversity of student needs, takes sustained energy, clear direction, and innovative special programs. It requires change on the part of all aspects of the school community, as well as, support from the various levels of administrative support.

“The educational landscape is littered with the remains of failed school reforms, many of which failed because of the social conditions surrounding the schools. Only those reforms that recognize these conditions and actively engage them are likely to make a lasting difference in the lives of the children, educators, and the community served by the school.” (The New Meaning of Educational Change, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, Michael Fullan, OISE Press, 1991.) The task of recognizing and engaging the cultural conditions of our school community can only be done by working with the members of that community. The school must become a warm, friendly, welcoming educational center for all members of its family. This partnering has required staff, time, and resources. At the school level, we needed to make parental involvement a fundamental part of the definition and mission of an effective school.

Practices: Over the last few years, the school has strived to involve parents more in the school:

- Appropriate cultural support groups have been set up to a) help translate school information into the various languages, b) provide a means of communication for parental visits to the school, c) help establish a positive sense of 'community' within the school climate
- Staff and the YMCA School Support Worker\* have meet with many of the new families to a) help explain the cultural differences they may experience, b) set up professional services (doctor,lawyer) and other essential services that the family may need, c) where possible helping to arrange for someone to aid in communications in other than school matters.
- Set up 'host' families. Each new family is connected with an established family in order to provide help in the new environment. This involves planning weekend, evening and summer projects involving both families.

(\***YMCA School Support Worker** – this is a federally funded program for our community. Several schools are provided with an individual who is a support person to the new families. The support workers do not follow the usual pattern of school life. Their hours are flexible and they are free to visit homes when necessary. They are usually people who have been recent immigrants and thus can appreciate the needs of the families they support)

The school has also taken a pro-active stance with respect to racial problems. Supported by the Halifax Regional School Board's Racial, Cross-Cultural and Harassment Policy, the school has accepted the responsibility to create a 'caring community' in which students are provided the opportunity not only to work and learn but also to feel accepted, respected and safe. If this is not done, students who face racial slurs and verbal and physical harassment, they will form social groups for comfort and protection. In some cases, these groups move from reactive to pro-active solutions. When students care about one another, they are more apt to care about their learning. Clayton Park has:

1. Provided opportunities for the sharing of knowledge of the various cultural groups found in the school
  - Cultural fairs
  - Classroom discussions (respectful dialogue)
  - Special recognition during holiday and religious events
  - **Celebrate the differences**
2. When disagreements do occur, have the 'offender' meet with those they have harmed or hurt. We have found this method to be very successful in the cases of 'name calling' and 'racial slurs'. This can change conflict into creative and constructive learning.
3. Have meetings with the family of the 'offender' to provide understanding of the rules and regulations of the school.
4. In extreme cases, remove the 'offender' from the school.

Our curriculum philosophy is based on the concept of 'multiple intelligences' of Dr. Howard Gardner. Each student must be given the opportunity to learn and express themselves in a variety of ways. Therefore art, physical education, family studies, technological education are taken by all students, as well as the usual core subjects. Music is taken by over 100 of our students.

In all courses:

- Cultural diversity is recognized and celebrated.
- The students learn to analyze and critique ideas from multiple perspectives.
- The teacher must create an environment where students feel safe to take risks.
- We provide opportunities for students to learn about each other.

Images (pictures, paintings) of the various cultures are found through out the school. All students must 'see' themselves if they are to feel at home. We must foster the self-esteem of all our students.

We have a full time English as a Second language (ESL) teacher who helps with the students who cannot speak any English.

Our Library has tried to have a collection of materials that reflect the diverse population of the school.

**Staff Development:**

Over the last six years, cultural sensitivity has been a priority in our professional development plan. We have used school board as well as outside agencies in this respect. When possible, staff has been chosen on the basis of their comfort with and knowledge of the various cultures. I have two Greek teachers and one Arabic speaking teacher on staff. My YMCA School Support Worker is Spanish speaking.

In conclusion, the school has developed and continues to develop a welcoming educational center for all the students and their families.

## Paper #3

By: Francesca Gobbo, University of Turin, Italy

**Introduction** - Within the European Union, intercultural education is defined as a theoretical and practical approach that is basically centered on promoting and developing *interaction* among pupils of diverse backgrounds, and *knowledge* of the different cultural, religious, linguistic traditions present in schools and in societies, in the belief that meaningful encounter and dialogue will foster *mutual understanding*, *enrich* intellectual and social life and *fight* prejudice, xenophobia and racism in everyday life and in classrooms. In the effort to affirm a non-hierarchical view of cultures and people, intercultural education runs the risk of not taking into full account the fact of low social status and even stigma attached to *other* cultures and consequently to the persons whose identity has been mostly shaped by those cultures. The treatment of Sinti and Roma people in various countries of the EU is a stark example of policy-making based on the belief of the other's inferiority. This is why I will begin this presentation by talking of an educational strategy that specifically addresses the learning and interaction problems of low status pupils in heterogeneous classrooms. I will then present a website - devised in Great Britain and currently being reproduced in Spain, Italy and Sweden – that aims at confronting and fighting racism. The third example is an educational project developed in a primary school in Vicenza (Veneto region, Italy). I must add that I have direct experience of all three examples, since I participated in the European school experimentation of the first two and I keep in close touch with the teachers at the Vicenza primary school.

**1) Cooperative learning for intercultural education** – *Complex Instruction* is an educational strategy that addresses those classroom features (classroom tasks, role of students and teachers, patterns of interaction among students and between students and teachers) that are often responsible for students' failure in traditional classrooms. E. Cohen's sociological analysis of the social system of heterogeneous classrooms acknowledges that the changes obtaining inside them (as a consequence of enrolment of more and more pupils and students of immigrant and low-income households) are a potential source of strength and richness for the life of the schools provided that teachers can capitalize on the multicultural resources precisely represented by those pupils and students. Yet the same analysis reminds us that our societies are characterized not just by diversity but by social and economic stratification as well. Therefore, outside the schools the students' cultural and linguistic differences translate into inequality of opportunities and low social status. Inside the classrooms, the same differences too often depress the students' academic standing and their standing among classmates. Such academic and social differences then set the stage for less and less equitable classrooms<sup>1</sup>. Since the same ones produce differential expectations for students' competence on the part of the teacher, the first step toward creating equitable classrooms consists in what she defines as "status treatment". Low status students have fewer opportunities to interact in a group than the good or even average students. Consequently they learn less as well since in Cohen's perspective greater interaction among peers is positively correlated to better learning. Teachers trained in *Complex Instruction* become aware of the status problems among their students and are ready to treat it specifically when it surfaces during group work

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<sup>1</sup> See E. Cohen "Creare l'equità nella classe attraverso l'*Istruzione Complessa*: i principi di base", in F. Gobbo a cura di, *Educare nella società e nella scuola multiculturali*, Imprimerie, Padova (forthcoming in 2002).

or when it affects a multiple ability curriculum. They alter their students' and their own differential expectations for competence by organizing group work in such a way that every individual fully participate in it and interacts with her/his schoolmates. Conversation, discussion and valuable multiple ability contributions toward accomplishing the task increase both the learning *and* the status of individual pupils and students, but also that of the class as a whole. The teacher's responsibility to foster interaction among students is best expressed in the delegation of authority to groups. In a condition of learning autonomy, students make an effort to accomplish a task by discussing different options and hypotheses among themselves, and by working together toward the creation of products. Though they delegate authority to groups, teachers must be keen observers of the interaction within groups so as to intervene quickly and briefly if status problems arise to block group interaction and work. Teachers' specific and detailed feedback is also necessary in order to make groups accountable for what they did (or did not do) and for the way they did it. Evaluative research in classrooms where this cooperative learning approach is used indicates that *Complex Instruction* works very well with higher level tasks and multiple ability curricula but at the same time it enhances basic skills. In this approach it is not a matter of celebrating diversity *per se*, but of seeing classroom heterogeneity as a positive thing since it brings together people with multiple abilities and the latter can be best made to work according to a cooperative way.

Complex Instruction was experimented in schools of 9 different European countries, during a 3 year Comenius project called CLIP, and its results published in 1998. As it happens whenever an educational strategy was transferred from its original context to new ones, we Comenius project partners were confronted by various challenges, one of them being – and I'm speaking in particular for the Italian experimentation – the different perspective and expectations that teachers expressed at the time of training. For many of them it was not always easy to detect the status problem or to consider it a relevant problem. Anxiety about delegation of authority was also an important factor but not a Europe-specific one. Since the completion of the Comenius project, I have organized training in Complex Instruction both at the compulsory school level and at the university one, noticing that the school culture and organization – rather than teachers' interest and willingness to try a different educational practice - is often responsible for making implementation of the cooperative learning approach rather difficult.

## **2) Intercultural education on the Internet: the “Britkid” website – “Britkid”**

([www.britkid.org](http://www.britkid.org)) was created at the time of the “European Year against Racism” (1997) by its author (Dr. Chris Gaine, University College Chichester. UK) who has a long standing interest in the issue of young people's racial attitudes. He defines “Britkid” as a “curriculum resource about racism”<sup>2</sup>, but though explicitly anti-racist it guides rather than preaches to its audience. The website addresses one of the tenets of intercultural education, namely that the encounter and dialogue with diversity should be promoted even in those situations where diversity (of language, ethnicity, religion, etc.) is not an actual issue. Yet it is well known that lack of contact does not mean lack of conceptions about the others. Those who seldom have any contact with “visible minorities”, think of them as either the descendants of the colonized nations or as sport or media stars as well as people involved with crime or religious fundamentalism. The stereotypes they hold, even at a young age, are mostly negative since people have no way of checking their prejudiced attitudes against reality. This is why *representation* of minorities becomes a key issue in any intercultural education endeavor. In this particular case, the site becomes a space for the authentic voices of those hit by racism,

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<sup>2</sup> See C. Gaine “Britkid: una risorsa educativa contro in razzismo in Internet”, in F. Gobbo, a cura di, *Educare nella società e nella scuola multiculturali*, Imprimerie, Padova, (forthcoming in 2002).

xenophobia and anti-Semitism, and it is centered on an interactive “dialogue” that takes into account the users’ language, perceptions and knowledge and aims at giving information to them about racist myths and how to fight them, indicating the positive contributions made by minorities to society, questioning misconceptions, presenting information on ethnic identity and multiculturalism. The characters are invented but they are based on rigorous empirical research: the 9 young people belonging to different groups discuss racism and what it means to grow up in an ethnically diverse society. They explore and discuss issues of immigration control, religion, jobs, housing, food, language and cultural maintenance. The user chooses one character and stays with her/him, going home with her/him, for instance, or accompanying her/him to a meeting place in town where friends are waiting. As “Britkid” is based in the Internet, it provides the possibility of being accessed (free of charge) by people (in and out of school) in countries other than Britain. Because some of us (in Italy, Spain and Sweden) thought it was a successful way of learning and self-educating about racism, we joined a Comenius Project that is currently under way and are trying to construct a similar website for our countries. In the process of gathering material (once more from original research) and constructing it into the lives and stories of 9 other characters, we met challenging questions that are of particular interests to this session, such as – only to mention the most relevant ones – how far can a format be successfully and convincingly replicated in a different socio-political context? Is there a real risk of reproducing stereotypes while we strive to compress many questions and issues in the stories and conversations taking place among youngsters<sup>3</sup>? How do we account for ethnographic research that tells us how the “others” – especially the ones of school age – learn to participate in different cultural environments and then switch from one identity to another?

**3) Communication and learning across the continents: “A Day in the Life of ...”** – This local project is one of the many invented and launched by a teacher (Anna Maria Comin) who believes that intercultural education can ensure a lively learning climate and make even very young persons<sup>4</sup> reflect on the common aspect of different ways of life. “A day in the life of ...” extends the experience of communicating, interacting and learning among peers well beyond the classroom’s walls and reaches out to pupils in different continents and various nation-states<sup>5</sup>. The partners are schools in Japan, Brazil, Burundi and Poland, and they were chosen thanks either to contacts the Italian teacher had in those countries<sup>6</sup> or with the help of people working with NGOs. Once the project proposal<sup>7</sup> was ready, it was distributed to all the schools that then agreed to participate in it. The pupils in the different classrooms were asked to draw what a “typical” or a “normal” weekday in their life was like, and they could accomplish the task by working individually or in groups. The project is planned to last the whole school year and will become part of the curriculum, i.e. its drawings and descriptions will be used alongside the teaching of various subject matters such as geography, social sciences, language. In fact, once the drawings arrive to the Vicenza pupils, the latter study and discuss them so as to learn what children’s life has in common regardless of the different

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<sup>3</sup> I had to confront this question when I coordinated and edited a website on Sinti and Roma people ([www.zingari-net.net](http://www.zingari-net.net)) that was also aimed at presenting and discussing racist and prejudiced attitudes among *gagé* so as to fight them, at portraying Sinti’s and Roma’s own view of schooling and of everyday life in campsites, and at narrating their history and in particular that of Holocaust.

<sup>4</sup> The Italian pupils were 6 years old when last year they started to send and receive drawings from their distant friends.

<sup>5</sup> Because of each country’s history, the pupils’ age may differ widely from the Italian one, as in the case of the school in Burundi.

<sup>6</sup> The teacher herself taught in Burundi for a period of time.

<sup>7</sup> The text was in Italian so Anna Maria Comin had to make sure that there was someone capable of translating from and into Italian on the other side of the line.

natural, social and school environments, on the one hand, and what different lives their distant schoolmates can live, on the other. The pupils in Burundi, Poland, Brazil and Japan are invited to do the same, and to share their thoughts with their pen/drawing-pals. This offers the pupils a chance to notice – with the help of a teacher – how differently different “days” and environments can be interpreted by outsiders, as well as to learn that a drawn description is itself the result of how a “typical” day in a child’s life is defined. The Italian drawings are a good example of such interpretive “native” point of view, since their “normal” day is represented as a school day, due to the fact that they stay in school from 8:30 am (and some of them from 7:30 am) until 4:30 pm (and some of them until 5:30 pm), and therefore that the biggest slice of their weekday is spent with teachers, schoolmates and friends. In addition to this, pupils will possibly learn that the way an environment or an event is represented may reflect a cultural style and thus become aware of the different ways in which something presumably familiar (a classroom, a school, a human figure, for instance) can be portrayed. It can be imagined that the questions each group of pupils asked itself were something like “What do we put into the picture? What do we want our distant friends to know? What is more significant about ourselves, about our lives? How do we draw this or that event?”. Communicating and interacting via postal and electronic mail adds an additional bonus, namely the creation of a network of peers that is presently entering its second year. To me this is an indication of the project’s success, as it is the fact that the Vicenza children are deeply involved in it: last year they researched further on the “network” countries and put together a collection of photos, cartoons and music that expanded and enriched the knowledge acquired from the drawings. Later this year, they plan to make an exhibit with the drawings so as to share what and how they learned with the other Vicenza schoolmates.

The same teacher has invented another intercultural learning/interacting experience called “YOU tell MY story”. 9-year-old children interview each other and then each writes and narrates the other child’s story, which is supervised and revised by the original narrator. The text will then be bound as a book for the school library. It is the interviewed child’s task to choose and narrate what she/he considers her/his life’s memorable events. The listener has an even bigger task as she/he must practice the arts of listening to and remembering the narration, and then recreating the life-story. Unlike the more common school activity of telling one’s own story in front of the classroom or to the teacher, the choice made in Vicenza maximizes peer interaction and ties it directly to learning. One of the expected results will be the effort to grasp the narrator’s point of view as well as that of understanding how difference is embedded in a life-story. As important as they are, the written story, the notebook-turned-reading book should be seen as part of the ongoing process of getting acquainted with another person’s life, of reflecting about how different circumstances shape a particular story, of learning how emotions are deeply intertwined with events and social roles.

## C: STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING ON EXISTING MODELS

(Chair: Day 1 - **Bill Kornblum**, Day 2 - **Marion Molteno**)

The Future Development of Roma Educational Programming in South-East and Central European countries - Based on the outcomes of OSI-BP's research project on Roma education programming, this session discussed the concrete outcomes and lessons learned about direct educational programming and institutional change efforts, and the implications for further program development in the region. The concept of an "integrated program approach," a project model that covers the age spectrum for children from K-12 and that meets the array of needs, was introduced.

OSI-IEP presented the conclusions of their research and the recommendations, which pointed to a need for an integrated approach to education in schools attended by Roma children. Patricia Flederman provided additional materials on the particular issues facing girl pupils.

Most participants supported the integrated programming approach proposed in the papers, but had concerns that such a comprehensive a programme should target only Roma children.

Two conflicting viewpoints emerged:

Viewpoint 1: Targeting direct support to Roma leads to resentment by other groups who have similar needs - for example financial inputs when poverty is a more widespread problem. Similarly system and curriculum changes to introduce Roma culture to teachers and other pupils backfires if it ignores other cultural and ethnic minorities.

Viewpoint 2: Maybe so, but Roma have suffered centuries of discrimination and no-one bothered to explain to them why they were so excluded. So positive action for Roma specifically is justified now.

The panellists responded that this is an issue in some projects and it is important to be sensitive to it. Benefits can usually be targetted at the wider disadvantaged group - for example the poorest in the community, all ethnic minorities in the school. In this way, Roma children benefit, but so do others. The ideal is for all children to be seen to benefit from changes that make education more accessible and relevant for Roma children.

Other questions raised included:

- how will such large integrated programmes be funded and sustained?
- how can smaller initiatives influence policy?

Participants did not feel that there were any specific issues relating to girls' education in their contexts.

## Paper #1

By: Patricia Flederman

### **INTRODUCTION**

In many countries girls are disadvantaged in the education system in ways similar to other marginal and disadvantaged minorities. Over the last twelve years major donors have partnered with governments and NGOs to implement and evaluate innovative frameworks and practices to address the need for access and equity for girls. System-wide strategies with multiple interventions have been developed. The scale of these programs have yielded a wealth of lessons on implementing change that could be relevant in the development of change strategies for other disadvantaged groups. This paper explores the change implementation lessons in Girls Education that could provide pointers for change strategies to address inequities in education for Roma/Gypsy and Traveler Children in Europe.

### **BACKGROUND ON GIRLS' EDUCATION**

#### **The Problem**

Girls are more disadvantaged than boys are when it comes to education. Of the estimated 700 million 6-11 year olds more than 110 million are not in school. About 60% are girls. Not only do fewer girls enroll, but also more girls than boys drop out, repeat grades or do not finish school. Barriers to girls' school participation and achievement exist both within the school system as well as at other levels of society.

In the education system barriers include lack of access, poor quality education, systemic and systematic gender-bias, cost of education, lack of female role models, and the fact that even in the same classroom girls and boys have very different educational experiences. Gender bias is generally found in all elements of an education system, from elementary to tertiary and in administration and policy areas. Non-schooling constraints include cultural traditions and practices, politics, work, poverty and all of these elements determine the priorities of families, schools, communities and nations.

#### **The Rationale for Educating Girls**

There is clearly a human rights rationale especially as the right to education is a gateway to other rights. In situations where this perspective is not shared, the development argument can widen support to girl's education. The World Bank has concluded that educating girls is the single most effective investment in poverty alleviation. This is because educated women are likely to have smaller families, healthier and better educated children, are less likely to be exploited and more likely to participate in political processes.

## **LESSONS FROM CHANGE STRATEGIES IN GIRLS' EDUCATION**

While the need for systemic education reform to increase girls' success has been carried out in Asia, the Middle East and Africa, the barriers to girls' success resonate with those constraints to Roma/Gypsy and Travelers identified in the 'Denied a Future?' report and other studies. We will look at lessons from models in Girls Education and illustrate one approach with a case study by way of example.

### **Lessons from a Girls' Education Framework**

#### **Begin by Defining the Problem within a Systems Approach**

A systems approach understands that the student and the school are part of, impact upon and are impacted by the wider community and society and that many layers of society are interconnected i.e. political, economic, cultural etc. The complex set of interrelated constraints must be identified. This process includes locally defined problems and culturally appropriate solutions. Also the process of identifying the constraints is part of the solution in that stakeholder groups will have some ownership in addressing these constraints.

#### **Involvement of Communities in Finding Local Solutions**

In Egypt's Community Schools Project parents help identify barriers, constraints and solutions. In this project and others like it this has led to elders assuming some of the roles normally undertaken by girls in order to free the girls to go to school and to do their homework. In some projects community committees have come up with labor saving devices to free women and children. It is highly important that parents help identify barriers, constraints and solutions. Parents make rational decisions, based on financial strains and concerns over what seems to be in the children and family's best interests. In India, fathers became more involved with girls' education by agreeing to help with household chores. In Egypt's Community Schools Project a need for teacher training was also identified, resulting in teachers trained in gender-awareness and use of child-centered and interactive teaching methods. Better-trained teachers and the support and encouragement of the community lead to increased girls' participation in class and a more child-friendly environment for all students. Girls' enrollment increased from as low as 30 percent to as high as 70 percent.

#### **Improving the Quality and Relevance of Schools to Attract Participation in School**

The curriculum needs to be related to the entire spectrum of survival needs and success as an adult. Subjects such as health, nutrition, civic rights and responsibilities, study skills should be included. Non-biased classrooms, including classroom texts, are needed to ensure that groups are not marginalized. Role models for all should be in the texts. Methodologies are needed to cater for more active participation and diverse learning styles. This attention to quality and relevance addresses not only the "pull" of girls away from school by factors such as work/need to earn an income for the family, but also addresses the "push" factors - such as concerns for safety, fear of humiliation - that leave children feeling they do not want to be in the classroom. Attention to the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom will benefit all students.

## **Health and Nutrition**

In many countries girls exhibit more malnutrition and parasite infection than boys. There is a growing body of literature demonstrating the tremendous impact of health on the learning potential of children. Projects that improve health and nutrition through feeding and vitamin programs coupled with health education, improved hygiene and reproductive health can be vital.

## **Second-chance Options**

Many girls have to take time off, often to care for young children, or because they are pregnant etc. Projects that help girls catch up and policies that do not penalize girls are needed.

## **Responsive Policy Framework**

School-based policies must be reviewed to ensure they address and protect from marginalization, such as those relating second chance options, pregnancy, flexible schedules, language support, entry regulations, and punishment for aggression, racism and sexism at school. Local and regional policies are needed for tax relief related to children in school and policies to give financial incentives to support parents in sending their children to school.

## **Mobilizing Key “ Social Actors”**

Myths rooted in deeply held beliefs play a powerful role in protecting certain social values and structures. Debunking these myths, (such as, girls’ work has no value; girls don’t need school; household chores aren’t work) is needed at many points, in the home, school, religious teaching, media. Social alliances among strategic partners such as parent groups, trade unions, religious bodies and the media are needed to monitor for violations of children’s rights to education, safety and dignity. This can also help to hold teachers and principals accountable. Partnerships with national and local media and popular theatre groups can help to reinforce the understanding of what marginal groups face and to provide positive role models.

## **Affordable Education**

Education must be made affordable by reducing the direct and indirect cost - for example, low interest loans, credit schemes, scholarships, food baskets, child care for siblings, waving of public utility fees. This addresses the “pull”out of school that work opportunities present. A scholarship scheme can enhance family capacities for protecting and providing for all their children to go to school. A project in Brazil, for example, provides money in an account for families to be drawn on only after 4 years of schooling in exchange for a commitment to send girls to school. This project also offers job training and parenting classes for parents.

## **Rights-based School**

A school committed to rights-based education will be geared towards an inclusive school culture where all students feel safe, valued and are prepared for civic participation in future.

## **Mentoring and Role Models**

Pairing older girls with younger can help in innumerable ways. Employment of women teachers and/or assistants and materials that marginal groups can identify with is important.

An example is attached that illustrates how a range of strategies has been used as part of an initiative to address the complexity of constraints and the need for a range of interrelated solutions within a systemic reform agenda. This USAID/Malawi Girls' Attainment in Basic Literacy and Education (GABLE) project was implemented between 1991 and 1998.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the key lessons are that success depends on

- 1) a holistic approach that defines interrelated sets of problems and solutions at the levels of family, school, community and society
- 2) this requires a multi-pronged strategy and partnerships for implementation
- 3) local action research into barriers to academic participation and success and locally-derived solutions must inform the development of strategies and interventions for change
- 4) in this way reform becomes focussed on addressing impediments in a tailor-made and locally relevant and culturally appropriate way.
- 5) while the understanding of the problem is complex, this does not preclude specific uni-focussed services, but it advocates for a single intervention to be articulated in terms of a macro strategic plan. This systemic strategic approach is very important because it enables collaboration and partnership with other stakeholders from local actors to governments and international funding organizations.
- 6) interventions for disadvantaged groups will often entail advantages for all students (for example diversity in teaching strategies respects the diversity of the students as a whole).

## **Case Study Attachment**

### **GABLE (Girls` Attainment in Basic Literacy and Education) Project**

This Case Study is presented to serve as an example of a multi-pronged approach to educational change on behalf of a disadvantaged group. We will begin with the big picture, look at one project and then hone in with an example of one teacher development tool. An important point is that even the specific and singular element of a classroom tool is connected to the big strategic plan.

First an overview of the elements of GABLE are presented. Then a particular element is presented: the Social Mobilization Campaign. Lastly, an example is given of one intervention tool that can be used to detect subtle gender bias in the classroom.

GABLE, a USAID project was implemented in Malawi from 1991 to 1993 to increase girls' participation in school. The project included the goal of systemic education reform.

## **GABLE's Multiple Approaches to Gender-Differentiated Education Issues**

Multiple, simultaneous approaches address barriers to girls' participation

### **Policy reforms**

- They reduced costs, which are obstacles, to girls' school participation, through primary school fee waivers, secondary school scholarships, and elimination of uniforms.
- They minimized constraints on girls' persistence by enacting policies to reduce repetition, and eliminate expulsion for pregnancy.

### **Leadership and Institutional Changes**

- The Gender-Appropriate Curriculum unit has improved the Primary School Curriculum and attitudes and practices of staff at the Malawi Institute of Education; it also is beginning to change the training provided by teacher colleges and by primary education advisers
- The Social Mobilization Campaign's participatory involvement of university students, community leaders, community members, community development advisers, staff from the Ministry of Education and community workers from the Ministry of Women, Youth, and Culture has formed a new cohort of leaders with experience of the reality of life in rural communities.

### **Promoting involvement and ownership of key stakeholders**

- Promoted the activities of the National Commission on Women and other Malawian groups with political and institutional power.
- GABLE equity concerns were validated by a newly elected government.
- Participatory methodologies empowered local leaders and communities and corresponded with the democratization process.
- The Gender-Appropriate Curriculum unit's gender-sensitive primary School curriculum corresponded with an ongoing curriculum reform process.
- The unit's gender-training materials were prepared for use in new teacher training programs.

### **Research and pilot activities address gender**

- GABLE technical assistance has produced a richer background of gender-centered research than is found in most sub-Saharan countries, but some of this research has not been translated into programs

GABLE supported pilot projects such as Village-Based Schools and Gender Streaming for Mathematics.

## Paper #2

### Integrated Program Approach

By: Noe Medina, Consultant to IEP and Christina McDonald, Senior Education Specialist, IEP

#### **Introduction:**

In its final report, the Roma Education Research Project recommended support for Roma education programs that emphasized program integration or coordination (“integrated program approach”). This concept paper presents the rationale for this recommendation, provides a description and examples of the integrated program approach, and identifies strategies for supporting and implementing the development of Roma education programs employing an integrated program approach.

#### **Background:**

The final report of the research project compared the education systems in Central and Eastern Europe to a pipeline beginning in preschool and continuing through university. For Roma children, this pipeline was full of blockages (barriers to educational success) and leaks (factors which led to children leaving school). As a result, many Roma children never even entered the educational pipeline. Among those that did, the pipeline became increasingly narrow as they proceeded through school so that only a very tiny trickle would successfully exit at the other end to enter or complete university.

Roma education programs sought to increase the flow of Roma students into the educational pipeline, to reduce the blockages, and plug the leaks. In the end, these programs sought to expand the educational pipeline for Roma children and increase the proportion who successfully complete their education.

#### **Goals of Roma Education Programs:**

The Roma education programs examined by the Roma Education Research Project generally seek to improve the educational achievement of Roma children. Specifically, these programs emphasize four goals:

- To increase the enrollment and improve the attendance of Roma children at all levels of schooling
- To ensure that the behavior of Roma students reflects the expectations of public school teachers
- To increase the academic achievement of Roma students and improve their understanding and mastery of the country’s majority language
- To increase the number of Roma students successfully completing each level of schooling

## Relevant Findings of the Roma Education Research Project:

In examining the goals and characteristics of seven Roma education programs, the Roma Education Research Project found that:

- Programs primarily provided either **direct educational services** to Roma children or promoted **institutional change** in the schools that would benefit Roma students. None emphasized the use of both approaches.<sup>8</sup>
- Most programs focused only on particular age groups or particular educational needs.
- Most programs demonstrated little coordination or cooperation with other initiatives targeting different Roma student age groups or addressing other educational or related needs of Roma students and their families. As a result, integration of services or institutional change efforts was limited.

The research project concluded that these three factors limited both the short- and long-term impact of the individual Roma education programs. This was because the focus of each program allowed it to address only a few of the complex and shifting array of needs facing Roma students as they entered and proceeded through school.

The Roma education programs emphasizing **direct services** to Roma children and their families generally succeeded in better preparing Roma children for the academic challenges associated with school and ensuring that Roma parents would be both willing and able to enroll their children in school. These efforts succeeded in increasing the enrollment of Roma children in school, improving their attendance in school, and improving the educational attainment of Roma children. Despite these gains, significant gaps between the educational attainment of Roma and non-Roma students remained. In part, this was because the direct service programs neither intended nor succeeded in changing the educational environment experienced by Roma children in public schools. Many of the barriers to improved educational attainment by Roma children were grounded in the inadequacies and weaknesses of that educational environment.

The Roma education programs emphasizing **institutional change** also demonstrated some success in changing educational conditions for Roma children. However, schools and school systems are traditional institutions that emphasize continuity and stability. As a result, successfully promoting change in the public schools is a slow and incremental process. In the meantime, many Roma children continue to struggle, fail, and leave a system which fails to provide them support and assistance. Even when the changes are successfully implemented, many Roma children will not benefit because they are not enrolled in school or prepared and supported to succeed academically in school.

By itself, **none** of the individual program models can respond to the entire spectrum of educational needs of all Roma children in any single country. However direct service and institutional change programs, **in combination**, may offer **comprehensive solutions** to meet the educational needs of Roma children across the continuum of ages, K-12

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<sup>8</sup> Annexe 1 describes the characteristics of these two types of programs

## **Description of Integrated Program Approach:**

The concept of an “integrated program approach” actually includes several elements:

1. First, it emphasizes offering direct services so that they meet the array of needs across the entire age range of Roma children (from preschool to university).
2. Second, this approach emphasizes conducting institutional change activities so that all elements of the change process are addressed and that comprehensive change may occur in schools.
3. Third, it emphasizes linking the provision of direct educational services to Roma children with the promotion of institutional change school so that the two efforts mutually support each other.
4. Finally, it emphasizes both the integration of services or activities within a single program and the coordination of complementary services and activities across multiple programs.

The Roma Education Research Project identified several examples of limited program integration undertaken by some of the programs. The program in **Yugoslavia** demonstrated the coordination and integration of direct services. This program provided direct educational services to preschool-aged children but also coordinated its services with another program that offered more social assistance to school-aged children. The program in **Bulgaria** demonstrated the coordination and integration of institutional change efforts. This program used material development and training to promote intercultural education among teachers and students in the schools. However, it also coordinated these efforts with other funding efforts designed to promote intercultural education activities after school and in the community.

Thus, the research identified activities undertaken by Roma education programs which could serve as the foundation for the development of more extensive program integration efforts in the future:

- In Yugoslavia, the program focused on providing direct educational services to preschool-aged children but also conducted training activities for public preschool and elementary school teachers. These training activities could be (but are not explicitly) used to promote changes in teaching practices in public school designed to improve education for Roma students.
- In Romania, several of the school-based change efforts developed and implemented special tutoring programs to meet academic needs of Roma students. Although the program was focused on institutional change, this demonstrated its potential for integrating direct educational services for Roma students.
- In the Czech Republic, some RTAs were involved in supporting school change efforts in their schools. Others were involved in direct service activities offered by NGO’s after school. Still others developed and conducted school-based tutoring services for Roma students.

## **Possible Components Of A National Implementation Effort:**

- Create/support a comprehensive Roma service center which incorporates preschool education, academic and social support for school-age children, and support for families

This covers the K-8 age range (possibly longer) along with family involvement. The conceptual importance of this model is the commitment to responsiveness to Roma family and student needs. Each program of this type developed:

1. An overall framework of contact (both outreach and center-based services) with Roma families and children.
2. An expanding or changing set of services to respond to a range of education and education-related needs identified by staff. This allows the development of a core of services while adding additional services either to respond to local needs or to assess the value of additional activities.

*\*This draws primarily from the work of the Macedonia program, though the Slovak and Serbian programs also have elements of this model in place.*

- Create/support a **mentored scholarship program** for Roma students in secondary and post-secondary school (with supports linked to the comprehensive service centers)

This covers the secondary school age range. Support for secondary school students needs to be different from the support provided to primary school students. Younger students would receive support primarily through activities at the center. For older students, the support needs to be more direct and much more flexible - with an emphasis on providing the money they need to continue schooling and the individualized academic and social development assistance provided by a mentor. However, the connection to the center should remain - to allow a connection to some group social activities and to serve as a central monitoring point for the type of assistance provided to the students.

The mentored scholarship activities will, by their very nature, be more decentralized. It may be that mentors will be able to intervene on an individual basis to make schools more responsive to their students or to address problems, but systematic change will need to grow out of a more centralized location - the center. This is another reason that the mentored scholarships need to be linked to a center *\*as in the Macedonia model.*

- Create/support building-based school change activities that include:
  1. Training and support to schools on teaching practices, curriculum and teaching materials, and parent/community collaboration (incorporating intercultural education throughout all these elements)
  2. School reform efforts emphasizing school governance, teacher training, and classroom change.

This may cover the age spectrum from 1-12. This approach would emphasize how to engage and support schools to make change. We need specific, aggressive strategies to get school leaders and a sufficiently large group of staff involved and to sustain their involvement. RTA's definitely should be linked into this effort. Their placement should be used as one

incentive for schools to be involved in school reform and as a support mechanism to both advance and support school reform efforts.

*\*This approach is based on the Romanian model*

- Train Roma educators including **Roma Teaching Assistants** and use them to influence school change activities and support the work of the Roma service centers.

It might be useful to connect the mentored scholarship program with the Roma assistant program -- looking to set up a specialized program where Roma high school and college students serve as school assistants. Perhaps they could receive additional money, get additional mentorship from an active teacher regarding teaching, receive advanced credit toward getting their education credential.

An initial effort would emphasize development of models within each of the above areas, including models for appropriately **linking** specific types of programs.

As much as possible, multiple efforts should **focus on the same schools**, rather than be dissipated among different schools. However, it might be useful to make the initial connections with a school using different strategies. Some schools might be more responsive to school reform work that grows out of collaboration around training and student assistance with a Roma service center. Others might respond to the opportunities growing out of the placement of a RTA. Still others might respond to an approach that grows out of or is conceptually linked to more systematic school reform. Whichever approach is used to engage them, the other elements of this effort should then be linked to maintain and support the change initiative in the school.

When possible, the efforts of the program supporters should focus on **strengthening existing programs** and integrating such programs into more comprehensive efforts rather than "creating" new programs. When there is a situation where there is nothing to build upon, existing programs from another country should be adapted or expanded.

## Appendix I

<b>Direct Educational Services to Roma and their Parents</b>	<b>Institutional Change Efforts</b>
Anticipate measurable outcomes in the short term (three to five years)	Expect outcomes over a longer time period (five to eight years)
Target a smaller population of Roma children than Institutional change efforts.	Target a much larger population of Roma students
Generally operated out of a community based center	Are school based
<b>Offer...</b>	<b>Offer...</b>
Kindergarten or pre-school preparation activities	To develop changes in the way schools were organized and operated, in the way they interacted with parents and teachers, in their understanding and approach to cultural differences, and in their approach to teaching.
Homework assistance and tutoring to primary and secondary school students	Build the capacity and willingness of teachers to employ teaching strategies that reflect the learning styles and address the educational needs of Roma children.
Enrichment activities to both primary and secondary school students.	Build the knowledge and capacity of school administrators and staff, in order to develop sustained working partnerships with Roma parents and the community to respond to the educational needs of Roma children.
Mentoring support to secondary school students	Support the recruitment and preparation of Roma adults as educators in the public schools.
Scholarship assistance to secondary school students	Build knowledge and understanding among non-Roma educators and students regarding the history, experiences, and diverse cultural traditions of the Roma
Parent training, education and support	Build the capacity and commitment of school communities to support changes in school structure, school operation, and classroom teaching to respond more effectively to the educational needs of Roma children.
Humanitarian assistance to families	

## **D: THE LANGUAGE NEEDS OF ROMA CHILDREN**

The failure of many schools to appreciate bilingualism as an asset in today's Europe is evidenced by the high numbers of bilingual children being channelled into Special Schools for the mentally disabled. Issues discussed in the 'Denied a Future?' report to be considered include teacher training, classroom support, curricula and textbooks, the challenges presented by and benefits of mother-tongue provision. Resource people for the session included a policy advisor, practitioners and Roma young people who work as 'cultural interpreters' in the classroom.

The experiences of the different countries represented at the meeting demonstrated that Roma children's language support needs are complex and varied. In communities where Roma children speak non-standardised versions of Romanes or a majority/minority language or a dialect, it is often not possible to deliver mother-tongue education. While instruction in Romanes contributes to strengthening children's self-esteem and sense of identity, it does not address the difficulties that they face in starting at school without speaking the language of instruction.

The group devised a series of questions and issues that needed to be considered in order for effective and realistic strategies to be devised to meet Roma children's language support needs.

The fundamental underlying question is:

- What can be done to improve the school experience of children who do not speak the language of school instruction?

One comment was that if the child speaks an 'ethnolect' i.e. uses a language form that is not recognised or standardised and therefore cannot be taught in a formal setting, whose problem is that - the child's or the teacher's? A perception that it is the child's fault or problem rather than a teaching task that education professionals should be equipped to deal with prevails in some countries.

Various approaches have been successfully applied where Romani mother-tongue education has not been an option. The most successful of these have engaged individuals who speak both the child's language or dialect and the language of instruction to act as support staff and 'cultural translator' - classroom assistants, bilingual 'mediators' and mentors. These support staff have also played an important role in gaining support from parents and the wider community for children's schooling by doing outreach work as well as work in the classroom.

A related question was asked:

- Under what circumstances should Romani-language instruction be provided?

The implications of offering mother-tongue teaching were discussed. What happens, for example, if the labour market has almost no demand for people who are not able to speak and read the majority language?

The concern was raised that while it is important for children to be able to function in the language of school instruction, pressure on them to learn the majority language could lead to the dying out of culture and traditions. If the school system is unable, for financial or technical reasons, to provide some kind of supplementary language support how can children who speak a different but not standardised language at home preserve their language and cultural tradition?

The role of and constraints upon government were considered:

- In a country with many demands on limited funds, where are the funding and resources for new services to meet children's complex linguistic needs to come from? How much of a priority should language support have with regard to other kinds of education interventions?
- What is government's role and responsibility in supporting and motivating teachers to respond to the needs of children who are not fluent in the language of instruction?

Which led to a related question:

- Given the resource constraints that many governments face, what is it appropriate and reasonable to expect NGOs to do to fill these gaps?

Finally there was a brief consideration of the very complex needs that returning IDP and refugee children are likely to have. An example would be the challenge of offering appropriate provision for a child returning to Kosovo (where the majority language is Albanian) after being a refugee in Montenegro where they would have been schooled in Serbian? In addition, the child would, in all likelihood, speak a different language or dialect at home.



## Paper #1

By David Murphy, Nova Skola, Prague, Czech Republic

### **PROJECT HISTORY**

#### **Pedagogical Minimum Course**

The focus of Nova Skola's core work since 1996 has been the training and ongoing support of Romany Assistant Teachers in classrooms with a high percentage of Romany students. The first formal training created and administered by Nova Skola was an 80-hour 'pedagogical minimum', designed to provide members of Roma communities with basic skills to enable them to assist teachers in the classroom. The course received accreditation from the Ministry of Education in 1998. Since first offering the course in 1997 we have trained 66 pedagogic assistants including 13 from Hungary, Slovakia and Bulgaria. We also co-organized follow-up training for 35 Romany Pedagogic Assistants from across the region in Sofia, Bulgaria.

#### **Further Education Courses**

Between 1998 and 2000 we created and administered an experimental further education course for Romany Pedagogical Assistants (RPAs), in cooperation with the Evangelical Academy, through which participants could gain their high school diploma through a distance learning class. The course was originally designed for RPAs already in employment, but it soon became evident there was much wider interest in the course even among Roma who were not currently employed. We expanded the course to include these people as well.

#### **Training Course for 100 Romany Pedagogical Assistants (RPAs)**

Nova Skola is currently providing a 72-hour course of Further Education to 100 RPAs from across the Czech Republic. The course is designed to improve both theoretical and practical knowledge of practicing RPAs and improve communication and cooperation between RPAs and teachers. The course is divided into three, three-day seminars for six groups of between 15 and 20 assistants from Northern Bohemia, Central and Western Bohemia, Northern Moravia and Southern Moravia. The course is part of the larger program **Improvement of Relations between the Roma and Czech Communities** being realized in cooperation with the People in Need Foundation and supported by the Phare Democracy Programme.

### **CURRENT DIRECTION**

#### **Joint Training of Romany Assistant Teachers (RATs) and Teachers**

Building on experience gained over five years of working with Romany Assistant Teachers we are starting a pilot joint-training program for Romany Assistant Teachers and Teachers. Since the effectiveness of the assistant depends on cooperation with the teacher, the goal of the course is to improve their ability to work together in the classroom. Training will

concentrate on the development of team building and communication skills, lesson planning and other practical skills. We are currently seeking funders for this program.

### **Introduction of Romany Assistant Teachers in orphanages**

Since a disproportionately high number Romany children are placed in orphanages or children's institutions we are starting a pilot program to introduce Romany Assistants into these institutions.

## **ADVANTAGES FOR CHILDREN**

### **Positive Role Models**

The Romany Assistant Teachers serve as positive role models for Romany children who are lacking role models. **Director Foltýnová, Vranovská elementary school says of her assistant teacher**, "It's in the things I have just mentioned. She is a perfect example; the children can see a capable, skilled Roma woman who is trusted by the parents as well. Her children and grandchildren come over here to the school... well, one could hardly ask for more." **Director Meisnerová, Prague adds**, "The main benefit is in their personal example, when Roma children see that a Roma person can actively contribute to educational process. With the older children, the behaviour of students improved with the presence of Roma assistants in classrooms." However, the impact of the assistant teacher depends also on the situation, as is evident from the comments of **Director Nohava, Litvínov**: "Some of the children's attitudes towards school get better when they see what a Roma can achieve, but some of them don't care because they live their primitive lives which won't change." *Assistant: The children say: Why should I study, I won't get a job anyway and I'll end up being subsidized by the state.*

### **Use of Romany, better understanding**

Romany Assistant Teachers also have a better understanding of the mentality of Romany children which enables them to understand more quickly why a certain student may be experiencing difficulties. **Assistant Křištofová, Brno** says about the use of Romany in the classroom, "I use some words. When they are not able to understand something in Czech I explain it in Romany. First they laughed at me. They thought it was funny for a teacher to speak "in Gipsy". But they have got used to it. Sometimes we use Roma greetings. The children speak Romany often. They are used to it from home. *Do you think that knowledge of Romany language implicates problems with Czech?* I think so. One of the boys speaks Romany a lot (Olash/Vlakh language). He is not able to speak Czech and I don't understand him. His cousin helps us to communicate and interprets for us. It's useful when children understand Romany, but it must not affect their Czech.

### **Greater Authority in the classroom**

Romany Assistant Teachers also enjoy greater authority in the classroom and among families (assistants inform parents about children's bad behaviour). It can be better to deal with an "untrained" Romany Assistant Teacher than a "malformed" teacher. The assistant can communicate on a normal, human level and not a detached, prejudiced, professional level. **Assistant Gorol, Prague** says, "The children have started to be interested in topics such as

the history of Roma people, they listen and ask questions... Maybe I have more authority, even with my own brothers or cousins whom I teach. Only at school, not at home. I set an example for them because I am the first one in the family who got involved in something like this."... *What did you like most of all at this school, what was your greatest success?* "Over the 3 years... most of all? I helped one boy with drug problems and he recovered. I tell myself that I did well and that gives me hope." **Assistant Reháková, Ostrava:** "The respect paid to the assistant is more than that paid to the teacher. However, respect comes from the children, not from the parents."

## **ADVANTAGES FOR TEACHERS**

### **Teaching in smaller groups**

There are also advantages for teachers who work with assistants. On average there are between 25 – 30 students per class, an assistant can help the children in smaller groups.

**Director Barták, Predlice states,** "The main reason was that two people in the classroom can manage better than one and our children needed another person... you can see that a lot of children are happy that there are Roma in such a position at school. Sometimes children prefer to confide in them, the assistants are a positive role model for them. Sometimes when we ask them what would they like to become, they answer, that they would like to work at a school..."

### **Teachers are often not aware of or familiar with the circumstances of Romany children**

The assistants often have a better understanding of the circumstances, from which the Romany children come and can therefore help teachers to better understand the origins of problems that may arise in the school.

## **ADVANTAGES FOR PARENTS**

### **Home visits**

**Director Rosová, Prague :** "To be in close contact with the families we needed an intermediary. Some parents tend to slow down our efforts, but we can't make progress without the parents' cooperation. We have to convince the parents and then appeal to the children together."

**Assistant Conková, Brno:** "I visit them (parents) because we need good relationships. At the beginning they used to stare at me when I spoke Roma, they were surprised, they thought I was Gadzo (white). Sometimes I just stop by for a coffee, I see how they are doing and I am able to maintain quite a close relationship with them."

**Assistant Žigová, Predlice:** "We go to the families when we take home a child who is sick, or, when we need to find out what's up with a child who has missed lessons. When there is a problem other than illness, we solve it with the help of the social welfare office. Otherwise, the teachers deal with problems in their own way with the parents, without our involvement."

## **Assistants run free time activities**

Many assistant teachers organize and run free-time activities. **Assistant Gorol, Prague** says, "The attitude of the children towards school is getting better. If a pupil is excited about free-time activity that the school provides, he/she will come to school more often. Also, with the help of our assistant, the teacher and parents we were able to make an agreement to get rid of harassment (bullying) in the fifth grade."

## **ADVANTAGES FOR ASSISTANTS**

### **Employment**

It is estimated that there is 70 percent unemployment among Roma in the Czech Republic. In the hardest hit areas where unemployment among the majority population is as high as 12 to 15 percent, unemployment among Roma is estimated to be between 90 and 100 percent.

**Assistant Bily, Prague:** "When we were registered as unemployed, we considered that a normal situation. Now if we lost our jobs, went to the Employment Office and saw those crowds of people looking for work and living on the dole (social welfare allowances), it would be horrible."

### **They have better employment opportunities**

Roma with jobs are generally employed in menial or manual labor positions due to low levels of education. The position of assistant offers them an alternative to the worst available jobs.

**Assistant Žigová:** "This work can be done only by people who really love the children, and will struggle to help them...When I see a child who is failing to master something, I try to help him or her, and after a few days the teacher comes and tells me that the child has made it. The assistant is always encouraged when he or she invests some effort and then sees the results...".

### **Can lead to more training and qualifications and a career**

The position of assistant teacher can lead to completion of education and a career in education. **Assistant Polhoš, Ostrava:** "I want to graduate (to pass the school leaving exam), I need secondary education for my work. I might get a higher salary as well. I'm afraid that I could lose my job because I lack proper qualifications. Then I would be unemployed. *Would you like to teach in the future?* Yes, I would.

## **DISADVANTAGES OF THE PROGRAM**

The success of the program depends on direct and active support of the RAT by the director, which often means a larger workload for the director. They must be very capable in communicating with teachers and parents and prepare the school staff to work with the RAT. It is also difficult to choose the right person for the job.

**Director Rosová, Prague:** "Who becomes a Roma assistant is very important. I know he/she can face strong criticism from parents. When Andrea started working here I had to encourage

her a lot, she even cried over how badly the parents treated her. I explained to her that from their side it was plain jealousy. She was able to make something of herself and they couldn't deal with that. But it didn't last that long, about three months. Today she is respected. The assistants are in caught between two fires – their own community, where they are treated with suspicion - and the Czechs, who are also distrustful. The assistants asked me what I think about assistants who are graduates of Special Remedial Schools (SRSs). An assistant is an intermediary between the school and the parents, he should be able to convince them to be proud that their children attend school. Many parents would rather send their children to SRSs, they get better grades there, they don't have to do homework and they have plenty of friends. At our school these children get grade 3s, (Cs), but it's great if they manage to make it to ninth grade because then they can choose where to go on to. It is hard for a parent to trust an assistant who himself attended a SRS or left in the seventh grade. Good examples work better."

The assistant is in the difficult position of being between the Gadžo community and Romany community. They are treated with suspicion from both communities.

**Assistant Žigová, Predlice:** "At the beginning, I was not too keen. It was because of the Roma, because of the parents. They did not want to accept me; it was unpleasant. They did not understand the point of the RAT's work, and the difference between him or her and the teacher. They thought I was a teacher. The director had to explain again and again that I was only a person hired to help. This situation lasted for about a year. Then, the first positive results started to appear. One of the boys improved his mark in mathematics from a five to a three, and a girl achieved the same in the Czech language... The parents finally got it, and were happy that I was here and that somebody was helping their children."

RATs have insufficient education to be able to teach alone and are automatically placed into an inferior position to the teachers. The Czech school system is very rigid and hierarchical. There is no training for teamwork and sharing responsibility.

**Assistant Demeterová, Prague:** "The director is very glad that I attended these courses but for potential employment anywhere they mean nothing. When I finished the courses I was awarded certificates but no-one respects them. (*Note: RATs have a low 'evaluation' in the salary tariffs used by the state sector*). What counts is finishing secondary school. That's why I'm studying now. On the other hand, I repeat that I learned a lot in these courses. In terms of pedagogical education, psychology, and so on, I don't think anything was lacking, the lecturers gave us all they could during that year. All of them were good professionals. Even our director participated in the lectures. I am sure I can use everything in my work and in my studies."

They are not always successful in translating a better understanding of Romany children's backgrounds, problems and weaknesses into effective action.

**Director Nohava, Litvínov:** "People don't have any money here, unemployment is high. No one will give a Roma a job, they have more problems than the whites. Girls end up as prostitutes on route E55. Last year two pretty Roma girls were supposed to re-sit some exams at the end of the summer. They told us, 'go ahead and give us a 5 (F), we didn't study.' I asked myself what was behind this and I realized that the pretty ones will, unfortunately, probably end up on route E55 anyway (*a motorway route from Germany notoriously famous for prostitution*). They'll earn ten times as much or more than we do, and the German guy won't

be asking them if they passed their history exam. It's terrible, but true. Education comes last in their priorities."

It can happen that RATs will not be accepted by certain family clans for traditional reasons. This makes it more difficult to choose candidates for the role.

**Assistant Polhoš, Ostrava:** "It was completely the opposite to what you would expect. At first my position was very good, but it changed. I often ask something of them and they have started to think that I'm a kind of a 'Gadžo' (White, Non-Roma). It is much worse now. Sometimes it winds me up but my wife helps me. Other assistants have had similar problems. But it's not a permanent situation, one day they call me *Gadžo*, but the next day we are friends again – we have often known each other from childhood and are on first name terms"

Low pay for RATs when welfare payments can be high. This is demotivating.

**Assistant Gorol, Prague:** The Assistant's low salary is a problem – for a young family paying high rent it is difficult. We often work here in the afternoon, although we are not paid for that. Our relationship with the majority of the teachers is bad, although here "upstairs" we have a good team and the teachers understand us, they respect our traditions. But these are in the minority. After these 3 years, I think there should be more of them.

**Director Balabánová, Ostrava:** It depends on the family. Even families with very poor social conditions differ. Around 70% of our pupils' parents are unemployed and they will never have a job. We can't expect the children to prepare for lessons at home. I can get an agreement with about 30% of these families, but I can't expect anything from the rest of them. One mother has ten children and two of them steal to get money for the rest of the family. The children are prosecuted instead of the parents. There is no way I can reach an agreement with her. These people, living in debt, their lives are a vicious circle.

*Are there many such families?*

About 40%. The social system of this country unfortunately supports those who keep their children at home, because then the family gets allowances (unemployment benefit) for the child which they don't get if the child is at school.

Teachers are not trained to work and cooperate with RATs. There is no teamwork training. Working with RATs can create more work for the teachers. Their general level of education is low, so there are certain subjects that RATs are not qualified to teach.

**Teacher Seifertová, Predlice:** "The first year I felt that the assistant was redundant, I struggled sometimes to keep her busy, but then I learned to work with her effectively..."

### **Needs of Bilingual Children**

Although no comprehensive research has been done on the state of the Romany language in the Czech Republic, according to our research the majority of Romany children experience different problems to 'typical' bilingual students. It is not the case that they speak their mother tongue well at home and are learning in a "foreign language" in school. They speak neither Romany nor Czech well.

Even in cases where Romany is spoken at home, many parents do not actually teach their children Romany. The parents themselves have poor knowledge of their own culture and language and are unable to teach their children their language and traditions. They are also unable to teach their children Czech properly, since they themselves do not speak it well.

**Deputy director Motyková, Brno:** "We suggested establishing a Roma language group, but the parents weren't interested, they said "what are you trying to push us into?"

**Director Nohava, Janov:** We made a great effort to teach Roma language here, but the children were absolutely not interested. Slavka wanted to teach it. She herself doesn't speak Roma, but she was promised a course by the district Roma counsellor to help her. First we inquired about interest in Roma language and nineteen children signed up, but then no one came. *Do the children speak Romany to each other or at home?* **Assistant Slavka, Janov:** Not even at home. Our father didn't want us to speak Roma at home.

Many of the children speak an ethnolect: a mixture of the Czech, some Slovak and a few words of Romany, but with a different structure to the Czech language.

**Director Balabánová, Ostrava says,** "In every class we have about 3 children with Romany as their mother tongue. It is more difficult with children who speak the "ethnolect": their ability to learn the second language is much lower. Many repeatedly make the same mistakes using the language. In our experience, it is easier to teach the Czech language to children who speak no Czech whatsoever, than to children who speak this ethnolect of Czech". **Director Rosová, Prague** agrees: "A poor vocabulary isn't the result of their speaking Romany language at home, there are a few such cases here. They usually speak an ethnolect and the range of terms and words they can use is quite narrow."

There is no methodology for unlearning the ethnolect and learning the Czech language properly. Another problem is the nature of the Czech school system which does not encourage verbal participation in the learning process or the use of language in such a way as to create a relationship to the language. Memorising, rather than creative writing or speaking plays the primary role in the teaching of the Czech language. Therefore, the children are not encouraged to practice speaking in the school environment. They use the language at home with parents and relatives who do not speak the language correctly and then they are punished at school for making mistakes. This problem is compounded by the fact that, as a rule, parents do not read with their children or encourage their children to read.

## EXCERPTS FROM INTERVIEWS

**Teacher Seifertová, Predlice:** "I let the children speak Romany, though in fact they do not use it much. Last year when I was teaching the fourth grade they spoke Romany sometimes. But the language is slowly dying out." *Do you think this is good or bad?* "It should not die out absolutely. But when the children speak Romany and we cannot understand them... it is hard. And we all live in Czech Republic, so they should speak Czech."

**Assistant Gorol, Prague:** *Do you use Romany language during your classes?*

" Very rarely. I used it in the zero class. Now we sometimes use a few words during music lessons, but since the parents had objections against the use of Romany, we hardly use it now."

*Can the parents speak good Romany?*

"Yes, some of them, but others can only use broken language"

**Assistant Demeterová, Prague:** "Yes, I can (speak Romany), but normally I don't use it. In our family we speak Czech, and with mom and grandma I speak Romany."

*I am asking because some of the assistants can't speak it.* "Yes, it happens, but I think that it is a shame if somebody is Roma and cannot speak his own language. I don't think that he or she should widely display this knowledge, there are few opportunities to use it, after all. But there is no reason why one should feel ashamed of this language. Various bad people are "among us", indeed, but also many good ones. This will change in the future, now we have more opportunities. But maybe Romany will disappear within the next ten years because few people use it on a day-to-day basis."

**Teacher Gorniaková, Prague:** "Children learn fast. I always found it easier if the child spoke Roma well and Czech a little worse, than if the child didn't speak any Roma and his Czech was also poor. It is always harder to correct deep-rooted errors, than to teach something from the start. Even if the vocabulary is not so rich, the child can absorb the grammatic structure of the language more easily than in case of deep-rooted errors. Unfortunately this is the case for most of the children."

*Out of 15 RTAs interviewed, 5 speak no Roma, 9 of them had knowledge of the language.*

## **The Role of Pre-school**

Romany Assistant Teachers work in preparatory classes in both mainstream elementary schools and special remedial schools. Many children enter preschool without basic skills such as the ability to correctly recognize colors or hold a pencil.

**Assistant Křištofová, Brno:** "We have many children who didn't go to kindergarten or preparatory class and they are behind in many aspects – they don't know colours, counting, drawing... Their abilities depend on the family. My three years old son is able to draw everything, he attends kindergarten and he likes it."

Another problem is that they are in no way prepared to concentrate on a given subject, to sit still and quietly, and in some cases they do not recognise or understand the Czech language spoken in the school system. The biggest problem is that they are not prepared in any way to comprehend how school functions, what is expected of them. Often their understanding of the world around them is poorly developed and they do not grasp abstract concepts.

The assistant teacher:

- Better understands the problems faced by the Romany children in trying to understand certain concepts and subjects
- If the Assistant Teacher speaks Romany they can help those children who speak Romany.

## EXCERPTS FROM INTERVIEWS

**Director Rosová, Prague:** "Preparatory classes are very important. Children are much better prepared. They have a solid vocabulary, they have mastered fine motor skills, they can draw, and they have developed a mathematical imagination. A poor vocabulary isn't the result of them speaking Romany language at home, there are a few such cases here. They usually speak an ethnolect and the range of terms and words they use is quite narrow. Children attend preparatory classes because they are free of charge. Not many go to kindergarten because they have to pay for that. The mothers are at home in the mornings, it isn't a problem for them to pick up their children in the afternoons. Preparatory classes are of great value, but they would be less so if there was only a teacher working in the classroom. A Roma teaching assistant ensures a good relationship between the school and the families. Now, the parents trust us, we can agree on things easily, but there are still some situations, when it is necessary for the assistant to intervene. Without an assistant, the preparatory class wouldn't have such an influence on children and parents and it wouldn't provide its full services. Before, children who came to us straight from their families usually repeated a grade or went directly to Special Remedial Schools."

**Assistant Polhošová, Ostrava:** "In one class, there are children who have attended kindergarten and those who had had no such pre-school preparation. If you visit the classrooms, you can clearly see the difference."

### Out of School Support for Children and Their Families

- Assistants organize free-time activities for children and workshops for parents

**Assistant Křištofová, Brno:** We offer ceramics, flute lessons, gymnastics, volleyball... *Do they like it?* When it's winter, they come. In summer they prefer to play outside.

**Assistant Žigová, Predlice:** There are groups for tennis, basketball, and football. We also have a group learning to use computers, a literary and drama group, a mechanical workshop, and a choir. We have some pupils who attend as many as 6 of these. Out of school, several boys attend the boxing and karate lessons. There is a Youth Centre but few children go there. Otherwise - disco music, of course. I run the dancing group. My husband attends the crafts course. It leads to an examination; a kind of requalification."

## **E: PRE-SCHOOL AND EARLY YEARS PROVISION**

(Chair: **Rob Fuderich**. Session was combined with 'Language Needs' on Day 2)

The 'Denied a Future?' report demonstrates that pre-school education is an important component of inclusive education. This session discussed a number of areas including the impact of fees and charges being introduced for pre-school services and practice models that successfully serve children from majority and minority communities enabling them to enter the first grades of primary school on an equal footing.

The session looked at two examples of successful practice from FRY and Czech Republic.

Participants were keen to discuss quite detailed issues of project methodology. Due to time constraints, a discussion on the bigger issues of policy formulation in ECD and a more comprehensive look at ECD therefore did not evolve.

Policy issues considered included the difficulties of 'scaling up' and sustaining good quality provision given that few governments regard pre-school as a priority for education spending. Another policy issue that needs further examination is approaching ECD in an integrated manner with pre-school provision being an important component in psychosocial development of a young child but by no means the complete array of intervention strategies that are needed.

It was also brought up that attending a progressive and child-centered pre-school can actually lead to problems for a child when they move on to rigid, teacher-centered, authoritarian primary school classrooms. This demonstrates the need to look at system reform as a whole.

### **Lessons learned**

It is clear that quality pre-school education has long lasting benefits to the child and society. One benefit is developing curiosity and a love of learning. However, there are many cases where children then go into rigidly-run primary school classes where the teachers are pre-disposed to regard them as problem students because of the liveliness and curiosity that was rewarded in pre-school.

It is therefore essential to examine the whole system of education and especially the interface between pre-school and kindergarten to the first few years of primary school as well as primary education as a whole.

Governments do not regard pre-schools as a priority and the whole issue of early childhood development is sorely neglected. Since many of these programmes are initially externally funded, governments, whether national or local, do not have the ownership or commitment to ensure successful continuation of the programmes.

Some community-based approaches may work initially but over a long period, they can face problems due to an emphasis on rigid standards or certification requirements. This was brought up with regard to using para-professionals in pilot projects. The example was given of pilot projects that are implemented through the use of para-professionals in the initial stages becoming disabled due to the inflexible enforcement of certification requirements at a later stage due to government involvement. Another problem discussed was the issue of sustaining the interest and professional growth of the staff without a career structure or professional recognition.

Another lesson from experience is the need to contain the urge to go to scale too quickly. This often times leads to a loss of quality. Governments tend not to monitor quality and outcomes once they take on oversight responsibilities. Very little emphasis is given to evaluation before “scaling up”. It was felt that concurrent to the development of pre-school projects, there is a need to support capacity-building amongst those responsible for supervision and the development of monitoring systems at a local and national level, *before* the project gets beyond the capacity to monitor results. These monitoring systems must pay particular attention to generating disaggregated data.

The more successful initiatives had built in partnerships with Roma NGOs. Also, both initiatives employed Roma teachers and this was essential to the success of the programmes.

The discussion tended to focus on only one aspect of a more comprehensive early childhood development strategy: pre-school education. More emphasis must be given to alternative approaches to providing early childhood development opportunities for children from birth through to age 8. As the group discussion was based on two pre-school projects, alternatives such as home-based pre-schools, playgroups, mother and infant/toddler groups, parent education initiatives, use of alternative media to disseminate messages and create behavioural change were not discussed in any detail

## Paper #1

### Kindergarten as a Family Center in Roma Settlements

By: Center for Interactive Pedagogy, Step by Step Program, Serbia

This Program in Serbia has been developed in accordance with the philosophy and methodology of the international “Step-by-Step” pre-school program. It is based on a humanitarian approach to education and draws on positive experiences from contemporary pre-school educational programs in different countries. CIP has adapted it to meet the needs of children and adults, cultural values, and living conditions in Roma settlements.

The Program started in 1997. In 2001, approximately 600 children are involved in the Program, 90 of them are non-Roma. The work is carried out in 28 groups, on 15 sites and is financed by OSI NY & the Fund for an Open Society, Serbia.

#### **BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE PROGRAM**

- democratization of the educational process and opportunities for children to make their own choices
- an individualized approach to working with children
- activities organized in centers of interest
- active family participation and linking kindergartens with the local community

#### **Are realized by:**

- respecting children and families and taking their needs into consideration
- partner relationships and team work by all participants in the educational process
- developing the potential of children and adults

#### **GOALS WE ARE STRIVING FOR ARE:**

- ✓ encouraging emancipation and integration of the Roma population into society while maintaining the authenticity of Roma language, culture and tradition
- ✓ creating an environment in kindergartens for developing tolerance and accepting differences regarding ways of life, origins and abilities
- ✓ motivating and supporting children and adults to include themselves in the public educational system
- ✓ increasing parent’s competence through gaining new knowledge and obtaining skills
- ✓ influencing the advancement of Roma community

## **AREAS OF INFLUENCE:**

- educational work with children
- care for children's health and hygiene
- co-operation with the family
- co-operation with the local community (Rroma and Non-Rroma)
- education of adults for the SbS program (Pre-school Teachers & Rroma Teacher Assistants)
- bilingual and intercultural education

## **HOW KINDERGARTENS ARE ORGANIZED**

### **I. Participants in establishing and operating kindergartens**

#### *CIP – Center for Interactive Pedagogy*

- assists in the opening, equipping and organization
- trains teachers and their associates through seminars
- assists in planning and programming work with children, families and the local community
- follows the work in a kindergarten and advances its quality
- evaluates the effects of the program

#### *Representative of Roma Association*

- organizes the work related to the opening of a kindergarten
- organizes the operation of a kindergarten and follows the program implementation
- co-operates with families and the local community
- collects various forms of assistance for children and their families

#### *Sponsor / financier*

- provides financial support to the program
- follows the program implementation and quality

### **II. Premises and equipment**

- Kindergartens are located on different places: in official kindergartens (5), primary schools (1), Rroma associations (8), refugee centers (1).
- Kindergartens are comprised of one room for children, bathroom, kitchenette and, if possible, a room for parents.
- When kindergartens are in Rroma settlements with poor living conditions, kindergartens are equipped so that mothers/teachers can wash children and clothes.

- The room for children is equipped with furniture in accordance with SbS standards; toys, picture-books, teaching aids/learning and work materials.

#### ***Work with children***

- The program is intended for children aged 3 to 7
- Other children that haven't started school are also included
- The team which works with children is comprised of one pre-school teacher and one or two Roma teacher assistants
- Work with children carries on throughout the year, for at least 3 hours a day
- Children's attendance is free of charge
- Children have one meal a day

## **EDUCATION FOR INTERCULTURAL SOCIETY**

### **Aspects of Development**

- personal identity
- ethnic identity (learning and nurturing Roma language, culture and tradition)
- relating to the local community (learning language, culture and tradition of the dominant population in the local community)

### **Working Principles in the Kindergartens**

- learning and nurturing Roma language and culture and the official language and culture of local community (Serbian and Hungarian) both in kindergartens with children of different national and ethnic origins and with a purely Roma population
- Roma associations and Roma teaching assistants in the kindergarten work with children on Roma language, culture and tradition
- programs are adjusted to the age, individual capabilities and children's interests
- respect for different cultural values
- discovering similarities and differences between cultures
- developing tolerance for differences, appreciation of differences

### **Activities and Content of Work**

- learning and nurturing the language
- informing about specific cultural issues
- nurturing tradition and customs

## **RROMA EDUCATION RESEARCH PROJECT**

### **Used the following instruments:**

#### ***A) instruments that CIP developed and used for evaluating the work in kindergartens***

- Form for Quarterly Reports for a site
- Form for Quarterly Reports for each group

#### **B) instruments that CIP developed and used for assessing children**

- Follow-up list (data about the child and family and data about the testing and education up to 5<sup>th</sup> grade)
- Checklist – evaluation of the child's readiness for school
- Data about children's education:
  - for the Pre-school Teacher
  - for the Teacher
  - for the psychologist/pedagogue / testing before enrolling the 1<sup>st</sup> grade

#### **C) instruments developed during the research:**

- Interview with Project Director
- Interview with Program Coordinator from National Fund for an Open Society
- Questionnaires for:
  - kindergarten staff
  - school staff
  - parents

## **RESULTS OF THE PROGRAM – CHILDREN'S SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENTS**

Data for children who attended our kindergartens and completed 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades in Primary school. Median data for all children in all grades, from 1998 to 2000. Total of 105 children.

### **school achievement :**

Excellent - 10,33%; very good - 30,11%; good - 40,28%; satisfactory - 15,60%; Unsatisfactory - 3,68%
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### **conduct:**

Satisfactory - 56,94%; very good - 7,32%; good - 26,88%; poor - 7,10%; unsatisfactory - 1,75%
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### **regularity of attending class:**

regular - 79,14%; part-time - 10,68%; very seldom - 10,18%
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### **dropping out of school:**

(percentage) - 15,71%
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### **cooperation of the schools and families (attending parental meetings)**

regular - 41,72%; part-time - 47,22%; never - 11,06%

### **TESTING CHILDREN WHEN ENROLLING INTO 1<sup>st</sup> grade – Data for 52 children.**

#### **test achievements:**

far below average - 6,98%; below average - 32,56%; average - 46,51%;  
above average - 9,30%;  
well above average - 4,65%

#### **command of the language which will be used in school:**

Good - 81,40%; poor - 18,60%

#### **enrollment into 1<sup>st</sup> grade of regular Elementary Schools:**

86,15 % were enrolled in 1<sup>st</sup> grade

### **HOW WE ACHIEVED THESE RESULTS**

- Roma associations are our partners in establishing and running kindergartens. They feel that this program is their program, not something that came from outside.
- They are very motivated to work on Roma emancipation and know that education is important for that.
- Roma associations involved in this program are also engaged in other programs: programs for women, health programs, supplementary programs for school children, different educational programs for adults. All of these programs work together on Roma emancipation in Roma settlements and local communities, and parents of our children are included in them.
- Kindergarten staff continuously cooperate with schools in many different ways: visiting schools with children, helping psychologists/pedagogues during testing, informing teachers about every child (their family situation, potential, knowledge, skills), visiting children in school and following their class attendance, conduct and achievement, helping them do their homework, helping school staff to solve problems with children and parents.
- Kindergarten staff work on parent's motivation for children's education during the time when they are in kindergarten and after they are enrolled in school. They have contacts with parents in kindergartens where they usually have younger children, or in the settlement/school.
- Parents are motivated to help their children during schooling and open to cooperation with the school.
- Kindergarten staff help parents with the documents they need for school and very often don't have. Roma associations provide humanitarian assistance for children: clothes, schoolbooks, bags...
- Children are well prepared for schooling: parents take care with their hygiene, they know language in which classes are taught, have knowledge and skills like other kids, so they are accepted by both peers and adults.

- Kindergartens have good cooperation with local communities: local government, official kindergartens, cultural and other organizations, so these support their work.

## **CIP ACTIVITIES IN RROMA EDUCATION**

### **We work with not for or instead of Rroma**

- Helping Rroma associations to assess their needs and develop project proposals to donors.
- Helping them to make contact with donors.
- Producing project proposals together with Rroma associations.
- Helping Rroma associations to implement their programs/projects.
- Involving young educated Rroma in our seminars as assistants.
- Supporting Rroma Teacher Assistants to enroll to train as pre-school teachers.
- Establishing new pre-school groups with other donors together with Rroma associations.
- Participating in conferences on Rroma issues at home and abroad.
- Promoting our program at different professional meetings at home and abroad.
- Working on a supplementary program for school children with other NGOs (manual and seminars)
- We created an anti-bias program for adults and a manual for pre-school teachers and teachers (how to work with children on developing tolerance).
- We try to find humanitarian assistance for children.
- We provide seminars, free of charge, to official kindergarten and school staff in the areas where our sites are.

We cooperate with the Ministry of Education, Ministry for Social Care and Ministry for national and ethnic communities and they support our work.

Next year, we will cooperate with these Ministries on a strategy to include our kindergartens in the official pre-school system.

## **F: OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUPPORT**

(Chair: **Martin Emerson**)

The need to address the context in which children learn and to develop a holistic approach to education is highlighted in the 'Denied a Future?' report. This session considered the contribution of community involvement and outreach programmes that aim to involve parents more actively in their children's schooling, programmes designed to overcome practical barriers to learning (homework clubs, supplementary weekend and evening classes) and other initiatives that seek to influence the wider learning environment.

The group discussed two case studies: a school desegregation project in Bulgaria and an NGO-run youth centre in Macedonia running projects to improve educational achievement.

Both projects had achieved very positive results on several criteria:

- Numbers increased dramatically
- Positive feedback

There were common elements that could be identified that contributed to success:

- Planning and documentation

Good organisation and planning long before implementation of the projects actually started. Also, careful monitoring throughout.

- The supervisors and staff working with the children were well-trained and very committed and involved.

Even the volunteers worked to high professional standards and they received good management support.

- Ownership and transparency

Media were involved before during and after the projects. There were also open information sessions to encourage anyone who was interested to be part of what was being done.

- Ownership of students

The discussion and provision of information was critical in that it was undertaken with care and in contexts where students were confident and comfortable. Positive expectations from students from the outset determined attitudes that permeated the rest of the project.

- Visibility of Roma activists with credible reputations.

The use and involvement of formal community institutions and facilities were critical to demonstrate that these new developments were not outside the mainstream.

## *Paper #1*

### *Successful Roma School Desegregation: The Case of Vidin*

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The opinions and conclusions expressed in this paper are solely those of the authors

#### **Acknowledgment**

We would like to thank all the donor organizations, international and national experts and especially field workers who helped the NGO “Organization Drom” to implement successfully our ideas on desegregation in Vidin, Bulgaria.

The Authors

#### **Abstract**

Why did the Vidin Desegregation project have successful results only a year after its launch? This paper answers this question, drawing on official documents, practical experience and analysis of the factors that had an impact on changing attitudes towards acceptance of the principle of integrated schools. The results are encouraging. Firstly, an increased number of Roma students were willing to participate in the desegregation. From 275 Roma students, the number reached 600 at the beginning of the second year of desegregation. This achievement speaks for itself about the accumulated trust and confidence in the desegregation project on the part of the Roma, and also about changes in the surrounding environment (attitudes of other involved social groups). The second encouraging result is that Roma children entered and managed to achieve high results in a new education system in a single school year and despite their initial low level of education.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

This paper presents a case study of a desegregation initiative at a Roma School in the town of Vidin (Bulgaria), which commenced in June 2000. The basic idea of the desegregation project is the transfer of Romani students from the segregated all-Romani school in the Roma Neighborhood to regular schools in the town of Vidin. “Organization Drom”, which is the leading NGO for the project, used a variety of incentives to change the attitudes of the social groups involved in the project and eventually achieved successful results.

## **THE NECESSITY FOR DESEGREGATION OF ROMA SCHOOLS**

About 70 per cent of school age Romani children in Bulgaria attend all-Romani schools, located in segregated Romani neighborhoods throughout the country<sup>9</sup>. The schools were established from the 1950s to the 1970s and were labelled by the official authorities as “schools for children with inferior lifestyles and culture”. In 1966, the Ministry of Education established primary schools with special curricula for intensified manual skills training in Romani neighborhoods. The special curricula of these schools were not altered until 1992.

Originally, the schools in Romani Neighborhoods were perceived as a positive development, since they contributed for the inclusion of Roma in the education system. However, gradually, the quality of education declined due to continuous neglect of Romani children, a policy of employing unqualified teaching staff in these schools and a failure to offer the quality of education that was available in “Bulgarian schools”. The problem is described in more detail as follows (Panayotova Donka, 2001, p3)<sup>10</sup>:

“...most of the non-Roma teachers, who were the majority of the teaching staff, ignored their responsibilities and did not care about the progress of children in the school. They tended to underestimate the children’s intellectual capacity and treated them without respect. The teachers’ neglect for the educational process was also reflected in the children’s attitude towards school – many Romani children gradually lost interest in learning, did not attend regularly, and often dropped. An insignificant part of the children continued their education after primary school and none of them ever tried to apply for University .”

In 1992, the Ministry of Education introduced standard curricula for schools in Romani Neighborhoods, thus eliminating the focus on vocational training. However, this measure did not improve the quality of education. High drop-out rates, poor attendance and drastic disparities in the educational achievement of the Romani children in comparison with their peers at mixed schools, persist to date. Therefore, Romani children are doomed to exclusion in the long-term perspective (Panayotova, 2001).

## **THE DESEGREGATION PROGRAM IN VIDIN**

The NGO “Organization Drom” started actions in June 2000 to ensure equal access of Romani children from “NOV PAT” Roma Neighborhood in to regular schools in the town<sup>11</sup>.

### **The objectives of the project:**

- Providing free access to Roma children from first to eighth grade to all schools in Vidin;

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<sup>9</sup> The 1992 census showed that the general education level of Roma was much lower than that of the majority population in Bulgaria (The Desegregation of Romani school”, 2001, p.6). Roma with high school diplomas constituted 4.9 % (four point nine) of the Roma population older than 6 years and those with university diplomas represent only 0.1 % of the same population. The shares for Bulgarians were, respectively, 36.5 and 8.9 per cent. The reason for these low education levels is the denial of equal education opportunities for Roma for several decades.

<sup>10</sup> Ms. Donka Panayotova speaks from her experience as a teacher for 15 years at the School in the Roma Neighborhood in Vidin.

<sup>11</sup> NOV PAT” Neighborhood is situated in the periphery of VIDIN and accommodates a compact mass of 15 000-20 000 Roma people or around 1/3 of the town’s population.

- Supporting efforts for Roma children to graduate from secondary school;

### **The tasks of the project:**

- Equitably distributing Roma children in classes of all Vidin schools;
- Providing bus transport, free of charge, to students from the Roma Neighborhood to the schools in town;
- Providing children from the most impoverished backgrounds with free school materials such as textbooks, notebooks, writing implements and breakfast every day;
- Tutoring students who were performing below grade level;
- Preparing students with outstanding academic ability to apply to specialized secondary schools for languages, mathematics, sciences;
- Sponsoring a “most ethnically tolerant” competition between classes;
- Recognizing and giving tangible incentives to students, who regularly attend school and achieve high marks; and
- Implementing regular training courses and seminars for teachers of ethnically mixed classes.

There was an objective necessity for starting a project on desegregation of the Roma School in Vidin. The Institution, which had existed for four decades, was encouraging the Roma Community to live and interact only within its own closed society. As a result, no chance for integration for Roma within the majority was given from early childhood.

## **FACTORS, WHICH HAD AN IMPACT ON THE DESEGREGATION INITIATIVE**

### **Work experience**

“Organization Drom” started in 1997 as a Human Rights advocacy NGO focussing on the protection of Roma rights and interests. The activities of the NGO covered three aspects: Legal protection, Media and Education.

In June 2000 NGO “Organization Drom” began work on the desegregation project described in this paper. However, before launching the project we already had some experience with education projects. In 1999 we organized eighty (80) 5-6 year-old children in four pre-school groups at the School and Kindergarten in the Roma Neighborhood “NOV PAT”. The organization supported socially disadvantaged Roma children financially (paying their kindergarten taxes and education materials) and also initiated extra-curricular activities (groups of interest, cultural events, visits, etc.). The four **supervisors**, young Roma with high school education, were central to the project. They facilitated the work of the pre-school groups where most of the children had insufficient understanding of Bulgarian language<sup>12</sup>. The project was positively evaluated by the donor organization, the Foundation “SEGA”-Sofia.

Representatives from “Organization Drom” had constant contact with the press and electronic Media. The relationship established with journalists proved valuable when publicising the

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<sup>12</sup> This is one of the basic reasons why these Roma children face significant difficulties when they enter school.

success of our activities and promoting the results of our work. Furthermore, we frequently organized round tables and seminars, where we discussed with NGO activists, representatives from local authorities and the media, the impact of our activities. Finally, representatives of "Organization Drom" participated in several national and international conferences and seminars, which increased our knowledge and gave an impetus for certain innovations.

"Organization Drom" had substantial field experience at grass-roots level through project activities in the four years before the Desegregation program started. Moreover, the transparency and success of our work was acknowledged by the media, which channeled this information to the wider society. Thus, "Organization Drom" established a network of personal relationships with Roma leaders, local authorities and NGO activists, which contributed to the organisation's positive image.

### **Team building**

In late July 2000, a month and a half before the school year started, "Organization Drom" announced a competitive recruitment to select six supervisors and a coordinator, who was responsible for dealing with parents' issues. The organization targeted employees from the Roma Neighborhood because it was felt that the team should consist of people who had established a positive image within the Roma neighborhood, supervisors that Roma parents would trust and respect.

There were 35 Roma applicants, both male and female, who had a high school degree (this was one of the requirements). Tests and the interviews took place in July 2000 and a committee of five members was involved in the selection. A psychologist from the Vidin Bureau of Labor was appointed to train the supervisors on the topic: "personal abilities for dealing with children".

Each of the six supervisors (young Roma aged 18-25) received a job description with their rights, obligations, functions and responsibilities. In addition to their working schedule, there was a compulsory meeting of the project team on every non-working Saturday at 9.00 a.m. The meetings, which lasted for three hours or more, were used to discuss problems arising during the past week and to set the new objectives for the coming one.

The core tasks of the project team members included the following:

- Supervisors' report on children's attendance;
- Supervisors' report on the children's current grades;
- Coordinator's report on his work with parents of students who were missing classes.
- Coordinator's report on teachers' one-to-one work with children who were lagging behind.

The supervisors experienced a lot of difficulties at the beginning. For instance, it was hard for them to convince Roma parents to register their children in the program, because the supervisors themselves had studied at the segregated school in the Roma Neighborhood. At the start of the program, the supervisors themselves were not convinced that the program was appropriate. However, at the end of the school year, after they had participated actively in the process, they were positive about the program. Moreover, the program achieved something extremely significant: the supervisors, all with only a high school diploma, felt motivated to continue their education at university level.

“Organization Drom” appointed a coordinator to work with parents (a 35 year-old Roma, who had been engaged in social welfare activities) and a pedagogue (experienced, with a good reputation in the town), who acted as a liason between the organization and the School Directors and teaching staff of the regular Schools in Vidin.

### **Public support**

The support of Romani NGOs for initiatives targetting equal education of Roma came about through a dialogue between the Roma community and the Bulgarian government in 1998-1999. In fact, the campaign for the promotion of the policy document “Equal Participation of Roma in the Public Life of Bulgaria” started in Vidin in September 1998, when “Organization Drom” organized an official meeting between local Roma leaders and representatives of the Human Rights Project-Sofia and other NGOs. The dialogue continued in other parts of the country, and resulted in the adoption of the “Framework Program for Equal Integration of Roma in Bulgarian Society” in April 1999. The Government and 70 Roma NGOs signed this document<sup>13</sup>.

Bulgaria is a party to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and it has also signed the fundamental human rights documents, required for membership status of the Council of Europe. However, until the Framework program, there was no other official document proclaiming the basic principle of the State to ensure equality of Roma in Bulgaria. One section of the document, entitled “Desegregation of Roma schools”, is particularly interesting for the purpose of this paper. It states:

*“A long term strategy must be developed for removal of segregated Roma schools in Roma areas and decisive measures taken to ensure free admission of Roma children to the “normal” schools and prevent segregation of Roma children into separate classes...”*

However, the Bulgarian Government was rather passive. As Mr. Rumyan Russinov, Director of RPP/OSI describes “two years after the adoption of the Framework program, the government had failed to act to begin the desegregation of Romani schools (“Desegregation of Roma schools”, 2001, p8).

To summarise, there was public support on the part of Roma NGOs and Roma leaders in general for desegregation of Roma schools. On the part of the government, there was at least an acknowledgement that this process would be tolerated, if it happened, and would not face drastic opposition and resentment.

### **The international environment**

International circumstances contributed to creating a positive framework for the desegregation initiative in Vidin. The war in neighboring Yugoslavia and ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, which started in March 2000, just a few months before the Desegregation idea was spread in Vidin, raised public awareness of ethnic conflicts and minority rights. Additionally, it was and still is the European Union that serves as an external anchor for urging the national government to respect human rights and initiate the implementation of public policy towards minorities. In this respect, Vidin was a special case for “passive” tolerance by the government towards the desegregation process. A key part of an important infrastructure project

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<sup>13</sup> NGO “Organization Drom” has also signed the document.

“Corridor No.4” is the construction of the *VIDIN-KALAFAT* Bridge. Günter Verheugen (EU Commissioner on Enlargement) visited Vidin in March 2001 because of the infrastructure project. Besides meetings with local authorities in Vidin, the commissioner was invited to the Roma neighborhood. Mr. Verheugen answered questions and expressed a positive attitude on the significance of the Roma problem in Bulgaria. This was covered in the regional media, legitimizing the steps already taken in respect to the Desegregation process.

**Preliminary preparation phase:  
july 01, 2000 – september 15, 2000**

In July the staff of the organization arranged meetings with representatives of local authorities, non-government organizations and political party leaders from the Roma community. The project, its goals and necessity were promoted. As a result support was expressed in Protocols from all those parties mentioned above.

The Chairwoman of “Organization Drom”, Donka Panayotova, was invited, on July 10 to a regular meeting with the Directors of the Vidin Non-Roma schools to introduce and argue for the necessity of the project. At this meeting, the project received unanimous approval. On the same day the local Vidin newspaper “NIE” promoted the project.

On July 28 Donka Panayotova was invited by the Director of the Roma school in Vidin to a meeting to discuss the "Desegregation of the Roma School in Vidin" project. After a long debate, the staff of the Roma school supported the project, however with some provisions.<sup>14</sup>

At the end of July TV “Roma” (a cable TV of the Roma quarter) made some short films, about each school in Vidin, their education programs and staff for transmission during August to inform Roma parents in choosing the best school for their children.

The real work of the project began. The supervisors from “Organization Drom” visited parents of Romani children from the neighborhood school at home and talked to them about the advantages of sending their children to the mixed regular schools in town. Until then, no-one had discussed education and their children's future with those parents. Many Romani parents expressed fears that their children might be exposed to humiliation or even to ill-treatment in a majority environment. It was difficult to guarantee that such things would not happen, as it was well known that majority attitudes towards Roma were extremely negative. Nevertheless, many Romani parents were aware that sending their children to the all-Romani school was detrimental for their children's future and agreed to participate in the program.

In September, “Organization Drom” conducted a National Conference on the topic “The Education of Roma Children on a New Stage”. (Additional information on [www.drom.hit.bg](http://www.drom.hit.bg)). Local and national Media publicised the event. Participants supported the idea of desegregation. *Thus, public support, articulated by distinguished intellectuals, gave*

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<sup>14</sup> It should be noted that it was not easy to convince the teachers from the Roma School that the project was a good idea. Especially, if one considers that full desegregation of the Roma school would result in closure of the Institution and possibly unemployment for all the school staff in the economically depressed Vidin region. To give a flavor of the discussion in the meeting, I would cite the Roma School Director: “We have the best teaching staff in Vidin and we provide a high quality education”. As the author had 15 years of experience at the very same school, the director's remark was far from absurd. Another important key point from the meeting was the adoption of a decision, on behalf of the administrative body of the Roma school, that each Roma student, who left the Roma school and enters the desegregation program, would not be allowed to return. This constituted a kind of threat to the “Organization Drom” in case of failure.

*impetus to the project activities.*

Before the start of the school year, two discoteques were organized for the children participating in the project with the support of the Bulgarian Red Cross Youth Union – one in the Roma quarter and the other in the Town's Youth Center. A special excursion to the countryside was organized with the objective of acquainting staff of the organization and students.

## **Media**

One of the main objectives of involving the media was to attract the attention of the Roma community and the Bulgarian society as a whole to the issue providing equal education opportunities for Roma children. The failure of the Yambol case still featured in public discourse<sup>15</sup>.

The activities of "Organization Drom" were presented to regional and national TV channels, radio stations, newspapers, magazines and the Bulgarian Telegraph Agency. The main feature of the media campaign, which was financed by Minority Rights Group, London and ERRC, Budapest was to create a positive image of desegregation.

Among the most significant contributions on behalf of the media were the following:

- A 30 minute film by local TV "VIDIN", which presented the work of "Organization Drom" with a focus on the desegregation project. It was transmitted in December 2000 on a national TV channel.
- Nancy Durham's reportage, which was transmitted by the Canadian Broadcasting Channel in September 2000 made an important contribution to the international promotion of the project.
- A full-page article in New York Times International, June 12, 2001
- A full-page article in the International Herald Tribune, June 14, 2001

## **Social groups' attitudes**

Before turning to the attitude of different social groups towards the project, we should define the main obstacle to desegregation in summer 2000. In the school in the Roma Neighborhood, among Roma leaders, Roma parents and even the new employees of the desegregation project, the attitude was as follows: "*The Roma school "educated"*<sup>16</sup> *several generations (since 1960s) and no matter how bad it is, still it is our school. It belongs to our Neighborhood*". Therefore, "Organization Drom" had to get past this deeply rooted feeling of belonging to the Institution "Roma School" and show that there was a better way to educate the children.

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<sup>15</sup> In September 1999, a year before the desegregation process started in Vidin, in the town of Yambol (South East Bulgaria) there was unorganized transfer of Roma students from the Roma school to regular schools. The process inspired a significant protest, led by unhappy Non-Roma parents who did not want their children to study together with their Roma peers. The protest was successful, and resulted in the return of the Roma students back to their segregated Roma school.

<sup>16</sup> we put educated in inverted commas, because it is highly doubtful whether the Roma school indeed served for educational purpose in the general notion, rather it was concentrated on the vocational training component that exemplified something like a long-term program for qualification, targeting unskillful workers.

## **The romani parents**

Unofficial statistics for the unemployment rate of Roma people in the region of Vidin indicate nearly 70 %. The official statistic for the region for all citizens is 27 %, still very high for the country<sup>17</sup>. The staff of the project considered that support in the form of breakfasts, free school materials and texts and free transport would be a significant factor for many poorer Roma families. Other parents had to be convinced that the quality of education in regular schools in town was better than that offered by the Roma school.

The supervisors went from house to house in the Roma Neighborhood during August and September to talk to parents and convince them that the Desegregation project would improve their children's lives in the long term. The Desegregation commenced on September 15, 2000 with 275 Roma children, who were spread amongst six regular schools in the town of Vidin.

Regular meetings were held between the staff of "Organization Drom" and Roma parents. During these meetings, at least one per month, the parents were told about the project's results, problems and achievements and how the children were progressing in their new school environment. Lectures and training were provided to parents about developments in education. The coordinators had numerous personal conversations with supervisors and parents in respect to the education and training of the children outside the school environment. Training courses were organized for the Roma parents to teach them the requirements of knowledge for each grade in Secondary School. An interesting development was that 35 parents, who had only completed 8<sup>th</sup> grade, decided to continue their education as private students in secondary school.

At the end of February 2001, "Organization Drom" held a meeting for parents of children participating in the desegregation process and school directors. The parents concluded that their children had made significant progress after the first school term. Many of the questions at the meeting related to the possibility of continuing the project .

Another unprecedented development was the inclusion of some Roma parents in School Councils at two high schools. These positive results came about because the parents felt highly motivated through their direct involvement in school and out-of-school activities.

## **The school authorities**

Two days after the school year started, "Organization Drom" organised a meeting with the directors from all six-partner schools. The supervisors, employees of NGO "Organization Drom" were presented and the first plans for coordinated activities were discussed. A decision was accepted to provide a room for supervisors<sup>18</sup>.

In November, "Organization Drom" ran a seminar on the topic: "A New Approach in the Education of Roma Children". The participants included the Chief of the Regional Inspectorate of the Ministry of Education and Science, the vice-mayor of Vidin Municipality,

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<sup>17</sup> Official statistics for the unemployment rate in Bulgaria for 2000 shows 14 per cent (Government statistics, 2001)

<sup>18</sup> The supervisors were obliged to be present in the school environment from the arrival till the departure of the Roma children.

public officers from the department of “Education” and Public Relations and Regional Development of the Municipality, School Directors, parents and representatives of Media.

“Organization Drom” also conducted meetings with the School Administrations and teaching staff, particularly those involved with the mixed classes, where the Roma children from the desegregation program were. Agreements for Co-operation were signed between “Organization Drom” and the Regional Education Inspectorate and the School Directors.

“Organization Drom” proposed that the schools organize a series of lectures for the students on topics related to ethnic tolerance and minority groups, their history and culture.

To solve the problem of providing additional training for teachers in order to improve the quality of education for children in mixed classes, “Organization Drom” organized, in co-operation with the Regional Education Inspectorate. One of Vidin's best teachers was engaged to start individual work with children from the desegregation program that were lagging behind.

The supervisors monitored the improvement of the children in class and reacted in cases when a child received a poor mark.

The motivation of the teachers, working with mixed classes was a significant element, which added to the success of the project. Additionally, teachers understood the unique opportunity that was being offered to work in ethnically mixed environment

### **The local authorities**

“Organization Drom” established a dialogue with the local authorities of Vidin from the very outset of the desegregation initiative. However, the relationship was not productive. Most of the time, the authorities tried to block the process and their desire to lead and have full control of desegregation activities led to conflict with “Organization Drom” from the very start. The NGO sought to constrain obstruction that resulted from the authorities and the administrative staff of the Roma School. Using the media, promoting the initiative among Roma parents and leaders and staff of the regular schools in Vidin eventually led to “Organization Drom” receiving official support from the local authorities in October.

### **Romani children**

The students were distributed in five Secondary and one Elementary School in Vidin on the principle that no more than 30 % in a class group were of Roma origin. Due to the supervisors (young Roma), whom the children knew very well and respected, and the positive attitude of teaching staff, the process of accommodation to a new environment went smoothly.

Free school materials were provided for 220 children (80 per cent from the total) from impoverished backgrounds. Additional classes were provided for children who had not reached the standard education level. This was necessary because parents, due to their own low level of education, were not able to help their children catch up at home.

The project also paid for courses to prepare for entrance tests to specialized secondary schools for three students, one of whom succeeded in entering the Mathematics High School<sup>19</sup>.

Extra-curricula activities aimed at building relationships between Roma and Non-Roma outside the classroom. For example, a competition for “Most Tolerant Class” was conducted in cooperation with the Regional Inspectorate of the Ministry of Education and Science to coincide with the International Year of Tolerance 2000.

During the winter vacation, a training camp was organized for children who were experiencing problems in some subjects such as mathematics and literature. Competitions and incentives were offered to reward children's achievement and good behaviour. Attendance of children from the desegregation program was extremely good, a difference from the experience at the Roma school, where absence from class was common. Awards were also given to teachers that had achieved the best results and summer and winter camps were organised involving children from the Roma and non-Roma communities.

In March 2001, the desegregation program was invited to open classes in all schools that had Roma students. This was a moment of celebration for “Organization Drom”, and for the children themselves. School directors had acknowledged that desegregation had improved the attendance and grades of all students, including non-Roma pupils.

## **Results**

The previous sections of this paper emphasised the problems that arose because of the existence of Roma schools. This last section describes results and our efforts to build a framework based on the Desegregation Model.

The Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science requires tests to be completed at start of the school year in all Bulgarian schools. This was useful for the desegregation project because we could evaluate the level of Roma students from the Roma School, compared to non-Roma studying at regular Vidin Schools. The results for children transferred from the Roma school, indicated that nearly 30 % (82 children) were behind in several subjects and about 15 % (41 Roma children) were completely illiterate.

By the end of the first school term, for the 275 participating students, attendance was 100 % and only 24 students had received low marks. Two sixth-grade students who had been awarded very low marks were, in fact, illiterate. They even did not recognize the Bulgarian alphabet. Until the previous year, they had attended the Roma school and the project team was mystified by that fact that they had passed through all the school grades. Table 1 gives the distribution of results for all the Roma children participating in the Desegregation project in the first school term.

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<sup>19</sup> It should be clarified that the best high schools in Vidin were targeted: The English Language School and the Mathematics High School. The level of education is far beyond the level in the other high schools at town, therefore the entry exams for the new students (each July after seventh grade) are extremely difficult.

**Table 1**

<b>Grades</b>	<b>Number of children</b>
Excellent	0
Very good	28
Good	120
Satisfactory	103
Poor	24
<b>Total:</b>	<b>275</b>

**Footnote:** The education scale system in Bulgaria is the following – (6) excellent, (5) very good, (4) good, (3) satisfactory, (2) poor, which is equivalent to 'fail'.

In May 2001, a test that was conducted by the Regional Education Inspectorate and “Organization Drom” in three Vidin schools. The purpose was to test the level of education of three groups of classes. The first group consisted of 100 % Roma students (from the Roma School in Vidin), the second group was 100 % non-Roma and the last was a class of mixed Roma and non-Roma students. Strikingly, the children at the mixed classes showed the best results.

The results for Roma children involved in the program at the end of the school year (by then, 460) are shown below:

**Table 2**

<b>Grades</b>	<b>Number of children</b>
Excellent	23
Very good	177
Good	204
S Satisfactory	56
Poor	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>460</b>

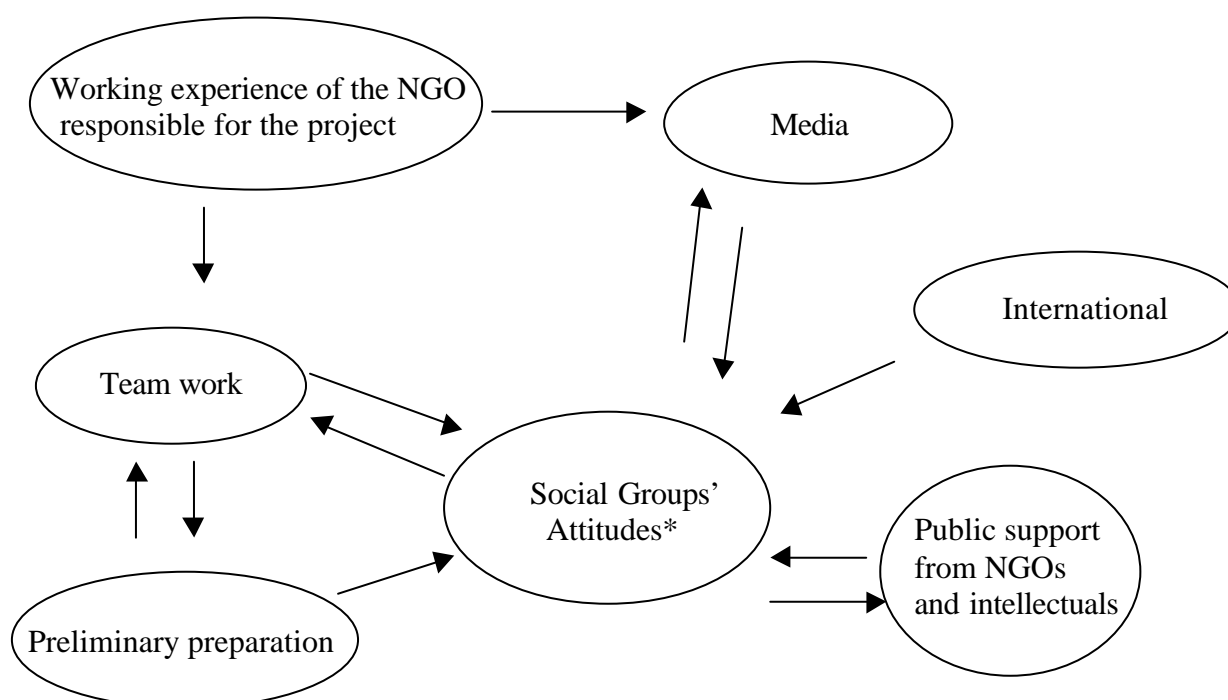
### **Analysis of the desegregation model**

Our priorities at the beginning of the school year were to motivate the children to attend classes regularly. At the end of the school year we found that we had 100 % attendance. Moreover, we had managed to find variety of successful incentives to motivate children, parents, teachers, administrators and local authorities to achieve the results presented in the previous section.

An increased number of Roma students were willing to participate at the desegregation project (from 275 to 460). Other social groups were ready to accept the incoming Roma students. At the beginning of the second desegregation year, about 600 students registered with the Desegregation project and "Organisation Drom signed official agreements with the Vidin Municipality, Regional Education Inspectorate and the regional local authority body.

The following model explains the process, which could be useful in other parts of Central and Eastern Europe.

## Desegregation model



\* The social groups include parents, school staff, children and local authorities, which interact between each other and with the NGO, which leads the desegregation project.

In the preliminary preparation phase, it is very important how the representatives of the team on the desegregation project form their expectations and perceive their responsibilities in the desegregation process.

The relationship between the media and social groups is important. On the one hand, the media is used to inform the wider society about the desegregation idea. It also has a 'domino effect', attracting the attention of other media outlets. On the other hand, developments in social groups influence the media as positive results from the desegregation project become visible.

The missing element in the model is the presence of government. Future desegregation on a national level should involve national authorities. In addition, national media should raise awareness of the whole society.

## CONCLUSION

It was found that the success of the Vidin desegregation project resulted from several factors:

1. Involvement at each stage of the project of all groups who are affected by its activities - Romani students and their parents; school authorities; the wider Romani neighbourhood community; non-Romani parents and students in Vidin; and the local authorities.
2. Extensive awareness-raising work with Romani parents and school authorities which started prior to the beginning of the school year and continued throughout the year;

3. Daily monitoring in schools; seeking feedback from students, parents and teachers; and maintaining regular contact among them;
4. Individual work with Romani students who needed extra assistance at school;
5. Extra-curricular activities bringing together Romani and non-Romani students;
6. Publicity for the project activities and public discussion of contentious issues.

Although the model could be replicated in other parts of the country, and even in other Central and Eastern European countries, to which the desegregation idea has already spread, the specificity of each country and local environment should be taken into consideration. “Organization Drom” used tools and motivation techniques that could be used by NGOs or other Institutions in Bulgaria and other parts of Central and Eastern Europe seeking to change social attitudes towards acceptance of the principle of integrated school systems.

## Paper #2

### Project: Program for supporting the education of Roma children and youth in the municipality Suto Orizari

By: Zaklina Durmis

The program was implemented from October 1998 to June 2001 in the biggest Roma community in Macedonia. Suto Orizari in Skopje has 40,000 inhabitants. There are two primary schools and one nursery school in the neighborhood. The project had permission from the Ministry of Education, which meant that we could cooperate with schools and follow the progress in school of children who were coming to the center.

The project also had the support of the local community. They gave us the premises for the center, for which they charged only a small rent. The center has 2 offices, a library, 2 classrooms and a large space for preschool children. The project employed 6 people (3 Roma and 3 Macedonians), 1 consultant for the programs, 4 volunteers and 2 people from the local community who led the free time activities.

The work of the project was supervised by a Board consisting of: a representative from the Ministry of education, a representative from the Ministry of social work and labour, the mayor of Suto Orizari, the president of the board of "Nadez", a representative from Caritas from Esen, a representative from OSI – Macedonia, a representative of the Faculty for social work and 2 representatives of Roma NGOs.

The project was designed to support preschool children, children from primary schools and children from secondary schools.

## COMPONENTS OF THE PROJECT "HOPE"

### Support for pre-school children

- The goal of the **preschool program** was to prepare children for a better start in the first grade. This preparation emphasised learning the Macedonian language because they have to study in that language. One hundred children were involved in this program. Activities consisted of games, songs, and drawing. 100 children were organized in 4 groups and they attended the center for an hour and a half every day from Monday to Friday.
- The **Program for preparing children for a better start in the first grade**, was implemented in the summer before beginning school. The aim of this program was to prepare children specifically for school (holding a pencil, writing, geometrical forms and discussions about why we need education). In the summer of 1999 we involved 125 children, in 2000, 83 children and in 2001, 71 children.

## Support for primary school children

- **Homework Program.**

Children could come to the center and do their homework with the help of pedagogues whenever they needed this kind of support. Records were kept for children who came regularly and we followed their educational progress. Over 150 children used this service.

The goal of this program was to improve the quality of the children's knowledge, to help them to learn from school materials and to improve their school attendance. It also aimed to influence teaching practice and make teachers more aware of the educational needs of Roma children.

In this program we didn't run formal classes (like in school), but worked on material from school. We offered the kind of support that is often expected of parents. The parents of these children were not able to offer this support, as they had no education, so we took on that role.

- **Program for elementary knowledge**

In this program we worked with children who had difficulties with mathematics and Macedonian language. Other problems arose due to their not knowing these two subjects well enough. The problems were basic: poor reading and writing skills, not knowing the basic operations in mathematics. Pedagogues working with a group of children on a daily basis.

- **Library**

The library was necessary because we had books that were needed in primary and secondary school. We also had other books including some in Romany language and for parents. Our library was the only one in Suto Orizari, and was open to all. For first time in Suto Orizari, 7 parents were borrowing books.

- **Debate program**

The aim of this program, which ran twice a month, was to build the children's self-confidence by debating specific topics. At the same time they developed their public-speaking and language skills.

- **Program for cooperation with schools**

Through this program we followed improvements in the children's marks and their school attendance. We had regular meetings with teachers and discussed the needs and progress of the children, and how we could work together to help children to submit their homework.

## Support for Secondary school children

- **Scholarships supporting the first year in High School.**

These scholarships were for students who were performing badly with low marks. The idea was to provide them with a mentor (a professor from the same school) and to help them to study and to pass the first year. Children and mentors had monthly

payments from second semester once changes in children's marks were visible. Lots of children were interested in this program, but the budget could only support 22 children with their mentors for 3 years.

- **Scholarships for completing a 4th year of secondary education for children who were only registered for 3 years.**

This program was for children who were achieving with high marks, but were registered in a secondary school course lasting 3 years instead of 4. Students finishing the 3rd year with good marks and wishing to continue in the 4<sup>th</sup> year had to pass all their exams for registration in the 4<sup>th</sup> year. We awarded 5 scholarships a year with the aim of getting students to university entry level (without the 4th year they can't go to University). Alongside the scholarships, we paid exam registration fees on a once-only basis. Students who failed had to pay to resit the exam themselves.

- **Program for learning the English language**

This program provided scholarships for high school children who were interested in studying English. The program paid for one 'level' in a foreign language school. If the student passed that level he received payment for the next level until he had completed all levels. This program involved 29 students.

- **Computer training program**

This program involved 280 high school students. They learned how to use a computers and internet and to work in Microsoft Word. We had four computers and books on computer programs.

### **Programs for involving parents**

- **Parents meetings**

This program ran once a week when a social worker was available to discuss children's problems in school with parents and ways to work together to solve these problems. At the start of the project, we motivated parents by distributing food or household cleaning products. After 8 months we stopped distributions, but all the parents continued to attend until the end of the project.

Parents attended these meetings but still had little contact with schools. So we involved teachers in our parents meetings so that they could build relationships and talk their children's school problems with teachers.

- **Program for professional consultation**

This program ran once a month for children and parents, when we invited a professional from a particular field (eg. doctor, psychologist), to lead a lecture on a specific topic (drugs, AIDS, the environment). The aim of the program was to provide information and awareness on important current issues.

- **Program for cooperation with families**

This program helped families to deal with problems. Because most of the parents are not educated they can't access their rights to state services to social and healthcare and employment.

### Free time activities

- **Program for cherishing Roma customs**  
The aim of this program was to transmit the 'treasures' of Roma culture from older people to the younger generation. Older people told stories, sang songs and spoke about customs for celebrating holidays.
- **Sports activities**  
The table tennis team that grew out of this program won second place in the first State league.
- **Program for music and dance**  
30 children were involved in this program and learned different dances.

In September 2000, a second center was opened to support a second school in the community of Suto Orizari. This center was financially supported by the Freudenberg Foundation and ran only the primary education support programs. Besides two educational centers in Suto Orizari, the team established a new NGO: Centre for Educational Support "Dendo Vas", with the aim of creating a network of educational centers in the Republic of Macedonia. This year we are establishing two further centers, one in Gorce Petrov (a municipality in Skopje) and one in Kumanovo.

In the Republic of Macedonia, the Constitution allows for minority nationalities to study in their languages, if they have educated teachers and primary school texts in their language. Roma do not have this capacity, so Roma children are study in Macedonian. Lack of knowledge of the Macedonian language is the children's biggest problem as they do not use Macedonian in their own communities.

Problems start in first grade. Children can't follow lessons, as they don't understand many words. At home, parents can't help because they are not educated. Teachers think that Roma children are stupid, because they do not bear in mind that these children have grown up using another language and in a different culture.

Education support out of school is very important. When we are planning such activities, we have to find programs and methods of implementation that meet the needs of children without undermining the formal educational system. Out of school support has to create a cycle of cooperation between the center, school and families. The center is a mediator. On one side we have poor and uneducated Roma families, who face a daily struggle to survive. On the other, we have the educational system, which has no concept of Roma people's needs, problems, language and culture.

An out of school support program must demonstrate to both sides (Roma families and schools) their 'gaps': to Roma people that they should study and be active in society; to the educational system, that Roma children face barriers in the teaching process (such as the teaching language).

1. The methods of working and needs differ in different locations, so we cannot copy programs wholesale. In Suto Orizari, the two centers have different methods of working and the children have different needs. In Suto Orizari programs for supporting the first

year in primary school the 4<sup>th</sup> year in secondary school are needed, but that's not the situation in Gorce Petrov, where they need financial support and books for the the secondary school.

2. These kinds of centers are very effective in improving children's learning, because the atmosphere is not like school. Many Roma children think that school is boring, because there are only lectures and exams. There are no close relationships with teachers. In the centers, children have close contact with the staff who work with them.
3. It is not easy to accomplish the aims of educational projects. They need time and good results require very hard and professional work.
4. The staff in the centers should be a mix of Roma and non-Roma. This gives opportunities to both sides: children have somebody who can explain the meaning of words they don't understand them in Romany language and they can meet educated Roma. Non-Roma staff can meet Roma, understand the reality of their lives and culture tell others about this.
5. This project involves the education authorities of the Republic of Macedonia. The local government has a separate board with representatives from ministries. Their involvement means that they learn about the needs and problems of Roma children and their families. Only the authorities are in a position to make the necessary changes.

### III

## WORKSHOPS AND WORKING GROUP SESSIONS



**#1 Interactive Photography Workshop**  
**#2 Developing Dialogue using Drama and Role-Play**  
**#3 The Role of the Media in Advocating for Diversity and Promoting Responsible Reporting**

*These workshops were activity rather than paper based.*

**#4 The Educational Needs of Children with Adult responsibilities**

This discussion sought to consider the situation and needs of children who are absent from school because they are:

- Earning income for the household;
- Caring for other family members, usually younger siblings or looking after their own children;
- On the move; in that the parents are travelling, and the children travel with them.

Contributory factors to this phenomenon were discussed, including:

- Deep-rooted and widespread poverty;
- Lifestyle, particularly in Western Europe, where families are often travelling;
- Cultural traditions that mean that Roma girls are expected to marry and have children young, whilst boys are seen as “men” at a young age and therefore able to work;
- Discrimination against Roma in the workplace even where they have qualifications, making an education appear irrelevant;
- An unfavourable school environment, including inappropriate curricula, which makes the option of working or staying at home to look after other children more attractive.

Clearly, some of the factors that are preventing Roma children from attending school are “societal” (e.g. poverty) and can only be fully tackled by structural changes within society itself. Specific policy initiatives however that it was suggested should be carried out in tandem with wider societal change included those that are:

Child-focussed, e.g.:

- Evening/extra classes for children who have missed schooling, or who cannot attend during the day because of other commitments;
- Development of educational programmes for children who are absent for long periods through travelling/working seasonally, e.g. distance learning programmes, or use of log books to allow schooling at several different schools;

Parent-focussed, e.g.:

- Free child daycare so that young mothers can continue their education and older girls are not withdrawn from school to care for younger siblings;

- Grants made payable to parents to compensate for the time their children spend in school as opposed to working;

For education workers (teachers/policy-makers etc.) e.g.:

- Tackling bullying/mistreatment within school so that they present more friendly environments.
- Development of alternative/flexible curricula for Roma that are more inclusive/more appropriate for their needs;
- Appointment of education advisors within Ministries of Education specialising in Roma children's needs.

Again, in tandem with the above, the importance of greater communication between children, parents and teachers was stressed; to tackle education workers' prejudices about Roma and ensure that they are more supportive of Roma children's educational needs; to address parents' concerns about the lack of relevance of an education; and to encourage children to see education as useful.

## **#5 The Educational Needs of Refugee and Displaced Roma Children**

The group examined and discussed:

- the situations in which displaced and refugee children were living
- existing standards of provision for them
- the specific factors and obstacles that made it difficult for these children to access education
- the tools that could be employed to lobby for improvements in provision (e.g. the UNCRC)

Problems and solutions were examined. Mainly, the discussions focussed on sharing experiences.

The problems included:

- multiple problems relating to language support needs
- discrimination and a lack of formal responses to incidents of discriminatory treatment in mainstream schools
- using the excuse of refugees not having their identity papers to refuse to enrol children in school is a particularly bad and often-cited example of this.

Solutions included:

- Ensuring there was support available to families by including incentives to get/keep children in school in poverty alleviation strategies
- Preventative work - to pre-empt problems arising that could lead to children not enrolling or dropping out, active involvement with families is needed to identify what these factors are

#### Examples of good practice

- using the goodwill of local NGOs and communities to help and cooperate with ministries
- in particular in assisting to develop inclusive and non-formal approaches that assist schools that are unused to having displaced and refugee pupils attending
- a systemic approach at policy level rather than a variety of ad-hoc initiatives of varying quality
- UNHCR scholarships

#### Issues:

- Complexity of problems e.g. returnees have missed out years of schooling in their 'home' systems
- Need for more research
- Diploma verification across countries
- Coping with trauma

### **#6 Policy Implications of the Roma Education Research Project IEP, OSI-BP. Beyond Projects: How can successful pilot initiatives and research inform policy development**

This group discussed the issue of “scaling-up” good educational practice broadly, which was supported by an introduction to scaling up prepared by Peter Rado. The discussion then led to using concrete educational models and practice that have been evaluated for impact, and using those models to inform educational policy.

A “Draft Educational Policy Recommendations” paper, prepared by OSI, was discussed with the group in order to get feedback. Of particular interest to the authors of the paper, were to find out whether: The policy recommendations were relevant to their country, were written in realistic and understandable language, and whether such policies already exist in the countries present.

Below are some specific comments made during the Workshop:

- A positive aspect to the Recommendations paper is that research advocates policy which is based on practice that has been proven to be successful.
- The proposals, however, proved to be too broad and too much for any government to consider implementing at once. There is a need, therefore, to further refine recommendations into short, medium and long-term priorities.
- Only proposals and recommendations that are economically feasible for governments with tight budgets, will succeed.
- Language support was (an important issue) in projects, but not highlighted in the policy recommendations. This will have to be reconsidered when the paper is developed further.

### Paper #1 - Scaling-up

#### **System-wide implementation**

In terms of educational policy the task is a classical bottom-up implementation problem. School level developments has the tendency to create models that – even if they are extremely successful - remain isolated within the whole system. Such developments almost never or rarely impose a spreading around impact on other schools without pro-active and deliberate policy support. There are certain policy tools that are able to support the spreading of the results of model site developments. These tools are the following:

- Strengthening the professional autonomy of the schools that allows for better adjustment to the needs of their clients;
- Deploying supplementary resources to the schools to cover the costs of innovation and extra services;
- Fostering the exchange of information and experience within the system;
- Building coalitions around certain developmental objectives.

Apart from these tools there are two complementary bottom-up implementation strategies for evoking the above mentioned spreading around impact: the project dissemination strategy and the systemic scaling-up strategy. The main differences between the two patterns of policies are the following:

<b>The policy of dissemination</b>	<b>The policy of systemic scaling-up</b>
The central question is: what are they doing and how?	The central question is: what are the conditions that allow them to do it?
The objective is the dissemination of the know-how.	The objective is to create the applicability of the know-how.
The most important tool is creating a network of co-operating schools.	The most important tool is modifying the systemic environment of schools.
In terms of adjusting to the local context the policy is relatively inflexible.	In terms of adjusting to the local context the policy is relatively flexible.
The impact on the functioning of the schools is direct, intensive and immediate.	The impact on the functioning of the schools is indirect, less intensive and delayed.
The number of schools involved is limited.	The number of schools involved is not

	limited.
Due to the project type of operation the innovation often remains isolated within the schools.	The innovation more easily infiltrate the entire functioning of the school.
The specific costs of development are high.	Due to the use of existing institutions and services the specific costs of development are lower.
Channeling in external resources is easier, the burden on the state budget is lower.	Channeling in external resources is harder, the burden on the state budget is bigger.
Ensuring cost-efficiency is easier.	Ensuring cost-efficiency is harder.

In an ideal case the two approaches to bottom-up implementation are combined. However, due to the limited amount of resources decision makers may give preference to one of them. When judging upon the weight of the two implementation strategies the following conditions are worth to be considered:

- *The scope of the problem*, that is, the size of the target group and the number of target institutions, the levels of education that are affected, etc. If the scope of the policy problem reaches a certain extent the systemic scaling-up strategy is better to be emphasized.
- *The level of decentralization*. In more decentralized systems the dissemination strategy is more feasible than the other one.
- *The maturity of support mechanisms and other conditions of school level quality improvement*. The systemic scaling-up strategy requires a mature and effective pedagogical-professional support mechanism in place that is at the disposal of innovative programs in the schools.
- *The source of resources*. If most of the required resources are provided by non-governmental development agencies only a dissemination strategy can be pursued.
- *Level of political and governmental commitment*. Due to the longer period of time and the wider use of public resources in the systemic scaling-up implementation model this commitment is essential.
- *The level of financial accountability*. Since ensuring cost-effective implementation via public agencies is harder the accountability related concerns may provide arguments in favor of the dissemination model.

Bottom-up implementation is successful only if the different kinds of supplementary resources (financial resources, human resources, services and information) are used in an effective way. This means, that if the *absorbing capacity* of the schools is high, bottom-up implementation is effective; if it's low, the implementation should be matched with top-down measures. The absorbing capacity of schools can be described by four criteria:

- The capacity of the staff to change,
- The willingness of the staff to change,
- The quality of institutional functioning of the schools (management, internal co-operation, external relationships, etc.)
- Accountability.

We can take the risk to assume that the absorbing capacity of those schools that educate Roma children are typically low. A school development project by permanent communication and consulting quite “easily” can ensure the appropriate use of the resources deployed to the projects sites. On a systemic scale it’s not that easy. In order to avoid huge “implementation deficit” the tools of mandate, capacity building, incentives, persuasion and support institutions should be built into the systemic environment of schools. Therefore, when the policy implications of grass-root developments are drawn the entire systems of governance, curriculum and examination, financing, textbook and teaching material publishing, teacher training, research and development, etc. should be reconsidered.

## **Paper #2 Roma Education Research Project: General Policy**

**Recommendations** \*This is a working document and will be revised. Please do not quote.

### **OVERVIEW**

Roma school-age children and youth in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe have lower levels of academic achievement and school completion rates than the general student population. There are a complex set of factors that have contributed to the lack of educational achievement and school completion among Roma children and youth. These factors include access of Roma children to appropriate educational opportunities, quality of schooling, continued discrimination toward Roma children, and attitudes of Roma children and adults toward public schools (reflecting both Roma cultural beliefs and Roma reaction to a history of discriminatory treatment).

Due to both resource and time limitations, the seven Roma education programs examined by our research project focused on particular policy problems rather than seeking to address the entire complex of factors which contribute to the lack of educational achievement among Roma. Our research revealed that program interventions addressing certain problems resulted in measurable and significant gains in educational achievement among Roma students. Although these gains reduced the educational achievement “gaps” between Roma students and the general student population by a significant amount, they did not eliminate these gaps. Moreover, the remains were still large. Program interventions focusing on other problems resulted in significant observable changes in schools. Although these changes did not produce immediate, measurable gains in educational achievement for Roma students, they did have the potential for significantly closing the achievement gap in the long term. From a policy perspective, our research results suggest that there are no simple remedies to addressing the educational needs of Roma children and youth. Governments need to implement policies which address this entire constellation of problems and factors in order to eliminate the educational achievement and school attainment gaps between Roma students and the general student population.

Our research also suggests that progress may be made toward accomplishing this goal by focusing on the implementation of policies that focus on addressing particular policy problems. Thus, governments can begin or advance efforts to improve educational attainment of Roma students by addressing specific factors sequentially rather than simultaneously – over time expanding the scope of their work to encompass additional causal factors in an incremental manner. This is likely to be a more practical alternative for governments given resource limitations and the practical need to produce some student outcome results in the

short-term. At this point, we do not have any evidence to suggest that addressing any one of the policy problems should take priority over the others. So initial government choices can reflect existing opportunities, resources, and needs in the country.

In the following numbered sections, we have identified several categories of policy problems and a range of possible policy approaches based on our research of the seven Roma education research programs. At the beginning of each numbered section, the italicized statements describe the causal relationships between policy problems and educational achievement of Roma students. Within each numbered section, we have described a series of policy problems, then described the “Program Strategy” used by specific programs to address the problem. Finally, we list a series of general policy recommendations designed to address each policy problem.

## **1. ROMA ACCESS TO APPROPRIATE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

*Low levels of academic achievement and school completion by Roma children and youth (compared to the general student population) reflect their limited access to educational opportunities available to the general student population. Increasing access to these educational opportunities will result in short-term gains in academic achievement and long-term gains in school completion among Roma children and youth.*

### **Preschool Preparation**

Problem: *Roma children have limited access to high-quality preschool preparation. Increasing their access to high-quality preschool programs will result in short-term gains in the academic achievement of Roma students in the primary grades.*

Program Strategy: Center-based preschool programs specifically targeted on Roma children conducted by non-school agency. Programs incorporated community-based recruitment of participating children, use of developmentally-appropriate teaching methodology, emphasis on developing language competency in majority language, exposure to classroom environment, and delivery of non-education services (meals, bathing, clothes washing, and personal hygiene). [Source of Program Research from Macedonia, Slovakia, and Yugoslavia/Serbia]

### Policy Recommendations:

- Establish Preschool Outreach Programs in Roma neighborhoods. Program staff will identify preschool-age Roma children and encourage families to enroll them in available preschool/kindergarten programs. Programs must be neighborhood-based and can be operated by Roma NGO’s or public schools using RTA’s.
- Ensure that public preschool/kindergarten class in public school is readily accessible to Roma preschool-age children. If such classes are not available through the public schools, such a program should be established in a site within the Roma neighborhood. The class should be associated with and operate as an extension of a local public school.
- Preschool/kindergarten staff working with Roma students should complete training activities focusing on use of developmentally appropriate teaching strategies based on current educational research, particularly strategies effective for working with language-minority students. Certify or establish appropriate training programs offered

- by institutions of higher education, teacher training agencies, public schools, Roma NGO's, or directly through government agencies.
- Require preschool/kindergarten programs working with Roma students to incorporate specific activities targeted on Roma children. These activities will build competency in the majority language, build knowledge and familiarity with public school classroom rules and procedures, and provide opportunities for personal hygiene.

### **Academic support and remediation**

Problem: *Roma children have limited access to appropriate academic support and remediation programs. Increasing their access to appropriate academic support and remediation programs will result in short-term gains in academic achievement of Roma students at all grade levels.*

Program Strategy: Center-based academic remediation program specifically targeted on Roma children conducted by non-school agency. [Source of Program Research from Macedonia and Slovakia]

Program Strategy: Academic remediation program specifically targeted on Roma children conducted by school. [Source of Program Research from Czech Republic and Romania]

#### Policy Recommendations:

- Establish after-school Academic Support Centers for Roma children and youth. Centers will provide direct tutoring and homework assistance (one-on-one and small group) to Roma students. In addition, Centers may offer supplemental classes focusing on building competency in the majority language and mastering basic skills and knowledge in mathematics, science, and social studies. Centers will be open to Roma students of all ages. Centers should be located in sites easily accessible to Roma students, preferably in Roma neighborhoods. If public schools are available and have space, they should be used to house the Centers. Centers should be established and operated by Roma NGO's working in consultation with the local public school(s) serving Roma students. Center staff can include community educators, RTA's, or public school teachers. Some staff must have familiarity with Roma language.
- Academic Support Center staff should complete training activities focusing on tutoring strategies. Certify or establish appropriate training programs offered by institutions of higher education, teacher training agencies, Roma NGO's, or directly by government agencies.
- Public schools serving Roma students should establish a Roma Student Support Team. The Team will include school administrator, teachers, RTA's (if available at school), and representative of local Roma NGO working directly with Roma students (ideally the NGO operating the local Academic Support Center). The Team will meet regularly to recommend specific Roma students for attending the Academic Support Center and identifying specific academic support needs of the students. The Roma Student Support Team will serve as the link with the Academic Support Center.

## **Enrollment in primary grades**

Problem: *A lower percentage of Roma children are enrolled in the primary grades and begin their formal schooling experience in a timely manner. Increasing the proportion of Roma children enrolled in the primary grades will result in long-term gains in the proportion of Roma children completing school.*

Program Strategy: Program staff familiar both to Roma parents of school-age children and to staff in the public school facilitate the successful and timely enrollment of Roma children in the primary grades. [Source of Program Research from Macedonia, Slovakia, and Yugoslavia/Serbia]

### Policy Recommendations:

- Preschool Outreach Program staff will work with Roma families to arrange timely enrollment of Roma children in first grade (or in subsequent grades). Where needed, Preschool Outreach Program staff will accompany Roma families to enrollment process in school.
- Public school administrators and staff should meet with Preschool Outreach Program staff on an annual basis to identify and address any problems or challenges associated with the timely enrollment of Roma students into first grade. School should identify specific accommodations needed to ensure successful enrollment of Roma students, including translated materials, flexible enrollment times, and availability of language interpreters.

## **2. ATTENDANCE OF ROMA STUDENTS IN SCHOOL**

*As compared to the general student population, Roma children and youth enrolled in school are more likely to be absent from school. Lower attendance means less exposure to academic lessons conducted in school. Less exposure in turn contributes to poorer academic performance in class and lower academic achievement overall. Improving attendance by Roma children will result in medium-term gains in their academic achievement and long-term gains in school completion by Roma children and youth.*

### **Engagement of Roma Students in Classroom Lessons**

Problem: *Roma students do not attend school regularly because they are not engaged by the content of the classroom lessons. Making the content of classroom lessons more engaging for Roma students will result in short-term declines in their absence from school.*

Program Strategy: Teachers incorporate accurate information on Roma history, culture, and literature into classroom lessons to increase interest of Roma students in the content of some lessons. [Source of Program Research from Bulgaria and Romania]

### Policy Recommendations:

- Create high-quality instructional materials on Roma literature, culture, and history. These materials should reflect the range of perspectives of Roma groups within the country. Materials should be created collaboratively by appropriate local Roma community members, local scholars, and local educators. Materials should be targeted at specific age groups (preschool, primary, elementary, intermediate, and secondary).

- Create a curriculum framework to provide teachers guidance in the classroom use of the instructional materials.
- Distribute both instructional materials and curriculum frameworks to all schools in the country.
- Certify or establish training activities focusing on strategies for incorporating these instructional materials into classroom lessons and teaching practices. Training activities can be offered by institutions of higher education, teacher training agencies, Roma NGO's, public schools, or directly by government agencies.

### **Effects of Discriminatory Treatment**

Problem: *Roma students do not attend school regularly due to the discriminatory treatment and attitudes of non-Roma school staff and students. The discriminatory behavior and attitudes make schools unpleasant environments for Roma children. This reduces their motivation or interest in attending school on a regular basis. Improving the attitudes of non-Roma adults and children toward Roma students and reducing the incidence of discriminatory behavior toward the Roma students will make schools more pleasant environments over time. This will result in medium-term declines in absentee rates among Roma students.*

Program Strategy: Intercultural education activities and incorporation of accurate information on Roma history, culture, and literature into classroom lessons reduce discriminatory behavior and attitudes of non-Roma adults and children. [Source of Program Research from Bulgaria and Romania]

### Policy Recommendations:

- Require all schools to develop and implement an intercultural education plan. Plan must include (1) measurable intercultural education goals for the school, (2) description of training activities to be undertaken by staff, (3) description of materials to be used to support intercultural education activities, (4) identification of resource individuals to be used in support of intercultural education activities, (5) description of community outreach and engagement activities, and (6) description of strategies to be used to incorporate intercultural education into classroom lessons. Establish a national competitive grant program to support implementation of intercultural education plans by schools with high-need. Schools that include Roma students must incorporate in their plan the use of instructional materials and teaching activities focused on Roma literature, culture, and history.
- Establish a national support and resource network to assist schools in the development and implementation of the intercultural education plans. Network will include institutions of higher education, education organizations (including training agencies), Roma NGO's, public schools with exemplary intercultural education programs, and appropriate government agencies. Network will offer training and direct assistance in the development and implementation of intercultural education plans.
- Certify or establish two types of training activities. The first type of training activity will target administrators and will focus on all aspects of the development and implementation of effective intercultural education plans. The second type of training activity will focus on teachers and will focus on classroom integration of intercultural education. All activities could be offered by institutions of higher education, education organizations (including training agencies), public schools, Roma NGO's, and appropriate government agencies.

## **Attitude of Parents Toward Public Schools**

Problem: *Roma students do not attend school regularly because Roma parents are not supportive of the public schools nor do they encourage their children to have regular attendance. Changing the attitudes and knowledge of Roma parents toward public schooling will make them more supportive of their children attending school regularly. This will result in medium-term declines in absentee rates among Roma students.*

Program Strategy: Program staff conduct training program targeting Roma parents to inform and educate them about the importance public schools and the necessity of regular school attendance. [Source of Program Research from Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Yugoslavia/Serbia]

Program Strategy: Teachers incorporate accurate information on Roma history, culture, and literature into classroom lessons to make content of classroom lessons more reflective of the Roma. [Source of Program Research from Bulgaria and Romania] >> [NOTE: This strategy is linked to strategies responding to Engagement of Roma Students in Classroom Lessons and Effects of Discriminatory Treatment]

Program Strategy: Presence of RTAs provides familiar and culturally-sensitive contact with the schools for the Roma parents. [Source of Program Research from Czech Republic]

### Policy Recommendations:

- Require all schools serving Roma students to establish a Parent Outreach Center in the school. The Center will serve as a source for translated parent information about the school and a site for parent training activities. Centers will be staffed by trained RTA's and/or staff from local Roma NGO's. Center staff will also function as intermediaries between the school and Roma parents to identify and resolve problems related to Roma students' education.
- Create and disseminate translated parent information materials for Roma parents.
- Develop and disseminate model parent training programs designed to build support of Roma parents for public schooling. Model parent training programs can be developed and disseminated by Roma NGO's, institutions of higher education, public schools, and appropriate government agencies.

## **3. QUALITY OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

*Public school classrooms are not appropriately organized to effectively meet the learning needs of Roma children and youth. Nor do public school teachers employ the range and type of teaching strategies needed to meet the learning needs of Roma children and youth. These inadequacies in the public schools contribute to the lower levels of academic achievement among Roma students and their lower level of school completion. However, it has to be recognized that even changes put in place in the short-term in the structure and operation of schools will result in gains in student academic achievement only over the long-term.*

## **Comprehensive, School-Based Educational Change Initiative**

Problem: *Schools lack the knowledge and capacity to implement comprehensive school-based educational change initiatives which will result in the use of best teaching practices identified in current educational research. However, the conservative and systemic nature of school organizations means that implementing changes in the schools and in the classrooms will be an incremental and time-consuming process. The changes will only result in changes in academic achievement among Roma students over the long-term.*

Program Strategy: Program provides training, information, materials, and an ongoing support network (1) for teachers to encourage and support the implementation of best teaching practices, (2) for administrators to encourage and support the implementation of innovative school management structures and practices, and (3) for administrators and teachers to encourage and support the implementation of community outreach and parent engagement efforts. [Source of Program Research from Romania]

### Policy Recommendations:

- Require all schools serving Roma students to establish and implement an ongoing School Improvement Plan designed to better address the learning needs of Roma children. This plan must define measurable goals related to changes in school operation, changes in classroom teaching practices, and improvement in Roma student outcomes. In addition, the plan must describe (1) proposed training activities, (2) possible institutional collaborators, partners, or service providers, and (3) resource needs.
- Establish a national competitive grant program to support the implementation of School Improvement Plan in high-need schools with significant concentrations of Roma students.
- Create a nationwide support network to provide training and technical assistance to school administrators in the development, management, and implementation of effective School Improvement Plan. Training and technical assistance activities should focus on school management issues, engagement of Roma parents, and collaboration with appropriate community institutions. This network could encompass institutions of higher education, education agencies (including teacher training agencies), Roma NGO's, public schools with exemplary school improvement plans, and appropriate government agencies.
- Create informational materials for administrators providing guidance on effective strategies for (1) developing, managing, and implementing a successful school improvement plan, (2) successfully engaging Roma parents, and (3) successfully collaborating with appropriate community institutions in support of school improvement efforts. These informational materials should reflect the work of both national and international education experts.
- Create a nationwide support network to provide training and technical assistant to classroom teachers regarding the use of best teaching practices that effectively meet the learning needs of Roma students and reflect the results of current educational research. This network could encompass institutions of higher education, education agencies (including teacher training organizations), Roma NGO's, public schools, and appropriate government agencies.
- Create informational materials for classroom teachers summarizing relevant results of educational research and their implications for best teaching practices. These

informational materials should reflect the work of both national and international education experts.

### **Best Teaching Practices (Using Roma Teaching Assistants)**

Problem: *Teaching practices used in the classroom do not reflect best practices identified in current educational research. As a result, these practices do not address the learning needs or styles of Roma students. Changing the practices used by teachers will be a time-consuming process. It will result in gains in academic achievement among Roma students only over the long-term.*

Program Strategy: RTAs provide additional classroom support to teachers to allow them to learn about and implement best teaching practices. [Source of Program Research from Czech Republic]

Program Strategy: Program provides training, instructional materials, and support network for teachers to encourage and enable their use of best teaching practices as reflected in current educational research. [Source of Program Research from Romania] .>> [NOTE: This policy recommendations for implementing this strategy are encompassed in the discussion of “Comprehensive, School-Based Educational Change Initiative”]

#### Policy Recommendations:

- Establish “Roma Teaching Assistant” as officially-recognized public school position. Establish appropriate qualifications for position which include working knowledge of Roma language and participation or completion of appropriate training activities.
- Establish three categories of RTA: RTA Trainee (non-certified RTA still participating in basic training activities); Certified RTA (RTA who has completed basic training activities); and Senior RTA (certified RTA with at least three years of experience who had completed advanced training activities). Define scope of responsibilities for the three categories of RTA. Establish graduated salary structure with salary increasing from RTA Trainee to Certified RTA to Senior RTA. Salaries can also be adjusted to reflect varying roles and responsibilities.
- Establish flexible training requirements for becoming Certified RTA (basic training requirement) and Senior RTA (advanced training requirement). Certify or establish training options organized around training workshops, on-the-job training, independent study, or combinations of these three approaches. Training programs can be conducted by institutions of higher education, non-profit education organizations (including staff training organizations), Roma NGO’s, public schools, or appropriate government agencies. Senior RTA’s can be recruited to staff training programs.
- Place RTA’s in all schools serving Roma students. Number of RTAs should reflect the relative number of Roma students attending the school. Each school must establish a plan that defines specific measurable goals for the use of the RTAs in the school relative to the learning needs of Roma children and their families. In addition, the plan should describe the specific roles of RTAs in the school. Possible roles could include use: (1) as classroom teaching assistants (to assist with behavioral or learning issues of Roma students and/or to allow teachers to implement innovative teaching practices), (2) to provide in-school academic support to Roma students, (3) as staff of preschool/ kindergarten classes for Roma students, (4) as staff in after-school Academic Support Center programs, (5) as staff in Preschool Outreach Programs, and (6) as staff in Parent Outreach Centers.

- Require administrators and teachers in schools with RTA's to complete appropriate training activities associated with the effective use of RTA's in the school and/or classroom. Certify or establish the appropriate training activities for administrators and teachers. Activities to be offered by institutions of higher education, nonprofit education organizations (including teacher training agencies), Roma NGOs, public schools, and appropriate government agencies.

### **Teacher Understanding of Students' Strengths & Learning Needs**

Problem: *Public school classroom teachers need to build a greater understanding of the academic strengths and learning needs of Roma students in their classroom. By gaining such an understanding, teachers will be able to more effectively employ particular teaching strategies to build on their strengths and respond to these needs. In the short-term, this will create a better learning environment for Roma students. This, in turn, will result in short-term gains in the academic achievement of Roma students.*

Program Strategy: Program staff (both preschool and remediation program staff) meet regularly with public school classroom teachers to discuss the academic strengths and learning needs of Roma students who formerly or currently participated in the Roma education program (either the preschool or remediation program). [Source of Program Research from Macedonia, Slovakia, and Yugoslavia/Serbia]

### Policy Recommendations:

- Require teachers with Roma students in their classroom to conduct a conference on each Roma student twice a year. Conferences should include the student's classroom teacher from the previous year (including the preschool/kindergarten teacher if the student is in first grade). In addition, the conference should include staff from the afterschool Academic Support Center if the student is participating in such activities. Each conference should discuss student's ongoing progress and learning needs and should identify strategies for responding to those needs. Teachers can contact the Roma Student Support Team in the school to request additional assistance in meeting the learning needs of specific students.
- Establish a standard student reporting form for use by preschool, public school, and afterschool program teachers to document student progress and needs in various academic and non-academic categories (i.e. reading, writing, and speaking in the majority language; mathematics skills and knowledge; science; social studies; relationship with other students; and classroom behavior). These reporting forms will be centrally maintained by the public school but will be available for use by appropriate public school or after-school program staff, as well as by the student and his/her parents or guardians. Staff will be available to interpret and explain information to students and parents/guardians during regular parent conferences or at request of parent/guardian.

### **Roma Student Classroom Behavior**

Problem: *Many public school teachers are unable to maintain appropriate levels of discipline and appropriate standards of behavior among Roma students in their classrooms. Disciplinary and behavior problems serve to distract both the individual Roma students and the classroom as a whole from the process of learning. By more effectively address*

*disciplinary and behavior issues among Roma children in the classroom, teachers can provide Roma students more time to focus on learning activities. Better classroom discipline and more time for learning will result in short-term academic achievement gains for Roma students.*

**Program Strategy:** RTAs (as one of their school-based functions) work with teachers on student behavior issues associated with Roma students and directly intervene with Roma students to resolve classroom behavior of students. [Source of Program Research for Czech Republic] NOTE: This strategy is encompassed in the description of RTA's relative to "Best Teaching Practices (Using Roma Teaching Assistants)"

#### **4. ASSESSING ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN EDUCATING ROMA STUDENTS**

*Decision-makers lack the capacity to monitor the progress of Roma education programs in accomplishing their goals and assess their impact on schools, Roma students, and their parents. As a result, schools and programs cannot be held accountable for accomplishing their goals. Nor can schools and programs be appropriately changed to better accomplish their goals. [NOTE: This policy issue emerged from the data collection and research experiences of the Roma Education Research Project rather than the work of the Roma education programs. Specific problems are more significant in some countries rather than in others.]*

##### **Capacity to Collect and Maintain Information**

**Problem:** *Schools possess only limited capacity to systematically and accurately maintain statistical information on school enrollment, attendance, and achievement by students over time. This limits the ability of decision-makers to identify changes over time associated with specific Roma education programs.*

##### **Policy Recommendations:**

- Require all schools to collect and report specific categories of student data including enrollment status, attendance, and academic achievement. Provide standard definitions of all relevant categories (i.e. Who is considered "enrollee" or a "dropout"? How should attendance be reported – by lesson or school day?)
- Provide financial assistance to ensure that all schools have the knowledge and tools to accurately collect and report required student data.
- Establish a central repository to gather and archive all student data reported by schools. Data should be maintained in computerized form whenever possible.

##### **Identification of Roma Students**

**Problem:** *Collection of education outcome data on Roma students is at times in conflict with efforts by countries to reduce discriminatory treatment of Roma. As a result, schools are prevented from specifically identifying Roma students by anti-discrimination laws. However, such identification is necessary to assess and monitor changes in educational outcomes for Roma students compared to the general student population. It is necessary to find a balance between the anti-discrimination requirements and appropriate data collection requirements so that both policies are effectively advanced. [NOTE: This is significant in only some of the countries.]*

### Policy Recommendations:

- Establish new national legislation or revised existing legislation to define appropriate circumstances under which ethnicity of public school student can be identified, recorded, and archived. Legislation must balance the need for information to ensure that minority needs (including educational needs) are being adequately met with the need to protect individuals from discriminatory practices.
- Require schools and other appropriate public agencies to establish specific procedures and criteria for making student data available to individuals outside the school or agency (including for public information purposes). Procedures and criteria should differentiate between the release of individual student data and aggregate student data (which does not include any individual identifiers).
- Establish procedures and criteria for providing access to student data maintained in any central national archives. Procedures and criteria should support and encourage the use of student data by decision-makers for program assessment purposes.

### **Standard Program Assessment Tools and Measures**

*Problem: Standard tools and measures for assessing academic progress of students are not available to schools. Such tools and measures are necessary to allow assessment between programs, between sites, and over time.*

### Policy Recommendations:

- Develop or identify appropriate national student assessment tools and measures. Where possible, adapt existing international student assessment tools and measures. Ensure that student assessment tools and measures identified for use are valid for assessing educational achievement of particular student age group and reliable for assessing educational achievement of students in different geographical areas and from different ethnic groups (particularly minority groups such as the Roma). These tools and measures should be cost-effective and suitable for wide-scale administration across the country.
- Encourage a policy of data-driven decision-making regarding the assessment of educational programs at all levels including within the public schools. Create national training activities for educational decision-makers (including school administrators and teachers) regarding the effective use of statistical and qualitative data in making effective decisions. Training activities can be conducted by institutions of higher education, non-profit organizations, Roma NGO's, public schools, and

### **#7 Focus on collecting data and evaluating the success of Roma education programs**

#### **Methodological Challenges and Lessons Learned**

During the course of this research project, the local research teams confronted conditions and situations which limited the effective and efficient collection of some, relevant research information. Some of these challenges were unanticipated. Others were anticipated, but their extent and magnitude were more significant than expected. These conditions and situations

required the research teams to employ alternative strategies in gathering particular types of research information, or to collect alternative types of information entirely.

### **Time Limitations**

The most significant limiting factor in this research project was time. Data collection and analysis associated with this research project occurred during a six-month period: from October 2000 until March 2001.<sup>5</sup> This severely compressed time frame was made necessary by the compelling need for immediate information on Roma education programs by the OSI Education Sub-Board.

The project deadlines forced the researchers to accelerate the initial preparation of the research plan. This meant that some aspects of the plans were still under development, even as their implementation was begun. It also meant that the research teams were unable to conduct a more extensive review of the national education system and legal framework in each country. A more extensive review may have allowed the teams to identify and better anticipate some of the challenges which later emerged during the project and to develop plans that more effectively responded to these challenges. The researchers consistently reported that a longer preparation time would have enabled the development of better approaches to their field research.

The limited time frame forced the research teams to emphasize the rapid and timely collection of relevant research data during each phase of the research plan. This pressure caused the researchers to reduce the amount of time they devoted to reflecting on the information being collected. This meant that some issues and problems relevant to the programs and their impact did not emerge until later in the research process. At times, they emerged too late for additional information to be collected to address some of these issues and problems. This time pressure also meant that the research teams could not engage program stakeholders in reflecting on the research information to the degree desired in a participatory research model. However, it is important to emphasize that key program stakeholders were effectively engaged in the research process – even if their level of engagement could have been increased had more time been available.

### **Collecting Student Records**

A second significant and consistent set of challenges faced by the research teams related to student records. Access to student records was difficult across the entire region. There were few, centralized repositories for student records. Generally, student records were located only in individual schools. Most were under the control of individual school administrators (also known as school directors, headmasters, or principals), although some were even maintained only by classroom teachers. There are, apparently, few requirements for maintenance of these records or for permitting public access to these records for research purposes. As a result, obtaining access to these records often required negotiations between the research team and individual school administrators. For the larger, nationwide programs, this requirement could be particularly time-consuming.

Once access was achieved, the challenges did not end. Compiling and synthesizing student records was made more difficult by the condition of some of the records. Time often had to be spent physically locating the records and searching for the relevant information in the records. Given the limited resources available in the region, it came as no surprise that few records were computerized. However, this added to the challenges of collecting the information.

These comments should not be taken in any way as a criticism of the administrators, teachers, and other staff in the schools. The economic situation in many of these countries has resulted in reductions in national funding for education. With these cuts, have come reductions in salaries and personnel. With such pressures facing educational professionals in the schools, it should come as no surprise that record-keeping efforts might fall by the wayside. Even in countries where such pressures are less significant, school administrators and teachers understandably direct most of their efforts towards helping their students. Record-keeping was generally seen as a bureaucratic distraction, rather than a contribution to the education of children.

This attitude toward record-keeping was actually only a manifestation of a deeper set of attitudes among school professionals, which created another challenge for the local research teams. Most educators in the public schools failed to appreciate the value of the research and assessment activities being conducted as part of the project. In some cases, this led to reluctance and even outright resistance on the part of administrators and teachers. In most cases, this lack of understanding limited their capacity for effectively participating in, contributing to, and benefiting from the research work.

Of course, educators in the public schools of Central and Eastern Europe are not alone in these attitudes toward educational research and assessment. These attitudes can be seen in public schools around the world. Often they are based upon the real failures of traditional research methodologies and approaches, which treat the educators and their students as subjects to be studied, rather than people from whom to learn. These approaches have produced esoteric and sterile products, which possess little relevance to the daily needs of the educators and their students. In an effort to maintain an illusory “objectivity”, many researchers have created barriers to communicating with educational practitioners and made it almost impossible for these practitioners to build a greater understanding of the research process.

Obviously, our participatory research approach was designed, in part, to address these limitations of more traditional research models. Despite this intent, our research has continued to suffer from the mistakes of the past researchers.

We also found that some school communities exhibited tremendous suspicion of all outsiders. In some cases, this attitude reflected past conflicts with national or regional governmental authorities. In others, it was a response to critical news stories about the school or related to minority education issues. In either case, these educators were unduly sensitive to outside scrutiny and were reluctant to cooperate with the local research teams. This required the researchers to invest more time in building the trust and confidence of these staff – an effort that was not always successful. As our research progressed, it became obvious that development and use of personal relationships and informal networks of colleagues were particularly effective strategies for gaining access to student records and other relevant research information.

### **Identification of Roma Students**

In some of the countries, the local research team faced considerable difficulties identifying Roma students. Several of the countries included in this research project (particularly the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic) prohibit the use of racial or ethnic identification of students. Given the history of prejudice and oppression of these minority groups, such a

decision can be readily understood. At the same time, such a policy makes documenting the educational condition of Roma students and tracking changes in their situation very difficult.

Even where such policies do not exist, the identification of Roma children and families can be problematic. Relying on self-identification results in some Roma identifying themselves with a less oppressed ethnic minority group in the country, or even with the majority ethnic group. Given the prejudice and oppression directed at Roma throughout Central and Eastern Europe, such a decision on the part of some Roma is not surprising. However, it does make the identification of Roma students more difficult and less reliable. In general, our local research teams, like most other researchers, were forced to rely on self-identification of Roma, despite the limitations inherent in the approach. No ready alternatives presented themselves.

It also became evident during this research that national legal policies developed to prevent ethnic discrimination were also limiting the collection of information for the purposes of education research, program documentation and program evaluation. This occurred because policies failed to distinguish between ethnic identification for discriminatory purposes and that conducted for the purposes of research or program development, assessment, and documentation. From a research perspective, information on the ethnicity of individuals could be collected but then maintained and used in an anonymous manner to protect the identify of any individual. This would be sufficient for research or program-related purposes, while preventing the potential for discriminatory action against any individual. Unfortunately, current policies in several countries are sufficiently broad to prevent the official collection of data in this manner, even for research purposes. Our data collection experiences suggest the need to review existing national policies regarding ethnic identification of individuals, to ensure that mechanisms are established to allow legitimate research and program development aimed at improving the living conditions of the disadvantaged and oppressed groups.

### **Finding Comparison Groups of Students**

In order to provide a context for assessing the impact of each program on Roma students, the research teams sought to identify appropriate comparison groups. However, several teams reported that Roma comparison groups were both difficult and time-consuming to find.

Those programs which provided direct services to Roma students (including those in Macedonia, the Slovak Republic, and Yugoslavia) often focused their efforts on specific neighborhoods, settlements, and communities. The researchers found that within these communities, most Roma children were participating in the programs. This meant that there were few Roma children available to serve as a comparison group. This forced researchers to identify Roma children in other communities to serve in a comparison group. Moreover, the researchers had to seek this data without the connections that had been built between the program staff and school staff. This further compounded the challenges facing the research teams.

Past research suggested that most Roma children did not enroll in public school without some program interventions. As a result of this, the researchers found that students sought for comparison groups, were more likely to not be enrolled in school. However, this fact also made them much more difficult to locate. Compulsory education laws in each country often meant that parents and other Roma in the neighborhood were reluctant to admit that these

children even existed. Again, this required an investment by researchers in trust-building within these communities.

Researchers also found that it was difficult to collect comparable student data from earlier points in time. They found that in some cases past student data was not archived or easily accessible. This made it more difficult to identify baseline data in order to determine changes over time. The rapidly changing governmental, social, and economic conditions in some of these countries over the last two or three years added to the complications. In fact, the researchers recognized one important benefit of the data collected as part of this research project, is that it can serve as a baseline for assessing further changes resulting from these and other Roma education programs in the future.

### **Assessing Student Progress**

Little use is made by the public schools in the region of standardized student achievement tests. Despite the real limitations of standardized tests as a measure of student achievement, particularly when used alone and with minority populations, these tests are a useful tool for comparing student achievement over time and over different sites.

One alternative would have been for our project to administer a standardized assessment instrument to different Roma and non-Roma populations across the region. Although this would not have provided us with information on change over time, it would have provided some useful comparison data. Unfortunately, this project lacked both the resources and the time to conduct such a mass- testing effort. This project chose instead to rely on multiple indicators of student growth and progress, including mark level and school completion rates, class marks, attendance rates, and student behavior. Nevertheless, standardized achievement test results would have been a valuable, additional tool for the research project.

### **Isolating the Impact of Program Interventions**

Another challenge mentioned by some local researchers was their difficulty in isolating the impact of the specific intervention being studied on the participating institution and target population. This was particularly true, when several interventions were being implemented in a single site. The reality in most countries and most schools was that multiple programs were being employed and that often complex interactions arose. Rarely was just one program operating in isolation.

Although this research project sought to gather information and understand the context within which each project operated, our time and capacity to collect and analyze this information was limited. Moreover, many of the projects being examined have only operated for a short time and in only a relatively small number of sites. This also made it difficult to identify and understand the different interactions that may be occurring among different program interventions under different educational conditions. Ultimately, further research must be focused on these crucial issues.

### **Implications of Methodological Challenges**

Taken together, these challenges did create unexpected limitations in the research activities. However, these problems did not fatally compromise the quality of the research project.

At the same time, these challenges have important implications for future research on Roma education in the region. Given the growing importance of assessment and accountability on the part of private and government funders of education change efforts, issues of record collection, maintenance, and access will take on increasing importance. Equally important will be the development of a greater understanding on the part of school administrators and staff to the importance and value of program research and assessment efforts. Building such greater understanding is a potential result of projects like this one, using a participatory research approach. Such benefits justify greater use of such a participatory research approach in the future.

## Appendices

- Appendix 1**      Invitation letter  
List of delegates
- Appendix 2**      Links/web addresses to e-versions of DAF? and ESP reports  
Summary of Denied a Future? report in Romanes
- Appendix 3**      Examples of media coverage
- Appendix 4**      Recommendation No R (2000) 4 of the Committee of Ministers to  
member states on the education of Roma/Gypsy children in Europe  
Appendix to Recommendation No. R (2000) 4

# Appendix 1

## Invitation Letter

We would like to cordially invite you to participate in a forthcoming conference in Budapest to launch Save the Children UK's 'Denied a Future?' report - an assessment of the levels of access to and quality of education provision for Roma/Gypsy and Traveller children in 14 European countries. This report looks at international legislation relevant to the rights of Roma/Gypsy and Traveller children and presents in-depth analyses of the situation in individual countries in Western, Central and Eastern Europe. The Budapest conference will focus on the situation of Roma children in Central and South-Eastern Europe.

As well as presenting and discussing the findings of the 'Denied a Future?' report, the conference will feature a presentation and discussions of a recent IEP OSI-Budapest research study with the aim of presenting some solutions to challenges in educational programming and policy making.

The aim of the conference is to discuss the findings and recommendations of the two reports and to provide a forum for constructive debate between policy makers, representatives from intergovernmental organisations, practitioners, educationalists, Roma young people and other experts and professionals. This conference will be an opportunity to share good practice identified and to seek practical solutions.

Please find attached details of the provisional agenda together with technical information about the venue, accommodation, local transport arrangements and visa requirements. We would be grateful to know whether you will be able to attend as soon as possible and **no later than 15 October 2001**. Please send your reply by post, fax or e-mail and any inquiries to the address given on the reply slip.

Yours sincerely,

Judy Lister  
UK/Europe Regional Director

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## Summary of Save the Children's Denied a Future? report in Romanes

### **Xasardi tehara? E Romengo/Gypsiengo thaj e Phirutne Chavengo chachipe vash Siklaripe ande Evropa Summaria**

#### **Angluni Vorba**

E Romen/Gypsyen thaj e Phirutnen<sup>20</sup> pe phuvake saste, intregone kontinentura shaj arakhen, khatar e Amerika k-e Australasia. Numaj e maj but dzene beshen ande Evropa, thaj phiraven jekh zurales shukar fenomena ande Evropaki historia thaj kultura. E historia 600 bersha palpale lel o jekhto rekordo pe e Romende, thaj khatar kadi vrama/vaxt e relacia sikavel but pharimata thaj paruvimata mashkar e Roma/Gypsiura thaj e gadzikani societeta/dostipe. E Roma/Gypsiura si e maj bari etnikani minoriteta akana ande Evropa. E kontinentoski populacia dikhen mashkar 7 thaj 8.5 miliona thaj si te barol. Romane/Gypsikane thaj e Phirutnenge khetanimata beshen ande sa e Evropake thema. Shaj si le aver kulture, trajo, dzivipe, historia, thaj jekhes si aver kvalitete thaj shajimata sar e averes, vi kade von si xasarde khatar e instituciengi diskriminacia, von si mashkar e maj chorre manusha, thaj von nashti te phiren ande bare shkoli andar kado diskriminaciako thaj chorrimasko baro numero.

E *Xasardi Tehara?* reporto kerdo khatar o “Save the Children” fundacia dikhel e Romane/Gypsikane thaj Phirutne manushengi siklarimaski politika thaj provizia avdjesh ande Evropa. O reporto, so vazdel e perspektiva pe e chavenge chachimata, sikavel kaj bari grizha vazdjilas te dikhen sostar xasajven e Romane/Gypsikane thaj e Phirutne chave ande siklarimaske khera ande Evropa. Kado dichol, misalake, ando *Siklaripe Savorrenge* Lumako Siklarimasko Forumo inkerdo ando Aprilo, ando paluno bersh. Kade vi e UN Komisia pe Manushikane Chachimata thaj e Komisia pe Rasistikani Diskriminaciaki Eliminacia (CERD) sikavel grizha pe kadi problema.

E *Xasardi Tehara?* reporto si lino ande jekh konteksto so si ande Centralone thaj Istochne Evropake themange aresavipe karing e Evropaki Unia. Kado si kerdo e politikantenge, siklarnenge, birajipnikane organizacienge, rajimatange/kabinetenge thaj donoreng. O Reporto sikavel sar len e shansa e Romane/Gypsikane thaj e Phirutne chavorrendar te phiren ande bare shkoli ande e themenge reportura ande duj katora. E themange reportongo 1to kator, so sikavel Albania, Bosnia thaj Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Kroacia, Jugoslaviaki Federalo Republika (Serbia, Montenegro thaj Kosova), Macedoniako angluni Jugoslaviaki Republika thaj Romania. Kotor 2 sikavel e Evropake Centralone thaj barvale thema, kadala reportura si ande Chexiko Republika, Finlandia, Grexia, Ungaria, Italia, Slovako Republika thaj e Bari Britania (UK).

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<sup>20</sup> E vorba ‘Roma/Gypsiura’ si lini vi khatar o Liégeois thaj Gheorghe sar *Roma/Gypsiura: jekh Evropikani minoriteta* (Minority Rights Group, 1995). Ande nesave barvale thema a vorba “Phirutne” maj feder phenen. Kodoleske, ame ando kado raporto phenas e duma ‘Roma/Gypsiura’ kaj trubul. Kado svato si lino te sikavel kodole bute grupen kon akharen pe averchandesh sar Rom, Roma, Cigany, ja Phirutne numaj khetano si ande lende ke I gadzikani populacia similarones lel grizha pe lende thaj von si viktime e diskriminaciake thaj chorrimaske similarone nivelenge.

E themange reportura sikaven e shansa te len siklaripe pokindo e themestar thaj kodolengi kvaliteta. E kvalitetaki rig dikhel e materialengi komparacia, thaj e kurrikulumengi thaj e siklarimaske praktikaki kvaliteta thaj relevancia. Kade shaj ginen kodo, so e siklarne adzukaren e Romane/Gypsikane thaj Phirutne siklardendar thaj save eksperiance si lenge daden, dejan thaj von so dzukaren e siklarimastar. Khate sikavas sar kerdjol pe jekh lachi praktika thaj kodi ande savo publikano siklaripe si inke/meg/panda kerdi ande Evropa. Ando sako themesko reporto shaj arakhen e “Save the Children UK” fundaciake propozicie, so te kerdjol pe te lachardjol i situacia. Jekh summaria cirdel jekhethane e khetane probleme ande kadala thema thaj del pe lende propozicie.

Jekh Mashkarthemutni Legislaciaki Pustikelin, so si pash e Summaria thaj e themange reportonge duje kotora, ramosarel pe mashkarthemutne thaj regionalone legalone krisa so den garancia pe e chavorrengo chachipe vash siklaripe khatar e minoretikane grupe. E relevante krisa thaj artiklura si analizime perdal jekh referencia pe e Romende/Gypsiende thaj Phirutnende so shaj del lacho vast e NGO-enge so keren lokalo thaj mashkarthemutni advokacia.

### *Anglune agorimata*

- But thema ande Evropa na keren kodo so e mashkarthemutni thaj themutni legislacia phenel, von xasaren e Romane/Gypsikane thaj Phirutne chavorren soske na sikaven thaj na den lenge penge chachimata thaj kodola so trubun len ande siklaripe so shaj del len o shajipe thaj dzanipe te len e themutnengi sasti zor.
- E chavorra thaj terne manusha kasa kerdam interju aversar den godji, nesave phenenas von kamen te siklon thaj kamen te traden maj dur vi kana bute pharimatenca resadjona; e avera phenenas sar chi len grizha pe lende thaj separato besharen len khatar penge klasspartnera; but dzene denas дума pe e diskrimaciake probleme.
- Vi e dada thaj deja aversar denas godji, soske nesave na denas patjiv e formale, gadzikane siklarimaske thaj bishavenas penge chaven ande shkoli, thaj nesave pale denas vast penge chavenge te siklon numaj sas len but pharimata thaj dar pala lenge chavorrengi sekuriteta thaj e chive na patjanas ande pende.
- E maj but siklarimaske initiative pe e Roma/Gypsiura, maj butivar ando Centralno thaj Mizmerig-Disjutni Evropa, na e themestar len e love.
- E ekonomiake generalo niveli, siklaripe pokindo e themestar, kheraripe, sastipe thaj servisura te lacharen e Romengo/Gypsiengo thaj e Phirutnengo trajo, maj cinno standardo malaven ande mahale kaj but Roma/Gypsiura thaj Phirutne beshen sar so si o standardo mashkar i gadzikani populacia. Kado cacho si ande maj but “chorrivane” thaj kade vi ande maj but “barvale” thema.
- Naj programe so den vast e bilingvalone thaj multilingvalone trebalimatange. Kado na numaj pe e Romende/Gypsiende si chacho. Te avena e shkole thaj e siklarne preparirime pe chavende avere chibanca kodo anela baro profito e chavenge bare numerenge.
- Kodo, kaj naj personalo sekuriteta, phiripnaski slobodia thaj alosaripe e maj bute Romane/Gypsikane thaj Phirutne khetanimatange ande Evropa thaj specifiko ande thema kaj si but konfliktura, del but bilachi influencia pe lenge aresajimata karing e shkole.
- Ande maj but thema, so dikhlam, shaj rakhas minimum jekh adekvato legalno thaj politikaki kris so del e anglune chachimata vash egalne shanse, aresajipe kaj servisura

thaj e kris. Numaj, vi kana e institucionalo diskriminacia thaj e servisura - so den len thaj si tal-o standardo - butivar si kerde ande phuterdi politika, thaj vi kade si e Romen/Gypsien thaj e Phirutnen nesave kanala kaj shaj hatjaren pe konfidento kana roden zhutipe.

- Baro numero khatar e intelektualone shukar Romane/Gypsikane chave ande but Centralone thaj Mizmerig-Disjorigune Evropake thema vi adjes traden ande specialone shkoli thaj len jekh kasavi edukacia so chinel lenge droma angla e maj but profesie.
- But generacie arakhen pes phandle khatar siklarimaske shanse thaj achon ande bilache, marginalone thaj na mishto pokinde butja.
- E butjaki limita vazdel but pharimata, thaj kodoleske nashti dikhas lachipe ande siklaripe, thaj e diskriminacia pale ande shkole so si karing e Romane/Gypsikane thaj e Phirutne chave inkrel len dur khatar e shkola thaj kado sikavel peski zor vi ande siklarimaski kvaliteta so den lenge.
- Vi kana si pharo te len buti thaj lacho siklaripe, jekh terno Romano/Gypsikano thaj e Phirutne manushengo trupo vazdjol ande Evropa so kerel advokacia andar penge chachimata.

### *Anglune predlogura*

Pe e riportoske bare punktongi basa, o “Save the Children” del peske predlogura, propozicie. But predlogura si tala e nacionalone guvernengo godorvalipe/ responsibiliteta, numaj o “Save the Children” del vi e shkolange direktoreng, siklarnenge, khetanimatange sherutnenge, thaj e birajipnikane organizacieng jekh bari rola. Vi e mashkar-rajipnikane organizacie thaj i media si importante te anen o paruvipe. E propozicie si buhle, thaj pe butende del duma, vi generalo thaj vo specifiko. Leske maj bare predlogura pashjon ande “Save the Children” fundaciako patjavipe, ke sa e chave, na dikh lengi etnikani ja kulturani origina, si len chachipe te len jekh inkluzivo thaj relevanto siklaripe. Kadala si:

- Jekhe maj felksibilone kurrikulumesko dzamavipe, na primer te khosen sa e derogativone referencie khatar e shkolake tekstura so si pe e Romende/Gypsiende thaj pe e Phirutnende; e etnikane thaj aver minoretikane grupange referenciango sikavipe ande jekh pozitivo thaj balansuime drom; thaj kaj so shaj (e referencia te resadjol e konkretone khetanimatange trebalimatenca thaj preferenciasa thaj pe kodi Romani chib ja dialekto te avel sar so kodo si vorbindo ando khetanipe), vi e Romani shib te avel siklardo khetane e avera chibanca.
- E treningura, so keren e siklarnenge, te paruvdjon. Misalake, e chavorrenge chachimata, manushikane chachimata thaj treningo vash egalone shanse si te aven topikura so musaj te siklon sar ande pre-servisno kade vi ande andal-servisno trening kurrikula vash e siklarne; kado treningo si te pindzaravel e siklarnen kodole shajimatenca thaj aspektonca so trubun kana keren butji chavorrenca khatar avere etnikane, lingvistikane, patjaimaske thaj kulturane origine.
- Maj bute siklarnengo, siklarne-assistentengo thaj klasslivni-assistengo butjaripe si te avel, specifiko khatar Romane/Gypsikane thaj Phirutne khetanimata kaj maj but modele te dikhen e chavorre.

- Maj but profite te len andar e shkolake khera, te den shansa e chavorrenge thaj e terne manushenge pe aktivimata pala e mizmeri thaj pe kurkesko agor thaj vi te keren shanse te anen aver familiake dzenen ande shkolate.
- Maj but rodimata te kerdjon pe kaj te avel maj feder hatjardo e ekonomikane, socialone thaj kulturalone faktorengi rola, soske e manusha cirden penge chavorren ja e chave korko sostar cirden pe khatar o formalo siklaripe.
- Maj but thaj maj vizibilo butja si te aven realizime; e shkola si te aven thana kaj sa e chave si sigurne khatar fizikalo thaj verbalo azbavipe. Sa e shkolako khetanipe si te aven astarde ande strategiange preparacie te mudaren e rasistikani diskriminacia, fizikalo thaj verbalo azbavipe.
- Sa e guvernura si te pindzaren ke o siklaripe angla e shkola (pre-shkolako siklaripe) but mol, thaj kodoleske si te adoptisaren strategie so den e shansa te resen kaj pre-shkolako siklaripe thaj kado si te avel bilovengo sa e familiange kaske trubul kadi forma.
- E guverne sigo si te len akcia te na dzal e segregacia maj dur karing e Roma/Gypsiura specifiko te agorden e specialone shkolangi sistema.

E predlogengo baro kotor dikhel e nacionalone thaj birajipnikane organizaciengi akanutni tendencia te len love avral pe initiative so si vash e Roma/Gypsiura thaj Phirutne. E reporto sikavel ke sigo si te keren evaluacia so trubula e parude strukturake khatar e publikone budzetura ande lungu vaxt. Jekh lungone vaxtesko mangipe si te biandjol khatar e guvernengi rig na numaj te den adekvato love pe reforme te agorden i diskriminacia, vi te len grizha pe kodole sisteme so kerena e agorimatengo monitoring thaj evaluacia. Kadala butjaki realizacia kamlol pe te arakhadjol precizo thaj komprehenzivo podatka, data pe e Romane/Gypsikane thaj Phirutne chavengo resavipe kaj e shkola thaj sar von siklon khote.

Po agor, o raporto del propozicie pe kodo attitudo so e guvernenge thaj avere relevantone agencieng si te len te implementisaren kasave paruvimata, konkretones aktivo konzultacia thaj te cirden manushen ande aktivimata vi khatar e mahala. Kado si importante te vazden servisura thaj te adoptisaren praktike te maladjon kodole khetanimatange trebalimatenga specifikone trajoske stilosa ja kulturalone preferencienca. Agoreste, e mashkarthemutne organizacie si te traden maj dur te keren zuralo monitoring pe mashkarthemutne obligacie so line e guvernura karing chachipe vash siklaripe, specifiko te dikhen e Romane/Gypsikane thaj Phirutne chavengo chachipe vash siklaripe.

### Media Coverage



**International Media Press Conference 28/11/01, Budapest**

Wide coverage of the conference was achieved in broadcast, print and online media. There was interest from Budapest-based media and from numerous global media agencies based in Europe and in the UK. The Roma Press Centre (Budapest) was closely involved in the coordination of both the media coverage and the press conference, which was held immediately after the Opening Addresses session on the 28<sup>th</sup> November 2001. Mike Aaronson (SC-UK), Maria Andruszkiewicz (SC-UK) and Christina McDonald (OSI) comprised the panel who answered an array of interesting questions from a large number of journalists from Budapest-based international media, and this served to successfully publicise the findings of the two reports. In addition Roma young people from different countries were able to recount their experiences and express their views through interviews with the press.

Some examples of published articles:

**Dec 01 CZECH REPUBLIC: THERE IS A SMALL GLINT OF HOPE THAT MORE GYPSY CHILDREN MAY BE EDUCATED. (EC)**

A THIRD of Europe's Gypsy children never attend school, according to findings put out this week by Save the Children, a charity. Most of the rest are shunted off into special schools for the mentally disabled or else drop out of normal school before they are 15 years old, many of them defeated by bullying and homework that is hard to finish in cold and unlit homes. Only one in a thousand is educated beyond the secondary stage. The statistics are grimmest in

former communist countries, where most Gypsies live. For instance, of the 20,000-odd Gypsy children of secondary-education age in Montenegro, only three (yes, three) go to school. But it is not much better inside the EU. In Greece, 80% of Gypsies are illiterate.

There are at least 6m Gypsies, or Roma, in Europe, of whom more than two-fifths are children. Keeping them at school is the key to lifting their community out of the third world. Classroom apartheid and the illiteracy it breeds will not end quickly, not least because traditional Gypsy parents reject assimilation.

But there are some hopeful signs. New pre-school programmes in several countries, notably the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia, now help Romany-speaking tots to learn the main language of the country in which they live before starting primary school, so saving them from the special schools and a life of - at best - menial labour. The recruitment of teaching assistants who are themselves Gypsies has done wonders in some schools, as they nurture and cajole the children. Extra money for meals at school has helped malnourished children concentrate on their studies. New curriculums that give the Gypsies' own culture a fair wind have engaged the imaginations of children who might otherwise have dropped out. And for the few who do manage to finish secondary school, new university scholarships are on offer. Still, successful programmes tend to be on a small scale and run by private groups. The trick will be getting governments to adopt them.

Boarding school is one radical idea. NGOs and Gypsy leaders are queasy about separating children from their parents, no matter how abject their home life. But the most successful Gypsy schools are boarding ones, such as the partly state-financed Gandhi College in the Hungarian town of Pecs. Its 200 pupils are from southern Hungary. Some of them do go on to university and in time, the school hopes, will provide the embryo of a Gypsy intelligentsia.

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### **Europe urged to combat Roma "classroom apartheid" BUDAPEST, Nov 28 (Reuters)**

A leading charity, backed by the United Nations and financier George Soros, urged governments on Wednesday to do more to tackle rampant discrimination in schools against Europe's three million Roma, or gypsy, children.

Educational segregation of Europe's biggest ethnic minority is moving up the political agenda as it touches on human rights, racism and the European Union's planned enlargement into central and eastern Europe, home to millions of Roma.

British-based Save the Children said around one million Roma children in Europe never go to school. Another million are misplaced in special schools for the mentally disabled. Of the million who attend school, most quit early due to bullying.

"The need for change is urgent," according to a new report, "Denied a Future?", published by the charity on Wednesday.

It said the Roma population was younger than the European average and was rising fast.

It warned that unless schooling was made a priority, Roma would be denied other civil rights, their communities would suffer and Europe's social cohesion would be threatened.

"Governments must take a lead in improving education for Roma children and stop what amounts to classroom apartheid," Save the Children Director-General Mike Aaronson told a news conference in the Hungarian capital.

"The treatment of the Roma is Europe's most pressing unresolved human rights and minorities issue," Hungarian-born Soros said in a video-taped address at the report's launch.

The report, which focused on Roma education in 14 EU and central European countries, said the problem was as bad, and the issues the same, in Western Europe as in the East.

The charity urged governments to do more than just throw money at the problem -- although some 90 percent of existing schooling projects are funded by non-governmental organisations.

"Schooling for Roma is not yet mainstreamed, not yet part of the state education system. Governments have to make that happen," said the report's author, Maria Andruszkiewicz.

According to the report, only around half the Roma children in Western Europe go to school and are often segregated.

In central Europe, many young Roma are put in schools for the mentally retarded, partly a legacy of decades of communist rule, the charity said.

Illiteracy among young Roma is high, fuelling unemployment and poverty and doing little to fight widespread discrimination.

## Appendix 4

### Recommendation No R (2000) 4 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the education of Roma/Gypsy children in Europe

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers  
on 3 February 2000  
at the 696<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve greater unity between its members and that this aim may be pursued, in particular, through common action in the field of education;

Recognising that there is an urgent need to build new foundations for future educational strategies toward the Roma/Gypsy people in Europe, particularly in view of the high rates of illiteracy or semi-literacy among them, their high drop-out rate, the low percentage of students completing primary education and the persistence of features such as low school attendance;

Noting that the problems faced by Roma/Gypsies in the field of schooling are largely the result of long-standing educational policies of the past, which led either to assimilation or to segregation of Roma/Gypsy children at school on the grounds that they were "socially and culturally handicapped";

Considering that the disadvantaged position of Roma/Gypsies in European societies cannot be overcome unless equality of opportunity in the field of education is guaranteed for Roma/Gypsy children;

Considering that the education of Roma/Gypsy children should be a priority in national policies in favour of Roma/Gypsies;

Bearing in mind that policies aimed at addressing the problems faced by Roma/Gypsies in the field of education should be comprehensive, based on an acknowledgement that the issue of schooling for Roma/Gypsy children is linked with a wide range of other factors and pre-conditions, namely the economic, social and cultural aspects, and the fight against racism and discrimination;

Bearing in mind that educational policies in favour of Roma/Gypsy children should be backed up by an active adult education and vocational education policy;

Considering that, as there is a text concerning the education of Roma/Gypsy children for member states of the European Union (Resolution of the Council and of the Ministers of

Education meeting with the Council on School Provision for Gypsy and Traveller Children, of 22 May 1989; 89/C 153/02), it is urgently necessary to have a text covering all of the member states of the Council of Europe;

Bearing in mind the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages;

Bearing in mind Recommendations 563 (1969) and 1203 (1993) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in which mention is made of the educational needs of Roma/Gypsies in Europe;

Bearing in mind Resolutions 125 (1981), 16 (1995) and 249 (1993) and Recommendation 11 (1995) of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe on the situation of Roma/Gypsies in Europe;

Bearing in mind General Policy Recommendation No. 3 of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on "Combating racism and discrimination against Roma/Gypsies in Europe";

Bearing in mind the work carried out by the Council for Cultural Co-operation (CDCC) to respond to Resolution 125 (1981), and in particular, the publication of the report "Gypsies and Travellers" (1985), updated in 1994 ("Roma, Gypsies, Travellers", Council of Europe Publishing);

Having welcomed the memorandum prepared by the Specialist Group on Roma/Gypsies entitled "Roma Children Education Policy Paper: Strategic Elements of Education Policy for Roma Children in Europe" (MG-S-ROM (97) 11),

Recommends that in implementing their education policies the governments of the member states:

- be guided by the principles set out in the appendix to this Recommendation;
- bring this Recommendation to the attention of the relevant public bodies in their respective countries through the appropriate national channels.

#### **[Appendix to Recommendation No. R \(2000\) 4](#)**

Guiding principles of an education policy for Roma/Gypsy children in Europe

#### **I. Structures**

1. Educational policies for Roma/Gypsy children should be accompanied by adequate resources and the flexible structures necessary to meet the diversity of the Roma/Gypsy population in Europe and which take into account the existence of Roma/Gypsy groups which lead an itinerant or semi-itinerant lifestyle. In this respect, it might be envisaged having recourse to distance education, based on new communication technologies.

2. Emphasis should be put on the need to better co-ordinate the international, national, regional and local levels in order to avoid dispersion of efforts and to promote synergies.

3. To this end member states should make the Ministries of Education sensitive to the question of education of Roma/Gypsy children.

4. In order to secure access to school for Roma/Gypsy children, pre-school education schemes should be widely developed and made accessible to them.
5. Particular attention should also be paid to the need to ensure better communication with parents, where necessary using mediators from the Roma/Gypsy community which could then lead to specific career possibilities. Special information and advice should be given to parents about the necessity of education and about the support mechanisms that municipalities can offer families. There has to be mutual understanding between parents and schools. The parents' exclusion and lack of knowledge and education (even illiteracy) also prevent children from benefiting from the education system.
6. Appropriate support structures should be set up in order to enable Roma/Gypsy children to benefit, in particular through positive action, from equal opportunities at school.
7. The member states are invited to provide the necessary means to implement the above-mentioned policies and arrangements in order to close the gap between Roma/Gypsy pupils and majority pupils.

## **II. Curriculum and teaching material**

8. Educational policies in favour of Roma/Gypsy children should be implemented in the framework of broader intercultural policies, taking into account the particular features of the Romani culture and the disadvantaged position of many Roma/Gypsies in the member states.
9. The curriculum, on the whole, and the teaching material should therefore be designed so as to take into account the cultural identity of Roma/Gypsy children. Romani history and culture should be introduced in the teaching material in order to reflect the cultural identity of Roma/Gypsy children. The participation of representatives of the Roma/Gypsy community should be encouraged in the development of teaching material on the history, culture or language of the Roma/Gypsies.
10. However, the member states should ensure that this does not lead to the establishment of separate curricula, which might lead to the setting up of separate classes.
11. The member states should also encourage the development of teaching material based on good practices in order to assist teachers in their daily work with Roma/Gypsy pupils.
12. In the countries where the Romani language is spoken, opportunities to learn in the mother tongue should be offered at school to Roma/Gypsy children.

## **III. Recruitment and training of teachers**

13. It is important that future teachers should be provided with specific knowledge and training to help them understand better their Roma/Gypsy pupils. The education of Roma/Gypsy pupils should however remain an integral part of the general educational system.
14. The Roma/Gypsy community should be involved in the designing of such curricula and should be directly involved in the delivery of information to future teachers.

15. Support should also be given to the training and recruitment of teachers from within the Roma/Gypsy community.

#### **IV. Information research and assessment**

16. The member states should encourage innovative research/small-scale action projects in order to find local responses to local needs. The results of such projects should be disseminated.

17. The results of educational policies for Roma/Gypsy pupils should be carefully monitored. All the participants involved in the education of Roma/Gypsy children (school authorities, teachers, parents, non-governmental organisations) should be invited to take part in the monitoring process.

18. The evaluation of the results of educational policies towards Roma/Gypsy children should take account of many criteria, including personal and social development, and not be limited to estimates of school attendance and drop-out rates.

#### **V. Consultation and co-ordination**

19. The involvement of all parties concerned (ministry of education, school authorities, Roma families and organisations) in the design, implementation and monitoring of education policies for Roma/Gypsies should be promoted by the state.

20. Use should also be made of mediators from within the Roma/Gypsy community, in particular to ease the contacts between Roma/Gypsies, the majority population and schools and to avoid conflicts at school; this should apply to all levels of schooling.

21. The Ministries of Education, in the framework of the awareness-raising action mentioned in point I, paragraph 3, above should facilitate the co-ordination of the efforts of the different parties involved and permit the channelling of information between the different levels of education authorities.

22. Member states should further encourage and support the exchange of experience and good practice.