

The Roma Education Resource Book

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The Roma Education Resource Book

OVERVIEWS AND POLICY ISSUES

METHODS AND PRACTICE

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Edited by
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Foreword

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Dear Reader,

The Institute for Educational Policy and the OSI Educational Sub-Board have continued to place importance on educational equity, generally, and the education of Roma pupils, specifically, within the Soros Foundation Network's agenda.

Information is knowledge and knowledge is power. Learning is essential for understanding issues, and for us as a community to collectively work at overcoming inequities in systems of education that disfavor specific minority groups.

Thus, IEP has continued to search and compile articles that will help us learn, that will lead the way to finding solutions, and that may enlighten us a bit more from what we do not know.

Share the contents of this book with interested people. Be creative in its use.

Read, enjoy and learn!

IEP

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Overviews and Policy Issues

Education of the Roma in Central and Eastern Europe: Trends and Challenges

By Dena Ringold, The World Bank, Washington D.C.

Source: This paper is a revised version of a paper presented at the European Regional Education For All Conference, Warsaw, Poland, February 7, 2000. It is excerpted from a larger report on Roma published by the World Bank, Roma and the Transition in Central and Eastern Europe (Ringold, 2000).

I. Introduction and Background

Roma, or ‘gypsies,’ are a unique minority in Europe. Unlike other groups, Roma have no historical homeland and are found in nearly all countries in Europe and Central Asia. Historical documents and legends trace Roma origins to northern India, and records indicate that they came to Europe in waves of migration between the ninth and fourteenth centuries (Crowe, 1996). Increasing evidence suggests that Roma in Central and Eastern Europe have disproportionately suffered the adverse affects of the transition from socialism.¹ Roma workers were frequently among the first to lose their jobs at the outset of restructuring and, for various reasons, including low educational status, have faced significant barriers to reentering the labor force and increasing impoverishment.

¹ In this report, “Central and Eastern Europe” refers to the transition countries which were not part of the USSR.

Despite these developments, information on living conditions among Roma and the challenges they face is scarce and frequently anecdotal. Recent poverty assessments by the World Bank and others, indicate that Roma are over represented among the poorest households. As an example, analysis of a 1997 household survey in Bulgaria found over 84 percent to be Roma were living below the poverty line—in comparison with the national poverty rate of 36 percent (World Bank, 1999a).² Similarly striking, data for Hungary found that one-third of the long-term poor (households which were poor four or more times between 1992-97) were Roma, although they comprise about only 5 percent of the population (World Bank, 2000b).³

² Based on a poverty line of two-thirds mean per capita expenditures.

³ Based on a poverty line of one-half mean per capita income.

⁴ For example, education was identified as a priority policy area in the recent report of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities.

These findings, alongside a growing body of qualitative evidence of deteriorating living conditions, have raised attention within countries and among the international community. A key issue which is emphasized repeatedly is that of education among the Roma.⁴ Evidence of low and declining levels of education among Roma children is a serious development with clear future implications. Lack of access to education jeopardizes future labor market opportunities and the ability of individuals to move, and remain out of poverty.

This paper seeks to bring together the available quantitative evidence from secondary sources and household surveys to assess the extent of the access problem among the Roma, and to identify possible constraints and policy options. It also draws upon evidence from three recent qualitative studies of living conditions among Roma communities in Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary. Section II of the paper discusses these data sources in more detail; Section III discusses the demographic context and different estimates of the size of the Roma community; Section IV presents the evidence on educational status and access; Section V explores constraints to access; and finally, Section VI examines some preliminary lessons for policy. This paper is part of an on-going research initiative on Roma by the World Bank. Subsequent phases of the work will look further in depth at the range of programs and policies of governments and NGOs in this area, with the objective of distilling more concrete lessons and policy directions than are provided here.

II. Methodology and Measurement Constraints

Data on human development status in the transition countries of Central and Eastern Europe are plagued with problems and pitfalls. However, these issues appear almost insignificant in comparison with the challenge of measuring developments among the Roma. Seemingly straightforward questions, such as estimating the size of the population within a country, prove extremely challenging. Household surveys and censuses often do not distinguish respondents by ethnicity,⁵ and even when ethnicity is included, a range of issues arise, including undersampling of areas where Roma are likely to reside, difficulties in locating and identifying populations which may not be officially registered, and problems with self-reporting. Roma may opt not to self-identify for various reasons, such as fear of discrimination (Druker, 1997; Liebich, 1992).⁶

⁵ A recent review of World Bank Living Standards Measurement Surveys (LSMS) datasets for countries in Europe and Central Asia found that only two out of nine surveys distinguished respondents by ethnicity.

⁶ These issues are common to the analysis of ethnic minorities in general. See, for example, Psacharopoulos and Patrinos, 1994.

Different approaches among surveys frequently yield contrasting results and impede comparability of data. For example, some household surveys ask respondents to identify their ethnicity, while others ask the interviewer to indicate the ethnicity, still others determine ethnicity by asking about the respondent's native language. The latter approach may underestimate results for Roma, as many do not speak Roma dialects. Still other obstacles exist to the analysis of administrative data, such as education and labor market statistics. In recent years, a number of countries have stopped collecting data by ethnicity for privacy reasons. For example, Czechoslovakia stopped collecting data on students by ethnicity in 1990, and Hungary in the 1993 school year (ERRC, 1999; Rado, 1997).

Yet another unique challenge of research on Roma is the legacy of biased research. A number of early studies of the Roma in the late nineteenth century in western European countries were racially motivated and sought to confirm theories about genetic inferiority (Fraser, 1995). A review of work on Roma health in the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic found more recent works with a social Darwinist and racially biased slant (ECOHST, 2000). More recently, scholarship on Roma may suffer from the political nature of the issue. Roma leaders and activists have an interest in portraying the situation as worse than it may actually be, while on the other hand, government reports may gloss over issues and present a more favorable picture (Barany, 2000).

Analysis of ethnic minorities is a challenging task, which raises fundamental questions about ethnicity and identity. Some Roma may not consider themselves Roma or may affiliate with a different ethnic group. An ethnic Roma living in Hungary may feel more Hungarian than Roma, or vice-versa. For the purposes of this paper, Roma are defined broadly to include those who identify themselves as Roma, and those who are identified by others as Roma. This is both because of the collection of data sources used, and because of the policy focus of this paper—if policies impact ethnic minorities, they may do so regardless of personal identity.

A further caveat is warranted regarding the difficulty of drawing conclusions about Roma in general. The diversity of the 'community' is a distinguishing feature, which impedes generalizations at the regional and country level. There are numerous different groups and sub-groups of Roma. Researchers have identified 60 different groups in Bulgaria. In contrast, there are three main groups in Hungary. In addition to these ethnic differences, there is significant diversity among Roma settlements: rural/urban, assimilated/non-assimilated, homogenous/heterogeneous, as well as affiliations with different religious denominations. Some groups speak variations of the Roma language, others do not, and so forth. For analytical purposes, this report assumes some commonalities across countries and groups, but conclusions are necessarily tentative.

As this report relies on a patchwork of data sources, including data calculated directly from household surveys, administrative data, results reported from other surveys cited in the literature, and original qualitative research, the reader should proceed with caution. Many of the results may not be comparable across countries because of differing methodologies.

Box 1: Recent Qualitative Studies

In order to get a more complete picture of living conditions and issues facing Roma communities in the region, the World Bank supported three independent studies conducted by local researchers in Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary in 1999. The studies focus on case studies of Roma settlements and, in the case of the Hungary study, schools. The following briefly describes the studies, their scope, objectives and methods.

Romania, 9 Case Studies (team leader, C. Rugbinis): This study was undertaken in conjunction with a larger study of social service delivery at the local level in Romania. It aimed to assess the human development issues facing different types of Roma communities, and the capacity of local governments and social service providers (health, education and social assistance cash benefits and services) to address these needs. In-depth interviews were conducted with Roma, social service professionals, local government officials and other key informants such as NGO project managers and religious leaders. The case studies were done in settlements in six districts: Bucharest, Tulcea, Vaslui, Covasna, Hunedoara and Timis. Sites were selected to represent diverse types of settlements including: rural/urban environments, differences in Roma subgroups (Rudari/Lingurari, Caldarari, Spoitori, Ursari, etc.), integrated and non-integrated communities, relations with other ethnic minorities (e.g. Hungarians), and areas with a high/low degree of NGO activity.

Bulgaria, 6 Case Studies (team leader, I. Tomova): Similar to the Romania study, the work in Bulgaria was done in tandem with a larger study on the impact of fiscal decentralization on social services (health, education and social assistance cash transfers). The study relied on in-depth interviews and focus groups with Roma, service providers, local officials and NGO leaders. In addition, the researchers conducted a quantitative survey of 831 Roma households. The case studies were conducted in three districts: Sofia Region, Sliven and Kardzhali. Individual sites were selected to reflect a diverse mix of characteristics including: rural/urban environments, ethnic diversity (e.g. Roma sub-groups and presence of other minorities including Bulgarian Turks and Pomaks, socioeconomic characteristics (e.g. areas impacted by economic restructuring), and local government capacity.

Hungary, Evaluation of Alternative Secondary Schools (team leader, E. Orsos): This study aimed to evaluate the experience of six recently established secondary schools for Roma students in Hungary. Although differing significantly in approach and organization, the schools all aim to assist Roma students in successfully completing secondary school and continuing on to further education and employment. Quantitative data were collected for all institutions, and in depth interviews were conducted with school directors, teachers, parents and students.

III. Population and Demographic Trends

Seeming straightforward questions, such as estimating the size of the Roma population are quite difficult and controversial. Estimates from different sources vary widely (table 1). The most frequently cited numbers are those of Jean-Pierre Liegeois, which are based upon the estimates of local experts, such as Roma community leaders and local government officials. From 7 to 9 million Roma are thought to live throughout the countries of Europe, with over two-thirds of the group living in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Because of data constraints, this paper focuses on five countries of Central and Eastern Europe: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, and the Slovak Republic.

Table 1: Roma Population, 1991-94 (thousands)

Country	Roma Population	Total Population	% of Roma
Albania	95	3,421	2.8
Bosnia	45	4,383	1.0
Bulgaria	750	8,459	8.9
Croatia	35	4,788	0.7
Czech Republic	275	10,323	2.7
Hungary	575	10,280	5.6
FYR Macedonia	240	2,191	10.9
Poland	45	38,446	0.1
Romania	2,150	22,761	9.4
the Slovak Republic	480	5,345	9.4
Slovenia	10	1,993	0.4
Turkey	400	59,461	0.7
FR Yugoslavia	425	10,675	4.0

Sources: Wheeler, 1999, from Roma population estimates; Liegeois, J-P., Roma, Gypsies, Travelers Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 1994. P. 34. Total population data: World Bank Atlas, 1995.

Notes: Roma population estimates are midpoints of ranges.

Census data are hotly disputed and generally found to underestimate significantly the Roma population. As an example, the 1992 census in Bulgaria estimated the population at 313,326, while generally accepted figures (based upon Liegeois surveys) range from 500,000-800,000. Similarly, the 1992 census in Romania put the population at 400,000 while current estimates are between 1,410,000-2,500,000.

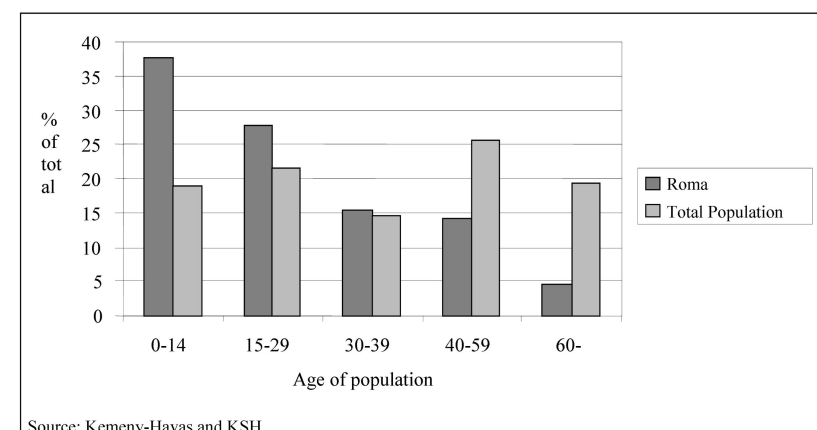
Due to the issues discussed previously, census data are controversial and generally thought to underestimate significantly the Roma population. Attempts to measure the population through household surveys are similarly problematic. The share of individuals identifying as Roma in the surveys is significantly less than conventionally accepted estimates. For example, in the household surveys for Romania, which are based upon a nationally representative sample, only about 2 percent of the population identifies as Roma, while the share of Roma in the total population is thought to be nearly 10 percent. The survey addresses ethnicity in two ways: first, through a direct question on nationality, and second, by asking the interviewee's native language. The share identifying as Roma in both questions has been consistent each year in the survey. Similar problems are found with the surveys for Bulgaria and Hungary used for this report.

Because of historical factors and the great variations in types of Roma communities (e.g. assimilated/isolated, rural/urban), settlement patterns of Roma within countries vary widely. Populations are unevenly distributed across regions. In Hungary, the greatest share of the Roma population live in the North, East and South-Transdanubia regions (Kemeny and Havas, 1994). In the Czech Republic the majority are in northern Moravia, especially in the Ostrava region, Prague, North, South and Western Bohemia, and around Brno. In the Slovak Republic most Roma live in Eastern Slovakia (ECOHST, 2000).

Fertility and demographic trends

Demographic patterns among Roma provide a striking contrast to that of non-Roma populations in the region. Because of higher birth rates and lower life expectancy, the Roma community is significantly younger than other population groups. Data for Hungary illustrate this phenomenon. In 1993, 39 percent of the Roma population was under 14 years old, while only 19 percent of the total population fell into this age group (figure 1). In contrast, 19 percent of the total population was over 60, while only 5 percent of Roma fell into this category. Birth rates among Roma are much higher than those of other groups. The same study of Hungary found that birth rates for Roma were 32, in contrast with 15 for the rest of the country (Kemeny, 1994).

Figure 1: Hungary, Population by Age, 1993



Evidence on demographic trends for Roma during the transition period is mixed. While overall fertility has declined significantly in Central and Eastern Europe, it is not clear whether this holds true for the Roma population as well. Evidence from Hungary suggests that fertility has dropped in some Roma communities (Puporka and Zadori, 1999), while the qualitative study in Bulgaria found that birth rates were increasing among the poorer subgroups of Roma (Tomova, 2000). Despite these contrasting messages, the available data suggest that regardless of declining trends, Roma families remain larger than other groups.

These developments require close monitoring for education policy to ensure that the demand for education among Roma communities is met. Dramatic demographic trends have led countries to review the availability of schools and teachers within their education systems. For example, in Bulgaria, which has experienced the largest drop in fertility rates of any country in the region during the transition period, the Ministry of Education is assessing the supply of school facilities and teachers across the country. As the system is characterized by an oversupply of facilities and personnel, this will likely lead to necessary school closures. However, the selection of schools to be closed requires careful consideration because of the differing age structures of communities.

IV. Education Status

Education status of Roma has historically been low across Europe. While significant gains were made in enrolling children during the socialist era, the gap in the educational attainment of Roma and the rest of the population was not bridged in any of the countries for which data are available. Limited evidence suggests that access has eroded during the transition period, and children of basic school age are increasingly not starting or finishing school. These trends are consistent with national level developments in enrollments, however, data suggest that the decline in access among Roma has been deeper than for the rest of the population (UNICEF, 1998).

Access in the socialist era

Gaps in access to education among the Roma are not a new phenomenon. It was not until the socialist regimes took over in Central and Eastern Europe following World War II, that large numbers of Roma began to participate in public compulsory education. Across the region, the socialist governments made a concerted effort to integrate and assimilate Roma into mainstream society. Communist parties issued decrees and adopted policies which aimed at providing basic services, including housing and jobs for Roma. Education was a key element of these campaigns, and was viewed as an instrument of political and economic socialization which would facilitate the integration of the Roma into the full employment state.

For example, an assimilation campaign undertaken in Czechoslovakia in 1971 sought to combat illiteracy and increase school attendance. This effort increased the enrollment rate in kindergartens from 10 percent to 59 percent by 1980. At the same time, the share of Roma finishing compulsory education increased from 17 to 26 percent and literacy rates rose to 90 percent among adults. Similarly, in 1983 the Romanian Communist Party instructed the Ministry of Education to undertake an aggressive campaign to promote attendance among the Roma. Parallel campaigns were launched in Hungary and Bulgaria in the 1960s (Crowe, 1996).

Despite the achievements in reducing literacy and increasing school participation, the efforts undertaken during the socialist era laid the foundation for inequities in education quality which have persisted in the post-socialist period. In many cases, Roma were channeled into segregated schools outside of the mainstream system, which were intended for children with mental and physical disabilities. For example, the education campaign initiated in Hungary in the 1960's focussed on creating "special classes...within the national school system for retarded or difficult children." This led to a disproportionate number of

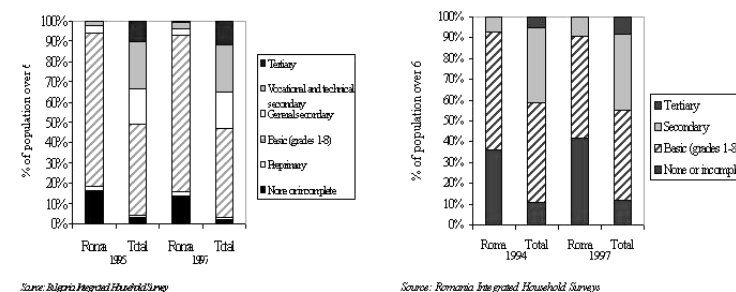
Roma enrolled in special classes in schools. Estimates suggest that in the 1970s 15 percent of Roma school children were in schools for the handicapped. Similar developments are reported for children in Czechoslovakia (Crowe, 1996). The practice of enrolling Roma in special schools has continued following the transition and will be discussed further below.

Educational attainment in the transition period

Gaps in education status persist in the transition period and are most evident in analysis of the educational levels of the population. Comparable surveys conducted in Hungary in 1971 and 1993 illustrate trends. In 1971, about 26 percent of Roma aged 20-29 had finished 8 years of primary school, this had increased to over 77 percent by 1993 (Kemeny, Havas, Kertesi, 1994). Despite these achievements, educational attainment of Roma lagged significantly behind the non-Roma population, with Roma much less likely to continue on to secondary and post-secondary education than the rest of the population.

Household surveys for Bulgaria and Romania highlight a similar situation (figures 2 and 3). Although the data are not directly comparable between the countries because of differences in the definition of education levels, they do illustrate common patterns. In both countries, the share of Roma who do not attend school is much higher than that of the total population, and the share of the Roma who continue education beyond the compulsory basic education cycle is dramatically lower than the rest of the population. In Bulgaria only 6 percent of Roma had completed secondary education, in comparison with 40 percent of the total population. In both countries, the numbers of Roma who had completed university education was miniscule. Only two individuals sampled in the 1997 survey had completed university in Romania and 3 in the Bulgaria surveys. Trends at the secondary and post-secondary level reflect the legacy of socialist era policies, as students completing the secondary cycle in 1997 entered school at the end of the 1980s.

Figures 2 and 3: Bulgaria and Romania, Highest Level of Education Attained (% of population group)



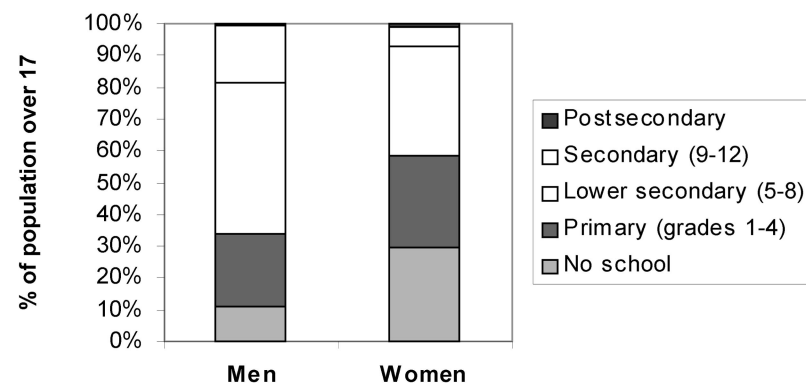
It is not surprising that education levels vary notably within countries, between urban and rural areas, and across different types of Roma communities. In Hungary, for example, the 1993 survey mentioned above found that the share of Roma who had not completed primary education was 16 percent in Budapest, 24 percent in towns and 27 percent in villages, reflecting the different types of constraints to access in each of the areas (Puporka and Zadori, 1999).

Differences between types of Roma are also important. For example, the same survey found that the share of Roma with less than basic education was 23 percent for the Romungro Roma, whose native language is Hungarian, 42 percent for the Bayash, native language Romanian, and 48 percent for the Wallach Romas whose native language is Roma (Puporka and Zadori, 1999). A similar finding of variation across sub-groups was noted in Bulgaria. For example, Roma from the Dzhorevtsi sub-group who are descendants of mixed marriages of Bulgarians and Roma generally have higher education levels than other groups (Tomova, 2000).

Information on educational attainment by gender is scarce and patterns are not clear. Results from a 1998 survey in Romania indicated lower levels of education for women than for men (Rughinis, 2000). Women were less likely to have gone on to secondary school and university than men. The qualitative study for Bulgaria, conducted in 8 settlements in the country illustrated a similar pattern, women were much less likely to have gone to school—29 percent had never gone to school or had dropped out before finishing grade 4, in comparison with 11 percent of men—and were also less likely to have continued on to upper secondary school (figure 4).⁷ Evidence from qualitative studies suggests that girls drop out of school earlier than boys because of early marriage and child birth.

⁷ Based on a survey of 831 households in 8 Roma settlements: Sofia (Christo Botev neighborhood), Doganovo, Sliven (2 urban communities), Gorno Alexandrovo, Topolchane, Sotirya, and Kardzhali.

Figure 4: Bulgaria: Educational Attainment of Roma by Gender in 8 Settlements



Source: Tomova, 2000

Low education levels among Roma reflect problems of access to education. There have been increasing reports of declining school attendance among Roma children during the transition and this is reflected in the available data. While the education structure of the total population did not change significantly over the two survey years in Romania, for Roma the share of the population that had not completed basic school education grew from 36 percent in 1994 to 44 percent in 1998. This development reflects decreasing trends in school participation among school age children, as the economic constraints to school attendance among Roma children have grown during the transition period. The barriers to school attendance are discussed further in the next chapter. Time series data on attendance are not available for Romania between the two years, but 1994 data on attendance highlight the gap between the Roma and the rest of the population. 41 percent of Roma children age 7-14 were not attending school, in contrast with 7 percent for the whole population.

Pre-primary attendance may have been most significantly affected during the transition period. In general, pre-school and kindergarten enrollment rates have fallen across the region, as state subsidies for schools connected to enterprises were withdrawn and fees were introduced (UNICEF, 1998). Growing costs have discouraged parents from sending children to school. Data for the Slovak Republic highlight the deterioration, in 1990 80 percent of Roma children aged 3-6 attended pre-school. This dropped by 60 percent in the 1991 school year, and by 1997 less than 20 percent of Roma children were thought to attend (Slovak Ministry of Labor, 1997). In Hungary, where pre-school is compulsory for all children at age 5, 11 percent of Roma did not attend school in 1997 (Rado, 1997). This is a serious development, as children who do not start preschool are less likely to attend primary school, and may have more difficulty remaining in school. For Roma children, these issues are compounded by the fact that many do not speak the national language at home and, as a result, begin primary school at a disadvantage.

As illustrated in the breakdown of the educational status of the population, the gulf between levels of education is wider for Roma than non-Roma, indicating the challenges of moving from one level of education to the other. Limited evidence suggests that drop-out rates have been increasing during the transition period, and disproportionately for Roma children (UNICEF, 1998). Informal estimates for Bulgaria suggest that most of the 45,000 students who drop out of school each year are Roma.

Drop-outs are most common at the 'breaking points' in the school cycle, when students transfer schools, or when the educational cycle changes. The figures for Hungary illustrate this. While in 1995 62 percent of students continued from primary to secondary school, only 9 percent of Roma did so (Rado, 1997). Findings from the qualitative study for Romania found

that the share of Roma students in school dropped significantly after fourth grade, when students have more subjects and teachers. For grades 1-4, with few exceptions students have one teacher for all classes, beginning in the fifth grade, students have a distinct teacher for each class and face a larger number of requirements. Related to this, the study found that the number of students repeating the fourth grade was higher than for other years (Rughinis, 2000).

Gaps in the education of Roma are not unique to Central and Eastern Europe. Schooling levels for Roma in Western European countries are lower than for other groups, although limited data are available. In Spain, which has the largest Roma (gitano) population in Western Europe, illiteracy among Roma is estimated at 50 percent for 2000. Enrollments in compulsory primary education have increased notably since 1990, however data indicate significantly lower performance. In 1992, 35 percent of Roma completed primary education on time, 51 percent failed a grade and 14 percent failed two or more grades (Martin, 2000). As a result, Roma are less likely to continue on to secondary school or university. Similar patterns of low attainment are found in other Western European countries (OSCE, 2000).

V. Constraints to Access

Declining access to education among Roma can be explained by a range of complementary and contrasting factors, including economic developments, sociological aspects and characteristics of the education systems at large. Many of these issues are difficult to measure and assess, and additional research is needed to understand their relative impact on Roma. In this section both the factors that constrain physical access to school, and those which impact access to quality education for Roma are discussed.

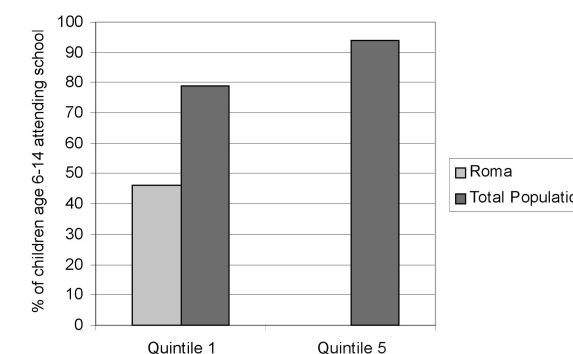
Poverty and Education

There is a close link between education and the risk of poverty in Central and Eastern Europe. Households headed by university graduates are much less likely to end up in poverty than others, while those with primary and narrow vocational training are at higher risk (World Bank, 2000a). Poverty affects both children's prospects of attending school and their performance. Children from poor families are more likely not to attend, or to drop out of school than other children for a range of reasons, including: financial and opportunity costs, imperfect information about the benefits of education, limited choice and poor quality of educational services, substandard housing conditions at home that im-

pede learning and studying, and poor health status. Data from the 1997 Bulgaria household survey showed that enrollment rates for children in the bottom household expenditure quintile of the population were significantly lower than those in the top quintile (figure 5). Enrollments for Roma children were 33 percentage points lower than the total population. No Roma were represented in the top expenditure quintile.⁸

⁸ Because of the problems of measuring income, expenditure data were used for the poverty analysis (World Bank, 2000b).

Figure 5: Bulgaria 1997, Enrollment Rates by Quintile



Source: BIHS, 1997

The economic context of the transition has increased the cost to families of sending children to school. The increasing prevalence of both official and unofficial fees for education has threatened the ability of families to send their children to school. While public education is ostensibly free throughout the region, severe fiscal crises and subsequent reform efforts have led to the introduction of fees for non-compulsory education (e.g. pre-primary and tertiary), as well as charges for school-related expenses such as textbooks, school meals, uniforms and student activities. Unofficial charges have also become more common, including charges levied by parent-teacher organizations, and informal payments to teachers for private tutoring (Vandycke, 2000).

These developments have the greatest impact on poor families, who are ill-positioned to pay for additional school related expenses, as well as basic necessities such as clothing and food. Growing costs, particularly charges for preschool, may deter parents from sending their children to school in the first place, while recurrent expenses may lead older children to withdraw from attendance. Results from the qualitative fieldwork in Romania and Bulgaria found that Roma families had difficulty locating the necessary resources. Interviews found that parents were most pressed to provide their children with clothing, particularly shoes, which were not as readily available second-hand as clothes, and food.

"After the winter comes, we won't send them any more—we don't have clothing and shoes...There is no food also. And the children wouldn't stay: if we bring them, they stay one hour and then they come running home, because they are hungry." Interview with a woman in Covasna County, Romania.

Even if poor children are able to attend school, incidental charges may keep them from participating fully in school activities, such as electives, and the quality of their educational experience may be lower than that of other children (Rado, 1997).

As household incomes have fallen, the opportunity costs of sending children to school have risen. Families may require children to work, either in the home or outside in the informal sector. The extent of this phenomenon among Roma households is not known, but there are many reports of children dropping out of school in order to work. Because of large families, Roma girls may stay home to take care of children and other household chores, while in rural areas children may work in agriculture, or other common income-generating activities such as gathering and selling scrap metals and herbs. Children work most frequently in the informal sector and as a result may engage in illegal or dangerous employment. Interviews with principals in Bulgaria suggested that many children dropped out of school after completing basic education, in order to work (Tomova, 1998).

Parents' education levels play an important role in children's school attendance and performance (UNICEF, 1997; Vandycke, 2000). In this regard, Roma are at a greater disadvantage because of the gaps in educational attainment. This factor may affect school attendance in different ways. Parents with limited education will be unable to help their children with school work in the same way that parents of other children can. In the Romania qualitative study, teachers reported that Roma children performed poorly because they did not do homework (Rughinis, 2000). Parents may also be less likely to participate in school related activities, such as parent-teacher committees. As a result, the communication between teachers and parents may be less frequent.

The dismal labor market situation for many Roma may lead them to discourage their children from school attendance. As discussed above, transition had an immediate impact on labor markets, as the collapse of socialism led to the dissolution of state-guaranteed employment. The extent of restructuring led to widespread unemployment in many Roma communities and, given the lack of alternative opportunities, many are long-term unemployed and have dropped out of the labor force. Children may be discouraged from attending school if the value of education for employment and mobility is not perceived.

"What can they become? It is now as it was before, when they could become something? Nothing—they would pull the hoe, what else? May they learn well...they will work the land." Mother of four in Vaslui County, Romania.

High levels of participation in the informal sector by Roma may also affect school enrollments. A school director in Bulgaria noted that many Roma were working as migrant workers, or travelling for trade:

"Parents are either unemployed or migrant workers and in such cases all their efforts are directed towards the immediate survival of the family instead of towards the education of their children, which are often left without any control. They travel everywhere. Some try to find seasonal jobs at the sea resorts—selling underwear, fruit and vegetables, and whatever one can think of; others work as musicians in pubs." School Director, Sliven, Bulgaria.

Cultural and Linguistic Factors

Negative stereotypes of Roma attitudes toward education are common. In the qualitative studies, interviews with teachers, education officials and non-Roma parents frequently expressed the sentiment that Roma are lazy and not interested in school. There is no evidence to suggest that these perceptions are true, and studies for Hungary suggest the contrary, that given a supportive environment Roma students are no less motivated than other students (Rado, 1997; Orsos, et al., 2000).

However, aspects of Roma social organization and culture do impact demand for education. For many Roma, education is the first and most direct encounter with the outside *gadje* (non-Roma) world. Many Roma parents may be protective and reluctant to send their children out of their family and community and fear assimilation (Gheorghe and Mirga, 1997). In particular, parents in rural areas where children have to travel outside their home village or settlement, may decide to keep their children at home. The traditional hierarchical organization of schooling may also differ significantly from Roma society. A sociologist noted that *"[s]trict timetables, immobility, group discipline, and obedience to a single authority figure all conflict with Gypsy emphasis on immediacy, flexibility and shared authority"* (UNICEF, 1992).

Because of low ages of marriage and childbirth among some Roma communities, girls face additional challenges to staying in school. A survey of Roma communities conducted in Bulgaria in 1994 found that 40 percent of Roma marry before age 16 and 80 percent before age 18. These findings were confirmed in more recent field work (Tomova, 1998; Tomova 2000). Similar results were found in the Romania case studies where informal, non-registered, marriages were found to be prevalent,

since many couples marry below the legal marriage age (16 for women and 18 for men). Related to this is the issue of early child birth, which makes it difficult for young mothers to stay in school.

Roma children starting school without full language proficiency are at a disadvantage relative to other students. In this regard, preschool education is a critical avenue for preparing Roma and other minority children for school. Preschool teachers in Slovenia noted that lack of familiarity with the Slovene language was common among Roma (Government of Slovenia, 1997). A school principal in Hungary commented, “to place somebody in the normal class without perfect kindergarten education would be like a competition between a Trabant and a Mercedes” (World Bank, 2000).

With the decline in preschool attendance, Roma children are likely to have additional difficulty integrating into mainstream schools. There are very few Roma teachers available to help children with language difficulties. As a result, students may be wrongly tracked into special schools and classes for children with learning disabilities and the mentally handicapped, or may become discouraged and drop out of school altogether.

Education Quality

Access to education is also directly affected by the quality of schooling, as students may be deterred from attending school if quality is low. Uneven education quality also impacts equity of education. There is evidence that the quality of education for Roma students is lower than that for the rest of the population. The following discusses aspects of education systems in the region which limit the quality of education for Roma including the prevalence of ‘special schools,’ the segregation of Roma students within the mainstream system, and inadequate teacher training and curriculum.

One of the most damaging legacies of the socialist era for the education of Roma is the tendency to channel children into ‘special schools’ for the mentally and physically handicapped. This policy had its roots in the socialist legacy of ‘defectology’ which assumed that differences among students were due to disability rather than environmental conditions, and as a result, should be addressed as medical problems in institutions separated from the rest of society (Ainscow and Memmenasha, 1998). The legacy of this practice has been the persistence of a parallel system of schools which provide lower quality education and fewer opportunities in post-basic education and the labor market than mainstream schools.

Evidence on this practice is most widespread for the Czech and the Slovak Republics and for Hungary. Data for the Czech Republic are striking, estimates for 1997 indicate that 64 percent of Roma children in primary school are in the special schools, in comparison with 4.2 percent for

the total population. In other words, Roma are fifteen times more likely to end up in special schools than the national average (ERRC, 1999). Similarly, in Hungary about half the number of students enrolled in special schools are Roma (Rado, 1997).

Regardless of the quality of teaching in special schools, students enrolled in these institutions are at a disadvantage. The curriculum is less rigorous and expectations are lower. A detailed report on the Czech schools notes that students in special schools receive fewer Czech language lessons per week, and are not expected to read for comprehension until the fourth year, in contrast with the first year for students in regular schools (box 2).

Opportunities for graduates of special schools are also limited. Even if children are able to overcome the low expectations enshrined in the curriculum, they are not allowed equal access to school leaving exams. In the Czech Republic, students leaving special schools are only allowed to enter technical secondary schools, which offer limited training in narrowly defined fields.⁹ Students are then dually challenged on the labor market, as employers look unfavorably upon graduates of special schools, and technical training fails to adequately prepare young people for the labor market.¹⁰

⁹ At the time of writing, the Czech Parliament was considering legislation which would allow graduates of special schools to continue in the mainstream school system.

¹⁰ See the World Bank Education Sector Strategy (World Bank, 1999b) for more on this issue.

There is growing recognition that the existence of special schools is a detrimental barrier to the integration and educational development of Roma children. However, the obstacles to change are notable. Not only does resistance to integration come from non-Roma parents and education officials who fear that increasing the share of Roma children in a classroom will lower the quality of education for non-Roma students, but opposition comes from Roma parents as well. Special schools can be attractive to poor Roma families for economic reasons, in that school meals and—for residential institutions—housing, are provided. In addition, special schools are viewed by some parents as safe havens in contrast with mainstream schools where discrimination by teachers and other students create a difficult environment.

Box 2: Entrance to Remedial Special Schools in the Czech Republic

Roma children end up in special schools for many reasons. A study of this process in the Czech Republic found that because of discrimination and the highly discretionary nature of the process, many more Roma children end up in special schools than the regulations should allow.

Children can be enrolled directly into special schools, or transferred from a regular basic school. By law, placement is based upon the recommendation of the school director in consultation with the parent and an educational psychologist. In some cases parental consent is not obtained, or is abused. Parents may not realize that they are authorizing their children to be shifted into a special school:

"My daughter is in the second year of basic school. She is doing alright. One day in November 1997 her teacher came to see me saying, 'We want to move her to another class which will be better for her.' He gave me a piece of paper to sign. I should have read it but it was long and I didn't think a teacher would try to cheat us, so I just signed it ... The next day I got a letter saying that my daughter had been moved to a remedial special school." Roma parent, Prague.

Educational psychologists play a pivotal role in determining whether children will be sent to special schools, they recommend students for examination and administer the exams. These procedures were found to be highly discretionary. In some cases children were even recommended for transfer without undergoing the required psychological exam. The tests themselves are problematic, psychologists may use a number of different instruments, many of which are culturally biased. An independent group of psychologists is currently working on a revised version of the test that will be more appropriate for Roma children, and plan to present it to the Czech Ministry of Education later this year.

Because of the widespread abuses that have been documented, parents of 18 Roma children from the Czech town of Ostrava initiated legal proceedings against the government last year. The Czech Constitutional Court ruled in favor of the government. An appeals process opened in April 2000 in front of the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. *Source: ERRC, 1999.*

Even where Roma children are kept within the mainstream school system, they often are separated into separate classes or schools. This is frequently related to geographic factors if Roma families are clustered in one part of a town. However, there is also evidence of further separation of Roma. For example, in Brno, the second largest city in the Czech Republic, there is a large Roma population in the eastern part of the city. There are eight basic schools serving the area and the majority of Roma children attend four of them. Within these four schools, Roma are frequently taught in remedial classes separated from non-Roma (ERRC, 1999). Similarly, fieldwork in Romania found situations in which non-Roma parents would request that their children be taught in classes without Roma students, and teachers would divide up classes to keep Roma separate (Lazaroïu and Lazaroïu, 2000).

"I cannot say that the school no. 102 is professionally worse or better than others. All I know is that the children are worse. I saw their behavior. That's why I ran away from 102, because all gypsies are there." Mother, Bucharest, Romania.

There was also evidence in the qualitative studies that schools with high concentrations of Roma children are ill equipped and understaffed, particularly in the poorest areas. A school director in Bulgaria noted that "schools with Roma pupils are looked upon as if they are step-children" (Tomova, 2000). Similar conditions were noted in Romania (Lazaroïu and Lazaroïu, 2000).

"The situation of schools got better. Romanian schools have computers, but the schools from the 'Gypsy land' are catastrophic because they are located there and the majority of children are Gypsy. The school is falling apart. Nobody cares because there are Gypsies there. We have only 3 or 4 Roma teachers. The children of wealthy Gypsies go to Romanian schools. For example the teachers from school no. 4 are much better than the ones from school no. 1. We tried to solve the problem and since September we have a Roma inspector. Because gypsies were slaves for a long time, most of them are illiterate." Roma leader, Vashui County, Romania.

Division of Roma into separate learning environments need not have negative results. Some schools create special classes for Roma in order to address particular needs, such as language ability for young children. In many cases, the impact of these programs has been found to be positive in encouraging school attendance and integrating Roma into the mainstream school system. In Hungary a number of alternative schools, largely at the secondary level, have recently been established to support the education of Roma by providing a supportive learning environment (Orsos, et al., 2000). These initiatives have increased access to quality education. However, it is when separation is based upon negative rather than positive objectives that quality is endangered.

Discrimination against Roma by non-Roma parents, children and teachers contribute to low attendance and can both discourage children from attending school and affect the quality of education children receive in the classroom. Stereotypes about Roma and their attitudes toward education lower teachers' expectations about the potential of their students. Discrimination can be both explicit, as in the case of schools creating separate classes, or more subtle, for example if parents discourage their children from interacting with Roma classmates. A study of the Czech system documented a number of cases in which Roma children had been abused by education staff. One parent from Prague noted that *"The teachers who teach Gypsy children are fine, but the others are terrible. They chase our children out of the dining room and insult them"* (ERRC, 1999). Fieldwork in Romania also reflected discrimination of teachers, ranging from ignoring student needs, pejoratively calling them 'gypsies,' and violent treatment.

Teachers are central to the quality of education, and discussions with Roma in the qualitative studies indicated strongly that parental and teacher support were key motivating factors for student attendance and performance. However, there was little evidence that teachers were sufficiently trained to handle Roma students effectively. A teacher in Hungary noted that “[u]niversities and colleges do not prepare us for meeting Roma children” (Orsos, et al., 2000). Teacher training programs generally do not include training in areas such as multicultural education, managing classroom conflict and other areas which would facilitate the social integration of Roma. There is also a lack of Roma teachers within the education system. While this is not a precondition for quality teaching, the presence of teachers who understand the background and challenges facing Roma children and who are role models is an important factor.

Schools also often lack the necessary support mechanisms to help teachers face challenging classroom environments. Teaching aids, textbooks, regulations, and content and quality standards are generally absent (Rado, 1997). A teacher in Hungary noted that:

“There is nobody to turn to if I have a problem...Some of the tensions we feel are connected to a lack of knowledge about the history and customs of the Roma, about surviving traditions which influence their lives. We do not know their language. Nobody helps to fill this gap.” Hungarian teacher.

Related to these concerns, school curriculum do not include multicultural education. Few schools teach the Roma language, history or culture.

VI. Policy Implications

Because of the central role of education for securing improvements in welfare and economic status, education has been a priority focus for government and NGO involvement. More project activity has taken place in this area over the past decade than in any of the other sectors. The review of social sector projects in Hungary found that more than 40 percent of resources allocated to Roma projects during the past decade were for education (World Bank, 2000e). This section first discusses some general issues for policy development and then identifies more specific policy options for education.

Cross-Cutting Issues

Addressing information gaps: This overview has clearly highlighted the critical lack of basic information pertaining to Roma, including education statistics. To address this countries should look carefully at their statistical instruments (e.g. censuses and household surveys) and administrative

data to assess how they can better capture information on Roma and other minorities that will be useful from a policy perspective. This is an area where multilateral coordination, advice and guidance is important for ensuring comparability of data. More information on international practices, particularly in addressing the privacy issue on ethnic identification is needed.

Combating discrimination: Social integration of Roma should be promoted through multicultural education and the inclusion of Roma history, culture and language in school curricula. More broadly, initiatives to reduce discrimination within society should be furthered to eliminate racial stereotypes. Examples could include media and law enforcement sensitivity training and public awareness campaigns.

Monitoring Program Outcomes: The outcomes of targeted public policies and NGO initiatives should be monitored closely. The results of program evaluation should be used for on-going policy development. Mechanisms should be in place for disseminating lessons across regions and countries.

Experimenting with integrated approaches. Because the challenges facing Roma are multi-sectoral, policy and project responses can also be designed to address multiple issues. Educational programs can address health issues, housing projects can provide employment opportunities, and social assistance programs support school attendance. Integrated approaches may also be more effective in meeting project goals. A recent article on education programs in the United States concluded that those initiatives that supported families as well as schools were more effective at raising educational outcomes (Traub, 2000).

Choosing targeted vs. untargeted programs. A critical question in all areas is whether policies and programs should be explicitly directed toward Roma, or broadly based for poor communities, or the population at large. There are no correct or easy answers, but the consequences of both should be considered carefully in program design. Untargeted programs are appealing for their administrative simplicity and broader appeal, and may facilitate integration and social cohesion within communities. On the other hand, untargeted programs may be ill-suited to reaching the poorest and most isolated Roma. Living conditions for Roma and non-Roma may differ quite significantly within a geographic area, and as a result, targeting a whole village or district may not be the most strategic approach. In this regard, targeted programs can be effective in addressing the specific needs of Roma communities, such as language teaching.

However, targeted approaches are not without their own risks. In some cases Roma-specific programs may be divisive within a community and breed resentment that some groups are receiving special treatment to the disadvantage of others. Similarly, without effective monitoring of objectives and outcomes, targeted programs can be instruments for maintaining

existing patterns of segregation and exclusion of Roma. For example, preliminary evaluations of targeted programs in Hungary found that in some cases local governments supported capital investments in Roma neighborhoods in order to reduce the incentives for Roma to move into other parts of town (World Bank, 2000e). Such programs need not have negative consequences if designed in close consultation with the whole community, including Roma.

Education Interventions

A priority starting point is *reducing barriers that keep children from starting school*. Many children are discouraged from starting school because of difficult economic circumstances at home and cultural differences, including language. Economic constraints can be addressed through the coordination of social assistance and education policies to alleviate the cost of education to poor families. A range of options exist, including school feeding programs (which can supplement nutrition while encouraging school attendance), policy measures that link provision of child allowances to enrollments, and scholarships for low-income students.

Preschool programs are important bridges for preparing children for the classroom environment and overcoming language and cultural differences. A number of countries have experimented with targeted preprimary initiatives to facilitate school attendance and performance. The Open Society Foundation has supported the “Step-by-Step” program, modeled on the U.S.’s “Head Start” initiative, in Roma and non-Roma communities. In 2000, 8,180 Roma students in 17 countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the countries Former Soviet Union were enrolled in Step-by-Step programs. Step-by-Step takes an integrated approach that provides training and support to teachers, as well as involves parents in the classroom. Parental involvement at all levels of education should be explored and fostered, including bringing parents into the classroom as teacher’s aides, participation in parent-teacher associations, and regular parent-teacher interactions.

Initiatives that *reduce dropouts and facilitate continuation to secondary and tertiary education* are also critical: however, there is less experience in this area. Mentoring programs and extracurricular activities that provide tutoring and supplementary educational activities have been introduced in some countries. More recently, in Hungary and the Czech Republic, secondary schools that target Roma children have been opened. Schools like the Gandhi School in Pecs, Hungary, and the Romani High School for Social Affairs in Kolin in the Czech Republic integrate Romani studies, including language, history, and culture into the curriculum. While it is not feasible, nor necessarily desirable, that all Roma be educated in separate schools, successful elements of the approaches taken in these schools, including a multi-cultural curriculum, teacher training and parental involvement can be incorporated into mainstream public schools (box 3).

Improving the quality of education for Roma students can have positive effects on school attendance and educational outcomes. A key element of this is reducing negative discrimination within school systems and, in particular, diminishing the role of special schools and institutions for Roma. Practices of channeling Roma students into special schools in the first place need to be reviewed, as do policies that limit the future opportunities of special school graduates. Special education should be reformed to address true learning disabilities and special needs of at-risk children. The issue of special schools should be considered within the overall shift away from child welfare institutions toward more effective and humane community and family-based solutions.

Teachers play a central role in defining the quality of education for all students and need to be adequately trained to deal with the challenges of a multicultural environment. On-going support mechanisms that help teachers on the job are also critical. Particular training could include Roma history and culture, conflict resolution, and classroom management. A number of countries have also experimented with Roma teachers assistants and mediators who can assist in the classroom environment, as well as provide a link between Roma communities and schools. A variation of this has been recently introduced in Romania, where the Ministry of Education has appointed Roma education inspectors in each of its forty-one counties to monitor the quality of education for Roma. The effects of this project are not yet known.

Box 3: Alternative Secondary Schools in Hungary

There have been a number of recent experiments in Hungary with alternative approaches to secondary school education that aim to help Roma children bridge the gap between basic and secondary school, and improve their performance and future opportunities. Roma are much less likely to start and complete secondary school than other children. A 1993 survey of Roma in Hungary found that only 1 percent of Roma took the final examination for secondary schools and only 13 percent received training as skilled workers.

A recent review of alternative approaches commissioned by the World Bank looked at six different schools, most of which have been established during the past five years.¹¹ All of the schools are private and receive support from a range of local and international foundations and NGOs, as well as state budget subsidies. While the majority of students in each of the schools are Roma, not all of the institutions explicitly target Roma children.

The type of education provided by the different schools varies greatly. In some cases, the schools provide vocational training, such as the “Roma Chance” Alternative Vocational Foundation School in Szolnok,

¹¹ An exception is the Don Bosco School which was started in 1988.

the Don Bosco Vocational Training Center and Primary School in Kazincbarcika, and the Budapest Kalyi Jag School. Others, such as the Józsefváros School and the Collegium Martineum in Mánfa, support students enrolled in secondary schools through extracurricular activities and classes and, in the case of the latter, dormitory accommodation in a supportive home environment. Finally, the Gandhi School and Students' Hostel in Pécs is a six-year secondary school (or gymnasium) that prepares students for continuation to university education.

The schools differ in the extent to which they emphasize the Roma background of their students in their curricula and approach. In most of the schools, the strengthening of Roma identity and community and the preservation of traditions are an explicit and integral component of the mission of the school, and teaching includes classes in such topics as Roma language, history, and art. Others, such as Don Bosco, focus on building the self-confidence of students through professional training and support for entering the labor market. There are also differences in the extent to which the schools address the underlying socioeconomic disadvantages of students. Some, such as the Collegium Martineum, target disadvantaged students and address the economic barriers to school attendance by providing housing and other support. Most of the schools involve parents in the educational process, however this proves difficult in many cases because of low education levels.

Because the schools are very new, evaluation of their effectiveness and outcomes is not yet possible. Preliminary evidence has been mixed. For example, more than half of the first class entering the Gandhi school dropped out. However, in comparison with the national rates for Roma this is an achievement, and dropout rates have declined for subsequent classes. Discussions with teachers, school directors, parents and students indicated overwhelming support for the schools and highlighted the importance of their common characteristics, including a recognition of the capacity of Roma children to succeed given a supportive environment, and the need for a broader approach to education that supports students at home, in their community, and in school. Sources: Orsos, et, al., 2000 and OSCE, 2000

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Roma Education Policies in Hungary

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Source: Expert study done for the World Bank. The findings reflect those of the author and should not be attributed to the World Bank

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to review and evaluate the Roma educational policies of the previous decade in Hungary. This task is not an easy one, because in the transition period three sets of educational policy related problems should be taken into account at the same time:

- The different policy initiatives of the Government that target directly the educational problems of Roma children;
- The mainstream educational policies that directly or indirectly affect the education of Roma children;
- The ongoing systemic transformation of the Hungarian education system that also affects the education of Roma children and/or the systemic environment and conditions of policy-making.

The border among these "concentric policy circles" is ambiguous. For example the overall curriculum reform, that is, the adoption of the new National Core Curriculum (NCC) changed dramatically the overall system of content regulation, which had a huge impact on educational targets, as well as the context and objectives of special Roma education development programs. For this reason, this paper—after outlining the policy problems—moves from the general context to the description and evaluation of specific government initiatives.

1. The policy problem

An in-depth analysis of the education problems of Roma children in Hungary is beyond the scope of this paper. However, a short summary of the problems against which the characteristics, quality and effectiveness of policies should be measured seems to be inevitable.

The failure of Roma pupils in the Hungarian education system is well documented by several research results and reports. However, although the fact is obvious, our knowledge about some aspects of the problem and its causes is still limited. Nevertheless, we can say, that the huge gap between the educational attainment of Roma and majority children, is the combination of two overlapping dimensions: the low quality of educational provisions for Roma children and the different forms of discrimination in education. In addition, as in all cases of education for minorities, schools should provide the conditions for free choice of identity, that is, they should provide access to the language and culture of the Roma community. In general, we can assume that in relation of the education for Roma the success or failure of the Hungarian education system should be assessed against three broad educational policy goals:

- Assuring equity in education in terms of resources, quality of the teaching-learning process and learning outcomes.
- Eliminating of all kinds and forms of discrimination.
- Assuring access to the Roma language(s) and culture.

Before assessing the “achievement” of the Hungarian education system in relation to the above mentioned goals it should be mentioned at the outset that due to the lack of basic information it is difficult to come up with any detailed analysis on the matter. In this respect the main obstacles are the following:

- Since 1993 (the legislation on the protection of personal data) education statistics do not include data about the ethnic affiliation of students.
- Due to the lack of a system of external evaluation the quality of education in the schools where Roma children are taught can not be assessed.
- The regular monitoring of the achievement of students in Hungary is not representative for the Roma students.
- Partly in connection to the previous problems, it is hard to draw a detailed picture about the extent and forms of discrimination against Roma children, especially about its “invisible” in-classroom forms.
- Due to the lack of empirical representative research education’s impact on the identity and language skills of Roma children can hardly be assessed.

Bearing in mind all these obstacles we should admit that the weight of any remarks aiming at identifying the main policy problems is, at least, relative. Nevertheless, there is an emerging consensus among experts of the field in Hungary, that the key matters in relation to the education of Romany children are the following:

- In the eighties and nineties the gap between the highest and average education attainment of the Roma population and the majority became wider. On the secondary level the progress chances of Roma students did not increase at all, their drop-out rate decreased in the

primary school but increased in apprenticeship schools and in secondary level education with a final examination.

- The reason for the school failure of Roma students is that educational institutions are not able to make up for the different disadvantages. The reason behind school failures is thus the language and social disadvantage, the inappropriate pedagogical practice, problems related to learning motivation, discrimination, the generally bad relationship between the schools and the parents, the inappropriate content of Roma education programs. The different combinations of these reasons varying in every community.
- There are several forms of discrimination against Roma students: operation of segregated Roma classes, directing students with no disabilities into special schools for disabled, different techniques of in-classroom discrimination.
- The education of Roma students does not ensure the realization of their right to receive education on their language, does not provide access to their culture, and in general it communicates assimilatory expectations.
- Several special Roma minority educational institution models have been established in Hungary but due to the lack of evaluation as regards their success from educational and ethnic aspect we cannot draw conclusions.
- Although the multicultural character of majority education has strengthened during the past decade, it is far from being sufficient from the aspect of the integration of the Roma population and the creation of an inclusive environment for Romany children.

2. Systemic environment and policy making

2.1. The transformation of the systemic environment of policy making

In the nineties the Hungarian education system went through a deep systemic transformation. Since the outcomes of this transition process mark the space of policy making and prescribes the possible tools of policy implementation, a short description of the key characteristics of the new systemic environment is inevitable. These characteristics are the following:

Decentralization and liberalization. The process of decentralization and liberalization of the Hungarian education system started in 1985, when a new act on education strengthened the autonomy of schools

and opened ways for “opting out” from the centrally issued curricula. The public administration reform in 1990, the 1993 act on education and its amendments and the National Core Curriculum created a new system that is governed by educational targets and incentives rather than direct administration. Schools develop their own local pedagogical programs that include their own curricula. The school maintainers (local self-governments) without any intervention of the central government approve these programs. Also, the role of self-governments in the financing of education became almost equally important as that of the government.

Marketization. As a cumulative effect of per-capita financing, diversity of pedagogical programs, free choice of school and declining enrolment numbers throughout the entire decade, education in Hungary became more and more competitive. In order to optimize the use of their resources (sometimes in order to survive) schools are interested in maximizing the number of children they enroll. Also, the entire chain of educational services of which the schools are consumers (textbook publishing, different pedagogical services, in-service training, etc.) are liberalized and reorganized as free market services. (State maintained institutions, NGOs and private enterprises are competing in equal terms.) The role of the state was transformed from being the main supplier to that of market regulator, with particular emphasis on quality assurance in these services.

Transformation of governance. Due to the underlying principle of subsidiarity on which the new management of education is based in Hungary, the role of daily administrative running of the system was transferred to the self-governments. This change enables the Ministry of Education to build the mechanism of strategic steering of the system. Nevertheless, in special cases—such as the education of Roma—this constrains the space of government intervention. Roma education policies should be based mostly on persuasion, incentives, capacity building and institutional development.

Democratization of education. In the course of transformation a diversified and institutionalized system of policy consultation was developed in Hungary. At the national level a National Public Education Council was established for policy consultation, in which the organizations of the important stakeholders (parent and youth organizations, self-governments, professional organizations, trade unions, private school maintainers, minorities, etc.) are represented. Also, the institutions of sectoral tripartite negotiation have been created. At the regional level stakeholders are involved in decisions on the use of resources that are deployed for regional development. Since elected bodies make all the important educational decisions at the local and regional levels, the political legitimacy of the management of education is strengthened, as well. Nevertheless, it can cause problems, especially when local self-governments are biased or hostile against the Roma community.

2.2. The involvement of Roma the community in policy making

In relation to Roma education policies one of the outstanding issues is the self organization of the Roma community and its involvement to policy making. From the aspect of minority education, and especially the education of Roma children, one of the most important elements of the new legal regulation is that it enables minority self-governments to exercise their rights as contained in the law on the rights of minorities. Minority self-governments may ask for information, may initiate measures, may make proposals and may raise objections against practices or decisions violating minority rights. Minority self-governments may exercise their “right to agree” (in fact: veto) in decisions relating to minority education. Therefore, no governmental decision may legally be made without a previously signed agreement with the minority self-governments. The right to agree is especially important in connection to the approval of the local self-governments’ minority related budgets, the appointment of institution heads and the educational program of the school

The rights of minority self-governments are basically related to the activities of the school maintainers (in most cases the local self-government). Besides this, minority self-governments may delegate representatives to the school board and through this may influence the operation of the educational institutions, as well. Minority self-governments may also participate in professional supervision of schools.

The law on public education created the National Minority Committee as an advisory body to the Minister of Culture and Education (after 1998: Minister of Education). The Committee takes part in the preparation of ministerial decisions concerning minority education. The members of the Committee are delegated by the national minority self-governments, its legal status is the same as of the National Council of Education. The participation of the Committee in policy making does not negate the rights ensured for the national minority self-governments.

In spite of the above described system of policy consultation and the strong mandate given to the Roma minority self-governments for participation in decision making the influence of Roma communities on Roma education policies is extremely limited at all levels. This low influence can be explained by three sets of reasons: (1) The establishment of Roma minority self-governments was not backed by an already existing strong Roma human rights protection movement. The legitimacy of the national Roma minority self-government is questioned by several influential Roma organizations and the actual level of self-organization of the Roma communities does not “fill in” the institutional frameworks that were created by self-governance. (2) The national Roma minority self-government and most of the local Roma self-governments failed to develop an elaborated view on the educational needs of Roma in Hungary, nor their

own educational strategy. Therefore, negotiations on Roma educational policies are driven by the initiatives of the actual Ministry. (3) Roma self-governments at all levels are dependent on the financial support of the government and the local self-governments. Therefore, their position in the course of negotiations is weak

3. The ethnic dimension of policies

3.1. Language and culture

The mother tongue of more than two thirds of the Roma population in Hungary is Hungarian, the mother tongue of the others is one of the Roma dialects or a dialect of the Romanian language. Therefore, although the number of individuals belonging to groups with mother tongues other than Hungarian is low and due to the effect of a decades-long language switch process their number is gradually decreasing, they are still—according to the 1990 census data—the biggest language minority. Until now public education has taken no notice of this fact. One of the most important aims of Roma catch-up programs is still to bring them to a linguistically „educatable“ state. Especially in the case of children who have not attended kindergarten, the lack of the expected language attainment seals their school career at the very the beginning. This is clearly indicated by the 1993 national Roma survey data: in the 25 to 29 years old age group 77 percent of those with Hungarian, 58 percent of those with Romanian and 52 percent of those with Roma mother tongue finished the eight grades of primary school.

Providing access to the children's own language and culture is important not only from the point of view of minority rights, but also essential for the pedagogical effectiveness of education. It contributes to the development of the students' self-esteem, while education delivering assimilatory expectations devastates it. In terms of access to the Roma language(s) and culture(s) in education there is a huge gap between the clearly emancipatory regulation and the real educational opportunities. Although, in theory, all kinds of minority education programs are open for Roma children due to the lack of skilled language teachers, textbooks, teaching materials, or any other kinds of conditions only a few private minority schools are prepared for the teaching of Roma language(s). The situation is very similar in relation to the teaching of Roma culture. One of the obstacles to the training of teachers is the a shortage of all kinds of readings, and even if teachers are trained, they are not supported by any teaching materials.

3.2. Discrimination

In the regulation of the education of Roma students the only serious deficiency is the lack of effective prohibition of discrimination against these students. The law on public education generally prohibits discrimination against students belonging to national and ethnic minorities, but it does not explain the concept, does not sanction the violation of the ban and does not appoint an authority to control the keeping of the ban. Due to all this—as the Minority Ombudsman also pointed out—today in Hungary there is no legal limit to school discrimination against Roma students.

In spite of all the outstandingly strong rights, minority self-governments have not had a significant influence on the work of minority education. This can be best seen in Roma education where the operation of Roma minority self-governments has not decreased the extent of discrimination against Roma students. Thus, in many cases even protest by the Roma minority self-government was not enough for the elimination of segregated Roma classes. The current government completely rejects to admit the pure fact of discrimination against Roma children in education. Also, there is a big number of local self-governments that proved to be biased against Roma. Since a big proportion of the Hungarian society shares anti Roma sentiments, politicians at all levels find risky any unambiguous anti-discrimination initiative. Nevertheless, there is an increasing pressure on the government claiming for anti-discrimination legislation.

4. The overall educational framework of policies

4.1. Regulation

Since a consistent minority legal system was developed in Hungary that provides from every aspect equal rights to the Roma population along with every other minorities, the regulations concerning the education of Roma students also does not form a separate system of rules. At the same time the regulation generally attempts to take into consideration the requirements rooted in the unique situation of the Roma population. The law about the rights of the minorities for example declares that special conditions can be created in the education of Roma students.

The system of regulation changed in some significant points in 1996 and 1997. The new regulation system was created by the 1996 modification of the 1993/LXXIX Act on public education, the ratification of the National

Core Curriculum and the preparation of the Educational guidelines for the pre-school and school education of national and ethnic minorities. Among others, the aim of the new regulation was to harmonize the minority legal system: the 1993/LXXVII Act on the rights of national and ethnic minorities and the regulations of minority education. Also, the amendments to the law were to extend the system of minority related preferential regulations and partly to extend the new system of public educational content regulation into minority education.

The law on public education—in accordance with the constitution and the law on the rights of minorities—ensures the right for mother tongue education for those belonging to any minority and, at the same time, prohibits any kind of exclusion or discrimination against them. The law leaves it to parents to decide what kind pre-school and school education they want for their children. The organization of minority education is the responsibility of local self-governments. Minority kindergarten groups and school classes have to be organized if parents of eight children belonging to the same minority request it. Local self-governments responsible for organizing minority education can execute this task together as an association, or in the form of an agreement with the maintainer if that is other than the local self-government.

4.2. Curriculum and assessment

The Hungarian National Core Curriculum prescribes the minimum educational targets (knowledge, skills and competencies) at the end of 4., 6., 8. and 10. grades. The last two years of upper secondary education are regulated by the requirements of the school leaving examination and in vocational education by the qualification requirements set by the National Register of Qualifications. The NCC organizes the minimum educational targets into ten cultural domains. It is up to the local pedagogical program and curricula of the schools to decide on the complementary targets beyond the minimum requirements of the NCC and to decide upon of the subjects they teach.

In terms of content and educational targets the education of minorities does not form a separate system, the requirements of the NCC, as well as the examination and qualification requirements apply to their education, too. The NCC describes the principles of minority education in a separate section. This section offers five types of minority education programs. Compared to the previous regulation and educational practice the NCC contains new elements as well. Among others, the NCC considers intercultural education as one of the minority educational program, that is, these programs are financed at equal terms as the traditional (mother tongue, bilingual, language teaching and Roma “catch-up”) programs. The NCC attaches equal values to the education of Roma students as to national minority education from the aspect of language and content,

as well. That is, it makes it possible to start Roma language teaching, bilingual and mother tongue programs. Another new feature of the NCC is that each of the five minority educational program makes the teaching of minority culture compulsory. In relation to the education of Roma children this measure is aiming to strengthen the minority character of Roma catch-up programs. (Regulation is thus in every aspect far ahead of the opportunities.)

The Minister of Education regulates the content requirements of minority education in a separate document, in the so-called Guidelines connected to the National Core Curriculum. This document sets the content of the pre-school education of minority children and Roma children among them, the aim of Roma catch-up programs in schools, the obligatory and alternative elements, the general curricular and developmental requirements and the organization rules for these programs.

4.3. Textbook publishing, teacher training and pedagogical services

During the one and half decades long autonomous working the absorption capacity of Hungarian schools in general has increased to a remarkable extent. They have learnt how to use the available resources in the best way, and developed the capacity and organizational environment that allows for improvement of their pedagogical work on their own, if these efforts are supported by grants. This is not the case in most of the schools, which educate Roma and other disadvantaged children. Therefore, schools alone cannot be blamed for the often poor quality of school programs for Roma children. Lacking regulations, content and quality standards, sample curricula, textbooks, teaching aids, teaching guides and accompanying in-service teacher training programs, schools are alone in doing whatever they can. Because of this one of the most important question about the education of Roma students is whether there are institutions that can carry out the necessary developments.

The services that are available for the schools in Hungary are marketized to a huge extent. The state budget makes resources available for schools that enable them to buy these services on the market. However, the supply of such services designed to support the schools that are educating Roma children is poor. The free market alone cannot develop these services further. One of the striking examples is the lack of textbooks and other teaching materials for the education of Roma children. Due to high cost and “political risks” and low income private publishers are not interested in their development. Therefore, it is essential to take into account the supply that is offered by the state maintained institutions.

In 1992 a Center for National and Ethnic Minorities was established within the National Institute of Public Education. Due to the lack of resources the Center could not do any substantial developmental work. When the

District Education Centers (deconcentrated regional education authorities) were established, within their organization a network of minority educational advisory system was developed. In 1996 the system of „background institutions“ of the Ministry of Culture and Education was reorganized. In connection with this, and according to the objectives of the Minority Education Development Program of the Ministry of Education, the developmental and pedagogical service system of minority education was also transformed. The mandate of the National and Ethnic Minority Department of the National Office of Public Education Services (OKSZI)—that used to be to organize final examinations and student competitions—became wider with the additional task of organizing in-service teacher training programs. The educational organization system and advisory network of the District Education Centers remained after the dissolution of the Centers. The network was taken over by the National Office of Public Education Services. The National Institute of Public Education's Center for National and Ethnic Minorities was merged to the Minority Office was established instead within the Institute's Center for Program and Curriculum Development. The scope of duties of the Research Center of the Institute was broadened with the tasks related to minority education. Besides this, county pedagogical institutes also accomplish minority education related tasks. The new institution system became able to handle the tasks related to minority education but at the same time certain services remained neglected and the division of labor and cooperation within the system is not functioning effectively yet. In the present system several tasks related to the education of Romany students have not been accomplished. These are the following:

- Curriculum and school level program development,
- Development of textbooks and teaching materials,
- Evaluation of programs, achievement assessment,
- Monitoring of discrimination,
- Advisory and information services,
- Quality assurance and evaluation of developmental programs,
- In-service teacher training and other capacity building programs,
- Higher education entrance examination preparatory programs,
- Development of multicultural and intercultural learning programs,
- Formalized coordination within the diversified support system.

In order to fill in these gaps within the existing system of pedagogical services the Gandhi Foundation (a “public foundation”, the maintainer of the Gandhi Gymnasium) recently decided to establish a Roma Education Development Agency.

The current government launched a national quality assurance program in education. Since this program is organized in a way that is compatible with the overall system of pedagogical services (small grants to schools for buying such services), there is a fear that schools that show less initiative, which educate disadvantaged and Roma children will not be reached by these programs. This may result in a widening gap between “good” and “bad” schools. Therefore, it seems to be essential to launch pro-active quality assurance and school improvement programs for these schools.

4.4. Financing

The financing of minority education is not a separate system. It works through many channels and combines the elements of normative (per capita) education financing with the elements of grant giving program financing. In this system the financing and support of the education of Roma students is not separated from the total expenditure of minority education. The normative financing of minority education is based on a complementary per capita sum (the so called “head-quota”) attached to the normal per capita support. This complementary head-quota is provided for each student participating in any of the minority education programs. The proportion of complementary minority support has remained practically the same, in spite of a minor decrease within the total public education budgetary expenditure.

In 1997 the proportion of support provided through the “call for projects” mechanism increased and the proportion of central developmental resources decreased within the system of resources that could be spent on the development of Roma education. No quality control, professional educational advisory system, in-service teacher training and evaluation were attached to support provided through the granting system. Therefore, these resources preserve existing school practice that is from a pedagogical aspect, not effective and often detrimental. On the other hand, there was a serious shortage of resources deployed for those central developments and provisions that would ensure the conditions for progress.

The Roma minority policies of the decade can be characterized by a special head-quota fetishism: the complementary support for minority education is often considered to be sufficient to deal with these problems. However, about 25-50 percent of the money spent on the normative complementary support of the education of Roma students „finances“ wrong pedagogical and education organizational practices. The normative support system is not accompanied by quality assurance, accountability enforcement measures and development services. The financing of special educational institutions (apprenticeship schools, vocational training institutions, etc.) that play an outstanding role in the education of Roma students has also not been solved. Due to the loose regulation of the use of complementary financing, complementary state supports provided to local self-governments usually do not appear as additional resources in the budgets of the schools.

Program grants have a significant role in the operation of Roma education. A smaller proportion of sources serving this purpose is the sum in the “budget chapter” of the Ministry of Culture and Education, which is separated for the implementation of minority education developmental programs. In the implementation strategy of the 1995 Roma Education Development Program—similarly to the implementation of the NCC—a two-direction financing system of the implementation programs was

applied. In 1996 as an effect of the „OKTATgate“ (a corruption scandal in connection with the use of budget supports) sources assigned to professional programs became exhausted. The Ministry of Culture and Education „took back“ the operative and professional control of minority developmental programs and in practice this resulted in the cessation of these programs. The largest proportion of financial resources deployed for the education of Roma is provided by an application system of different public and private foundations.

5. Different programs for Roma children in primary and secondary education

In primary education (grades 1-8.) Roma students are participating in four typical types of education:

- Integrated education in normal classes with special “catch up” (remedial) programs for Roma children. (A certain proportion of catch up programs organized for segregated Roma classes.)
- Integrated education in normal classes without special minority program.
- Special separate institutions for Roma children.
- Special education (classes or schools) for the mentally handicapped children (children with learning difficulties).

According to the results of an achievement research the knowledge of 8. Grade Roma students enrolled in the first three types of programs show significant differences in five subjects.

The average achievement of 8. grade Roma students enrolled to special minority schools, to Roma catch up programs and to normal classes in five subjects 1988. (Maximum achievement = 100)

Subject	Special Roma school	Catch up program	Normal class
Hungarian language, literature	58	29	62
Mathematics	66	27	71
History	-	11	58
Physics	75	22	68
Civic education	46	25	43

Source: Székelyi-Csepeli-Örkény 1988.

These results are closely related to the social status of the students; the social status of the Roma children participating in catch up programs to a significant extent is lower than those of enrolled to normal classes without remedial programs. It justifies the widely shared conviction that the pedagogical added value of these programs is low, they are not able to balance out the impact of low social status on learning outcomes. Further analysis shows that this connection does not prevail in the cases of special Roma institutions, in this respect they are much successful than the catch-up programs. Also, it is clearly demonstrated by the research that catch up programs fail to bridge the gap between the achievement of Roma and non-Roma students, while enrollment to normal classes or Roma minority schools proved to be much more effective.

The special schools for children with learning difficulties are among the dead-end tracks of the Hungarian education system. Enrollment rates in these schools in international comparison are extremely high in Hungary. (This rate in New Zealand is 0,03%, in Turkey 0,27%, in Finland 0,46%, in Italy 0,92%, in Ireland 1,03%, in Hungary 3,56%.) 30% of these children are attending special classes organized within ordinary primary schools, 70% of them are attending separate special schools. The high level of separation of these children in Hungary is caused by the lack of pedagogical preparedness of normal schools to create an inclusive classroom environment and the lack of culture of differentiated teaching. This is a broader problem that effects a large number of Roma children, as well, because—as it was already mentioned—a typical way of their separation is driving them to special education. From a policy point of view, dealing with this kind of discriminatory practices must be part of an overall strategy aiming at integrating and mainstreaming the education of children with learning difficulties. So far, no such strategy has been developed in Hungary.

At the secondary level there are several Roma minority institutions in Hungary offering alternative short-cuts to vocational qualifications or full secondary degrees, as well as special minority programs. With the exception of the Gandhi Gymnasium and Dormitory in Pécs, these schools offer short cycle vocational programs. Due to the lack of external evaluation of these programs their pedagogical added value can not be assessed. Most of these institutions are private schools depending on casual, sometimes ad hoc public support.

6. Targeted government development programs

Since the issue of the education of Roma children has been on the educational policy agenda throughout the entire decade, governments have felt the necessity to respond to the problem by the development of separate strategies for the development of Roma education. One of the reasons for the birth of these policy documents was the special organizational framework within central governance. Minority related issues were dealt with by a Central Office and separate departments within the Ministry of Culture and Education (after 1988: Ministry of Education). This organizational setting, on the one hand, drew more attention to the matters concerned, but on the other hand this was one of the obstacles to mainstreaming minority, especially Roma education policies.

The Roma education policy papers of the nineties are the following:

- The 1992 governmental proposal of the Ministry of Culture and Education (Ministry of Culture and Education, 1992.);
- The Ministry's 1995 Roma Education Development Program (Ministry of Culture and Education, 1995.)
- The government's decree on the „medium-term measures for the improvement of the life standard of the Roma population“ ratified in 1997 (Government, 1997.);
- The Phare Program for “fostering the integration of disadvantaged, especially Roma youth (Ministry of Education, 1999.).

6.1. The 1992 strategy.

The main elements of the 1992 program of the Ministry were the following:

- To establish a regional network of primary and secondary level institutions with catch-up and talent-care programs and with dormitories.
- To establish a system of vocational training, further and re-training for the Roma youth.
- To involve basic pedagogical attainments in teacher training.
- To establish a pedagogical department at each level of tertiary education.
- To ensure the differentiated and appropriate use of complementary normative support.
- To ensure the conditions for the publication of Roma language textbooks.

From the tasks set by this program the following were realized before the 1994 change of government: the establishment of a Pedagogical Department in the Catholic Teacher Training College of Zsámbék and a Center for National and Ethnic Minorities within the National Institute of Public Education.

6.2. The 1995 strategy.

Parallel to the Minority Education Development Program started in 1995, a Roma Education Development Program—as part of the previous one—was also started. The aim of the Roma program was to have an effect at several points of the public education system through concerted chance improving and preferential actions:

- to help the school integration of Roma students through the development and support of pre-school, school-preparatory and basic level catch-up programs;
- to improve the adaptability and effectiveness of the schools, primarily through in-service teacher training;
- to increase the proportion of Roma students achieving basic education within the compulsory schooling period through the development and support of catch up programs and the development and operation of a talent-care network;
- to increase the number of Roma students receiving and successfully finishing secondary level education ending with final examination through talent-care, dormitory and scholarship system.

The main elements of the program were the following:

- To support pedagogical, linguistic, ethnographical, historical and other research serving the renewal of the content of Roma education.
- To develop curricula, textbooks and teaching aids to be used in different Roma educational programs and institutions.
- To develop and support pre-school and school-preparatory programs improving school readiness.
- To develop and support catch-up programs.
- To establish a national network of talent-care and dormitory system.
- To extend the system of public education and tertiary education scholarships.
- To support teacher training and other tertiary education programs.
- To organize and support the in-service training of teachers, social workers and educational advisors.
- To support Roma minority educational institutions.
- To develop and support intercultural educational programs.
- To develop pedagogical-professional services.

The implementation of the program stopped in 1997. Certain elements of the program (a part of content development, the extension of in-service teacher training, the establishment of the Gandhi Public Foundation, the establishment of the basic structure of a consistent support system, a part of the research, the reorganization of the system of background institutions, etc.) had been accomplished while other elements (institution developmental program, coordination of the financing system, development of teaching methods, textbook and teaching aid developments,

establishment of a network of experts and a system of evaluation, etc.) had not. The Soros Foundation's Roma Educational Development Program "took over" certain elements of the program. In this strategy some issues were not given the appropriate emphasis. These are for example the language question and the problem of segregation.

The Ministry of Labor which was responsible for the system of vocational training till 1998, has not yet prepared a Roma vocational educational development program. It has not had the existing programs and operating institution models evaluated, has not formed a concept with the different enterprise developmental and social programs and about the starting of Roma vocational training programs combined with general education. Neither has a governmental program for the tertiary level education been developed, although certain tertiary education related elements appeared in the different documents.

6.3. The 1997 strategy.

In the 1997 program of the government, education related tasks were formally based on the 1995 Roma Education Developmental Program of the Ministry of Culture and Education. Actually there was a shift of emphasis at several points in the education policy of the Ministry and several elements of the 95 program in the governmental decree were put-off until after the 1998 elections. In the program approved by the government, some of the short-term measures were the „further development“ of the system of scholarships and tuition fee support. The content development program was limited to the development of sample curricula and the institution developmental program was limited to the support of the already existing institutions. In the governmental decree the weight of social supports generally increased while the development program focusing on the whole of the public education grew weaker.

6.4. The 1999 strategy.

The current government reconsidered its Roma education strategy within the framework of a "Phare Program for "fostering the integration of disadvantaged, especially Roma youth". (The total budget of the program is 9,6 M Ecu) The objectives of the program are the following:

- Increasing the level of basic education of disadvantaged, especially Roma communities.
- Preventing the social exclusion of disadvantaged, especially Roma communities, strengthening social cohesion.
- Fostering the social integration of Roma minority, supporting the development of its middle strata.

The program consists of three main components that are served by several grant-giving actions:

1. component: Reducing primary education dropout rates.

- Development of regional cooperation consortia and service packages in order to reduce primary education dropout rates.
- Launching experimental education programs via regional consortia in order to combat school failure.
- Training of nurses for female Roma for the kindergartens of small rural settlements.
- Development of special kindergarten programs for Roma children.
- Incorporation of special courses of ethnic and social problems to the pre-service training of teachers.

2. component: Special secondary education. (Institutional support for schools undertaking the education of disadvantaged groups.)

- Development of special catch up programs for disadvantaged children in order to lead them back to secondary education.
- Strengthening the links between general and vocational education in order to foster the attainment of a first qualification for students consisting of disadvantaged groups.
- Building a modular system of vocational training and active labour market intervention programs for young adults consisting to disadvantaged groups.

3. component: Improving the social position and fostering the integration of Roma minority. (Social measures and support for talented Roma students)

- Development of educational provisions designed to foster the participation of Roma students in secondary education (remedial programs, talent care programs, extracurricular activities, preparation for entrance examinations), and the further development of existing secondary education institutions and dormitory houses that foster the progress and social integration of Roma students.
- Support for talent care programs and post-secondary vocational programs for those Roma students who complete their upper secondary education.

In comparison to the educational practice in Hungary or to the previous strategies this strategy does not contain new elements. In fact, the program opens additional resources for already existing initiatives. However, it almost completely ignores those matters, that are related to ethnic problems, such as minority content of education (language and culture) or discrimination. Also, this program is a poor grant-giving program that builds on the initiatives and capacities of the schools. This way of policy implementation has proved to be ineffective in Hungary.

7. Overall evaluation of policies (Summary)

- Partly due to the generous legislation on minority rights and partly due to the pressure of international organizations (such as the European Union) problems in relation to the education of Roma are constantly on the educational policy agenda in Hungary. Education is considered to be the point of departure for any attempts aiming at fostering the integration of Roma into mainstream society.
- Since the education reform agenda was to respond to the huge problems of systemic transformation of education during the entire decade, no sufficient attention was paid to the specific problems of children with special needs and/or minority affiliation. As a consequence, Roma education policies were marginalized, the design of mainstream policies and targeted Roma educational policies were not always harmonized.
- The ideological alignment of the different governments influenced their approach to the education of Roma children. As a consequence there has been no real continuity in policies. All governments start to reconsider the policies from the basics and no policies survive the full implementation. In addition, there is a tendency towards policy reductionism; one or another component of the problems are emphasized that results in a complete lack of holistic approach to the problems in concern.
- In terms of conceptual basis of policies there is a permanent shift throughout the decade from the combination of ethnic and ethnically neutral approaches towards a pure ethnically neutral approach. This results in the simplification of the problem. Also, there is a more and more strong criticism of government policies because the rejection of dealing with discrimination. In spite of this shift, so far no government strategies have been able to put the problem into a broader equity framework.
- So far none of the Hungarian governments were able to develop a coherent strategy that is designed to address all of the underlying reasons for the school failure of Romany children. As a consequence, there is a lack of synergy in the use of different policy tools, such as financing, regulation or development.
- Due to the traditional Central-Eastern European “supply driven” approach to education in general, Roma education policies tend to focus on resources and structural issues, while the developmental components of policies are weak. Therefore, the ineffective use of financial resources is a much bigger problem in Hungary, than the small amount of public money that is deployed for the education of Roma children.

- There hasn't been developed or carried out any governmental educational strategy in Hungary that was designed to assure the language and cultural rights of the Roma community and/or aimed at fighting discrimination in education. Also, the existing educational provisions are far from being effective in bridging the educational attainment gap between Roma and the majority.
- As a result of the lack of deliberate, state initiated and funded development no complex program-packages are made on any level of the education of Roma children that could be offered for the institutions and that contain curricula, textbooks, workbooks, teacher's guidebook and in-service training program for teachers.
- There are serious obstacles to informed and high quality policy development for Roma. The most important obstacles are the lack of statistical data, the lack of measurement of learning outcomes of Roma children, the lack of program evaluation, the lack of real involvement of Roma community into policy consultation and the lack of awareness of ethnic problems among experts and policy makers.
- Also, there are serious obstacles to policy implementation. The most important obstacles are the low absorption capacity of the systemic environment of schools, as well as the low absorption capacity of the schools, themselves, and the low awareness of ethnic problems among teachers, school managers and local decision makers.

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The Gypsy Minority in Bulgaria – Policy and Community Development

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Historical Background

The large-scale settlement of Gypsies (endonym Roma, exonym Tsigani) in Bulgarian lands can be traced back approximately to the period of the 12th - 14th c., some earlier contacts are also possible (some authors are inclined to think that Gypsy presence in these lands began in the 9th century). [Marushiakova & Popov 1997] Numerous historical sources have records of Gypsy presence in Byzantium in that period and their entry into Serbia, Wallachia and Moldova. [Gilsenbach 1994] Considering the geographical situation of the Bulgarian lands, it is quite logical to suppose that the coming of Gypsies to Bulgaria should be referred to no later than that period.

There is a wealth of historical information about Gypsy presence in Bulgarian lands during the times of the Ottoman Empire. [Marushiakova & Popov 2001] References to them as „chingene“, „chingane“, „chigan“, or „kibti“ are found in many official documents (mainly tax-registers) from that period. [Galabov 1961; Stojanovski 1974].

Processes of sedentarization in the towns and villages were active among the Gypsy population in the Ottoman Empire. A new type of semi-nomadic lifestyle emerged (Gypsies with a specific residence and an active nomadic season within regional boundaries). Most certainly, these processes did not include all Gypsies, nevertheless they were very active. Often Gypsies would break away from their traditional crafts and take

up farming but usually they still practised some occupations and crafts. The most popular occupations were those of the village blacksmiths and town musicians. Registers from the years 1522-1523 listed also tinsmiths, farriers, goldsmiths, sword-makers, cutlers, shoe-makers, carriers, sieve-makers, butchers, guards, servants, etc. It is hard to define which occupations were traditional and which were newly acquired, but the traditional professional specialization of Gypsy groups seems to have been the case in most instances. The demographic information about Gypsies in Bulgarian lands in the 18th and 19th c. is incomplete and quite unreliable.

The issue of the civil status of Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire is a rather complicated one as Gypsies had a special place in the overall social and administrative organization of the Empire. Despite the population division into two main categories—Moslem (the faithful) vs. Raya (gentiles), Gypsies had their own, rather specific dual status outside these two categories. Gypsies were differentiated according to the ethnic principle (something quite unusual for the Ottoman Empire) with no sharp distinction between Muslim and Christian Gypsies (for tax and social status purposes). As a whole Gypsies were actually closer to the subordinated local population, with the exception of some minor privileges for Muslim Gypsies (Gypsies who worked for the army were more privileged). Nevertheless, Gypsies were able to preserve a number of ethno-cultural characteristics such as their nomadic lifestyle and some traditional occupations.

A good example for the civil status of Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire were Gypsy slaves running from the vassal principalities of Wallachia and Moldova to seek refuge in the Empire. This process increased in the 17th and 18th c. when a great number of Gypsies made use of the wars between Austria and the Ottoman Empire and the temporary Austrian occupation of parts of Northeastern Serbia, Northwestern Bulgaria and Wallachia (1690 - 1718) to enter the Ottoman Empire and settle there (the so called Second Gypsy migration wave in Bulgarian lands). The so called „big Kelderara invasion“ from Wallachia and Moldova began after the Crimean war. It led to new waves of Gypsy groups coming to Bulgaria in the second half of the 19th c. (third Gypsy migration wave in Bulgarian lands). The migration of Gypsies from neighbouring countries (mainly Rumania and Greece) as a result of their nomadic lifestyle continued until the 20th c. and was usually related to the change of country borders in the wars (the two Balkan wars, W. W. I and W. W. II).

Regular population censuses were conducted after the Russian-Turkish war and the reestablishment of the Bulgarian State (1878). The majority of Gypsies in that period (more than 2/3 of their total number) lived in the country, nomads with permanent winter settlements were probably considered as belonging to that group as well. Processes of sedentarization and orientation towards life in „mahalas“ (ethnic quarters) developed

in some nomadic Gypsy groups in the 20's and 30's of this century. In the first half of the 20th century part of the Gypsies in Bulgaria were affected by an important phenomenon—the search for their own place in the social and political structure of the macrosocieties where they were living. The centuries of coexistence between Gypsies (this is true especially for the sedentary ones) and the surrounding population brought about a gradual effacement of their particular ethnosocial structures, forms of social life and self-government. Certain patterns of social organization were borrowed from the macrosociety.

Particularly interesting are the amendments in the Electoral Law of 1901 which deprived Gypsies of the right to vote and the Gypsy response to them which indicated the trends in the development of social consciousness among Bulgarian Gypsies. The 61st session of the Eleventh Regular National Assembly, held on May 31, 1901 debated on and passed a „law for amendment of the Electoral Law“. In conformity with its stipulations (paragraphs 2, article 4 and 7—„Who cannot be a voter“) the following text was added „including the non-Christian Gypsies and also all those Gypsies who cannot establish residence“, i.e. the electoral rights of the Muslim Gypsies (the majority at this time) and the nomads were suspended. During the long debates on this law in the presence of all prominent Bulgarian political leaders, no speaker showed concern about these discriminatory and anti-constitutional encroachments upon the rights of Gypsies (Article 86 of the Constitution of Bulgaria stated that „Voters are all Bulgarian citizens who are 21 or more years of age and are in full possession of their civil and political rights“).

The reaction of the Gypsies (or at least of some of them) took Bulgarian society by surprise. The first Gypsy conference was convoked in Vidin, in 1901, immediately after the amendments to the Electoral Law were passed and a decision was taken to start a campaign in order to revoke them. After lengthy preparations, the „tzari-bashi of Bulgarian Gypsies“, Ramadan Ali, invited the Gypsy leaders from all over the country to Sofia where they drew up a common petition, insisting that Gypsies in Bulgaria should have the same rights as the rest of the population. The petition was taken to the National Assembly on June 1 1905. The complete silence and lack of any response which the petition encountered, led to the convocation of the first Gypsy Congress in Sofia on December 19 1905, where a new petition was voted with the same demands and brought once again to the attention of the National Assembly. Eventually, the Bulgarian National Assembly voted a new Electoral Law, where the restrictions on the voting rights of Gypsies were dropped.

The end of World War I was the beginning of a new period in the development of Gypsy civic organizations. In 1919 or 1921, the organization „Egypt“ was founded in Sofia, headed by Shakir Mahmudov Pashov (outlawed in 1925 with the Supplements to the Law for Protection of the

State), in 1929 in the Koniovitza quarter of Sofia a new Gypsy organization „Istikbal“ (Future) was created (again headed by Shakir Pashov). In 1931 the organization started to publish the newspaper Terbie (Education) as an edition of the „Mohammedan cultural organization for national education“. In 1932 a conference in the town of Mezdra made efforts to broaden the nationwide influence of the organization but after the coup of May 19, 1934 which overthrew the elected government, the organization was dissolved.

After the communist takeover on September 9 1944, the Gypsies in Bulgaria became the target of a carefully elaborated policy, carried out by the new regime. Different tools and means were used to secure its success: decisions of the Communist party, state and administrative ordinances, manipulations of the structures of the different social and political organizations, usually in the guise of the Fatherland Front (a union of all non-fascist parties in Bulgaria, created in 1942, which was later reduced to the status of a totalitarian Communist organization) and so on. How straightforward this policy was and, what is more important, how and to what extent it worked in practice is another question.

For a relatively short period (the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s) in unison with the Soviet model, this policy consisted of trying to establish Gypsies as an ethnic community within the structure of the Bulgarian nation, with equal rights and their own identity, to involve them actively in the „building of the new life“. At first Gypsies were defined as a specific nationality, with their own rights, formulated in the so called „Dimitrov constitution“ (1947). They were well taken care of and an active Gypsy intelligentsia was organized. Through the Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP) and the Fatherland Front committees Gypsy intelligentsia was actively included in the problems of the Gypsy population. At this stage the aim was mainly to make Gypsy living conditions equal to those of Bulgarians (i.e. Gypsies had to become citizens with equal rights and natural ideological supporters of the communist ideology). An All-Gypsies' Organization against fascism and racism and for the Promotion of the Cultural Development of the Gypsy Minority in Bulgaria was created on March 6 1945, headed by Shakir Mahmudov Pashov. The newspaper Romano essi (Gypsy voice) made its appearance in 1946, the Gypsy theatre Roma was founded in 1947 in Sofia. The local authorities actively assisted in the creation of local branches of the Gypsy organization and their integration into the local structures of the Fatherland Front as sections with equal rights. The National conference of the Gypsies in Bulgaria held on May 2 1948 confirmed its commitment to the policy of the Fatherland Front.

However, the attitude of the authorities toward the Gypsy organizations changed with time. In the beginning of the 1950's the local branches of the Gypsy organizations were dissolved and their members joined the

sections of the Fatherland Front, the Roma theatre merged with local cultural centers—the reading-rooms and the All-Gypsies' Organization against fascism and racism and for the Promotion of the Cultural Development of the Gypsy Minority in Bulgaria ceased to exist, and Shakir Pashov (by this time a deputy in the National Assembly) was sent to a concentration camp on the Danubian island of Belene. This marked the end of the Gypsy organizations and the shift to a new policy towards Gypsies which aimed at ethnic and cultural effacement—the final goal being their complete assimilation into the „Bulgarian socialist nation“.

In accordance with this policy the official mention of Gypsies became very restricted (the census held in 1956 is the last one where the numbers of Gypsies in Bulgaria were officially published). In the mid-fifties the practice of „renaming“ Muslim Gypsies i.e., substituting Bulgarian names for their original Turkish-Arabic ones was introduced. Decree # 1216 of October 8 1957 of the Council of Ministers on the resolution of the problem of the Gypsy minority in Bulgaria was followed and supplemented by another, Decree # 258 of 17.10.1958 on the settlement of the issue of the Gypsy population in the People's Republic of Bulgaria. In accordance with the latter, „vagrancy and pan-handling“ were prohibited in the People's Republic of Bulgaria and citizens were obliged „to get involved in labour beneficial to society and to work according to their strength and abilities“. A glance at the explanations attached to the Decree reveals that it was intended to solve all issues concerning nomadic Gypsies, who had no permanent residence at that time (they numbered around 14 000): they were to settle in permanent domiciles and acquire permanent jobs.

On April 5 1962 the Politburo of the Central Committee of BCP voted Decision A 101 whose purpose was „to curb the negative tendencies ... among Bulgarian Muslims, Gypsies and Tartars to identify with the Turks ... and to enhance patriotic education“. In compliance with the terms of this Decision „they can register themselves and their children as Bulgarians, and change their first, middle and last names without a ruling of the People's court but simply by a legal request sent to the respective Local councils“.

Typical for the policy of socialist Bulgaria was its fear of problems which this minority might create—on the one hand because of their Muslim religion some Gypsies might become bridges of Turkish and Muslim policy and influence, on the other hand they could join the Muslim community in Bulgaria and make it too big and dangerous.

Gypsies were considered a demographic threat as well. An existing popular opinion held that Gypsies had a higher birthrate than Bulgarians and their relative number would grow steadily in the total number of the population, to become in a few generations higher than that of Bulga-

rians who would then be a minority. This fear produced the new socialist family code. It introduced the system of decreasing per-child allowances in large families—a vestige of the totalitarian regime's encouragement of birthrate only in ethnic Bulgarian families (which averaged fewer than two children per family).

Another aspect which also saw Gypsies as a threat was the cultural one (this was reflected in the thesis about the vulgarization and „Gypsy transformation“ of Bulgarian culture).

The achievements of the state policy were still quite insignificant and in the end of the 70s a new strategy was adopted towards Gypsies. The outcome of this new strategy was Decision # 1360 of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of BCP of October 9 1978—For further improvement of the work among Bulgarian Gypsies, for more active integration into the building of a developed socialist society. Besides the general directions in the policy toward Gypsies („The emphasis should be laid on their involvement in labour which benefits society, on advancement in their education, on improvement in their living standards, on an increase in their consciousness and self-confidence as full-fledged citizens of socialist Bulgaria, on their growing participation in the building of a developed socialist society“), this Decision formulated certain specific measures: „to gradually eliminate segregated sections and quarters in the next ten to twelve years, to improve the professional skills of working Gypsies, to construct a vast network of day-care centers and kindergartens to enable the children to learn the Bulgarian language at an early age, to ban all segregated schools and boarding-schools, to make special efforts to attract Gypsies to amateur art groups, to reflect and artistically recreate the positive changes in the life and thinking of Bulgarian Gypsies“ and so on. [Materials] The directives were elaborated in details in a Decree issued by the Council of Ministers on January 26 1979. The practical realization of these decisions deserves special mention. In practice the results were meager, even the opposite of what was intended, notwithstanding the excess of formal reporting. For example, only 36 out of the 547 existing Gypsy quarters (thinking mainly of urban ones) were „closed“, but some of them sprang up again a couple of years later. Only a few families received apartments—many of them after bribing the officials. The rest continued to live in their old ghettos, or joined their relatives in other Gypsy quarters of the country. Even though the Decision explicitly stated „not to allow the existence of segregated schools“ for Gypsies, schools of this kind not only survived but even acquired legal status (from 1966 until 1993) hidden behind the euphemism „schools for children with low living standards and culture“. Their goal was to teach „elementary literacy and some professional skills and discipline“. Thus began the policy of unequal education for Gypsies. These segregated Gypsy schools limited considerably the educational options of Gypsy children from a very early age and prepared a mass of low-skilled labour.

[128] The communist government made a simultaneous effort to prepare a small group of Gypsy intelligentsia through some unofficial privileges to study in „normal“ schools and then high schools and universities. So an ascendant Gypsy intelligentsia was formed with the goal to create loyal supporters and instruments for the dispersal of communist ideology among Gypsies.

The last phase in the government's special policy towards Gypsies coincided with the „Process of Revival“ of 1984-85. By the end of the 70's and the beginning of the 80's the majority of Muslim Gypsies were renamed. Nearly 180 000 Gypsies with Turkish-Arabic names were directly affected by this process (the numbers are from 1981). Those who had preserved their names were forced to take Bulgarian names at the time of the renaming of the Turkish population in Bulgaria during the „Process of Revival“, the largest of all taking place in the period 1984-1985. As it proved impossible to create a „scientifically argued“ explanation for their Bulgarian origin that had to be „recovered“ („revived“), the official position was to deny the very existence of Gypsies in Bulgaria. The authorities considered them officially non-existent—there was no mention of Gypsies in the media and academic publications, in many places Gypsy ghettos were surrounded by high concrete walls to hide them from foreign observers. It was forbidden to speak Romanes in public, to perform Gypsy music and sing Gypsy songs, Muslim women could not wear traditional clothes, some customs and rituals were declared a dangerous heritage from old times or a cultural vulgarity and were therefore banned, such as male circumcision, the ritual bath of young brides, arranged marriages, etc.

In connection to the „process of Revival“ an old practice concerning Gypsies was remembered—an attempt was made to send at least some of the Gypsies to Turkey together with the Turks during the so called „great excursion“ (the forced emigration of Bulgarian Turks to Turkey in 1989).

Naturally, such a ridiculous policy yielded no results—neither the foreign observers (let alone the Bulgarian population) could be convinced that the Gypsies and their culture were non-existent, nor was there any Gypsy integration with the Bulgarian nation (the effect of the later was exactly the opposite). Finally, the failure of the „socialist national model“ of attitude towards the Gypsies as a state policy became evident—its basic purposes (apart from the means that were being used) turned out to be unattainable.

The official treatment of Gypsies during socialism was sometimes absurd and controversial. Its main strategic goal was to deprive the Gypsies of their ethnic individuality and gradually assimilate them completely. But at the same time efforts were made (despite their mediocre practical implementation and predominance of paper work) to improve the living

conditions and elevate the educational standards of Gypsies in order to make them equal citizens. For the sake of objectivity, we must say that despite its shortcomings this policy had some positive results for the Gypsies. For example, in Bulgaria, as in the other Eastern European countries, an active, though not very numerous Gypsy intelligentsia emerged (a phenomenon almost unknown and inconceivable in the countries of Western Europe). At the population census in 1992 there were 464 Gypsies with M.A. degrees and 274 with B.A. degrees, but the actual number is bigger. [Rezultati 1994] Unemployment was unknown to them, racial attacks and open demonstrations of ethnic hatred were impossible (unfortunately all these phenomena exist now and make the present situation of Gypsies different and difficult again.)

Ethnosocial structure

Gypsies are a specific ethnic community, the so called „intergroup ethnic community“ (IGEC) which has no analogue in the other European peoples. Gypsies in Bulgaria, like Gypsies around the world, are not a united and homogeneous community. They are divided into many internal subdivisions—separate groups, metagroup units and subgroup divisions. Gypsies in Bulgaria can be classified on the basis of group self-consciousness reflected in their endonyms. A complete and well-grounded classification must also consider additional criteria such as language, lifestyle, boundaries of endogamy, professional specialization, time of settlement in Bulgaria, etc. All these criteria reflect on their self-consciousness and give the complete picture of the present state of Gypsy ethnos in Bulgaria. This is by no means a static picture, it used to be different and will yet be different in other periods of history.

The metagroup community of settled Gypsies or „Yerlii“ (a generic name) is the most numerous and varied one. These are the descendants of the first group who more or less gave up nomadism and settled on the Balkans at the time of the Ottoman Empire. They speak different dialects of the „Balkan“ group of Gypsy languages which belongs to the first and earlier stage of development of these dialects („strata I“ according to some authors). Dialects can differ a lot with each group, some groups have forgotten the Gypsy language and speak Turkish (or are bilingual). The community of „Yerlii“ is divided into two main subdivisions—Dasikane Roma (Christian or Bulgarian Gypsies) and Xoraxane/Xoroxane Roma (Muslim or Turkish Gypsies). Within the boundaries of these subdivisions there are some well-preserved groups—the awareness of belonging to the group comes first, the groups have preserved their traditional functions, they are strictly endogamous and differentiate themselves from other Gypsy groups and the surrounding population. These groups often have preserved their traditional occupations and sometimes their nomadic way of life.

At the same time there are large communities whose members remember the old time occupations and the respective group division, but no longer practise them, the boundaries between groups have been obliterated to a great extent and moved to the frame of the bigger community (Dasikane or Xoraxane Roma). These processes are typical mostly for big city mahalas. In some instances, especially after a number of name and religion changes (such as those in Sofia), community awareness may be on a still higher level (only as Yerlii) while in others the memory of the past religion and the respective differentiation as a separate community may remain—such is the case of Xoraxane Roma (Turkish Gypsies) who are Christians.

Sometimes the memory of old occupations and group division is completely absent. The ethnic self-consciousness here, as in the above example, is in the frame of the metagroup.

The Agupti (Blacksmiths) in the Rhodope mountains stand apart from the other Yerlii. They are probably an older wave of settlement on the Balkans, they observe a strict distance from other Gypsy groups and have a strong urge to blend with the surrounding Turkish or Bulgarian-Muslim population and sometimes also accept the Turkish or Bulgarian language.

There is another big subdivision of the Gypsy community in Bulgaria which now belongs to the Yerlii framework. This is the community of Vlax Gypsies (an appellation used in Western Bulgaria) or Laxo (with variants—Laxoria—used in Eastern Bulgaria). They use second level dialects (dialects of strata II of the Balkan group), some authors even classify them in a separate Vlax dialect group (together with the third level). Their settlement in Bulgarian lands can be dated back approximately to the 17th - 18th c. when their ancestors came from Wallachia (mostly runaway slaves within the Ottoman Empire). They used to be nomads with several group divisions, who gradually became settled in the 20's and 30's (some of them even later) mostly in town mahalas, some changed their religion (those in Eastern Bulgaria are now Moslems) and gradually joined the existing metagroup communities (Dasikane and Xoraxane Roma). Today co-existence and intermarriages are normal, but the different group origin is still remembered, there are also some differences in appearance, some cultural and behavioural specifics, which give them a special place in the general metagroup frameworks of the communities they have entered.

Some groups of this first subdivision are more specific. These are Gypsies with Turkish self-consciousness who have a preferred self-consciousness and declare themselves to be Turks. These are Muslim „Turkish“ Gypsies who have lost most of their group specifics and are often bilingual (speaking Turkish and Romani) or entirely monolingual (speaking only Turkish). Similar processes develop with some „Bulgarian“ Gypsies such as „Dzhorevtsi“ part of whom are also descendants of intermarriages between Bulgarians and Gypsies.

A second major and very distinct metagroup community among Bulgarian Gypsies is the one of Kardarasha/Kardarasha (also a generalizing name given by the Yerlii). These are former nomads who were forced to become sedentary in 1958 with a special decree of the Council of Ministers. They live mostly in villages and small towns and less often in bigger towns, in small groups scattered among the surrounding population without forming their own mahalas. Kardarasha use their own dialects (the so called third level or strata III of the Balkan group or some Vlax dialects according to another classification). They are descendants of groups who scattered around the world from Wallachia, Moldova and Transylvania during the great Kelderara invasion (in the second half of the 19th c.).

There are two major subdivisions, internally divided into differentiated groups and subgroups (according to regional, clan or other features). All Kardarasha Gypsies differ greatly from the rest and are strictly endogamous within the wider boundaries of the community as a whole.

The Thracean Kalaidjia (tinsmiths) occupy a very specific place between the two major metagroup societies (Yerlia and Kardarasha). A number of criteria, such as lifestyle, group preservation, primary role of group self-consciousness, etc. make them similar to the Kardarasha community, while their language is similar to level II. They are rigorously closed in their own group and keep their distance from the two major subdivisions of the Gypsy community.

Rather a different example is the one of the third major Gypsy community in Bulgaria—Rudara (called Vlax or Vlax Gypsies by the surrounding population). Its members speak an old dialect of Rumanian and have a preferred ethnic self-consciousness (i.e. identify themselves as Vlax or old Rumanians and distinctly differentiate themselves from Gypsies, although they are aware of a certain relationship). Like Kardarasha, they scattered around the world during the great Kelderara invasion and are Orthodox Christians. Rudara were nomads until recently and they have preserved the nomadic lifestyle with seasonal traveling mainly of Ursara who travel with their bears and monkeys across the country in the warm seasons. Rudara representatives can be seen all over the country, they live mostly in villages and small towns, sometimes in their own mahalas.

A very interesting issue is how to determine the number of Gypsy groups and especially the major subdivisions of the Gypsy community in Bulgaria according to the above classification. Unfortunately, we have to admit that there is no exact information (and probably it will not be available soon), such indicators have never been part of any census and are not considered in geographical and sociological studies. Given this situation, we can only rely on a general and personal estimation in order to define the number of Gypsies in the major subdivision of the Gypsy ethnic community in Bulgaria. There is no doubt that more than half of the

Bulgarian Gypsies belong to the provisionally limited Yerlia community (including the Laxoria who have joined it). Xoraxane Roma are more numerous than Dasikane Roma, but it is most likely that about one third of them have preferred Turkish self-consciousness. As far as the other communities are concerned, we can say that Rudara are more numerous than Kardarasha, but it is hard to make a more precise internal comparison. These estimations are only approximate, nevertheless they can give an idea of the current internal distribution within the Gypsy community in Bulgaria.

The number of Gypsies and their migrations

The question of how many are the Gypsies in Bulgarian lands in each period of history has never been answered unequivocally, even in official population censuses.

After the liberation from the Ottoman Empire and the restoration of the Bulgarian state in 1878, the first Bulgarian government in power began to carry out regular censuses. Despite short-comings concerning their statistical principles and methods, these population counts provided a fairly clear (though not an absolutely complete) idea as to the number of Gypsies in Bulgaria, without, however, taking into consideration other parameters of this community (religion, number of wandering Gypsies, if counted at all, group and metagroup divisions, preferred ethnic identity).

The first two censuses were held in 1881 and 1885 in the Principality of Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia; they were designed to supplement each other with the principal identification criterion of „mother tongue“. The summarized data for 1881/85 shows that 37 600 Gypsies or 1, 87 % of the total population lived in the Principality and 26 724 Gypsies or 2, 83% of the total population—in Eastern Rumelia. [Sarafov 1893]

The first general census in united Bulgaria was carried out on December 31, 1887 (the date is only given for the sake of convenience, the census actually lasted several months) and in 1888 50 191 Gypsies were reported (31 986 in the former territory of the Principality and 18 305 in former Eastern Rumelia), i.e. there was a visible drop in their number.

Subsequent censuses in Bulgaria were held in 1892, 1900, 1905, 1910, 1920, 1926. The data collected is once again unreliable and incomplete (at least as far as Gypsies are concerned) but still deserves some attention:

- In 1905, 99 004 people were listed as Gypsies, 20 545 of them living in the cities and 78 459 in the rural areas. This represents a total of 2, 45% of the population, Romanes being the „mother tongue“ of 1, 67%.

- In 1910, 122 296 people were listed as Gypsies, 28 486 of them living in the cities and 93 810 in the rural areas. Gypsies represented 2, 82 % of the total population, and for 1, 76 % of them Romanes was their „mother tongue“.
- In 1920, there were 98 451 Gypsies in Bulgaria, 25 486 of them in the cities, 73 401 in the rural areas. They represented 2, 03% of the total population and Romanes was „mother tongue“ of 1, 27% of them (the drop in the number of Gypsies in this case can be explained with the territorial changes after World War I—Southern Dobrudzha was lost to Rumania, Northeast Macedonia and parts of the Rhodopes and the Strandzha mountains were annexed to Bulgaria).
- In 1926, 134 844 people were listed as Gypsies, 32 101 of them living in the cities and 102 743 in the rural areas. They represented 2, 46% of the total population, while only 1, 5 % of this population claimed Romanes as their „mother tongue“. [Chankov 1935]

The quoted numbers do not allow for any serious conclusions, however, two important points should be emphasized. First, the statistical data rejects the firmly established and widespread misconception (both past and present) that Gypsies are mostly urban dwellers, settled on the outskirts of cities. In Bulgaria during this period, the majority lived in the countryside (more than two thirds of the total number); they were probably wandering Gypsies, some of them with permanent winter residence in the villages were also assigned to this group. Second, we can observe a significant discrepancy between the number of people who considered themselves Gypsies and the number of people who claimed Romanes as their „mother tongue“. Gypsies whose maternal language was not Romanes (unfortunately the relative extent of other mother tongues such as Bulgarian, Turkish, and Rumanian was not recorded) amounted to approximately one third of the total number, and the tendency shows a slow but clear increase over the years.

The demographic data on Gypsies in Bulgaria during this last historical period (1994-1989) is no doubt of great interest. Unfortunately, as with the previous period, the numbers are incomplete and unreliable, though for different reasons. The population census of 1946 registered 170 011 Gypsies, and the last officially published census of 1956 quoted 197 865 people identifying themselves as Gypsies. [Rezultati 1994] Since then, all data has been classified and preserved in the archives of BCP. Thus, in 1959, 214 167 Gypsies were counted, 8 103 of them in Sofia; the last census of 1976, according to unpublished sources registered 373 200 Gypsies. These data, however, did not seem satisfactory to the Central Committee of BCP and following a special order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, with the assistance of the organizations of the Fatherland Fronts, another census, this time classified, was carried out. In this census, not only those who declared themselves to be Gypsies were counted as Gypsies, but also all those who were defined as Gypsies by the surrounding population,

according to their visage, way of life and cultural traits. The numbers from this census, completed in 1980, show 523 519 Gypsies living in Bulgaria i.e. there is a substantial discrepancy between the data from the two censuses which were based on different criteria. [Materials]

Data collected during the work on the Ethnographic Atlas of Bulgarians of Gypsy origin prepared for the Central Committee of BCP in 1979, is also of some interest. According to the numbers cited in it, in 1968 37 % of Gypsies in Bulgaria were living in the cities, 63 %—in the countryside, while only four years later, in 1972, the numbers were resp. 50,9 % in the cities and 49,1 % in the villages. The change in numbers should not, however, be explained with some sort of mass migration from rural to urban areas (which, of course, did happen), but by the fact that several settlements received the status of towns in this period. [Ethnographic Atlas]

The practice of secret, unannounced censuses (especially of Gypsies) carried out by the forces of the Ministry of Interior (MI) continued in the following years. The last one was carried out in January 1989 in order to collect information about the „process of Revival“; it showed 576 927 Gypsies (or 6,45 % of the total population in Bulgaria) and a special note stated that „more than half of the Gypsies tend to identify themselves with the Turks“ (i.e. had preference for Turkish ethnic identity). A similar census of Gypsies organized by the Ministry of Interior through the regional Directorates, corresponding to the former districts, was held in May 1992 but it was incomplete. The figures from the National census of population and housing stock on December 4 1992 and data from the 2 % representative sample (taking into account the expected stochastic errors) [Demografiska 1993] allows for comparisons between the figures from these last three censuses (concerning the numbers of the Gypsy population in Bulgaria). [see the Table-Annex]

One thing that is clearly visible in this table are the many instances of serious discrepancies between the data provided by the different censuses; the reliability of many numbers is questionable and cannot be accepted without serious reservations. Thus, the first census found only 38 Gypsies in the region of Pernik (the former district)—an obviously unreliable piece of information, since the number of Gypsies in only one quarter (the Rudnitsa quarter) of the city is far greater, let alone the entire district. The numbers obtained during the second census seem more adequate. In the region of Gabrovo (the former district), the situation is reversed: the numbers in the first census seem more reliable than those from the second. The observer is also impressed by the fact that the numbers are too rounded (35 000 in Varna, 50 000 in Pazardzhik), while in other places both censuses carried out by MI showed precisely the same numbers (for example Russe and Silistra). Similar errors cast serious doubts about the precision and correctness of this table.

A question which immediately comes to mind is about the different methodologies used in the censuses: while the first two censuses, organized by the MI, depended on „external“ information (data was submitted by the militiaman in charge of the quarter, assisted by a circle of collaborators), i.e. this census showed „who is considered a Gypsy by the surrounding population“. The last nation-wide census was based on information contributed personally by the respondents who had to declare themselves and their ethnic identity. When it comes to Gypsies, this second method discloses a whole new set of problems related to the complex hierarchical structure of their ethnic consciousness and to the widespread phenomenon of preferred ethnic identity. Last but not least come a number of ill-suited statistical and sociological methods applied in the study of this ethnic community (or, at the very best, a number of poorly formulated questions). The inappropriateness of these methods becomes evident when we compare the 2% representative sample with the final census data (the error margin is from 30 to 260% in different districts).

In short, we can now say that the total number of Gypsies in Bulgaria given in the last three censuses (and especially the latest one) are low, while the estimate of the MI, put forward after the census of 1989, „that more than half of the Gypsies in Bulgaria tend to identify with the Turks“ is exaggerated. The comparison of these figures with data collected from certain local authorities and personal observations and calculations, made by the authors, allow us to estimate the number of people of Gypsy origin in Bulgaria as being approximately 700-800 000, which makes Bulgaria the country with the highest proportion of Gypsies. Another question altogether is how many of them, for various reasons, would like to declare themselves Gypsies. This situation is not unknown in Eastern Europe, as became obvious after the censuses in Rumania, Hungary, the Czech republic and Slovakia. In any case, the data from the last census helpfully illustrates the direction and depth of the ethnic processes taking place among the Gypsies in Bulgaria.

One of the factors which makes it even more difficult to define the number of Gypsies, is their mobility both within and outside the country.

In order to understand correctly the nature of present day Gypsy migrations, we have to look at their direct relationship with the Gypsy nomadic traditions. One of the primary ethnocultural features of a given community is their way of life; with the Gypsies this aspect is closely related to their professional specialization. The Gypsy situation is very specific indeed, as it cannot be established with certainty whether their initial „traditional“ way of life was settled or wandering. The question whether their ancestors in Ancient India were sedentary or not, whether the nomadic way of life was adopted during the long journey to Europe or has prevailed since the very beginning, still remains open. It seems quite probable that the answer is not unequivocal, just like any other assumption concerning

the origin of Gypsies. It is quite possible that the distinction „settled-wandering“ always existed at the time of departure, i.e. some parts of the Gypsy community were traditionally bound to one kind of living, while others stuck to the other.

This distinction has been observed since the very arrival of Gypsies on the Balkans and in Europe and persists until nowadays. Even in countries where a process of forced, mandatory sedentarization took place in the 1950's and the 1960's (mainly in Eastern Europe), the former nomads preserved a marked taste for a life on the move, on the contrary, sedentary Gypsies, even when pressured by different circumstances to change their habitat and move into new territories (for example, the migrations from former Yugoslavia into Italy), bring with them their propensity for permanent settlement. Of course, the lines drawing the distinction „sedentary-wandering“ are very mobile and precarious and often may change (for example, nomads may settle and adopt the main characteristics of sedentary Gypsies), but still they do exist. On the other hand, the correspondence between the way of life and professional specialization (traditional occupations) is not absolute (though certain crafts and occupations definitely entail nomadic or semi-nomadic way of life): several alternatives may appear and it is difficult to decide which occupations are pertinent respectively to the wanderers and to the sedentary Gypsies (it is certainly normal that a craft may be practised indiscriminately by the two groups).

In socialist Bulgaria there was a system of compulsory residence, i.e. administrative registration of people in their places of residence, which made migrations within the country quite difficult. And yet, Gypsies always managed to find gaps in the existing legal norms and continued with their migrations (in different forms), including the mid-season nomadic life-style of some Gypsies.

The nomadic traditions of the Kardarasha were not lost after the forced sedentarization in the 1950's. Kardarasha men continued to practice their traditional crafts (making, repair and tinning of copper utensils, all kinds of trade) under one form or another. They continued to move, too, but over greater distances and only one family. Recently, when the authority-imposed restrictions were suppressed, these traditions were revived, expanded and modified and part of the groups returned to their semi-nomadic way of life (seasonal, with a permanent domicile). The modifications in the nomadic tradition among some other subgroups of „Kardarasha“ are stronger. In many instances, they adopted new forms of seasonal activities after sedentarization (for example, a few families, working together in construction enterprises on contract); at the same time they initiated specific, familial wandering of women. Since recently, a tendency can be observed of expanding this modified wandering abroad.

The wandering of the Ursara (Rumanian speaking bear and monkey trainers) has been for a long time transborder and of a very specific kind. The scope of Ursara wanderings was gradually scaled down, especially markedly after World War II. However, they never broke completely away from their traditional occupation, modified as it was in the new situations. It is interesting to note that they have preserved their penchant for working with animals and have often been hired as seasonal or permanent workers in animal farms; performances with bears and monkeys are transferred to the elderly members of the family. The wandering groups are small, consisting of family members only. Lately, a tendency of proliferation of this traditional occupation can be discerned (as a possible alternative to the economic crisis and unemployment) and younger participants appear side by side with elderly ones. Most often we can observe a change in the way of traveling—by train to the big cities and resorts (mostly at the Black Sea coast) and temporary camp-sites with bears and monkeys are built close to train stations.

A „second“ revival of the nomadic way of life in contemporary conditions is not uncommon among other Gypsy groups, too. This trend is most strongly manifested among the „Thracean Kalajdjia“ whose semi-nomadic (seasonal) way of life, bound to a certain region, is typical of Bulgaria and occurs (or has occurred) among other Gypsy groups as well. These Gypsy groups are committed to a certain territory or locality (place of their winter settlements in the past, and of their permanent residence at present), and the entire group meets regularly once a year before and after periodical meetings of the different sub-divisions. Their present day wanderings are strongly reminiscent of past descriptions: they travel by open horse-drawn carriages and sleep in tents. Their preferred routes ramble through the countryside where they can pick up orders (to make and repair copper utensils) and especially in mountainous regions. Certainly, this current way of life is not the one and only lifestyle of all representatives of the community, but it can still be observed among large parts of them.

These basic models of nomadic traditions emerged after the forced sedentarisation in the 50's. Sedentarization in Bulgaria took place (it is not clear whether deliberately or accidentally) in the winter period when the nomads were in their winter settlements and authorities let them choose their own places of permanent settlement. Thus, each group could settle in specific regions without mixing and choose the way of sedentarization within the group—e.g. one or two families of „Thracean Kalajdjii“ go to one village and cover wide regions; Kardarsa are united in local communities (several extended families in nearby villages and small towns, mainly around big towns and highways), and thus they cover greater territories; there is a higher concentration in some villages, etc.

One should not conceive of the transition from nomadic to sedentary way of life, which in Bulgaria took place in two rounds in the same century (first in the 1920's and 1930's, and second and almost definite in the 1950's) as an automatic and radical change in the way of life and total break away from nomadic traditions. On the contrary, this tradition is most often modified and preserved under different forms. The possession of a proper home and a permanent residence opened new opportunities for the development of stable occupations. Certainly, the traditional crafts were abandoned in many instances, yet in other instances they survived as a source of supplementary income in the past, or, very often, as the only possible mean of subsistence nowadays. Except for the already mentioned examples of resumed wanderings, quite often traditional crafts, organized in the permanent residence, are combined with short trips to carry around the merchandise in the villages (in addition to the fairs in the big cities), as with the Lingurara (spoon-makers), Koshnichara (basket-makers), the makers of different kinds of ironware, etc. In addition, the popular in olden times custom of a seasonal family or group (a few families) wandering connected with lumbering, preparation of charcoal, gathering of wild berries and medicinal herbs, etc., continues to proliferate. It is interesting that these phenomena are also popular among members of groups who have never had a strong tradition of a nomadic way of life, like the so-called Gradeshki Tsigani (from the village Gradetz, in the Kotel region).

In most recent times, a new type of wandering abroad has emerged and is actively growing. Its beginning was the autumn of 1989. One of the first steps of the new government after the collapse of the former regime was to permit the possession of passports for traveling abroad and to abolish the requirement of visas for Bulgarian citizens to travel outside the country. On the other hand, the entry of Bulgarian citizens in other European countries was sharply restricted (a humiliating visa requirement, different financial requirements, etc.) including the restrictions of some East European countries, which still preserved their visa-free regulations for Bulgarian citizens.

We have to make explicit the fact that the existing visa regulations and the huge lines in front of the Western embassies in Sofia were not a serious obstacle and everyone who really wanted to leave Bulgaria was able to do it (and still can do it) including a large number of Gypsies. It is difficult to give precise information about the number of people who have left the country because there is no system to differentiate between those Bulgarians who have immigrated and those who are working abroad only temporarily. On the whole, in 1992-1993 the number of immigrants per year was about 60-65 thousand, and the percentage of Gypsies among them was not specified. This number has definitely decreased later on, but more specific information is needed for quantitative estimations.

The transborder travelings of Bulgarian Gypsies should not be considered as emigration only, since they are much larger in scope and scale and belong to several basic types, which are often mutually related or inter-lapping.

First come the migrations of Gypsies from Bulgaria to the countries of Western Europe (as well as the USA and Canada) with the goal to remain there for good. However, these are comparative less cases, immigration was initially made possible through asking for a political asylum and sometimes through marriages (often fake) with citizens of European countries. The possibility for demanding the political asylum was limited in line European countries and at present it is used mainly in countries where is foresaw not directly administrative decision and extradition but legal process (Great Britain, USA, Canada). Exact facts are missing and we must to note that comparatively much often are the cases in which the ethnic Bulgarians present themselves as "Gypsies sacrifices of racial discrimination" who "have forgotten their language because of the prohibition during the socialism times". In this original "emigration business" are included rows of NGO of respective countries.

A variant of such migrations are seeking a temporary (as long as possible) stay in a foreign country. The Kardarasha were the trail-blazers along this road of migrations, even before the changes of 1989. This migration belongs to the „invisible“ type—individuals go to another country, investigate the situation and establish a base for the transfer of their relatives in case of need. Preference is given to the Benelux countries, as well as the Scandinavian countries and Germany. During the last two years in string with the hard economical situation in Bulgaria which has brought to stagnation of their business has formed a part of Kardarasha community for more-permanent settle in Western Europe, especially in Belgium and Great Britain, where already there are settled several thousands their families.

Much larger in scale and extremely „visible“ were the migrations of settled Yerlii Gypsies in Bulgaria, especially the „Turkish Gypsies“ from North-East Bulgaria in the beginning of the 90's. Their first destination was Germany due to its geographical convenience (a relatively easy access via the former socialist countries which do not require visas) and mostly because of its liberal legislature and considerable (especially for Bulgarian standards) social assistance. The Gypsies moved about in larger groups, usually organized on the principle of relatives or people sharing the same territory without relating strongly to Gypsies from other countries. They made camps in Poland and the Czech Republic, near the German border, and tried to cross the border into Germany illegally. On their arrival in Germany (and in the other Western countries as well), they would most often use the formula „demand for political asylum“ (they would most often present themselves as Turks who had suffered in the „process of revival“). The denial of asylum did not have tragic consequences for

them—thanks to the social assistance for their big families, illegal work, small-scale illegal trade and similar activities they returned to Bulgaria with foreign currency and goods which provided them with a decent living standard.

The data illustrating this model of migration are the following: In 1991 3 927 applications for political asylum were filed in Germany, out of which only 14 were approved. The others were rejected or settled in another way (most often the „political refugees“ themselves left the country a little before the term for reviewing of their applications had expired). Unfortunately we do not know what was the percent of Gypsies among these people, but all sources point to the fact that it was rather high. In 1992 the so called „political immigrants“ from Bulgaria to Germany were 31 540 and in 1993 more than 23 000. Following changes in German legislature in the end of 1993, which limited the assistance for such „refugees“, the flood began to recede very quickly in 1994 and the present migration of Bulgarian Gypsies has taken other destinations.

Another relatively frequent variant are seasonal or irregular transborder migrations of Bulgarian Gypsies. To a certain extent they are related to the already mentioned revival (often in new forms) of their former nomadic or semi-nomadic way of life, although sometimes these migrations also include a smaller number of settled Gypsies. These are hired workers (most often in construction) and musicians, who have official work contracts with some countries of the former Soviet Union and or the Middle East, rarely Western Europe. Most often there is a great interest in this type of migration and Gypsies can only seldom be part of the groups of workers. Musicians are an exception since they are competitive, especially for a specific type of music.

Far more popular is working abroad as „black workers“ (i.e. illegally) without official documents and permission from the respective country. The undisputed leaders in this migration are the Rudara communities. The countries of their choice are Greece and Cyprus, where they work in agriculture, mostly in harvesting, and the Rudara women are household helpers and attend the sick as well. In these countries the Rudara rely on the assistance of their related Gypsy groups. They usually cross the Bulgarian-Greek border illegally (sometimes via Macedonia). The Greek authorities have quite a liberal attitude towards their presence there and almost encourage them, thus providing cheap labour. Rudara also travel to Italy where the situation is easier for them as they speak a related language, and work as unqualified labourers, have odd jobs in farming and very rarely deal with speculative trade. In the last few years the most popular is Spain where has formed comparatively considerable Rudara community working illegally in the agriculture. Exact facts for this migrations are missing but seldom there can be met Rudara-family which has not got representative on temporary work in the foreign parts.

Xoraxane Roma are active participants in these migrations as well. They prefer Turkey, Cyprus, and less often Italy where they often present themselves as Turks. Work migrations are usually made by small groups of men united on the principle of being relatives or neighbours. Often (more and more often recently) the whole family participates in the migration (including the children, at least those children who are able to work).

Another frequent type of transborder migrations of Bulgarian Gypsies are the regular return trips abroad with the purpose of speculative trade. This process began in 1989 when the Bulgarian border with former Yugoslavia was opened and Bulgarian goods and foodstuffs were taken to Yugoslavia on a large scale in return for hard currency. At the same time, another common phenomenon was travels for speculations with hard currency which were made possible with the unification of Germany. These trading routes were later on enlarged to include the markets of Eastern Europe (Rumania, Hungary, Poland) with Turkey (Istanbul) occupying a special place as a source of large amounts of cheap (mostly Turkish and Middle Eastern) goods which were then sold in Bulgaria. The so called „shopping tours“ have become the custom for Bulgaria. Between 1990 and 1995 dozens of tourist companies flourished thanks to such „excursions“. Gypsies, mostly settled Gypsies in urban ghettos, are among the permanent „tourists“ touring Eastern Europe in buses overflowing with goods. For their trips the „Turkish Gypsies“ from Eastern Bulgaria, who usually speak Turkish, often chose Turkey and the Gypsies from Western Bulgaria—the countries from former Yugoslavia and Eastern Europe. This type of activity has grown and acquired new dimensions with the embargo on former Yugoslavia and Macedonia, when whole border regions would make their living with this type of trade. Recently (1996-1997) there is a certain decrease in this type of commercial activity, but it still has an essential influence on the lives of many Gypsies, as specially for the Turkish Gypsies from North-Eastern Bulgaria the preferred country is Poland where they spend months to the markets of different cities.

In the Bulgarian media are often talking about the Gypsy migrations as a high criminal. Usually the Gypsies are blaming about the visa regiment for all Bulgarians. However this accusations are speculative. The Gypsies are excluding of the prosperous criminal transborder business as the prostitution, car thefts and drugs traffic in which interfere Bulgarian citizens or the Gypsies occupy peripherally place in it as a cheap prostitutes or a speculative small merchants from Bulgaria to Poland.

Other Gypsy groups are beginning to look for ways to resume their former transborder nomadic travels, but so far only individual attempts have been made (such as a few families of „Thracean Kalajdjia“ going to Macedonia where they tin household utensils).

All these possible combinations clearly indicate that the passage from nomadic to settled way of life is not unilateral. Depending on the specific social and economic conditions, new modifications of traditional nomadism may arise as well as its „resuscitation“ for a second life.

An interesting question arises here: what are the perspectives of transborder Gypsy migrations and can we speak about a new big wave of migrations after the „great Kelderara invasion“ of the 19th c. and after the „Yugoslav wave“ of the 60's and 90's of 20th century. On a European scale we can certainly speak about a third wave of transborder Gypsy migrations in Europe, especially with Gypsies from Rumania and former Yugoslavia. What will be the participation of Bulgarian Gypsies in this process? This is a question which still cannot be answered with certainty. No doubt, there is a great potential for mobility and the direction it may take depends on the development of the Gypsy community in Bulgaria and the assistance they receive from abroad, but even more important is the overall situation in Bulgaria, which is far from optimistic.

Policy of the State institutions and local authorities after 1989

In Bulgaria the collapse of the East European socialist system in 1989 was followed by a long transition period (which is still going on now), accompanied by permanent social, economic and political crises. The general crisis reflected very strongly on many aspects of the situation of the Gypsies in Bulgarian society. In the economic aspect Gypsies were the first ones to suffer after the changes began. The majority of them were left unemployed in the cities (after factories were closed down) and in the villages (after the collapse of the cooperative farms). Unemployment and the lack of social assistance changed their way of life. Gypsies adapted relatively quickly to the new situation, primarily in the sphere of „gray“ [shadow] economy which is a leading one in Bulgaria. We would like to emphasize the latter fact because if one were to believe official statistics or representative sociological data, Gypsies in Bulgaria should not be able to live at all since almost all of them are unemployed, with no registered income, and only a small part of them receive occasional social assistance.

At present the Gypsies are implementing various economic strategies. Many Gypsies, mostly in the towns, have become involved with peddling, quite often abroad as well (mostly in Turkey and Yugoslavia). Others rely on being hired for occasional unqualified work, e.g. in construction. Some Gypsies, mostly living in villages, make their living with seasonal

agricultural work and gathering of wild herbs and mushrooms. Yet others have gone back to their old traditional crafts, sometimes in a modified version (different kinds of blacksmith services, tinsmith work, weaving of straw mats, baskets and others). Some of these crafts are related to the nomadic lifestyle. There is a large number of transborder labour migrations, especially of the Rudara, who work illegally in the agricultural farms of Greece, Italy, Spain. Some Gypsies, mainly Kardarasha, have won relatively good positions in the sphere of gray business (manufacture of alcoholic beverages, building undertaking, buying and selling of metals or agricultural produce). The overall picture is rather diversified and it depends on a number of factors, including the internal differentiation of the Gypsy community itself.

Considerable changes have also taken place in the sphere of public relations. The economic crisis and political struggles have caused a tension in society, which often leads to a crisis in the inter-ethnic relations. In the beginning of the transition period the Gypsies were a necessary „scape-goat“ in the search of people to blame for the social crisis, often going as far as pogroms, murders of Gypsies by skinheads and police violence. (Bulgarian Helsinki Committee; Human Rights Project). Gradually, however, the situation became relatively calmer and the relationships gradually entered their age-old framework. The Gypsies are still discriminated against and are still victims of violence on the level of personal relations and certain everyday situations, as well as on the level of state institutions (mainly the police). However, the predominant pattern in Bulgarian society is the one of despising the Gypsies as an inferior people who have to know their place. Problems usually arise when the Gypsies are no longer willing to remain in this place. Due to their higher civil consciousness the Gypsies now seem to have become more sensitive towards the attitude of discrimination. There are small and unorganised groups of young men who introduce themselves as skinheads and are an imitation of similar movements in the West. The attempt to create a popular movement based on a racist ideology and directed against the Gypsies remains on the level of sensations in the media and has at the moment no real potential for development.

The Gypsy policy of State institutions and local authorities can be summed up most generally as a denial of active politics and an imitation of activities although the manifestations of this approach differ over the years. In 1991 a new constitution was adopted based on the presumption of individual civil rights. The most frequently cited Gypsy-related excerpt from this constitution is Art. 6, para. 2 which does not allow for „any limitations of the rights or privileges based on ... ethnic belonging ...“ and thus, anytime the problem of minorities have to be solved, the typical reply is that according to the Constitution all Bulgarian citizens are equal and there can be no privileges. In November 1992 the Constitutional Court gave an explanation to the above text allowing for „certain socially justified privileges“ for „groups of citizens“ in „an unfavourable social situation“, thus encouraging a certain State policy towards Gypsies, although mostly in a narrow socio-economical field.

The situation remained almost unchanged in the system of executive government despite the change of various cabinets and political powers. For a few years there were discussions about having a special body of the Council of Ministers with representatives of various ministries which would realize a coordinated State policy in respect of Gypsies. Finally, in 1994 an Inter-departmental Council on Ethnic Problems was organized. In 1995, with the coming in power of a new government of the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP), this council was transformed into Inter-Administrative Council on Social and Demographic Issues, but the Council had no activities whatsoever.

In the beginning of 1997 the new government of the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) declared a new state approach to the Gypsy issue. A new government body was established—the National Council on the Ethnic and Demographic Issues at the Council of Ministers. For a long time this Council had no tangible activities and this attitude of the state made the Roma organisations take the lead themselves. A Roma Non-governmental organisation the “Human Rights Project” initialises and organises the preparation of a framework Programme For Equal Participation of Roma in the Life of Bulgaria by Roma leaders and independent experts. (Program 1998) The Programme turned its back on cheap speculation with specific social and economic problems and paid special attention to the major reason for them—the unequal position of the Gypsies in Bulgarian society. Hence the major directions which the state has to follow in order to implement its Gypsy policy—the establishment of State body for fighting discrimination, desegregation of „Gypsy schools“, legalising of the existing Gypsy neighbourhoods, access to the national media and others.

The Framework Programme was discussed in detail, supplemented and approved by all Roma organisations in the country at a National Round table in October 1998 and consequently proposed to the government as a basis of its future work. In response to the initiative of the Roma organisations and in view of the then approaching local elections, the government adopted the slogan for integration of the Gypsies through their participation in local governments. The government also tried to impose, with collaboration of an well-known international NGO, its own programme prepared by Spanish experts of the Council of Europe. The Roma leaders rejected the government proposal and following long negotiations an agreement was signed between the Roma organisations and the Council of Ministers on 07.04. 99. The Council of Ministers discussed and approved with a special Decision the Programme proposed by the Roma on its session of 22.04.99. (The representatives of the Council of Ministers introduce some minor changes into the Framework Programme, such as addition of the word “integration” and including of the so-called women issue in it). Until the present, however, the Bulgarian government has limited itself to appointing one Gypsy (Yosif Nunev) expert in the National

Council and to making a number of statements in the media and at international forums, without implementing any specific activities for the accomplishment of the programme goals.

On the whole, the Gypsy policy of the state can be characterised in brief as a lack of any real desire to change the existing situation. In the instances when for one or another reason the Bulgarian state has to have a position on specific problems related to the Gypsies (such as participation in certain programmes of European institutions) it still prefers to fake activity instead of making use of the existing potential. This situation is not influenced by the differences between political powers because the attitude towards the Gypsy issue has been predetermined by the underlying stereotypes of and prejudice towards the Gypsies in the Bulgarian society.

Gypsies and the Non-Governmental sector

The non-governmental sector presents a situation similar to the one in the State and local authorities, although it is much more dynamic and diverse. The non-governmental sector in Bulgaria was created after the changes in 1989 and it exists thanks solely to the financial support of different programs and foundations from abroad (mainly from the USA and Western Europe and recently more and more from European Union programmes). The non-governmental sector in Bulgaria had a powerful surge of development. This, however, was a rather specific development, especially in respect of Gypsies and their problems. The non-governmental sector firmly believed that the problems of minorities (and specifically those of Gypsies) were a basic priority. Almost all of the newly emerged non-governmental organizations rushed to solve the problems of Gypsies, to help them and defend their rights, to build civic education, community development, conflict resolution and others. This simple phraseology has proved to contain the magical words that can provide financial aid from abroad regardless of the actual activities of the organizations and their vague ideas about Gypsies and Gypsy problems. A reference book published in 1995 „Non-governmental Organizations in Bulgaria“ (which did not include the whole non-governmental sector) included a total of 467 organizations with more than a fourth of them listing minority rights as their priority. [Spravochnik 1995] According to information from 1997 from the Association of Bulgarian Foundations and Societies, the organizations which wanted and intended to work with minorities (i.e. mainly Gypsies) then are more than 1200!

However, one should not be misled by these numbers. Neither the Bulgarian society as a whole, nor the Gypsies themselves have a clear idea about the number of people and organizations „taking care“ of them.

Often a dummy Gypsy is included in an organization or project in order to facilitate funding. The argument is that minority representatives are active in a certain NGO. Another variant is keeping in touch with a Gypsy organization (often consisting of one or a few people) and presenting a „joint“ project of the two NGOs. Most of these organizations are semi-legal—they are registered officially and present their „activity“ to sponsors from abroad while rigorously avoiding any mention of their activity in Bulgaria (and only occasionally enter the media). This „semi-legality“ often is maintained deliberately. In 1994 we asked a dozen NGO's with declared Gypsy-oriented activities for their annual reports or information on their „Roma“ projects. The results were so indicative that there is no need for further comment—only two !!! NGO's agreed to present their materials to us.

A weird situation has emerged—Bulgarian NGOs working (or at least reporting such an activity) with Gypsies are more numerous than the Gypsies or Gypsy organizations who want or are able to be their partners. This has led to some curious situations, such as having a Western foundation with representation in Bulgaria help a project of one Gypsy NGO through two (2) other non-governmental organizations. Nobody is in a position to explain the use of paying office rent, salaries and other expenses to these „mediators“. There is a Bulgarian proverb saying that „He is not crazy who eats the spinach pie, but the one who gives it to him“, but Gypsies have no chances of seeing their problems solved once and for all through such an approach. Moreover, there is a persistent negative opinion of „the privileged“ Gypsies and the non-governmental sector in Bulgarian society. Bulgarian public opinion finds it hard to explain how the salary of a female student associate in the non-governmental sector can be two, three times higher than the salary of her university professor, or how the budget of a NGO employing 5 or 6 persons can be much higher than those of a school, a kindergarten or an academic institution. These moods only serve to discredit the idea of a non-governmental sector. Another question however is that the salaries of Bulgarian academics are so low that they do not cover their living expenses (let alone work expenses), which is one of the reasons why some of the young and flexible researchers are moving from Universities and Academic institutions into the NGO sector.

In order to illustrate the relevant problems of working with Gypsies, we can analyze some especially poignant examples where the deficiencies of the third sector in Bulgaria are most obvious. [Marushiakova & Popov 1997] For several years now there have been projects on homeless children in Bulgaria. The issue flourished in the period of 1994-1996. This is a „profitable“ problem which has attracted some State institutions and a number of non-governmental organizations. The result was: a multitude of projects, enormous for Bulgaria budgets, advertising campaigns in the press, heart-breaking reportages, press conferences, charity balls and cocktails, gift-giving

campaigns, associates hired to work with these children, and others. Hypocrisy culminated in the event of dressing a few of these children in theatrical costumes and taking them to the Sheraton Hotel ... so they could dance for the President of Bulgaria, diplomats and businessmen. Then the children were again changed into their old clothes and sent back on the street.

These activities unfortunately distorted the nature of the whole issue. Various organizations would present the number of homeless children as being incredibly high—scores of thousands of such children—so that the problem was artificially blown out of proportions and acquired apocalyptic dimensions. The relatively precise data of the Ministry of the Interior, however, give the number of homeless children as being about 3 000 registered in all the country for the period of 1991 - 1995, although in reality the permanently homeless are maybe about a few hundred (about a few dozen for Sofia in particular). An unpleasant fact was the ethnic definition, i.e. „a Gypsy problem“, attached to this social problem (although not all homeless children were Gypsies). Thus, the negative stereotypes about Gypsies were confirmed in Bulgarian society. Mass media described Gypsies as people who did not take care of their children and deliberately sent them out to beg, steal, become prostitutes and take drugs. Nobody, including the non-governmental organizations busily working on their projects, was willing to tell the truth—which is that there are about a few dozen homeless Gypsy children in Sofia and also a few thousand „normal“ Gypsy children, living with their parents, who have serious problems of a rather different nature.

The activities of the non-governmental organizations were used by the State to distance itself from the problem of homeless children and transfer the responsibility to the non-governmental sector. The official explanation for long period of time was that the State was powerless since there was no law for Child Protection, but the followed accepting of this law didn't change the situation. A shelter, financed by many sponsors from abroad, was finally built in Sofia and officially opened in the presence of State and diplomatic officials. This is a place where homeless children can come to eat and spend the night, but they cannot stay there for good. Here we do not go so far as to speak of literacy, but merely of the minimal assistance for biological survival and an attempt to accomplish State tasks. Universal opinion, including the opinions of those directly involved in this activity, which started off with great hopes and extensive advertising, is that it has proved completely unsuitable and the situation of „street children“ is still the same. The children spend all their time on the streets and have neither the wish nor the chance for a normal life. This is an example of how impossible it is for the non-governmental sector to assume all State tasks, all it is able to do is undertake palliative measures. Enormous danger stems from the fact that the non-governmental sector not only does not urge the State to perform its functions, on the contrary—it has made it stay away from the problem.

Another problem attracting the attention of non-governmental organizations, is related to the education of Gypsy children. In 1991 the special status of Gypsy schools was canceled de jure, but de facto the situation there has remained unchanged. The control of the Ministry of Education has decreased, and given the economic problems of Gypsy families, the lack of interest in such an „education“ on the part of Gypsies has become especially obvious. In their attempt to bring Gypsy children back to school and improve the conditions of schooling, quite a few organizations (including some Gypsy ones) have worked on projects on the repair of existing schools and distribution of free food to some of the children who have been selected as most needy. There is nothing bad about this type of activities, but in the long run they are merely palliative ones and do not solve the educational problems of Gypsy children. Free food can increase attendance, but the quality of education in these schools does not improve. Parents who appreciate the importance of good education for their children try to enroll them in „normal“ schools and not in „Gypsy“ ones, so they can receive equal education.

Far more unsuccessful and with a markedly negative effect are the projects which aim at keeping the children in school by means of changing the curriculum or introducing additional school hours. A typical example was the project „Let us bring the children back to school“ financed by UNESCO through a Bulgarian foundation. The project sounds theoretically logical—it aims at attracting Gypsy children to the schools by means of additional programs which pay attention to some of their ethnic and cultural characteristics—such as lessons in music, dance, drawing, traditional Gypsy occupations and others. This project, which was realized as a „pilot“ one (another magical word in the non-governmental sector) in seven schools, has relatively good results—the evident increase in the school attendance of Gypsy children. However, there is another issue here—whether the basic aim of the education of Gypsy children should not be different and directed at increasing their level of education in view of their future professional and social realization. Schools should attract children with the increase of the practical results of education which is clearly not possible in segregated schools. People graduating from „Gypsy schools“ are, and will remain, second rate, their education is insufficient no matter how regularly they have attended school. The implementation of such kind of projects only confirms the existence of schools based on the segregation principle, instead of being radically reformed and gradually closed down. A ridiculous situation has emerged—Bulgarian human rights activists launched a campaign against the segregation of Gypsy children while the people responsible for the project (who were also high-ranking government officials—obviously a Bulgarian patent for „combining“ the non-governmental sector and the State) claimed that „Gypsy“ schools do not exist in Bulgaria at all (and the subsequent implementation and continuation of the project were transferred to mixed schools in order to avoid

all talks of Gypsy schools). Even worse, this project has given the Ministry of Education the necessary grounds for offering a return to the near past—an introduction of segregated professional education for Gypsy children from an earlier age which would be at the expense of their general education, thus they will have opportunities for professional realization. In the long run, despite the good intentions of its organizers, the project „Let us bring the children back to school“ has only moved the situation backwards instead of providing Gypsy children with new and equal opportunities, however later after hard critic in Human rights press the organisers change the project and take the activities out from regular curriculum and move the implementation of the project into mainstream (mixed) schools.

The greater part of Gypsy literacy-related projects implemented in the non-governmental sector do not have any hazardous consequences, they are rather harmless, but with almost no tangible results. It is not clear how the „NGO sector experts“ gain such a high level of self-confidence and have the courage to create such conceptual programs facing an ethnic community which is practically unknown to them, e.g. a group of physicians from one NGO conducted a „sociological research“ among some Gypsies in three Gypsy quarters and based on it they proposed a national program for the sexual education of Gypsy children. This approach to the „scientific argumentation“ of the problems is not a Bulgarian patent, but a wide spread model of work in the NGO sector worldwide. In order to illustrate this it is enough to mention an example of a dilettante bibliography on Gypsies prepared by a Rumanian lawyer on the basis of „own research“ in libraries in USA and proposed as a basic source for work with Gypsies from the network of Soros foundations in Eastern Europe [Roma 1997]

A parallel, „unofficial“ NGO science is created, financed and serviced by the NGO sector, which is much lower in quality but (at least in Eastern Europe) is far better financed and distinctly different from the „official“ science (for example, it uses only a certain type of quasi-scientific literature). We can cite the examples of the reports on Gypsies in the countries of Eastern Europe, prepared by various human rights organizations, which at best are prepared by young lawyers fresh out of law school, and quite often by people with no professional training and experience. It would not be serious to think that such a type of „specialists“ can learn to perceive the strange cultural and historical reality in a few weeks time, to learn the strange legislature, come to know the Gypsy community, its problems in the respective countries, etc., let alone offer an adequate solution to their problems.

The numerous larger-scale projects on civic education, conflict resolution, „open education“, sexual literacy, family planning, protection of Gypsy women from violence and others belong to the same type of projects,

which are rather harmless, but with almost no tangible results. They usually take the guise of endless courses and seminars with an insignificant or totally zero effect for the development of the Gypsy community. Usually the lecturers are highly qualified and well-meaning Western specialists who are totally unfamiliar with the specifics of the Gypsy community and the overall situation in Bulgaria. Sometimes it is quite curious to see that the lecturers and „experts“ are people, who do not know any Gypsies in their own countries, but this does not prevent them from giving generous advice on how to solve the „Gypsy problem“ in Bulgaria. Usually the same people (most often teachers or social workers) and a small circle of Gypsies who have become professional „seminar attendants“ take part in all projects. The level of similar projects and the true interest of their participants in Gypsy issues and Gypsy community development became obvious during an international meeting in 1995 of the „Step by Step“ program (a program of the Open Society foundation network in Eastern Europe aiming to provide an equal start for minority children through specialized kindergartens). The Bulgarian representatives attending the meeting could not even answer the specific question of whether there were separate Gypsy quarters in Bulgaria. There are no opportunities for applying what has been learned, which obviously does not seem to interest the organizers or their sponsors. A project is over, the activities and expenses have been accounted for and what is next ... there will be a similar project and its multiple carbon copies.

The evaluation of these numerous projects touches upon another problem—the unwillingness to inform society about ongoing or finished projects. The above-mentioned principle of „semi-legality“ is strictly observed here—information about these projects can be found mainly in the reports of the sponsor foundations from abroad, presentation in the media is most often avoided, and the greater part of the Gypsy community involved never understand how many people and funds have been used to assist their development.

The evaluation of these numerous projects touches usually also upon another problem—the financial one—the evaluation is ordered and paid by sponsoring organisation, and sometimes also by implementing organisation with clear aim—to underline the „positive“ experience, i.e. to receive a positive evaluation. The evaluators are paid to be positive and only as rare exception it is possible to see a negative evaluation. Negative evaluation of a project or of an organisation is negative evaluation also of the donor, who makes mistake by choosing the project or organisation and as high is the amount invested as low is the eventuality to receive a negative evaluation.

Yet another problem is the common interest uniting most non-governmental organizations in receiving as much funds as possible without any concern for their proper use. If we look at the reports of big foundations

working in Bulgaria, as well as the reports of the European programs, we will immediately perceive an interesting regularity—Bulgaria is always one of the first countries whose projects on Gypsies have been approved, i.e. on the background of the general crisis the „Gypsy industry“ is one of the few flourishing developments. The increase in funds usually results in more people working for a non-governmental organization, renting of bigger offices and consequently seeking ever more expensive and inefficient projects to support the non-governmental organization. There is an interesting regularity—the more expensive the project, the smaller the chance of spending money on something specific rather than on office rent and salaries. Quite often we can observe curious situations, such as having a given foundation give priority to the projects of their „experts“, i.e. one and the same people vote approval of their own projects, complete them and then report their success to themselves. The tendency for inflated projects receives outside assistance as well when the projects are evaluated by the organizations which fund them. Typical in this respect was the macro-project from 1996, evaluated as the most successful so far within the Phare-Democracy program. It consisted of selecting about ten children of different ethnic backgrounds and their repeated education in an isolated group by at least twice as many „experts“ in the spirit of „intercultural dialogue“. Certainly, such an educational model is not entirely meaningless, but its practical implementation is hardly possible in the near future, moreover the economic hardships and the crisis in the educational system in Bulgaria makes it ridiculously out of place.

Their common interest stops project participants from criticizing other projects for fear of having the funding of the whole non-governmental sector stopped. A relatively small circle of people is formed, all of whom use the simple phraseology of the „civic society“, occupy key position in the NGO sector and to a great extent control and distribute the funds.

We can observe with increasing clarity a transfusion of the NGO models of work with those of the state institutions, which often are partners in various European programmes and their interests coincide to the detriment of the Gypsies. Only one example is enough: in spring of 1998 in the town of Lom was held a seminar, where the representatives of government, local authorities and the organisers (one well-known international NGO) proclaimed their success in establishing of model of collaboration for solving of social and economical problems of the Gypsies; only few weeks after Roma from Lom who did not receive social assistance money for more than one year tried to self ignite themselves publicly (PER 1998).

In other instances there is a direct clash of interests of the NGO sector and the Gypsy community, such as in the case of segregated Gypsy schools. Several NGOs implement a number of projects on the education of Gypsy children which cannot be implemented if these schools cease

to exist. One of the clearest examples for this is the project coordinated by Minority Rights group (London) for the training of teaching assistants of Gypsy origin (i.e. this is a consolidation of the principle of specialised—i.e. segregated education for the Gypsy children, which presupposed the existence of segregated Gypsy schools or at least of segregated Gypsy classes, instead of general education). It consisted of a short training course in the Nova Skola Foundation (The Czech Republic) in 1998 for the training of young Roma teaching assistants of Gypsy pupils. The Ministry of Education has promised to employ these teaching assistants in the system of education (their salaries will be paid by Council of Europe funds), even though there is no position of teaching assistant according to Bulgarian legislature. And of course there are not project for preparing of teaching assistants for other minorities or for the Bulgarian majority.

Similar (oriented towards segregational schooling) is the PHARE program project for Inter-cultural Education, implemented in 1995-1998 by *Minority Rights Group* (London) and Foundation „Inter Ethnic Initiative for Human Rights“. The basic part of the project is extensive and expensive printing of special (out from regular school curriculum) teaching materials on Gypsy history, Gypsy literature and Gypsy music. The project was accomplished and praised highly and now is prepared its continuation. Nobody however propose a more effective and cheap solution—to include the information on Gypsies in regular teaching material which are used by all children in Bulgarian schools.

Actually, we are witnessing an active process in Bulgaria and worldwide, a transformation of the NGO sector into a „world in itself“. Enormous resources circulate within this „world“ without substantially influencing their targets, which they are supposed to change. However, despite the disadvantages described above and maybe some others, the non-governmental sector still assists the positive changes in Bulgarian society, and it contributes actively to the change in social consciousness which will eventually lead the way to a modern civic society.

Gypsy movement

After the changes in the autumn of 1989, Gypsies in Bulgaria were free to express their ethnic belonging and organise their respective unions. Gradually, various Gypsy organizations began to emerge, and in the course of their development they were actively influenced by the overall social and political environment.

At the founding conference on March 17 1990, in the town of Sofia, a decision was taken to establish a Democratic Union Roma, whose chairman became Manush Romanov. The initial initiative for this union came

from the Bulgarian Socialist Party (the former Bulgarian Communist Party). However, in the process of acute political conflicts during the so called Round table, the union changed its course towards the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF)—a varied political coalition, formed on an anti-Communist basis, with no clear political face, which constantly fell prey to the contradictions of its member parties and organizations, as well as individual leaders and groups. At the initiative of the Bulgarian Socialist Party, in the eve of the elections in the spring of 1990, alternative local Gypsy organizations began to emerge, such as „The Union of Bulgarian Gypsies for democratic socialism“ in Sofia, which became the basis for the „Movement for social and cultural development of the Gypsies“, including mostly Gypsies from Sliven and Sofia, whose chairman was Assen Zlatev. In Plovdiv and Assenovgrad the „Birlik“ (Unity) union was formed, headed by Assen Kolev and Syuria Yusuf. Later on Assen Kolev left the union and renamed his organization „Cultural and educational society—Unity“. In Varna the „Organization for social development of Gypsies—Ascent“ emerged, headed by Kiril Bakardzhiev, in Shumen the „Cultural and Educational Society of Gypsies“ headed by Bogdan Petrov, in Haskovo the „Unity“ union was registered in court headed by Acho Yordanov, a little later in Sofia the Club of Gypsy intellectuals, headed by Gospodin Kolev was organized, and others. The majority of these associations have a vague status, most of them are not registered in court and actually ceased to function after the parliamentary elections.

For a certain period of time the Gypsy organizations restricted their activities, even though the Parliament at that time had three Gypsy members—Manush Romanov (UDF), Sabi Golemanov and Peter Alexandrov (BSP). The Gypsy organizations stirred again only in the summer of 1991, when the political conflicts in the country were on the rise and new elections were approaching. Manush Romanov failed completely in his attempt to transform the Democratic Union Roma into a political power. In the autumn of 1991 he left UDF, where he had the unclear status of „observer“, because he was ignored in the pre-election coalition. The Democratic Union Roma gradually dissolved, Gypsies no longer had their representatives in Parliament, and after the elections the influence of the Movement for Rights and Liberties (uniting mainly the Turkish and Muslim population of Bulgaria) increased considerably, mostly among those Muslim Gypsies who speak Turkish and have a preferred Turkish ethnic awareness.

In the beginning of 1992 the existing Gypsy organizations manifested a certain tendency towards unification, irrespective of their political views. A group of Gypsy leaders from Sofia launched an appeal for the creation of a confederacy. On the other hand, in April 1992 Manush Romanov launched the idea for founding a Gypsy party independent of the other political powers, which would unite all Gypsies in Bulgaria. This idea

did not find a sufficient number of supporters. After a number of preliminary meeting, at the so called Unifying Conference in Sofia on October 17 1992, the United Roma Union was created with chairman Vassil Chaprazov and secretary Georgi Parushev. The supporters of the confederacy refused to join the new leadership and declared at the conference that they would not dissolve their organizations (such as the newly created Social Foundation „Roma“ in Plovdiv headed by Anton Karagiozov and Ivan Kotchev). Other Gypsy leaders, such as Manush Romanov and Vassil Danev (Business Association Indi-Roma from the town of Varna), boycotted the conference and publicly declared that they would not dissolve their organizations.

In the beginning of 1993 the leaders of some Gypsy organizations declared a new initiative for the creation of a Confederacy of Roma whose individual organizations would preserve their independence. On May 8 1993 a new national conference for unification was convened in Sofia. The new organization was officially named Confederacy of the Roma in Bulgaria. Its leaders were 5 co-chairmen—Peter Georgiev (Sofia), Assen Zlatev (Sliven), Assen Kolev (Plovdiv), Alexander Kracholov (Stara Zagora), the secretary-in-chief was Alexander Emilov (Sofia), and spokesman Velko Kostov (Sofia). The goal of the confederacy was to „enter the corridors of power“, always having in mind the existing reality, i.e. it still was an officially „non-political organization“ which would work for the unity of Gypsies in Bulgaria and their ethnic emancipation in Bulgarian society.

In July 1993 yet another attempt was made at founding a political party of the Gypsies in Bulgaria. Ramadan Rashid from the town of Ispirih declared his intention to create the political party „Union Roma - Muslims“, but made no practical moves in this direction. Acho Yordanov, who presented himself as a leader of the non-existing United Roma Union for Southern Bulgaria, also declared his wish to be politically active. Acho Yordanov shocked Bulgarian public opinion with his loudly proclaimed statements that 2 and a half million Gypsies were living in Bulgaria, who would create their own political party or enter into coalition with other political powers. In the end of August 1993, in Varna, the president of „Indi-Roma“ Vassil Danev organized a Second Gypsy Assembly, where he declared the creation of a new national organization, Federation of the United Roma Communities, which was going to seek unity with the other Gypsy organizations. At the same time and at the initiative of Georgi Parushev, former secretary of United Roma Union, who was dismissed from the management of the union, an initiative committee was organized which had to prepare the creation of a Corporation for Economic Development of the Roma in Bulgaria, and later on a Center for Strategies and Analyses. However, no tangible results were ever attained.

Over a fairly long period of time the Gypsy organizations were less active until the parliamentary elections in the autumn of 1994 stirred them again. After long pre-election negotiations, during which part of the United Roma Union was transformed into Roma Union for Social Democracy, headed by Milcho Russinov, some Gypsy leaders were included in the electoral lists of various political parties and unions. However, their places in these lists made their future election almost impossible. The pre-election agreement of Georgi Parushev with the Movement of Rights and Freedoms (MRF) is especially interesting. It gave Gypsies the right to participate in the elections as MRF members in more than one third of the electoral districts (in Western Bulgaria where there is no Turkish population and MRF received no votes). In reality, Gypsies still had no presence in Bulgarian political life after the elections. Only one Gypsy was member of the new Parliament—Peter Georgiev from the Bulgarian Socialist Party (in 1966 Dimitar Dimitrov from Vidin also entered Parliament as a member of BSP and a substituting deputy).

The political crisis in the end of 1996 and the beginning of 1997, as well as the elections in spring 1997 stirred the Gypsy organizations anew. They had several meetings in order to prepare a joint political line of action and eventually, joint candidates for Parliament. No agreement was reached, some Gypsy leaders were included in the electoral lists of some parties, again in places where the chance of being elected was almost non-existent, others ran for Parliament as „independent“ candidates, but on the whole Gypsies did not have any political representation in the new government.

In the period between 1989 and 1997 some new organizations have come into being, all of which pretend to be „national“ and to have clear-cut political ambitions. As usual, we associate them with their leaders—Confederacy of Roma in Bulgaria (Peter Georgiev, Alexander Kracholov), United Roma Union (Vassil Chaprazov, Georgi Golov), Democratic Union Roma (Manush Romanov, Vassil Vassilev), Federation of the United Roma Communities (Vassil Danev), Roma Union for Social Democracy (Milcho Russinov), as well as some similar regional organizations—Independent Democratic Union Roma - Varna (Sali Ridvan, Yosif Mihailov, Assen Hristov), Club Union - Mezdra (Toma Tomov), Society „Agreement“ (Zlatko Marinov). We have to emphasize that the aspirations of the so called „national“ organizations are to a great extent unreasonable. They consist mainly of their leaders and at best include a limited number of activists, usually concentrated in a few regions, they have almost no organizational activities, no political lobby or representation even in the lowest echelons of power. Their popularity among the Gypsy population in Bulgaria is insignificant on the whole (or rather the majority of the Gypsy population know nothing about their organizations). A relevant fact is that they do not rely on Gypsy votes to be elected for Parliament, they would rather like to use the lists of the major political powers. Though

they often declare that they would like to have a separate Roma party, the discriminating constitutional law banning religious or ethnic parties has turned out to be a convenient alibi for them. Experience so far has clearly shown us that this ban is rather a formal one and could easily be trespassed in many ways, which is being done by the MRF, as well as by a number of smaller Turkish or Muslim parties.

The disappointment in the „political road of development“ gave a powerful impetus to the development and transformation of the Gypsy NGO sector in relation to specific projects. Underlying the NGO sector are the Gypsy organizations (which have the status of NGO according to Bulgarian legislature, even though they were initially created with other goals) and their leaders. The road of their transformation in a classical NGO sector most often goes through the „mediators“—NGO organizations attracting Gypsies from the already existing organizations, who later on begin to establish their own organizations or foundations (according to Bulgarian legislature the most problem-free form of registration is the one-man foundation). This process is still very active and far from being completed.

The first steps of the „classical“ non-governmental organizations were marked with the strong feeling of dependence on non-Gypsies, on the person in power, the mediator in the non-governmental sector. For a long time Gypsies used to think that they were unable to prepare a project and work on it on their own, that they needed special blessings, joint activities with representatives of a higher institution or people close to the wealthy foundations (in Bulgaria these usually coincide, it is considered normal for a State official to be a member of the executive board of a foundation). Experience has taught Gypsies what they could not learn from the numerous courses and seminars on the development of non-governmental Gypsy organizations and project-writing. The individual development of the Gypsy non-governmental sector could no longer be stopped, however inconvenient it might have been to many „mediator“ NGOs, whose existence and global perspective are already beginning to lose their meaning.

In Bulgaria at present there is a visible „boom“ in the development of the Gypsy NGO sector. Dozens of Gypsy NGOs have already been registered and are now functioning—Social Foundation „Roma“, Foundation for Regional Development „Roma“, Foundation „New Life for Bulgarian Roma“, „Support for Roma“ Foundation, „Women for Charity - Roma“ Foundation, Association of Roma Women and Children, Association of Roma Women „Hope“, Independent Women's Organization „Lachshi Romni“, „Romani Dai Bulgaria“ Foundation, „Romani Dukh“ Foundation, „Romani Bah“ Foundation, „Roma“ Foundation, „Romi“ Foundation, „Social Roma Bureau“ Foundation, „Roma Social Bureau“ Foundation - Montana, Social Foundation „Stolipinovo“, Roma Foundation „Iskra“,

„Cebros“ Foundation, „Bahatale Chave“ Foundation, „Zemia“ Foundation, „Hayir“ Foundation, „Right Way“ Foundation, Balkan Foundation for Cross-cultural Education and Understanding „Diversity“ and many others. It is a curious fact that all these numerous foundations obtain projects and money from various sources, but none of them has a program for financing of any projects other than their own.

The attempts to unite or at least coordinate the activities of all Gypsy organisations have so far been unsuccessful. The Association of Roma NGO's, established by Peter Kostov (Foundation „New Life for Bulgarian Roma“) and headed by Toma Tomov („Union Club“) failed to attract all Roma organisations and foundations and develop any activities.

However, the development of the Non-governmental sector of Bulgarian Gypsies is not only positive. Influenced by the example of the Bulgarian NGOs working with them, most Gypsy NGOs rapidly began to repeat their activities, thus repeating their major weaknesses. These negative effects are normal to a great extent—clearly meaningless projects are being offered which have real chances of being approved. The most cunning Gypsies have even registered several foundations (one in their name, another „female“ foundation in their wife's name, a third „youth“ one in their sons' names), so they can have more opportunities. The work of the non-governmental sector is perceived as a specific type of business, conducted according to certain rules which should be observed (the kind of rules which surround them). It should not be surprising that corruption on many levels and in many guises is another rule of the game (at least for the majority of the non-governmental sector in Bulgaria).

These disadvantages in the work of the non-governmental sector in Bulgaria should not, by all means, be perceived as a complete rejection of the meaning and importance of the sector. Although only a few in number, there still are some organizations which have specific and useful activities related to Gypsies. Here we would like to mention the „Human Rights Project“. This is a Gypsy organization which is not closed within community frameworks, it also includes non-Gypsies and co-operates actively with other organizations in Bulgaria and abroad. The „Human Rights Project“ was created as an organization for Gypsy civil rights watch in Bulgaria, and at present it has its regional coordinators and a wider range of activities. Other NGOs, which are non-„Gypsy“ in concept, but include Gypsies or have active co-operation with representatives of the Gypsy community, have similar roles, for example the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee. There are also some local organisation with usefull projects and good results—such as e.g Foundation for regional development Roma—Plovdiv, Foundation Romani Baxt, Drom and others.

Unfortunately a similar type of actually functioning NGOs, either „Gypsy“ or „non-Gypsy“ ones, are an exception rather than the rule.

Another interesting question is how these processes and forms of modern social life (NGO) enter the life of the Gypsy community and become part of it. We can say with certainty that they concern only a limited part of the Gypsy community and only in some locations. Large subdivisions of the community remain virtually unaffected (such as Rumanian speaking Rudara, great parts of Turkish speaking Gypsies, many traditional Gypsy groups, Gypsies in most regions of the country, etc.). Most Gypsy communities in Bulgaria stand apart from these processes, many of them still rely on their traditional lifestyle.

In the beginning the community of Kardarasha stood apart from these processes too. Kardarasha keep well-preserved ethnic and cultural traditions (including internal self-government—the Meshariava or Gypsy court), strong endogamy, and they are relative rich. They are always looking for new economical niches and logically they have come to the idea to turn to the new social activities in the attempt to legalize partially their business and tie it up with public procurement (which is the most profitable type of activity in the present circumstances).

Initially, they sent their representatives to participate in the new system of Gypsy NGOs—for example Vassil Danev, Toma Tomov, Zlatko Mladenov, Alexander Philipov (Roma Soros Foundation and the Roma Program of the Open Society Fund). Parallel to this, with the help of the media they applied the familiar pattern of „Gypsy kings“ (such as Kiril Rashkov „Tzar Kiro“). They experimented with a transformation of the traditional forms of internal self-government (the creation of „Supreme Meshare“ headed by Zlatko Mladenov).

It is the Kardarasha community which has become the basis for the new stage in the development of the Gypsy community related to the activities of the Euro-Roma organisation. Its establishment was initiated by Tsvetelin Kanchev—a Bulgarian who has been adopted in the Kardarasha community, a rich businessman and a Parliament member since the autumn of 1997 (initially a member of the Bulgarian Business Block and later a member of the Bulgarian Euro-left). After a lengthy preparation, a founding congress of the National Euro-Roma Association was held in Sofia in December, 1998. It was attended by 3 386 delegates of 205 municipal organisations of all regions in the country. This was the first in the history of Bulgaria public event of such scope, moreover, it was the first such event in modern Gypsy history which subdivisions and independent participation in the political life of the country.

The new organisation has been very active in the preparation for the coming local elections. The establishment of Euro-Roma is a proof of the fact that Gypsies do not need the shelter of somebody else's political umbrella because they can rely on their own power. The existing constitutional ban on parties on an ethnic principle has proved to be ineffective

since it could easily be ignored. In 1999 a few other Gypsy political parties also became active in their preparation for the local elections—Democratic Congress Party (led by Ramadan Rashid), Union for Democratic Development (Ivan Kirov) Bulgarian Party „Future“ (led by Sabi Golemanov), „Free Bulgaria“ Party (led by Angel Rashkov, the son of „Tzar“ Kiro) and small Rudara Party „Political Party Democratic Movement ‘Rodoliubie’” (recently created and led by Ivan Kostov—a member of Rudara community).

This stirring up of the Gypsy parties frightened the government which reciprocated with a strike against the most popular organisation by depriving Tsvetlin Kanchev of Parliamentary immunity in the summer of 1999 in the eve of the coming local elections, and detaining him under charges of criminal acts, which the Bulgarian public opinion does not take seriously (moreover, there was a similar situation with Kiril Rashkov, who was detained for a few months following ridiculous charges which were not proven).

The desire to try to achieve economic power and political influence through own political representation however could not be destroyed more.

The empty slot left by Euro-Roma was partially filled by the Free Bulgaria party whose election campaign relied on the principle of Roma voting for Roma and milliets voting for milliets. The results of the local elections (October 1999) were to a great extent a shock for the Bulgarian society. The Free Bulgaria party received 52 300 votes and 81 municipal councillors and was formed as a political power among the top ten ones. Euro-Roma had 56 municipal counsellors and all Gypsy parties (individually or in various local coalitions received about 2% of the votes and about 200 municipal counsellors and key positions in a number of municipal councils, as well as several mayors (in bigger villages). Thus the Roma and their parties have become an important factor in the country's modern political development and only the future will show what the further development of these processes will be.

A specific variant of searching for another way of community development, different from the already mentioned ones, is the entrance of different Evangelical churches among Gypsies in Bulgaria. These doings are not totally new. Between the World Wars, the British Bible Society commissioned the translation of part of the New Testament into Romanes and the first evangelical churches were built in Gypsy neighbourhoods (e.g. Baptist Gypsy mission in Lom, in the 1920's, publication of first Gypsy newspaper in Bulgaria). During the years of „building socialism“, the activity of these evangelical churches was greatly restricted, sometimes illegally so, but never stops to exist at all.

After the sweeping changes of November 10, 1989, the already established churches in Bulgaria (the Pentecostals, the Sabbatarians) were joined by a number of new ones (Truth from Sion, Bulgarian Church of God, Word of Life, Jehovah's Witnesses, etc.), including some (e.g. „Roma-Turk“), whose activity is directed mainly toward Gypsies and Muslims. These churches are especial effective and spreading fast among the inhabitants of large urban ghettos. In some urban Gypsy neighbourhoods the evangelists have started to prevail; in other places they are joined by entire communities, including some of the „Gypsies who tend to identify with the Turks“ (in the last case we might see some syncretic modifications of Islam in an evangelical sense).

All the evangelical churches in Bulgaria center their attention on the poorest and most underprivileged members of the Gypsy community of Yerlii, segregated not only from the macro-society but also from the rest of the Gypsies. In doing so the religious missions offer an alternative to those of the Gypsy community who have turned to anomie. The acceptance of an individual or a group in a given religious community is an opportunity to leave the marginal life and find new lifestyle. A change of religion or the conversion to a new religion is often seen as a possibility to seek a new place in the overall structure of the macro-society, to adjust to new conditions, to find an outlet from the crisis in one's own ethnic body; under Balkan conditions (where ethnic and religious identity often are confused) this could be a way to change one's own ethnic attribution.

Summary

At present it is not easy to outline the tendencies of development of the Gypsy community. Observations have revealed that the highest potential exists in the combination of traditional ethnocultural forms with the capacities of the non-governmental sector. However, the complete implementation of this variant will require too much time. Without participation of the State, at least in trying to solve the most important problems of equal integration of the Gypsy community (such as school education), and without the provision of equal civil rights and opportunities, we cannot expect any essential changes. The palliative measures of the non-governmental sector in all their clearly negative aspects, will still prevail. It is obvious that in the near future State and local authorities will have neither the desire (considering the social attitudes regarding Gypsies) nor the needed skills, knowledge and potential for a special policy in this direction. The non-governmental sector is working actively, but the actual results of their work are unlikely to be seen soon. The attempts to create a civic society with a well-developed NGO sector under Bulgarian conditions, in a society with a different type of social stratification and

different cultural and historical tradition, in reality has led to the formation of a small closed stratum of paid „professionals of the NGO sector“ and „civic society fighters“, who have no real interest in the actual creation of a civic society, because such type of society will stultify their „missionary zeal“ (and will have a negative effect on their financial situation). There is a serious danger, especially if the Western approach remains unchanged, that the pseudo-dissident neo-nomenclature will have a firm hold of the non-governmental sector and work primarily for themselves without eventually influencing Gypsy development. This will be the final compromise of the entire idea of a civic society in Bulgaria.

Based on current experience, we can summarize that especially negative for the development of the Gypsy community is the influence of the paternalistic approach of the State and the non-governmental sector whenever development issues have to be faced and solved. A flagrant example of this approach is the attempt to present Gypsies as a destructuralised, marginalised community without their own ethnocultural traditions. This has even been done in some quasi-scientific research works [Tomova 1995], servicing the State and the NGO sector in this approach towards the Gypsies. The excuse that it was done with the good intention of attracting public attention to the Gypsies and their problems, is rather suspicious considering the actual effect—funds from abroad coming for the „good-natured „ benefactors of the Gypsies, while the negative attitude of Bulgarian society towards Gypsies becomes permanent.

At present it is not easy to outline the tendencies of development of the Roma community, in Bulgaria. In most general terms the situation may be summarised as being a disappointment in the present patterns of development and a search for new perspectives. Bitter experience has convinced the Gypsies that the roads tried so far do not lead to actual results, moreover, do not have the potential to ensure the real development of their community. The paternalistic approach of „the good white brothers“, which is exactly the same in the activities of the political parties, the State, and the NGO sectors, has placed them in a position of being forever taught and guarded, has destroyed the adaptive mechanisms of the community and in the long run will hinder the natural development of the community. A clear-cut example of the above is that fact that whenever there is an opportunity for independent Gypsy movement or initiatives, such as Euro-Roma or the Framework Programme, the state and the NGOs (with a few exceptions) would use a very lame excuse to unite unanimously against the Gypsies (or refuse to support them. The political parties (and the governments as their derivatives) need the Gypsies as voters, and the NGOs (including those based outside Bulgaria) need a community with problems to care for, protect, defend its rights, etc. However, no one would benefit from the development of a community which will solve (or try to solve) its problems in an independent manner.

It has become clear that the international institutions cannot solve the problems of the Gypsies in the country, and the numerous instances of the „Gypsy industry“ sector on various levels (both state and NGO) only confirm this belief. Moreover, the patterns proposed by the West are often inadequate to the situation or lead to the opposite results (as in the examples of Bosnia and Kosovo). The abolishment of restrictions on contacts with Gypsies from abroad shows that the all-Gypsy unity is still only an idea which will take a long time to reach and will become successful if it is based on what the Gypsies have achieved in each country.

It is not easy to say whether the Bulgarian Gypsies will have the strength to take their destiny in their own hands through NGO's or through Political movements, but it is very clear that the idea of such a development already exists and it could hardly be forgotten despite the inevitable disappointments.

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Annex

Table No. 1

Regional Direction of MI (former District)	1989 (MI)	1992 (MI)	1992 (Census)	1992 (Census*)
Sofia - the city	38 000	n.a.	10 797	13 902
Sofia - district	14 136	17 077	10 812	11 684
Blagoevgrad	16 100	18 000	7 652	8 216
Burgas	37 894	38 453	16 365	16 120
Varna	20 682	35 000	14 313	17 077
Veliko Târnovo	20 880	n.a.	2 750	7 236
Vidin	15 115	12 000	6 142	7 965
Vratsa	22 160	23 715	9 924	11 927
Gabrovo	5 920	114	2 314	1 585
Dobrich (Tolbuhin)	23 665	18 000	17 210	18 449
Kârdzhali	9 024	9 843	1 562	1 899
Kyustendil	8 463	12 762	6 248	6 057
Lovech	17 746	12 490	5 581	6 384
Montana (Mihailovgrad)	28 813	29 480	8 867	19 079
Pazardzhik	45 705	50 000	22 124	21 810
Pernik	38	6 600	1 604	2 142
Pleven	24 870	27 747	6 559	7 111
Plovdiv	45 333	61 585	24 403	21 139
Razgrad	5 213	16 468	7 639	7 464
Russe	16 306	16 306	8 917	11 934
Silistra	12 826	12 826	4 570	6 519
Sliven	46 491	40 590	17 170	18 183
Smolyan	548	1 225	n.a.	514
Stara Zagora	28 289	38 000	22 309	24 143
Târgovishte	17 035	n.a.	6 487	9 474
Haskovo	13 488	26 100	12 135	14 014
Shumen	20 128	15 823	15 760	14 727
Yambol	11 240	12 762	8 515	6 669
Total	576 927	553 466	287 732	313 396

* 2% representative sample. [22, 136]

* Final census data. [196, 372-378]

Education for Romanies in Finland

By National Board of Education, Romany Education Unit

Source: http://www.oph.fi/info/romanit/education_for_romanies_in_finlan.htm

Romanies have inhabited Finland since the sixteenth century. Their exact number is not known because Finnish citizens are not registered according to their ethnic origin. According to the latest estimates, there are at least 10,000 Romanies in Finland. In addition, approx. 3,000 Finnish Romanies live in Sweden.

As Finnish citizens, Romanies are entitled to the same education as the majority population. However, in practice, the position of the Romanies as regards education is more difficult than that of the majority. In recent years, the educational level of the Romanies has improved considerably, but, compared to the majority population, it remains low. The problem for Romany children continues to be failure to complete the comprehensive school, which makes it difficult for them to enter further education. On the other hand, it must be recalled that the Romanies' educational tradition is still relatively young. Various reports show that the education received by older people remains inadequate and that they even include illiterates.

Day Care and Pre-school Education

The Act on Day Care

The Act on Children's Day Care (36/1 973) incorporates a special obligation for the municipality to arrange (day care), i.e., a so-called subjective provision on the right to day care. This provision is contained in paragraph 1 of § 11 a of the Act on Day Care (... *it must be possible for a child to attend the day care referred to in the provision until he or she, as a child subject to compulsory school attendance, as referred to in the Act on Comprehensive Schools, starts attending a comprehensive or comparable school.*)

On the basis of the provision, all the parents or other guardians of children of pre-school age have been entitled since the beginning of 1996 to obtain for their child the day-care centre or family-care place arranged by the municipality, referred to in paragraph 2 or 3 of § 1 of the Act.

Under paragraph 1 of § 2 a of the Act on Children's Day Care, the core task of day care is to support the homes of children attending day care in their upbringing task, and to further the balanced development of the child's personality in collaboration with their homes. Under § 1 a of the Decree on Children's Day Care (239/1 973), the upbringing objectives in § 2 a of the Act on Children's Day Care also include support for the native tongue and culture of the children of Finnish- or Swedish-speakers, Samis, Romanies and various immigrant groups in collaboration with representatives of the culture in question.

Legislation on pre-school education

The Act on Children's Day Care does not include special provisions on pre-school instruction. As part of the early education which forms part of day care, a large number of municipalities have arranged pre-school instruction targeted in particular at six-year-olds but also at younger children.

§ 1 of the Act on Basic Education (628/1 999), which took effect at the beginning of 1999, enacts concerning not only basic education and compulsory school attendance but also, inter alia, concerning pre-school instruction in the year prior to compulsory school attendance. According to § 2 of the Act, pre-school instruction is designed to promote the general objectives set for basic education and, as part of early education, to improve the child's capacity to learn. Under § 9 of the Act, pre-school instruction lasts for one year.

Under § 15 of the Act on Basic Education, the body which arranges pre-school instruction is bound to draw up a curriculum for the teaching. The curriculum is approved separately for instruction in Finnish, Swedish and Sami and, where necessary, instruction in some other language.

The obligation to provide pre-school instruction will be imposed on the municipalities under a separate act, which will enter into force in 2001. These amendments will be made to both the Act on Day Care and the Act on Basic Education. Pre-school instruction can already start being provided prior to the entry into force of the Act.

The municipal day-care system thus provides children with opportunities for day-care services whilst their parents are out at work. Pre-school instruction, on the other hand, is arranged as far as possible for all children who wish to receive it. In the Romany culture, children have traditionally been looked after at home. Nowadays, Romany children attend day care and pre-school instruction to some extent, and this facilitates the start of their attendance at school. Pre-school

instruction has a very important role to play in preparing Romany children in particular for school. Romany personnel need to be recruited to child day-care centres and pre-school instruction, so that the Romany language and culture are already taken sufficiently into account already the children start school.

The Comprehensive School

Finnish Romanies are also subject to compulsory school attendance. However, the schooling of Romany children does involve certain difficulties, which have only now started to be taken seriously. Cultural differences, the teachers' limited knowledge of Romany culture and inadequate co-operation between the home and school mean that Romany children discontinue comprehensive education more often than children from the majority population. Romany children have also been observed to suffer from what is termed 'semilingualism', which means that they lack strong skills in their mother tongue when they start school. Their motor and mechanical skills are often poorer than those of other children. For these reasons, the children's schooling is hampered from the very outset. Schools have not been able to pay enough attention to these causes, but Romany children have all too readily been placed in remedial classes.

Some projects to support Romany children and their parents in matters relating to schooling have been launched in Finland. These include Romano Missio's Aina ammattiin asti (Right through to a job) project, which is designed to help young Romanies complete comprehensive school and take up further education, and to determine the difficulties which arise in the schooling of Romany children. A study conducted during the project indicates that, depending on the locality, as many as 10-20 percent discontinue school. This is a disturbingly high figure.

Senior high school and tertiary education still attracts little interest among Romanies. The history of Finland's Romanies means that Romany homes lack a history of education and that Romanies have not tended to esteem the education provided on the majority population's terms. Nowadays, attitudes have become more positive. Romanies value education, and seek to support their children's schooling so that they can obtain professional skill.

The Teaching of the Romany Language in Schools

In Finland, the legislation on the comprehensive school guarantees certain prerequisites for maintaining and developing Romany language and culture.

Legislation on the comprehensive school:

The basic right reform of 1995, § 14.3 of the Constitution, observes that: *the Sami, as an aboriginal people, and the Romanies and other groups are entitled to develop and maintain their own language and culture.* The reform of the school legislation, which took effect in 1999, continues in the same vein (*Act on Basic Education, § 10 Language of instruction: Paragraph 1; The language of instruction at school shall be either Finnish or Swedish. The language of instruction can also be Sami, Romany or sign language., § 12 Instruction in the mother tongue; Paragraph 2; In accordance with the guardian's choice, Romany, sign language or some other mother tongue of the pupil may also be taught as the mother tongue.*).

The aforesaid reform of school legislation has made it possible for instruction in the Romany language and culture to be given at comprehensive and senior high schools, in vocational training and in vocational adult education.

The municipalities are under no obligation to provide instruction, and no separate education or cultural allocations have been assigned for the purpose, as has been the case with the Sami language. The lack of funding is reflected in the instruction in the Romany language and culture provided by the municipalities.

Instruction in the Romany language at comprehensive school was started in Finland in the early 1980s, initially in club format. Since 1989, instruction in the Romany language and culture has been provided more broadly at the comprehensive schools, beginning at Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa schools. National curricula for the Romany language have been drawn up for the comprehensive and senior high schools.

In practice, instruction in the Romany language has been arranged in accordance with a notice issued by the Ministry of Education concerning instruction in the mother tongue for children who speak a foreign language. This means that instruction has been provided to

groups of 4-5 Romany children for two hours a week either within or outside the curriculum. Out of the approx. 1,700 Romany children of comprehensive-school age, instruction in the Romany language is received by an average of 250 children in about ten localities.

There are a number of reasons for the scarcity of instruction in Romany. One major obstacle is the lack of qualified teachers of Romany. Each year, the National Board of Education's Education Unit for the Romany Population has arranged further training for teachers of Romany in collaboration with Heinola Education Centre. In 1992, ten teachers of Romany started a two-year course for training teachers of the mother tongue who work with children who speak a foreign language. This has helped to strengthen their professional skill.

When teachers of the Romany language are working at a school, they have to perform numerous other tasks besides teaching the language. In order to meet the needs in the field, the Education Unit is extending training for teachers of Romany by means of the Further Qualification of Culture Instructor and Specialist Qualification of Culture Instructor for Romanies introduced into the legislation on vocational schools. The bases of the syllabuses for these are currently being compiled by the National Board of Education. This qualification would help Romanies to obtain work with the municipalities as contact persons, cultural interpreters, school assistants and teachers of Romany.

The Ministry of Education has approved the Further Qualification and Specialist Qualification of Culture Instructor for Romanies as one of the qualifications referred to in the Act on Vocational Qualifications of 1997.

Adult Education for the Romany Population

Adult education for the Romany population in Finland has mainly been arranged by means provided under labour policy. Education tied to labour policy has been arranged both as vocational training and as guidance training. Guidance training has made it possible to fill gaps in previously inadequate basic education and has thereby improved the students' chances of entering the job market. Nowadays, education relating to labour policy in Finland is arranged regionally rather than centrally, as was the case previously with, e.g., education for the Romany population. This means that a large number of people now have to share educational resources, and smaller groups are not always taken sufficiently into account.

Vocational training began being arranged for Romanies in 1979 fields which are close to their way of life, such as horsekeeping and trotting-race training, sewing the Romanies' national dress and other handicrafts associated with Romany culture. Training in practical nursing has also been provided. Nowadays, training is oriented increasingly towards educational sectors which meet the requirements of modern society.

The goals of guidance training have been the completion of the syllabus of the comprehensive school, adequate basic studies for further and vocational training, and familiarisation with society's structure and services. Guidance training has been found to be a good way of securing an adequate basic education and it will continue to be needed in future, too.

The Romanies' own representatives are almost always involved in planning courses designed for Romanies. This procedure has been useful because it has allowed the Romanies' own needs and the special features of their culture to be taken into account. This, in turn, has increased their motivation to take up training. Particularly good results have been obtained when the initiative for arranging training has originated with the Romanies themselves.

In 1995, the National Board of Education commissioned a survey into the educational needs of the Romany population. Two-thirds of the 200 people who responded expressed an interest in vocational training. The most popular sector was social welfare and health. As regards practical needs, it may be noted that it is precisely in the teaching, social and health care sectors that there is an acute need for Romany employees.

Special training includes the training project for Romanies known as Romako, which began on a trial basis in Uusimaa in 1996–1998, with, e.g., practical nurse and school assistant courses. The feedback from the trial has been so positive that, following administrative changes in Finland and the country's accession to the EU, it was extended nation-wide and became known as Suomen Romako.

Suomen Romako is a job and training project designed for the Romany population. It has been granted funding for the period 3rd August 1999–31st December 2000 and is meant for Romanies aged 25–55 who are either long-term unemployed or have been displaced from the job market. The funding comes from the European Social Fund (40%) and Finland's Labour Administration (60%). The administrative and practical side of the project is being dealt with by Tuusula Job Centre and the Tuusula Social Sector College. Training has so far been provided for 195 students in twelve localities.

Courses which have been laid on during Romako and Suomen Romako include

- Comprehensive school studies in four localities
 - Training equipping students for vocational training and work in three localities
 - Part of the Vocational Qualification in Textiles and Clothing
- The Vocational Qualification in Youth and Leisure Instruction
- Training for the car sector

There have been individual training places in practical nurse's, hairdresser's, massage therapy, music therapy and musical drama studies.

The project has also allocated funds for supported employment, employment subsidy and apprentice contract training.

Both the educational establishments and the students have found the training laid on by Romako stimulating. The establishments consider that the Romanies have been highly motivated to study and develop themselves. The training has also facilitated the Romanies' right to maintain and develop their language, since the curricula have also included instruction in the Romany language wherever possible. The students' views indicate how important the training has become for them. They have felt that a profession enhances their identity both as individuals and as a group. They also want and are able through the profession to acquire economic independence.

Each year, the National Board of Education has also funded adult education for the Romany population at open colleges and folk high schools. The instruction provided by these colleges and schools is important especially for Romanies who have not completed the syllabus required under compulsory school attendance. Primarily, the instruction aims to teach the Romanies literacy and numeracy and to help them to complete the comprehensive school syllabuses in the various subjects. Study of the Romany language and culture has also been felt to be important. There has also been found to be a need for arranging courses in social studies for Romanies in their own areas of residence.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health has an Advisory Committee on Romany Affairs which monitors the development of the Romanies' opportunities for participating in society and their social conditions in order to promote equality and give statements on these subjects. The Advisory Committee also takes initiatives and makes proposals for improving the Romany population's economic, educational and cultural circumstances and for promoting the recruitment of Romanies. The Advisory Committee also fosters the strengthening of the Romany

language and culture. The Education Unit for the Romany Population is an expert member on the Advisory Committee and collaborates with it in all matters relating to education and training.

The Education Unit for the Romany Population

On 1st February 1994, the National Board of Education established the Education Unit for the Romany Population. The Unit is assigned to develop and implement nation-wide training and education for the Romany population, to promote the Romany language and culture, to engage in information and publicity activity on Romany culture and education, and to carry out the increasing number of international tasks which have arisen as a result of Finland's EU membership.

Educational activity

The permanent activity of the Education Unit for the Romany Population includes further training arranged annually for teachers of the Romany language, training of contact persons, and summer schools in Romany. Curriculum planning work forms part of the Unit's profile, e.g., currently for the Further Qualification of Culture Instructor and Specialist Qualification of Culture Instructor for Romanies. This aims to provide teachers of Romany who are already in work in particular with formal competence so that they can find work in the municipalities on a broader and more equal basis.

Learning materials

Learning materials have been and are being drawn up to meet the needs of both the majority and Romany populations. The material for the majority population is designed to improve knowledge of Romany culture and thereby to reduce prejudices and foster tolerance.

The material for the Romany population is designed to increase their knowledge of their own roots, to strengthen their own identity, and to bolster and develop the Romany language.

Besides national funding, support for producing learning materials has also been obtained, from the EU's Comenius Programme.

The National Board of Education has produced the following learning materials for promoting the language and culture:

- a booklet and cassette of children's songs in Romany
- a video called "Samuelin päivä" (Samuel's day), which tells about Romany culture through a Romany boy's day at school and his family
- "Romanioppilas koulussa" (The Romany pupil at school) is material designed to provide ideas for school authorities, head masters and other individuals who need to know about Romany culture in school work
- an ABC in Romany and a grammar to support language instruction
- "Romanit ja terveystalvelut" (Romanies and health services)—a guide for public health professionals
- the Ministry of Education has also provided funding for a Romany-Finnish-English dictionary which was completed in 1995

The National Board of Education and the Education Unit are also currently planning together a three-year (2000-2002) package of learning material in Romany for the comprehensive and senior high schools. The package includes practice books and workbooks, readers, a basic guide to civic skills, senior high school textbooks and workbooks and other peripheral material.

The Education Unit is also starting an extensive long-term comprehensive school project. One of its aims is to work with teachers and Romany homes to find ways of encouraging Romany children to complete the comprehensive school.

Publicity work

The Unit publishes an information bulletin, *Latso Diives*, four times a year. It is aimed at the majority and Romany populations and focuses on increasing the Romany population's knowledge of opportunities for education and training and of society in general. The majority population are provided with information on Romany culture.

The publicity work also includes arranging and taking part in various seminars, lectures, exhibitions and participation in multicultural and tolerance events. The work seeks to distribute information on both sides and to improve opportunities for co-operation.

The Education Unit has also arranged theme days for women. These have examined matters closely relating to a woman's sphere and issues of parenthood and schooling.

The Education Unit also supplies various Finnish authorities, the Council of Europe and other international bodies with statements and stances on educational matters affecting Romanies.

International activity

Now that Finland has acceded to the European Union, it has been able to take part in the EU's Sokrates training programme, in its Comenius programme in particular. Comenius focuses on training and education for migrant workers, the itinerant population and Romany children, and on intercultural instruction. It is an inter-school programme. The Education Unit for the Romany Population is currently co-ordinating just such a Comenius programme, the Rom-sf project, with the participation of Sweden and Portugal. The project is producing a book on Romany culture as teaching material for the lower forms of the comprehensive school and a book of Romany biographies for use in the upper forms and in tertiary and university instruction.

The Education Unit for the Romany Population is also planning a broader EU project to promote school attendance by Romany children. Participants from Sweden, Estonia, France, England, Norway and Lithuania have registered with the project. EU subsidy for a visit to prepare the project has been applied for and a decision will be obtained by the end of this year.

The Education Unit for the Romany Population acts independently and its work is led by a management group which includes Romany members.

The Rom-sf project

One goal of the Sokrates Programme is to foster skills in seldom used languages within the European Union and the European Economic Area. This Sokrates Programme incorporates the Comenius-2 Programme, which focuses on the education of migrant workers, the itinerant population and Romany children, and on intercultural instruction. The Education Unit for the Romany Population is co-ordinating the Comenius-2 Programme's Rom-sf project in collaboration with Sweden and Portugal.

The Rom-sf project is gathering, recording and publishing Romany biographies. The idea for it was conceived in 1996 by the area advisory committee on Romany affairs of the Provincial Government of Southern Finland and what was then Häme province. The National Board of Education and the Education Unit for the Romany Population applied for and obtained support from the EU for the two-year project, running from 1998 to 1999. The EU support totals 60,000 ECUs, most of which has been spent on gathering interviews and on the practical costs of the project (publicity, national seminar etc.). The national share of the funding includes the Project Secretary's salary, the writers' and illustrator's fees, i.e., publishing activity.

In Portugal, the Ministry of Education and four schools are taking part in the project. In Sweden, the Nordic Romany Council and the National Association of Finns in Sweden are involved. In Finland, the project is being run by the Provincial Governments of Southern and Western Finland, Järvenpää Parish Institute and the lower forms of two comprehensive schools.

The project had the goal of gathering vanishing Romany tradition with the aid of interviews. It has succeeded admirably with this; more than 120 interviews were gathered in Finland, approx. a hundred in Portugal and forty in Sweden. Two books of this material are to be published. One is a volume of stories for use in teaching in the lower forms of the comprehensive school. It is targeted at both Romany children, to strengthen their culture and identity, and at the majority population, in order to increase knowledge of Romany culture and promote tolerance.

The authors of this book are Leena Laulajainen and Malla Pirttilahti, and it is being illustrated by Kari Lindgren. The National Board of Education will publish the book, which is due for completion in spring 2000.

The other work is for use in teaching in the upper forms of the comprehensive school, at the senior high school and in tertiary and university education. It is a compilation of biographies based on interviews with Romanies. The Romanies talk in their own words about their lives and experiences in and of Finland within the context of Finnish history. It does not consist, therefore, solely of entire biographies. The author of this book is Marketta Ollikainen and it will be ready in summer 2000. The writers of both books are supported by a working group with Romany members. A book of stories and a book of biographies are also being produced in Portugal. Both countries will publish their own books, in their own languages. The aim is to apply to the EU for additional support for possibly translating the works into a language of the EU and to subsequently publish the books under one cover, but these matters are still unresolved.

Roma in the Educational System of Bulgaria – a problem analysis

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Prepared by the Institute for Educational Policy, Open Society Institute – Budapest, May 2000

Foreword

This document was originally prepared for the Open Society Foundation - Sofia, with the assistance of the Institute for Educational Policy, OSI-Budapest, as a problem analysis upon which the Foundation could base its strategy in education with particular attention to equity. The intent was not to focus on international or national legislation, but to reveal and understand the barriers in the education system, and society, which hinder Roma children from having equal access to education. An understanding of these barriers will ultimately help to design appropriate strategies to counter them.

The document was presented to the Open Society Foundation—Sofia's Education Board and Roma Board for review in May 2000. It was later decided to develop this work further for publication to a wider audience.

Unlike many reports, this one does not provide recommendations. The Open Society Institute-Budapest is currently overseeing a research project on select education programs in the region of Central-Eastern Europe.¹ The results of this research will help guide strategic directions in the future for the Soros Foundations wishing to support equity in education for Roma. Recommendations to the Open Society Foundation - Sofia, and to other Soros Foundations, will be made upon completion of this research.

¹ *Expected date of research results in April, 2001.*

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I. Introduction

I.1. Note on Methodology and Organization of the Report

In preparing this report, written information was collected from various sources, including NGOs, the Internet, governmental and intergovernmental organizations, and documents which the author and the IEP already possessed. After extracting the relevant information, and organizing it into the format of the problem analysis outline (see annex), a one-week field research to Bulgaria was arranged, with the assistance of Romani community leader Nikolay Kirilov from Lom.

Meetings on current needs with School Directors, teachers, NGO community workers, local and regional authorities, and visits to schools and classrooms took place in the counties of Montana (Montana city and the town of Lom), Vidin (Vidin city), Kurdjali (Kurdjali city), and Sofia („Fakulteta“ district). Visits to NGOs working with local Romani communities in the villages of Valchedram and Biala Slatina were also made, though schools were not visited as it was a Saturday. For the most part, Romani neighborhood schools were visited, but some ethnic Bulgarian and mixed schools were also included for comparative purposes, while one „special school“ in Vidin was also visited.

Upon returning, the current report was prepared, on the basis of the first draft and information from the field research. The report starts with some brief background information on the present-day situation of schooling and education of Roma, followed by contextual information on relevant legislation and the education system in Bulgaria. Next, the profile of schools in terms of location, ethnic composition and general standards are outlined, and data on the achievement levels and trends of Roma in the educational system is presented. Following this, there is a short section on the discriminatory attitudes, deliberate segregation and exclusion confronting Roma in education and schooling. Section III points out some specific issues and needs for improving the education and schooling Roma, and Section IV outlines the governmental plans in the field of education and Roma, in the context of its global policy on Roma. The report ends with a brief note section on donor programs concerning education and Roma, the concluding remarks and a data sheet concerning education and Roma.

Annexed to the report is a list of Bulgarian organizations, currently engaged in activities concerning the education and schooling of Roma, a map showing the religious make-up of selected Romani communities throughout Bulgaria (Tomova, IMIR, 1995), and the agenda of the field visit.

1.2. Brief background and History of Roma and the Educational Process in Bulgaria

As in other countries, the Roma of Bulgaria are a diverse ethnic group, with different sub-group dialects of the Romani language, traditional heritage and degrees of integration and assimilation. Likewise, general anti-Roma sentiments lead to negative stereotyping in the mass media, anti-Roma violence, police abuses, and other forms of discrimination and exclusion in public life. In the typical Romani neighborhood („mahala“), situated toward the outskirts of cities, towns and villages all over the country, unemployment is extremely high, educational achievement levels are low, housing conditions are usually inadequate, chronic health problems exist, public services may not operate regularly, and the neighborhood schools look more like prisons rather than a place for personal development.

In May 1992 a census carried out by the regional offices of the Ministry of Internal affairs put the total population of Bulgaria at 8,487,317, out of which 533,466 or 6.45% of the total population identified themselves as „Tsigani“ (Roma). Like other countries in the region, the official census figure is generally regarded as well below the actual number of Roma. This is, in part, due to the negative image of Roma in the country, and the preference to declare oneself as a member of the majority population—„Bulgarian“, or in this case the Turkish minority as well. Indeed there are Roma who speak the Turkish language and identify as Turks, especially in regions with a high Turkish minority. Relations with other „Roma“ can be strained, including relations amongst students in the schools with these mixed groups. Leading sociologists and Romani activists generally estimate the actual Romani population to be from 700,000 to 800,000, or about 9% of the total population.

The Roma are dispersed throughout the territory of Bulgaria. A map of the locations included in a sociological study concerning Roma in Bulgaria gives a picture of how well dispersed the Roma are throughout the country. The map also provides a religious profile of communities, whether Christian, Moslem, or mixed. (see annex 2) Larger cities such as Sofia, Plovdiv, Burgas, St. Zagora, Sliven, Yambol, and Lom have the largest and most densely populated Roma settlements. For the most part, Roma live in the ghetto sections of these towns.

The reality of Roma populations in any country is that the diversity that exists between groups of Roma makes categorizing very difficult. For the sake of trying to make some understanding, however, of the Roma populations in Bulgaria, this report will describe three general categories, though perhaps arbitrary: traditional Romani families, non-traditional Romani families, and Roma who are currently falling or have fallen into *anomie*.

Traditional Roma families are those who still speak the Romany language, who have perhaps continued in the age-old occupation historically associated with their group, and who might still dress according to their ethnic costume. Non-traditional Roma families are those who have assimilated more into Bulgarian culture. They may have shifted their language to Bulgarian (or often times, the older generation will speak Romanes, and the younger generation the dominant language. Their clothing does not necessarily mark them ethnically. *Anomie* is a sociological term that is defined as, „the loss of one's own culture, ethnic characteristics, and moral principles, without accepting new ones to replace them“ (UNICEF, 1992 in Nunev, 1998: 18). Those Roma groups who fall into this category are usually the poorest and exist on the margins of society.

One can also say that in each of the Roma groups (kaldaras, rudar, basket-knitters, etc.), however, representatives of the above three categories can be found. Moreover, these categories also apply to the majority population.

Some sociologists have stated that in traditional Roma families, education does not form a priority in their value system, and an early abandonment of schooling may, in part, be attributed to the need to help the family earn income, or to early marriages. For non-traditional Roma, who constitute a very small proportion of Roma, education may be expected to have a higher value, as it does for the majority population (Nunev, 1998: 18).

Those in the process of *anomie*, who are also referred to as the most marginalized, are in a difficult situation, and warrant particular attention. This group appears to represent a high percentage of the Roma who either have high absenteeism or do not attend school at all. This group also has more serious health problems and lives in extremely impoverished conditions. Based on a 1994 representative study, the percentage of Roma in this category was estimated to be 15-20%, with variations from one settlement, region and sub-group to another (Tomova, 1995: 31).

With respect to education categorisation of Roma may be misleading because the problem is not with the traditional Roma or with the Roma who fell in *anomie*, but with the overwhelming part of the Roma community (which is neither traditional nor in *anomie*), which faces problems in education resulting from poor motivation and lack of means.

It should be noted, however, that an oversimplified and over generalized assessment of the value attributed to education by each of these groups may produce an irrelevant picture of the Roma vis-à-vis the educational system.

For persons who belong to the *anomie* group, ghetto life and the effects of past assimilation policies have resulted in creating persons who typically do not see themselves as equal citizens or as having equal rights, and where „the abandoned cultural values may also be accompanied by other problems such as a missing family member, conflict between generations, lack of family business income, or divorced parents“ (Nunev, 1998: 28). Other problematic side effects of the socio-economic transition in Bulgaria may be found amongst these families including „unemployment, alcoholism, prostitution, drug abuse amongst youth, vagrancy, theft, beggary, waste food collection, lack of interest in education as a value“ (Nunev, 1998: 28).

The extreme marginalization of this group, „from nowhere“ or belonging to „no one“ was discussed amongst Romani women in the region, who stressed the particularly vulnerable situation of women in these conditions (ARW, 1999: 4).

In Bulgaria in the 1950's a policy of forced settlement of nomadic and semi-nomadic Roma was accompanied by attempts by the Communist Party to increase the schooling of Roma. Today the Roma population is still settled, though some families and persons migrate within Bulgaria for seasonal labor opportunities.

During that time, a number of new schools were built in Romani settlements, and results were generally viewed as having a positive impact on the literacy of Roma. However, by the mid-1960's and onward, the quality in these Romani neighborhood schools declined. Many Roma attended irregularly or dropped out, and a number of schools adopted an increased focus on vocational skills, replacing courses such as Bulgarian language, mathematics, foreign languages, natural sciences, etc. The quality of education in these schools did not prepare students for advancement on to higher levels of education (Tomova, 1995, p. 58).

The legacy of these schools with an emphasis on low level vocational training still exists today (This is discussed in more detail later in section II Situation of Roma and Schooling—General Trends). In 1991, the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science registered 31 such schools with a vocational emphasis, where some 17,800 students attended. In addition, there were another 77 schools that the former Communist Party labeled as schools „for children with a lower life-style and culture“ (SC, 2000: 61). In 1992, the Ministry of Education declared that this lower standard curriculum with a vocational emphasis should be replaced with the national curriculum of normal schools. However, it is generally agreed that „the educational environment remained unchanged, and determines the lower quality of education in these schools today“ (SC, 2000: 61).

In addition to lower level vocational schools, inequity in quality of education and schooling also exists in the separate Romani neighborhoods. Separated Roma neighborhoods, and schools within them, continue to serve as an invisible wall between the Roma and ethnic Bulgarians. For example, a Romani organization working in the „Fakulteta“ district of Sofia, a neighborhood that is predominantly Roma, said that few of its 35,000 inhabitants ever leave the district, and some only as often as 1 or 2 times per year.² Similarly, while in Sofia, the taxi driver was hesitant to drive researchers to the „Fakulteta“ district, stating that he does not usually go to that area.

² Discussion with Romani Baxt. March 2000.

1.3. Profile of the Education System in Bulgaria

1.3.1. Legal Provisions

The Bulgarian Constitution states that „education for all children under the age of sixteen is compulsory, as is the right to free elementary and secondary education“ (Art. 53). The basic issues concerning education in Bulgaria are set out in the Public Education Act, first adopted in 1991. In 1998, it was stipulated in the Public Education Act that basic education of 8 years is the minimum necessary knowledge, and pupils who fail to complete 8 years and are 13 years old should be enrolled in vocational classes (UNESCO, 2000: Pt. I).

Citizens are entitled to select the school and type of training according to their personal preferences and means. The Public Education Act ensures the conditions and guarantees equal rights for all children to receive education, and provides possibilities for their further development and accomplishment of a high level of knowledge in the system of secondary education.

In 1999, the National Assembly adopted the Level of Education, General Education Minimum and Curriculum Act (State Gazette, issue 67 of July 27, 1999). The Act aims to implement a common minimum of education for all students that shall guarantee the equivalent of the documents for a completed grade, stage and degree, as well as possibilities to move from one type of school to another. Based on this document, two public general education requirements will be changed: study content and grading system requirements (UNESCO, 2000: Pt. 1).

The Bulgarian language, as the official language of the Republic, will ensure that its „study and use [of the Bulgarian language] shall be the right and obligation of every Bulgarian citizen“. For pupils from minority groups and with a mother tongue other than Bulgarian, conditions for study of their mother tongue, in addition to Bulgarian, are

to be secured in the municipal schools under the protection and control of the state (Law on Public Education, Art. 8, par. 1.2). In 1994, the study of the mother tongue became a „mandatory elective“ with a view to include all stages of education after the respective laws and curricula have been approved.

While Romani language has been taught in connection with some NGO initiatives with local schools, Romani language is not offered in the universities. There has been some controversy over a supposed government-formulated need to have a standardized Romani language before introducing it formally into the educational system. According to some experts, however, the government never officially formulated the need for standardization of the Romani language. Some officials might have referred to the fact that the Romani language is not standardized simply to give an argument for their reluctance to introduce/support the study of Romani language at school. The key issue is certainly not the fact that the language is not standardized. The government has never opted for a policy of encouraging the teaching of Romani language that includes teacher training, development of textbooks, etc.³ Currently, efforts toward developing a standardized Romani language are being made by Romani expert Iossiv Nunev, with initial support from the Open Society Fund in Bulgaria.

³ Discussion with Savelina Danova, March 2001.

Regarding minority policies, it should be noted that „No restrictions or privileges based on race, nationality, gender, ethnic or social origin, faith and social status are admissible“ (Bulgarian Constitution, Art. 6, par. 2). However, in 1992, the legal basis for social-based affirmative action was created with the Constitutional Court's ruling that there may be „certain socially justified privileges for „groups of citizens“ who are in „an unfavorable social situation“ (SC, 2000: 54, 63).

There is also a National Program for the Education of Adults. This program's main objective is the formation of a national system of adult education. The basic goals of the Program include: adjusting the education for adults to the social and economic reforms in the country, improving access of adults to various types of education and training, the elaboration of needed legal provisions (UNESCO, 2000, Pt. 1).

As highlighted by the existing problems outlined in this report, there is a gap between the standards and rights set forth in existing legislation and the current schooling conditions and educational opportunities of the majority of Roma pupils in Bulgaria. In many cases, it may be said that there is a lack of appropriate mechanisms and institutional arrangements to implement these provisions, coupled with insufficient political will and the difficulties relating to the crisis of the Bulgarian economy.

1.3.2. Structure of the Educational System in Bulgaria

Pre-school (Kindergarten) is for children from two to six or seven years of age. Local governments fund over 95% of kindergartens, though a private sector is developing. Most Bulgarian families send their children to Kindergarten (SC, 2000:58). The rate of kindergarten fees is determined by the local government councils, according to the Local Taxes and Fees Act, (UNESCO, 2000), where lower-income families should pay lower fees (SC, 2000:58). One of the reasons for Roma's low representation in Kindergarten is the need to pay such fees. For example, social assistance in the town of Lom is about 30 BGL (or 30 DEM) per month, plus 10 BGL per child. The kindergarten tax is 13 BGL.⁴ For families living on social assistance, this kindergarten fee would represent almost 33% of their monthly income.

⁴ Discussion with N. Kirilov, April 2000.

General education (basic early primary education, grades 1-4, and pre-secondary education grades 5-8) begins when a child is six or seven years and is completed without examinations (SC, 2000:58). In a sociological survey carried out in 206 compact Romani neighborhoods in towns and villages, it was concluded that the average age for starting school is often 8-9 years (Tomova, 1995: 60). School Directors also mentioned that they have some students in the 1st grade level who should be in the 4th grade level.

Certificates for general education are issued based on scores in the subjects included in the school's plan of study (SC, 2000:58). In regular primary schools there are no entrance exams. However, in profile-oriented primary schools, such as those with a foreign language or music and arts profile, students are required to pass an entrance exam. Romani representation in these schools is practically null, as they lack sufficient preparation to pass entrance exams along with the necessary parent income to cover the costs of schoolbooks and materials needed for the classes.

Secondary education is from 9th to 11th, 12th or 13th grade, depending on the type of school and course programs offered. Minimally, the 11th grade must be completed for matriculation. Secondary education diplomas may be obtained at: 1) general comprehensive education schools, 2) specialized, profile-oriented schools, and 3) vocational, technical schools.

Comprehensive secondary schools may range from Grade 9 to Grade 11, 12 or 13, again, depending on the type of school and course programs offered. The profile-oriented secondary schools are from 9th to 12th grade. There, one may specialize in natural sciences and mathematics, the humanities, sports, arts, etc. Schools with intensive foreign language instruction are from 8th to 12th grade (SC, 2000: 58, UNESCO, 2000, pt. 1).

Structural changes within the secondary school system have influenced the number of non-specialized secondary schools to greatly decrease, while the total number of specialized schools has increased (Savova, 1996).

Secondary vocational education includes 4-year schools from 9th to 12th grades; technical schools from 8th to 12th grade with intensive foreign language studies, and secondary vocational and technical schools from the 9th to 11th grade (SC, 2000:58). These vocational schools have a normal matriculation process.

In the above institutions, a diploma is awarded after passing the matriculation exams, which entitle the student to continue on to higher education.

It should be noted that the vocational schools mentioned in this section differ from those mentioned earlier. The former can be found in Romani neighborhoods and replace general courses with some vocational training with the perspective that the students will not continue their education. Though theoretically students should be able to continue after completing such schools, practically, they have received a lower level of education than in other schools, which makes it extremely difficult to integrate upon completion to „normal“ schools.

1.3.3 Administrative Structure

Formal education is still centralized under the Ministry of Education and Science. Regional Inspectorates carry out the state management of education. The country is divided into nine districts, and 28 regional structures operate in the major cities. The Regional Inspectorates are responsible for permanent inspection of schools to ensure that state requirements are met, and have the right to take decisions on a range of issues regarding local specifics of the region. For the opening, restructuring or closure of schools, they may make recommendations, though the actual decision is to be taken by the Minister of Education. The Regional Inspectorates are directly subordinated to the Ministry of Education, just as school management bodies are directly subordinated to the Inspectorates (Savova, 1996⁵).

The municipalities (local governments) are not directly engaged in the management of the educational system, though they are responsible for about 50% of the schools budgets (Savova, 1996). Municipalities are also responsible for controlling compulsory education, and to prevent non-enrollment and dropouts (UNESCO, 2000: pt. I).

⁵ With the ongoing reforms within the educational system, this information may not be fully up-to-date, as it was published in 1996.

Each school is represented as a legal entity by a school head (Director), who is appointed by the Minister of Education on a competitive basis and is directly subordinated to the Minister. The head reports on his or her activities to the Teachers' Council, the School Board, and to the Minister. The Teachers' Council and School Board are collective managerial bodies of the school. The Teachers' Council includes all members of the teaching staff, and its decisions are binding for the school, canceled only by a qualified majority of the Council itself, or by the Minister of Education. The School Board is a consultative body, which includes teachers, parents, pupils and representatives of the community. It meets to discuss reports, projects and other documents and makes proposals regarding the development and activities of the school (Savova, 1996). In some education projects of NGOs, efforts have been made to involve these school boards, including the participation of Roma.

Currently, the reforms in the context of overall decentralization efforts include plans to further decentralize the system, where greater authority will be given to the Regional Inspectorates and to the School Directors.

1.3.4 Financing

The financing of schools for children with special education needs and most vocational schools is carried out from the state budget by the Ministry of Education,. The rest of the schools are funded by the local municipality, and form the core of the education system (Savova, 1996).

The Ministry of Education is to determine the annual allowance of every school, according to the state education requirements, and the level of education, type of school and living conditions in the region. Therefore, the budget for the whole educational system and for each school would be determined by multiplying this figure by the number of students (UNESCO, 2000: pt. I). However, the UNESCO document, prepared by the National Institute for Education at the Ministry of Education and Science, notes that the budget is not yet determined this way, though no other explanation is given.

Budget expenses for education are allocated out into items of expenditure. According to the Budget Law, primary importance is paid to expenditure on salaries and social security rather than on repairs and new buildings, canteen overheads, medical insurance, textbooks, etc. Since 1989 the resources allocated for education have been chronically short (Savova, 1996). From 1992 to 1997, the share of the GDP allocated for education dropped from 6,06% to 3,2%, which according to the National Institute for Education, is due to the difficulties of the Bulgarian economy (UNESCO, 2000: Pt. II).

⁶ Interview, Ministry of Education, Sofia. April 2000.

⁷ In the project „Financial Managing of the Secondary Education“, elaborated by the Ministry of Education and Science and funded by the PHARE program, 100 schools have been implementing the policy of decentralized decision-making through a delegated budget system. The essence of the delegated budget is that subsidies from the state and municipal budgets are allocated to schools according to a certain formula based on several criteria such as the number of students, the size of the school building, expenses on repair work and maintenance. The School Director has greater freedom and flexibility to operate the funds as s/he deems necessary. The Ministry of Education and Science is expected to take a decision for expanding the practice of the delegated budgets. (UNESCO, 2000: Pt. 1)

⁸ Discussion at Lom City Hall, May 2000.

In the context of overall measures to decentralize the system, the local municipalities are to retain more of the local taxes collected with which they would also be expected to cover a higher percentage of the local school costs.⁶ Municipalities are expected to cover, „health care and security in kindergartens and schools; funds for support, building, equipment and repair works of schools and kindergartens; funds for implementation of state educational requirements ... as well as funding on all sections of the curriculum of the municipal kindergartens, schools and servicing units; conditions for canteens, hostels, recreation and sports facilities and transportation for children, pupils and teachers; scholarships and specific aid for pupils“ (UNESCO, 2000: Pt. I)⁷. Furthermore, municipalities are expected to ensure the compulsory attendance of students to school and the administration of sanctions if not respected

In the town of Lom, it was explained that the budget for schools is comprised of 49% local tax revenues, and 51% from the central government budget. Of the total 2 million BGL (1 DEM = 1 BGL) annual budget for all schools in Lom, the government is currently faced with a 1 million BGL deficit.⁸ It has been noted that „decentralization, whilst it has the advantage of more local, community control, nevertheless puts extra strain on poor communities who are required to match or contribute to central funds through local taxation“ (Penn, 1999: 5). Furthermore, those schools with students coming from working families have managed to attract more resources through parent contributions and good connections with funders, and are able to provide extra lessons and support to pupils. Therefore, „schools are not resourced equally, and non-working parents would have difficulty meeting fees or providing suitable school clothing or textbooks and learning materials“ (Penn, 1999: 5-6).

In most of the schools visited, especially Romani neighborhood schools, little to no funding remained after the payment of salaries. Therefore, the schools have remained without repairs, textbooks are scarce and there are insufficient pedagogic materials. In one Romani neighborhood school, the Director said that they did not even have money for chalk this year, while no repairs had been carried out since 1992. These dynamics contribute to the depressing appearance and the lower quality education provided for these schools.

The contrasting appearances of the run-down Romani neighborhood schools and the Bulgarian schools, especially the „elite“ schools, in the centers of towns raises the question as to how schools come to have different amounts of resources for such works? According to one Romani community leader, this is a form of discrimination. The practice is that the local governments allocate money for repairs to the schools situated in the center of town, and by the time they arrive to the Romani neighborhood schools, typically located toward the outskirts, there are no more funds.⁹

⁹ Interview with Nikolay Kirilov, May 2000

By decision of the College of the Ministry of Education and Science, from the 1999-2000 school year, textbooks will no longer be provided from the 1st to the 8th grade, free of charge, but for the 1st grade only. A special library fund is to be established from the available textbooks, which may be used by poor families, as determined by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (UNESCO, 2000: Pt. I). In the Romani neighborhood schools, a lack of funding for textbooks was expressed as one extreme difficulty, contributing to a lower educational standard in these schools.

For the „elite“ foreign language schools, it was explained that parents have to buy the textbooks, where one of the books costs about 40 BGL. Without a certain economic standing or special subsidies, it would not be possible for poor and low-income families to buy the necessary textbooks and materials to participate in these schools.

II. Situation of Roma and Schooling – General Trends

II.1. Profile of Schools

This report will refer to four types of schools that can be identified in Bulgaria. These are not official references, but used for the purpose of this report: 1) „Romani neighborhood schools“ 2) „mixed schools“ 3) predominantly „ethnic Bulgarian schools“ 4) „Special school“ for children with special needs.

II.1.1. „Romani Neighborhood School“

A „Romani neighborhood school“ is one that is usually situated in or near the Romani quarter of cities and towns, and attended predominantly by Romani students. Romani neighborhood schools may be general education primary schools (1st to 4th grade or 1st to 8th grade) and some may be comprehensive schools (1st to the 11th grade). For the primary and pre-secondary level schools, the students are to continue their secondary education in another school, usually located more toward the center of the town and attended by other non-Romani students from the respective locality. The general appearance of the Romani neighborhood school is an old, run-down building, often with barbed wire on the windows, broken windows, paint peeling off the walls, and classrooms with little decoration and facilities. Some of the schools have their toilets located in a small cement structure away from the main building, which can also be used by other members of the community. An estimated 70% of the total Roma population have attended or do attend these „local“ schools.¹⁰

¹⁰ Discussion with Rumyan Russinov, June 2000.

Teachers in Romani neighborhood schools are noted to experience higher levels of distress, and turnovers are high (Tomova, 1995, p. 62). Enthusiasm and motivation is stifled by the high truancy, lack of parent interest, poor working conditions and low salaries. Also, „it is an unspoken rule that the least qualified teachers inevitably get posted to such schools“ (Vassileva, ERRC, 1998).

Emphasis should be made here that lack of preliminary preparation to work with minority children and lack of motivation of the teachers in the Romani schools is due, largely, to widely held negative prejudices. This, in turn, may largely contribute to the poor scholastic achievement of the Romani pupils as well as to their low level of attendance of school.

The Romani neighborhood schools are general schools, rather than profile-oriented, and it is not uncommon that these schools offer a limited curricula, coupled with a focus on vocational training in the latter years. In reality, this offer inhibits further continuation of the students' education owing to the lower level of education received.

Some Romani parents have expressed an interest in their children receiving this vocational replacement of normal studies. Some attribute this desire to chronic economic difficulties and low self-esteem of parents in the ghettos, but also to manipulation by the school administration to maintain their teaching staff (Nunev, 1998: 15). There is no official record of the number of schools still practicing this policy, inherited from the former Communist times.

According to former Romani teacher and current governmental expert, Iossif Nunev, significant improvements in the education of Roma cannot take place without breaking the family-neighborhood-school circle of the Romani ghetto life. This is especially the case for those families described as having fallen into anomie, living in depressing and substandard living conditions, and who do not set high and challenging objectives for themselves. Nunev says, „The terrible poverty and the anomie of Romani families are real facts. The circle is closed by the schools for Romani children“ (Nunev, 1998: 29, 22).

A lack of positive goals, motivation and interest concerning school can be expected when the children come from families who suffer chronic food shortages, overcrowded living quarters, streets filled with trash, and lack of electricity and water supply (Nunev, 1998: 21). Health problems contributing to irregular school attendance and abandonment are also a natural consequence of such living conditions. A number of school Directors and teachers stated that many of the children are absent owing to health problems, and they are regularly confronted with children who openly complain of hunger.

Overall, many Romani children have a more narrow experience in the context of the predominantly family focused environment, including a lack of preparation for mental efforts of schooling. Socialization therefore is slower and more difficult, especially given that attitudes for intellectual efforts are not developed in kindergarten and pre-school, and the schooling experience itself remains within the Romani neighborhood environment (Nunev, 1998: 21).

At the same time, it must be recognized that the family ties and relations are an essential traditional Romani value, with a historically rooted function in preserving Romani culture and identify, while compensating for the weakened recognition of Roma by the state and society (Nunev, 1998: 26).

II.1.2. „Mixed Schools“, Segregated Classes

Roma can also be found in schools with other ethnic Bulgarians, referred to in this report as „mixed schools“. Mixed schools can be both primary and pre-secondary/secondary. Such schools can be found in small villages with fewer schools, and on the borderline areas between the Roma neighborhood and non-Roma streets in towns. Mixed schools are mostly general schools, with better physical conditions than the average Romani neighborhood school, and with a quality of education that could provide for continuation onto higher education. This, however, does not appear to be in the future for most Roma students. In one mixed school from 1st to 8th grade, Roma comprise about 30% of the student body. The school Director explained that the Bulgarian students transfer to high school after the 7th or 8th grade, while over 90% of the Roma students stay an extra year in order to receive the 8th grade diploma, as they do not plan to continue their education.¹¹

¹¹ Interview, Iom. April 2000.

It has also been reported that Roma students are segregated into „Roma classes“ within the mixed schools. This can happen through School Administration decisions, when the number of students in a particular grade level requires the formation of another class, and where the Roma students are placed. In a discussion with a local Romani leader, it was also stated that the Roma students in the local school are always placed in the Russian language class, while the Bulgarian students are placed in the English language class.¹²

¹² Discussion, Valchedram, April 2000.

As segregated classes do not officially exist, there is no figure on the extent of this problem, though recognition of their existence is made in the context of the governmental policy on Roma (See section IV).

II.1.3 „Ethnic Bulgarian Schools“

In the „ethnic Bulgarian schools“, there are usually no Romani students, or perhaps a few who come from well integrated families, most likely living outside of the Romani neighborhood. As noted earlier, there is an increasing trend in the Bulgarian education system for profile-oriented schools, either beginning from the primary level or at the pre-secondary level. From outside ethnic Bulgarian schools appear to be, generally, in better condition, and the families are expected to provide support for the specialized textbooks required for the classes. In the towns visited, there was always one „elite“ school, or the „best“ school, usually specialized in foreign languages. Upon visiting some of these schools it may be said that, contrary to the Romani neighborhood schools, the buildings were in good condition, rooms were more spacious, better lit, plants were abundant, pictures were on the walls, and a lot of books were on the desks of the students.

II.1.4 „Special Schools“

The over-representation of Roma in so-called „special schools“ for children with physical and mental disabilities is a relatively well-known problem in Bulgaria, though there have been no significant efforts to halt current practices. For a number of years, it has been observed that the decrease in state subsidies for school-age children was accompanied with a rise in the proportion of Romani children in special schools, where about 1 out of every 3 students was of Romani origin (Tomova, 1995: 61).

More recently, the Save the Children draft report notes:

The majority of children in special schools are from minority origins. Most are from the Roma and Gypsy communities who have been marginalized, or who have preferred ethnic identity. ... There is no precise data about the number of minority children in special schools (SC, 2000: 61).

In 1999, it was reported that there are 274 special schools/children's homes, located both in large towns and some remote country locations. Though unofficial, Romani representation in these schools is estimated at 70% (Penn, 1999: 7).

Similarly, the Regional School Inspector in the northern county of Montana estimated that more than 60% of the children in the county's special schools were Romani origin, and from families confronted with extremely difficult economic situations.¹³

¹³ Discussion, April 2000.

There are a number of alleged reasons why normal Romani children are put into schools for the mentally handicapped and for children with special needs; one is money. In comparing the budgets for all needs (materials, books, repairs, etc.), excluding teachers' salaries, a Romani neighborhood school has about 1,000 BGL for a school of some 650 children, while a special school in the same town has about 50,000 BGL for some 75 children.¹⁴

¹⁴ Discussion, Vidin, April 2000.

In the context of Bulgaria's current economic difficulties, the free food and other services provided to students in these schools may be a motivating factor for some parents. One Director of a special school also stated that they provide students with clothing, which they receive from various charities. All special or auxiliary schools are financed fully by the Ministry of Education, unlike normal schools that also receive funding from local government budgets.

Romani children's insufficient knowledge of the Bulgarian language may also lead to their transfer to special schools, as suggested by former Romani school teacher Svetlana Vassileva:

For a teacher the easiest solution is simply to get rid of such problem kids. Usually parents are „strongly advised“ to take their child to a „special school“ for mentally retarded children. The teacher's authority plus free lunches in these establishments push many parents to comply (Vassileva, ERRC, 1998).

The official procedures for determining whether a child should be placed in a special school involves either a committee consisting of a psychologist, an educator and the child's teacher (appointed by the regional educational office), or by the issuing of a medical certificate for the child's psychological status (SC, 2000: 62).

It is also understood, however, that the exams are not culturally sensitive, as they take place only in Bulgarian. There are also no clear criteria for determining the mental health of the child, and a decision can be made in 2-3 minutes. Finally, the commission itself is not independent.¹⁵ In the context of the current demographic trend in Bulgaria, it is clear that a number of schools will have to be closed, as the school-aged population has decreased significantly. Therefore, decisions may be influenced by an interest to keep schools open and maintain jobs.

¹⁵ Discussion with Montana School Inspector, April 2000.

Local, regional and central government authorities all recognized that there are Romani children in these schools who are not mentally handicapped. However, as no steps have been taken to correct the situation, there seems to be a lack of real political will to do anything. One foreseen change, which may have a positive influence, is the

intention to transfer fiscal responsibility of the schools to the local governments, who may be more set on reducing spending, and therefore seeing to the closure of some of the schools.

This study does not tackle the issue of overrepresentation of Romani children in Educational Boarding Schools (EBS), another type of special school, which are under the authority of the Ministry of Education and Science. In short, the Educational Boarding Schools are for children with delinquent behavior. Evidence exists that Romani children are being routed to these schools in violation of established procedures. While this is not an educational problem per se, the situation of Romani children in the EBS is worth studying with a view on the perspectives for their reintegration into regular schools as well as their prospects for further education.¹⁶

¹⁶ Contribution made by Savelina Danova, reviewer of this report.

It was thought that an entire study could be dedicated just to this topic. More information may be obtained through research conducted by the Bulgarian non-governmental organization, Bulgarian Helsinki Committee.

II.2. Problems Concerning School Attendance, Continuation and Overall Achievement Levels

Most of the information available regarding the educational achievement of Roma in Bulgaria comes from sociological surveys. For example, recent figures concerning achievement levels amongst the estimated 800,000 Roma in Bulgaria indicate that some 8% are illiterate; 37% with 4th grade education; 46% with primary education; 8% with secondary education and less than 1% with university degrees (CEGA video, 1999).

According to the results of another study carried out in 137 compact Romani neighborhoods in 1994, „16% of the adult population is illiterate; 36% have primary education only; 40% have only elementary school education, 8.5% have secondary school education and 0.3% have higher or college education“¹⁷ (Tomova, 1995, p. 60).

¹⁷ Here primary is understood as grades 1-4, while elementary includes grades 1-8.

However, in a report commissioned by Cordaid, a program funded by the Netherlands government MATRA program, Bulgarian NGOs stated that, „they do not have sufficient or they have incorrect information about the school population regarding minorities“ (Stichting leerplanontwikkeling—SLO, 2000: 3.4).

II.2.1. Romani Children Not Attending School

The Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science registers that some 60,000 Roma children do not attend school. NGOs estimate that about 120,000 children do not attend school (CEGA video, 1999).

In the same representative study undertaken by Tomova, which is mentioned above, it is stated that, „Out of the 2,047 respondents' children who are subject to compulsory education about whom data was collected during this research, only 978 of them, 47.7% go to school. Over half do not attend school at all.“

II.2.2. Low Percentage of Romani Children Attend Kindergarten

Research indicates that only 12% of 3 to 6-year-old Roma go to kindergarten (Tomova, 1995: p. 62). Other field visit data correspond. In a Montana Romani neighborhood, only 20-24 out of an estimated 200 Romani children of kindergarten age currently attend the local school, partly as there is inadequate space. In Vidin, about 10% of the 1st graders had attended kindergarten, and about 20% were currently enrolled in preparatory classes. Teachers and School Directors stated that for the children who had attended kindergarten and preparatory classes, there was a higher level of socialization to schooling, better results in the learning process (including knowledge of Bulgarian language), and overall a more sustainable educational start.¹⁸

¹⁸ Discussions in Vidin, April 2000.

II.2.3. High Drop-out Rate Amongst Romani Students

According to the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science there are 30,000 - 40,000 dropouts each year, most of whom are Roma (SC, 2000: 60). The Ministry of Education, however, has no dropout policy (Stichting leerplanontwikkeling—SLO, 2000: 3.7).

Some figures for Romani neighborhood schools include the Fakulteta district of Sofia, where there are 7 classes for the 1st grade level, but only 1 class for the 11th grade. In the Romani neighborhood school of Kurdjali, 73 out of the 610 Roma and Turkish-Romani students dropped out or had to repeat the same grade last year. Furthermore, out of 80 students who started, only 40 students completed the 8th grade in 1999.¹⁹

¹⁹ Discussions with School Directors in Sofia, April 2000.

In Romani neighborhood primary schools from the 1st to 4th grade, the dropout rate in the 5th grade is higher upon the expected transfer to another school. Likewise, many students drop out upon transfer from the 8th to the 9th grade, indicating that the 5th and 9th years are critical transition periods. As in other countries, 13 to 14 years of age is the average leaving age from school, especially for girls (Tomova, 1995, p. 60).

Some Romani families engage in internal seasonal migrations to make a living. Many, for example, may work as agricultural day laborers. When they move, they take their children with them, or leave them with other family members, which can result in withdrawal from schooling before the end of the school year.

According to the Law on Education, students who had previously discontinued their education, but for different reasons would now like to continue again, have the possibility to attend night classes. Practically, however, this depends on local factors, such as financing, organization, and mediation activities between Roma and local schools and teachers. This reality, in fact, makes it very difficult for Roma students who have dropped out for various reasons to continue their education.

II.2.4 Overall Lower Achievement Levels Among Romani Girls and Women

In a qualitative study carried out in 8 settlements, it has also been noted that a higher percentage of Romani women than men have never been to school or dropped out before completing the 4th grade, with figures at 29% and 11% respectively. Likewise, overall achievement levels are lower amongst Romani women than men (World Bank, 2000: 21).

II.3. Discriminatory Attitudes, Deliberate Segregation and Exclusion

The deep-rooted and widespread negative attitudes toward Roma amongst the majority society also surface and influence the quality of education for Romani children. Issues that have been discussed in this report—the maintenance of lower standard vocational programs in Romani schools, the transfer of Romani students to „special schools“, the organization of segregated classes, exclusion from ethnic Bulgarian schools, and teachers' neglect of hostile and prejudiced behaviors of non-Romani students toward their Romani classmates—are some of the problems mentioned in various reports.

In the governmental Framework document, it is recognized that, The old regime system of factual segregation of Roma children in the so-called „Gypsy schools“ with emphasis on workshop classes has been inherited in the present and we witness a tendency to form separate segregated classes of Roma children at schools (Govt. Framework, V.).

Recently, there have been local decisions to transfer Romani students from Romani schools in ghettos to mostly ethnic Bulgarian schools. The decision to do such is a result, mainly, of the typical run-down conditions of the Romani neighborhood school and the overall decrease in the number of ethnic Bulgarian children in ethnic Bulgarian schools.²⁰

²⁰ According to Savelina Danova, Bulgarian human rights activist, it should be noted that this case should not be perceived as an attempt to desegregate Romani children. She comments that if desegregation is understood as a conscious effort to eliminate racially motivated separation, that was not the case here. This case of transferring was dictated by the necessity to „people“ the mixed school and therefore preclude reduction of funding, teaching staff, etc.

There have been incidents, however, where these efforts were accompanied by protests from Bulgarian parents and even withdrawal of their students from the school.²¹

On the other hand, an important development in the field of education of Romani children, which has also recently taken place, is the pilot *desegregation* project initiated by the Vidin-based Romani NGO DROM. This project involves busing Romani children from the school in the Romani neighborhood to the nearby mixed schools. Currently, the project is only at the beginning of a long-term process to eventually be taken over by the state.²²

Exclusion from higher quality ethnic Bulgarian and mixed schools also occurs, where school authorities have reportedly denied access to Romani children, „through unofficial, off-the-record harassment or discouragement“ (Vassileva, ERRC, 1998; OSCE, 1999: 73). In the same report, Vassileva also writes that in typical classroom settings it was typical for Romani students to be stigmatized for their behavior by students and teachers.

Likewise, upon starting in mixed schools, the child's experience of hostile attitudes, difficulties with lessons and neglect from teachers can lead to frustration and reduced motivation for continuing school (Tomova, 1995). In discussions with one School Director of a Romani neighborhood school in northwest Bulgaria, it was stated that about 25 children start out in the other mixed schools, but that about 20 eventually come back to the neighborhood school due to their negative experience.

The difficulty of instituting effective educational measures in a climate of unwillingness, negligence, rejection, and hostility cannot be underestimated. One must consider the necessity of mass tolerance education in order to begin to change this climate over time to one that accepts and respects the Romani population, their cultural differences and contribution to the social fabric of Bulgaria.

²¹ Examples include in Yambol, reported in SC, 2000: 61; and in Vidin city according to discussions at the regional government, March 2000.

²² Further information on this project can be obtained from the Roma Participation Program which supported its implementation.

III. Current Needs in View of Improving the Education and Schooling of Roma in Bulgaria

There are a number of complex, often inter-related reasons why there are large dropout rates and overall low achievement levels among Roma in the educational system in Bulgaria. These include: poor social and economic conditions, discriminatory attitudes and exclusion of Romani children, insufficient attendance of Roma in kindergartens, a lack of bilingual teaching methods and materials to overcome initial language barriers, inadequate pre-service teacher training, and a lower level quality of education in Romani neighborhood schools (teachers, materials, general conditions).

III.1. No Institutionalization of Bilingual Programs

Currently, dropouts in the 1st grade can, in part, be attributed to the fact that there are Romani students who start the schooling process while having too little knowledge of the Bulgarian language. Research findings indicate that the percentage of all Roma who speak Romani language at home is about 50%. According to one study, as few as 14% of Roma speak Bulgarian at home. Of the remaining 36%, the majority probably speak Turkish language (Tomova, 1995: 26).²³

²³ A small percent of Vlasi (Vlach Roma) may speak an old dialect of Romanian language.

Currently, no bilingual programs have been introduced on the systemic level to address this problem. For example, one teacher stated that she has students who cannot say they are thirsty or have to go to the bathroom. Naturally, it is not interesting, even frustrating, for a student to listen to a story in Bulgarian language, when they only understand maybe 50% of the words (CEGA video, 1999).

Given the lack of teacher training and bilingual programs and materials, Bulgarian NGO initiatives include the introduction of Teacher's Assistants (Romani) in different schools of the region who assist in the teaching process, providing for translation from Bulgarian to Romani and vice versa. The Teacher's Assistant is usually a young Romani woman from the community, who works alongside a teacher in preparatory classes.

Complementary programs have developed alongside the Teacher's Assistants initiative, especially in creating activities to involve parents in the schooling process. There are instances of parents' committees being formed, educators speaking with parents about the education of their children, and the organization of extra-curricular activities to make the schooling experience more attractive and interesting for students and parents.

Preparatory classes should be organized for children who have a poor command of the Bulgarian language and who have not attended kindergarten. Actual implementation of such classes, however, falls short of the current demand (SC, 2000: 54). At the same time, preparatory classes for children who did not attend kindergarten can only partially compensate for kindergarten, and does not mean a truly equal start at an equal age (Nunev, 1998: 21). It is the responsibility of School Directors to arrange for preparatory classes that involve teacher's assistants in bilingual programs. However, though „preparatory classes“ may exist, they often do not include bilingual programs and assistant teachers.

The Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science allowed NGOs to experiment with the project for assistant teachers, but to say they have „welcomed“ the approach would be an exaggeration. Though there have been rumors that this new post will be formalized within the educational system, thus far no concrete decisions have been made to do so. In the past the Ministry agreed to the implementation of a number of NGO projects which are a venue for additional financial support for the schools. However, with the end of the projects, the activities stopped.

III.2. Unequal Expectations and a Lack of a Support Scheme for Critical Transition Years

There are certain critical stages within the schooling process that begin from kindergarten and end with a higher education. To begin, kindergarten or pre-school attendance is extremely important in order to achieve a positive and more sustainable start to the schooling process.

Given the high rates of unemployment amongst Roma, and the rising costs of kindergarten fees, fewer Romani children attend kindergarten than in previous years. This is a critical period in which the foundation for the child's future education is laid, though currently there is no effective social policy to support the participation of children from low-income families.

It is also important to note that more and more „top“ schools with a foreign language profile require children to pass an entrance exam before entering the 1st grade. Moreover, participation in such schools requires adequate family income to pay for the costs of the materials. For most Roma, their access to these schools is limited or blocked by a lack of preparation for the exams and the financial resources necessary to attend the school.

Other critical stages in the schooling process are the transition from the 4th to the 5th grade, and 8th to 9th grade. In some cases, this involves a transfer from one school to another (i.e. the Romani neighborhood

school to a mixed school). If the quality of education is lower in the Romani school, then students will have difficulties upon transfer, and without extra support and attention, will most likely result in humiliation, frustration and eventual withdrawals.

Also, there are problems of lower expectations toward Romani students, contributing to the lower quality education and lack of preparation for continuing on to higher forms. For example, it was mentioned that the high school for Romani neighborhood pupils in Lom only has 10 grades, rather than 11 or 12, as required for matriculation.²⁴ Supplementary hours held after the regular school hours to provide for additional work on the day's lesson and preparation for the following day are also to be dropped in the context of educational reforms. Teachers and school directors stated that these hours are necessary for many of the students.

²⁴ Discussion with N. Kirilov, Lom. May 2000.

For higher education, only NGOs with access to mostly external donor support are able to provide support (both in terms of studies and financial support) focusing on the transition from the 11th or 12th grade to the university. An informal network of NGOs working with Roma in different regions of the country also stressed that there are insufficient possibilities for scholarships to support Romani students who are high achievers in education, but who cannot advance owing to social and economic limitations.²⁵ Pre-examination training is planned as part of the project to be co-funded by the European Commission PHARE program, in support of implementing some of the provisions of the government's „Framework Program for the Equal Integration of Roma“ adopted in April 1999 (see section IV). At the time of writing this report, the project was still in the stage of finalizing the Terms of Reference. However, it may be noted that there is no special scholarship program, and no provisions for affirmative action-type policies.

²⁵ Discussions with local NGO representatives from different regions of the country working in an informal network together with the Creating Effective Grassroots Alternatives organization. March 2000.

III.3. Insufficient Pre-Service and In-Service Teacher Training, and Insufficient Presence of Romani Teachers

In Bulgaria, pre-service teacher training does not provide for adequate knowledge on the methods for working with minority children. This is reflected in the entire educational system, which is „intended for the needs of an ethno-national (one-nation) state“ (SC, 2000:60).

Generally, pre-service training does not include actual practical work with Roma and in Romani neighborhood schools. Therefore, teachers going to work in schools with Romani students are unexposed and unprepared. They usually have little to no knowledge about Romani history, culture and language, and have had no education and training to deal with common anti-Roma attitudes and sentiments.

In addition, NGOs have reported that many school Directors lack knowledge about minorities, and do not see minority education as a responsibility of the school, and therefore fail to develop proper policies. Accordingly, the main problem is that in-service university programs do not include courses on the development of school policy for minority education, and there are too few opportunities for school directors to attend such courses. Currently, this gap is filled, in part, by NGO activities (Stichting leerplanontwikkeling—SLO, 2000: 3.4).

It may also be mentioned that the teaching profession has come to have a very low social status in the society at large:

The low professional self-confidence of the teachers and dissatisfaction with low pay, in addition to the alienation of all other institutions to the problems of education, prevent the start of innovations and negatively affect the whole system (Savova, 1996).

For the first quarter of 1999, the average gross salary for persons employed in the educational system was 150.22 BGL (about 151 DEM), while the national average was 187.738 BGL (UNESCO, 2000: Pt. II).

III.4 Lack of Multi-Cultural Curriculum and Textbooks, Including Romani Language

Romani history, culture and literature is still absent from the curricula used in the Bulgarian education system. As one educator put it,

The primers, spelling books and text books on literature, history, etc., do not contain the slightest hint that Roma also live in this country, and that for centuries have taken part in building up the material, intellectual and spiritual culture of Bulgaria (Tomova, 1995 p. 63).

Reportedly, the current expert groups responsible for the development of textbooks, and who participate in a tender at the invitation of the Ministry of Education, lack expertise about minority education (Stichting leerplanontwikkeling—SLO, 2000: 3.4).

With regards to minority education in general, the Save the Children Draft Report points out that,

teachers, and especially their professional organizations (including the most popular one, the Union of Bulgarian teachers) ... have not developed a clear-cut approach to education of minorities (SC, 2000: 64-5).

²⁵ The actual scale of implementation is not mentioned in the UNESCO, 'Education for All / 2000 Assessment' document.

According to the National Institute for Education of the Ministry of Education and Science, a kindergarten project for working with „socially neglected children, mainly of gypsy origin“ is implemented in the country.²⁶ The stated principal objective is „that the children learn the Bulgarian language before they enter school and that they join the traditional culture and value system“ (UNESCO, 2000. Pt. II). Such an attitude and perspective does not give the impression that the system, as such, is making efforts toward the respect for cultural differences and multi-cultural education.

Although various materials have already been produced by different NGOs, there is yet no real progress in the institutionalization of books and manuals that were produced by the Inter-ethnic initiative for Human Rights, MRG, and the Diversity Foundation. Reasons given have been a lack of funds. There have been some discussions amongst NGOs and Romani representatives about whether they should become part of the general history and literature books or remain as separate, more colorful and attractive supplements.

Some of the textbooks and resources produced include:

A bilingual reading book (Kyuchukov et al., 1993) that functions as a general text about Romani language, history, and culture, and which is accompanied by a teacher's instruction manual.

Romani alphabet (1995) and *Romani Reader* (1996); the latter introduces Bulgarian Romani children to the Romani writers of the world. (Kyuchukov, ERRC, 1998)

Romani language and *Let's Learn Bulgarian*, UNICEF project, 1992 – Two experimental bilingual textbooks.

Roma Rights and Education, EC PHARE project involving the Inter-ethnic Initiative for Human Rights. They produced a high-quality set of teaching materials as supplements to existing textbooks (5 for teachers and 11 for pupils 7 to 18 years old) about the history and culture of the Romani community. The materials have been piloted in 35 schools in Bulgaria in partnership with the Bulgarian Ministry of Education since 1997, but have not been institutionalized.

Currently, the same organization is also implementing a project called „Developing Intercultural Experience“, which uses non-traditional teaching methods to acquaint 7 to 11-year-old children from different ethnic and religious communities with each other, including different value systems. Outreach activities in the form of dialogue clubs with teachers, parents, students, School Boards, and other social actors and institutions are also organized, and teachers' aids and training

materials are also being developed. While the Ministry of Education and Science has provided that these books may be used in different schools, no financial support has been provided, and there is no mention of the future institutionalization of these materials (IEI foundation, on-line).

III.5. Insufficient Textbooks and General Teaching Materials in Romani Neighborhood Schools

Also affecting the quality of education in Romani neighborhood schools is a lack of general textbooks and materials. School directors, teachers, and NGO community and school workers mentioned that children have to share the books that exist. For example, in one Romani neighborhood school, all the textbooks were kept in the library. Books were not a part of the classroom learning process and were accessible to students only when the school library was open. In addition to the physical lack children must suffer due to this policy, the intellectual message that is transmitted regarding education and books is also quite negative.

Photographs taken in the field comparing a Romani neighborhood school and an average school with a foreign language profile in the same town show the marked difference in the physical nature of the school, in the classroom learning standards, and in the materials that children had access to.

As mentioned earlier in the „Financing“ section of this report, beginning from the 1999 school year, textbooks should be provided for the first grade only. Many teachers and directors in the Romani neighborhood schools expressed their concern over how this will affect the students and the learning process, as it is already difficult.

III.6. Lack of Extra-Curricular Activities of Romani Students and Meaningful Involvement of Parents in the Schooling Process

For some more traditional Romani families, it may be that basic reading, writing and arithmetic knowledge is seen as adequate, since the children's active participation in income-generating activities for the family has a more important role in the family's survival (Nunev, 1998: 19). In this regard, family seasonal labor migrations and other family income-generating activities also motivate school absenteeism.

School attendance of Romani children from families who have fallen into anomie, or who are seen as the most marginalized, represents the worst situation. „For such Romanies, it is normal to disregard the

role of school in children's life" (Nunev, 1998: 19). In discussion with NGOs and School Directors in neighborhoods, these would seem to represent the most difficult families to work with, and a large percentage of children who do not start school at all.

Romani parents often state that they are not able to provide the necessary clothes, shoes and school materials for their children Tomova, 1995, p. 60). While this can form part of the barrier, many agree that this is not the most important factor.

Problems of low attendance and high drop-out rates amongst Roma, especially in the Romani neighborhood schools, is a complex and difficult subject to approach when looking at issues of value sets and motivation. On the one hand, it cannot be separated from the deeper psychological and social implications of ghetto life, different sets of values between some Romani groups, Romani family priorities in the context of economic difficulties, the lack of a Romani presence in the current curricula and the rejection of Roma on the part of some authorities and members of the majority population. On the other hand, it has been shown that NGOs in Bulgaria have had positive results in the organization of various activities that increase the interest of Romani students and parents by providing an opportunity for them to participate in a number of activities, which any youth and proud parent can appreciate.

In identifying ways to improve school attendance and interest in school, a number of Bulgarian NGOs have organized extra-school activities, which had previously not existed, such as sports clubs, music lessons, dance clubs, drama, computer course, etc. In many cases, the continued participation in these clubs is dependent on the students' performance in school, and supplementary hours are provided to students who fall behind or need extra tutoring.

At the same time, local activities have also involved discussions with parents about their children's schooling, the organization of parents' committees, and club-related performances for parents. Some programs also provide food in school and according to discussions with school directors, attendance greatly increases when provided, or reduces immediately when stopped. One school director said that attendance drops by about 50% if they do not provide food.

IV. Current Policy Framework Concerning Roma and Education

IV.1. Governmental Policy on Roma

In April 1999, the Bulgarian Council of Ministers approved the Framework for a Program for Equal Integration of Roma in Bulgarian Society". The Framework was drafted by the Human Rights Project (Sofia), together with some 70 Romani NGOs from throughout Bulgaria, with the support of the Council of Europe.

Stressing the overall need to eliminate widespread anti-Roma discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity, the education component of the Framework Program includes the following points:

- Desegregation of Romani schools.

Long term strategy—removal of segregated Roma schools in Roma areas ...ensure free admission of Roma children to so-called „normal“ schools and prevent segregation of Roma children into separate classes.

The long term process calls to reorganize/restructure so called „Gypsy schools“ ... meanwhile to work on improving the quality of education/standard of education in these schools.

Steps:

1. Assistance and encouragement of introduction of pre-school/preparatory classes for Roma children who do not speak Bulgarian.
2. Introduction of integrated general educational curricula to Roma schools and excluding early/premature vocational training classes from the curricula.
3. Stimulation of employing teachers with the necessary qualification and experience and dismissal of teachers with no University degree or teaching qualifications.
4. Introduction of a new educational entity, the so called „assistant teachers“ from the Roma community who will be helping in Roma children classes and providing special training for these assistant teachers. (Note: This provision was not part of the original Framework. This refers to the Program initiated by the Human Rights Project, together with Romani NGOs from throughout Bulgaria)
5. Free access to information and consultations of families with low income and poor living conditions which should be entitled to eat free in the school canteens, receive, free of charge, school books, books and other school aids.

- Dissolving/Abolishing the existing practice of normal healthy children of Roma origin to be educated in „special“ auxiliary schools.
- Counteraction to forms of racism in the classrooms

Roma children are exposed to various forms of bad treatment and humiliation in schools. Negative attitude of teachers and school-mates towards Roma children is also a factor that leads to the unwillingness of these children to attend classes. The Ministry of Science and Education must develop educational programs on ethnic tolerance for teachers. Everyone, teachers, parents and pupils should receive special training on counteraction to forms of racism in schools. Racial acts in the classrooms must be sanctioned.

- Providing opportunity to study Roma language in school, ... where Roma language must become an optional school subject on the general national curriculum.

One major obstacle in studying Roma language in school is the shortage of teachers who are capable to simultaneously force and execute this process. For this reason „Roma language and culture“ should be introduced as a second optional major at universities for teachers. It should be introduced especially at Sofia University where not only university students studying to become teachers but other students whose future work shall involve working within Roma community can choose to study it as a second major.

- University education for Roma

... Providing conditions/possibilities for Roma to be admitted at universities for example, organizing preparatory courses for Roma candidates, etc. Roma community must be well informed about the procedures and requirements for receiving university grants.

[It may be noted that the HRP backed framework called for the „introduction of preferential admittance (including on a quota basis in the system of state-sponsored education) of Roma into Bulgarian universities“]

- Programs for Roma adults in literacy and qualifications.
- Roma history and culture must be present in textbooks for primary, secondary and high school as an intricate part of the general context of Bulgarian history and culture. (In the component for the „Protection of the ethnic specification and culture“)

Currently, there are sentiments of frustration among various NGOs about the pace in which provisions of the Framework program are being implemented. Last year, 500,000 Euro was approved by the European Commission PHARE program to support the government project on „Promoting the Integration of the Roma“. The support is to be directed at educational and urban development activities along with training of recently appointed Roma civil servants, all in relation to the Framework program. The Terms of Reference were being finalized during the field visit in preparation of this report.

Indeed the limited resources and the activities planned in the context of EC PHARE support seem only to scratch the surface of the problems. For the most part, the draft Terms of Reference for the educational component include 4 training seminars related to the introduction of Teacher's Assistants in four pilot regions of the country, along with working groups to create the job descriptions and training curricula development. Other activities include the organization of courses to help prepare Romani students for higher education, and training for the introduction of the teachers' guide to Romani culture and history in the 4 pilot regions. The latter is to build on the previously developed guides prepared by the Intercultural Initiative for Human Rights Foundation and Minority Rights Group (with EC PHARE support).

According to the Save the Children report, „this is a consolidation of the principle of specialized education for Romani and Gypsy children instead of general education“.... representing „another attempt by the State to transfer its obligations to the NGO sector, thus offering only half-measure temporary solutions“ (SC, 2000: 64).

On the other hand, the Teacher's Assistants provide for an important figure in the current situation of a lack of bilingual programs to address the insufficient knowledge of Bulgarian language amongst some Romani children. However, it is important that this is seen as a short-term response to the current needs, and not a long-term solution to the more complex issues resulting in unequal educational opportunities confronting the majority of Roma in the country.

V. Donor Programs

Regarding other donor programs concerning the education of Roma in Bulgaria, there are not any specific programs or priorities targeting this area known or discovered in the course of preparing this report, other than government plans in the context of the EC PHARE project mentioned above.

The Open Society Foundation—Sofia has a „Roma Program“, as in other countries, with an average annual program budget of 200,000 USD. Some of these funds have been provided to support local educational activities, though priorities have been laid more on community centers and the provision of support for general running costs. Some scholarships have also been made available to Romani students, administered jointly with the scholarship program of the Foundation.

Romani and non-Romani NGOs also work or provide(d) support to local partner organizations for various community development activities, including education-related initiatives, with the support of mostly external donors, such as NOVIB—the Netherlands, the governmental MATRA program, UNESCO, and U.S. private foundations.

²⁷ *The MATRA program, under the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is especially for the support of the Transformation of societies in Central and Eastern Europe, and involves partnerships between a Dutch organization and organizations in the country of implementation.*

One program called the „Human Rights Program“, funded by the MATRA program of the Netherlands government²⁷, and carried out by CORDAID in the Netherlands and five Human Rights organizations in Bulgaria includes an educational component. Concerns about the cooperation with NGOs in the program, and adequate support from the Ministry of Education and Science in Bulgaria led to the commissioning of a mission and report „to obtain more assurance about co-operation of the Bulgarian government with NGOs in the framework of the MATRA-project A-433/8005 Human Rights Program“.

The mission took place from 26 February to 7 March 2000. The overall conclusion was that, „despite the rather passive attitude of the Ministry of Education and Science regarding minority education and co-operation with NGOs, we see sufficient reason to continue this project“. The report recommends that the MOE adopt a more active policy in the field of minority education, where a 2-3 year work plan may be a good framework. Likewise, there is a need to „raising awareness of minority conditions in the Bulgarian minority, the balance between integration and recognition of the own minority identity and an educational policy for minorities at risk“. Two specific issues stressed are the development of a policy and practice for mother tongue education, and steps forward in the desegregation of Roma schools (Stichting leerplanontwikkeling—SLO, 2000: 5.2).

Support from the European Commission PHARE program came through a number of different channels, including some Roma-specific programs, such as the 1997 regional „Roma Rights and Education“ project, which contributed to the production of Romani history, literature and culture textbooks.

Also, the Socrates Program's Comenius Action 2 involves international projects with activities including: „joint development and dissemination of pedagogical methods and materials relevant to the special educational needs of Roma, all measures related to teacher training as well as the exchange of experience and discussion of good practice through seminars, conferences and study visits“ (EU Enlargement briefing, 1999 : 9).

One area, which should be more closely examined, is that of larger-scale educational programs and their impact or inclusion of Romani pupils, schools and Romani-related curricula. Here attention may be drawn to programs mentioned in the UNESCO „Education for All“ 2000 report, prepared by the National Education Institute of the Ministry of Educational Science. These include: EC PHARE supported programs initiated in 1994, „Bulgaria—Educational Sector Reform“ for 1 million ECU; „Professional Education and Training, Reform in Education, Science and Technologies“ for 9 million ECU; „Development, Evaluation and Accreditation Program“ and the „Dropout Pupils“, „Management Education Program“ for 1.35 million ECU (UNESCO, 2000. Pt. II).

There is also the „School for Everyone“ project, which aims to develop practical models for working with children who have dropped out of school in different regions of the country, in view of establishing a policy and the related structures and mechanisms for dealing with school drop-outs (UNESCO, 2000: Pt. II).

VI. Concluding Remarks

The cooperation between the Bulgarian government and Romani NGOs in the context of drafting the „Framework for a Program for Equal Integration of Roma in Bulgarian Society“ was an important first step in identifying tasks, which would improve the overall situation of Roma in Bulgaria, including those in the field of education. However, as in other countries of the region, the government is now challenged with the task of making the appropriate legislative, administrative and institutional changes in view of implementing the respective policies.

While economic conditions do influence the situation, for example, in terms of family income, long-term unemployment, public services and central and local government expenditures, genuine political

will is necessary for the institutionalization of Roma-related policy provisions, and the mainstreaming of Romani issues into wider processes of educational system reforms and developments. Here there is a need to consider both the Romani children already in school, and those who are not attending at all.

Many of the problems related above are directly connected to the conditions and quality of education within the Romani neighborhood school, which would not be relevant if the Romani children were attending normal schools with other non-Roma children. This fact, along with the declining school-age population and the need to close schools, means that a well-planned, well-communicated and carefully monitored process of desegregation should take place. Otherwise, it is difficult to foresee that the current situation of Roma in the Bulgarian educational system will undergo significant changes.

The desegregation process should include preparatory activities for Romani and non-Romani students and parents, teachers, and school administration. Roma must be accepted to the schools by school administration and majority population parents; teachers need to be more informed about Romani culture, better prepared to work with Romani students and to address issues of inter-ethnic classroom relations; and Romani families and students must be prepared for their engagement with majority people and institutions.

If Romani schools were immediately closed, and the Roma and ethnic Bulgarian schools were not prepared to accept the students and address inter-ethnic relations, the effects could mean even higher exclusion of Roma from schooling institutions. To the knowledge of those preparing this report, there are no such plans by the Ministry of Education to begin a well thought and prepared process of desegregation in the near future, for example, through bussing of a limited number of students and corresponding sensitization activities for different stakeholders.

Romani culture, history and language should have its place within the national education curricula, and there should be widespread access to programs that facilitate and support the participation of more Roma in higher education, including the preparation of more Romani teachers.

Certainly, NGOs in Bulgaria have played a leading role in identifying local problems and methods for working with Romani students, families and communities. While such grassroots approaches, especially those concerning Romani community mobilization, awareness-raising and self-organization should undoubtedly continue to play an important role, the situation calls for government-led systemic changes to provide Roma with equitable educational opportunities.

Data Sheet²⁸

Sources	Government	Romani Activist/NGO	Leading Sociologists	Others?	Source
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DEMOGRAPHIC					
1	Total Country Population	8,487,317			8,256,800 Trans-Monee Database Census, 1992
2	Ethnic Composition				Bulgarian 85%, Turkish 9%, Roma 3%, Macedonians 3%
3	Total Roma Population	533,466 or 6.45%	800,000 or 9% of the total population	8%	CEGA Video, 1999 Bulgarian Census, 1992
4	Total School Age Population				1,316,586 CIA
5	School aged population as percentage of total population				16% CIA
6	Roma children as percentage of School Age population				118,492 (constitutes 9% of total school age pop.)
7	Speakers of Romanes as % of Roma population		60% - 80%	50% 20%-30% have difficulties understanding in school	Tomova Ilona 1995 CEGA, 1999

²⁸ This data sheet is not complete, but an attempt to pull together existing data from available resources. More data may exist, and should be incorporated to flesh out this sheet entirely.

PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION					
8	Enrolment rates in general population				Trans-Monee Database
	• Pre-primary	_____	_____	_____	63.4%
	• Compulsory Primary	_____	_____	_____	94.3%
	• PreSecondary				
	• Upper-Secondary	_____	_____	_____	62%
	• General	_____	_____	_____	31.4%
	• Technical	_____	_____	_____	41.5%
	• Vocational	_____	_____	_____	0.7%

Sources	Government	Romani Activist/NGO	Leading Sociologists	Others?	Source	
9	Roma enrollment rates <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pre-primary• Compulsory Primary• Pre-secondary• Upper Secondary	<div>_____</div> <div>_____</div> <div>_____</div> <div>_____</div> <div>60,000 do not attend school</div>	<div>_____</div> <div>_____</div> <div>_____</div> <div>_____</div> <div>120,000 do not attend school</div>	<div>12%</div> <div>47.7%</div> <div>Over half (50%) do not attend school at all.</div>	<div>10%</div> <div>(local school)</div> <div>27%</div> <div>4.0%</div>	<div>Save the Children UK</div> <div>Tomova Ilona 1995</div> <div>CEGA, 1999</div>
10	Drop-out Rate in general population <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compulsory education• Primary• Pre-secondary• Upper Secondary• General• Vocational	<div>_____</div> <div>_____</div> <div>_____</div> <div>_____</div>	<div>_____</div> <div>_____</div> <div>_____</div>	<div>_____</div> <div>_____</div> <div>_____</div>	<div>3.87%</div> <div>27%</div> <div>4.0%</div>	<div>Unesco, IBE</div> <div>European Training Foundation, 1999</div>
11	% or Number of Roma Dropouts	Almost all	Almost all	85% before grade 11	30,000-40,000 Seven 1 st grade to one 11 th grade class (Fakulteta)	Save the Children, 2000
12	Average age of Drop-out for Roma			13-14		Tomova, 1995
13	Number of Roma children not in School		120,000	52%		Tomova, 1995
14	% of Roma with no education				15%	WB
15	Number of children in Special Schools					
16	% who are Roma			70% (8)	+ 60% (Regional Inspector, Montana) 70% of Roma have attended „ghetto“ schools	Penn, 1999

Sources	Government	Romani Activist/NGO	Leading Sociologists	Others?	Source	
OUTCOMES OF EDUCATION						
17	Overall Illiteracy Rate			1.7%	Unesco IBE	
18	% of Roma who are illiterate	8%	16%		CEGA, 1999 Tomova, 1995	
19	% of total pop. who attended pre-primary	46.99%				
20	% of Roma who attended pre-primary					
21	% of Roma who completed primary education	46.2%	37%	36%	76%	CEGA, 1999 Tomova, 1995 NSI, 1994 Ringold, 2000
22	...pre-secondary		40%	50% who start	CEGA, 1999	
23	...secondary	7.8%	8.5% 8%	6 %	CEGA, 1999 Tomova, 1995 NSI, 1994 Ringold, 2000	
24	...Tertiary	9%	0.3% -1%	1-2%	CEGA, 1999 Tomova, 1995 NSI, 1994 Ringold, 2000	
25	% of total population who have never attended school			2%	NSI, 1994	
26	% of Roma who have never attended school		29% (women)	8-8.5%	NSI, 1994 CEGA, 1999	
27	Number of Romani teachers					

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Annex 1

Agenda of the working visit to Bulgaria in preparation of the report „Roma in the Education System of Bulgaria – a problem analysis“ 12 - 20 April 2000 – Jennifer Tanaka

- Arrival, and travel to Lom **12 April / Wednesday**
- informal meeting with the Roma Lom Foundation
- Visit to „elite“ Bulgarian school in Lom, observation of preparatory class of mixed Bulgarian and Roma children. (Also has teacher's assistant) **13 April / Thursday**
- Visit to Roma neighborhood school in Lom „Kliment Ochridski“. Discussion with teacher of preparatory class (All school directors were at a special training about fund-raising this day)
- Meeting at Montana regional Inspectorate. Discussion with Vice Inspector, the School Inspector, and the Roma functionary (recently appointed as part of government program).
- Visit to Roma Neighborhood school of „Georgi Bemkovski“, discussion with headmaster, observation of classes, brief discussion about issues with teachers and kindergarten.
- Visit to Bulgarian school in Montana. Discussion with headmaster. Viewing of rooms and Step-by-step classes.
- Meeting at local government of Lom, meeting with functionary charged with schooling, appointed Roma and the mayor.
- Meeting with Teachers Assistants and teacher in Lom
- Visit to mixed school in Lom. Discussion with headmaster, class visits **14 April / Friday**
- Meeting at regional government of Vidin
- Visit to Roma neighborhood school „Sofroni Wrachanski“ in Vidin, discussion with headmaster and teachers.
- Interview for Roma television in Vidin.
- Visit to special school, discussion with headmaster, visit to classes.
- Viewing of video - „Welcome Pupils or a Gypsy Spring“ on education and Roma.

- 15 April / Saturday**
- Visit to Valchedram village. Discussion with local NGO.
 - Visit to Biala Slatina. Discussion with newly formed group/NGO working on schooling of Roma children in the village. Walk through Roma neighborhood.
- 17 April / Monday**
- Travel to Kurdjali (large Turkish and Turkish Roma population). Discussion with local NGO, formed of former School inspector and former vice-mayor and member of Soros Board.
 - Visit to Roma neighborhood school, discussion with headmaster, visit to teachers and classrooms.
 - Visit to „elite“ Bulgarian school, brief meeting with one of the Headmasters.
 - Visit to normal Bulgarian school. Discussion with Headmaster, viewing of classrooms.
 - Discussion at another local NGO
- 18 April / Tuesday**
- Discussions with the following NGOs in Sofia:
- CEGA / Creating Effective Grassroots Alternatives;
 - Human Rights Project;
 - Romani Baxt / Fakulteta school - discussion with headmaster.
 - British Council;
 - Inter-Ethnic Initiative for Human Rights Foundation;
 - Balkan Diversity Foundation and Lili Kovatcheva.
- 19 April / Wednesday**
- Meeting at OSF with Kristin Razsolokova, Program Director Education and Culture; and Roma program coordinator
 - Meeting at National Council on Ethnic and Demographic Issues. Discussion with Iossef Nunev, (and Peter Atanasov, Nadejda Anguelska)
 - Meeting at Ministry of Education, with Vice Deputy in charge of all regional Inspectors.
 - Meeting with informal network of NGOs from different regions of Bulgaria, co-operating with CEGA

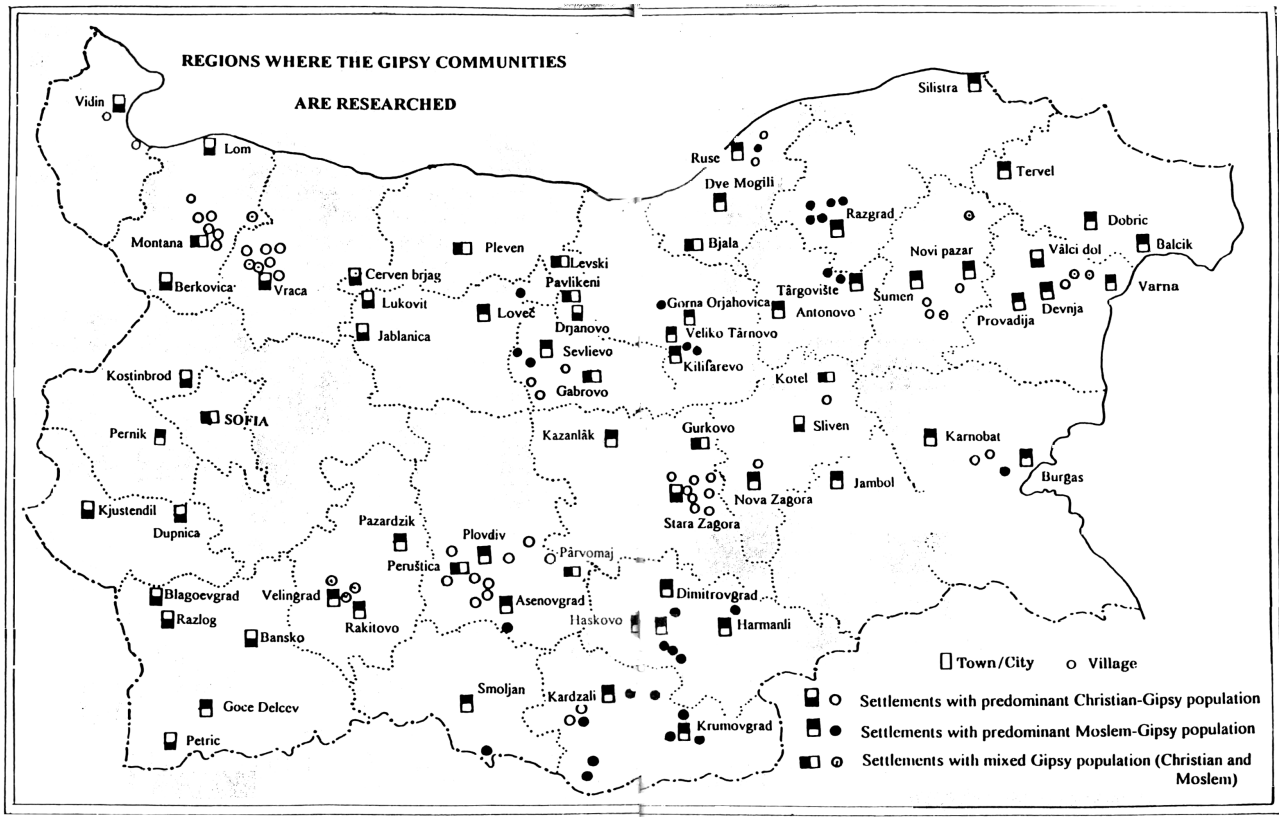
Annex 2

List of NGOs in Bulgaria with Previous or Current Activities Concerning Education and Roma

NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE	FAX	E-MAIL
<i>Balkan Foundation for Cross Cultural Education and „Diversity</i>	Sofia 1000, 145D G.Rakovsky, fl. 2 ap. 7	+359 2 87 73 95	+359 2 981 47 56	
<i>Confederation of the Roma in Bulgaria</i> Contact person: Mr. Peter Georgiev	Sofia, Gurguliat Str. #11	+359 2 26 09 75		CEGA@mbbox.digsys.bg
<i>Creating Effective Grassroots Alternatives - CEGA</i>	96 Rakovski Street, 2 nd floor, Sofia 1000	+359 987 70 82; +359 981 09 13	+359 981 79 90	
<i>„Drom“ Association</i>	Vidin, Saedinenie, bl. 2, Ap. 1	+359 94 47 616		
<i>„Euroroma“ National Association</i> Mr. Ilia Petrov	Sofia, Iskar, Str. 5003-4	+359 88 518 735		
<i>Federation of United Roma Communities „Indiroma“</i> Contact person: Mr. Vasil Danev	Varna, Gabrovo # 2	+359 52 44 08 14		
<i>Foundation for Regional Development „Roma“-Plovdiv</i> Contact person: Mr. Anton Karagiozov	Plovdiv, Stolipinovo, Malina Str. #12	+359 32 27 36 78		
<i>Human Rights Project</i> Contact person: Mr. Dimitar Georgiev	Sofia, Solutnska Str. 23, 6 th floor	+359 2 986 35 46; +359 981 50 66	+359 980 11 63	

Annex 3

Map of selected Romani settlements in Bulgaria (Tomova, IMR: 1995)



<i>Independent Women's Roma Organization „Dobra Maika”</i>	Pernik, Breznik Str. # 126			
<i>„Inter-club Roma” Association</i> Contact person: Mr. Stoian Stoianov	Straldja, Filip Totiu Str. # 12	+359 4 761 29 70		
<i>Inter-ethnic Initiative for Human Rights Foundation</i>	9A, Graf Ignatiev Street, Sofia 1000	+359 (0)2 980 1716	+359 (0)2 980 0108	
<i>„Napredak” Roma Foundation</i> Contact person: Mr. Plamen Tsankov	Pazardjik, Buzludja Str. # 9	+359 34 8 29 07		
<i>National Association of the Roma Foundations and Associations</i> Contact person: Mr. Toma Tomov	Sofia, Aksakov Str. # 10, floor 1, ap. 10	+359 2 980 70 99; +359 2 980 66 96	+359 2 980 70 87	
<i>Roma People's Council „Kupate”</i> Contact person: Mr. Zlatko Mladenov	Sofia, Opalchenska Str. 100 A, 3 rd floor, ap. 5			
<i>„Roma-Lom” Foundation</i> Contact person: Mr. Nikolai Kirilov	Lom, Pirot Str. #71	+359 489 70 288	+359 489 70 288	roma_lom@almus.net
<i>„Roma Youth” Association</i> Contact person: Mrs. Stela Kostova	Sliven, Nikola Karev Str. # 5			
<i>„Support for Roma” Foundation</i> Contact person: Mr. Georgi Parushev	Sofia, Slatina block # 64-D-4			
<i>United Roma Union</i> Contact person: Mr. Vasil Chaprazov	Sliven, B.O. Box 129 A	+359 44 78 687		

Methods and Practice

“Life Took Me Elsewhere”

The Roma Tutoring Project in Romania

**By Charles Temple, Professor of Education,
Hobart and William Smith Colleges**

Source: Reading Teacher, Nov99, Vol. 53 Issue 3, p228, 4 p.

The participants in this writing workshop have been silently scribbling for 20 minutes. Now an invitation goes out for a volunteer to share; one of the participants looks around at the group, clears his throat, and gamely begins to read his piece. The woman next to me whispers his words. I nod, smile, frown, and laugh, conscious that my responses come a half step behind the reader. He is reading in Romanian, and the woman speaking in my ear is translating for me into English. When he is finished, the translator conveys my call for comments. There are few, this being early in a workshop that is a novel experience for the participants. („I was told by my teacher,” says one, „that writing was a talent you were born with, or you weren’t. I never thought you could be taught to write.”) The reader’s tale, though, is very moving. With lively language and lots of action, he tells of the plight of a gypsy man trying to harvest fruit from a magical cherry tree. With a little polishing, we all agree, it might well be a „keeper”: a text we can use in the Roma Tutoring Project here in Romania.

The tutoring project

Christian, the author of the story, is himself Roma (the preferred word for gypsy). So are two other participants. The rest are teachers with young Roma students in their classes, and their concern for those students, plus their demonstrated flair for writing, is the reason they are present at this workshop. Roma children as a group experience the most difficulties of all children in the schools of Central Europe, including Romania. Unlike other groups in this region, the Roma are a nationless minority. The Hungarians in Romania once called Hungary their homeland; the Slovaks in Hungary are aware of relatives in

Slovakia. But the Roma came into Romania from northern India in the 13th century (Crowe, 1996), and while many keep apart from other Romanians, they recognize no other homeland. Nonetheless, many speak a language that has its origins in Sanskrit and Hindi.

The Roma people have endured a history of oppression. In medieval times, Roma were murdered for sport in gladiatorial spectacles. Roma were still enslaved in Eastern Europe in the 19th century. Hitler's genocide caused terrible losses during World War II, and the porajmos endured by the Roma was another holocaust that goes largely unrecognized. The communist regimes that controlled most aspects of society in Central Europe following World War II tried to force the Roma into schools and mainstream occupations, with mixed success. In the process, the communists isolated the Roma from their traditional vocations as skilled craftspeople.

This situation has left many Roma cut off both from the past and the future—unskilled in their traditional vocations and barred by prejudice, injustice, and perhaps some of their own disinclination from moving through the technically challenging school systems of central Europe into the mainstream economy (Fonseca, 1995). It is the plight of the Roma in Romanian schools that motivated the project described here. Fewer than 10% of the Roma who enter first grade graduate from high school, and a great many (the statistics are hard to come by) drop out after Grade 4.

Romanian schools. The ministry of education in Romania has been working hard to bring Romanian schools up to date, but there is still no organized offer of compensatory education for Roma children here or in many other countries in the region. „Second chance“ provisions for dropouts are nonexistent, and in Romania any child who stays out of school for 3 years is not allowed to go back. Those Roma children who do go to school face the sorts of prejudice that racial minorities faced in the United States a generation ago: Teachers and students alike may say unkind words to them or about them, with surprisingly little sensitivity. Their faces and their stories are nowhere to be seen in the portraits that hang on classroom walls or on the pages of school books. In short, it can be tough to be a Roma child in a Central European school.

Attempting to fill the gap in services to Roma children is the Open Society Institute of New York and Budapest, and the 27 national Soros Foundations of Central Europe and Central Asia. At the Soros Foundation in Romania, Simona Botea coordinates efforts to help Roma children succeed in school. Some of her efforts send sociologists to help sensitize classroom teachers to the needs of Roma children. Other efforts, with the help of educators from the Netherlands, encourage parents to become involved in their children's schools. Last year, Botea inaugurated a program to „dropout-proof“ Roma children.

I happened to be passing through her office as she was contemplating designs for the project, and I suggested that she focus her efforts on reading instruction. If young children could get off to a good start in reading, they would be far more likely to weather the academic challenges of the later grades. Such, of course, is the logic of programs like Reading Recovery and the Howard Street Tutoring Program (Morris, 1999).

The Howard Street Tutoring Program. Botea chose to carry out a version of the Howard Street program in Romania, and I promised to help her. Of the range of early intervention programs available, the Howard Street program offers several advantages for the Romanian setting. It is based on a structured lesson in a simple format. It can be staffed by moderately trained volunteers, and it is the only volunteer tutoring program in existence that has proven effective through rigorous evaluation (Wasik, 1998).

In the Howard Street model, one-on-one tutoring is offered 2 or 3 days a week for 40 minutes. A well-trained and knowledgeable teacher assesses the reading ability of each student to be tutored and then writes a daily lesson plan to be taught by a volunteer tutor. The plan calls for supervised reading of appropriate level materials, writing, word study, and reading aloud to the child. On the lesson plan, space is provided for the tutor to write a brief report on how the activity went for the child. These reports are returned to the supervising teacher at the end of the tutoring session, and they are used, along with that supervisor's own observations, as a guide in writing up the next day's lesson plan.

In order to bring Howard Street to Romania, the project would need (a) training for the teachers who would oversee the tutors, and (b) reading materials at graduated levels of difficulty. The quest for training took Botea and her colleague, Catalina Ulrich, to Boone, North Carolina, USA, where Darrell Morris, the originator of the Howard Street model, hosted them at Appalachian State University and took them into several schools where the tutoring model was being used. One user, Judy Henderson of North Wilkesboro, North Carolina, so impressed the visitors with her tutoring expertise that she was invited to Romania to conduct training.

Writing multicultural books

But what about the reading materials? We would need between 20 and 40 different titles of short and interesting books at carefully graduated difficulty levels, and we already knew such books were not available in Romania. We decided to solve that problem by writing our own books.

Templates. Our idea seemed simple enough. We would ask an experienced American teacher familiar with early intervention strategies to help us produce a series of templates or patterns that would carefully guide the way texts might be written on different levels. Books written from the templates should offer stair-stepping levels of challenge to their readers. For example, the simplest template called for an eight-page concept book, with one word and an article on a page naming a concrete object that would be depicted in the illustration in that page (an apple, a grape, a banana). A slightly more complex template called for a series of prepositional phrases, one to a page (The horse rode out of the barn, through the woods, down the road, into the town).

We realized that templates written for books in English would not necessarily result in corresponding levels of challenge for the books in Romanian (where, for example, the definite article is part of the noun, as in *pahar* [„a glass“] and *paharul* [„the glass“]), but we planned to solve that problem by testing and leveling the books, once written, with Romanian children. We found our perfect template producer in Jane Bonacci, a reading teacher at Trumansburg (New York) Elementary School, and she produced an excellent set of templates for 40 levels of books.

Writers. Next we needed writers. We knew we should take this opportunity to create books that would truthfully reflect Roma culture; so the Soros Foundation in Romania issued a challenge to teachers who were either Roma themselves or teachers of Roma children to submit writing samples, with a chance to become authors. Teachers from Bucharest, Timisoara, Iassi, and Cluj all submitted samples, and their entries were judged by a panel consisting of Botea, Leticia Mark, and me. Mark is Roma and not only teaches Latin and Greek in high school in Timisoara, but also operates a center for Roma youth there. From the entries, we chose a dozen writers who seemed to have a flair for language, skill, and narration, and a less didactic tone.

The first workshop was in the town of Brasov, Romania. I explained to the writers that the texts produced would be used to help Roma children learn to read well (and early) in their school careers, so that they could continue to succeed in school. The texts would also reflect Roma culture, whenever possible. As a justification for this, I explained Rudine Sims Bishop's metaphor for multicultural children's books: They offer a rare „window“ into another culture for majority students, and a welcoming „mirror“ of their own culture for minority students (Sims Bishop, 1990).

Roma culture. The multicultural focus of our work seemed to capture everyone's imagination, and from that moment it was clear that producing books that featured Roma culture would be as valuable an

outcome of this project as the tutoring. With that focus came a thorny problem: Just how do you represent Roma culture? Over the next 2 days there were fascinating discussions of Roma life—about the traditional lives of itinerant clans with their wagons, customs, and kings. There was talk of kidnapped brides (when the husbands had no bride price), weddings blessed, and weddings cursed. There were folk tales, proverbs, toasts, and images of contemporary life—images of homeless Roma children living in colonies in abandoned train tunnels, of extended families packed into unhealthy urban apartments, and of a kindly school principal who allowed her young rural Roma students to arrive at school after 10:00 a.m., when the field grass had thawed enough not to numb their bare feet.

What images would children recognize? What images would give them pride? There was clearly no consensus of opinion on these questions. Some of the Roma participants at the workshop wanted to write about campfires, caravans, moonlight dances to violin music. Others said such visions were passé; few people live that way anymore, so they should write about street life in the city. We settled on an uneasy compromise: Rural scenes with horses would be encouraged, but so would urban scenes. Beyond that, we would judge each work on its own merits.

Eager to get on with the writing, I asked the participants to set aside late afternoons to talk about cultural issues (and we not only talked, but told stories, sang, and danced). The earlier hours were filled with writing exercises. On the third day, the participants began to write from the templates, and at the conclusion of the workshop they divided the templates among themselves, with each writer having three manuscripts to create. The participants had learned by example how to conduct critique groups, and now they were organized into groups that meet at least monthly in each region.

Our next writing workshop took place 3 months later. By now the writers had produced their manuscripts. It was time to refine them and, ultimately, to choose the ones that were suitable for publishing. I wanted to have the group critique several of the manuscripts publicly in groups, because such critiques are an excellent way to teach about good writing. The concept of constructive criticism was not widely understood, however, and it took great pains to keep the comments helpfully positive—no mean feat when comments come thick and fast and one is relying on a translator to explain what has been said. (Our only real casualty turned out to be the translator—who got so mad at the participants in the middle of a session that she walked out of the room, packed up, and caught the train home.)

Illustrations. Botea had invited a team of illustrators to this workshop, and they were now to be oriented to the craft of illustrating children's

books-something that was new to all of them. As part of their orientation, they were to work with writers to bring their texts to life. Unfortunately, we were unable to bring along a professional book illustrator, so as an author (but certainly not an illustrator) of children's picture books and of a textbook on children's literature, I found myself called upon to share everything I knew about book illustration, and then some. But the illustrators were amazingly quick studies, and they learned most of what they needed by poring over books illustrated by Maurice Sendak, Trina Schart Hyman, Anita Lobel, and James Marshall.

But that's not all. A team of multicultural education experts were in the country gathering background for a conference on antibias education. So we had the benefit of participation by two very wise experts in this field: Deborah Menkart and Beverly Tatum. My good friend Bird Stasz, a folklorist who is an expert on training students to collect oral histories, was asked to present on the last day. We also had participation by Hristo Kyuchukov, a Roma educator from Bulgaria, who had for several years single-handedly been collecting Roma folklore and publishing it in books for children. (He is the only person I am aware of who has done that.) This was a busy workshop!

Two things were becoming clear by now. First, the publication of books was going to proceed very slowly-too slowly to provide all the texts we would need for the tutoring project. Second, there was a huge interest in the book publishing project as a venture in multicultural education. With the very significant exception of Kyuchukov, no one has been publishing children's books in the region that feature Roma children-in fact, few (if any) writers have approached multicultural writing in the region at all.

The language experience approach. When Henderson came to offer training for the teachers who would supervise tutors, Morris had suggested that it would be most sensible to begin the tutoring project with the language experience approach. This made good sense: Only two works had been produced from the book publishing effort, so teachers would need some way to generate texts on the spot for reading with their young charges. Henderson's training focused on eliciting experience accounts, constructing word banks, doing word study, and using writing tasks.

It was clear that the language experience approach was a major departure from standard practice in Romania, where reading instruction typically proceeds from part to whole: studying letter sounds, then syllables, then whole words, then meaningful sentences. In fact, even the concept of remedial instruction raised eyebrows. Some of the students to be tutored in the project were third and even fourth graders, and several teachers questioned the suggestion that they begin

instruction at their reading level-which was acknowledged to be around first grade-rather than in materials written at their grade placement level. Henderson carefully explained the rationale for making reading meaningful and the advantages of teaching at the „working face“ of a child's learning, even as she showed the teachers the details of teaching a language-experience lesson.

And it worked. Information from the field has been sporadic, but the first reports after the workshops were very encouraging. A school director who used the methods in a small town, and trained other teachers in their use, reported that „These methods work the best we have ever seen. The teachers are delighted with them.“

Meanwhile ...

The interest in providing multicultural educational material has grown as fast as the interest in tutoring. Stasz's work on oral histories struck a chord: Oral histories provided a way to bring the children's culture-and even their parents-into the classroom. Stasz conducted a second workshop in Romania on methods for collecting oral histories and found an able proponent of these methods in a sociology professor from the University of Bucharest, Louis Ulrich. Good news from these activities has begun to come in. (Stasz will write about her work in the April 2000 Reading Around the World column.)

In May 1999, the Open Society Institute in Budapest held an international workshop on education for minorities, and project directors attended from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Moldova, Bulgaria, Romania, Albania, Macedonia, Latvia, Slovakia, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Poland. One day was devoted to policy issues. Another day was set aside to showcase promising approaches to multicultural education, and, to our surprise, Stasz and I were asked to „keynote.“ We carefully read books by, and drew on the teachings of, Tatum (1997) and Menkart (Lee, Menkart, & Okazawa-Rey, 1998), the multicultural experts we had met in the region the year before. We were also delighted to have Kyuchukov give the orienting talk at our session. For a whole day, we demonstrated the whys and hows of writing multicultural materials for young people, and of using the oral history approach to collect culturally relevant material to use in school.

We did learn at the conference that there are seven more books for the tutoring project finally emerging from the publishers, and more are hoped for after that. It is difficult to say, though, if those books will generate more interest as support materials for tutoring projects, or as members of that very rare breed: multicultural books written

and produced in Central Europe. A colleague tells the story of a Roma friend of hers, a famous band leader who stood up his band in favor of a lengthy conversation with her. When she asked what he would tell his colleagues by way of an excuse, the man shrugged and said, „They’ll understand. I’ll just tell them ‘Life took me elsewhere.’“ In the Roma tutoring project, life continues to take us elsewhere!

The editor welcomes reader comments on this column.

E-mail: temple@hws.edu

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The Józsefváros* Day School

By Dr. Judit Szőke

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The Day School is maintained by:

Józsefvárosi Tanoda Alapítvány

Founded by:

András Bíró

Board of Trustees:

Péter Szuhay, Anna Csongor, Gábor Havas

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** Józsefváros is one of the districts of Budapest named, as usual, after an Austrian emperor – the translator*

Introduction

During the past ten years, a number of new programmes and schools started their operation. We can be witnesses and participants of the new ideas born under the aegis of offering different alternatives. If these new initiatives satisfy realistic requirements, more and more people choose them. The two extremes are represented by those, extremely expensive private schools that offer costly services, and the schools and programmes offering educational or other services for those who are at a disadvantage, are poor, or word requirements different from the average for some other reason. The Józsefváros Day School falls into the latter category with the special characteristic that the children are not removed from their school, and their success at school is promoted in co-operation with the school.

The Józsefváros Day School offers afternoon programmes for the Roma children and youth living in the district and attending either the upper four grades (5th to 8th) of the elementary school, or a secondary school. It can be interpreted as a culture-mediator school which, with its talent developing and value mediating programmes, intends to increase the success of the school.

Our starting thesis

When shaping the concept of Józsefváros Day School our starting point was the present and the future *educational requirement of the local Roma population.*

According to our findings, the Roma families living in Józsefváros do not intend to send their children into a separate Roma (nationality, or minority) school. Among the *reasons*, the most important one is that they did not have good experience with any kind of “segregation”. At present, one third of the schools in Józsefváros “*spontaneously become dominated by Roma children*”. During the past 5–6 years, the ratio of Roma children as compared to the non-Roma ones doubled, and in some cases exceeds 80 percent. In these schools, the indices showing the number of children continuing their studies are the worst, but the other indicators are not too good either.

Parallel with refusing the idea of segregation, the need for programmes promoting the success of Roma children at school is worded more and more clearly. The majority of the families require external help, coming from outside the school, at least for the time being.

In addition to the requirements of the parents, we are also on the opinion, from a professional point of view, that it is better for the children to go to a “heterogeneous” community in the morning. In our opinion it is very important that they experience their desired school success in the community of their Roma and non-Roma classmates, because it may open new perspectives before them in terms of their social contacts. It is another issue, of course, that we propose the families to think about finding a better school for their children in the interest of their optimal school development.

First we wanted to camp then we only went for an excursion. To Kemence.

The situation

In district VIII: similar to the whole country, Roma children studying in the different secondary-educational institutions are under-represented. Though there are certain achievements in finishing the elementary school, this is not shown in the successful termination of *secondary-educational* institutions. The indices of registration into secondary-educational institutions have improved, but *dropouts* and *failures* are significant already after the first grade.

In September 1995, 123 Roma children from Józsefváros (93 percent of the Roma children finishing the 8th grade of the elementary school) were registered at secondary-educational institutions (the respective data were collected by the Independent Roma Minority Group of Józsefváros Local Authority) according to the following:

School registration

Number of pupils	Secondary grammar school	Vocational secondary school	Trade school	Technical institute
123	11%	22%	40%	27%

School success of children at the end of the first school year

School type	Successful	Failed	Dropped out
Secondary grammar school	50%	28%	22%
Vocational secondary school	45%	22%	33%
Trade school	28%	34%	38%
Technical institute	25%	6%	69%

** Successful: did not fail, entered the second class*
** Failed: Has to take examination the second time, or has to repeat the first school year*
° Dropped out: did not even register, or stopped going to school

In summary, 67 percent of children either failed at the end of the first school year, or stopped going to school.

The reasons

School failure, which is finally demonstrated in unsatisfactory school performance, is the consequence of *several factors multiplying each other*.

The reasons should, on the one hand, be sought after *in the family*: often enough, the family is simply not able to assure the conditions that would promote the children in the competition for registration in secondary schools, or help them to be successful at school. In some, rather exceptional, cases the family has a different attitude to the perspectives provided by education and learning than most of the families do. On the other hand, we think that the following factor is also at least this much decisive: the *elementary schools* in this district are excessively burdened by the education and teaching of those children who, currently, do not at all attribute perspectives to education. These schools simply do not have proper *personal* and *objective* conditions that would meet the requirements of these children, could be adapted to the complexity of their problems and would facilitate efficient education. ("The problems of the Roma people are manifold and complex, and are the combination of three sets of problems: (1.) The problematic situation of a minority group and the minority culture; (2.) The problematic relationship between the people belonging to the minority and the majority group, which is actually a social group-conflict; (3.) The existence of different social problems. The specific nature of the Roma issue is, in reality, the mutual influence of the above three problem-areas, and their mutual influence strengthening each other." – *Sándor Révész*, manuscript)

At the same time, *extensive unemployment*, especially afflicting the Roma population and the *raised value of skill and knowledge* in the labour market necessitated the introduction of special programmes promoting entrance into secondary schools.

The Roma children are unsuccessful at school not only because the necessary knowledge and talents are missing, but also because of the psychological and *socio-psychological* factors stemming from minority existence. Successful support of learning can be based on the *mutual treatment* of these problems.

At school (and especially in the secondary schools, as we are talking about children living in Józsefváros), the social strata with different income positions are confronted with each other. The poverty of children living under poor housing conditions and brought up by uneducated parents hunting after daily existence connected with the fact of being Roma becomes a *personal shame*. Every "healthy" child wants to ease or eliminate this shame. However, these "strategies of survival" are quite limited. They start with the counter-inspiration to-

wards the world and the values of the school and end with branded clothes purchased forcefully from the last pennies of the parents. Most often, however, they end up with leaving the school.

General characteristics of the programme

As we do not think about the majority of the families that they create a "low-stimulus" environment "drawing back" the children brought up in these families, we do not want to remove the children from their families. For this reason, the sections of the Day School provide *half-day* or weekend programmes only.

This institution does not result in the segregation of the Roma children either, as they attend their own district elementary or secondary school in the morning. In stead, the day school tries to provide all those opportunities that were and are missing from their lives due to social or cultural reasons, but are indispensable for successful learning or further education. We intend to provide a *stimulating environment* for the children, who miss this at home, that directs them towards the continuation of their studies and an intensive intellectual environment that makes learning interesting and important.

In the beginning, we did not have tables, chairs, lockers, copy machines

Consequently, our programme is not simply a tutorial type programme though qualified pedagogues help the children in their daily learning tasks. It is rather a development and knowledge-enlarging programme organised by educational fields and completed with study circles and clubs with the objective to call the attention of the children to the riches of the world and to the significance of knowledge as a value. In addition to this, we offer them the opportunity to get a deeper insight into and knowledge about the *Roma culture*. Personality is considered to be a value not only in connection with the individual people, but also with the ethnic communities. We would like to suggest that "being a Roma" is a value and riches, similar to all other ethnic differences. In short, the diversity of the world is a value and riches. In addition to the use of the library and media collection to be developed, we rely upon the support of the Roma intellectuals as well.

Value mediation, development of talents, development of learning and educational techniques and the enrichment of leisure-time culture are all included in the programme of the Day School. How can the Day School, with its own methods and means, complete school education having similar objectives? On the one hand, the day school can do it with the same methods and means as an intellectual (middle-class)

family and environment does. With books being available and with the recommendation of proper books at proper times, with cultural programmes that are organised by the family in the above-mentioned (well-functioning) families (visiting museums, going for excursions, going to the theatre, the movie, to discuss television programmes, to play games, etc.). Among our most important objectives, intellectual development and self-development and the development of independent acquisition of knowledge are the most important ones.

As our activities are directly related to the educational and teaching activities of the schools, our requirements are harmonised with the National Basic Syllabus (NAT) and the local syllabuses.

We put a special emphasis on teaching *foreign languages* and *computer science* being the most widespread parental aspirations typical of the Hungarian middle-class families. This way, our children can compete with their mates coming from well to do or different cultural environment in relatively new areas being somewhat independent from school.

In summary, Józsefváros Day School is a culture mediation school that intends to create the opportunity for social mobility with its talent-development and value-mediation programmes. We promote the realisation of *free choice of school* and *equality of chances* with this programme.

The operation of the Day School

Selection of the target group

One of the key problems of the elementary schools is that the ratio of Roma children successfully continuing their studies is very low. In addition to this, the vast majority of children continuing their studies in secondary-educational institutions drop out because their families are unable to provide the help required by the school and necessary for the continuation of the studies. We try to solve the above two problems within the framework of an aid programme.

We concentrate on two age groups: to those children attending the *upper four grades of the elementary school and the secondary-educational institutions* who would like to study, but in the lack of stimulating and helping family environment can not attend secondary schools, the universities or colleges. (The Day School can follow the institutional changes introduced by the new Act on Education flexibly, because the essence of the whole programme is that it is harmonised with the requirements of the school selected for the children for the continuation of their studies.)

The merger of the above two tasks is justified by the fact that this way the programme can help the education of the children living in the district both in the *input* and the *output phases of the secondary school*. At the same time, the families can also feel and enjoy help in two, critical phases of life.

We offer this opportunity for those Roma children *who attend the upper four grades* (grades 6-7 [8]) of the elementary school and represent the so-called "*second line*". Namely, we help those children who would not be able to finish the secondary school without help in spite of having good talents as they lack the necessary means for that in the widest sense of the term. Evidently, co-operation of the parents and the family is also a must. For this reason, we start to work only with those children, at least during the initial years, whose family clearly requires this help and demonstrates this need.

However, we also would like to support those Roma children of the district who already attend *secondary school*. In their case, we provide all the background services for them that are received by those children of the middle-class families who intend to continue their studies (individual programmes to help closing the gap, professional tutorial aid, library, computers, learning languages, experiences to develop background knowledge).

Our goal with this and with the whole programme is the following. Those children who have already got to a certain level with the help of their family should not be lost and should be able to go all the way long on the difficult road leading to the realisation of the career selected for them.

Launching

In the first year (beginning with September 1997) 45 children (18 attending the 6th grade and 5 attending the 8th grade of the elementary school and 15 attending secondary school) were admitted into the day school.

The programme is announced in the secondary schools of the district indicating that we want to develop co-operation with the institutions receiving the children in the morning. This, however, is impossible in the case of the secondary school children, as they attend different schools dispersed all over the capital city. In their case, the list of those 8 graders who will go to a secondary school and those who receive scholarship completed with our knowledge about the local condition help us.

According to our experiences the most efficient propagation of the programme is when the respective information is transmitted in the wider family environment or in the neighbourhood by those who are connected with it, or by the children and their parents taking part in the programme.

After the announcement, we organise different programmes in the Day School, including a three-day excursion, for the parties interested in it (for the children and their parents). The children are invited to a kind of entrance exam, which is actually a discussion in early September. The purpose of this discussion is manifold. In the first place we would like to find out how realistic the idea of the children about the programme is. We also would like to know more about their status of motivation, and intend to find out whether they are in need of this programme or not.

We accept those 6th, 7th and 8th graders in the *elementary school section* who have a realistic chance to continue their studies with the support provided by our institution.

We recommend the services of the *secondary school section* for those young Roma people who attend a secondary school with maturity exam, or prepare themselves for higher education.

Term of training

We tried to develop the term of training according to the above-said, complex problems of the Roma children.

When selecting our methods our starting point was that the traditional school model is capable to handle only those children who *meet certain preliminary conditions* and is unable to meet the requirements of the others. Meeting the requirements of the remaining children automatically means segregation and systematic, low-level education and training. For the time being there seems to be no bridge between the traditional *verbal culture* of the Roma people and the institutionalised civil culture.

The Roma children often don't have a chance to express their knowledge at school which leads to gaps in all subjects.

As our program choose to assimilate to schools, we use a method to fill these gaps that builds all new knowledge on the knowledge that children have already acquired.

Services provided by the day school

The students can choose from a number of services. In some subjects, they even have a chance to choose the teacher working with them. The needs are collected in the first 1 seventh of the school year. The school schedule is based on those needs. After the first two weeks with the new schedule, teachers and students gather to give mutual feedback.

There are two fields for teachers and students to work together.

1. Assistance to learn
2. Free-time programmes

1. Assistance to learn

A, study-room

The study-room from Monday to Friday between 3 pm and 5 pm. Here, students in groups of 6-7 prepare for the next school-day. Students are also taught methods for effective studying. The study-room is lead by a master teacher and either a math or a literature teacher as well.

B, Students development can also happen in smaller groups or individually if:

- The child can't learn new materials because of gaps in previously learnt things.
- The child does not find the explanations at school understandable or clear.
- The child must learn large amount of new material in short time.
- The child has been absent for a longer time.
- The child needs more motivation.
- The child is outstandingly gifted.
- The child is preparing for an exam.

Development in small groups is available in all subjects.

Individual development happens mostly at the child's home.

The work is done in small groups with an internal division of labour. The working groups jointly discuss the achievements of the programme, summarise the results and the conclusions, and *present* the prepared documentation to their mates in the day School, to the parents, and to the public. The most commonly adapted method is making films, editing journals, and organising exhibitions.

We intend to bring the knowledge closer to real life and to utilise it as a means of social learning by the help of the project method. While solving the tasks jointly, undertaking responsibility, co-operation, disciplined debate, conflict management and reconciliation of interests can be practised.

Consequently, we intend to realise *problem-centric* organisation of teaching in stead of explanatory or illustrative methods, because this assures the activity of children the most. In this case, the pupils or students not only learn new knowledge, but also practise the different ways of acquiring new knowledge. The purpose of learning is to acquire problem-solving attitudes.

In the interest of making the learning process more interesting and the Day School programmes more differentiated we apply the popular *computer* educational programmes (interactive practising, animation, processing of new materials, educational methods, simulation of experiments, syllabus systematisation programmes).

Evaluation

Evaluation is continuous, and primarily of reinforcement or affirmation nature. Children need feedback, and seem to stick to the school marks, or evaluation marks as well. Teachers are free to decide about the way of evaluation. It seems to be useful to stop teaching (circa once a month), and to evaluate performance by subjects. Teachers of the subjects should give personalised verbal evaluation about the achievements of the children, their development and the objectives for the next term. The previous term is evaluated in a complex way every three months, and the future self-development aspects are worded at these occasions.

The basis of periodic evaluation by subjects is continuous activity and the achievements. An achievement can be the materialisation of a project work, a test ending a subject, an examination, or the activity at a competition in the Day School.

The best form of award and positive reinforcement is "self-award". (For example: appearance in the newspaper of the Day School, or in an anthology, successful activity at a competition organised by the Day School, the success before the public of a nicely quoted poem, school success achieved by the help of the Day School programme, participation in competitions organised by external bodies, etc.) Symbolic signals also from an integral part of our means. These include, besides others, the traditional extra marks or red dots given to the best or extra ones. (Minus points and the five-grade qualification system of the schools should be avoided.) Exceptionally good per-

formance at a lesson can be rewarded with a short note in the school-book, which is a separate, nicely bound book used exclusively for this purpose and is called the "school chronicle". Finally, we award the children with actual presents as well (pens, toys, theatre tickets, books, cakes given for a group of children, excursions, etc.). In addition, we do not forget about the words of appraisal and the different meta-communicative signs of acknowledgement either.

2. Free-time programmes

In addition to our educational and teaching activities, organisation of programmes, both inside and outside the Day School, related to *Roma* and general culture is an exceptionally important task. Our objective is to form the children into a community where knowledge is a value and where the Roma identity of the children can be undertaken and is accepted.

The weekend club provides the framework for the free-time programmes. We all know that the difficulties of the school achievements of Roma children can not only be measured and explained by their performance in the different school subjects. The average Hungarian children bring some of their knowledge and talents from home. The schools suppose that the children have already acquired this knowledge and these talents. However, the Roma children of Józsefváros do not receive this knowledge in the majority of the cases, and do not receive the inspiration to acquire this knowledge either. One of the objectives of the club is to teach and learn this knowledge and these talents in a playful and entertaining manner.

First ..., then we presented. Books.

In an optimum case, the pupils and students of the Day School are organised into a community during their weekly activities, and the club also plays an important role in it. This is a great achievement and a great responsibility as well. The children need us to help them spend their free time usefully. The community also plays an important role in the following fields: it teaches the children (and facilitates them to practice as well) that they are, at the same time, Roma and Hungarian citizens, preserve certain traditions and learn the knowledge, talents, values and norms of modern middle-class.

The task of the club is to help to create the conditions and frameworks for successful school and social development, to motivate the children and the young people for the development of a new, modern middle-class identity. We do not intend to create an entertainment centre, but a specific extension of the Day School.

Those children and young people who visit the club do not live their everyday life according to middle-class (for example: intellectual) values. The specific characteristic and value of the club lies in the fact that it tries to help these children to acquire these values. The organised activities of the club represent a kind of withdraw from everyday life. However, as the everyday life of the children and young people visiting the club is not characterised by intellectual activities, these are the ones that mean separation from everyday life. The club programmes are organised on Saturdays from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. These programmes are completed with theatre programmes as well.

Activities of the club

1. Getting acquainted with art

The purpose of the occupations is to teach the children to approach the different objects of art with understanding. With the capability to recognise what is beautiful in them, to recognise themselves, to respect their mates, to place themselves into the different processes, to increase their sensitivity, and to create desire for creativity (probably for artistic work). We want them to appreciate their own creativity and the creativity of others as well.

Literature: The purpose is to compile and process or discuss those literary works that are not (necessarily) part of the syllabus. The selection also aims at loosing the connection between school expectations and club occupation. The selection and discussion of the literary works is suitable to mediate such experiences that these children have already been confronted with in their everyday life (for example: the poems of Petri, Ginsberg, Károly Bari, Eliot, etc, the prose of Émile Ajar, Géza Ottlik, Géza Csáth, Béla Osztojkán, Menyhért Lakatos, etc.).

Theatre: Besides increasing the educational level of children, the purpose of going to the theatre is to familiarise the children with the actual venues of the values intended to be mediated, to see and learn the complete theatre production (performance) and to teach them how to behave in the theatre. Conversations and weekly activities that are related to the selected performance precede the theatre programmes, while conversations about the theatre performance follow them. According to a different interpretation of the theatre, we play situation games and situation exercises with the children. The purpose of these games and exercises is to let the children learn more about each other and themselves, to practice concentration and paying attention and to develop body language.

Fine arts: The purpose of the occupations is to let the children participate in creative procedures helping them to develop creativity and to make drawings, montage, paintings and—depending on the materials available—ceramics, textile objects, etc. We also aim at developing the visual talents of the children. The occupations are usually led by young Roma artists. The art occupations are related to the literary occupations (the preparation of montage to poems, the preparation of illustrations to the processed literary works, etc.).

2. Editing and making journals

The purpose of the Day School journal is to transmit news about our activities, experiences and thoughts. Improving the writing talents of children is another important objective.

The journal is edited by an editorial board. The members of the editorial board are selected from the most talented, most diligent and most reliable children visiting the club. The articles and drawings published in the journal are written and made by the members of the club.

Drawings, montage, poems and reports prepared during the occupations are published in the journal. The interviews made with the adults, the invited guests and with each other in the Day School have a permanent column. According to our plans, there will be a dispute column, a news column, a correspondence column, and some other—currently uncertain—columns satisfying the interests of the children.

First we did not have, then we had. A journal.

The *nationality programme* of the Day School is primarily organised within the framework of the club too. In stead of the widespread ethnographic-historic approach, we try to apply a different, more realistic and close-to-life approach taking the identity status of the children into account. We approach the “issue of identity” from the point of view of the families, because we do not think that a universal Roma image or a universal Roma identity should be favoured. The mainframe programme for this is the organisation of an exhibition and the editing of a supplement to our journal where the children can present their families. The collection of the source materials is a great experience in itself. The children ask photos from their elderly family members and write down everything they know about the people on the photos. They make sound and video recordings about their family members. They say that this way they can learn a lot of new things even about their close relatives. If we want to word it in a somewhat extreme manner we could say the following. This method is

better for the development of self-esteem and self-recognition of children than the presentation of the routes of wandering of the Roma people leaving their homeland in India or of the ancient myths and traditions. Evidently, the latter ones are also important, but only in a later phase of our nationality programme. According to our expectations, the children will initiate this wider approach themselves, as they did propose the education of the Roma language as well.

Personnel conditions of the programme

Leaders of the activities

1. Subject teachers from the elementary or secondary schools capable to teach their subjects at a high level.
2. Language teachers, teachers of computer science.
3. According to our intentions, those people, who are not pedagogues but agree with our objectives will have an equal role with the above teachers if they are suitable to influence the children in a positive manner due to their special knowledge or personality.

When selecting the candidates for these positions, the first and foremost aspect is *professional* suitability. However it is also very important that adults being equally familiar with the Roma and non-Roma (majority) culture should be around and with the children. We need open, creative, emphatic, tolerant people with social sensitivity.

We plan to involve into the realisation of the programme those universities and colleges of the capital city that deal with the training of pedagogues. This idea seems to be feasible because the Day School could serve as the venue of pedagogic practice and experience for their *graduate students* (possibly including those who attend the Romanology faculty). After proper preparation, these students could be involved into the team of the Day School facilitating for them to take part both in the occupations of the Day School and in home teaching.

Actual labour-force requirement of the day school

The Day School needs *one full-time programme leader*, whose main task is to control the realisation of the programme, to co-ordinate, to keep contact with the schools and families of the children attending the Day School, and to manage the programme.

The Day School needs *two pedagogues* heading the study rooms. They work two hours, four times a week.

The Day School needs *one expert* heading and managing the project programme. This person leads the occupations once a week for three hours, and keeps club occupations during the weekends also for three hours.

Besides this, the Day School needs an *administrative employee* working six hours a day and an *assistant pedagogue* also working six hours a day. The latter one should be on duty during the office hours of the Day School (between 14.00 and 19.00). (Having an assistant pedagogue is absolutely necessary, because one adult besides the person heading the occupations according to the syllabus should be in the Day School to supervise and help the children using the facilities—library, computers, tutorial aid, etc.—of the Day School.)

In addition to these persons, we need subject teachers and pedagogues doing home teaching. Their number depends on the number of hours they can work.

Tutorial system

Based on sympathy, student-teacher pairs will be formed with the mediation of the Day School director. The tutor keeps contact with the family and the elementary school, prepares school selection, plans and controls the pace of preparations.

The student, the parents, the tutor and the form-master conclude a four-sided *agreement* with each other. They word the expectations concerning the development and the performance of the children together, and write them down. The agreement includes the conditions of attending the Day School. The students are obliged to inform their tutors about their school performance. The tutors should provide detailed information about the operation and level of requirements of the school (secondary school, college, or university) selected by their students and should call the attention to the school that seems to be the best from the point of view of the talents of the child. (We would like to achieve that the form-masters, as patronage teachers, should receive payment. This could be made in the form of “honorarium or commission fee”. This money should come from the complementary state contribution applicable by the schools for the follow-up programmes of the Roma children.)

Material conditions of the programme

The venue of the programme: Budapest, District VIII., József krt. 2. IV./1. (rental of a 150 square metre private apartment). (beginning with 1 January 1999, the new address is: Budapest, district VIII., József krt. 50. III./13.).

Organisational form: The programme is operated and realised by Józsefvárosi Tanoda Alapítvány (Józsefváros Day School Foundation).

Budget, financing

According to current legal regulations, Józsefváros Day School is *not entitled* to normative state subsidy. Its operation should be funded from donations and sponsoring. Thanks to the Soros Foundation, the minimal operational level of the Day School was assured during the first three years (between 1997 and 1999). However, additional sponsoring and subsidies are required for normal operation. In terms of the future, we find government Decree No. 1093/1997. (VII.29), and the mid-term programme package launched for the improvement of the living conditions of the Roma people very important. The programme package mentions the Józsefváros Day School as a talent-nurturing programme that should be stabilised and strengthened.

The pedagogy of KEDVES*-house

The outlines of a pedagogic trend presented in conversation pieces and subject pictures

By Peter Lázár

Source: Soros Oktatási Füzetek, 1998

**Kedves, in Hungarian,
means nice, sweet, ami-
cable, dear, gentle, etc. –
the translator*

*“The world especially misses the people,
who care about the missing things of others...
Only those of us will really be happy, who seek for and find the ways
to serve the others.”*

(Albert Schweitzer)

New period of my life...

Nyírtelek village is eight kilometres away from Nyíregyháza, on the road to Tokaj. I moved to this village in 1990, with my large family. Before that, I used to work, together with my wife, in a youth custody centre as a teacher (by the way, I grew up in this youth custody centre under state care). When it was time to move, we brought with us, in addition to our three children, ten teenage Roma boys, who had just finished the eighth grade of the elementary school, because we wanted them to grow up in a family.

In 1994, the majority of the big boys finished the vocational training school, they came of age, and left the paternal "foundation home" for LIFE, in capital letters. As a result I, who used to be a full-time father, teacher, and orchestra conductor, all of a sudden became jobless. After four years full of struggle, I was there, somewhat broken down, without objectives, and did not have the slightest idea about what to do. At that point I heard that there was a vacancy in the local school.

I went to the apartment of the head teacher at the prearranged time to get more information about the job. She said that, for the time being, she was unable to offer me a job that would meet my specialisation, but also said that there was a remedial class (precisely fourteen children, in the majority over-aged and at a disadvantage), in need of a teacher.

After some minutes of thinking I said sadly, but firmly, that I did not know anything about teaching methodology and that I knew even less about special development, and that they would rather need a good teacher of handicapped children, then, while saying good-bye to her, I added:

– Should that job for a biology-physical education teacher become vacant, think of me.

Evidently, none of us did seriously believe that this idea would become a reality in the near future. However, I had the feeling that there was something else the head teacher wanted to tell me, because she stood up from the table only somewhat later and it could be seen, quite clearly, that inside she was fighting with herself. Then she looked at me, somewhat uncertain and blurted out:

– But I did really hope that you would take the job. Now I do not know what would happen with these Roma children. How can I find a proper teacher for them?

– I see! – I got over my surprise. They are Roma children?

– Yes.
– Then I take the job.
I said good-bye to her.

At that time I was quite unsuspecting, but now I know, that the meeting with the head teacher meant the beginning of a new period in my life.

Some days later, again at the prearranged time, I went to the school. I wanted to know more about my future pupils, and also wanted to ask for some sort of tutorial aid material to help me to prepare myself for teaching before September comes. The head teacher and her deputy, who were on their regular summer duty, took great pains over the preparation of the timetable. They gave me the syllabus and "last year's" school record book. From this book I learnt that the majority of my future pupils had already been first-graders, some of them already twice, but they were far from being successful. As the same family names were repeated frequently I found out that these children were the members of the younger generation of two-three families. I also saw that most of them missed school very often.

While browsing the data and the school-marks I also realised why there was a need for a remedial class...

In 1992, a new head teacher had come to the school. This was the year when the largest number of Roma children registered at the school. And the majority of them failed at the end of the year. The failed ones from the parallel classes joined the new-comers, thus, drawing the conclusions from the experiences of the previous year, it seemed to be a rational decision to start a separate Roma remedial class in the 1993/1994 school-year. The rationale behind was that this way they had the opportunity to learn according to their individual pace, and they did not disturb teaching in the other classes. The teacher of this remedial class was a young lady, who had just started her career. She worked heroically all the year then she went to teach elsewhere.

The head teacher told me that solving the school problems of the Roma children had always caused her a lot of headache. The situation was made even more serious by the fact that she had to spend most of her time with the internal affairs of the school. She had to handle the tension created by the election of the new head teacher, the troubles caused by the school audit, the different intrigues, etc.

Finally, after two years, she succeeded, with the support of her deputy, to line the most energetic core of the teaching staff for their matter. This part of the teaching staff was open and wanted to do something with the school and for the school.

She also succeeded to get certain things out of the local authority. Moreover, the head teacher was elected into the body of representatives at the 1994 local elections thus she could represent the interests of the school more successfully.

Only the school problems of the Roma children were left unsolved.

What was the problem with the Roma children?

Well, in fact, they had problems with the school. The village had two elementary schools, and the majority of the commuting pupils attended this one. In reality it meant that out of the 350 pupils of the school 60 per cent was commuting every morning from one of the 14 dispersed farmsteads that belong to Nyírtelek village. The Roma children, whose number was around 50, also lived in these outer areas. However, there were some children every year who were exempted, for the better, from the obligation of school attendance due to over-age, large number of missed schooldays, and behavioural problems.

There were constant problems also with those ones who went to school. They were late all the time, they got to school only with the bus that arrived at 9 o'clock, and—after the third lesson—left with the bus leaving at 11, being fed up with the cramming course.

In addition to this, smaller and bigger rows between the Roma children and the others were everyday events in this school. There were thefts and there was shouting. In the majority of the cases, the Roma parents came to the school only when they thought that the administration of justice was derogatory and humiliating from the point of view of their children. Otherwise they did not react either to the messages, or to the notices sent to them by the teachers.

According to the head teacher, it was also a fundamental problem that the children came to school sloppy, unwashed and in dirty clothes. Fresh air had to be let into the classrooms several times a days because of the unpleasant smell thus the teachers were quite unwilling to substitute the teacher of this class.

After all these I became very curious about the housing conditions of these families, about the place where even washing themselves seemed to be a problem, thus I went to visit the Roma settlement the very same day.

The settlement is about 15 kilometres away from the school, in the outer areas of a small farmstead, in the immediate vicinity of an always-noisy pearl-stone factory. In reality, we are talking about one, roughly 25 meter long and 12 meter wide, old, deteriorated brick building, which was called by the local people: "the barracks".

For the first sight it became clear to me, that the building, which used to be the dwelling home of the agricultural workers of the estate, had been dilapidated and neglected already before the Roma families moved in. Though the roof structure and the brick walls were standing firm, the plaster was all gone, and time, joining forces with nitric acid, too has had it on the brick, especially on the base. The roof was sunken at several points, some of the tiles were missing, and the roof structure in the front, roughly over the third of the building, was collapsed completely, and only one or two rafters or roof battens were standing out. The windows were just black holes, some of them covered with greaseproof paper, the whole place was full of rubbish, there was only one well in the courtyard and there were paddles and mud with playing children and dogs all around it. The undergrowth was covered with the fine dust of pearl-stone, inciting to cough, making the whole area completely grey. When I first saw this building (whose roof was missing in the front), I immediately sensed that this is the home of poverty, misery, exclusion and defencelessness. Right after getting out of my old BX car, I was surrounded by children and their parents. Their initial distrust started to disappear when they learnt that I would be the teacher of their children from September. Moreover, they introduced those children who had already been to school. Then one of the mothers asked:

- Are you also Gypsy?
- Why, can't you see? – I asked back.

This broke the ice completely. They invited me into their homes, and offered me coffee. It was getting dark when I left them and went home.

Some days later, when I visited the barracks again, I went to see all the families, and—as a kind of study of living conditions—I took notes of everything in connection with their living, housing, financial and social conditions. They were beginning to find their tongue, they were happy to see that, after all, somebody took care about them. At home, I studied my notes taken quickly about their conditions. Seven families (babies and elderly people) lived there under extremely unhealthy conditions. Altogether 47 people, with an average monthly income of HUF 2800 per head.

That day I completely understood two things. On the one hand I realised how powerful poverty is, what it means to be faced with it

every day, and what a special instinct and technique of survival is needed to continue and to regain their feet. On the other hand I also understood that under such miserable conditions parents are simply unable to consider schooling or washing as something of great or even moderate importance.

As to the “positive” effects of the study of living conditions I must tell you the following. After the head teacher read it and handed it over to the people in charge of these issues at the local authority, a housing construction programme was launched, which—though quite slowly—provided proper homes for these Roma people in three years’ time. The barracks were demolished.

The school year of 1994/1995

School started in September. I shall never forget the first day.

After the opening ceremony of the new school year, while going to the classroom, a woman, holding the hand of a little girl with curly black hair approached me.

- Are you Péter Lázár?
- Yes, I am.
- Well, you should note that my daughter would not attend this Roma class! Then she rushed away, dragging the little girl with her.
- Oh, Good, it does not begin too well! –I said in a subdued voice, then entered the classroom, where the children whom I got acquainted with in the summer were waiting for me. They were nice and neat, and some of the parents were also there. Moreover, I got a bunch of flowers from one of them, accompanied by kind words.

I was fully aware of the fact that if I started teaching the traditional way I would not be able to make them come to school regularly. The head teacher gave me full powers in teaching, and I used this opportunity. As I knew where and how they were living, how they spend their days, it was quite easy for me to find out what they were missing, what they do not get at home, but would very much like to get.

During the first two weeks we spent little time in the classroom. We went for long walks in the fields, were collecting plants and seeds, observed birds and plants, and, in the meantime, spoke about very important things, but we always ended up with talking about the family. The children brought up the subject, and I let them talk. I was surprised to see the large number of plants and animals they were familiar with, though they did not know their exact names. And they

were surprised, because I could tell them something interesting about all the plants and animals they showed me. After a time they learnt the correct names of the plants, and, often enough, they also learnt why that was the name of the plant or animal in question. During those two weeks they became familiar with a lot of herbs, they learnt what they can use them for. Whatever we could, we also took into the classroom. We made bunches of dried flowers, we stuck dry leaves on cardboard, we were stringing seeds, or created different shapes of them. We played a lot outside, especially team games. Thus I could make use of my knowledge as a biology-physical education teacher. We went for excursions several times. As most of the children have never been to a city, sightseeing in the city of Nyíregyháza was a great experience for them. And the visit to the zoo in Debrecen was probably an even bigger experience.

One day it was raining and we could not go out to play in the courtyard. While they were staring at the pouring rain in boredom, one of them asked:

- Mr Teacher, we will never learn? Shall we ever have schoolbooks?

And then I asked the very same pupil:

- Why? Do you really want to learn?

And they answered in chorus:

- YEEES!
- Then we should create a classroom that is ours. Where we like to learn! – I answered.

And they described the kind of classroom where they would like to learn. At that time the big boys, who were under state care, used to live with us, and as it was Friday, and the weekend close. So we whitewashed the classroom, painted the doors and the windows, emptied the lumber next to the classroom, and converted it into a playroom. We got rugs and toys from the head teacher, we were hanging fairy figures and puppets on the walls, and the bunch of dried flowers, the drawings and the collection of seeds also got their well-deserved place. The children could bring their favourites from home on Monday: dolls, playing cars, pictures about the family. Practically whatever they wanted.

The first two weeks were very important in terms of the future. At that time it was not a consciously organised pedagogic activity, and I assessed the effects only later.

In reality:

1. I waited until the *moment to teach* came, which was produced by the increased internal level of motivation of the children.
2. During our times of togetherness, without any limitation (without the limitation of 45-minute lessons), the children were really released and more direct with me, and in addition to *being accepted by them*, I got to know them individually. This way I succeeded to determine their capabilities, and could define, more or less, where to start their development.

School within the school

First we made rules. These rules were connected to behaviour, the class, the way of having a snack at ten, etc. In the beginning, we made rules almost every day, which were confirmed every day in a new situation. This way the customs that developed represented the foundations of a *co-operative communication* imbedded into a special teaching organisational structure. We did not stick to the traditional time limits of the lessons, we decided when to learn and when to have a rest, if we got tired of working.

The homelike, cosy classroom played an important role in the fact that the children came to school with pleasure, regularly, and neat. The *continuously increasing number of children drawings* on the walls of the classroom, the rug with the toys, the fairy country with the puppets and the draught-screen, the pictures and the drawings about their families, the flowers, all strengthened *personal chaffing*. We ended the day, quite often with saying: "I like this classroom, because..."

(We called the classroom home-class, because here they could find everything that they missed at home.) In the field of group-building, *strengthening the feeling of relatedness* and the *respecting individual values* were given special emphasis from the very beginning. These values were present not only in common plays, but also in the group activities and in the evaluation of each others' work by the group: "I like the drawing of Gabi, because ... I appreciate Julika, because ..."

I myself made an effort to give *emotional security* (as well) to every child, because those who are afraid and are full of anguish simply can not be taught. For those, however, who come from a family with completely different way of socialisation, and have already experienced that the expectations at school are very different from what they can meet, it is rather difficult to get rid of the inhibitions.

As a consequence, during my teaching I based, as a starting point of all the activities, on those things that a child learns in the family from birth.

Later, this exerted its positive influence on development at three points:

1. Strengthened (or substituted) the feeling of security at home, thus the children became receptive and acceptors.
2. The specific elements of cultural difference and family socialisation (also differing by families) completed each other very well, and this knowledge, brought with them and being a value, promoted the approachability of other cultural and moral values as well.

Where could these values be grasped, and how could they be brought into the classroom?

Well, these values were present everywhere: In the drawings of the children about their families. In their dream-drawings, in the pictures brought with them to school, in the expressive photographs of the newspapers, in the Gypsy fairy tales, in the nursery rhymes, in rhythms, in music, in dance, in clothes, and in their own stories. I just had to call them forth with pedagogic methods: by the help of telling stories, playing the guitar, singing songs, drawing, playing, with shaping them both individually and jointly.

In other words, I had to put the children into the proper situation in order to let their preliminary knowledge embedded into their life experiences come to the fore. Furthermore, permanent strengthening of these capabilities freed the children from their anguish, attached sense to their life, and increased their self-confidence.

3. Its third important effect was that it was easy to relate new knowledge to the preliminary knowledge gained in the family. Namely, the world widened out for them, in such a way that they could develop the new things in it.

In one of the tails we imagined that we were "cooking", and I started to say, slowly: "Now, we take the lemon, and cut it half with this not too very sharp knife." All of them showed the motion, but it was only me who took a deep breath, and they did not. Then I went to the grocery store, and brought a real lemon with me...

During this period, we have learnt a lot from each other. They shared with each other and with me the values they brought from home, and I, adding a small bit of the Roma cultural heritage to these values, completed with social and universal human values, opened and widened the world before them.

It became absolutely clear to me, already at an early stage that these children were in need of a remedial class not because they were handicapped. They simply needed it because, due to their different family socialisation, their talents and capabilities simply could not reach the level that represents the foundations of readiness for school. And readiness for school is the precondition of progress in the Hungarian educational and school system. (Sorry to say, but the examination carried out by the consultative bodies of schools is limited only to the examination of mental capabilities.)

Consequently, during the first term, I put the emphasis on the compensation of disadvantages in the field of socialisation, and on strengthening individual and group identity, based on family socialisation.

Regular school attendance resulted in the development of *proper set of customs*. I used teamwork as the most common way of doing things, and seldom turned to frontal class work. They gained new experiences every day, which were related to their previous knowledge. The frequency of working in small groups and the practice of individual differentiation increased parallel with the increase of their burden-bearing capabilities and working capacity.

In addition to learning from experience, *developing the capabilities requiring abstract thinking* was given an ever-growing importance after the first term.

These were mainly complementary, or preparatory playful occupations based on communication and drama games, that served the purpose of developing and preparing the mathematical, writing and reading talents (memory games, games to develop concentration, problem-solving thinking, games related to the sense of time and space, etc.). This way, there were a lot of opportunities (also) when speaking about a tale to develop knowledge related to the school subjects. (I do not intend to go into details about it.)

In this phase, the *principle of progressivity* was decisive: tales could be used for the purpose of teaching mathematics so that the names of the animals mentioned together with the numbers were gradually left out, and independent mathematical operations and exercises were created. Consequently, in the second half, the development of capabilities and talents required to learn the school subjects were given increasing importance.

When choosing the form of work I had to take into consideration the age differences and the differences in the individual capabilities of the children. At that time, when learning something new, I usually used the method of working in small groups.

It happened quite often, that the small groups presented their “knowledge” to the large group. This way, the younger ones succeeded to learn from the bigger ones, and vice versa. When stabilising knowledge, I found individual work and personalised tasks extremely important. It strengthened personality, because, on the one hand, increased the feeling of being accepted, and on the other, facilitated for the pupils to *develop according to their own capabilities and pace* in the given subject matter.

The development of children could be measured also in terms of knowing the school subjects by the end of the school year. In mathematics, writing and reading each of my pupils succeeded to learn the minimised (remedial) requirements of the school year. In fact, the majority of the pupils were just about to finish with the regular school subjects, and the elderly ones had overcome the difficulties of the subjects for the second year. On an average, the measurement of the regular school subjects (reading, spelling, and mathematics) gave week or medium results. Nevertheless, none of the test sheets could measure the *positive change* that took place inside the children between September and July. They became more self-assured, and the teachers spoke about their work with respect. At around the middle of the second half, there was a period, about one month, when the children, especially the bigger ones, learnt with great intensity. Often enough, they were so very deeply engaged in solving individual tasks that I almost had to force them to go out of the classroom. It is very likely, that this could happen because, all of a sudden, they realised that they were able to learn, and wanted to meet the expectations of the school. The activity of learning became an internal need, being the source of joy and success for them. I firmly believe that my pedagogical work played a decisive role in it. I did my work, every day, with belief, professional respect and personal relatedness. I wanted to give, and also wanted to prove that that these disadvantages can be caught up if we are able to give chance and opportunities to the children.

I succeeded to gain *the support of the parents* especially with those hidden messages that were brought home by the children every day. In my mind, the parents were always sitting behind their children (I wanted to teach them too), and whenever I caressed, washed, or praised a child, that was also addressed to his or her parents. When I said: “Tomorrow, we shall go to the theatre. Can I take it for granted that everybody will be nice?” then the children at home did not say that the teacher said my clothes were dirty and I should wash myself, but they said: “I want to look nice, because we shall go to the theatre with our teacher.” I could list the hidden messages for long. Though only very modest messages and ideas were sent to the parents, they—due to personal pride—did more and more for the success of their children at school.

I went out to the barracks minimum once a week. I helped them to arrange their troublesome businesses (filling in application forms, applying for family allowance, upbringing aid for housing construction, social-policy aid, etc.). At Christmas, the school collected used clothes for the Roma families. The parents were also present at the Christmas feast, where they could watch their children singing and telling nice poems. We also invited them to the school (together with their younger children) for a day each, to see the progress of their children. And they came happily, and were very proud of their children. In the beginning it happened that some of the children did not reach the morning bus, because the parents failed to wake them up on time. At these occasions I always notified the head teacher, who sent a substituting teacher in stead of me, then I got into my car, went to the barracks, and drove the child to school.

From the very beginning, there was some sort of very special (and inexplicable) *sensitivity in our communication*. Something that the Romas feel among themselves in the field of positive acceptance, and I know that it can be very strong. They called me “Mr Teacher”, and I greeted them with saying: “Kiss your hand*”. Both the parties were fully aware of the fact that mutual acceptance, respect and trust lie behind these greetings. They were proud, because I was the teacher of their child, they looked up to me, to the Roma person, to the “Mr Teacher”. My colleagues also accepted me very quickly, and the school management gave me full support to do my work successfully. I never ever sensed any kind of prejudice, my colleagues accepted me as a pedagogue, who is Gypsy. Now I know that this genuine authenticity gave the foundations of the positive changes.

**Traditional, rather old-fashioned way of greeting mostly women. It originates from the German language.
– the translator*

The idea of weekly home-dormitory

The idea was born in April 1995, when, in one afternoon, the head teacher, her deputy, and myself were talking about how to continue in the mirror of our achievements.

We all agreed, that in order to continue, the conditions should be improved, and we also agreed in saying that there is still a lot to do in order to decrease the disadvantages. For this reason we reached a consensus opinion on keeping the group together also in the next school year.

However, there were some problems that had to be solved. It was a problem especially in the case of over-aged children that in the next school year the time spent at school did not seem to be satisfactory, if we wanted them to meet the increased requirements in terms of the school subjects. In order to let them finish the eighth grade of the

elementary school in time (before they are 16), and give them a chance to continue their studies, they have to pass an exam in the subjects of the 3rd and the 4th grades. It seemed to be possible only if they stayed at school also during the afternoons for tuition. But how can they get home then? And how will they learn at home?

Consequently, there was emotional security and proper motivation for learning, and there was also family support, and acceptance at school, but social security necessary for further development was still missing. And then came the idea, *the weekly home-dormitory*. A dormitory, that also provides *social background and mental hygienic care* for the children to learn, and that may exert positive influence on the family too. The foundation house, where we used to live with the ten big boys, was vacant, and seemed to be suitable for the purpose. The idea was then quickly followed by activities, and the events speeded up. Making phone calls, correspondence, tendering, the Ministry, the Soros Foundation, the draft program, the local authority, painting, wall-papering, the National Public Health Service, dormitory standards, operational licence... After a lot of trouble and after spending a lot of time in anterooms, the dormitory finally started its operation in September 1995 with the support of the Department of Minorities of the Ministry of Culture and the Soros Foundation.

In the beginning, the parents were averse to the idea. They were afraid that we would take their children from them, that the children would be put into an institute. Slowly, they familiarised themselves with the idea of the dormitory, because the hidden messages again hit their targets as bullets. We talked about the dormitory with the children more and more often, we planned how we would live there, and this opened a “new window” for them into a different world. An increasing number of the parents approved of the idea, when they understood that it would be an open dormitory, their child could go home any time, they can also visit their child and it would be free of charge. By the end of August, all the children became the residents of the dormitory, in principle.

KEDVES-house from the dormitory

The dormitory received the children for the first time at the end of September (on a Thursday afternoon). They were very happy and released. After dinner, they had a bath. As they were sitting there in their pyjamas, nice and neat, it was very good to look at them.

When getting ready to go to bed, an ominous thought flashed through my mind. Up till now, these children were sleeping under very poor conditions, but in the habitual and reassuring family environment.

This is the first time in their life when they go to bed without their parents, into a clean bed, in a friendly, but alien room. Can they fall asleep easily, or will they miss their habitual environment? I pointed at the sack in the corner, being full of plush animals.

– I said: “Now, everybody can choose a sweetie, and go to bed with it.”

And they hugged the sweeties happily, and ran into their rooms. After half an hour, only their peaceful breathing could be heard through the open door. I peeped into the room. They were sleeping peacefully, quietly, hugging the soft and warm toys. The favourite animals are still there, on the pillows. They are the “Kedves”, who take care of their beds during the week-ends, and wait for them to come back to the Kedves-house on Monday.

After a very short period of time, being together permanently brought about qualitative changes in their school life as well. They became tranquil. For example, they were eating their lunch more quietly and leisurely. They were working more thoroughly and more attentively. They were more patient and gentle with each other, and were talking to the *gádjo* (Hungarian or non-Roma) children more often in the courtyard. In short, they were satisfied with the fact that they had a common home, where they can have a bath every evening, and that they can go to school every morning in clean clothes. (In this respect, the difference between them and the non-Roma children disappeared completely.)

At school, there was more time left for common and free conversations, for playful activities, for singing together, and also to play baseball, as they did not have to go home with the 12-o’clock bus. I tried to organise and control learning so that the older ones could help the younger ones (learning in pairs).

It had two reasons:

- I was not always able to give them personalised tasks, and was even less able to correct the test sheets;
- This method promoted responsibility for each other, and the appreciation and valuation of others’ work.

From the second half on, however, I needed the help of two colleagues, because I simply could not co-ordinate the pace of learning and the evaluation in the different subjects and groups. The reason was, that individual learning upset the previous group frameworks completely. As a result, three groups were formed, which are presented in the table below:

Group	Class	Number of children	Curriculum	Degree of being over-age	Exams passed during the previous half
1.	2 nd class	7	Regular 2 nd graders	With 1 year	
2.	3 rd class	4	Remedial and regular 3 rd graders	With 2-3 years	2 nd class
3.	4 th class	3	Remedial and regular 4 th graders	With 3-4 years	3 rd class

We decreased the years of being over-aged so that the children passed the exams from the “reduced” curriculum of one school year every half-year. Thus they succeeded to reach the level equivalent to their age very quickly.

The situation was made even more complicated by the fact that there were pupils who learnt the subject matter of the 3rd class in mathematics, and that of the 4th class in Hungarian literature and grammar. Thus there were days, more and more often, when all the three of us were teaching in the classroom at the same time. (Different teachers were teaching the different small groups.) By the end of the school year, we finally succeeded to meet our objectives in learning. Each pupil could start the next school year in the class equivalent to his or her age. In this set-up, the homeroom teacher was, at the same time, the patronage teacher (who was monitoring the results of the children in the different school subjects, and wherever and whenever this teacher noticed weaknesses, organised the needed tuition.) Besides this, the homeroom teacher met the children several times a week in the Kedves-house during the afternoon tuition.

Naturally, the positive effects of the Kedves-house on school life could be listed for long in terms of the different learning periods, or in the life of the individual pupils. It would also be useful to follow the influence of the Kedves-house on the whole life of the school, and to highlight the changes in the public opinion of the village.

Life in the KEDVES-house

Gyerekekért SOS '90 Alapítvány (For Children SOS '90 Foundation) maintains the Kedves-house dormitory. As it is the background institution of the school, it is operated jointly with the school. At present, the dormitory offers homely accommodation for 20 Roma pupils with multiple disadvantages from Monday to Friday. All the children living in the dormitory are the pupils of Nyírtelek elementary School No. 1. Two permanent boarding school teachers work in the dormitory, together with a team consisting of schoolteachers. In the afternoons, they organise different programmes for the children in the dormitory. A person managing the household duties of the dormitory, a district nurse and a maintenance man also work in the dormitory.

The dormitory provides social security, mental-hygienic care, love and care for the children. All of them spend the weekends with their parents.

The order of life and work

Dormitory and school activities are built upon and complete each other. An annually prepared program containing the most important tasks, objectives and development trends assures it.

The framework for the order of life and work is provided by the rules of the house and the weekly programme plan. The *laws and rules* brought by the children are the contextual regulators of operation. Permanent togetherness in the Kedves-house promotes not only individual development, but group-building as well. It offers a number of opportunities for personal strengthening, the substitution of insufficiencies at school, development of special talents and self-development. In the first place, the afternoon programmes and group conversations in the evening offer the best opportunities for this. *Conversation* is a very good method to work off tension. It brings about new experiences every day. In addition to this, the children bring home, every weekend, the hidden messages about brushing their teeth, bathing, cleaning the house, about the Gypsy songs, poems, stringing of beads, playing football and birthday cakes.

In other words, the children “educate” their parents during the weekends. This is further strengthened by the so-called dormitory days, when we are cooking together with the parents and discuss our common matters. One of the parents raised the following at one of these conversations: “Mr Teacher! Don’t you want to make a school for us? We also would like to learn. At home, we hardly understand these children!” And we did ... After eight months of learning, on 19 December 1997, 19 Roma parents successfully passed the exam from the subjects of the 7th and 8th grades of the workers’ school at Nagykálló.

Development of the programme

Development of its image

The *Kedves-house project* went through significant changes during the last school year as it has developed into a nationally accepted pedagogic trend. The principles and the objectives form a uniform system in its pedagogic programme influencing the pedagogic practice as well.

The most fundamental philosophical notions of the Kedves-house pedagogy that essentially differentiate it from other alternative pedagogic trends are the following:

1. Education at school is based on the values of family socialisation;
2. Community and individual identity (community development, personality development) are developed through getting acquainted with the cultural values of the Romas;
3. The effects of pedagogy exert their positive influence on family environment as well through the development of family support;
4. The educational structure, as a whole, is interwoven by the value-mediating influence of the Kedves-house dormitory. (Children live in the dormitory from Monday to Friday, and besides assuring proper conditions to learn, they also get social security and mental-hygienic care.)

Efforts to make the programme known and acknowledged, and its effects

During the year, close to 200 pedagogues visited the Kedves-house (and the school) to get an insight, within the framework of “professional days”, into our pedagogic practice. I delivered presentations in more than 30 schools, facilitating this way for more than 1000 teachers to become familiar with our work, what we had done, and the different possibilities of further development. (The positive radiation of the *Kedves-house project* is also indicated by the fact that, as a consequence of the professional days and the presentations, development programmes facilitating the development of Roma children were initiated in several schools.)

The May volume of the most important Hungarian pedagogic journal, *Új Pedagógiai Szemle*, published my article titled “*Kedves-house*”. This way, several thousands of pedagogues had the opportunity to read the history of Kedves-house and the most important elements of the pedagogic trend developing from our experiences. At the same time, this publication indicates the professional acknowledgement of our work.

The *Kedves-house project* is significant not only in Hungarian terms. I participated in the preparation of the Street Children programme in Bucharest, Rumania, for the invitation of the leader of the Back to School Foundation and for the request of the Open Society Institute. The above-mentioned programme tries to find solutions for the improvement of the living conditions of children sauntering along the streets of Bucharest in gangs. The organisation and operation of (a) Kedves-house type school(s) seems to be the most convenient in Rumania as well, because this could provide living conditions (social security) and school environment capable to mediate belief and rational and meaningful objectives. The preparations pursue the right course, and it seems to be very likely that there will soon be Kedves-house type schools also in Rumania.

The fame of our pedagogy reached the United States as well. In August 1997, again thanks to the *Regional Roma Programme* of the Open Society Institute, I participated at the three-week long intensive teachers' training programme of the New College of California in San Francisco. Multicultural societies, improving the situation of the minorities in marginal situation, prejudice and the methods and techniques that can be applied efficiently in pedagogic practice were the most important topics of this training course. Being the only European at this course, I could share with the participants the Roma minority culture and the pedagogy, philosophy and teaching methods of the Kedves-house, and the Americans received this information positively and with great interest.

In addition to the above-said, the direct positive effects of the *Kedves-house project* could be sensed and enjoyed primarily by the children living in the house, their parents and the school.

In the current school year, as I have already mentioned, 19 Roma parents were sitting in the classrooms, and were studying the subjects of the 7th and 8th grades. (They dropped out of school when they were children, and had no chance at all up till now to finish the elementary school.) I was teaching them too. During this time, they were shaped into a real community. They also formed an independent organisation, in order to keep their life in their hands and to improve and control the life of their children as well. They got land suitable for cultivation and seeds for sowing through tendering, and started farming. They have a number of sizeable plans and objectives for the future. Some of them intend to continue their studies, others want to start breeding animals, while others think that the service industry will offer the best opportunities for them. I keep my eyes on the development of the community. I help them as much as I can.

As a result of the *Kedves-house project*, the school became a nationally acknowledged model school, and this way a number of development programmes were realised that had been impossible earlier (special courses in computer science and languages, development groups, integrated education, different special study circles). In addition to this, our school has become a methodological centre in the region in the field of promoting the integration of Roma children and "closing the gap". At this point, the so-called *Hálózatesztés (Netting) Programme* deserves mentioning, because it facilitates for about 30 schools to receive useful information through the Internet from our school. (As I have already mentioned, a great number of teachers visited our school and the Kedves-house during the year.)

The Lion-claw prize

The children living in the Kedves-house have also gone through considerable development during the past year. This is manifested in the school records and their community life, not to speak about the positive changes in their personality. A girl, called Karolin Rákóczi, who became known for the whole country from the newspapers and the television, deserves special mentioning. She received the Lion-claw prize offered by the PORTOCOM Ltd. The prize is actually a personal computer, awarded by a professional jury (for the third time already) to the child with exceptionally good performance. (Karolin Rákóczi used to attend a remedial class in 1994. She finished the regular 4th grade this year, and was the first according to the evaluation system of the Kedves-house.) This performance is really exceptional, and also indicates the acknowledgement of the Kedves-house.

The positive influence of the Kedves-house can be sensed in the Hungarian public-education policy as well. During the year, I participated at several, high-level meetings and professional consultations where the situation of minority education and the trends and regulation of contextual development were on the agenda. In the first place, I called the attention of the educational and supervisory experts to one important fact. According to the demographic forecasts, the number of Roma children attending the school system would be several times higher in 2002 than it used to be before (especially at the small villages, where the number of Roma inhabitants is high). This fact in itself represents a challenge both for the educational administration and the schools. In one of my studies called: "*The outlines of a regional Roma educational development strategy*" I emphasised, besides others, the importance of spreading the alternative pedagogy of the Kedves-house and organising further educational programmes, related to the above pedagogy, for the teachers. I also underlined the

significance of providing basic knowledge in Romology for the college and university students and facilitating for them to get acquainted with the Roma educational programmes already in operation (for example: the Kedves-house).

The Kedves-house, being a model educational programme, was included into the government programme package aiming at the improvement of the living conditions and facilitation of the integration of the Romas.

In order to spread the pedagogy of the Kedves-house and to promote the local initiatives similar to that of the Kedves-house, we founded a three-member working group (the Nyírtelek team) in May 1998 for the request of the Ministry of Culture and Public Education.

We elaborated the annual work programme that includes, besides the above-said, the operation of an education-methodological and information centre. We would like to organise training courses and further-educational programmes within the framework of this centre.

The second trend of institution building is connected to the *Roma Education Programme* of the Soros foundation. (The Soros foundation has helped the establishment and the operation of the Kedves-house from the very beginning.)

Whenever I delivered presentations, I was asked by several people to visit their school and to help them to realise similar development programmes. This gave birth, in my mind, to the idea of the following programme that started to operate in September and has reached a lot within a short period of time.

The consultation programme

The *Consultation project* is an aid program organised with the participation of 14 schools. It was created with the support of the Soros Foundation in order to facilitate for the schools to get to know the pedagogy of the Kedves-house. It provides help for the schools to realise development programmes, similar to the Kedves-house, according to the local characteristics of the schools within the framework of a series of presentations with the aim to strengthen the teaching staff. The presentations last during the whole school year. In essence, working groups (trainers) consisting of consultation pairs deliver consultation training courses in the schools (these training courses last one or two days, and are held six times in each school) with the active participation of the teaching staff. The consultations are held in the following subjects:

The school as an institution and its set of contacts

- Self-diagnosis
- Correction of the pedagogic programme and the syllabus with the purpose of including—as much as possible—minority-related issues (the Act on Education; National Basic Syllabus—NAT; co-ordination of Minority Principles).
- The set of contacts of the school (maintainer, pedagogues, parents, local society, school board, local organisations)
- Development programmes matched with the local characteristics.

Pedagogic practice

- Learning-organisational strategies
- The Kedves-house pedagogy
- Efficient learning methods
- Motivations to learn
- Intercultural, multicultural features
- Efficient communication
- Techniques of co-operation

The pedagogue and the prejudice

- Self-knowledge
- School and mental-hygiene
- Changes in the attitude through getting acquainted with the Roma cultural values
- Finding local solutions to ease discrimination and prejudice

The significance of the consultation programme and its expected achievements

The programme is unique among the different systems of further education. Co-operative learning mobilises the whole teaching staff. This way, the participating teachers receive knowledge that is missing from the school system and can be used very well in the educational and teaching work (knowledge about the Romas, learning-organisational strategies, learning motivation, teaching methods, the different attitudes of the pedagogues, influences shaping the children).

Strategic objectives of the programme

1. Familiarising the Kedves-house pedagogy to the widest possible circle of teachers, promoting the establishment of dormitories similar to the Kedves-house;
2. To realise development programmes in all the 14 schools that exert positive influence on the neighbouring schools as well;
3. Establishment and operation of a school network (Network of Co-operating Schools) where schools can learn from each other (the get to know each others' programmes, promote the continuation of learning of the talented Roma children, etc.).

The trainers' training programme

The third trend of institutional development is "*The trainers' training programme*" launched in May, which is described in the following.

Parallel with the development of the *Consultation programme*, an increasing number of schools wanted to join (however, a consultation team with eight members simply could not help more schools). In the meantime, the feedback and the experiences made it clear that the *Consultation programme* itself can only be efficient and viable in the long run, if the trainers are also trained simultaneously. For this reason, we have selected pedagogues (one or two teachers from each school) from the 14 schools participating in the *Consultation programme* undertaking to participate in a complex (altogether 120 hours) course. After finishing the course, these teachers, as "pedagogues of the Kedves-house" can then head and conduct similar training courses in the ever-extending network of schools.

When preparing the programme of the training course, my greatest ambition was to put an emphasis, in addition to the pedagogy of the Kedves-house and the contextual development of Hungarian minority education, on foreign aspects promoting the modernisation of education (multicultural and intercultural education, co-operative learning, etc.).

I asked Dr Sudia Paloma, the director of the Teacher Education Programme at the New College of California to head and conduct the seminar. She happily accepted the invitation, especially because she had participated in the preparation of the programme and in conducting the training courses. According to our plans, we shall jointly conduct the one-week long training courses held four times altogether.

In short, these were the basic trends of the professional and contextual development of the *Kedves-house project*.

Structural development and financing

Gyerekekért SOS '90 Alapítvány (For the Children SOS '90 Foundation) maintains the Kedves-house dormitory. The Foundation is also the host of the *Kedves-house project*, and the related development programmes (*Consultation Programme*, *Trainers' Training programme*). The contextual development of the project resulted in the development of extensive professional contacts (the Ministry, different foundations, partner schools, domestic and foreign experts).

As a result of the increased number of tasks and also in the interest of being able to do high-quality work, structural development was unavoidable. This meant additional human resources and more rational division of labour in the following two areas:

1. *The operation of the Kedves-house dormitory*: employment of a Roma boarding school teacher in the dormitory, the training and employment of two boarding school teachers. (My role is to conduct and manage the work and to provide the conditions thus I have more time left for the realisation of the development programmes.)
2. *The Kedves-house project and the related development programmes*: a strategic working group was created (four people, including myself), whose task is to prepare the programmes, to divide the tasks, to find funds through tendering, to manage the project, and to organise the programmes. In order to realise the *Consultation programme* successfully, as I have already mentioned, I set up a consultation working group consisting of 8 people. The consultants working in pairs keep contact with the partner schools, and conduct consultation training - courses in the 14 schools.

The operational costs of the Kedves-house dormitory are covered by the Foundation from state norms. However, this amount is sufficient only to cover the costs of minimum operational conditions. All the other development programmes are realised from different funds received through tenders.

Network development

With the increasingly extensive utilisation of human resources, the possibility to develop a network seems to come true. According to my hopes and expectations, this will exceed the limits of the Foundation within one or two years, and will promote the development of the project and spreading its values more effectively on different organisational foundations.

The number of those who participate in the organisational and management activities of the *Kedves-house project*, or help its work in different other ways (pedagogues, educational experts, programme organisers, technical staff) exceeds one hundred. As a result of the launched training courses, close to 500 pedagogues (the teaching staff of 14 schools) will be able to use in practice the pedagogic methods of the Kedves-house.

With the help of the *Trainers' training programme*, the values of the programmes can be transmitted as a kind of chain reaction, thus the *pedagogues of the Kedves-house* can promote the development of other schools.

With the co-operation of the trained pedagogues of the Kedves-house, the network of trainers can be developed, while the teaching staff of the schools participating in the training activities can be the core of the extending Network of Co-operating Schools. In the near future, the establishment of dormitories similar to the Kedves-house seems to be possible at 5 settlements. Preparation takes a lot of time and energy, especially because, in contrast to the foundation of schools, the foundation of the Kedves-house has no history yet.

Consequently, dormitories similar to the Kedves-house can only be founded at those places where the local community needs this, and makes it possible and/or needed. The first and most important step of this is to have co-operation between the different social groups (the Roma population and the majority of the inhabitants). This open dialogue gives the opportunity to assess the situation realistically and to try to find solutions to the problems jointly. The negotiations have reached this point at several settlements in the issue of the Kedves-house. I find it especially very important, that in many villages (Acsa, Hernádvécse, Kemecse, Hejőkeresztúr) the schools, the maintaining body of the schools, the minority local authorities, and the parents think that the improvement of the living conditions of the Romas living in the given settlement is their common concern. As a consequence, they try to find solutions to the problem together with the Romas. However, it is a difficult thing, can not be done from one day to the other. The pace of development is slowed down, because it is very difficult to find authentic people identifying themselves with the matter and fighting for its realisation. This is one of the reasons why training courses and further education are important, as they show positive examples inspiring people to change the situation. As a clear proof of the previous notions I can tell you that Kedves-house is not the only one of its kind. Collegium Martineum operating at Mánfa can be considered as a "Brother institution". There, secondary-school children live according to similar principles as our children at Nyírtelek, in the Kedves-house. The founders of Collegium

Martineum took the Kedves-house as an example. They spent several days there, watching, examining and studying (in details) the work and the order of life in the Kedves-house. Me and also my colleagues were pleased to share our experiences with them. We called their attention to the difficulties of getting the licence to operate the dormitory. Collegium Martineum functions successfully. Its dynamic development is due to the persistent and determined work of three enthusiastic pedagogues (Tibor Derdák, Aranka Varga and Péter Heindl).

Recently, they ask me to support them in the realisation of a very interesting and valuable initiative.

In one of the villages (Petneháza), the activists of the local community would like to organise the operation of a community house guided by the principles of the Kedves-house. Needs, requirements and opportunities stemming from the local characteristics are decisive and determinant here as well. The kindergarten of the village is overcrowded, and is incapable to provide, especially for children at a disadvantage, those personal and material conditions, and the developing pedagogic effect mechanism that have decisive role in avoiding the failures following school entry.

The other problem is related to the elderly people, who are left alone in old age. (Their children grew up, moved from the village, their spouse had deceased, or is sick, etc.) There is no place for the elderly people where they could be together and could share with each other their problems and happiness. A kindergarten teacher and a nurse found out that it would be good to have a house in the village where the lonely elderly people and the kindergarten children at a disadvantage could be together during the day. This togetherness would exert positive influence on the children and also on the elderly people who could this way get the so much missed happiness and joy of being grandparents and could also be in the company of other people.

The two women, the kindergarten teacher and the nurse, contacted me in the spring of this year and asked me to help the realisation of their idea. I visited Petneháza several times, and talked to the representatives of the kindergarten, the school and the local authority. The negotiations are on the right way. A local strategic working group was teamed up, and we jointly elaborated the pedagogic programme of the elderly-kindergarten children group based on the pedagogic principles of the *Kedves-house* project. At this point, "only" the financial and material conditions are missing for the realisation. In the near future, I would like to establish the Life House Foundation in order to raise money for the operation of the community house. According to my expectations, life will begin in the Life House at Petneháza within two years.

Summary

The *Kedves-house project* went through considerable changes during the last year, and its developing effects can be sensed not only in the field of education, but also in different areas of social life (culture, civil self-organisations, etc.). The pedagogy of the Kedves-house has developed into an alternative pedagogy. It represents a significant step forward in the development of Hungarian public education as it promotes the social integration of the Romas.

The programme opened new development opportunities not only for the children living in the Kedves-house, the pedagogues dealing with them and the school. After 18 months of persistent learning, 19 parents received the certificate proving that they had finished the elementary school. They established an organisation, and have ambitious plans to take their fate into their hands.

The indirect effects of the programme could be sensed by more than a thousand pedagogues. They try to find the opportunities, in different schools, to solve the educational problems of the Roma children. Within the framework of professional days, the different groups of pedagogues followed one another in the Kedves-house and at the school to gain experiences about the work done here (demonstration lessons, conversations, and consultations). I was invited into more than 30 schools to present *the programme of the Kedves-house*, and to help the realisation of a development programme. As a result, a zero-grade was launched at Kemece with my co-operation to help the joining of the Roma children at a disadvantage. This grade alleviates the difficulties of transition from kindergarten to school, and saves the children from school failures. A school association was established at Pátroha, organising programmes for the teachers of the 16 member schools. At these meetings, the pedagogues have the opportunity to share their experiences, and to become familiar with the new methods and programmes.

The pedagogy of the Kedves-house was included into the *Roma education development programme* of the government. For the request of the Ministry, the Roma expert working group was founded (the so-called Nyírtelek team). Its task is to give professional help to those schools that intend to introduce similar development programmes. We have daily contact with more than 30 schools, and—within the framework of the information network called *Netting*—we can send information through the Internet to all the interested schools.

The *Consultation Programme* provides a training-staff strengthening training programme covering the whole school year for the teaching

staff of 14 schools. An eight-member professional team does this work. One of the most important tasks of the near future is to write down, based on the experiences of the training courses the whole documentation of the courses and to have them accredited by the Ministry.

The value-mediation function of KEDVES-house

Kedves-house mediates values to the children that strengthen their identity and help them to accomplish their ethnic identity. In other words: it helps them to be able to make free and responsible decisions, and to undertake responsibility for their decisions and deeds. Obtainable knowledge, which is the only way for the Romas to social integration, plays a decisive role among the values of the Kedves-house.

Finally: The pedagogy of the Kedves-house, as a pedagogic trend, is in the making. This study intends to show those important elements, in terms of their history and through conversation pieces and subject pictures that are dominant in practice and are the determinant characteristics of this pedagogy. Due to the limited nature of the study, I could not present the philosophy and the principles of the Kedves-house, the structure of the teaching and learning process, the didactical objectives, and the methods and technique of teaching. Detailed discussion of these issues requires another study.

The Gandhi Secondary School: An experiment in Roma Education

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ABSTRACT *The Gandhi Secondary School, located in Pécs, Hungary, was, until recently, the only secondary school in Europe devoted to preparing young Roma for higher education. This article discusses the School's origins and philosophy, its curriculum, and its teaching models. There is also a discussion of the reality of life at the school and the various challenges faced by teachers and students.*

Background

This article is based on three years of experience, working closely with the Gandhi School, talking to its teachers, its students and some of the parents of the students. It is also based on a number of teacher-training seminars conducted in Central and Eastern Hungary.

The education of Roma youth, and their future in society, has become a major concern of the Roma intellectuals in Hungary at the end of this millennium. Approximately 7% of the Hungarian population are Roma, and this percentage is growing due to significantly higher birth rates. There is distinct population pyramid among the Roma of Hungary, with the large majority of the community being under the age of 20. This also implies that the school age population of Roma

is increasing rapidly. Nevertheless, the number of Roma who succeed in the educational system is almost negligible. Statistics from the Hungarian Ministry of Education show that the percentage of Roma that complete secondary school is 0.5% (and 0.01% make it to the university). Most never even make it to the secondary school level (only 40% have finished primary school).

The situation in South-Transylvania, where the Gandhi School is located, is equally a cause for concern. Approximately 60 thousand Beás (who speak a language very close to Romanian) Roma live in this region of Hungary. Unemployment rates are approximately 90%, and illiteracy is widespread. According to information obtained from the school in 1997, there were a total of 12 Beás secondary school graduates in all of Hungary (although the actual number is probably somewhat higher).

Various reasons have been offered for the failure of Roma students in the Hungarian educational system. The main ones include:

1. Distrust by the Roma community towards Hungarian (Gadje) educational institutions. Most memories of school experiences are negative.
2. Lack of faith in traditional education. Parents tend to feel that after a certain age children can learn from the family what is necessary to survive.
3. Fear on the part of parents that their children will become contaminated with the attitudes and culture of the majority.
4. Lack of educated role models, and thus an expectation on the part of the community that Roma can only fulfil certain jobs.
5. Families tend to be large and poor. The children, especially girls, are needed to help out in the family. The boys are needed to earn money and supplement the family income.
6. Traditional expectations on the part of parents that their children will marry and have children at a young age (13-15 years of age), especially the girls.
7. Many young Roma do not speak Hungarian as a first language. This affects their school achievement at a young age.
8. Teacher expectations that Roma pupils are less intelligent than the majority pupils (If a Roma pupil succeeds it is due to luck or cheating; if a Hungarian pupil succeeds it is due to skill)
9. Prejudice and discrimination on the part of teachers and other pupils. Almost all Roma students will have stories of how they felt they were discriminated against in the school class.
10. Early tracking into special education classes and schools, thereby destroying any opportunity for young Roma to have a school career.
11. Culturally-biased tests that work to the disadvantage of Roma children (e.g. standard intelligence tests such as the Wechsler).
12. A curriculum that in no way reflects or the history or culture of the Roma.

13. Teaching methods that put Roma pupils at a disadvantage. Especially traditional methods that demand strong reading and language skills are less appropriate for Roma pupils.
14. Lack of understanding in the part of teachers regarding Roma culture (e.g. the fact that Roma teenagers are considered adults by their communities)

A cursory glance at the long list of factors above indicates that the issue of Roma school failure is a complicated one. Any program with the intention of changing the present scenario significantly has to take all of these factors into account.

An especially powerful factor, in the author's experience, is teacher expectations. During several teacher training workshops conducted in Hungary, Romania and Slovakia, many teachers indicated that they placed Roma students at the back of the room (already at the beginning of the school year) because they knew that they would not pay attention, that they would not enjoy the lessons, would be potentially disruptive, and that they would fail. These assessments were almost exclusively based on the fact that a student was Roma. Consequently, teachers were not disturbed when students stayed away from class, or failed to achieve in class (after all, it was to be expected). It was rare to find a teacher who had ever taken the effort to talk to the parents of Roma students about their academic failure (several teachers expressed that they were frightened of the parents).

It is within this context that the creation of the Gandhi Secondary school needs to be placed. The Gandhi School represents the first school in Europe that focuses on preparing young Roma for a higher education. The creation of the school represents a response to the overall bleak educational prospects of Roma youth in Central and Eastern Europe.

History of the Gandhi School/ Teacher and Student Body

The Gandhi Foundation, which runs the Gandhi Secondary School, was created by Roma intellectuals on April 11, 1992. After certain cities had turned down plans for a Roma secondary school, it was decided to establish the school in Pécs, near the Croatian border. The school opened its doors in 1994, when it admitted its first 50 students into its so-called "0 year".

Since 1994 the School has admitted 50 students a year that it carefully selects. Students from the Transdanubia region are invited, after consulting teachers at primary schools throughout the region about their brightest Roma students, to come to a special summer camp at the school. Parents are often present, since attending the Gandhi School will mean quite a change in family life. Prospective new students are tested in a variety of ways to determine whether they are suited to attend the school. The first cohort that started in 1994 has now entered its fifth year of education. The first graduation class is expected in 2000.

Though many of the students might have failed somewhere along the way in primary school, for the reasons cited above, they tend to be only slightly older than their Hungarian peers at other secondary schools. This is partially because the school makes a special effort to recruit new students who are twelve years of age and have just left primary school (many other Roma education schemes are second chance education).

Since students are recruited from the entire region around Pécs, and transportation is poor in the area, most students reside at the school (approximately 95% at the moment). They return home every other weekend.

The teaching staff at the school is different than at most other schools. Since there is a serious lack of Roma teachers in Hungary, most of the teachers, both past and present, tend to be Hungarian. Nevertheless, In 1998 there were four Roma teachers among a staff of some forty teachers (including principal Janos Bogdan). The presence of a Roma principal and Roma teachers creates a connection to the Roma community that is lacking in almost any other school in Europe.

Teaching Philosophy, Pedagogical Model and Curriculum

¹ From: *Gandhi Internal School Publication: The Pedagogical Conception of the Gandhi Grammar School*

As stated in all of its literature, the aim of the school is to establish a secondary school with mainly pupils of Roma origin, and to train Roma intellectuals. Another important aim is to “arouse the children’s interest in the past, present, the culture, and the language of their own people”¹

The school places a strong emphasis on liberal arts education and calls itself a “humanities grammar school”. Students, in addition to the standard secondary school curriculum, also learn about Roma

history, culture, music, and mythology. Students are also required to learn two Roma languages, Beás and Lovary, although they can choose between these (some take both). The teaching of sociology is meant to give students insight into society in general and Roma society in particular (principal Janos Bogdan is a sociologist).

There are regular field trips to Roma institutions and communities in the area to gain first hand experience of society and communities and how they function.

Small learning groups are intended to improve learning conditions. Class size tends to vary between 10-20 students. Part of this is deliberate, and part is due to the fact that within each cohort more and more students leave the school with each successive year. Nevertheless, it cannot be said that a great deal of innovative teaching takes place. Almost all teachers have had a traditional training and tend to lecture to small groups.

In general, the purpose of the educational program at the school is to teach the students everything they need to succeed in Hungarian society, but also about their own culture. The Gandhi School philosophy is to make the students secure in their Roma identity, and instill a sense of pride in the about their culture. The school hopes that graduates will later return to their communities to help pull them out of poverty and protect their rights.

The curriculum at the Gandhi School reflects the educational philosophy discussed above.

Table 1: Hours devoted each week to subject areas, per year²

SUBJECT	yr0 ³	yr1	yr2	yr3	yr4	yr5	yr6
1. Hungarian	3	2	1	2	2	1	2
2. Literature	2	3	4	4	4	3	3
3. History	1	2	3	3	3	3	3
4. Mythology/Religion		2					
5. Philosophy						2	2
6. Film Studies						2	
7. Psychology						1	
8. Music	1	1	1	1	1	1	
9. Art	1	2	2	1			
10. Foreign Language 1	2	5	4	3		2	2
11. Foreign Language 2	1					5	3
12. Information Science/Computers	15						

² From: *Gandhi Internal School Publication: The Pedagogical Conception of the Gandhi Grammar School*

³ The 0 year lasts one semester

13. Mathematics	6	3	3	3	3	3	3
14. Physics	1	2	2	2	2		
15. Chemistry			2	2	3		
16. Biology	1		2	3	2		
17. Geography	1	3	2	2			
18. Sociology				1	1	2	2
19. Beás language		2	1	1	1	1	
20. Gypsy language		2	1	1	1	1	
21. Gypsy Culture			1	1	1	1	2
22. Physical Education	3	3	3	2	2	2	2
23. Electives	4					6	8

Table 1 shows that Roma related topics are integrated into the curriculum. What it fails to show is that Roma issues have been inserted into the common curriculum as well. History lessons contain many references to Roma history, for instance.

Some of the major critics of the school complain that the school is exclusively Roma and that the students have become ghettoised. It needs to be reiterated that the school also has non-Roma pupils. Also, several dozen pupils are from mixed backgrounds (where one parent is Roma). Nevertheless, it would take a very progressive Hungarian family to send its child to a school with a Roma inspired curriculum.

The ghettoisation criticism contains an element of truth. The school is located far from the centre of town and functions more as a campus than a school. The students rarely interact with the other residents of Pécs, and their heavy schedule keeps them in the school most of the time.

Life at the school

As mentioned earlier, for most of the students the school functions as a boarding school. Students tend to get up early in the morning and have class until the mid-afternoon. After this the students are expected to study for several hours (quiet time), until dinner. In the evening students can read, study, listen to music or “hang out”. For the most part very few evening activities are organised.

The male-female relations at the school would raise some eyebrows in the West. Whereas students in western nations are having their first boyfriends and girlfriends in secondary school and are experimenting for the first time with relationships, the Gandhi students are much more serious. True to Roma tradition, the students appear to be searching out possible marital partners at this young age. This does not apply to the entire student body, as the next section will explain.

Student Attitudes – a study

In 1997 the author collaborated with several ELTE university students to assess two issues:

1. How the Gandhi students viewed their own and other ethnic groups.
2. The future ambitions of the students

A total of 20 students (of the approximately 100 attending the school at that time) were randomly selected from the student body to participate in a mixed design survey. All students in the survey were Roma. The students were asked to fill out a Bogardus-type social distance scale, indicating to what extent marital partners from different ethnic/national groups were acceptable to them. The groups listed were: Jews, Arabs, Roma, Americans, and Hungarians. Students were also asked what professions they would like to have when they were adults. After the questionnaires had been filled out the students were interviewed about their responses.

The results of the questionnaire were somewhat surprising at face value. Students viewed Arabs and Jews as their least favoured marital partners. Partners from these groups were seen for the most part as “highly undesirable”. Roma scored in the middle range of desirability. Hungarians were seen as more favourable and Americans as the most favourable. These results were unexpected to the author because it meant that these students preferred to marry outside of their own ethnic group. They were also surprising because the Anne Frank House had been involved in a highly publicised project at the school that focused on the history of the Holocaust and Anne Frank, who was of course Jewish. The project contained a great deal of information (both inside and outside of the classroom) about the history (especially relating to the Holocaust) of the Roma and Jews. It was anticipated that this would lead to favourable attitudes toward Jews.

The follow-up interviews shed a different light on the issue. The students were not negative towards Arabs and Jews, as such. They were quite sympathetic towards these groups and their history of persecution. Several students mentioned that their own history was one of intense suffering and that they did not want this in their personal lives. They were in school to succeed in life and therefore they preferred marital partners who had a greater chance of success. Hungarians were seen as much more successful than Roma. Americans were considered to be the most successful and powerful, and thus the preferred marital partners. The willingness on the part of these students to eventually marry outside the Roma community is striking.

⁴ In September 1998 a new school dedicated to Roma secondary education was opened in Kolin (Czech Republic), 60 kilometers east of Prague. The Romska Stredni Skola Socialni (Romany Social High School) has 42 students that are in the first year. All of the students are Roma, but like the Gandhi School, the school is open to anyone interested in Romany studies. There are two major differences with the Gandhi School. Students tend to be somewhat older, between 15 and 20 (thus for many it is second chance education). Also, according to the first journalistic accounts, built around interviews with teachers and students, the students in the Czech school have much less ambitious career aspirations than the Gandhi students. None interviewed mentioned university studies, and most mentioned the hope of acquiring office jobs.

These findings are reminiscent of the original penis envy argument put forward by early psychoanalysts, who failed to understand that women did not want to be men, but wanted to share in their privileges.

The questions regarding post-school ambitions pointed in the same direction as the earlier indicators. The students, almost without exception, wanted to go on to higher education. Almost half of the students indicated they wanted to become teachers in the future. In the follow-up interviews these students mentioned that they looked up to their teachers as role models. They also pointed to the fact that there are very few Roma teachers in Hungary and that they wanted to help their communities. Other preferred professions were doctors and attorneys. Students mentioned that they were concerned about their communities and wanted to help them. They felt that doctors and attorneys had a contribution to make⁴.

Thus, even though students were inclined to want to marry out of their own ethnic group, they still had a strong commitment to helping their own communities.

Special Projects and International Connections

Given the philosophy of the school and the international attention the school has received, it is not surprising that there are a variety of special projects at the school. There is a hesitancy to become involved in too many projects. Two main reasons are that the traditional training background of the teachers does not prepare them for innovative educational projects and because of the low pay that teachers receive. Low pay is a major problem for teachers throughout Central and Eastern Europe. This has led many teachers to take on second jobs to survive financially (something that was not necessary under the old communist system). Obviously, this does not leave much energy for creative work. In addition, the parents live so far from the school that they do not have the opportunity to get involved school activities (if they would desire to do so).

Nevertheless, there are number of projects that deserve brief mention

The large number of field trips to Roma institutions and communities creates ties to Hungarian Roma society, and is an important part of the general curriculum. At the end of their studies the students will be experts in Roma language, culture and society.

Each year, towards the end of March, the school holds its so-called "Gandhi Days", in which it shows its wares to the local, national and international community. The students present a variety of projects to the outside world, including art, dance, drama, poetry, etc.

For the past few years the German language students have had the opportunity to visit a sister school in Northern Germany (near Flensburg). The school is populated by Danish speaking students and caters to the needs of the Danish minority in Germany.

More recently, at the beginning of 1999, an English sister school, with a large Asian student body, was found in Hounslow, England (Cranford Community School). Forty students from the English School will travel to Pécs in March 1999 to participate in the Gandhi days. Especially the Asian background (Pakistan and India) of the English students makes the prospect of future co-operative projects between the schools possible.

The author of this article has been involved, through the Anne Frank House, in a long-term, peer education and youth empowerment project at the school. Since 1996 several professional stage directors with educational backgrounds have worked with a varying group of students on drama in education projects. Several of the students have also been trained at the Anna Scher youth theatre in London and at the Royal National Theatre. Well-known British playwright Bernard Kops has been involved in these efforts, including writing a special play (called *Cafe Zeitgeist*) for the children about the Holocaust of Roma and Jews in Hungary. A cast of Gandhi students has performed this play in various Hungarian cities. In 1998, two students (László and Szabina, both 15) started their own after-school drama in education club to discuss issues such as AIDS and racism. Laszlo has also worked with children in the Netherlands, despite his young age.

Problems, prospects and challenges

The Gandhi Secondary School clearly offers a supportive environment where young Roma can study without negative teacher expectations and discrimination from outsiders. The parents of the students are also less concerned about alienation, bullying, contamination, etc. Consequently, parents are more willing to support their children's education, even if this means a great deal of separation from the family.

Students can easily recount horror stories of their primary education period, in which teachers and students treated them badly, and contrast this treatment to the support at the Gandhi School. Anita, a 15-year-old student, describes the following situation:

"I have always loved music, reading and poetry. When I was in primary school I wanted to learn how to play the piano. Other kids were allowed to practice, but the teacher wouldn't let me go near it. She just said that I was a Gypsy and therefore should concern myself with other things. To this day I am so saddened and angry that just because I was Gypsy I could not learn how to play the piano. Now things are different of course. People recognise my talent in many areas and I am encouraged to learn."

This is not an uncommon tale among the students. Many will convey that they loved learning but were never truly given the opportunity to reach their full potential in primary school.

Despite its sensitivity to Roma issues, and the major effort to create a supportive community for its mostly Roma students, the school is not without problems.

Some of the more serious students admit quite readily that the school is far from a perfect learning environment.

Gabi, in the fifth year of the school (the graduating class), commented recently that:

"It is tough...some of us really want to work hard, and graduating means a lot to us. There are quite a few students, about half of our initial class, who have left the school for one reason or the other. It doesn't inspire us to see our classmates leave. I think that 20 or 21 of the initial class (which was 50 – author), will actually graduate next year."

Laszlo, now in his third year, is equally critical:

"It is sometimes very difficult to concentrate in class, because so many kids are disruptive. They don't care about what is being taught, and the teachers can hardly deal with these kids. They only reason they are in class is because the school is so cheap. They are smart

enough to succeed if they want to, but they would prefer to get married, find work, or something like that. It is not good for me and it is not good for the school. I just hope these unmotivated students leave school so that the rest of us can learn"

These comments touch upon some of the internal problems that the school has to cope with.

Many children at the school have difficulties at home that make their academic success difficult. Though most parents tend to be proud of their children they also express concerns about their children's schooling. By staying in school the children are being exposed to information and attitudes that are alien to the parents. They have a difficult time understanding some of the ambitions and ideas of their children.

Traditionally, Roma in Hungary will marry at around age 14 and have a first child before age 16. The communities that the Gandhi students come from still clearly embrace this view. Staying at the Gandhi School past 16, unmarried and childless, by definition makes these children deviants in their communities.

The school has a very, sometimes criticised, strict code regarding pregnancies. Any girl who becomes pregnant, or boy who gets a girl pregnant, has to leave the school. Perhaps because of this policy there have not been many cases in which students have had to leave school for this reason. However, recently, as the older cohorts move towards graduation, some pregnancies have occurred.

Other issues that clearly effect the success of Gandhi students are the relatively large number of families where alcoholism, physical abuse and mental abuse, and imprisonment of family members take their toll.

Because so many Roma families are poor there is pressure especially on the male children to help support the family financially. In conversations with parents of some of the boys attending the Gandhi School they have expressed discomfort with the fact that if their sons would go on to the University, they would delay making money for another ten years.

The SOROS Foundation in Hungary has instituted a mentor program that might prove to be quite effective in assuaging the fear of some parents that their families (through the school attendance of their children) are losing earning power. The program encourages teachers to become mentors of Roma high school students by giving them extra attention at school and in their private lives. Students receive 5,000 HUF (appr. 20 Euro) per month for their participation and teachers

3,000 HUF (appr. 12 Euro). In 1997 a total of 471 mentor-student pairs received funding. Quite a few of these were Gandhi mentor-student pairs. It should not be underestimated what 5,000 HUF per month can mean to a poor family in Hungary.

Several families have pulled their children from the school because they see them so rarely. Roma families tend to be close-knit, and seeing their children every other weekend is too much of a sacrifice for some parents. This is perhaps the main reason why with each passing year, the cohort decreases in size. Various students have been removed by their parents, and now attend "Hungarian" secondary schools closer to home.

As mentioned, one of the goals of the school is to encourage future graduates to return to their communities. Though there is a strong commitment to these communities on the part of the students, it is easy to see how it will be difficult for many to return to places that are sometimes plagued by 100% unemployment.

Another problem is teacher retention. The demands placed on teachers at the Gandhi School are higher than most secondary schools, yet the salaries are the same (very low). Teachers are expected to not only function as teachers, but to spend a good deal of time as mentors and even fulfill some family roles for the students. This added burden has proved to be too much for some teachers. In 1998, for instance, both of the school's English teachers resigned.

Perhaps the most difficult challenge for the school in the years ahead is to get over the tragedies that have affected the school in recent years. In 1997 the assistant principal of the school was killed in a car crash. During the summer of 1998 two of the school's brightest students drowned during a visit to the sister school in Northern Germany. Teachers and fellow students watched powerlessly as the boys drowned in the waves. The most recent tragedy occurred while this article was being written: Principal Janos Bogdan was killed when his car spun out of control on an icy road in January 1999.

Summary and Conclusions

The Gandhi Secondary School represents perhaps the most unique experiment in Roma education in Europe. Its philosophy, to create a Roma elite and to prepare young Roma for higher education, seems to be partially succeeding. Though about half of the students will probably not graduate, the anticipated 50% graduation rate is a major improvement compared to graduation rates elsewhere. One needs to consider those students as well who have gone to other secondary schools.

Since the Gandhi School is the only school of its kind (though the new school in the Czech Republic should be watched carefully) the school is scrutinised carefully. This places a considerable burden on all involved to succeed. It is already clear that the students have become much more ambitious than their peers in the Roma community. Many expect to attend the university. This is a first sign that the school might accomplish some of its objectives.

It will be interesting to see whether the Gandhi School experiment will be repeated elsewhere in Hungary or in the rest of Central and Eastern Europe.

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„There Is Another Way!“ Program

By Ildikó Hardi & András Hardi

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I. The Program

The *Roma Education Program* of the Soros Foundation launched a new program in 1996 under the name of *Joint Scholarships for Roma Secondary School Students and Their Mentors*. In the board's view, while a scholarship in itself could provide quite substantial regular assistance for Roma students in secondary education, it could hardly solve all the problems they were likely to encounter in school. The top priority, as they saw it, was not the solution of problems specific to particular subjects taught—although the goal of achieving better grades was a main concern—but rather finding a way to prevent students from being alone and unaided in their new educational setting. Imagine a talented Roma child who, having grown up in a village or small country town, is admitted to a school in a bigger town or even a city: being possibly the only Roma in class, he or she will miss the intimacy and everyday support of the family and the Roma community and will, sadly enough, encounter common prejudices. During the years of secondary school, peer groups are perhaps the most formative environment for students; when it comes to sharing their problems, plans and desires, they prefer to confide in each other rather than adults. Yet, being completely or virtually alone in their schools, Roma youth have a much harder time establishing such relationships with the other students: whether they are consciously ostracized or not, simply by virtue of being the single representatives of a different culture, they have difficulty in finding their voice, showing their merits, or daring to ask for help when in trouble. Research in educational sociology has shown that Roma youth who do make it to secondary school—with the support of the elementary school and the family—tend to quickly drop out, particularly if the secondary school is one granting a general certificate of education (GCE). Thus, not only are Gypsy youth admitted in disproportionately lower

numbers than Hungarians in the first place, but the majority of even those never graduate, and it is the problems outlined above that account for this far more than the students' actual abilities.

This is why programs attempting to help these students are vitally important. The clubs organized by such programs can provide a venue where young Roma attending various secondary schools can meet and help each other, where mentors can advise them on career plans and choice of college, where the students can improve their study skills and learn to manage their lives more independently, and where they can be supported in maintaining a close relationship with their families and home community. Unfortunately, such programs are few and far between in the whole country when, in fact, every major town should have one.

The advisory board came up with the idea of the joint scholarship to promote personal assistance of this sort. Roma youth who are admitted to a secondary school granting a GCE are eligible for the scholarship if they choose a mentor on staff either at their elementary school or at their new secondary school. One teacher may be a mentor for several students. The intention of the advisory board is to find educators of integrity, willing and able to take personal responsibility for assisting Roma secondary school students. The ideal outcome would be the establishment of small support centers, where students and teachers could join forces and work together. This booklet contains the documents of the formation of such a group.

Our aim in presenting the mentoring program that evolved into the Mohács Free School is to request the other participants—about three hundred teachers and over eight hundred students—to write about their successful programs in a similar format so that we can publish the best ones in a follow-up volume. We would also be very happy if this booklet as well as the next one could succeed in giving courage and good ideas to all of those who did not participate in the *Joint Scholarship Program* of the Soros Foundation.

Ferenc Arató
consultant

II. From the Beginnings to the Association

In the summer of 1996, there was an ad in *Dunántúli Napló*, a county paper, in which “unnamed persons” were looking for teachers for a one-year job. Since we both had “steady” jobs at the time, we did not give it much thought at first. It sounded like Daddy Entrepreneur looking for a private tutor to help the kid catch up in class, and that was something we knew all about. Finally, curiosity took the best of us, and we called.

“Gypsy Minority Local Government of Baranya County,” said a voice at the other end. I was immediately interested, since we had been working with Gypsy kids before. Finding a convenient time to meet was easy (the beginning of the summer holiday), and the interview happened quite soon.

I could say that we gave our little speeches, but that would not be true; it was a pleasant, enjoyable conversation between us and József Kosztics, which revealed their intentions (the mentoring program of the Soros Foundation) as well as ours, namely that we were delighted to participate. There was not even a hint of distrust in the conversation; Jóska [nickname for József — trans.] was cheerful, natural and friendly from the start.

Why was this significant? I could say that “I’ve met happy Gypsies too,” but that would be phony and all too full of pathos. In any case, it took no time for Jóska’s personality and way of thinking to erase all our earlier notions of administrative officials, which, in fact, Jóska was, being an employee of the GMLG (Gypsy Minority Local Government).

He kept no hours, however—we would occasionally talk till late at night—and none of his sentences came across as official announcements.

“There’ve been lots of applicants,” he said. “Most people hung up as soon as they heard it was about Gypsy kids. Still, a good number came for an interview. Of those, you’re the best.”

We may have been pessimistic about the teaching crowd, but this last piece of information was quite hard to believe. We asked several times about the number of interviews, and he finally showed us his calendar with the various names jotted down.

What came next was a series of personal encounters with the kids. Some did not need us, and some welcomed our willingness to help. These conversations gradually began to give us an idea of what we should do, but the real point was getting to know the kids and establishing a relationship.

I do not know if it was a conscious decision on the part of the Soros Foundation not to outline the mentor's task in specific detail. In any case, it was a good approach as in this case the liberty of the teacher provided great opportunities: opportunities for shaping the student's personality, finding his or her weak points and improving them—in other words, doing whatever the student needed.

The applications were put together, and the tasks were gradually outlined. By the end of the summer we learned that our applications had been accepted. We were waiting for the contracts to arrive and dreading phrases like "...will devote three hours a week to mathematics, two hours to history, one hour..." No such phrases were to be found in the contract.

Jóska wanted to turn the signing of the contracts into a festive occasion and proceeded accordingly. We gathered at the *Youth House* in Pécs—students, parents, teachers, Jóska Kosztics, and Pisti Kovács, head of the GMLG of Mohács.

We soon found that Pisti Kovács's thinking was not unlike Jóska Kosztics's: he offered his friendship almost instantly, and he talked about the kids with sincere affection, the same as he talked about us to others. We have never been disappointed in him to this day; he is the one who takes care of things and makes everything happen even for our wildest plans.

There was no dispute about the mountain moving to Mohammed. One student would see us in Pécs, but all the others were from Mohács; naturally, we went to Mohács rather than having the students travel to us.

(Now that we are on our third year, there are four of us teachers, trying to solve the problems of thirteen students. Most of the students are from Mohács, and three of them come from nearby villages. Eleven of them study in vocational schools in Mohács, and two study in Szekszárd. Interestingly enough, all of them chose vocational schools rather than grammar schools, seeing it as a safer choice for the future. This, of course, makes for an early career choice, which is modified by many after finishing the vocational school. Finding "bypasses" and ways to go on is one of our specific tasks.)

The order of our shared work took shape fairly quickly in the fall. The overlap between a mentor's work and that of remedial teaching is quite limited. The former is characterized by providing constant help in response to current need. We would meet every Saturday in Mohács for 4-5 hours. Besides these regular meetings, however, there was also a need for being available all the time in case something unexpectedly changed in the student's life, if something happened

at school that would change the pace at which he or she needed to study, or if there was an administrative issue the student was unable to sort out alone. We encouraged them to call us or write, partly with the intention of providing them with communication training. We would often travel to Mohács during the week when kids happened to have a problem of some sort.

Santa Claus (aka "Father Winter" in former, more determinedly secular days) was the first occasion to give us team spirit.

Pisti Kovács said it would be a good idea to have a Santa Claus party, as otherwise many of the children would get no gifts on 6 December. Interestingly, Jóska Kosztics had the same idea in Pécs, so vigorous planning followed at both ends. The students were quite enthusiastic in their preparations: Gipsy folk tales, poems, etc. Meanwhile, we were looking for sponsors, and eventually had small boxes of gifts, complete with chocolate Santa Clauses and apples. The companies were happy enough to give something (not that they gave as much as we needed).

I think this was the moment that turned the Mohács group into a community. The happiness in the eyes of the little ones gave our kids a feeling of success, and so did the performance itself. (It *was* a success, too.)

As for us, we treated them a bit like the Foundation had treated us: by not specifying the tasks in detail, we let them be creative based on their own methods and ideas.

Spring brought difficulties. The board was evaluating first-term grade reports, and the scholarships were received by the kids 2-3 months late, as late as April or May. By March they had become noticeably dejected, thinking they were "not getting it any longer." True, they were happy when they did get the scholarship retroactively for all those months, but the lost momentum had made substantial damage.

The camp. The scholarship recipients' camp was a pleasant surprise for the group. The gesture, the chance to go to a camp was appreciated; it is a pity that only two of them could benefit from it. As a matter of fact, most vocational schools schedule practical training for June or July and are rarely willing to negotiate that. The situation is quite likely to be similar in most vocational schools in the country, so it would be wise to schedule the camp in a way that does not conflict with practical training. The camp is a great asset—firstly, nothing can substitute for its *ad hoc* community; secondly, camps with thematic projects can give students a chance to immerse themselves in subject materials that make a lot of sense to them. Our students came back from the camp composed, stable and beaming with self-confidence.

The four days devoted to teachers was a similar experience for us. The “in-service training” reinforced our sense of doing a good job. We learned about institutions similar to ours (or rather, ones we aspire to be like): *Amrita*, run by Tibor Derdák and colleagues, *Józsefvárosi Tanoda* (Józsefváros House of Learning), and *Kedvesház* (KindHouse). We also got acquainted with personalities like József Choli Daróczi, Anna Orsós and Gusztáv Nagy, who I think gave us strength and resources for a long time to come. We got to know those who, finding the position of Gypsy children problematic in their school or kindergarten and deciding to look for a solution, sent in applications to the Roma Board. These also included people who abided by “the single right way” and were duly appalled by the talk József Choli Daróczi delivered about the Other and accepting difference. What can one say? Well, that’s the way we are: different from each other.

What *we* were missing was a good number of the mentors. They may well have had their share of the students’ scheduling problems, being unable to leave their duties at school behind. Whatever the reason, a sorely needed professional meeting of mentors is yet to happen.

After writing applications in the summer, we began to experience problems similar to those in the spring. Contracts were delayed once again, which made the fall perhaps even harder than spring had been. We had no way of knowing who was getting the scholarship and who was not.

Despite all of this (or perhaps for this reason?), the group was turning into a close-knit community. (There is nothing like hardship to give one strength.) Training sessions were characterized by a good, relaxed atmosphere and mutual supportiveness.

We had a good reputation in town, and people in Mohács were not only quick to help, but also helped a great deal. We were given access to the computers of the *Belvárosi Általános Iskola* (Downtown Elementary School) as a matter of course. We were more than welcome in the town library. Although we went to the latter without making an advance appointment, the librarians’ faces showed no fear at the sight of ten Gypsy youngsters showing up with us. I would not have been surprised in the least, if it had been otherwise. They readily showed us around in the library and explained all about UDC (Universal Decimal Classification). Although we had prepared for the subject as any decent teacher should, it was quite all right with us that the librarians ran this session. It was more authentic and interesting this way. This was the first time we sensed that the kids were proud to be members of the group, just as they were proud of having received the Soros scholarship. Following our three trips to the library, the group members started to use the library on their own—most importantly, they have learned how to use it for their study needs.

Soon enough, it was our turn to be proud: we received an invitation to a press conference of the Soros Foundation in February. On my way to Budapest, I (A. H.) was accompanied by two of the young people (who were not handpicked, but simply happened to have time). The results of our communication exercises became tangible in the self-confident demeanor and talk of Marika Orsós, Georgina Szajkó, and Gyuri Gojkovics (or naïve teachers that we were, we just *liked* to think it was the effect of the communication exercises). We were proud of the way they expressed their views, the way they maneuvered around some TV reporters’ nasty questions, the wise and composed way they responded, behaving as if expounding on various topics on TV was their bread and butter, indeed as if they were no less than veteran TV consumers.

By spring, the *House of Minorities* was built in town and we could move to this nicely furnished, pleasant building from the GMLG offices. This gave new momentum to this (self-)developing community. The students were brainstorming and, of course, we joined them: why not start a youth club or career orientation for elementary school pupils or a weekend school.

We suddenly realized the value of the process in which our scholarship holders were emerging as a core of leadership for a new generation of the Gypsies, and this almost purely by the power of autonomous self-organization.

The time of graduation was the next chance for the group to demonstrate it was a real community. We collectively attended the graduation ceremony of Gyuri Gojkovics, one of the motors of the team. The group independently organized the purchase of the gift as the custom of graduation ceremonies required (what’s more, they spent the money collected on a gift that really pleased Gyuri), so the only thing we had to do was pay our share. We attended the graduation ceremony. It was to be expected that our group of ten would be quite a spectacle in the sea of families, relatives, and friends. This was especially the case when we “elevated” Gyuri: graduates were traditionally riding along the main street in carriages to be greeted by the tepid waving of relatives—the only exception being the single Gypsy student of the graduating class, who was greeted by seven girls, all enthusiastically shouting Gyuri-i-i-i!

Finally, it was undoubtedly a new experience when the group got together at Gyuri’s family’s place: our relationship came to be defined by a pleasure of spending time together.

As early as the fall of 1997, we began to flirt with the idea of finding some institutional form for our group. Thanks to the *House of Minorities*

and the growing strength of the community, random ideas were beginning to take shape: institutionality with minimal restrictions. The plan of the Free School Association of the Gypsy Minority of Mohács was made and, hopefully, this framework will allow us to realize all the ideas that can benefit the town's Gypsy population.

The summer of 1998 will most likely be devoted to the formal and legal procedures of setting up the association. As for the Free School itself, it will be shaped and filled with content by the young people who will attend it.

Based on our experiences so far, it is a good idea for our scholarship holders to spend time not only studying but also helping and entertaining each other. With a bit of luck, we should have the energy for creating and running a teacher's club at the free school.

That is what we have done for these two years and this is where we stand now.

III. The Relationship of the „Mentor“ and the „Mentored“

“Roma secondary school students and their mentors” in the title of the scholarship sounds like a definition of the potential applicants, but it in fact serves to define a task and a relationship. Once the first phrase is “translated”, the title can be seen as presenting a relationship between the mentored and the mentor.

What do these words refer to?

The original Hungarian name of the scholarship uses the word “patronáló” as in patron and patronage. The Latin origin (as we readily found in the *Portable Latin-Hungarian Dictionary* by Alajos Györkösi) is *patronus*, meaning ‘supporter, defender, protector, legal representative,’ which itself goes back to *pater*, meaning ‘father.’ The sum of these two etymologies can approximate the concept of the mentor, although some restrictions apply.

Obviously, these restrictions apply particularly in the case of the meaning ‘father.’ Father, interpreted as ‘the one possessing power in the family’ or ‘supreme ruler’ are obviously not relevant here; in other words, the word ought not to be understood as referring to a patriarchal idea of domination. The word does suggest, however, a different sense, one of a familial, close relationship, realized in love, trust, and mutual respect for each other's values.

Thus I may not be completely wrong when I include closeness, as an implied meaning of the word *pater*, in my interpretation of the concept of the mentor. This yields then five concepts which rather closely define our tasks and the relationship between the mentor and the mentored.

1. A close relationship
2. A relationship of supporter & supported
3. A relationship of defender & defended
4. A relationship of protector & protected
5. A relationship of legal representative & legally represented

1. A Close Relationship

Love, trust, and a mutual respect for each other's values. These are really hard to achieve and take a long time in the process of getting to know each other. In a relatively free relationship that allows for choices, getting to know each other is a prolonged activity. You cannot just say after a brief test: “OK, I know the student, now let's move on.”

There is a simple fact the recognition of which is vitally important for both parties: the student and the teacher can only function in a community of joint interest which determines all of their shared efforts.

This undoubtedly makes the role of the teacher different from the one typical of today's schools. The explaining teacher, who assigns tasks and generally acts “downwards” from a position of authority, turns into a fellow human being who serves students by helping them.

We had a relatively easy task in this respect, as we encountered our students outside the framework of institutional education; consequently, our relationship was not determined by the hierarchy which inescapably exists between student and teacher in a school. If even one of the three values listed as the content of a close relationship is tinged by such a hierarchical relationship, the value of the relationship will suffer.

(An example: We had a student who liked to attend the 3T sessions—to be discussed later—but he applied jointly with his homeroom teacher. He told us he had been afraid this teacher might lower his grade if he was to apply jointly with anyone else. Hierarchical organizations, as is well known, are partly driven by fear. He for one was afraid. He has participated in all our activities so far and we have solved many of his problems, but he kept all of this secret in his school. It was obvious how fear came to overshadow the triad of love, trust, and mutual respect.)

We know this scholarship program was not designed particularly for “free school” type organizations like ours. It is clear that in the overwhelming number of these relationships, a Gypsy student is assisted by a teacher of the given school. While it is not my intention to disparage the latter’s work by this train of thought, I do wish to draw such teachers’ attention to a danger: unless they do their best to erase fear as a motive within the hierarchical organization of the school, they have no chance of establishing a close relationship based on mutual trust.

Why is this important?

It is vital for the relationship, for one cannot solve a student’s problem unless one knows about it. The lack of trust and closeness will prevent one from learning of the small details of a student’s life and about a student’s personality as a whole. Until a close relationship is established, one is in the dark.

2. A relationship of supporter & supported

If the first item in the list referred to a quality, the relationship of supporter & supported covers a task. This task is sometimes not unlike taking a little child by the hand and guiding him or her in the world, pointing out the dangers. Sometimes it is like a chivalric exchange of armor: I will fight for you (in both senses of the word).

Obviously, those who do exchange armors and do go to fight, are making a mistake. They become potential victims rather than mentors.

What we must do is to teach mentored students to take care of the problems in their lives. Solving their problems for them is not our real task: we must nudge them towards finding a solution on their own.

3. A relationship of defender & defended

If we think about what we should defend our students from, this is a task as well and a dual one.

We must primarily defend them from the disadvantages, incidents and discrimination resulting from belonging to a minority. No wonder Gypsy kids are particularly sensitive in their reaction to such phenomena, often overreacting or falling into apathy and lethargy. Since we cannot eliminate negative discrimination, our task is rather to provide a shield: psychological training is a crucial part of our work.

Secondly, we must defend our students from damages they can suffer as students attending a school. Trivial little issues can be relevant here:

- does the student have access to the correct solution and scores of tests?
- can the parent (or perhaps the mentor) see the above?
- can parents excuse absences?
- does a teacher have the right to regulate students’ attire?
- what can the school make mandatory for the student etc.?

It has been necessary—and will be necessary in the future too—to educate students about student rights and the Education Act. As mentors, we should no doubt give our students a working knowledge of the relevant issues; working out a consensus between the students and their teachers at school, however, is beyond the scope of our role. In the future, even this might be accomplished within the framework of the free school, where meetings between teachers and students could provide a chance for sharing experiences and initiating a dialogue about these issues as well.

4. A relationship of protector & protected

The relationship of protector & protected primarily involves the elimination of errors of self-estimation.

Self-estimation and self-image being quite out of touch with reality is a phenomenon we frequently encounter. If we become aware of either extreme—overestimation or underestimation (i.e. a lack of self-confidence)—we must react to them.

Overestimation often expresses the student’s dreams.

(One of our students suddenly wanted to become a doctor to help the sick Roma. This in itself would be a wonderful and valuable idea, except the student can’t bear the sight of blood and can barely win the struggle for a passing grade in Biology. The idea born in December was to be realized in January in the form of applying to the Medical University. After a long debate among us mentors, we decided to attempt to talk her out of it and thus spare her a serious failure. Naturally, she was distressed, but after feeling sad for a while, she realized she had been wrong. Now she has a good chance of being admitted to college in a different discipline.)

Working against the lack of self-confidence is much harder and, regrettably, this is the more prevalent problem. For it is much easier to find excuses for failures and potential fiascos: I won’t succeed in it,

because I am a Gypsy and because I (consequently) go to a worse school and because I can't do well at exams and because, because, because... the list of negative reasons is endless whatever the given problem. Dealing with under-estimation and lack of self-confidence is difficult for the mentor not only because the kids can come up with truly weighty arguments, but because it is quite a shock for a member of the social majority to recognize such a lack of tolerance and such marginalization and disadvantages. It is shocking and painful. We know very well how valuable these kids are, how rich they are emotionally—we know what treasures they are.

It is as if they were starting a hundred-meter race where others get fifty meters' head start.

We have no other choice: we must make them aware of their worth and teach them how to use it and have it recognized by others.

5. A relationship of legal representative & legally represented

This is most probably the item that is beyond the abilities of a teacher. What is not beyond, however, is to make our students familiar with and conscious of their opportunities. As early as secondary school, they can benefit from learning how to write an application and learning about issues they can evaluate. Discussing and learning from stories that emerge in the media is an important and valuable activity.

(We collected all information related to the Rádió utca case [an incident in the town of Székesfehérvár — trans.] and we spent one meeting with a detailed discussion of all its elements. This helped our students learn about the way democracy works and the many ways it doesn't work—intolerance, for example.)

Finally, it goes without saying that our main goals include aiding the students in their studies. The primary goal of mentoring is namely for the mentored student to be as successful as possible in finishing secondary school, to be admitted to an institution of higher education and to get a job that does justice to the student's knowledge and merit.

How that can be done, or rather one possible way such help can be given, will be the subject of the following chapters.

IV. Learning

Reading this chapter may prove particularly useful for those colleagues who braved the great unknown as they started mentoring, who, in other words, did not start the work with their own students. Such mentors usually started the work at the encouragement of supportive organizations (such as GMLGs).

I use 'learning' to mean 'getting to know each other'—a reciprocal process. The reason I am using the former word is that I have no way of describing how students came to know me as a teacher; the best I can do is to describe how I wish to be seen by them.

It is useful for prospective applicants and mentors to get to know each other as much as possible before the application is made. This can be done in the form of a long, detailed *conversation*. In this conversation, I give the student the chance to decide if he or she wants to be “in the same boat” with me. This may sound sheer nonsense to many frustrated teachers, who could not begin to imagine students choosing their teachers based on liking or not liking them. Our situation is not that kind of school, however, and if a student does not happen to like me, I have to accept that.

It is important for these young people to realize they have options: in other words, our conversation is not the only way they can apply for and potentially receive the scholarship. Otherwise, in the current financial circumstances of most young Gypsies, a teacher's being accepted is virtually guaranteed, but it would be coercion of sorts, yielding a merely formal and unproductive relationship.

Thus, writing an application makes little sense unless the parties, having learned a great deal about each other, decide to work together.

In these early conversations of “sounding out,” it is crucial to have answers to the following questions:

1. Will the shared work benefit the child?
2. What kind of relationship should develop between teacher and student?
3. What are the student's study plans? (Where can the teacher help?)
4. How does the student think and communicate? (Does he or she have any problems or weaknesses in this area?)
5. What responsibility does the relationship involve for the teacher?

The answer to the first question is rarely simple and unambiguous. It seems simple for sure, but once the potential answers are weighed as

arguments, the ratio is frequently something like 70-80% for and 20-30% against. In such cases, the decision will depend on the way the teacher and student prioritize the various arguments to resolve the dilemma.

The process of getting to know the student from a pedagogical point of view will go on after the writing of the application. Once again, it is worth articulating the questions to which we would like answers.

For example:

1. What is the student's attitude to studying?
2. What are his/her main fields of interest?
3. What shortcomings characterize his/her skills and abilities?
4. What impedes him/her studying?
5. What psychological issues cause dysfunction in his/her studying?

These questions are important to answer as they can set tasks. We used a questionnaire to manage this process of getting to know the student. The written form allowed the student to ponder the questions at home and answer without hurry; it also enabled us to include certain concrete details in the questions in order to ensure the objectivity of answers.

What follows is a series of such test questions (italicized) with interpolated comments (in regular font).

1. How do you feel about yourself in the world?

A leading question about general mood with plenty of blank space below. If the kid trusts the teacher, there will be plenty of response too. Answers often reveal depressed, pessimistic feelings and a fear of the world. As the answers can reflect a momentary mood, one should not necessarily draw far-reaching conclusions from them. (If personal contact yields a different view of the student later on, this later view will be the correct one.)

2. Choose those statements about studying which characterize you. (You may choose more than one, but try to avoid self-contradiction.)

Why do you study?

- Studying is a pleasure for me.
- Studying is a necessary evil for me.
- I hate studying, but I have to do it.
- Studying is pointless.
- I study in order to be admitted to college.

- I study in order to have a profession that is paid well.
- I study in order to have choices in life.
- I study because that is what my parents expect from me.

This question targets the motivational basis. None of the answers are right or wrong. The answers chosen indicate the student's emotions related to studying and his or her consciousness of goals. This question and the responses given are important, because the type of motivation chosen by the student can determine the type, quality and strength of motivation in the subsequent period of shared work. I think constant motivation is one of the components of a mentor's work. Regular, nearly constant effort at motivating the student may be necessary, as the motivation provided by the mentor is likely to last for no more than 2-3 weeks in the case of a secondary school student.

3. Choose those statements about studying which characterize you. (You may choose more than one, but try to avoid self-contradiction.)

How do you study?

- I study all sorts of things, whatever I get my hands on.
- I study all subjects equally.
- I am interested in some subjects, which I study more thoroughly.
- I feel good to read up on the more interesting subjects in the library or elsewhere.
- I spend too much time studying.
- I spend little time studying.
- I study effectively, because my grades are good.
- Grades reflect one's knowledge correctly.
- I study effectively, because I am learning more and more about the world.
- I study effectively, because I remember even things I learned a long time ago.
- It is enough for me to learn as much as I need to graduate with passing grades.
- I always study as much as is assigned.

This sequence of answers will indicate the attitude to studying. They will also show if and to what extent the student has "specialized." Another issue is what the student considers a result: grades, long-term knowledge or barely getting by. "Too much time" or "little time" spent studying are crucial indicators that can be interpreted later on. Later conversations can clarify whether this is because of good or bad study methods or because daily assignments are too big or too small. Some of these explanation may be clear from the combination of answers given, while others can only be clarified in conversation.

4. Answer the questions as before.

Where do you study?

- at home, in a separate room
- among the members of my family
- elsewhere

What do you study?

- what I will have the next day
- what I had that day
- what I am interested in
- what I don't understand

What do you do while studying?

- listen to music
- chew gum
- watch TV
- stare out of the window from time to time
- nothing except study
- doodle

Study habits and circumstances can add further touches to the picture. Obviously, the ideal place would be a separate room, as the optimal environment for studying has minimal stimuli. It is good for the student to study what he or she had in school that day, but it is a good idea to review materials for the following day. According to most respondents, however, such an optimal state of habits and circumstances did not occur even once. What is ideal, of course, is not so much a separate room as the chance to study in peace. It is the students living in dormitories who have the best shot at that, depending on the conditions available in the given dormitory.

5. Answer the questions as before.

What study methods do you use?

- I read and take notes
- I try to find the key points in the assigned text
- I write whatever I have to, and that's it
- I just read

How frequently do you study independently?

- in the afternoon
- in the evening, after the movie
- at dawn
- on Saturday and/or Sunday

What do you study?

- just the textbook
- the textbook and outlines in my notebook
- other things too

What characterizes studying?

- miserable
- easy
- varied
- boring
- interesting

Once again, the ideal responses are easy to find in the sequence. It is therefore worth pointing out to the students that the aim of this exercise is not to do well on the test, but to define their reality. It is important for the students to know the aim of the test: we are trying to find where and how to help. Teachers who do not teach their mentored kids in school have better chances here, as the “official” undertone of the test can be avoided altogether.

This sequence lists details of study habits and techniques with the exception of the last question, which refers to a quality: the student's opinion of his or her own habits and techniques. It is noteworthy when someone ticks optimal study habits and methods only to characterize studying as miserable. What studying “independently” refers to in the question above—students often ask this when completing the test—is „studying without a teacher, alone in the dormitory or at home (i.e. not in lessons at school).

6. List subjects by the given criteria.

Interesting:

Boring:

Difficult:

Easy:

Naturally, a certain repetition is to be expected here. Interesting subjects tend to be easy, while boring ones are difficult.

A basic aim of this question is to find out about relative interest in sciences and the arts, but it is worth noting when vocational subjects at vocational schools are listed as boring/difficult. Such an answer might indicate a hasty career choice made after elementary school.

In the testing of reading skills, we focused on reading speed and comprehension. The texts used were 350–400 word excerpts of literary works (*Ábel in the Wilderness*, a novel by Áron Tamási, and a collection of Gypsy folk tales) and excerpts of similar length taken from Geography, Biology, Chemistry and Physics textbooks for the 7th and 8th grades of elementary school.

The following two formulas can help one prepare the text and conduct the testing:

a.) An approximate formula for word count in Hungarian (for the lazy):

Word count = No. of lines * characters per line * No. of pages / 8

b.) A formula for calculating reading speed:

Reading speed (word/minute) = 60 * No. of words / reading time (in seconds)

To test reading comprehension, one can ask 20 questions, each covering a key point in the text. One question counts for 5%. The number of correct answers multiplied by five yields a comprehension (retaining) value in percents.

I have listed three aspects of learning in this chapter. Comprehensiveness has, of course, been beyond my scope—I simply selected some of the things that worked for us. I want to emphasize that this is not the single possible solution for the process of getting to know each other. As a matter of fact, I intentionally chopped up the test to avoid someone simply copying it. I recommend revising and extending it with your own thoughts and questions, omitting certain parts, or writing another similar one. This is not the only test we use, as each case is somewhat different in terms of how well we know each other and what the most relevant questions are.

The Results of the Survey

Ten students participated in the first survey in the fall of 1996. It should be kept in mind that they gave their responses after learning that their applications for the scholarship of the Soros Foundation were successful. Nevertheless, the first question (*How do you feel about yourself in the world?*) was answered as follows:

“Indifferent, like other people. If I could live in better circumstances, I’d be happier and would feel better.”

“I would like to live more happily and easily; I’d feel even better then, but I can’t complain as it is.”

“I’ve been better, because I’ve got to study a lot in the new school and there are lots of difficult subjects. I’ll survive, though.”

“Not well. I don’t think life’s worth living. There’s no point in fighting for anything or in studying based on what I’ve seen of my parents’ life.”

“It changes all the time.”

“Like a speck of dust, changing sometimes.”

“Most of all, I find my life boring and tiresome. I’m surrounded by difficult and unbearable things.”

“It’s mostly boring, and I live a hard life. I feel I’m lost, an eternal loser. This country seems too empty. The people who live here are like sleepwalkers; they are aimless and let themselves drift. Sometimes, this is the way I feel too.”

“I don’t feel good, because I always have problems I can’t solve.”

“I don’t like studying; I’m fed up with it all.”

Even if one makes allowance for a teenager’s dismissal of the world or a passing mood, it is still clear enough that the students feel rather estranged in the world, their world view is overwhelmingly negative, and they barely know what to do with themselves. The references to their human contacts and their lives at home are especially poignant.

These self-images defined pedagogical tasks for us. We had to proceed slowly and gradually in altering their views.

(With two years’ hindsight, it may be interesting that one of our students applied to the social worker program of Janus Pannonius University in Pécs and has been probably admitted too; this is the student who wrote in 1996: “Not well. I don’t think life’s worth living. There’s no point in fighting for anything or in studying based on what I’ve seen of my parents’ life.” The subject of the entrance exam was social studies—M. was well-prepared for the exam and wrote four pages in

response to the questions. She has already decided not to give up if she did not succeed this time; she would continue studying and try again next year.)

In the next questions of the questionnaire, the students could choose from statements about studying:

Of the statements targeting a consciousness of goals, seven students chose "Studying is a necessary evil for me," while "Studying is a pleasure for me" was chosen by one. "I study in order to have a profession that is paid well" was chosen by eight, and "I study because I go to school and I have to" was chosen by five.

I shows a degree of indecisiveness that those choosing the first two answers often ticked the third option as well. At the same time, this section of the questionnaire, as the single section referring to a sense of goals, is the potential starting point for committing oneself to the struggle.

"I spend too much time studying" was chosen by seven. Their responses were fully justified by the reading tests (see later).

Of the statements about study habits, seven students chose the sentences "I always study what is assigned" and "Knowing the texts in the textbook is necessary for success," which indicates a sense of studying as obligatory duty rather than a desire to gain knowledge. "Egoism" is rejected: nobody chose "It is enough for me to learn as much as I need to graduate with passing grades." As for the place of studying, two ticked "at home, in a separate room," four of the rest studied in the dormitory, and four could not study undisturbed. As for study habits, they typically studied "for tomorrow," tried to grasp the key points, and relied exclusively on the textbook and outlines in their notebooks.

When asked about the frequency of studying and the time of day, all ticked "daily" and "on Saturday and/or Sunday," and all ticked "afternoon." (There was some ambiguity in the test: as it turned out, students thought "daily" referred to weekdays only, so they ticked the weekend as well.)

Literature and Grammar were labeled boring by five, History by three, and vocational subjects (in health care!) by three.

Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics were labeled difficult by six, Grammar (spelling!) by two, vocational subjects by five.

Six students did not list vocational subjects under "interesting."

The reading speed of the students averaged 90-100 words/minute (equivalent to the 5th or 6th grades of elementary school).

No wonder studying felt time-consuming and a misery, since the amount of assigned materials, the length of texts to be read and learned demand far more time in any year of secondary school than in the grades of elementary school mentioned above. We decided to devote considerable time to developing reading skills, improving reading speed and comprehension. For the same problems applied to reading comprehension both in the case of literary and scientific texts. (Comprehension was 30-40% after the first reading, and 50-60% after the second.)

An approximate evaluation of oral communication skills revealed lacks primarily in the area of techniques that can facilitate comprehension. (We spoke about a given subject for five minutes—as in a lecture in class—while students were allowed to take notes.)

Students could retain about 40-50% of the information content of a topic.

Based on the above experiences, we constructed our program and developed a general strategy.

V. How can one Help? What Is School For?

The two questions of the title barely seem related. I have to admit we could not make a choice between them, considering both of them important, and, in fact, the two are quite related in our case.

We know perfectly well that today's school transmits information to its students and does so on a relatively high level. What we think is absent or sometimes inadequate in today's school is a systematic development, training, and maintenance of skills and abilities. (Hopefully, the schools of the future will make this systematic activity the foundation for their secondary role of information delivery.)

This is how Albert Szent-györgyi expressed his view of this issue in an interview: "The function of school is to let you learn to learn, to stir a desire for knowledge, to acquaint you with the joy of work well done, to give you a taste of the excitement of creation, to let you learn to love what you do and let you find the profession you'll love." (Péter Oroszlány's interpretation)

No doubt Albert Szent-györgyi is right. His view is backed up by one of the best definitions of “being educated”: “Educating, education, and being educated involve a transfer of knowledge and (primarily) abilities; essentially passing into a certain state, in which one must become able to do something, must be able to enable others as well, and must sustain this ability.” (After Tamás Deme)

Such an idea (or ideal) of being educated quite unambiguously sets a task too—a task, which is not typical and often nonexistent in today’s elementary and secondary schools.

We are positive therefore that the development of skills and abilities is the foundational task that defines both our work as mentors and the whole concept of the Free School.

We have made an inventory of the skills and abilities we could measure and—presumably—improve in our kids. For lack of adequate information, we did not venture to sort out which difficulties were due to the shortcomings of the school system and which were due to the specifics of Roma kids.

We decided to assess and develop—and keep regularly assessing, developing, and maintaining—the following skills and abilities:

1. Skills and abilities related to optimal studying, such as

- reading speed
- reading comprehension
- finding key points in texts
- finding data in texts
- thought processes
- note-taking
- making outlines

2. Communication skills and abilities, such as

- production of independent, individual spoken text (speech)
- techniques of conversation and discussion
- situations of everyday communication
- writing, written communication
- spelling, accuracy
- production of written text
- interpretation and application of rules

3. Behavior skills and abilities such as

- appearance at exams and entrance exams
- appearance, image projected to others
- communication with examiners, teachers, etc.
- conformity, nonconformity

We thought such a plan responded to the situation at hand:

Firstly, we found most of our students to be emotionally unstable and therefore in need of psychological support; the student’s family background, financial situation, and inhibitions related to minority existence tended to make the students’ mood and attitude to studying unstable and erratic.

Secondly, the students are at an 8-10 year’s disadvantage in their verbal-communicative skills, which makes their assessment at school critical and prevents them from presenting their actual knowledge on the level expected.

Thirdly, our students’ study techniques are inadequate. The Hungarian school system pays little or no attention to teaching and developing study techniques and methods.

Fourthly, it is a fundamental feature of gifted students (including ours) that they are very interested in some subjects, while they have a hard time adequately studying others (i.e. maintaining their level of performance).

Finally, children of relatively less educated—or completely uneducated—parents fail to receive the support available to fellow students with non-minority (middle-class) backgrounds. Thus, for our students, learning “at home,” which is a key reinforcement of school work, is pushed outside the family circle. Those living in dormitories are lucky in this respect, being more likely to develop a system of studying. This, of course, does not make up for the lacking parental function, as a dormitory does not necessarily succeed in giving the student goals and forming his or her views.

The problems above have helped us delineate our mentoring tasks. This is how we came up with the “fixed point” principle: regular meetings once a week. Agreeing on the time was easy; the kids asked for Saturday, as most of them lived in dormitories or finished at school quite late, so weekends were the only time when they were at home in Mohács and could make it to the meeting.

The weekly meetings were named the 3T club for training (tréning), study methods (tanulásmódszertan), and subject-specific help (tárgyi segítség).

Training started off with “venting,” which was followed by setting “goals for the week.”

(This was the part when individual problems would get to be told. The form of one-on-one sessions gradually gave way to “séances” as the group members got more comfortable with each other. They increasingly dared to share unsolved problems and soon began to look for solutions together. “Goals for the week” frequently developed from solutions found to specific problems.)

We frequently had communication training sessions, partly in the computer room of the *Downtown Elementary School* (reading skills, reading comprehension, interpretation of texts, writing texts on a word processor, etc.), partly at our regular place (verbal expression of our thoughts, outline for an oral test, structuring an oral test, outlines and retaining information, notes and finding key points, etc.).

In the area of *study methods*, we discussed the optimal study environment and methods with each student individually. We grouped types of studying and practiced appropriate methods for each. We had exercises for developing reading skills, improving reading speed and comprehension.

Subject-specific help was given individually or in small groups based on students’ requests and interests. It often happened that a student in 4th grade would listen in on a discussion of 1st-grade mathematics which addressed a problem he had, while preparing for the GCE final exam. 3-4 students asked for regular spelling exercises, feeling that their written work was routinely underrated because of frequent errors. Ultimately, our kids requested help in virtually all the subjects, although what group of subjects they were interested in varied quite a bit.

Besides the “fixed point,” that is the weekly meeting, the students would get in touch with us during the week too. We urged them to call or write, which enabled them to practice communication in authentic situations.

They typically took this opportunity when teachers unexpectedly announced tests. In these cases, we would review, organize and summarize the material, paying special attention to problem parts (this was called a bit cynically the 4th T for ‘tűzoltás’ or fire-fighting). Although they hardly knew more as a result—they had learned the

material beforehand—they did systematize their knowledge and felt more self-confident about writing the test, which was a great asset.

After the first term, we felt we have achieved the following results:

- The young people became calmer, more balanced and their lives and studies became more organized
- Their attitude to studying began to improve
- They had a firm sense of goals; they had plans with their studies
- They studied more logically and methodically
- Their reading speed and comprehension was improving
- Our students “did well” at school, their communication became thoughtful, and their well-structured, logical answers in class increased their self-confidence.

The study environment at their schools did not change at all. There were practically no instances when the kids were negatively evaluated because of their ethnicity. During the years, we knew of no hostility to our students and—with the exception of a few “little stories”—no incidents that set them back in their work.

What did occur were the “typical” problems of student life. Finally, we had to give a one-hour talk on student rights and the Charter of Student Rights. This information, even though their actual experience made students reluctant to accept it completely, did change their outlook; we felt they began to operate both more freely and more responsibly in their schools from then on.

The support of the Soros Foundation became one of the key motivating forces for our students’ work. The fact that they were “scholarship holders” boosted their spirits considerably. They were (and still are) proud to belong to the Foundation and they tried to present that pride to their environment.

When the suggestion of one student came up for discussion, we found that several of them would be happy to wear a badge or some other token displaying their affiliation with the Foundation. I think this would be respected by classmates as well and could be a way of avoiding petty ethnic conflicts in school or between each other.

We found the circumstances were slowly improving in the family environment. The family presumably appreciated the scholarship itself—the families in question have great financial difficulties, and the scholarship money makes a great difference for them by freeing up the amount previously spent on school. Family members attempted to ensure the conditions of the student studying in peace, as they came to interpret studying as an activity with earning power.

When we assessed changes at the end of the first year, we could say that the function of the mentor came to have a meaning. Students told us they had not understood immediately what the scholarship work was all about, but after reviewing the activities they said they realized our joint work had been meaningful.

This became the most crucial motivating factor for the second year.

VI. The Changing Role of the Teacher

“Uchitel uchit urok.” Older colleagues may still remember this phrase from a Russian lesson—a phrase which perfectly defines the teacher’s dominant role and position. “The teacher teaches the lesson.” In this case the teacher (*uchitel*) is not participating as a complete personality, which would be probably uncalled for anyway. He is there purely for the activity of teaching: he lectures, explains, and “gives the lesson,” so to speak. He is there and is there as a necessary evil that is unavoidable for people of a certain age. The lesson (*urok*) is the single great truth which lends itself to one activity: being learned by the student, i. e. being taught by the teacher. And that’s it. The pieces of the puzzle fit together. Everybody has clearly defined, preset roles. This is how things ought to happen in any transparent, problem-free society.

Or maybe we should look at the confusing little details.

Firstly, teachers not only teach, but also demand answers, and judge, grade and perhaps even assess students. They have clearly defined tasks from which they should not stray, being clearly underqualified for including their own ideas. Granted, they have college degrees, but that’s to ensure an understanding of their tasks. Which they should unfailingly perform.

Secondly, not every child is the same. Taking this into account would be quite detrimental, however, because the lesson and the education it represents is the same. In such an order, it is the lesson that defines participants. If everybody equally knows the Great Lesson, surely they will also think about it the same way. They will be like the characters leaving the school factory in *The Wall* by Pink Floyd; they will have the same face or they will be faceless.

Of course, things have changed to some extent. The change in schools has not been massive: teachers are still not considered first-class intellectuals. Nevertheless, they are now allowed to think and adapt their tasks. The basic sentence can be modified, perhaps. The subject and verb can stay, and the object can be replaced. “The teacher

teaches the lesson” can turn into the phrase “the teacher teaches the student.” What’s more, it could turn into the phrase “the teacher teaches the one who wishes to learn.” This is what was barely possible before: a teacher teaching and educating one who wishes to learn.

And even this will not do.

School is undergoing a great change in our days. The personality of the student gets the spotlight as something that should be enriched, enhanced, and developed by the teacher.

The teacher’s role in a mentoring system (as in the scholarship) is even more interesting. What is happening here?

People who appeared to have conflicting roles in society before—teacher vs. student or educator vs. child—find themselves on the same side. I need to emphasize their conflict was apparent only, as interests and goals are obviously shared by teacher and student. You could say the Foundation and its scholarship put things in their right place: the teacher beside and not opposite the student. If this is how it was anyway, not everybody involved managed to realize it.

Add to that the difference between the tasks of the mentoring teacher and those of the teaching teacher, and it is clear the teacher’s role has changed (significantly?) in this relationship.

Other things have changed as well. The institutional control of the school being absent, self-control mechanisms gradually develop. As a matter of fact, institutional control is (and will be) unable to check the teacher’s work anyway. It can check if a certain amount of material was transmitted, and if it was transmitted within a given time for a given wage. It can’t verify, however, what the teacher gave of his or her personality and what growth can be registered in the values of the teacher-student relationship.

The Foundation knew this. So both teachers and students were given creative freedom. The report required at the end of the term is to explain how this freedom was used by the participants for the development of personalities. How did the relationship between mentor and mentored evolve? What values were given and received? I felt—and this was crucial for me—that the planners of the scholarship assumed teachers to be honest and responsible personalities.

As a result, the teacher’s role is defined by achieving goals and striving for success. This occurs in collaboration with the student, so this striving for success cannot make a victim of the student and its success is, in fact, the student’s success.

When things work this way, there will be shared experiences, and working together becomes a pleasure.

Free school. This is the name we gave to what we have been doing and what we would like to keep doing in the years to come.

What makes the free school free?

Formal aspects: you only participate if and when you want to; when you happen to be bored, you can leave.

Content: we discuss whatever happens to be important. We correct what needs to be corrected at the time. Anyone can suggest a new topic—teacher and students alike. In return, mutual responsibility grows and this can be felt in every moment of the activities. Interestingly, “students” ask for a share in responsibility and enjoy adopting the “teacher’s” role temporarily.

It was fascinating to see how helpful the “old hands” were when the new ones had to write their applications. They took over our tasks almost completely and even started to grumble the way teachers do (how can he forget to put his name on it, etc.).

The essence of the changed role of the teacher is that shared struggles, experiences, problems and solutions bring a shared sense of results. Shared results, in their turn, bring new tasks.

For me and for them.

VII. Little Stories

Summer—early summer—of 1997. My wife and I are traveling to the camp of the Soros Foundation in Balatonalmádi. We figure out the most complicated route possible between Pécs and Balatonalmádi: train to Siófok (simple, warm and long), boat from Siófok to Balatonfüred (fast and pleasant), and train from Balatonfüred to Balatonalmádi (a long wait, a dirty train, but at least a light at the end of the tunnel).

We walk towards the quay in Siófok. There is a big, well-maintained park there with more flowers than the town’s population. We have plenty of time before our boat is scheduled to leave. There is a tidy public toilet in the middle of the park; the elderly restroom attendant sitting in front is smiling. She looks kind. My wife goes in, and I chat with the attendant.

Suddenly a Gypsy child of about ten zooms down the promenade, riding a bike standing up (a familiar view: perhaps all the ten-year-old Gypsy kids in the world ride their fathers’ bikes that way, not being tall enough for the saddle). A merry crunching of pebbles under the tires of the *Csepel* bike. A crunching of pebbles, and a shout from the old lady:

“Get off, kid, or you’ll be fined by the park-keeper!”

The boy stops about twenty meters from us (he is not quite ready for Formula-1) and calls back:

“Thanks for warning me.” He walks on, pushing the bike.

I am halfway into a broad grin as if to say “Gee, what polite little rascals you can find in Siófok,” when the old lady wipes the grin off my face:

“Those damn Gypsies just won’t listen!”

The shock in my face probably told her I was a teacher. I asked her:

“Didn’t you hear what he said?”

“What did he say?”

“He thanked you for warning him. *And* he got off the bike.”

“Really?”

“Really.”

A long pause. She was evidently thinking. I was thinking too—thinking that our discussion, if there would be one, would be theoretical: the kid was not impolite, he was not damned, the park-keeper would not fine him, so everything appeared to be all right. This is where I was in my thoughts when she said:

“I’m old, you know. I don’t like them and that’s the way I’ll die.”

I became sad. I got on the boat and was still thinking, not that it was a lot of use. If I had not seen the little rascal’s eyes and if I hadn’t seen many such eyes before, I would have gotten over it quickly. But I had seen them, and they looked so full of the love of life as if they wanted to embrace the whole world.

József Choli Daróczi arrived in the evening.

“Good to see you here,” he said. “You’re the one to make me mad before I give a talk.”

“I can do that,” I said and told him the story: Siófok, restroom attendant, little rascal, the whole thing.

He gave his talk quite energetically. His well-known analysis—namely that the values represented by the school and by the Gypsy family are different, which is the source of conflicts between teachers and kids—left quite a few colleagues fuming.

Choli seemed to enjoy this, and glanced at me with the same naughty smile I had seen in the biker's face earlier.

How could I be so naïve as to think racism and intolerance are a characteristic of older generations?

I can't even be sure the teachers' guild, shaping the views of the next generation, stands united for positive and tolerant attitudes.

"This is the way it'll always be," said Choli after the talk. That was the time I decided to collect these little stories.

To prove how right he was, here is another little story from August (soon enough):

I met a colleague who had been said to be patient and tolerant in his school. We talked and after the routine "what do you do these days," we started to talk about my mentoring.

"You could help," I said in a while, "because we are not good enough at Physics and Chemistry. You could work with Gypsy secondary school students and make some money too."

"As soon as you give me a submachine gun..." he answered and that ended our conversation.

So here's to your next talk, my friend, József Choli Daróczi—I'll have no problem making you mad the next time either. Of course, I am not "lucky" enough to experience such rough and tough stories on a daily basis. Much more frequent are the cases that in their elaborate and subliminal way "nearly pass for the ordinary course of events," but somehow involve a contempt, condescension and dislike for Gypsies.

I think there is no point in mulling over these things. What is far more significant is the experiences of our young friends: students with their teachers, Gypsy students with their Hungarian teachers, if you like. We had been used to the former for a long time, and the latter also ceased to be a problem after a while. It all became irrelevant with time: we were on friendly terms with the students, who accepted us and made us feel welcome.

At the beginning of the second year (Fall 1997), one of our young friends asked a surprising question: "Can I come even if my application is not accepted?"

We have been in touch ever since. This was the first time we had solid proof they did like the meetings and were happy to attend.

In the new period of sending in applications, we also realized some were reluctant to acknowledge their Gypsy identity. Assimilation?

Something else. You should have seen the faces of two scholarship holders when they came in with a little "Indian princess": "We brought someone who's interested." They helped with the paperwork for the application too. They did this with the caring and affection of a mother/father. "I was flipping out," one of them said, "when she couldn't state her goals! That'll change for sure!"

M. was applying to the university in Pécs. Naturally, she needs us to accompany her to this unfamiliar place; an entrance exam is not a pushover, and she is nervous enough. Ildikó is with us and so is M.'s boyfriend. We have plenty of time to kill before the written exam, so Ildikó shows us around at the university—what is nostalgia for her is interesting for the younger ones.

M.'s boyfriend keeps hemming and scrutinizing it all, and he finally announces: "If she gets in, I'll start studying too."

And we are suddenly in the middle of a conversation about where trade school graduates can get a general certificate of education and how they can then apply to university. Meanwhile, the time has come for M. to go in and write her exam.

The Gypsy intellectuals' family-to-be is in the making.

Finally, a little story from the train. We are standing next to the Inter-city, about to travel with three Gypsy girls. Some railroad workers are having the inevitable Hungarian conversation about who-makes-how-much-and-why.

"I'll try and go on welfare too, but I gotta put some polish on my face first," says one.

We are silent. One of the girls is suddenly cheered up and says audibly:

"Chocolate will do."

We get on the train, laughing and waving to the railroad workers.

The following section consists of passages we have selected and edited from our young friends' writing. We invited them to write about whatever comes to mind in connection with the scholarship or anything else they want to share. We asked them to write anonymously and did not include even the names of those who did sign. (We have the signed originals.) These writings cover the content and style of our meetings as well as the early difficulties and failures.

VIII. "It Is Good to Belong Somewhere"

"When we first met our mentors at the *Youth House* in Pécs, we were very tense. The members of the group gave each other piercing looks. The tension was almost unbearable.

Our teachers started to get acquainted with us. Talking with Mr. Hardi made me feel embarrassed. I suddenly had no idea where I was. He was talking and I was staring at his glasses the whole time. I heard lots of things that sounded attractive, but I couldn't believe them. This is probably natural, as there are very few people in the world today that you could believe. I found out later on that our two teachers were sincere, pure and trustworthy people.

The things I've learned from them I couldn't have learned anywhere else."

"I am proud of getting a scholarship; when I and a classmate of mine (also on Soros scholarship) were talking about this, the others looked at us with envy.

'You're getting money for studying?' they asked.

'It's not just money; we also get together every weekend to talk about things and to study too.'

"I was a bit anxious first about not establishing a good relationship with my mentors. To be frank, they didn't appeal to me all that much at first sight. That was perhaps because I didn't know them yet."

"Nobody outside my family knew I belonged to the Foundation. Maybe I was a bit ashamed of it. My brother and my cousins envied the 5000 Forints I got every month. What annoyed me was that the money was sent once every six months."

"There was a meeting. I made myself go somehow. A teacher talked, and students were listening. I felt it wasn't worth coming and I was bored. A lot of times I didn't show up.

Now I'm proud to belong here, because I feel important. They recognize my knowledge even if I can't show it all the time. The things we practiced were good, because I could use them."

"The way the Soros Foundation changed my life is that my mother doesn't nag me as often about studying. Maybe I improved my work at school by paying more attention in class and I have the Soros Foundation to thank for that."

"We've learned quite a lot of things. We are improving our communication skills. Find the key points, write outlines, etc.

One Saturday when we all met, I asked Ms. Hardi to help me do a successful oral presentation. It went really well and, of course, I used everything we'd learned. The most important thing is that I performed well before my whole class. I could talk clearly and fluently. I was very happy to see our little methods worked so well."

"I could buy a lot of books for school and even for the GCE, which I could never have bought without the scholarship. I hope I'll have a great experience later, because my class is going on a six-day study trip to Austria this summer. As this is quite expensive, we have been saving up since first grade, collecting money every month. I pay my share out of the scholarship and save a little for pocket money too.

Getting the scholarship is an honor for me and it motivates me to study, although I do take it easy sometimes. My classmates know that I am getting such a scholarship and they are happy to have someone like that in the class, but it's not something they think about all the time.

It feels good though that they are proud of me.

Of course, I don't spend all of my scholarship on school; it's great when I can save a little spending money.

When I can, I usually buy some clothes or a novel, but this year I could even stretch it to Easter gifts and I could buy a few good things for myself too."

"Two of us from the group went to the camp last year. I decided to go at the last minute. We spent 10 days in Pilisszántó. I thought we'd go home if we didn't like it. I didn't like the faces at all, and I asked when we were going home before the first day was out. I didn't make friends

that day. I had the prejudice that they would pick a quarrel with me. Then the ice broke the next day. I saw who was worth making friends with. I happened to start chatting with a girl my age. We talked about school. I'll never forget how happy she was about me getting my GCE. It seemed natural to me, but she looked at me like I was a God. It was a bit awkward, but felt good anyway. I saw she was an interesting individual and I was trying to get rid of my prejudices from the previous day. We all came from different parts of the country. They had funny ways of talking. Dialect. I liked that. I almost fell over laughing. It was amazing that teenagers still spoke in dialect these days. By the end of the camp I sometimes started to talk the same way without even noticing.

I was never bored at the camp. There was something to do from morning to night. Everybody fell like a log when night came, but it was worth it. The teachers there came up with programs for every day. They were nice and friendly.

We went into nature a lot too. We spent our time there every day.

The food was awesome. We got everything. We didn't even have to spend on sweets. They gave us all we needed and we didn't even have to ask.

We made such good friends at the camp that we have been corresponding with three girls ever since. I think the students on Soros scholarship who didn't take this opportunity really missed something."

"We got an invitation to a press conference in Budapest this February, and four of us went: my mentor and three students including me. We had a great time. We learned very interesting things about the Soros Foundation. After the press conference, we informed TV and radio stations about our program. It felt great, because we could feel important."

"It was good to participate in the press conference of the Soros Foundation. I gave a lot of interviews. This was not a routine thing for me. I enjoyed it, but being bombarded with questions was pretty exhausting. They treated me a bit like a freak, which disturbed me."

"There's a girl in first grade at our school, who's very pretty. I think she's Roma, because she has (slightly) brown skin. Her brother's a policeman, which raises questions about her background though. Being able to see her and talk to her every week makes going to school a real thrill for me!"

"When I was at the Soros Foundation in Pest (for the press conference), my mom told my homeroom teacher that I'd gone to Pest for a press conference, and he told my class. When I went to school the next day, all my classmates were waiting and wanted to know how it went down. I told them and I think they envied me a little."

"When I started elementary school, I was the only Roma in my class. My classmates mocked me a lot because of my background. I missed out on a lot of good things, because my classmates kept from me everything they did together.

My homeroom teacher noticed this and talked to my classmates, first individually, then together. My classmates never mocked or ostracized me in the years that followed. We have been inseparable ever since. It looks like they needed my homeroom teacher to open their eyes to see there was no difference between me and them."

"I was in class C in elementary school. The majority were Roma in this class. So there was no discrimination among us. This felt good, and the teachers and the homeroom teacher were all very nice and they didn't discriminate either; one of the teachers even liked us best of all.

So I had a good time in this environment.

This class C didn't do as well in school as classes A or B, because those thought more of themselves; they thought they did better at school."

"I couldn't say I'm not accepted. Frankly, it's not the non-Gypsies that disapprove of me, but the Gypsies, of all people. I know they don't like me. They think I think too much of myself, but I don't care."

"I never had any negative experiences related to my race. I was judged by what I accomplished and how I performed. One of my classmates learned I belonged to the Foundation and he's helped with everything and he's happy for me. The other Gypsies judge me, because I still go to school and I don't have a boyfriend."

"The Literature teacher in my school announced a Round Dance Competition (presentations of ethnic folk art — A. H.). Timi and I signed up for presenting the Gypsies. We even made a video recording of one of the oldest members of the Mohács Tambura Orchestra. We are writing about the Beas language too, and the books we have been given to help us with that have been very useful."

"The librarians were really helpful and nice when we came in. They explained the UDC system. UDC stands for Universal Decimal Classification. They showed us how you can look up a book, when you don't know the author's name or the title.

UDC is good for finding a book when I have a topic in mind, but there's no particular book I want to find. There is a huge system that contains the various topics."

“Sometimes we and our teachers had meetings at the Jenő Mohácsi Town Library. They gave us a warm welcome the first time and asked us to come again several times. This was an honor for us. It feels good to know they have this attitude to us. I like this town.”

“It’s in the street I feel small. People stare sometimes and make remarks. That’s why I don’t like big crowds.
This is the first time I’ve felt any advantage of being a Gypsy for the past two years: a Soros scholarship, an opportunity to study.

I was about to fail my classes and I called my mentor and asked him to persuade my teacher to let me do an oral test for the passing grade. He suggested I should try to solve the problem myself and I finally managed to do it.”

“The fellow members of the group had a hard time opening up in the meetings. I would have liked to talk, but I felt the others wanted me to stop wasting their time, because they were ready to go home. This hurt. I thought they probably treated me this way, because they thought I was smarty pants. I don’t think I’m too smart, but I’m not stupid either. Sometimes I withdraw into the background to give the others more space to assert themselves. I am the oldest member of the group. I am twenty, and I’ve gone through a lot, but I don’t want to make them conscious of that. I didn’t really like them in the first years, but strange as it is I’m beginning to like them more and more. It was strange to be with so many people of Gypsy origin, because I only have non-Gypsy friends (both men and women) at school and in my neighborhood, who accept me and are really proud of me. But I’m beginning to get on with my own kind too. I’m learning to deal with them. The group became cheerful.

I owe a lot to my mentors. I can always approach them with my problems and they have good advice to give. They motivate me very much to go on to college. I count on their further support too. The group changed a great deal after the initial period. They all became open, and we learned a lot. I am having more and more fun among them. We laugh a lot every time. So I’m having a good time. It’s good to belong somewhere.”

Language and Culture

Cultural Diversity: Equal Opportunities?

By Montserrat Santos

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Introduction

This article examines how the Spanish education system has responded to the challenge of integrating the children of immigrants and Gypsies into the education system. It focuses on school-based approaches for children of compulsory school age.

Traditionally, Spain has been a country of emigration. The main destinations were France and Central and South America. The last migration wave was to Germany and other European zones in reconstruction during the 1960s. But this European wave stopped in the early 1970s and, from then on, the number of immigrants began to be greater than that of emigrants. Thus, Spain has moved from tackling the issues concerned with re-integrating emigrants returning home to those concerned with an immigrant population. In parallel to these movements of emigration and immigration, Gypsies form a traditional minority group within the Spanish population, with their own specific cultural and education needs. This article compares and contrasts how the education system has attempted to respond to those needs with how it is dealing with the more recent issues of an immigrant population. It focuses on immigration from developing countries.

In 1981, the immigrant population in Spain was estimated at 180,000 people and its number has continued to increase since. Given that the official figures only included foreigners with an official resident's permit, the figure was probably higher. In 1991, new legislation allowed many people to legalise their situation, thus increasing the official fi-

gures by some 100,000 people. According to the latest data, there are 461,354 foreigners with resident's permits. This represents 1.4% of the Spanish population which is, of course, far less than some European Union countries. However, there are many reasons to believe that these figures will continue to increase, given the low birth rate in Spain and the economic differences with the countries more to the South, such as Morocco and Central Africa.

It is important to know the country of origin of the immigrants. Traditionally, they mainly came from highly developed European countries, the US, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. However, in the 1960s, when there was a first increase in the number of immigrants, those from Third World countries grew to reach 30% of the total foreign population. With the legalisation of illegal immigrants in 1991, which only affected those from the Third World, their proportion reached just over half of the resident foreigners. This is still the case at the end of the decade and the article will concentrate mainly on this group.

To these fairly balanced figures between 'developed' and 'developing' countries can be added a strong concentration by country of origin. Those from the European Union, the UK, Germany, Portugal and France (in that order) represent more than one third of the foreign residents in Spain and 70% of the European residents. Of the Latin American countries, Argentina represents a quarter of the total, followed by Peru, the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Colombia and Chile. As a total, they represent the three-quarters of the Ibero-American foreigners and 20% of all the foreigners in Spain.

Concerning Africa, 80% come from the Maghreb and, of those, more than 90% come from Morocco. At present, the Moroccans constitute the largest number of immigrants and, in recent years, their number has increased both in numbers and as a proportion of the immigrants. The other African countries that send immigrants are Gambia, Senegal and Equatorial Guinea, in that order. Of the Asians, the main immigrants come from the Philippines, China and India.

One must also take into consideration the regions where they settle. In 1993, 80% lived in six of the 17 autonomous communities: Madrid, Catalunya, Canary Islands, Baleares, Andalucia and Valencia. To be more specific, the immigrant population is concentrated in Madrid (20%) and in Catalunya (20%). These two areas will be examined in more detail below as case-studies of immigration in Spain.

Although the arrival of immigrants from lower socio-economic categories is fairly recent and is concentrated in specific zones, this is clearly becoming a source of preoccupation, relayed by newspapers and a fairly abundant literature on the topic. In recent years, there

has also been a growth of organisations that work with immigrants to help them solve their difficulties and combat the intolerance and discrimination they encounter.

The first section of the article will present selected data on immigrants in the Madrid region and in Catalunya in order to set the context in which educational policy has been formulated and implemented. The following section examines the education policies of the Spanish State in relation to immigrant pupils, ethnic minorities and Gypsies. Finally, the last section draws together common social issues facing both groups.

The Context

As said in the introduction, Madrid and Catalunya are the regions with the highest number of immigrants. It is then not surprising that in these two regions, substantial studies have been carried out on immigration and its impact on the school system. In this section, we present selected data concerning immigrants and their representation in the school system in order to clarify the context in which educational policies have been developed and implemented in schools.

The Autonomous Community of Madrid

The Autonomous Community of Madrid has traditionally hosted many migrants who came from other regions of Spain to look for work and better living conditions and who have contributed to the human richness of the Madrid population. As a result, the population increased substantially between the 1950s and 1970s. Between 1960 and 1975, it grew from 2.6 million to 4.3 million people concentrated in a highly urbanised area which includes the city of Madrid and its suburbs and more especially the Southern zone.

In the following years, this trend changed, producing a certain stagnation until the end of the 1980s when a large number of people who were not from the Community of Madrid started to arrive, increasing the annual rate of growth in relation to the rest of the country. However, its incidence on the demographic growth is not very great.

There are not many immigrants in Madrid compared to other European capital cities (where the immigrant population may represent 15% to 20% of the total). It represents 2%.

The Demographic Features of Immigrants in Madrid

The immigrant population in the Community of Madrid represents one-fifth of the immigration in Spain. According to data published by the Padron Municipal de Habitantes, there were 93,610 immigrants in the Community in 1996, of whom 61,322, i.e. 61%, lived in the city of Madrid. This figure has increased considerably if we compare it with the data of the Padron Municipal of 1986 and 1991 when the figures grew to 32,134 and 36,417, respectively. At the same time, there is a high number of unregistered foreigners who, according to a recent study of the Delegacion Diocesana de Migraciones de Madrid, represent some 24,045 immigrants. The highest single national group is represented by the Moroccans, who constitute 11% of the total registered immigrant population. A little over half the immigrants registered in 1996 (32,905) come from developing countries, Latin Americans being the most numerous, followed by Africans, Portuguese and Filipinos. Altogether, some 20% of the total come from other Spanish-speaking countries.

There is a clear link between the country of origin and the type of profession. Those who come from Western Europe, with the exception of Portugal, and those who come from the US occupy high level professions and the size of their population is in relation to the growing internationalisation of the economy and the implantation of foreign companies in Madrid. Those from Eastern Europe, on the other hand, mostly find jobs in the building trade. Those from Morocco mainly find jobs as workers in the service area and in the building trade, as well as in agricultural occupations. The Latin Americans present the most varied picture. Those from Peru, the Dominican Republic and other countries find jobs in hotel and catering and domestic work, whereas those who occupy high level technical and professional posts are Argentinians who came to Spain for political and ideological reasons. One can also find Filipinos in the domestic jobs. Those from China mainly work in hotel and catering. Last, those who come from Sub-Saharan Africa occupy lower positions in the building trade and transport and are also street traders.

The Characteristics of Immigrants in Madrid

In summary, in the last few years, immigration in Madrid has had the following characteristics:

- it is an economic immigration, most people coming to look for work in the service sector;
- it is a young population of working age, with 62.66% between the ages of 20 and 39;
- there are many women, mainly Latin Americans (4 out of 5 come from that region) and Asians who tend to work as domestic employees;
- there has been a great increase in the number of second generation immigrants, due mainly to family groupings, in the last few years. This suggests that they intend to stay for many years;
- there is a tendency for people to concentrate in the same towns and to develop relations and networks with other people from their countries; and
- there are large numbers of Moroccans (12%), Dominicans (6%), Peruvians (10.3%) and Filipinos (4.3%).

Immigrants in the Schools of Madrid

The increase in the number of immigrants in Spain has led to a rapid growth in the number of children of immigrants of school age. This can be seen in the number of foreign pupils in the State schools in Madrid. It will be noted that between 1992 and 1994 there was a very substantial increase (see Table I).

Currently, children of immigrants make up some 2.5% of the pupils in the State and associated schools of the town of Madrid, but within each district their number varies greatly, sometimes reaching 40% of the total. The data refer to the network of State schools, but one should also add the number of foreign pupils in non-registered private schools and in the 'national' schools of each country: the German school, the French Lycee, the Italian school, etc. They represent at least 1,000 pupils. It is interesting to note that, according to the 1991 census, the number of school age foreigners who live in Madrid is slightly lower than the number of foreigners registered in the network of private and State schools. This suggests that there are a certain number of children of illegal residents in the State schools. This discrepancy tends to confirm the difficulty of having reliable figures.

Immigrants in Catalunya

According to the Census, there were 15,692 foreigners living in Catalunya in 1960. Of these, 11,743 came from the developed countries of Europe and the US. The rest came from economically disadvantaged countries. Thirty years later, not only has the number of foreigners increased considerably, but their proportion has stabilised and even changed to a majority of people from the poor countries. It is estimated that the real number of foreigners in this region is over 100,000, with an increasing number of Moroccans.

An important factor that should be taken into account is that the demographic growth in Catalunya at present is practically nil, since the number of deaths is the same as the number of births and immigration from other regions of Spain has changed. Hence, the small rise in the population during the year under consideration is entirely due to foreign immigration. Unlike the Autonomous Community of Madrid where 80% of the foreign population is concentrated in the capital, in Catalunya, the foreign population is widely disseminated in the whole of the region and mainly works in agriculture.

Foreign Pupils in Catalunya

According to the data of the Consejería de Educación, there were 16,969 pupils registered in the schools and the different levels of education in 1995-1996, distributed as shown in Table II.

As one can see from the table, those from the Maghreb, of whom more than 90% are Moroccans, constitute the largest group—approximately one third of the foreign pupils in Catalunya. One can also see that the number of foreign pupils from the European Union in the different streams of secondary education represents half of those of this origin in the primary schools. With those from the Maghreb, the percentage of pupils in secondary education is only 10% of those in primary education.

Margarita Bartolome (1994) stresses that immigrant school children in Catalunya usually stay within their own minority. Filipino children are those who are the best integrated, whereas Moroccan children tend to be excluded by other groups.

The Educational Policy of the Spanish State in Relation to Immigrants and Ethnic Minorities

The data presented in the above section established the context for an analysis of educational policy. This section will examine policies developed to improve the integration of children of Gypsies and immigrants in schools. It focuses on the immigrants from Third World countries and the minorities, as well as those who have problems integrating into a Spanish cultural environment because of their ethnic group, language or socio-economic background. We shall also take into consideration the Gypsy minority which has more than 100,000 children in Spanish schools. Integrating these children provided the model followed by the Spanish State in relation to immigrants.

Although, at first, it was individuals who immigrated, the immigrants quickly wanted the rest of their family to join them or they created a new family in the town where they settled. Hence, the presence of a school-age immigrant population. Although immigration is a recent phenomenon in Spain, the number of immigrants or children of immigrants has risen rapidly and at present there are some 500,000 foreign pupils in Spanish schools. The fact that it is only since the 1991-1992 academic year that the educational authorities began to collect and publish data on foreign pupils is a good example of how recent the phenomenon is. The educational authorities have had to adopt measures to meet the problems, especially in the public schools, where almost all the immigrants from lower economic backgrounds are concentrated. As in other countries, the measures adopted tended to mirror earlier approaches where attention is given to pupils with specific problems, i.e. immigrant children are essentially treated as having a problem.

In the 1980s, and in parallel with what happened in other countries, to the problem of integrating children with different abilities can be added the problem of socially disadvantaged children, who, although they follow a common education, systematically obtain lower results at school. Hence, 'remedial' education was introduced in 1983. This type of education was provided in schools in the disadvantaged and marginal areas of the large cities. It was also provided for members of travelling families and more especially the Gypsies who represent 300,000 people, at least a third of whom are of school age. A persistent problem has been that they receive little schooling and are the object of social exclusion. Hence, when a few years later, the presence of immigrant pupils in certain schools grew, it seemed obvious to the authorities to include them in remedial education.

The Education Reform Act of 1985 (*Ley Organica sobre el Derecho a la Educacion (LODE)*), which specifies the right to education for all, already referred to foreigners living in Spain, giving them the right to free and compulsory education. It also referred to cultural plurality, the respect of differences and the need to adapt the curriculum to the specific needs of the pupils. These measures were reinforced in the *Ley de Ordenacion General del Sistema Educativo (LOGSE)* of 1990.

In practice, when a school becomes part of a programme of remedial education, it has one or several extra specialised teachers who are responsible for teaching pupils with special needs for a few hours per week in small groups. In addition, the centre receives additional funds to pay for teaching equipment and other costs. The teachers in these schools take priority for places in in-service training courses and are encouraged to develop innovatory educational projects and other educational research projects.

If schools with a high number of immigrant pupils are easily attributed remedial education programmes it is because their pupils have insufficient or no knowledge of the language of the school (Spanish) and because it is felt that this is the most rapid and efficient way to remedy this deficiency. If these pupils integrate schools in Spain after the compulsory age for entering school, it is likely that they will also fall behind. The teachers of remedial education are supposed, at least in theory, to deal with this also. It is also possible for them to act as agents of intercultural education in the centre or as a contact with the immigrant families or with the bodies that are responsible for the immigrants. However, in practice, their main occupation is teaching the Spanish language.

Multicultural Education

In Spain, the focus on multicultural education is very recent, hardly ten years old. It would be unfair not to recognise the progress of the study of the Gypsy minority by associations and other groups that have worked with great rigour even before the issue of multicultural education arose explicitly. However paradoxical this may seem, one does not know exactly how many foreigners or Gypsies are living in Spain, as there is only information on pupils at school, as we have seen. We shall now analyse the educational situation of the ethnic minorities, beginning with the Gypsies and then the immigrants because, although there are certain common traits, there are also substantial differences.

The Gypsies

Demographic and socio-economic data on the Gypsies are rare and not very recent, since their movements make it almost impossible to count them. In the last 30 years, many have settled down and so they can be documented and have, to a certain degree, become integrated in Spanish life. Yet the research carried out by Jose Manuel Fresno in 1994, based on a mapping of the life of the Spanish Gypsies by the PASS group (1991), shows the lack of regularity in their schooling through a diagnosis of the conditions that determine the success of their schooling.

All the research analysing the situation of the Gypsies in schools for 'payos' (the name they give to non-Gypsies) insists on the need for a better understanding of their culture in order to be able to understand their problems. It stresses the importance of knowing their history, their way of life and the socio-economic and work conditions in which they evolve, in short, their marginal position in a society that has always been hostile to them and still is.

The schooling of these children began on a massive scale some 25 years ago with the creation of 'bridge schools'. These aimed at preparing them for their incorporation and integration into ordinary schools, although their rejection by the school community because of their special way of life and way of understanding life in many ways made the schooling that was offered them inappropriate. As from 1983, Gypsies integrated remedial education. Although, since then, the number of registered Gypsy pupils has increased considerably, there are many indicators that it has not yet reached the desired level of normalisation. Hence, and despite the efforts of the different education authorities and non-governmental organisations and the progress made over recent years, albeit slow, information is still rather disappointing. This is well illustrated by the problems that define the educational situation of these children: they are early leavers (they begin dropping out of school as early as age 8, but it is mostly between the ages of 11 and 15 that the rates are highest), absenteeism (only 36% go to school on a regular basis), failure at school (80% do not master the basic skills and the pupils are two or more years behind) (Murillo, 1996).

Munoz Sedano (1993) classifies the schooling problems of these children in three categories: culture shock, previous conditioning before entering school, and subsequent problems at school. The greatest problem is the culture shock between two antagonistic cultures, which means that they have contradictory, not to say incompatible, concepts of education. 'Society uses school as the sole way of teaching

and transmitting its own values, whereas the Gypsy considers that its major role is to teach reading and writing and sees as negative those values it tries to inculcate' (Munoz Sedano, 1993).

As for the conditioning before entering school, he states that it is of two kinds: subjective and objective. Subjective elements would be the rejection of Gypsies by the school community in general and the fact that the fathers are very reluctant to send their children to school. The objective conditioning comprises three aspects: the different linguistic codes used by the school and the Gypsy child, which imply different modes of knowledge, the social and cultural disadvantages, the economic problems of the families and the unhealthy conditions of run-down homes. The problems that arise once these children enter school can be summarised, as above, by three characteristics, i.e. they leave school early, there is great absenteeism and there is a high level of academic failure.

Ethnic Minorities from Other Countries

The schooling of ethnic minorities from other countries has been studied in the Autonomous Community of Madrid and in Catalunya, as we have already seen, but the conclusions resemble those concerning the Gypsies. In addition to the issues discussed above, the main targets of rejection at school are the 'moros' (the pejorative name given to people from North Africa) and the Africans.

The social groups that provoke the least racist attitudes are clearly those who are closest to the white population, Western culture and the Christian religion. Thus, attitudes of intolerance towards other European groups have, in fact, decreased considerably. Jose V. Merino (1994) indicates in his research on this theme a series of features of the minority groups that makes people consider them positively or negatively: their work and socio-economic status, the ethnic and cultural differences and their degree of integration.

Research which analyses the educational problems of the children of immigrants agrees on the fact that the massive influx of immigrants in recent years has created a situation that it is very difficult for schools to cope with, due to the lack of resources and, above all, the lack of specific training of the teachers. In the different sectors of education there is general consensus that it is necessary to facilitate the cultural and social insertion of the immigrants, whilst at the same time respecting their identity, i.e. on the basis of the fundamental right to be different.

But there is less consensus when it comes to putting this into practice because of the numbers involved and unfortunately one does not always observe positive attitudes towards cultural minorities.

According to the data collected by different studies, most schools and teachers do not take into account the ethnic diversity of their pupils when developing education projects or in classroom practice. Hence the right to be different is still an objective that is far from having been reached. From this point of view, schools in fact tackle the problem of multiculturalism from an assimilationist angle, although they claim to adapt minority cultural groups to the dominant culture (Murillo, 1996), and from a remedial stance insofar as they direct attention to solving concrete learning problems, rather than favouring integration. It should be noted that the educational situation of immigrant children is quite different from that of Gypsy children because, although many also belong to an equally marginalised group from precarious backgrounds, they also present some additional conditioning that does not facilitate their integration at school. In this sense, one must stress the communication problems through a lack of knowledge of the host country's language and the almost always traumatic experience of immigration and uprooting.

So far, we have seen that the presence of immigrant children in the classroom has led to their being considered as 'different' pupils, like the Gypsy minority. Hence, they are put in remedial education classes when they cannot integrate the 'normal' classes from the outset. Yet in various European countries in the last few years the observation that immigrants present great cultural differences with the society in which they live has led to the conclusion that education must not only try to integrate them, but must also respect their singularity. This is the purpose of multicultural education. In the Spanish educational legislation, this is not recognised as such, but the Ministry of Education has funded the publication of textbooks and equipment for this kind of education.

To complete this description, it should be remembered that the Ministry of Education organises in-service courses for tenured teachers and assistant teachers who teach immigrant children. They aim at the type of multicultural education we have already referred to. Training focuses on the specific problems of these pupils, emphasising the teaching of the Spanish language. Through the CIDE (Centre for Educational Research and Development) the Ministry has also financed research that supports the work in these schools.

Language Studies

One of the main reasons why foreign pupils fail is their lack of knowledge of the Spanish language. Their progress depends on the age at which they start school, the level of interaction with their schoolmates whose first language is Spanish, and the opportunities to use the language. It is more difficult to assimilate those from the communities that are rejected or marginalised at school. It is perhaps one of the aspects which multicultural education should influence. Studies show that people from the Polish community who are not rejected in the schools assimilate the second language without any problem because of their degree of integration, whereas the Moroccans, who are rejected and tend to live amongst themselves have three times as many problems learning Spanish.

As we have already seen, one of the basic aims of remedial education is teaching Spanish to those who need it. But the resources allocated by the Ministry of Education are insufficient at present. The Ministry does not take responsibility for teaching or perfecting the language of origin of the immigrant children. Instead, it has signed agreements with Morocco and Portugal to facilitate this teaching.

The Moroccan Government, in agreement with the Spanish Government, offers courses in Arabic and Moroccan culture to Moroccan children living in Spain. Teaching is carried out either in Spanish schools or in other centres, during and outside school hours. In 1996, there were 46 such centres: 25 in the Madrid area and 16 in the Barcelona area. 20 teachers who are coordinated by an inspector are responsible for these courses, 821 pupils follow them, 357 of whom are girls. Given the demand, there are plans to extend these courses.

The 'programme of Portuguese language and culture' for Portuguese immigrants is also the result of an agreement between both countries. It concerns Portuguese pupils who are very numerous in the mining areas of the North and Western parts of the provinces of Leon and in the frontier regions of Andalucia and Extremadura, as well as in Madrid. According to data for the 1992-93 academic year, some 2,000 Portuguese pupils followed the course in 45 schools with Portuguese teachers. In some cases, teaching was offered as complementary classes to the Spanish curriculum, whereas in others it was integrated to the school curriculum and was followed by both Portuguese and Spanish pupils. Generally speaking, these pupils are well integrated in their new environment and have no problems using Spanish as a means of communication. But some 10% of this Portuguese population is of Gypsy origin and, in their case, school integration is more difficult.

In this section, we have presented an analysis of the main aspects of the education policy in relation to immigrant and Gypsy children as defined by the Ministry of Education. Its basic principles can, of course, be applied to the whole of the Spanish State.

Conclusion

Generally speaking, one can say that the needs and problems of those who have trouble in integrating, whatever their origins, are conditioned by similar factors:

- There is a strong need for administrative regulation, as legal instability creates difficult situations for the immigrants and their families, due to their exclusion from the public health and education (at higher levels) or the impossibility to bring their families to Spain.
- One must take into account their social situation. Immigrant families express the need for decent housing, access to health resources, learning of the Spanish language and culture.
- There is a need for specific resources for women, given the growing feminisation of immigration. Women immigrants ask for help because they are isolated or alone, since their families are far away. If they have children who have not reached their majority, these may not receive the attention they should because their mothers have long working hours.
- One of the growing issues is prostitution, which has become more widespread because of the international networks. The presence of immigrant women in prostitution has increased in recent years and has become a major source of income to maintain the family that has stayed in the country of origin. At first, the majority came from Latin America, but today they have been replaced by women from some African countries, such as Nigeria and Liberia, but also from Eastern Europe.
- Special attention is needed for foreign minors, as many have problems in adapting to the Spanish school system, either because they do not speak the language, or because of the differences with the educational system of their countries. Others need special attention because they are not protected. Thus there is an increasing number of young Moroccans aged between 16 and 18 who come alone and without papers to look for work.
- Finally, there are ethnic and xenophobic prejudices in certain sectors of the host society that make relations more difficult and create discrimination in the access to resources.

From our analysis, it is clear that equal opportunities do not exist for immigrants from the Third World countries and the Spanish Gypsies for the reasons we have evoked. Yet it is a positive advance that the

educational authorities have become aware that multicultural education can help the integration of groups who are and feel marginalised by their culture. It is not an easy task and the problems cannot be solved immediately. The same phenomenon is taking place all over Europe, but this problem will increase in Spain in the coming years. For the moment, minorities are still in relatively small numbers but immigration is expected to continue to rise.

Table I. Foreign Pupils in the State Schools of Madrid

Legend for Chart:

A - Academic Year

B - No. of foreign pupils

C - Variations %

A	B	C
91-92	2.625	
92-93	3.629	+ 38,2
93-94	93-94	+ 25,8
94-95	4.702	+ 3,0

Country of origin of the foreign pupils in the State Schools of Madrid

Legend for Chart:

B - Country

C - %

A	B	C
1	Morocco	28
2	Peru	11
3	Dominican Republic	7
4	Philippines	7
5	Portugal	6
6	China	6
7	Guinea	3
8	Argentina	2
9	Poland	2
10	Colombia	2
	Ecuador	2
	Brazil	2
	Other countries	23

Source: Ministerio de Educacion y Ciencia (1996).

Table II. Foreign Pupils in the Schools of Catalunya

Legend for Chart:

A - Country of origin

B - Pre-primary

C - Primary

D - Secondary

E - Total

A	B	C	D	E
European Union	749	2.105	1.016	3.870
Rest of Europe	212	678	362	1.252
Maghreb	1.182	3.655	430	5.277
Rest of Africa	413	363	71	847
North America	123	467	110	810
Central and South America	515	2.441	785	3.751
Asia	329	853	190	1.372
Total		16.969		

Source: Consejeria de Educacion (1997).

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Educational Language Rights and Romani Participation in Macedonian Education

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Source: Education Resources Information Center, ERIC_NO: ED428021

As an ethnic group in Macedonia, the Romani people have occupied a marginalized place similar to that in which they find themselves elsewhere in Europe, but with an important difference: While they have been subjected to discrimination (see Silverman 1995a, 1995b), they have not been the target of the kind of racist violence that has occurred and still occurs elsewhere in Europe (cf. Barany 1994, 1995, Kyuchukov 1995). In fact, in the complex ethnic mosaic of Macedonia, the Roms¹ have maintained their separateness while at the same time functioning as an integral and accepted part of everyday Macedonian life. Since the constitutional revisions of 1974, when the Roms received legal recognition as an ethnic collective, there have been various attempts to advance education in Romani — education as a linguistic right being a cornerstone of identity politics. With the independence of the Republic of Macedonia, the Roms were recognized in the 1991 constitution as a *narodnost* ‘nationality’ on the same level as Albanians, Turks, Vlachs, and others (mainly Serbs). Although Roms seek to participate in formal educational institutions using their own language, however,

¹ See note at Rom. in Table Two

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² *Romani ethnopoliticians have on occasion claimed as many as five times the official figures (Cvangova 1991), and political leaders of all the other major ethnic groups inside Macedonia as well as politicians in neighboring states with histories of territorial claims against Macedonia have at one time or another claimed numbers as much as 60 times in excess of the 1994 census figures. The point is not one of statistical accuracy but rather claims to political power and hegemony (see Friedman 1996). Nonetheless, given the social stigma attached to Romani identity and the marginalized position of Roms in society, it is well known in demographic literature that Roms often choose to declare a different nationality (Stanković 1992:161). Another example of conflicting tensions was the appeal to Roms during the 1991 census to register as Roms and not as Albanians or Turks or “something else” out of fear or due to pressure (Nova Makedonija 28.III.91: 4). To the extent that the Macedonian government is seeking to reduce Albanian influence, this has led to increased recognition for both Roms and Macedonian Muslims.*

³ *The 1991 Yugoslav census was boycotted by part of the population, mainly ethnic Albanians. Data for Table Two are based on Stanković (1992).*

the Romani language itself is still in the process of the kind of standardization associated, among other things, with the institutionalized structures of formal education. In this paper, I shall discuss the development of Romani language use in the Republic of Macedonia primarily in terms of its relation to education and other public and official contexts, utilizing both published sources and my own experiences during more than twenty years of field research in Macedonia. In order to frame these issues, I shall first turn to the statistical and legal position of the Roms in Macedonia and former Yugoslavia.

According to the 1994 census Roms constitute approximately 2.3% of the population of the Republic of Macedonia.² In former Yugoslavia, Roms constituted between 0.6% and 0.7% of the total population, approximately two thirds in the Republic of Serbia and about one-quarter in the Republic of Macedonia. As can be seen from Tables One and Two, the figures on people declaring Romani nationality have varied considerably over the years. This is not due to changes in birth or death rates, since the Roms have a natality rate almost twice the Yugoslav average (Stanković 1992:173). While mechanical growth (migration) could account for some fluctuations, there were no migrations massive enough to account for these differences. Rather the magnitude of changes in the figures reflect differences in social pressure concerning the declaration of Romani as opposed to some other nationality. The tremendous drop in 1961 in the number of self-declared Roms in Serbia but not in Macedonia has been labeled a „statistical enigma“ (Stanković 1992:160), but must clearly reflect a difference between either the censusing or social position (or both) of Roms in Serbia and in Macedonia.

Table One

	1981	1971	1961	1953	1948
Macedonia	43125=25.7%	24505=31.2%	20606=65%	20462=24.2%	19500=26.8%
Serbia	110959=66%	49894=63.6%	9826=31%	58800=69.5%	52181=71.8%

Figures concerning Romani nationality in Macedonian and Former Yugoslavia in the five uncontested post-war censuses³

Source: Stanković: 1992

Table Two

Census total by year, number, and percentage (rounded upward where necessary)
Declared Nationality

(narodnost)	1948	%	1953	%	1961	%	1971	%	1981	%	1991	%	1994*	%
Macedonians	789548	68.5	860699	66.0	1000854	71.2	1142375	69.3	1279323	67.0	1328187	65.3	1295964	66.5
Albanians	197389	17.1	162524	12.4	183108	13.0	279871	17.0	377208	19.8	441987	21.7	441104	22.9
Turks	95940	8.3	203938	15.6	131481	9.4	108552	6.6	86591	4.5	77080	3.8	78019	4.0
Roms**	19500	1.7	20462	1.6	20606	1.5	24505	1.5	43125	2.3	52103	2.6	43707	2.3
Vlahs	9511	0.8	8668	0.6	8046	0.6	7190	0.6	6384	0.3	7764	0.4	8601	0.4
Serbs	29721	2.6	35112	2.7	42728	3	46465	2.8	44468	2.3	42775	2.1	40228	2.0
Muslims	1560	0.1	1591	0.1	3002	0.2	1248	0.1	39513	2.1	31356	1.5	15418	0.8
Bulgarians	889	0.1	920	0.1	3087	0.2	3334	0.2	1980	0.1	1370	0.0	1682	0.1
Greeks	-	-	848	0.1	836	0.1	536	0.0	707	0.1	474	0.0	368	0.0
Egyptian	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3307	0.2	3080	0.2
Bosniac	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6829	0.4
Yugoslav	-	-	-	-	1260	0.1	3652	0.2	14225	0.7	15703	0.8	595***	0.0
Other****	8928	0.8	9752	0.8	10995	0.7	29580	1.7	15612	0.8	31858	1.6	9797	0.4
Total	1152986	100	1304514	100	1406003	100	1647308	100	1909136	100	2033964	100	1945932	100

Sources: Antonovska et al. 1991, 1994a, 1994b, 1996, Latifčić et al. 1970, Pekevski et al. 1973, Savezni Zavod za Statistiku 1954, 1981.

The Ethnic Structure of the Republic of Macedonia since World War Two

** According to Dr. Svetlana Antonovska (p.c. 95/05/25), Director of the Republic Bureau of Statistics, the lower figures for some nationalities in 1994 vs. 1991 is due to the fact that citizens living abroad for more than one year were included in the 1991 census, whereas in the 1994 census — in accordance with international norms — only those citizens living abroad for one year or less were counted.*

*** The predominantly Romani-speaking ethnic group popularly known as Gypsies in English and Cigani in Macedonian (similar ethnonyms are used in most of the languages of Central and Eastern Europe) is now referred to by the native ethnonym Rom (singular) in scholarly literature as well as official documents in many countries. (The term was official in the 1971 Macedonian census.) Although in languages other than English this word has been unhesitatingly adapted to the grammar of the language in which it is used (e.g. Bulgarian, Macedonian, Romanian, Serbo-Croatian pl. Romi, Albanian pl. Rom), considerable inconsistency has arisen in English usage. Thus as the plural of Rom some scholars and other serious-writers use the Romani form Roma, others adapt the word to English morphology and write Roms, others use a pluralized adjective Romanies, and some use the Kalderash collective Rom for both singular and plural. I have argued elsewhere (Friedman and Hancock 1995) that just as in English the plural of Turk is Turks and not Turkler, so the plural of Rom should be Roms and not Roma. I would argue that the form Roma exoticizes and marginalizes rather than emphasizing the fact that the group in question is an ethnic group just as are Turks, Magyars (not Magyarok), Bulgars (not Bulgari), etc.*

**** This figure includes those who declared „Yugoslav“ as well as nationalities not counted separately in the census, mostly from Africa, East Asia, and the Middle East (MIC 95/01/05).*

***** Yugoslav and Macedonian censuses distinguished up to 34 nationality categories as well as several other types including those who declared a regional identity and those who did not declare a nationality. For the sake of conciseness, I have grouped all the smaller categories, none of which are relevant for this paper, under the designation Other. This designation includes the following specified groups: Austrian, English, Belgian, German, Danish, Jewish, Italian, Norwegian, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Rusyn, Slovak, Slovenian, Ukrainian, Hungarian, French, Dutch, Croatian, Montenegrin, Czech, Swiss and Swedish. This category also includes those who protested the use of nationality as a classification by making facetious declarations, among which the most popular were Lightbulb and Refrigerator (Robert Hayden, University of Pittsburgh, personal communication).*

Between the 1971 and 1981 censuses, there was a change in the legal status of Romani that both reflected and encouraged a rise in consciousness of Romani identity — viz. the federal and republic constitutional reforms of 1974 in which Romani (along with Vlah) received the official status of *etničkagrupa* ‘ethnic group’, a step below *narodnost* ‘nationality’ (the term which came to replace ‘national minority’ [Macedonian *nacionalno malcinstvo* Serbo-Croatian *nacionalna manjina*] during the 1960’s and became official in the 1974 constitutions).⁴ This rise in national consciousness was parallel with a rise in linguistic consciousness. It was during this period that the first serious attempts in the direction of Romani-language education were made in Macedonia.

In discussing the relationship of Romani language to Romani nationality, it is important to keep in mind that there is not an absolute one-to-one correspondence between the two. The figures in Table Three show the correlation between declared nationality and declared mother tongue for the first and last uncontested Yugoslav censuses conducted in Macedonia and the 1994 Macedonian census.

⁴ The 1974 constitution recognized three types of ethnically defined collectives: narod ‘nation’, narodnost ‘nationality’, and etničkagrupa ‘ethnic group’. The difference between a narod and a narodnost was that a narod was considered a constitutive nation of Yugoslavia and of its constituent republics (Slovene, Serb, Croat, Macedonian, Montenegrin, and Muslim) whereas a narodnost was de facto a minority that was a constituent of a national-state other than Yugoslavia, e.g. Turks. An ethnic group was a minority with no nationstate beyond the borders of Yugoslavia, i.e. the Vlachs and the Roms. An exception to this principle were the Ruthenians (Rusyni), who live primarily in Vojvodina and who did not have an external nation-state but were nonetheless given the status of narodnost. A major complaint of the Albanians during this period was that while they constituted a numerically larger group than Macedonians or Montenegrins, they were considered a narodnost while the latter each constituted a narod. Each category implied a different level of linguistic and other collective rights mitigated by factors of size and distribution: the language of a narod (Slovenian, Macedonian, Serbo-Croatian) was official at the federal level. However, federal laws and regulations were also to be published in Albanian and Hungarian, making them semi-federal. The language of a narodnost was official at the republic or provincial level (e.g. Turkish in Macedonia, Hungarian in Vojvodina), the communal (municipality) level (e.g. Italian in Slovenia, Bulgarian in Serbia), or not at all (e.g., German, Polish, and Russian) (see Bugarski 1992, Sxkiljan 1992). The languages of ethnic groups did not receive guaranteed official support, but their constitutional recognition positioned them to seek such support. Although the Roms had the status of narodnost in the Republic constitution of Bosnia-Herzegovina, this had no practical effect (Sxkiljan 1992:40).

This figure presents Serbian and Croatian which were listed as separate languages in the 1994 census.

6426 Bosniacs were listed in the column ‘Other’ for mother tongue. Presumably the overwhelming majority declared Bosnian. 7795 Muslims were also in the ‘Other’ column and presumably also listed Bosnian.

Table Three

1953 – Declared Mother Tongue

Declared Nationality	Macedonian	Albanian	Turkish	Serbo-Croat	Romani	Vlah
Macedonians	853971	1986	281	934	277	2565
Albanians	2152	153502	6569	181	70	1
Turks	32392	27087	143615	534	70	10
Roms	1040	860	2066	25	16456	1
Vlahs	137	4	2	14	0	8130
Serbs	3945	0	8	31070	41	9
Muslim	*	*	*	*	*	*
Yugoslav	2152	25	50	563	2	4
Other	322	341	569	5258	173	31
Total	896651	183805	153160	38579	17089	10751

1981 – Declared Mother Tongue

Declared Nationality	Macedonian	Albanian	Turkish	Serbo-Croat	Romani	Vlah
Macedonians	1276878	190	160	547	316	*
Albanians	1218	374181	3	440	1697	*
Turks	16608	8592	60768	366	94	*
Roms	4160	1697	808	24	36399	*
Vlahs	1111	1	0	3	2	5257
Serbs	8521	10	3	35867	14	*
Muslim	15075	4968	2038	16325	308	30
Yugoslav	7645	1943	274	2746	530	*
Other	13282	4247	2853	17031	1280	*
Total	1334498	391829	64907	63349	37780	5931

1994 – Declared Mother Tongue

Declared Nationality	Macedonian	Albanian	Turkish	Serbo-Croat	Romani	Vlah	Bulgarian
Macedonians	1289868	124	124	1938	94	259	125
Albanians	2063	426418	210	135	•	•	0
Turks	10885	906	62726	86+•	11	0	•
Roms	5974	1212	1311	14+•	34955	•	•
Vlahs	1800	•	0	12	0	6747	0
Serbs	11693	0	8	27843	•	•	32
Muslim	5552	605	180	1181	20	•	•
Bosniac	36	21	•	312+•	0	0	•
Bulgarian	358	0	•	80	0	•	1216
Egyptian	961	1856	42	10	•	0	0
Other	3793	221	64	3484	40	30	75
Total	1332983	431363	64665	35095	35120	7036	1448

* Not specified
• Under 10

Difference between declared nationality and declared mother tongue for the six main languages of the Republic of Macedonia: 1953, 1981, 1994

Sources: Savezni zavod za statistiku 1953a, Savezni zavod za statistiku 1988, Antonovska et al. 1996

As can be seen from the table, there is a fairly high correlation between declared Romani nationality and declared Romani mother tongue. In fact, the correlation of over 96% is well above the Yugoslav average of 79.1% of those with Romani nationality declaring Romani mother tongue (Petrović 1992:120). This can be taken as an indicator of the strength of the correlation between declared Romani language and nationality in Macedonia. What these figures do not — and cannot — reveal, however, is the fact that many Roms declare another nationality (and/or mother tongue) due to the social stigma attached to Romani.⁵ Since the majority of Roms in Macedonia are Muslim, and more over urban, Turkish represents a significant prestige language while Albanian represents numerical strength as the language of the largest predominantly Muslim minority. We can also note here that the drop in Roms declaring Turkish mother tongue between 1953 and 1981 correlates with the migration of Turks to Turkey (largely for economic reasons) in the late 1950s (cf. Katona 1969, Jašar-Nasteva 1992). Many other Muslims also declared themselves as Turks on the basis of religion in order to emigrate to a non-communist country. The tremendous discrepancy between declared Turkish and Albanian nationalities in 1948 and 1953 was politically motivated. The 1948 census was conducted before the Tito-Stalin break, when relations with communist Albania were good and relations with non-communist Turkey were bad. By 1953, Yugoslavia had been expelled from Cominform and was not on good terms with Albania whereas by contrast relations with Turkey had thawed considerably (cf. Tanasković 1992). Although not readily ascertainable from census figures, these changes in relations also affected Roms, albeit not those declaring Romani mother tongue. At present, the issue of education for non-Romani speaking Gypsies also involves ethnic politics.⁶ There is pressure on Muslim Gypsies to go to Albanian or Turkish rather than Macedonian schools, the better to justify expanding minority language education (cf. e.g. *Flaka e V'llaz'rim* 86.01.06:10 on the situation in Kumanovo, also *Birlik* 84.10.01:14). Current concern in Macedonia with Romani education is not merely connected to Article 48 of the Republic's constitution, which guarantees minority language rights, but can also be seen as aimed at reducing challenges from Albanian and Turkish.

There are also the *Gäupci*, or *Egipčani*, endogamous, non-Romani speaking groups of Romani descent who do not identify as Roms and who in Macedonia speak Albanian (e.g., in Ohrid and Struga) or Macedonian (e.g. in Bitola) as their first language (Friedman 1985b, Ljubisavljević 1990, Risteski 1991, Duijzings 1992, Forthcoming, Xadži-Ristić 1994, Zemon 1996).⁷ Although they sought to be recognized as a separate category in the 1981 census, they were placed in the category „unknown“ (*Nova Makedonija* 82.03.06:9), whereas in the 1991 and 1994 censuses they were recognized as a distinct group (but see Abduramanoski 1994). Both Romani and Albanian ethnopoliticians claim them for their own, but the *Gäupci* identify with neither.

While Romani-speaking groups are often associated in the popular mind with nomadism, and indeed many groups were and some still are peripatetic — in France, for example, more than half the Gypsy and Traveler population is nomadic or semi-sedentary (Chalumeau and Gualdaroni 1995)—Romani people have been settled in the Balkans in general and Macedonia in particular for centuries (see Friedman and Dankoff 1991). The social situation of many if not most Roms in Macedonia is thus quite different from that of many groups living elsewhere. The education issues facing many European countries, and the United States as well, involve significant differences between Romani and non-Romani culture — issues such as how to deliver societal services to nomadic groups, adapting the educational curriculum to the needs of children from a very different culture, etc. The Romani-speaking people of Macedonia, however, are part of a region where multilingualism and multiculturalism are a centuries-old tradition. The very existence of the Balkan linguistic league is testimony to this. The Balkan linguistic league (or *Sprachbund*) consists of the Balkan Slavic languages (Bulgarian, Macedonian, and the Torlak dialects of Serbian), the Balkan Romance languages (Romanian, Megleno-Romanian, and Aromanian [Vlah]), Greek and Albanian, all of which share a variety of significant structural similarities as the result of centuries of language contact. As the Slovene linguist Jernej Kopitar wrote in 1829, these languages gave the impression of having a single grammar (*Sprachform*) with different lexicons (*Sprachmaterie*). Moreover, although they are not usually included in studies of the Balkan linguistic league, the Balkan Romani dialects do in fact share a number of significant grammatical features with the other Balkan languages (see Kostov 1973, Friedman 1985a, Matras 1994). A brief illustrative example is given in Table Four.

Table Four

Romani	tedžas	mangav	te	hramonav
Albanian	t' shkojm'	dua	t'	shkruaj
Greek	ná páme	theloø	ná	gráfoø
Bulgarian	da trúgnem	iskam	da	piša
Macedonian	da odime	sakam	da	pišuvam
Torlak Serbian	da idemo	oću	da	pišem
Romanian	saî mergem	vreau	saî	scriu
Vlah (Kruševo)	s- neádzimuî	voi	si	scriu
English	'let us/if we go'	'I want to write'		

Optative-Subjunctive particle replaces infinitive and other structures in the Balkan Languages

However, while Romani-speakers constitute an integral albeit distinct and sometimes marginalized segment of Macedonian society, and while issues in Romani education parallel issues in other minority

⁵ Albanian and Turkish are probably more frequent than Macedonian due to the fact that most Roms in Macedonia are Muslim and the former two languages are more closely identified with Islam (cf. note 1). According to Faik Abdi, cited in Cxangova (1991), most Roms who declare another nationality and/or mother tongue in western Macedonia declare themselves as Albanians while in eastern Macedonia they declare themselves as Turks. This would reflect the relative-numerical strength of these two groups in these two regions.

⁶ I am using the term Gypsy here as a cover term for all those European groups descended from Indic-speakers who arrived in Europe during the Middle Ages.

⁷ Like the English term Gypsy, these ethnonyms derive from ethnonymic terms meaning 'Egyptian'.

language education in Macedonia, there is a significant difference: while the Albanian, Turkish, and Serbian minorities in Macedonia have codified languages to serve as the bases of education, Romani, like Vlah (Aromanian), lacks such a standard. In the case of Vlah, there is a codified literary language, viz. Romanian, which is sufficiently close that it can provide a model if not a substitute. In fact, there is a movement that would replace Vlah with Romanian, but this is resisted by the majority of Vlachs in Macedonia (cf. Jašar-Nasteva forthcoming) in the same way that, e.g., the Macedonians resisted the imposition of Bulgarian, the Ukrainians resisted Russian, the Slovaks resisted Czech, or the Norwegians resisted Danish (cf. Haugen 1968). Romani, however, is faced with a different problem which makes it unique in Macedonia and unusual in Europe: not only does there not exist at this time an established Roman linguistic norm, but Romani's closest relatives—the languages of western India such as Hindi and Punjabi—are too distant from Romani to have even the slightest chance of substituting for it, although their relationship to Romani in terms of vocabulary enrichment is a separate issue, one which we shall discuss below (cf. also Friedman 1989). Thus Romani education cannot take place effectively without settling the Romani „*questione della lingua*“ (*čhibakoro phučipe*).

As was mentioned earlier, the 1970s saw both a change in Romani legal status and attempts at advancing Romani-language education. In general, however, these attempts met with a variety of difficulties. In 1971, Sxaip Jusuf, a Rom who had earned a B.A. in physical education from the University of Belgrade, began work on a Romani grammar with Krume Kepeski, a professor at the Skopje Pedagogical Academy (*Nova Makedonija* 80.02.15:10; cf. also Koneski 1950, Lunt 1952:v). By 1973 Jusuf and Kepeski had completed the manuscript of their grammar (Prof. Kepeski was kind enough to show me the manuscript while I was in Macedonia), and they were seeking publication. Due to various complicating factors, however, the grammar did not appear until 1980. The appearance of Jusuf and Kepeski (1980) in a tirage of 3,000 copies signaled a new phase in the development of the standardization of Romani in Macedonia. The book is written in both Romani and Macedonian on facing pages and was the most ambitious attempt of its kind at the time. The express purpose of the book was the creation of a Literary Romani for use by Roms in Macedonia, Kosovia,⁸ and adjacent parts of Serbia, with a view to the creation of Romani-language schools in these areas and to the use of this literary standard as a basis for the creation of a Romani literary language for use by Roms in general (Jusuf and Kepeski 1980:4-5).⁹ The language of the grammar is based on the Arli dialect of Skopje, although Jusuf makes frequent use of his native Džambaz dialect—especially when citing Romani forms in the Macedonian text—and occasionally Gurbet and Burgudži forms are

⁸ Because both the [original] Slavic Kosovo and the Albanian [and Turkish] Kosova currently have political implications whose complexities I wish to eschew, I have chosen to use the productive English-suffix when writing about this place in English.
⁹ The question of whether Romani is to be considered a single language with numerous dialects or as a group of closely related languages is not of immediate concern to this article. The most commonly held opinion among linguists is that Romani is to be treated as a single language (cf., Kochanowski 1963:184-92; Hancock 1975:26; Vencel' and Cxerenkov 1976:283; Cortiade 1984) despite varying degrees of mutual intelligibility. Questions of the definition of language and dialect involve more factors than mere intelligibility, as can be seen from such classic examples as the mutually unintelligible dialects of Chinese or the mutually intelligible languages of Scandinavia, but the discussion of the relationship among language, dialect, ethnic identity, and national identity are beyond the scope of this article. For our purposes, we shall adopt the commonly held view of linguists just alluded to (cf. also Haugen 1966, Lunt 1984).

also mentioned.¹⁰ I have published a detailed analysis of this grammar elsewhere (Friedman 1985c). For the purposes of this paper it will suffice to point out some of the most salient types of problems raised by Jusuf and Kepeski (1980) with respect to the standardization of Romani and its use in education:

1. Orthographic conventions were not standardized as illustrated by the following examples: syllable final *jotis* indicated by both (i) and (j) as in the spellings *muj* and *mui* 'mouth', the automatic fronting of velars before front vowels is inconsistently indicated, e.g. *kerdo* and *kjerdo* 'done', the opposition between a uvular fricative (x) and a glottal glide (h)—phonemic in some Romani dialects but not in others—is not made consistently, e.g. *xor* 'depth' but *borda-ripe* 'deepening', *xramonel* 'write' but *bhramondikano* 'written', etc.
2. Competing dialectal forms are not selected but rather mixed, as seen in the following examples. The basic form of the instrumental singular marker is {-sa} but the (s) is lost intervocally in Arli. On the Romani side of one of the nominal paradigms, the instrumental singular of the word for 'wind' is given as *bavlal-aa*, *-asa* while on the Cyrillic side it is given as *bavlalaja* (*bavlalaja*). In fact, *bavlai* is the Arli dialectal form, the Džambaz and etymologically older form being *balval*. Similarly, the second singular present tense morpheme, which also has the basic shape {-sa} and has both the Arli-specific loss of (s) and a morphological variant without the final (a) in all the dialects, is used in various places in all its possible realizations: *keresa/kereja/kerea* 'keres/kere' 'you do'. Similarly, for the nominative plural definite article both Arli/Burgudži *o* and Džambaz/Gurbet *e* are used, e.g. *o Roma* and *e Roma* 'the Roms', feminine nouns in consonants are used with both jotted and non-jotted oblique stems, e.g. *čhiba-* and *čhibja-*, 'tongue, language', etc.
3. Neologisms are coined from Hindi, sometimes with disregard for the Romani phonological system, rather than based on native material or borrowed from languages familiar to the speakers e.g. *bhaga* 'consciousness'.
4. The grammar was written on a level for use in a high school pedagogical academy, but at the time there were no textbooks at the elementary school level. The grammar could thus at most have been used to prepare teachers, but the cadre of educated and motivated individuals and particularly the organizational structure was lacking.

Although the cultural organization *Phralipe* 'Brotherhood' was formed in 1948, it was not until the 1970s and 1980s that sporadic attempts were made at advancing Romani education and related linguistic rights such as use in the mass media. Thus there were radioprograms broadcast out of cities and towns such as Belgrade and Niš in Serbia and Tetovo in Macedonia (cf. Puxon 1979:89), a monthly entitled *Krlo e romengo* 'Voice of the Roms' was published for nine

¹⁰ We are accepting here as a useful heuristic device the distinction between the so-called Vlach and Non-Vlach dialects of Romani. Although the Romani dialectal situation in the Republic of Macedonia is quite complex, the majority of speakers use dialects of a Non-Vlach type that are described by the self-ascriptive cover term *Arli* (< Turkish *yerli* 'local'). Next in importance for Macedonians is *Džambaz* (< Turkish *cambaz* 'acrobat, horse-dealer', known elsewhere as *Gurbet*, related to *Kaldersa*, *Lovari*, *Cxurari*, *Mačvano*, etc.), which is a Vlach type dialect that has undergone Non-Vlach influence. Also of significance for Macedonia is *Burgudži* or *Bugurdži* (< Turkish *burgucu* 'gimlet-maker', also known as *Rabadži* [< Turkish *arabaç* 'drayman'] or *Kovačja* [< Slavic *Kovač* 'blacksmith'], a name which is also used for other groups including the non-Romani speaking *Gäupci* of southwestern Macedonia), which is also a Non-Vlach dialect. The details of Romani dialectal differentiation are beyond the scope of this paper. For a summary of current theories see Hancock (1995). Vencel' and Cxerenkov (1976) and Boretzky and Igla (1994: 361-415) give useful comparative sketches of Romani dialects. Cf. also Table Seven for some illustrative examples.

¹¹ According to the 1994 census (Antonovska et al. 1996), 48% of Macedonia's Romani population lives in the five Skopje municipalities, more than half of them in the municipality of Cxair, where Sxutka is located. The next largest concentrations are Prilep (8.2%), Kumanovo (7.1%), Tetovo (5.6%), Gostivar (4.9%), Bitola (3.9%), Sxip (3.3%), Debar (2.5%), and Vinica (2%). In terms of proportions, Roms constitute 3.9% of the population in the five municipalities of Skopje, but 14.7% in Cxair. Other relatively sizable proportions are Vinica (4.6%), Debar (4.3%), Prilep (3.8%), Berovo (3.3%), Sxip (2.9%), Kicevo (2.6%), Delcevo (2.5%), Kumanovo (2.4%), Kocani (2.3%), and Kriva Palanka (2.2%).

¹² An especially prolific scholar has been Rade Uhlík, who published a Serbo-Croatian-Romani dictionary as early as 1947 and had published Romani poetry even prior to that (Uhlík 1937; see also Dalbello 1989).

¹³ Of the plethora of books that have sprung from this tragedy, Woodward (1995) is the first major scholarly work in English (see Hayden 1995) and gives a particularly clear analysis of the role of international involvement. Silber and Allen (1995) represents the best journalistic account in English in the opinion of many educated observers (Vesna Pusić, University of Zagreb, personal communication).

months in 1973 in Belgrade (Dalbello 1989). Books in Romani, most of them poetry, were published in all of the capitals of the ex-Yugoslav republics and autonomous regions as well as in smaller towns such as Leskovac and Preševo. Classes in Romani were begun in Gilan (Gnjilane) and Ferizaj (Ferizovik, Uroševac) in Kosovia (Birlik 9.X.94:14) and informal classes outside the regular school structure were also organized in the predominantly Romani Skopje suburb Sxuto Orizari (Sxutka), which was where a large number of Roms from Skopje and later elsewhere settled after the disastrous Skopje earthquake of 1963.¹¹ In 1977, Sxaip Jusuf translated a book about Tito into Romani with significant press coverage (*Nova Makedonija* 77.09.28-30:9, Jusuf 1978). It was the first non-periodical publication in Macedonia (and Yugoslavia) by a Rom for Roms. Shortly thereafter, a number of anthologies of Romani poetry and stories were published, mostly in bilingual editions (e.g. Djurić 1979, Dimić 1979, Krasnići 1981, Salijesor 1984, Balić et al. 1984, Dimić 1986, see also Dalbello 1989) as well as a Romani-Serbo-Croatian-English dictionary (Uhlík 1983). More than ten years after Jusuf (1978), however, Trajko Petrovski's (1989) translation of the pre-World War Two Macedonian poet Kočo Racin's collection *Beli Mugri* ('White mists') into Romani was still an unusual event.

Throughout this period, pedagogical materials were virtually nonexistent. The classes mentioned above were conducted without formal textbooks. Jusuf and Kepeski (1980), while it brought attention to the Romani language, did not function in an institutional context. Although translations, original belle lettres, folklore collections, and scholarly studies¹² appeared with increasing frequency, they did not change the educational situation. Cortiade (1984), published in an expanded version in Titograd (Podgorica) in 1986, was an attempt to formulate a transdialectal orthography that would serve as the basis of both literary communication and a literary language for use in schools. Although this orthography has been gaining increasing acceptance in Western Europe (see also Cortiade et al. 1991, Cortiade 1994), and was even the basis of a primer published in Sarajevo (Kurčide 1990) in a tirage of 2,000 with a teachers manual in a tirage of 1,000, this orthography has not had a significant impact on publications in Macedonia. Problems with this orthography will be discussed below (see also Friedman 1995a).

In 1990, Yugoslavia along with the rest of Eastern Europe entered an era of political pluralism. The tragic results of the nationalist hijacking of that political process, a course of action that had already begun during the previous decade, are too well known to require further comment here.¹³ The Romani contribution to the ethno-political movement, however, is not perceived as a challenge to the legitimacy of the Macedonian state and has been careful to insist on its loyalty to

the Republic of Macedonia.¹⁴ The Party for the Complete Emancipation of the Roms (Macedonian: *Partija za Celosna Emancipacija na Romite*, Romani: *Partija Saste Emancipacijake e Romengiri* PCER or PSER) was founded on 12 August 1990 with Faik Abdi (Faik Abdieskoro), a wealthy businessman from Shutka, as its leader.¹⁵ The first item in the party program concerned education. Among the planks in the educational platform were the following (Predlog 1990):

1. Opening of pre-school/day-care centers in which children could be exposed to both Macedonian and Romani simultaneously
2. Elementary education in Macedonian with 2-3 hours a week Romani instruction
3. Founding of a Department of Romology at Skopje University, one which would contribute to the overall improvement of the condition of the Romani nationality
4. Post-graduate studies and exchanges with India
5. Romani children learn the history of their people, especially about Hitler's holocaust against the Roms during World War Two, which is to be made part of the facultative language classes 3-4 hours a week.

The third section of the party program was concerned with the Romani language, and called not only for minority language rights equal with other minority languages but also expressed concern for the normativization of Romani and close cooperation with institutions in India.

On 8 September 1991 a referendum was held concerning independence for the Republic of Macedonia. Material encouraging people to vote was printed in all six major languages of Macedonia including Romani.¹⁶ It was perhaps the first time Romani appeared on the front page of the principal Macedonian daily newspaper, *Nova Makedonija* (91.09.08:1).¹⁷

In Fall 1991, Faik Abdi sent a letter in the name of PCER to the rector of the University of Skopje demanding the opening of a Romani Studies Department but the establishment of such a Department remains a desideratum that has yet to be achieved. In early 1992, a group of Romani intellectuals formed a second Romani political party, the Democratic Progressive Party of the Roms in Macedonia, headed by Bekir Arif. A major issue for the new party was increasing the pace of educational reforms (*Nova Makedonija* 21.X.1992:4). There was also disagreement between the two parties over questions of language standardization, dialectal compromise and the place of Romani in educational institutions. Among the debated issues were whether Romani should be a language of instruction (Macedonian: *nastaven jazik*) or a language of study (Macedonian: *nastaven predmet*) and whether or not the standard was to be based entirely on the Arli, dialect, spoken

¹⁴ This is in contrast to, e.g., some Albanian ethno-politicians in Macedonia, who on occasion dispute the legitimacy of Macedonian statehood and even national identity (e.g. Xhaferi 1995).

¹⁵ Like other ethno-political parties in Macedonia, the leadership of PCER denies that the party is "mononational" and points to the existence of party members belonging to other nationalities to demonstrate this (Cxangova 1991). As with other ethno-political parties, however, the fact remains that the party's political concerns are focused on a specific ethnic group. In 1991 the party changed its name to Party for the Complete Emancipation of the Roms of Macedonia Romani: *Partija Saste Emancipacijake e Romengiri* (Macedonian: *Partija za Celosna Emancipacija na Romite* na Makedonija).

¹⁶ The other five are Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish, Aromanian, and Serbian.

¹⁷ The phrase was *Referendumeske '91. Va: sijam suvereno thajkorkorifundirmi Makedonijake' [pertaining to] Referendum '91. Yes: I am for a sovereign and independent Macedonia' (Arli dialect). The advertisement was hexaglossic, but there were also monoglot Romani-language posters encouraging Roms to vote in the referendum.*

by the majority or Roms in Macedonia, or whether elements of other dialects should be included. Table Five gives a selection of diagnostic words illustrating some of the most salient phonological, morphological, and lexical differences among the main dialects spoken in Macedonia. Among the features illustrated are the following: palatal mutation of dentals before stressed (i) ('work'), treatment of inherited intervocalic retroflex *n̥d̥n̥ ('bread'), palatalization and loss of (n) intervocalically before stressed (i) ('water'), formation of the aorist ('I gave'), the shibboleth 'thus', intervocalic (s) in grammatical suffixes ('with God'), shape and gender in the 3 pl pronoun ('they'), and shape of the definite article (nominative plural = masculine nominative singular vs nominative plural = oblique singular and plural and distinct feminine nominative singular vs feminine nominative singular = nominative and oblique plural).

Table Five

Burgudži	buci	maro	pani	diyom	kidjal	devlesa	on, ol	o-i-o-e
Arli	buti	maro	pani	dindjum	agjar	devlea	on, ola	o-i-o-e
Džambaz	buki	manro	pai	diyem	g'ja	devlesa	von	o-i-e-e
Gurbet	buči	marno	pai	diyem	gaja	devleha	von	o-e-e-e
English	<i>work</i>	<i>bread</i>	<i>water</i>	<i>I gave</i>	<i>thus</i>	<i>with God</i>	<i>they</i>	<i>the: Ms-Fs-Np-Obl</i>

Examples of Romani dialectal differences

It was shortly after this split in the Romani political scene occurred that, on November 20-21, 1992 the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Macedonia and the Philological Faculty of the University of Skopje sponsored a conference for the purpose of reaching an agreement concerning the introduction of Romani as a course of study in Macedonian schools.¹⁸ The conference was attended by a number of Macedonian Roms active in Romani intellectual life, including Sxaip Jusuf, Trajko Petrovski, Gäuneš Mustafa, Sxaip Isen, Ramo Rušidovski, Tahir Nuhi, Iliaz Zendel, and others. Also present were Donald Kenrick and myself as well as members of the Philological Faculty of Skopje University and the Macedonian Academy of Sciences, most notably Olivera Jašar-Nasteva and Liljana Minova-Gäurkova as well as Zxivko Cvetkovski, head of the Macedonian Department. Representatives of the political factions were also present at the opening session, but the chair of the meeting deftly prevented the meeting from becoming a series of political speeches and expeditiously turned the conference into a language standardization working group.

It quickly emerged that the Roms present at this conference were not in favor of the establishment of Romani as a language of instruction in a parallel education system but rather the teaching of Romani as a subject in elementary schools and pedagogical academies with a view

to preparing a cadre of teachers and ultimately a lectureship and Department of Romani at the University of Skopje. As mentioned above, one of the explicit goals of Romani politics in Macedonia is the establishment of such a Department, but a qualified cadre of faculty has yet to be trained.

The document that resulted from these deliberations, which was reproduced in full and analyzed in detail in Friedman (1995), was agreed upon by representatives of the various political currents as well as by the intellectuals that produced it. The document addresses a number of issues in Romani language standardization, e.g. the Arli dialect is specified as the base, with elements from other dialects being incorporated into it, and basic orthographic, morphophonological and morphological rules are specified in a series of twelve points. The document should be viewed in the context of Jusuf and Kepeski (1980), Kenrick (1981), and Cortiade et al. (1991). As indicated above, both Jusuf and Kenrick were present at the conference. Moreover, both Jusuf and Kenrick participated in the deliberations of the Language Commission at the Fourth World Romani Congress, at which Cortiade et al. (1991) was discussed and signed. Jusuf was a signatory to that document, but Kenrick was not. Mention should also be made here of Hancock (1975, 1993), which, while important for the history of Romani standardization, did not have a direct bearing on the 1992 conference. The former had been superseded by subsequent publications and events while the latter had not yet appeared.

Orthography has always been an issue for the standardization of Romani. Because efforts at Romani education have taken place in the context of the languages of other countries, as many orthographies have been used for Romani as there are standard languages with which it has been in contact. Although Romani in Cyrillic-using countries such as Russia and Bulgaria has been written in Cyrillic, a consensus has emerged to use a Latin based orthography as the most universally accessible (cf. Kyuchukov et al. 1995)—considerations which also influenced the choice of alphabet for Albanian (see Skendi 1967:366-90). In the case of Macedonia, which in the context of former Yugoslavia had an established bi-alphabetical tradition, Romani has always been written using a Latin orthography similar to that of Kenrick (1981), although Jusuf and Kepeski (1980) also use a Macedonian-based Cyrillic orthography for Romani in their Macedonian parallel text. At the 1992 Skopje conference Macedonian Roms preferred to continue developing an orthography like that of the Second World Romani Congress (Kenrick 1981) rather than the Fourth.

Table six illustrates some of the salient differences between the Fourth World Romani Congress orthography and that of the 1992 Macedonian Conference.

¹⁸ Concerned Macedonian intellectuals were already attempting to respond to the need for Romani language education by the summer of 1991, when Dimitar Mirčev, who was then a professor of Sociology at the University of Skopje discussed with me the possibility of holding a normativization conference in Skopje.

Table Six

	Cortiade et al.(1991)	1992 Macedonian Conference	dialectal pronunciations	
Rom (loc. sg.)	Romes e	Romeste	[romeste]	[romesće]
Rom (loc. pl.)	Romen e	Romende	[romende]	[romenǥe]
Rom (abl. sg.)	Romes ar	Romestar	[romestar]	
Rom (abl. pl.)	Romen ar	Romendar	[romendar]	
Rom (dat. sg.)	Romesqe	Romeske	[romesće]	[romeske]
Rom (dat. pl.)	Romenqe	Romenge	[romenǥe]	[romenge]
done (pl. pt.)	kerde	kerde	[ćerde]	[kerǥe]
Rom [instr. sg.]	Rome_a	Romesa	[Romea]	[Romesa]
you do (sg.)	keresa	keresa	[ćerea]	[keresa]

Comparison of current Romani orthographies

The treatment of underlying or historical dental and/or velar stops is an area of both considerable and salient dialectal variation and morphophonemic alternation in Romani. These phonemes can be pronounced as palatals and/or with affricated or fricativized articulation in various dialects of Macedonia and elsewhere (see Ventcel' and Cxerenkov 1976 and Boretzky and Igla 1994 for details). More over, as seen in Table Six (as mentioned earlier), some Romani dialects eliminate intervocalic /s/ in certain grammatical morphemes. Cortiade et al. (1991) articulates the principle of using underlying forms in most environments, but has special graphic symbols for the above mentioned morphophonemic alternations in their function as case markers (which Cortiade et al. [1991] treats as postpositions, but see Friedman 1991), viz. , q, and _ for dentals, velars, and /s/, respectively. Thus in the orthography of Cortiade et al. (1991) the same morphophonemic alternations have different spellings, while the same graphic symbols have different pronunciations whose dialectal variations are represented by different letters in roots and verbal affixes on the one hand and in case affixes on the other, as illustrated in the Table Six.

On 17 November 1993 the first issue of a Romani monthly newspaper, *Romani Sumnal/Romski Svet* 'Romani World', was published in Skopje under the editorial leadership of Oskar Mamut, who is also employed in the Romani-language division of Radio-Television Skopje.¹⁹ The newspaper is bilingual, with all material in both Romani and Macedonian. The issue of the codification of a Romani standard language is explicitly addressed on the first page of the first number, where the

editorial board states that one of the tasks they have set themselves is contributing to the development and use of literary Romani. As such, the paper can be taken as a measure of the progress and ongoing concerns of the standardization of Romani in the Republic of Macedonia. The role of the mass media is potentially of great importance in language standardization.

In its basic principles, *Romano Sumnal* represents a development in the direction described by the decisions reached at the 1992 Skopje conference and indicated in Jusuf and Kepeski (1980), namely an Arli base with elements from other dialects using a Latin orthography of the type in wide use in Eastern Europe, including Jusuf and Kepeski (1980), and recommended at the 1971 standardization conference (cf. Also Hancock 1993, 1995). Nonetheless, specifics of the solutions reached by *Romano Sumnal* differ from those seen elsewhere (see Friedman Forthcoming). Taken as a whole, *Romano Sumnal* clearly represents a step forward in the standardization of Romani in the Republic of Macedonia. The editors are aware of standardization issues and are attempting to make concrete contributions towards a consistent and usable norm.

Of particular importance to *Romano Sumnal* was the issue of education. Four articles were dedicated to the topic in the first issue (Bajramovska 1993, Mamut 1993, Darman 1993, Jašarov 1993). Darman (1993) speaks directly to the concerns of Romani parents for creating a home environment conducive to the success of children who are just beginning school. The other three articles are all critical of the fact that at the time they were written, Romani was still not a subject in any school curriculum in Macedonia, that the rate of educational success among Romani children is not showing any signs of increase, and that the few Romani intellectuals either hide their origins or bicker with one another rather than cooperating. While the very existence of a newspaper complaining about these conditions is itself something of a step forward, the fact remains that Romani education, like many other social programs, has not progressed with alacrity. Emilija Simoska (pc 8.XII.95), former Minister of Education, observed that education is functioning as a proxy for interethnic relations so not enough attention is being paid to curriculum.

Nonetheless, progress is being made. When in June-July 1994, at the behest of the International Conference on Former Yugoslavia (ICFY) and under the sponsorship of the Council of Europe, an extraordinary census was carried out in the Republic of Macedonia (see Friedman 1996), Romani was one of the six official languages of census forms and documents, including the training manual for enumerators, in accordance with Article 35 of the census law. The published materials connected with the 1994 census represent the first official

¹⁹ Although the newspaper was intended as a monthly, it has so far appeared only thrice: 17 November 1993, 10 December 1993, and 1 April 1994.

use of Romani in the Republic of Macedonia and were thus intimately connected with the standardization of Literary Romani in that country. The language of the census forms displays significant progress in the achievement of standardization and as such represents a significant development of Romani in official usage (Friedman 1995b).

In September 1995 Sxaip Jusuf's Romani textbook for elementary schools was finally in press at Prosvetno Delo, the reviews having been completed in July of that year. Although Jusuf originally envisioned a series of textbooks beginning with grade one, the current book is intended for grade 3. The manuscript contained about a hundred texts, in poetry (24) and prose (80). The amount of material is about twice as much as can be covered in a year at two hours a week (i.e. 70 hours), and the question of norm versus dialect is not explicitly addressed. The final version also included vocabulary and pages of pictures for stories. One problem with the review process was that the two reviewers with pedagogical expertise knew no Romani, while the Romani reviewer had no pedagogical experience. The Romani reviewer criticized the text for excessive Indicisms (e.g., using *namaste* 'hail' (Hindi) instead of *sar sijan* 'how are you' or *šukar/lačho dive* 'good day', the Indicism *badali* instead of the colloquial Turkism *buluti* 'cloud'), but sometimes picked on dialectal details (suggesting *konzavuri* for *kanauri* 'hedgehog', *farba* (from German) for *renki* (from Persian, probably via Turkish) 'color' (cf. Friedman 1989). However, he also caught orthographic inconsistencies, e.g. the need to treat the syllable *o-* in the 3 sg acc. pronoun as part of the stem: *ole* and not *o le* (as if *o* were the definite article). The textbook was officially published and announced to the public on 8 April 1996, but as of this writing (March 1997) it had not yet been released due to financial complications.

Meanwhile, developments in neighboring and other Balkan countries are taking place each independent of the other. In Albania (Kurtide 1994) the Fourth World Romani Congress orthography and pedagogical materials sponsored by the European commission are circulating, but it is unclear if any of them are in actual use. Similarly, in Romania a pedagogical manual for teacher training complete with lessons using the Fourth World Romani Congress orthography (Cortiade et al. 1991) has been published (Saraïu 1992, cf. also Saraïu 1992) and European Commission-sponsored projects are being undertaken (*Interface* 15[8/94]:5), but so far Romani is only a language of study at the university level (Lemon: Romnet 95.XII.20). In Bulgaria some materials use an adaptation of Bulgarian Cyrillic for Romani (e.g. Malikov 1992), but an English-type Latin orthography using digraphs rather than diacritics is also in use (Kyuchukov et al. 1995), e.g. *sh=š*, *ch=č*, *chh/chsh=čh*, *j=dž*, *zh=ž*, *x=ks* *h=x* *orh*, *y=j*, *ts=c*, *ph*, *th*, *kh*, *w=schwa*, and studies have been conducted for bilingual literacy

(Kyuchukov 1995).²⁰ Romani is also being taught at the University of Sofia (1995-97) by Birgit Igla, a non-Rom specialist in Romani with extensive fieldwork experience in Balkan Romani. In Greece, various studies have been conducted and conferences held, but none of them are concerned with education of Romani children in Romani (*Interface* 18[5/95]:18, 13[2/94]:15-20, 8[11/92]:12). Rather, in accordance with Greece's assimilationist language policies towards its minorities (cf. Human Rights Watch 1994), the concern is with teaching Greek. Although former Yugoslavia was home to some of the most progressive Romani activities such as the first Romani summer school, which was held in Belgrade (*Interface* 16[11/94]:3), the war has resulted in the persecution of Roms living in the FRY and other Former-Serbo-Croatian speaking lands, and many have fled to Western Europe (see *Interface* 19[8/95]:20-22).

In conclusion we can say that while progress in Romani language education in the Republic of Macedonia has been slow, it has been made. Romani has gradually risen in status from total legal absence to legal equality with all other minority languages, even if the de facto realization has not yet met the de jure possibilities. The standardization of Romani and the fixing of the Arli dialectal base with other elements, together with a consistent orthography, has made significant progress from Jusuf and Kepeski (1980), to Romano Sumnal (1993) to the census (1994) to Jusuf's third grade textbook (1996). Similarly, the orthography conference of 1992 probably helped make actors aware of the need for consistency. While activity in the Republic of Macedonia has not been coordinated with that going on in neighboring countries or western Europe, it is endeavoring to meet the needs of the people for whom it is intended, and is certainly in advance of, e.g., Greece or FRY. Although politics is clearly playing a role, nonetheless, the essential issues remain pedagogical and normative. The introduction of Romani as a language of study at the elementary level has the potential to exert an enormous influence on the future codification of Romani both within the Republic of Macedonia and beyond its borders. While Romani education in Macedonia is progressing slowly, it is nonetheless perceptibly progressing, and if other circumstances in the region allow, the future promises to be better than the past.

²⁰ Cf. also Hübschmannová et al. (1991), which uses a Czech based orthography.

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Holocaust Stories of Roma (Gypsies) from Hungary: Practices of Memory and Interpretation

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"Forgetting the extermination is part of the extermination itself"

Jean Baudrillard

The story of the Holocaust of the Gypsies, or *Porrajmos* as it is referred to in the Romani language, in general and the story of the Hungarian Gypsies in particular has never been told. The testimonies — the written and/or filmed and taped memories — are fragmented, individual and random, as if there is no common thread linking them together. The conclusion that could be reached in this situation is that there was no common story; that the group or individual stories of traumatic events connected to racism, persecution and the extermination of the Gypsies by the Nazis (Hungarian and/or German) were incidental, random, local, unique, and perhaps even imaginary occurrences.

The many prejudices surrounding the Gypsies, their continual relegation to the margins of society even under the post-World War II regimes, their oral culture handed down by word of mouth rather than in writing — have all resulted in the *Porrajmos* receiving the status of "The Forgotten Holocaust", as in the title of the BBC documentary on the subject.

Forgotten traumas, however, leave the individual as well as the collective in a state of strangulation with an awkward and unresolved problem hanging over us, and mainly in isolation and seclusion with the unprocessed event. Raising these events to the memory and formulating them in a story to be told to a supportive and attentive audience is essential for redirecting the life story onto its coherent and normal path. In her book, *Trauma and Recovery*,¹ Judith Lewis-Herman speaks of the social context which is so critical in enabling someone to tell his or her story. When the social context is structured so that, from the beginning, it is opposed to the victims — in this case the Gypsies — the story will be denied, diminished in value or distorted.

¹ *Basic Books, 1992*; trans. Trauma Ve Hahlama (in Hebrew) *Am Oved, Tel Aviv 1994*.

Indeed, the following are some of the remarks I heard about the Gypsies of Hungary: “Ah, nothing happened in the Holocaust to the Gypsies in Hungary”; “Their suffering is nothing compared to the slaughter of the six million Jews”; “They were persecuted on social not on racist grounds”. This last remark especially provoked me since it distorts the reality attested to by existing documentation of the Nazi racist policy towards the Gypsies, which reveals it as being consistent with that towards the Jews. Since I am not a historian, the research on which I am working is not a historical one, but a social-narrative. Where the social context proved to be on the whole, hostile towards the Gypsies and, accordingly, did not allow for articulation, I went to serve as an audience to their stories and to the stories about them.

In the last three years, I traveled all over Hungary and I collected over 50 interviews with Gypsies, most of whom were Holocaust survivors or their families, and a few who were informants whose stories added to my knowledge. In my journeys, which were full of adventures, I met with researchers, the clergy, artists, poets and writers—Gypsies and non-Gypsies—all of whom opened my eyes.

After my initial contacts, I asked to see Holocaust survivors in order to interview them. My friends brought me to a house of a victim of the Ravensbruck Camp. During the interview her husband who was sitting with us, interrupted us and tried to speak. The woman silenced him again and again. In order to console him, I said: “When I finish with your wife, I will interview you.” “But he is not a survivor, he was only in the army”, his wife replied. When I began interviewing him, it became clear that the man had spent the war in forced labour as part of the notorious labour divisions. He also said: “I am not a Holocaust survivor. I was in the army.” (Let me point out that every Jew who “served” in the “army” in Hungary in the labour divisions is considered, and rightly so, as someone who suffered the horrors of the Holocaust; and, if by some miracle, he

survived, he is regarded as a Holocaust survivor.) From here on I discovered more and more Gypsies who were not aware of their being Holocaust survivors and who had not received any recognition of being such, despite the fact that they were victims of the Holocaust as Gypsies.

My interest in their stories surprised them, and the interviews often ended with emotionally expressed gratitude for my having listened and provided them with the possibility of raising their painful memories, putting them into words and dislodging them from their stifled souls.

When I met the interviewees — usually without having had any possibility of notifying them in advance — I would introduce myself, saying: “I am a Jew from Israel, a researcher, and I am interested in the common fate of the Jews and the Gypsies”. Everyone knew at once what I meant and spoke to me with willingness. One woman, an Auschwitz survivor, replied: “Oh, finally! Come here sister and I will tell you everything.” And with tears of relief she talked and talked and talked. When she had finished telling her story, she said: “God sent you here in order to listen to me before I die.”

Some of the stories had been kept as a secret, totally cut off from history, as with the story of the slaughter of the Gypsies towards the end of the war by the gendarmes and other Hungarian Nazis in various different places in Hungary. These stories were revealed incidentally, one at a time, until it led to the indispensable assumption that there were many such stories and their secret buried..

One of these stories is that of the village of Lengyel in the district of Tolna, which I shall recount below as an example, as it was told to me by three of the survivors:

During the late afternoon hours, a mounted gendarme unit came galloping up to the Gypsy neighbourhood in the village of Lengyel. They ordered the residents to stand in front of their houses, and then opened fire on them. Many of the people who were not injured by the first round of fire ran into their houses. Others fled to the nearby forest. The gendarmes continued to fire in all directions. They threw hand-grenades at the people who had run into the houses, until it looked as if there was no living soul remaining. The riders chased the people who had fled into the forest and shot at anyone they were able to find. Afterwards they returned to the neighbourhood, made sure that there were no people left alive, shot the pigs, chickens, horses and dogs, and then moved on. Those who had managed to hide in the forest throughout the night joined the Red Army which arrived in the village the day after the

massacre. They returned to their homes and found the bodies of their families — sixteen in all — lying on the ground in and around the houses.

This story was told to me at different times by three survivors each living in a remote village, neither of these near to the other. On this occasion, as with other occasions, the story was constructed in the memory of each of the interviewees in a different manner which points to, amongst other things, the individual coming to terms with the trauma he or she experienced. In addition, the memory is constructed in accordance with the person's circumstances at the time of the interview. The major differences resulting from the different constructions relate to the feelings and thoughts connected to the event and to the manner in which the story was processed within the passage of each life story. For example, while one of the interviewees described the event as a complete surprise in light of "the good relations with the local Hungarians", another explained that such slaughter was to be expected since the perpetrators were "*nyilasok*, that is, Hungarian Nazis".

The common thread in these stories was the dismay, the protest against the crime and the lack of meaning behind the massacre. Each of the interviewees explained this in his or her own way, but the feeling of rage at the injustice was common to all three accounts. The facts were also the same in each of the stories.

Distinctive to the stories of the concentration camp survivors was the long and winding journey taken to return to their homes and to a tolerable daily routine (and I refuse to use the pompous word "rehabilitation").

From testimonies of Jewish Holocaust survivors (for example, from the interviews in the Yad Vashem archives and the works of Primo Levi), we know of the outbursts of pain, the hardship, the sorrow, the inadequacy and disorientation of the survivors at the time of their liberation. From this moment on, the struggle begins to return to a more or less normal way of life, although not always successfully.

The Gypsies as a rule did not experience that moment. Their stories do not depict the moment when the suffering of the survivor shifts from that of victim-captive, who has been tortured and has his or her very life at stake, to that of the violated victim who finds re-establishing himself or herself so difficult. The Gypsies, in effect, continued to be persecuted, and, therefore, their stories feature indistinguishable boundaries between the Nazi, German, Hungarian, Communist secret police and Russian persecutors, in fact of all regimes in general.

Despite the fact that without a doubt the peak of their persecution was under the Nazis who strove to exterminate them, the defeat of the Nazis did not result in the "tables turning".

One woman, who was 15 when she was taken away together with her friends from the carrot field where she had been working, to the Komarom detention camp and from there to Dachau, told me what happened to her in the camp. She continued her story, saying: "And then I began to walk around and I wanted to go home because I was all alone. There were vehicles travelling to Hungary, but they would not let me on because they said that they were only for the Jews. So I began to walk, sometimes getting a lift on a cart if one happened to pass by..."

The woman reached her village after two years of wandering. When she arrived, she found some Gypsies still there, but they were penniless and without any means of making a living. Later, once the reforms were introduced by the new regime, the land was parcelled out and the farmers organized themselves into *kolkhozy*; but the Gypsies were not included in these. This situation led to their being labelled parasites or dissidents carrying out forbidden "private" work, such as, cleaning and repair jobs. And that is why sometimes in their stories, the "Nazis, *Nyilasok* (members of the Hungarian "Arrowed Cross"), Avo (the Hungarian secret police), police, army, Russians and Hungarians" are only distinguished from one another by their uniforms and language, and not by their deeds or attitude towards the Gypsies, so that the distinction between them is not always clear-cut.

The continuous persecution of the Gypsies — albeit not as part of a professed policy as in the Nazi period — led to the fact that the Gypsies never had the possibility of organizing themselves, physically and spiritually, personally and socially. They were forced to continue to struggle for their very existence, and this struggle for survival did not let them deal with their traumas on a personal level nor to receive recognition as Holocaust survivors on a social level. Therefore in the stories of the second and third generation, the *Porrajmos* does not always receive separate status from the many other family stories. This situation is another reason for the forgetting and obliterating from memory which, as mentioned by Baudrillard, is an integral part of the extermination itself.

Even after so many years when the wall of silence has begun to crack and the Gypsies are beginning to express their desire to remember and to be remembered, they have to struggle with their surroundings. One of the interviewees told me about the massacre of the Gypsies in the city of Szekesfehervar where hundreds of people were killed.

This event, unlike others, has been documented and its perpetrators were tried and convicted at the time. Part of my interview with Uncle Jakab went like this:

Uncle Jakab: The Gypsy organizations which have, after much difficulty, been founded in the last few years wanted to erect a monument, and the Szekesfehervar leaders said: 'Ah, impossible, because the perpetrators are still alive. And if those who did it are still alive, it stands to reason that they enjoy high standing in the city.'

Me: And they might be offended?

Uncle Jakab: Ha, ha, yes. They will be offended. Right. And that's why a monument hasn't been erected. It hasn't been.

As opposed to the monument which was not erected, let me tell you about a different existing monument. In July 1996, I joined a Hungarian television team filming a documentary directed by the well known director Jancso Miklos and the Gypsy journalist Agnes Daroczi. The documentary, *The Unburied Dead*, was filmed in the village of Lajoskomarom, and dealt with the events of January 1945: the murder of the Gypsy villagers, about 20 in all, and their burial in an unmarked communal grave.

As in the case of Lengyel, the event was wiped from memory and kept as a secret in the village. When we came to film, there were even attempts to deny the facts. Nevertheless, the story began to evolve and, as a result of the film, it became part of documented history.

One of the storytellers in the film, who was a boy of 12 at the time of the murders, described what happened. He told how the four Gypsy men were killed in a ditch in the cemetery. He knew where they were buried, next to his mother's grave, because, when the gravediggers were digging his mother's grave, they suddenly struck a skull in the ground and said: "Ah, that's one of the Gypsies." He went on to say how later on the women and children were placed on carts and taken to a field beyond the village where they were all killed. The bodies had been ploughed over a long time ago. The parcel of ground has been cultivated for many years now. When they were taken to the field, they ordered the villagers to dig a pit and then they shot them — children, infants, babies and all.

The witness continued his story, saying how not one of the Gypsies remained alive, and everyone had put the incident aside, as with the two Jews, who, he could not quite remember how and when, disappeared, who left and never returned — they simply became extinct.

As he takes the interviewer around the graveyard, the viewers can see the monument erected as a memorial to all the village's war victims: of the First World War, the Second World War, and the 1956 Hungarian uprising against Soviet occupation. The names of the victims are engraved on the monument, although somehow the names of the Gypsies and the Jews are not there.

No. He does not know why the names of the Gypsies and Jews do not appear on the monument. In the end he walks around the four-sided monument in an attempt to see if perhaps he can find the names of those who are missing, the forgotten ones.

After the documentary was screened on Hungarian television, I closely followed the public reaction. I expected a storm, a scandal, a debate and action following the exposure of the massacre of the Gypsies and the suppression of the truth for 53 years.

I do not know how many people watched the once only screening of the film, but no reaction whatsoever reached the media.

The lack of reaction is not due to a "raging silence". The lack of reaction is due to indifference, the acceptance of this sort of thing. This acceptance continually fluctuates between enthusiastic and active attempts to do the same thing today and a mere shrugging of one's shoulders at the happenings in another person's backyard, especially when the "other" is a Gypsy.

This is yet another reason why it is so necessary to tell the stories of what happened. For my part, I continued with my travels, interviewing more Gypsy and Holocaust survivors. One of them, in the summer of 1997, was Uncle Antal.

When I returned to Jerusalem, I sent, as is my way, a postcard to Uncle Antal, a thank you card for the interview. Uncle Antal sent back a card on which he wrote:

Dear Katalin,

I would like to thank you very much for having thought about me from distances like these with the lovely card you sent. I spoke to you most willingly, even if the conversation was painful for me. But my feeling is that, in this democracy, the country and the world should finally know, unfortunately, what happened to us — the Gypsies — in times gone by. My daughter-in-law is writing these things to you in my name.

*Sincerely,
Uncle Antal*

Over the passage of time and with his thoughts going back, as a result of the interview, Uncle Antal sees himself as the representative and spokesman of all the Gypsies, and, while taking upon himself the role of spokesman, he also charges me, the interviewer, with a role: to be the messenger responsible for passing on his testimony to the country and the world.

Language Discrimination in Education and Gypsy Unemployment

By Miklós Kontra

Source: Interview by Ágnes Kende

Social discrimination being relatively rare in Hungary is a view cherished by many in Hungarian public life. Géza Balázs, author of the entry on language politics in a recently published encyclopedia, writes the following: "Hungary has minor tasks these days in the area of language politics (...); it is the Gypsy population where such tasks are the most relevant: varieties of bilingualism, illiteracy, and the status of the Romani language." The author has decided readers need not busy themselves with further details.

In this article, I will show that the situation is far less idyllic in fact. A part of the Gypsy population of Hungary is subject to language discrimination and becomes unemployed as a result. Their basic human language rights are violated, which violation determines their chances for a humane life for a whole lifetime.

Discrimination against linguistically defined groups is called linguicism. This technical term was first used by Tove Skutnabb-Kangas in a book he published in 1988. I will quote from a study of his which has recently come out in Hungarian translation: "According to our definitions, racism, ethnicism and linguicism are such ideologies, structures and modes of action that are used for legitimizing, creating and reproducing an unequal distribution of power and (material and non-material) resources between 'racially,' ethnically-culturally or linguistically defined groups."

Colin Baker has defined linguicism as a use of languages aimed at "legitimizing and reproducing an unequal distribution of social resources and power."

István Kemény's 1994 research on Gypsies has shown that "differences according to mother tongue are the greatest and probably the most significant" among Roma in the age group of 25-29 who do not finish the eight grades of elementary school. Those finishing less than eight grades amount to 22.9% among Gypsies with Hungarian mother tongue, 41.6% among those with Romanian mother tongue, and 48.2% of those with Romani mother tongue. Children having either Romanian or Romani as their mother tongue have to start their studies in a completely unfamiliar language (Hungarian), as Gypsy teachers are few and far between in Hungary and education in Romani is even more of a rarity.

In the mid-80's, Anna Csongor surveyed 130 Gypsy classes in 37 schools and found the following: "Romani mother tongue or bilingualism was not a criterion of selection in any of the cases we examined. There was only one school, where a teacher (an after-school teacher) could speak and understand the language used by the children at home. Education in the mother tongue has no role in the current practice of Gypsy classes. Equally lacking is the remedial teaching of the majority language."

We have seen that twice as many fail to finish eight grades of elementary school among those with non-Hungarian (Romanian and Romani) mother tongue than among those with Hungarian mother tongue. The 1990 census registered 48072 persons with Romani mother tongue, but the actual number is doubtless higher.

István Kemény also notes that "the problem for the vast majority of Roma children is [...] the prospect of long-term unemployment for those failing to finish elementary school." Thus, discrimination in the language of education against Gypsy children with non-Hungarian mother tongues—the fact that they cannot even begin their studies in their mother tongue—is connected to their being uneducated, which in turn determines their position in the job market. The Roma are relegated to unemployment by the language discrimination regarding mother tongues that exists in education.

Insofar as the National Core Curriculum (NCC) attempts to preserve this situation, it must be characterized as having features of linguisticism. A passage from page 19 of the NCC can be quoted as evidence for this: "The goal of minority language teaching is to ensure that dominantly Hungarian-speaking students can learn their mother tongue as a second language. In this type of education, the language of education is Hungarian, and the teaching of the minority mother tongue begins in the first grade according to the NCC curriculum requirements for living foreign languages. Gypsy remedial education [...] may include the teaching of one of the Gypsy languages according to the requirements of this type of language teaching."

Thus, the NCC goes so far as to imply that dominantly Hungarian-speaking Gypsy students can acquire and study their mother tongue in school as a second language, studying it as a living foreign language. This part of the NCC abounds in sheer socio-linguistic and pedagogical nonsense. In addition, it is extremely linguisticist as well, which can be easily demonstrated by "translating" the quoted passage to refer to Hungarian minorities in Slovakia. The result is the following: The goal of education is to ensure that dominantly Slovak-speaking students can learn their Hungarian mother tongue as a second language. The language of education is Slovak, and the teaching of Hungarian occurs according to the curriculum requirements for living foreign languages.

The fact that young pupils with Romani or Romanian (Beas) mother tongue cannot go to schools where their mother tongue is the language of education needs to be viewed in the following context: the ratio of those finishing the eight grades of elementary school is 77% among Roma with Hungarian (majority) mother tongue, and only 58% and 52% among Roma with minority mother tongues (Romanian and Romani, respectively).

One argument familiar from "justifications" for language discrimination against part of the Gypsy population is that "they have no literary language, speak too many dialects and cannot even understand each other." This line of reasoning is not as unique as some might think; Hungarian non-Gypsies saying this about Hungarian Gypsies are far from being the only ones using this argument. Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas (1997:25) have come to the following general conclusion after analyzing the legal status of numerous minorities in terms of language:

"Identifying languages as 'dialect' or 'regional dialect' is aimed at eliminating efforts for sovereignty by nations with no power, the argument being that they lack one of the prerequisites of national existence, namely a wholly developed language. Thus nations and peoples having no state are treated as socially handicapped and invisible on the international scene."

The argument that "they speak too many dialects for the state to educate them in their mother tongue" ignores the linguistic human right for all to begin their studies in their mother tongue. The minority education recommendations made by the OSCE in October 1996 stated that "the first few years of education are crucial for the development of children. Education research has shown that the language of education is ideally the mother tongue in pre-school (kindergarten) years. Wherever possible, states should make such a choice available to parents. [...] Research has also shown that the language

of education is ideally the mother tongue in elementary school as well. The minority language must be taught as a subject. The official state language must also be taught as a subject and preferably by bilingual teachers who are very familiar with the cultural and linguistic background of the students. Towards the end of elementary education, some practical or non-theoretical subjects must be taught in the official state language. Wherever possible, states should make such a choice available to parents."

The argument that "they speak too many dialects for the state to educate them in their mother tongue" is not beyond the pale in today's Hungary, so much so that parties sitting in Parliament show barely discernible differences in their attitude to this argument.

As is well known, an Ann Arbor (Michigan, USA) court had to decide in 1979 in the course of an anti-black education discrimination case whether Standard American and Black English Vernacular were in fact two different languages. If they were one language, the case of education discrimination on the basis of language could not apply. A Solomonic judgement followed, in which the judge nevertheless made it mandatory for the Ann Arbor school board to set up in-service training programs to make teachers capable of identifying students who came to school with BEV and of using specially designed methods and materials to teach them the reading of Standard American. When I teach the Ann Arbor case at university, I always end my class with the rhetorical question "Which two variants differ more in linguistic terms: Standard American and Black English Vernacular or standard Hungarian and Romani dialects in Hungary?" The answer is obvious and the conclusion with regard to education rights is sad: some of the Hungarian Gypsies are in a much worse situation than Blacks in America.

Gábor Horn, a Member of Parliament, asks this rhetorical question in his article on the National Core Curriculum: "What about those children who lose every chance for a life of human dignity when they are only 14?" And what about those, I have to add, who lose every chance when they are only 5 or 6 years old?

"Whoever sets up a hierarchy between languages is setting up a hierarchy between people"

Miklós Kontra, linguist

Is the Romani language adequate for covering the whole range of education?

Two things need to be made clear before any further discussion of the statement that the Romani language is inadequate for education. Firstly, it is a statement untenable in terms of human rights. Secondly, it is certainly not an unprecedented view; in fact, the many people voicing it include a number of Hungarian politicians. If somebody made such a statement, one ought to ask what the grounds for the statement were. There would be no answer, as the person voicing this view would be a politician, who knows next to nothing about linguistic matters and does not have a linguistic consultant, so what is left is popular wisdom. In a politician's case this is problematic, because it results in false information being spread, no matter how good the politician's intentions. These politicians are apparently not aware of the fact that, since they have great ethical responsibilities as figures shaping public opinion, they should not make statements until they have consulted and interpreted accessible, public scientific data. "Language Rights and Rights Violations," a study by Tove Skutnabb-Kangas and Robert Phillipson published in the journal *Valóság* in 1997, argues that whenever a state or other form of power calls the language of a given people a dialect, a regional dialect etc., these purportedly linguistic arguments are used to justify the preservation of the existing social hierarchy. Such characterizations serve the purpose of keeping dominated populations in their subordinated positions and rendering them invisible. This is a global phenomenon, by the way. While politicians state that the Romani language is not adequate for covering the whole range of education, a linguist can only form a diametrically opposed view. The difference between the linguist and the politician is that the linguist knows what he is talking about, which is more than what can be said for the politician. From a human rights' perspective, if one says that some languages are adequate for education purposes, while others are not, one is clearly setting up a hierarchy between languages. A language is not an abstraction hovering in the air, but a tool that people use and that belongs to the essence of their humanity. Whoever sets up a hierarchy between languages is setting up a hierarchy between people. If the right to education is a basic human right, how could anyone be restricted in the practice of this basic human right on the basis of language? I can see no difference between Hungarian minority children having to attend monolingual Slovak schools in the Meciar regime and Hungarian Gypsies with non-

Hungarian mother tongues currently having no alternative to studying in Hungarian, a language totally unfamiliar to them. And it is no "excuse" that the technical language for nuclear physics does not exist in Romani, because it would not be a problem if education could begin in the mother tongue and then continue bilingually to finally allow a bilingual Gypsy college student to become a physicist in Hungarian. There are Hungarian politicians who say one should not make analogies between Hungarians in Transylvania and Gypsies in Hungary. This might win political votes, but it is an appalling view from a human rights' perspective. This way of thinking is a selective enforcement of human rights, which goes against the very notion of human rights.

The Hungarian government's position is that there is no point in taking on impracticable obligations with regard to the Romani language; therefore the languages for which they made commitments in the Charter are the ones, where language rights are already in effect.

This is, once again, a question of human rights. What this means is they like human rights when it is easy to guarantee them, but they will not try too hard, when such rights would take an effort. This is a rather strange position, which discriminates between various human groups. Starting school in one's mother tongue is a basic human right. This is probably acknowledged by Hungarian politicians as well. If not, they can read the recommendations of the OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) about the education rights of minorities.

How could you connect the concept of linguisticism with the language discrimination affecting Gypsies in education?

Linguicism is a kind of racism, except it discriminates on the basis of language rather than the color of one's skin. It is discrimination against linguistically defined groups. If István Kemény's 1994 research on Gypsies is correct, the ratio of education between Gypsies with Hungarian mother tongue and with non-Hungarian mother tongue is 2 to 1 in the 25-29 age group. To put it another way, Gypsies with Hungarian mother tongue have been integrated into Hungarian society, since their education statistics are comparable to those of non-Gypsies: one in four fails to finish the eight grades of elementary school. The corresponding number is nearly 50% among Gypsies with non-Hungarian mother tongue. If education and one's ability to sell on the job market are closely connected, this also means that half of the Gypsies with non-Hungarian mother tongue are doomed to be unemployed and will be unemployed their whole life. And

this is done to them by the country which does not let them even start their studies in their mother tongue. Until it is scientifically and soundly proven that Gypsies with Hungarian mother tongue have an IQ of 100 and those with a non-Hungarian mother tongue have one of, say, eighty, we simply cannot presume that the lower level of education among Gypsies with a non-Hungarian mother tongue is unrelated to the language of education. And if we do not presume such a difference in intelligence, the fact that Gypsies with non-Hungarian mother tongues are uneducated is the direct consequence of them being educated in a foreign language.

Endre Tálos and others have said Gypsy children are bilingual and every one of them speaks Hungarian by the time they go to school.

I don't know what grounds Endre Tálos has for this. I do respect him and like him, but one cannot responsibly state such a thing. One could only state this if the Hungarian Gypsies' linguistic state and their knowledge of languages had been reliably and professionally surveyed. Until such a survey is done, there are simply impressions. The notion that Gypsies are bilingual and dominantly Hungarian-speaking is not something invented by Endre Tálos; it can be traced at least to József Vekerdi and it can be read in the 1961 resolution of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. What is shocking is how precisely the spirit of the 1961 party resolution is reproduced in the 1995 National Core Curriculum (NCC). This too speaks of dominantly Hungarian-speaking Gypsies, which is a totally unsubstantiated claim. To start with, 48000 people said in the 1990 census that their mother tongue was Romani. What does this data mean to someone who claims Gypsies are dominantly Hungarian-speaking or bilingual? People who say such things do not even know how they define mother tongue. According to Skutnabb-Kangas, there are four definitions of mother tongue. These four definitions allow for great variety, as one's mother tongue could change even within one's own lifetime, depending on the definition being used. Who determines one's mother tongue is a fundamental question here. Do I determine it for myself or is it determined by others? We should realize that both the party resolution and the NCC have others defining someone's mother tongue or "dominant language." The census has people declaring their own mother tongue. The statement that Hungarian Gypsies are monolingual Hungarian-speaking or bilingual can be acceptable if the definition of bilingualism is similar to the one I use as a linguist. A bilingual person is one who can use more than one language on some level. I can imagine a bilingual Gypsy person (more likely a child than an adult) who knows his/her mother tongue just as people in general know their mother tongue (i.e. perfectly) and has a vague idea what Hungarians are saying; another

person who speaks Hungarian as well as his/her own mother tongue would also count as bilingual. So it is theoretically possible that no Gypsy children start school without speaking Hungarian, but how well do they speak it? Has a professional linguist ever measured this? Is it possible to generalize for every single child? Bilingualism is a very fluid subject, which has been covered extensively by scholars, but people who shape public opinion by their statements know nothing or at least not enough about this scientific literature.

István Kemény's research results have shown extensive language loss among Gypsies, and he even claims that younger generations tend to know the language passively, while speaking Hungarian to each other.

I respect István Kemény very much, but I am not happy about the ways he is sometimes invoked. As a linguist, I feel about some references to his research much like the way I feel about people going for a walk, seeing 6-8 signs in foreign languages and declaring the Hungarian language dead and gone. If there is a rapid language change among Gypsies anyway, the state is doing its best to give a boost to this assimilation, offering to free Gypsies from their self-inflicted ghettoization. This is a widespread slogan too: those fools have locked themselves up in the ghetto of their primitive language, but I, the state, will help them get free if at the cost of depriving them of their mother tongue and their own culture. What if they would have none of it? The non-voluntary giving up of the mother tongue is no dream; it comes at a great price.

It is often said that Gypsies themselves do not request education in Romani.

If this is said by a non-Gypsy, I am not interested to begin with. The question is what the Gypsies themselves are saying. A lot of them probably say they don't want any school except a good Hungarian school. I can even imagine this is the majority. However, I am also sure that more variation would emerge in a representative survey free of the terrible distortion caused by the fact that Gypsies are asked questions by non-Gypsies (i.e. the dominant culture asking questions of the one being oppressed). This is a problem in all research of this sort. If Gypsy people were asked what schools they wanted and they could answer voluntarily, freely and without fear of any potential discrimination, it would obviously not be a case of every single Gypsy wanting an exclusively Hungarian school. Social scientists know this; as for politicians, however politely they phrase their lines, the end result is that assimilation continues.

How would you rate linguistic reasons among the causes for Gypsy children's failures in education?

The greatest problem with the educational careers of Gypsy children is not the fact that 48000 children with non-Hungarian mother tongue cannot be educated in their mother tongue, but the fact that social discrimination is at work and pedagogical decisions are often unprofessional and irresponsible.

What do you think of the efforts to standardize the Romani language?

The fundamental problem is the lack of qualified Gypsy linguists. The well-meaning laymen who deal with the issue inevitably make grave errors. One disastrous error has been, as Zita Réger writes, the introduction of the English-based spelling for Romani. Standardization of Romani or changing its status will not succeed until there are Gypsy linguists. Well-meaning non-Gypsy outsiders can help, but not nearly as much as Gypsy linguists could help. A Gypsy non-linguist intellectual can show enthusiasm and get carried away, but the lack of expertise will more likely create havoc than bring a change for the better.

According to folklorist Melinda Rézműves, language design is the way to make Romani usable in all areas of life.

This is a good term, but I would go even further. Hungary needs a strategy of language policy. That can be followed by the nitty-gritty, such as language design. I don't think it is a good idea to start with someone producing a Hungarian-Romani Dictionary of Chemistry, which would surely look great in a shop window, but would change nothing at all.

