

**Education of Roma/Gypsy children in Europe**

**Training Modules for Teachers in the History,  
Culture and Language of the Roma**



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A European training project on schooling for Roma/Gypsy children  
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Report prepared by Pascale Faure



## Background

The situation of Roma/Gypsy communities is generally poor because of rejection, tensions and conflicts, and this has a crucial impact on children's school attendance.

Attention was called to the economic difficulties facing many European Roma/Gypsies in the results of a report presented on 24 June 2003 by the World Bank.

The report states that "The complex cycle of Roma poverty is one of the most critical remaining issues on the agenda for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe as they prepare for EU membership". Reports from other institutions come to similar conclusions. In this context, school attendance is a major priority since it is synonymous both with independence for Gypsies and with savings in the public sector: the costs of appropriate schooling are way below those of social support which is widely rejected by Roma/Gypsies.

In other words, the future of Gypsy communities depends largely on the conditions of their children's school attendance.

## European agreements

The work being done is underpinned by a variety of instruments adopted by the international institutions, which complement and reinforce one another. Two major statements have been adopted by Ministers of Education, one through the European Union and the other through the Council of Europe: the **Resolution** adopted by the Ministers of Education of the European Union in 1989 and the **Recommendation** adopted by the Ministers of Education of the Council of Europe in 2000.

These two documents are of crucial relevance to the policies pursued to date. For example, in Council of Europe Recommendation (2000)4, the Ministers noted that "the problems faced by Roma/Gypsies in the field of schooling are largely the result of long-standing educational policies of the past, which led either to assimilation or to segregation of Roma/Gypsy children at school on the grounds that they were 'socially and culturally handicapped'".

The Ministers considered "that the disadvantaged position of Roma/Gypsies in European societies cannot be overcome unless equality of opportunity in the field of education is guaranteed for Roma/Gypsy children" and "that **the education of Roma/Gypsy**

**children should be a priority in national policies** in favour of Roma/Gypsies".

It was also pointed out that at its 11th Annual Session held in Berlin from 6 to 10 July 2002, the **Parliamentary Assembly of OSCE** adopted a Resolution on Education for Roma. In its arguments, goals and recommendations, this statement confirms the content of the earlier documents and indeed places still greater emphasis on the discrimination suffered by young Roma/Gypsies, both in everyday life and in education. The wording used is very strong, pointing to the "under-education" which penalises Roma and drags them into a "downward spiral", while "increased access to education will increase the ability of Roma to ensure that their rights are protected and would to participate fully in political processes".

## THE EUROPEAN LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

### **Beyond differences: towards positive co-existence with the Gypsies**

Ania Marchand (France)

The first step towards a positive co-existence, from which everyone would gain, is to go beyond cultural differences and to base inter-personal relations on a mutual awareness of the value of diversity. The relations between Gypsies and mainstream society are typical of this, and examination of them decodes the formative mechanisms of intercultural relations. Thus, numerous initiatives by international organisations aimed at guaranteeing minimum protection for this group point to ways of strengthening the position of Gypsies and respect for their ethnic identity by realising the value of cultural diversity in Europe. In order to give a few examples of good practice and provide a source of inspiration, it is worth giving a brief description of the teaching tools used in the Ecole de la Paix, and in particular of the interactive exhibition "The warpath, or how to avoid it", as a practical illustration of how intercultural education can be applied.

The notion of identity is central to ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity, which is usually defined as the acknowledgement of the plurality of cultures at an international level. This notion gains new significance today in relation to the globalisation and standardisation of lifestyles, since identity is identical for all members of a given group while at the same time unique with reference to other groups. The same applies to the identity of the Gypsies: even though they are scattered across the entire European continent, their identity remains

stable in content, resting on factors such as their Indian origins, their shared historical experiences and their use of the Romani language. Following their development of national consciousness, stimulated by the explosion of minority issues in Eastern Europe, defence of the Gypsy identity takes the specific avenue of claims for national minority status. They demonstrate their national allegiance, which is essential for the award of this status, by using symbols such as a national anthem and a flag. Under the Council of Europe documents, particularly the 1995 Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, this is certainly the most advantageous of all forms of minority status. However, its award remains a highly sensitive issue since governments are fearful of any signs of particularism or separatism.

The protection of minority languages and cultures seems less controversial where it does not involve national minority status. While it is still useful for safeguarding and developing the identity of minority groups, its principles are less threatening and it is more easily accepted by governments. The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, adopted by the Council of Europe in 1992, is quite consistent with this rationale. It complements the Framework Convention by following a more flexible approach and sets out to protect and promote the languages of minority groups through administrative, educational and cultural measures. It is also the only binding document to date addressing the issue of the non-territoriality of certain minorities and thus protecting Romani. This Council of Europe legal framework is reinforced and enriched by the initiatives and instruments of other institutions, such as the European Union's European Year of Languages or the UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity, dating from 2001. This policy direction covers Gypsies, whose language and culture are officially recognised as belonging to the European heritage. It would seem to meet their main interests by strengthening the key elements of their identity.

An examination of the other international initiatives and instruments to protect languages and cultures, both those of a more general nature (such as the Resolutions of the European Parliament) and those concerned specifically with the Gypsy minority (such as UNESCO's support to the standardisation of Romani), confirms their contribution to improving the position of Gypsies in Europe. The promotion of diversity is starting to bring about positive changes where they are concerned by having their customs and way of life, contrasting with those of the population at large, acknowledged as the expression of an identity worthy of respect for its enrichment of Europe's cultures. Thus it adds to the resources pitted against the prejudices that are

the root cause of the violation of Gypsies' fundamental rights. As one such resource, promotion of cultural diversity will nevertheless be effective only within an overall, multi-context strategy centred on positive co-existence. In particular, it should not be forgotten that full integration of Gypsies calls for two-way understanding with the surrounding society, and that the trends observed at the international level will only be reflected in everyday life if mainstream society is lastingly convinced of the value and richness of their identity. It is therefore necessary to make the public appreciate this population's problems and realise the richness of its culture.

Hence it is also necessary to develop education for peace and training to live side by side for everyone from childhood. This is the role of the Ecole de la Paix, a voluntary association according to the Law of 1901 formed in 1998 in Grenoble with the aim of furthering more peaceful relations at local, regional, national and international level through activities centred on educational promotion, research and mediation. In particular, the association designs and produces interactive educational tools and activities and delivers them to teachers, socio-educational bodies and local authorities. One of these tools, the exhibition "The warpath and how to avoid it", offers an instructional and recreational sequence encouraging 10-14 year olds to become aware of what is meant by prejudice, discrimination, rumour and scapegoating. It takes about an hour and a half to go round the exhibition, which takes up 200 m<sup>2</sup> and consists of 8 display boards presenting the various topics. Children view it in teams of two or three, with the help of a "passport" serving both as a guide to the various activities and as a logbook. Thus, by encouraging visitors to gain self-insight from their own experiences and helping them look for solutions which involve respect for others, the value of dialogue and the importance of everyone participating in community life, the educational tools of the Ecole de la Paix give the current directions of European policy on human rights an everyday, localised expression.

## HISTORY

### **The history of the Roma from a Western European point of view** Thomas Acton (United Kingdom)

It is far from easy to give a reading of the history of the Roma in the West. Indeed, how to grasp what Western Europe is from one's personal vantage point is the question for the discussant. This is a problem since one always stands at a particular point of history.



History is constantly changing, being revised and rewritten even as it unfolds and producing different perspectives. I shall therefore talk about how to tell history's tale, read history and teach history.

From a theoretical point of view, it is necessary to abandon illusions, to deconstruct, to doubt, and to combine readings of history with readings of history teaching. History is a complex juxtaposition of different levels, which may be scrutinised in terms of the following questions:

History: what happened?

Historiography: how should what happened be told?

Critical historiography: how should what we say be explained?

But other, further levels of analysis may be added:

History of critical historiography: how have our explanations changed?

Historiography of critical historiography: how should the changes in our explanations be described?

Critical historiography of critical historiography: how should our descriptions of the changes in our descriptions be explained?

The answers to each question generate in turn the different modes of history.

## **History**

What we call the history of the Roma changes very rapidly, as is evident from three examples:

-The explanation given for the genocide in England in the 16th century

- Post-modern forms of Roma identity (Willems, Lucassen, Okely, Nemeth)

- Linguistic theories on the late arrival of the Roma in Europe.

- **Laws condoning the genocide in 16th century England**

The explanation that used to be given for the genocide directed against the Roma after they had been living in the country for fifty years is construed as a reaction against their practices and personalities ("foreigners", not members of the Church, etc). According to the new explanation, the genocide was the consequence of economic and political changes in England (involving eradication of anything "foreign" etc).

Is the second explanation in any way better? It merely explains why the genocide happened in 1540 rather than in 1490! Can documents be relied on for the facts?

- Post-modern forms of the Roma identity

The explanation used to be based on Indian origin. In the new explanation, Grellman stands out as the great illusionist: the “ethnic” essence is replaced by cultural determinism. Revision of history occurs here too. Why is this new analysis better? It invalidates deep-seated racism as an explanation.

So why is it inadequate? It is not apparent to anyone unacquainted with linguistics or the Romani language.

- The latest linguistic theory approach

The explanation used to be that the Roma split from the Doma before they arrived in Armenia and reached the Balkans round about 900–1000 AD. The new explanation says that the Roma and the Doma were parallel tribes whose exoduses occurred some 200-300 years apart (9th and 11th centuries), and that this military exodus from India created a lasting socio-political identity out of different borrowings in different contexts by peoples whom different exoduses divided from each other.

Why is this new explanation better?

- it meshes with the linguistic differences between Romani and Domari

- this may explain why the Balkan Gypsies long eschewed the Roma identity: Doma and Roma in the Balkans could not identify with one another since they had different histories.

- What do teachers need to know?

At the present time, teachers need to be familiar with readings that contradict the former ones. Facts are nothing but strongly argued opinions. But the structures of reality make it possible to transcend particular doctrines and perceived cultures. What is more, the Roma can help non-Gypsies to deconstruct what they have believed for 500 years about “nations”.

## **The Second World War**

### **Historical facts about the Roma during the Nazi regime**

Herbert Heuss (Germany)

Teaching anything about minorities (history, culture, politics) means that something is taught and learned about the majority too. In the discussant’s opinion, moreover, this dimension of knowledge about the majority, about ourselves, is important and indeed a prerequisite for understanding inter-group and majority-minority interactions and hence the fate of the European Roma under the Nazi regime.

In Mr Heuss's paper, the term Gypsy is employed as the direct translation of the word *Zigeuner* occurring throughout the sources: in German, the word *Zigeuner* has extremely pejorative connotations for the Roma minority, especially during the Nazi period. This is in fact one of the problems presented by the sources: recurrences of exclusion, discrimination and persecution have a long history, and the language used in the documents held by local and government archives (of police, local authority, institutional, social service and other authorship) is always the same and demonstrates the entrenchment of anti-Gypsy images, resentment and stereotypes.

### **The facts**

The author has highlighted three aspects of the process of radicalising exclusion of the Roma in Germany, especially what was known as the *Asozialen-Aktion*, or action against anti-social elements, in 1938. He demonstrates the need for accurate scrutiny of what happened.

- In March 1938, a memorandum from Himmler prompted the announcement to local authorities that the "Gypsy question" included all final solution initiatives along racial lines. The policy of deporting Roma then began. The first special action was aimed at the "inactive" who were capable of working in the concentration camps, but was not at first directed at the Gypsies, or the Jews, since the productive labour targets related to people belonging to the majority, the *Volksgemeinschaft* (community).
- However, the subsequent deportation for work targeted the Jews, to whom were added the Roma and Sinti: classification as a Jew or a Gypsy then became a sufficient condition for internment, rather than social situation or behaviour.
- For the members of the national community, even the Nazis offered plenty of opportunities for reintegration into the *Volksgemeinschaft*, subject of course to probation, the consequence in case of failure being the concentration camp and extermination. But under the rules of the Third Reich, the Jews and the Gypsies lost all their rights. Their behaviour was not an issue since Jews and Gypsies, under the Nuremberg Laws, were by definition not part of the national community. As a result, while citizens had the chance of being reintegrated, the laws provided that Gypsies and Jews had absolutely no rights and could be destroyed – not on grounds of behaviour but simply for belonging to an alien race.

## **The facts about the victims and the individual facts about the perpetrators**

Teaching about the history of the fate of the Roma in Europe goes beyond the simple issue of knowledge. Learning uncovers facts, disclosing what is behind the facts: the individuals involved, their feelings, their outlooks, their chances of survival and their oppositions, accommodations and inclinations towards the Nazis.

This dimension, at one remove from knowledge of facts, ranks equally or higher in importance to the interpretation of historical facts. Questions come thick and fast: What could the population do? How could they resist? When should they have resisted? How can evidence be found?

This means that it is necessary to shift the focus from the level of central government to the local level where people actually live.

There are two choices: the Nazi regime was not merely a huge, shadowy, bestial machine impossible to resist. Orders could be ignored, though, and administrative measures manipulated. The extermination of the Sinti and Roma depended on the co-operation of numerous institutions: civil status and employment registers, the police and the Churches, social and health services, schools and orphanages. Above all, people co-operated and very few took no notice or resisted.

Lastly, there is the role of the racialist sciences.

## **The history of the Gypsies in France: the question of sources**

Emmanuel Filhol (France)

Although regarded as pariahs, the Gypsies living in France have been on record for centuries in various sources. This paper seeks to review some of the most important sources dealing with the history of the Gypsy society in France and also enquires into the silence about the two terrible episodes of the internment of Gypsies in French camps during the two World Wars.

There are many written sources setting out the history of "Egyptians", "Bohemians" and "Nomads". Much can be learnt about the various periods concerned, from the end of the Middle Ages to the present day, from the B, E, M and Z series available in the departmental and

municipal archives. Other sources should not be overlooked: discursive texts, dictionaries and encyclopedias, and the press, not to mention visual sources, especially the Fi series of photographs in departmental archives, literary documents and musical works (opera and songs) and film. Of course, here it is necessary to compare with sources emanating directly from Gypsy groups themselves in order to appreciate the discrepancies and contradictions between the Gypsy world and the non- Gypsy vision of it.

During the two World Wars, French Gypsies were subjected to a policy of discrimination and repression: between July 1915 and July 1919, “Romany from Alsace-Lorraine” were interned in Western France, before being assembled in Crest (Drôme); later, this happened to all “nomadic” travellers who were interned in whole families under the Vichy Government and the Occupation. Yet despite the eye-witness accounts of the victims and the camp archives, this persecution of Gypsy minorities still remains practically unknown today. In school textbooks and in the communes where the camps were set up, and at national level, remembrance of these traumatic events is with few exceptions totally absent.

**A history of silence: memories of internment in a French Manouche community** *Jean Luc Poueyto (France)*  
**History or memory**

Our culture accepts history’s wager of depicting the past: “There is history because there is a past and a particular infatuation with it.” By virtue of being written down, history is transformed from invisible time to a visible “object” in space. Writing is therefore a phenomenon which, in the case of historiography, allows time to be transformed into space, to be visualised by signifying it in terms of space.

But if there is to be a past, there has to be a break between that past and the present, between the living and the dead, which is not so in the Manouche culture. This does not mean that there is no representation of the past, but rather that the past is not a matter for speculation. To cite the antithesis suggested by Pierre Nora, the past is not in history but in memory: “History is the ever problematic and an incomplete reconstruction of what is no more,” adding that “Memory is a process of constant immediacy, a bond lived with in the everlasting present”.

## **Between silence and historical representation**

This has made it possible to apprehend that the threat of internment or any other disaster is ever-present for the Manouche of the Pau region. This point of view, perhaps disproportionate at first sight, nevertheless seems vindicated by the surrounding reality in which racist statements may be made about them in public without repercussions, and in which a policy of control and confinement still treats them as a separate and always and suspect class of citizen. In this respect, then, their status has barely changed in a century. But right inside the community, silence about the departed creates a perception of the past that is very different from ours. While distinct from each other, the past and the present often become interwoven. What has happened may yet happen at any moment, and at the same time memory continually touches upon what is forgotten.

This representation of the past belongs to the realm of “what has been”. But how is this terrifying “what”, which persists as an unspoken threat, to be passed on? How can mute memory withstand oblivion? Above and beyond an unspoken and still enigmatic transmission of such events, part of the answer lies in the fact that the Manouches do not live in isolation from the world of non-Gypsies (Gaje). They have been fully part of it for at least five centuries. Patrick Williams demonstrated recently that it was because the Gaje had praised and recorded Django Reinhardt, to the displeasure of the Manouche community, that he did not sink into obscurity but paradoxically became the musical icon within the community. In relation to the Manouche internment and deportation, I seem to grasp a similar phenomenon: the violence of the Gaje imposed a historical perception of this event on them from without, via television, books and bald statements. In some way, genealogical anonymity, silence about the departed and absence of history, perhaps the very stuff of Manouche identity (if there is one), is nurtured in spite of everything, albeit very meagrely, by Gaje historiography. As though this memory always on the verge of extinction had to be continually reactivated and prodded by Gaje historiography, in order that the community may reunite in reverent silence around its absent yet ever-present dead and hence around its own essence. As though truth could only be honoured by silence, a silence nonetheless only meaningful by contrast to the tiresome but indispensable chatter of the Gaje.

## **Summary of working group discussions on the theme of history**

Martina Hornakova

The conclusions of the various working groups on the theme of history fall into two types: the more general and the more specific.

### **Part A**

- 1- It is very important to stress first of all the gap between the identification and definition of Roma/Gypsy groups by academics (“research”) and by the groups themselves.
  - 2- The impossibility of bringing uniformity to the approach of all Roma/Gypsy groups give rise to complexity when deciding to deal with a subject such as history – there can be no generalisations, and this diversity of Roma/Gypsies has to be acknowledged and expressed in class, so that it is even more necessary to work with specific groups than with a “Gypsy” aggregate.
  - 3- Before tackling the subject of history, it is necessary to discuss stereotypes and to question negative perceptions – where does the negative image come from? Furthermore, it is impossible to talk about history without taking into account the different elements of culture, language, etc.
- ⇒ History is important, but not the only priority subject. It must be used as an “analytical filter” and not just as a source of knowledge.

### **Part B**

#### **1- *The place of the Roma/Gypsy history module***

The history of the various Roma/Gypsy groups must be fitted into general history – this history is therefore not to be conceived as a special subject to be taught to Roma/Gypsy children, but written into ordinary school textbooks.

#### **2- *The content of the history module***

- a) Themes

Some themes emerged as priority items to be addressed in this module with reference to what are regarded as the most important historical events.

A series of “essential” events was therefore listed: for example, the origins, the genocides, the galleys, the deportations, the Gypsy raids in Spain, slavery, the First World War period, the Second World War, the internment camps in France, etc.

It is necessary to invoke the most important events which have occurred in the different countries (in the case of a transnational history).

Next, topic sheets can discuss these events according to the following themes:

- Common origin
- Slavery
- Confinement
- Extermination
- The fascination exerted at first on the surrounding population by the Roma/Gypsies
- Exclusion and marginalisation throughout history
- Assimilation/Settlement
- Migration
- Appreciation of Roma/Gypsy culture (their contribution to world civilisation)

These themes must be developed, taking differences of attitude into account according to the public authorities and social groups concerned.

A technical/methodological sheet must also be devised (showing for example how to use sources such as national archives).

b) In addition:

- History may be distorted, and that is why it is necessary, as well as teaching history, to teach history teaching method, which will bring out the relativity of history.
- It must be taught that history is provisional and continually redefined.
- With respect to the two points above, actual examples need to be given so as to break down the facts generally



accepted as amounting to “true” history, thus relativising the approach.

- The groups affected by history must not be seen only as victims: teaching should not just cover the negative events in which these groups of the population have been involved, but positive occurrences should be shown as well.

#### c) Development of modules

The history curriculum should be drawn up in collaboration with the groups concerned (involving families and Roma/Gypsy NGOs).

#### 4- *The tools*

Books, school textbooks, videos, book lists – the subject was not explored in any greater detail by participants.

#### 4- *A few additional notes*

- Teachers cannot be trained well unless teaching about the history of Roma/Gypsies is expanded at university level – Master’s or PhD degrees in Roma/Gypsy history.
- Families should be allowed to take part in courses.
- A practical example from England, where a voluntary association has been bringing Roma/Gypsies and non-Gypsies together for the last ten years to work on genealogy (investigating one’s own identity).
- An important point to note: participants asked that the pejorative definition of Roma/Gypsies should be removed from dictionaries.

## CULTURE

### **Training for Roma teachers and mediators: options and themes**

Diana Kirilova (Bulgaria)

#### **The origin and history of the Roma**

A knowledge of the origins and history of the Roma allows teachers to understand their current situation better and to work more effectively with the Roma children in their classes. Roma children who hear the teacher talk to them about their origins and history in class will be far more motivated to go to school and learn.

The young Roma mediators can find out about the lives of their forebears and their own history – many Roma are not aware of their origin and history, which has been so full of sorrows (**the Holocaust**) – and to explain it to other Roma.

### **The importance of the family unit and children’s education**

The lifestyle of a Roma family is not the same as that of the majority: it is important to be aware of family structure and to know how parents educate their children. It is vital to show Roma families that teachers are interested in them and want to get to know them, in order to motivate the Roma and build trust in the majority.

For young mediators, a knowledge of this theme is not meaningful or important in the same way as for teachers, since they live with it from day to day, but hearing it from someone else is worthwhile for them: it is difficult for people to reflect on their everyday lives from the “inside”. This gave the mediators present food for thought about themselves, and a certain detachment.

### **Roma women**

Roma women play a most important part in the community, being the driving force not only of the family but also overall whenever changes occur. Their role is crucial, not just in passing on language but also in culture. Firstly, female teachers can compare their lifestyle with that of Roma women. Secondly, they may find out about the peculiarities of Roma women, since their work with Roma children is closely connected with the mothers. It is then easier to establish contact with the family as a whole.

During the discussions, the mediators were able to express their opinions on various points. The Roma girls said: “Things don’t have to be like that, that’s got to change,” and so on.

### **The Romani language**

Attention needs to be given to the Romani language’s origin and structural development into different dialects, and to Romani literature, with reference to its major authors in the world and their work. Alongside this theme, a description of the different groups of Roma makes it possible to distinguish the variations in their lifestyles, traditions and dialects. For young mediators, this is also a way of finding out about groups with which they are not familiar.

## **Childhood, youth, adulthood and old age**

It is important to develop this theme of different ages among the Roma in explaining how life proceeds at each age, and to try to show up the differences.

Teachers can find out how the Roma organise their lives and what they regard as priorities in order to make their lives easier, not only with children but also with the Roma population in general (parents and grandparents).

These presentations do not teach the mediators anything new but enable them to reflect on their lives, to express their opinions and to discuss with others.

## **Traditions, culture, rites and religion**

An awareness of Roma traditions, rites and religion helps in acknowledging the values of Roma culture. Respect for values can make it easier to work with the population, and of course the results are not then the same: openness to a new culture is indispensable in working with such a population. There needs to be adaptation on both sides, and the Roma must also make efforts to get to know the culture of the others, of the “Gaje”.

This cultural approach for young mediators, now more open-minded, enables them to accept changes more easily. By thinking more about their culture, traditions and rites, they can distinguish more clearly between what good and not so good, what to discard and retain.

## **The picture throughout the world today**

The traditional occupations and trades with their distinctive traits make it possible to link the past with the present. Talking about the current situation in Europe brings out all the positive as well as negative things which still being done to Roma today, by giving definite examples as regards level of education, their economic situation and the other problems facing them. The public have the opportunity to expand their knowledge and to gain a broader vision in a wider context: the opportunity to compare the Roma in other countries, and to distinguish between the ways of life of the Roma in countries of Eastern and Western Europe.

**Gypsy women – Traditions and rites** *Olga Mariano (Portugal)*  
**The role of Gypsy women in bringing up children**

Gypsy women start caring for children very young. At around ten years of age, Gypsy girls are already regarded by the (often very large) families as capable of taking care of younger brothers and sisters while the mother is away from home for business or personal reasons. This is one of the designated causes of absenteeism and school failure among Gypsy children (especially girls). Through this responsibility placed on them, girls begin to turn into future mothers and housewives with all the duties involved (housekeeping, washing, cooking, childcare, etc).

As wives, they are assigned the role of looking after the upbringing and welfare of the children and the family, the father almost always remaining a spectator and head of the family with the responsibility of helping to maintain the family financially. In order to retain their respect, fathers seldom talk to their children i.

**Education within Gypsy families**

Within the family, the grandparents, uncles and aunts, brothers and sisters share in bringing up the children, but it is the mother who has the main responsibility.

At the birth of the first child, a Gypsy couple almost always already has its own home, and the child begins to be an integral part of the new couple's family, experiencing all its joys and sorrows. One of the first joys is doubtless to sleep with the parents even though the child has his or her own bed. Children are breast-fed, so that they grow up healthier and are stronger and more content. The length of breast-feeding varies, depending on whether another child arrives to take the place of the first, usually after two years. Similarly, the habit of sleeping with the parents wears off in time. Control of the sphincters varies from child to child, but generally takes two to three years.

**Age differences – from 7 to 17 years**

It is generally the mother who gives orders to a girl. Perhaps because they are used to being asked to do things by the women in their families, girls adjust better than boys to school discipline when they reach school age, since the image of the mistress carries on from that of their mothers, inspiring trust and a sense of protection. For the boys, the reverse is true. At that age, they only receive orders from

their fathers, whom they usually accompany in their occupational and other activities.

### **Bereavement**

Bereavement is felt deeply by the whole family. If it is the husband who dies, a Gypsy woman lives in mourning for the rest of her life with all the consequences: hair cut, scarf worn on head and shoulders, low-heeled shoes and well-worn long skirts to conceal the outline of her body; she is absent from social events, in the family and outside, and for the first year must visit the cemetery every day. If it is the wife who dies, the husband must wear a hat and may not cut his hair, also having to wear mourning for the rest of his life.

After the death of a mother or father, a son or daughter, or a brother or sister, the rule may vary from one to three years. In the case of grandparents, mourning may last from 6 months to a year. These are of course rules and every rule has its exceptions.

### **Marriage**

When a Gypsy girl is old enough for betrothal (between 14 and 18 years of age), the family spends a considerable amount of money on her, buying her dresses, shoes, jewellery, etc. All this investment (depending in part on the financial capacity of the family) is well-spent since the girl's future is improved by giving her the ability to find a rich husband who can give her the wished-for rise in social status. It should be remembered that a Gypsy girl will only marry the suitor of her choice. Even though he may have the approval of the family, she has the last word. The opposite applies to boys, who have to marry; otherwise serious conflicts may arise between families.

### **The place of Roma women and their role in preserving the language**

Silvia Naidenova (Bulgaria)

Being Roma herself, the speaker felt she could clearly present the different aspects of the Roma woman's place in the family and her role in preserving the language. Learning one's mother tongue is a fundamental human right, and is guaranteed by the Constitution. But the right of Roma to learn their mother tongue is violated in that the Romani language is not studied in any school curriculum and is confined to their culture. She wished to show clearly how the Romani language is passed on from generation to generation, and the nature

of Roma women's role in this process. The social class in which women live is also very important.

### **Families in the ghettos**

The role of Roma women in the lowest social classes is to fight for survival.

In most cases, the women are unemployed, usually have more than five children, and live in abject poverty. These Roma families live on the fringes of housing estates in ghettos without sanitation and water. Women of this type are deprived of all rights within their families, to put it bluntly, because most are illiterate, do not work and have none of the family's budgetary resources at their disposal. And if they have a job, they are unskilled and earn low wages in jobs such as basket-weaving, agricultural labour, animal husbandry or other activities such as fortune-telling, but increasingly live on welfare benefits. These Roma women do not regard the education of their children as a priority because they received no education themselves. They speak Bulgarian very badly and think that the Romani language must be preserved as the mother tongue and learnt before any other language; in order to preserve it, they start speaking Romani with their children when they are very young. The children of these Roma women do not communicate with the children of the majority because of the language barrier. These women do not speak to them in the majority language even in public places.

### **The middle class**

Women who belong to the middle class have a good standard of general education. They work especially in dress-making, ironing or other such jobs. They have two or three children and voluntarily live in housing estates on the edges of the ghettos. They regard education as necessary and motivate their children to get on at school, at least in the normal schools attended by the majority. In this case, it can be observed that the Romani language cohabits with the majority language; Romani is spoken at home with the aim of preserving it as the mother tongue, and the language of the majority is used at school and at work. In these families, the women have realised that mixing with the majority is a necessary plus for the development of their children.

This section of Roma women is better situated and better integrated than the group described above. In their case, discrimination arises from the fact that Roma women only have authority over children and

the management of the home; in the wider society, they have no access to institutional affairs or decision-making. It is only the difference in social status and intellectual level that make these women feel different from the first group, and the two groups sometimes reject one another.

### **The higher social classes**

Taking the example of a more modern Roma family, about which not much is said, it can be seen that the women stand out from the rest. There are not many of them, but they do exist, and Bulgarian statistical data consistently put Roma women with a university degree at one per cent of the population. These women are convinced that education is important and necessary for development and change; they teach their children primarily to speak the official language of the country, and the Romani language is neglected. These women sometimes feel uncomfortable both among Roma and among the majority: among Roma because of their position, and among the majority because of their ethnic background.

As a whole, Roma women do what they can to pass on something to the future generations because they do not want what was done for them to be recorded one day in their history, rather than what was done by them. That is why all Roma women in Bulgaria, despite their social, material and intellectual differences, want change, and we consider that this will be brought about by the creation of a multifunction centre. This centre will be equipped with modern European facilities, comprising consultation services and social enterprise services (social, legal and health services, education and family planning).

### **Khetane – A CD-Rom for working on Gypsy culture from an intercultural perspective, *Xavier Lluch (Spain)***

#### **Our theoretical approach to work on cultural diversity:**

How to use the Khetane CD-Rom:

- the theoretical teaching model is intercultural education.
- the best method and medium for dealing with Gypsy culture in schools is not special, exclusive teaching. It is better to incorporate Gypsy culture, history and language into the ordinary curriculum: we have to work with the materials in the syllabus and the ordinary books.

- the topics in the syllabus need to be explained in all their complexity, from a variety of cultural perspectives. That is how multicultural skills should be offered.

The teaching experience of the working group shows that the best way to work with the Gypsy people is intercultural activities with all pupils with, of course, special materials that may help to explain and improve understanding of cultural diversity, thereby including the Gypsy community.

### **The Khetane CD-Rom**

- **General description and aims:**

This material may be used in a variety of ways:

The main aim is to help to introduce Gypsy culture into the development of the ordinary curriculum. No special treatment should be used (such as “Diversity Days”, “Peace Days”, etc). The aim is to make this material dealing with Gypsy culture (like other cultures) a normal part of existence.

Another aim is to suggest subsequent developments based on this material (teaching guidelines, lists of materials, bibliography, etc).

A third aim is to suggest activities for independent work by pupils and teachers.

- **Structure**

*History:* 12 themes with brief texts. The texts are carefully written (it was a very long process to write them, involving consultation with Gypsies and specialists in history, anthropology, sociology and so on).

*Culture:* also 12 themes with brief texts. The same procedure as for history.

*Stories.* A story for children also offering a cultural content: where Gypsies came from, their background, their understanding of life, and the importance of the family and of staying together, in three languages: Catalan, Spanish and Romani. There are teaching guidelines for working on the story: a syllabus with aims and suggested activities building on the cultural content: the family, travelling, nomadism, work, contact with nature, etc.



*Cartoon stories:* each of 7 stories also contains cultural themes: family, habitat and place of residence, school, work, festivals, solidarity, language and customs. There are teaching guidelines for work on the stories (a chapter on teaching resources): a syllabus with aims and suggested activities for making use of the cultural content.

*Language.* There are 12 situations introducing the basic vocabulary and conventional, ordinary, everyday expressions. Some of the obvious vocabulary of cultural features has been added (eg the family, food, etc) in three languages Catalan, Spanish and Romani.

*Activities.* For independent work by pupils and teachers (at a higher level than pupils). Entertaining and other activities building on the cultural content of previous chapters.

*Teaching resources.*

- The story and cartoons. Syllabus of content and activities for working on the stories.
- Materials for working on Gypsy culture.
- Training programme for teachers in intercultural education

Bibliography and resources (studies of Gypsy history and culture, books for children and young people, legislation in Europe, Spain and its minorities, racism, xenophobia, etc; and websites.

*Visual documents:* A set of photographs, drawings, and old and historic documents.

### ***Summary of working group discussions on the theme of culture***

Delphine Bruggeman

**First stage:** a number of ideas were put forward during the discussions in the three working groups about the theme of culture:

- Training in Roma/Gypsy culture(s) must form part of more general discussion about culture (definition of concepts, philosophical orientation, etc) and about its various roles in society and at school:
  - in order to bring out the notion of ethnocentrism,
  - and to make teachers aware of their prejudices, perceptions and stereotypes.
- Training should also be associated with consideration of how the education system operates, and more specifically of school and

the place of the child in school, in order to discuss how differences can be accommodated at school for the following purposes:

- to also highlight cultural similarities and not only differences, since too much stress on the latter may make people forget that Roma/Gypsy children are first and foremost children capable of learning like any others;
- to define or redefine intercultural education and teaching;
- to change the mentalities of teachers who think that catering for

Roma/Gypsy children always creates an extra burden and problems. Without minimising the sometimes difficult working conditions in schools, it must also be demonstrated that different cultural dynamics use can be harnessed and made an asset to class;

- to discuss questions of flexibility and rigidity in school

- There is also a clear need to examine respect for and knowledge of Roma/Gypsy culture introspectively:

- in order to avoid exaggerated artificial “ethnicisation”;
- in order to distinguish what can be classed as useful information from mere inquisitiveness: not all aspects of Roma/Gypsy culture are necessarily suitable for transmission to teachers (private vs. public spheres – the notion of a boundary not to be crossed);
- in order to present the aspects of culture which are most important in the school context and enable teachers to understand and respect Roma/Gypsy children better;
- in order to understand that concentrating on the specific runs the risk of accentuating differences and stigmatising these children all the more;
- in order to take into account the wishes of some families, who do not want their socio-cultural characteristics accentuated in school and would rather be treated “like the others”

**Second stage:** three levels of proposed content and priorities for the development of training modules emerged from the discussions:

- Training in intercultural education, with reference to what has been said above
- Training in Roma/Gypsy culture focusing on key aspects of the themes to be determined in agreement and partnership with Roma/Gypsy contributors, varying in accordance with the European social and educational context

Among the themes should be mentioned: the diversity of groups and lifestyles, family structure, the place of the child and family upbringing, relationships with the outside world (with time, space, objects) etc.

It was also considered necessary to present these different factors in the context of their surroundings, highlighting the issue of adaptation among Roma/Gypsy populations.

- Tools for teachers:

- so that they can identify for themselves the most important factors to be taken into account in managing communications with children and parents;

- discussing opportunities for partnership with Roma/Gypsy mediators in order to work with families and overcome prejudices;

- working for example on the impact of the media which contribute to the development of perceptions

- also providing information about the perceptions of the Roma regarding school and school education.

**Final points of a general nature:** information about culture is merely one part of training in its true sense. It is necessary to go further than knowledge and make the different cultures driving forces of teaching practice. A consequence of the considerations is the issue of how teachers can use their knowledge and turn it to account in working with the children. One question was raised on this point: to think out training in Roma/Gypsy culture, history and language, is it not also necessary to think about its implications and subsequent classroom applications?

## LANGUAGE

### **The success of the Romanian model of education for Roma and the teaching of Romani as a mother tongue**

Gheorge Sarau (Romania)

Unlike other countries, even before 1990 there was traditionally a special branch of the Ministry of Education and the education system in Romania for the teaching of minority languages, and there were optional weekly courses on the language and literature of the various mother tongues. each having a tradition of educational practice (Hungarian, Slovak, Serbian, Ukrainian, Russian, Turkish, Bulgarian, Croat, Tartar, Greek etc). After 1990, the Ministry extended this

educational choice of minority languages to other minorities and ethnic groups.

### **Keywords and strategic principles**

From 1998 onwards, the Romanian Ministry of Education realised that the issue of the teaching of Romani and school attendance by Roma children could no longer be addressed in the same way as before. Despite all the good results mentioned above concerning the study of Romani as a mother tongue, a new approach to teaching for the Roma was necessary.

- *The first principle* was that the system had to operate using its own resources, or in other words, the teaching of Roma had to become a system that would provide teachers mainly from within the Roma ethnic group itself.
- *The second principle* aimed at moving away from an educational curriculum for the Roma population about which the beneficiaries, the Roma themselves, were not consulted, which demonstrated the scant respect for that population. The slogan underlying these two principles was the obligation to work “with the Roma population for the Roma population”.
- *The third principle* focused on expanding and improving educational choice for the Roma population, so that it went beyond the responsibilities of the Minorities Department (teaching in mother tongues) and took into account all age groups of the Roma population (preschool, primary, lower secondary, upper secondary and university), while also providing alternative educational arrangements for young people and adults who had left school at least three years before and wished to take or repeat primary or secondary education courses.
- *The fourth principle* was to reconsider the educational benefits offered by Roma and non-Roma non-governmental organisations running home study and distance re-enrolment projects. The Ministry and the entire school network (preschool, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary) set out to act as partners developing and implementing educational projects for the Roma population.
- *Finally, the fifth principle* was to re-examine the idea of “integration”. For example, many non-Roma who approve of social and educational support for the Roma have an unfortunate view of these actions as involuntary assimilation, saying, “Of course, of course, it’s fine to help with the eventual aim of integrating them” (and this no doubt reflects widespread

ignorance of the problems of the Roma population rather than reluctance). In consequence, the idea is not full integration (since the dangerous notion of assimilation co-exists in the sub-conscious) but “differential integration” meaning that policies directed at Roma (chiefly in the field of education) need to be refined and matched to the values and lifestyle of the Roma, in consultation with the groups concerned.

### **Strategic programmes of the Ministry of Education**

Mention may be made of some of the actions and measures put in place by the Ministry of Education for Roma:

- 1- Expansion of the annual programme of allocating special places for Roma candidates in universities and colleges on the basis of minimum criteria in the entrance examination.
- 2- Expansion of teaching of Romani language and literature at university level by creating a special section of the Faculty of Foreign Languages at the University of Bucharest.
- 3- Introduction of a programme of training for untrained Roma teachers (with only upper secondary qualifications but no university degree) so that they can teach in distance education, with a specialisation in both school-teaching and Romani language teaching.
- 4- Recruitment and preliminary training of Roma teachers with first university degrees.
- 5- A few NGOs are developing programmes for non-Roma teaching staff working with Roma students in order to encourage them to view them with greater compassion and understanding. As a result, they take into account the emotional and psychological factors which are very intense among Roma children and are generally regarded as a serious, sensitive issue. NGOs such as Education Centre 2000+ , Save the Children, Romani CRISS and Unicef run these advisory centres for both teachers and the parents of Roma children in school.

### ***Summary of working group discussions on the theme of language***

Vincent Ritz

**Following the plenary sessions, a number of different ideas were put forward:**

- It is necessary that “Gypsies” should know the language of the country in which they live.

- The priority is not always to learn Romani but the majority language: for some people, fulfilment entails learning the majority language since this will be more useful in finding a job.
- Some groups refuse to learn or speak their language at school since it belongs to the private sphere. Some families therefore do not approach teachers on this issue.
- Just because a language is not widespread, this does not mean that it does not exist.
- Nonetheless, the Romani language may not be ignored in schools, particularly in preschools where there are children who do not speak the majority language. In such cases, teachers need to know a few words in order to communicate.
- Some groups wish to give priority to the teaching of the Romani language.
- There is a call for standardisation of the language in some countries so that the Romani language can be understood by all.
- It is necessary to ask what skills should be encouraged among teachers (in respect of oral expression, writing, etc). They must define their needs.
- There is a need to train teachers, to include language in their training, and to adopt a basic vocabulary approach.
- It would also seem necessary to understand how the syntax of the Romani language(s) is constructed in order to have a better understanding of the difficulties that children may face in learning the majority language.

These highly contrastive views reveal differing positions among “Gypsies” as to whether their language is used or not, depending on the context and the various educational issues that obtain in each country.

It would therefore appear that a number of aspects might be explored in relation to the **training of teachers in the area of language**, in the form of general information illustrating the history, diversity and differences in status of the Romani languages from a linguistic and social standpoint, depending on the country:

#### 1 – *Knowledge of the Romani language*

- definitions, origins
- classification
- aspects of sociology and ethnology

#### 2- *Knowledge of the language*

- linguistic training
- structure of the language
- codification

- better knowledge and understanding of the language in relation to learning the majority language (the cognitive difficulties this may pose to children)

### 3- *Learning of the language*

- determining needs: For the teacher's own personal education? For use in class? So that it can be taught to children?

- determining the skills to be developed in the teacher: Understanding written language? Oral language? In what kinds of situation?

### 4- *Creation of methodological tools: (learning method):*

- popular songs, nursery rhymes, books, videos, etc, materials on the cultural heritage of the different groups and nationalities (cf. ethnomusicology)

- using the various dialects as different ways into the languages.

## **GOOD PRACTICE**

### **EURROM: Integration of Roma/Gypsy culture into education**

Calin Rus (Romania)

COMENIUS Project (1998 – 2001) - Romania – France – Spain – Slovakia.

Coordinator: Intercultural Institute of Timisoara.

### **Methodological approach**

- Reasons

School as an alien environment for Roma children. Relations between Roma parents and schools. Marginalisation of Roma in school. Huge variety of situations throughout Europe

- Theoretical basis

Constructivist intercultural teaching

- Methodological principles

Interaction: between pupils, between pupils and socio-cultural reality; between pupils and knowledge. Cross-cutting approach (complex educational activities) starting from the situation and culture of the local Roma community.

Reinforcement of positive cultural identity among Roma children and development of balanced intercultural relations.

### **The EURROM guide**

- Structure of teaching models:

*Each module is arranged as follows:*

Description of the theme and emergence of early perceptions among children  
Children's search for additional information  
Synthesis of information collected  
Organisation of the event or achievement of the outcome  
Analysis of what has been learnt.

Each module uses:

Argument  
Aims (factual knowledge, practical skills, social skills)  
Suggested methodological approach  
Suggestions for timetabling and organising activities  
Suggestions for different versions of the activity  
Annexe with additional information or examples of implementation.

- Description of teaching modules

*Ten proposed teaching modules:* diary; life story; school correspondence; local history; ways of life; traditional occupations; the Romani language; Roma traditions; kris (lore); stories.

*These teaching models:*

- refer to different levels of identity
- capitalise on the local Roma situation as an educational resource
- relate to the different types of learning expected in primary school (reading, oral and written expression, forms of artistic expression, mathematics, etc)
- have a practical, visible goal which motivates Roma and non-Roma children to work together: factual knowledge / practical skills / social skills
- are designed so that they can be adapted to a variety of socio-cultural contexts



## **EURROM training.**

- In-service training courses  
Emphasis on inter-training and analysis of practice, balanced awareness-raising and information on questions affecting Roma communities, understanding the methodological approach.
- Integration with initial teacher training.
- On-line interactive courses (accreditation?)
- Comenius courses (?)

## **The Roma Studies Centre – the Intercultural Education Centre**

Petra Morvayova (Czech Republic)

The activities provided by the Roma Studies Centre and the Intercultural Education Centre aim to give students a broad range of skills in the field of knowledge and communications. For the last few years, these efforts have also aimed at giving teachers intercultural skills and organising large-scale Roma studies seminars for a common intercultural education syllabus.

With the particular demographic and social situation in the Usti nad Labem region, a large proportion of children from the Roma community in this region are at risk of social exclusion in school. Teachers find children from these backgrounds difficult to accept. A negative approach with preconceived ideas is very commonly applied to these Roma children from disadvantaged families. The work of the Centre focuses on two areas which affect socially excluded communities.

## **Instruction in the compulsory courses**

- A theoretical aspect: common fund of information about the Roma ethnic minority, the past and especially the current situation.
- A practical aspect: class visits and discussions
  - to the localities themselves
  - to the organisations trying to change the situation
  - to educational institutions.

**By means of the courses**, we aim to pinpoint the true situation of pupils and to highlight the possibilities, limitations and specific areas on which teachers should concentrate. Children living in these places automatically take on the local models of behaviour, so that situations are reproduced from generation to generation. Most of the time,

Roma children go to special schools, do not do enough homework and instead of studying spend their free time on the street, some not going to school at all. Neither the parents nor the community in which they live motivate them to work. Rather, they indirectly transmit the idea that their way of life is socially inferior.

In addition to the social aspect and the family context, we aim to show how the support and intervention system works, and to highlight the potential of the community and educational activities in such localities. Approximately 40 students on full-time courses and 50 students on a combined programme are following compulsory education courses.

### **Teaching support for students in socially excluded localities**

The optional courses offered by the Roma Studies Centre include post-experience study visits throughout the semester. Courses are carried out on the ground in collaboration with the “People in Need Association” of the Community Centre of Mati-ni Street, a socially deprived area whose adults, mainly Roma, are nearly 100% long-term unemployed, in a district with a buildup of social problems.

Permanent Centre staff carry out specific tasks in the area of grassroots social support, focusing their long-term activities on locally managed social work, and specifically on help with resolving critical situations (issues of nationality status, social security, school attendance, conflicts between families, repayment plans, etc).

Moreover, they concentrate above all on prevention, finding ways of making active use of free time, developing creative abilities and improved problem-solving skills through simple activities. Being creative facilitates new social contacts and comparison of experiences through interaction with other sections of the population, thus having an impact on the children, in an effort to alleviate their desperate living conditions and to change educational practices.

**Grassroots social workers:** a trainee and other volunteers specialise in providing leisure and educational activities for children, mainly in the local “low-threshold” Centre, and this support may, in co-operation with grassroots social workers, be geared to :

- Children’s school attendance: the social worker takes care of children who have problems with school attendance, negotiates with the parents and the school and tries to remove the causes of the situation.

-Children's homework: the worker helps families where there are inadequate facilities for doing homework, and attracts volunteers for remedial classes

-Educational prospects for the children: the worker collaborates with clients and their children in order to make progress and supports the children in special schools, motivating them so that they can change to elementary schools.

### **Graz: The RomBase teaching project**

Ursula Glaeser (Austria)

**RomBase** is funded by the European Union, Comenius C2, the Austrian Federal Chancellery and the Austrian Federal Ministry.

The main purpose of this project is to help to overcome the economic and social marginalisation of Roma and Sinti by improving the range of teaching information published about the Roma.

#### **RomBase consists of :**

- RomData: an illustrated network – a central encyclopedic core of Roma data, providing information and theory about Romani.
- RomGames: computer games available in several Roma languages and a set of questionnaires based solely on the content of the RomBase data.
- RomPed, providing a comprehensive teaching method and suggestions for using the material in teaching, offering both a guide and training modules for Roma mediators and teachers.
- RomBase Media, a list of films, CDs, books etc, which may be used as additional information for more extensive discussion of the subject.

#### **RomBase training and teaching modules**

The first module gives an overview of the main subjects identifiable in RomData, viz. names and designations, history, recent situation, ethnology, music, language, and negative perceptions.

The second module provides further detailed information about the subjects in the first module; depending on special interests and "targeted" needs, simple subjects may be chosen.

Introduction to using RomData.

Specific information for teachers about didactic transfer, research, use of the media material, and literature.

**RomBase Teaching Guide** (for teacher training and the media kit):

Short articles giving introductory information about the main subjects in RomData (see above)

Material provided: tables of contents of all the media kit; description (and a few evaluations) of specific items

Ideas and suggestions for teaching

Recommended literature and press (not in the media kit); addresses (internet, Roma organisations)

**RomBase media material**

Films: documentaries (Holocaust, recent situation of the Roma), feature films

(Sidonie, Latcho Drom), a biographical film (the life story of a Roma woman)

CD and CD-Roms: music, photographs and documents, language learning games

Books: general topics (The Roma in Austria, What is the Romani language?) stories, novels, autobiography, examples of teaching material)

Guide (see above)

Distance training for teachers

**The CNED and the school education of Gypsy and Traveller children**

Elisabeth Clanet (France)

The Resolution of 22 May 1989 provided, among other things, for the promotion of “experimentation in distance teaching, which may be a more suitable response to nomadism”. Under this provision, the Ministry of National Education has since 1992 made a special post available to the National Distance Education Centre (CNED) to deal with the distance education of Traveller Children.

This post, which was initially attached to the Institut de Rouen (at lower secondary level), was essentially devoted to setting up remedial classes going back over the basics of elementary education, enabling several thousand young people of 12 to 16 years of age to follow courses corresponding to their real achievement level, and allowing

some of them to move up to the general classes of distance secondary education.

Since the start of the 2002/2003 school year, the role of the teacher appointed to this post has been to ensure better co-ordination between the various activities carried out in the CNED Institutes that provide education and training to meet the needs of these groups, which now account for over a quarter of those in compulsory education registered with CNED, some 6 000 pupils.

In the coming years, CNED will need to think about how to deal better with the situations facing these young people – no fixed place of residence, illiterate parents, cramped caravans, adapting the ergonomics of the courses offered and making greater use of the new technologies and the internet, especially to overcome problems of sending mail due to the high degree of mobility of the families.

It is also vital that these pupils attend schools while they move around so that they can receive methodological help, visit the documentation centre and have access to the internet, and above all, so that they can benefit from greater socialisation, thus having access to full and complete citizenship.

### **Information / training for staff appointed to CNED**

Some 1 200 teaching and administrative staff (responsible for courses and attendance, tele-enquiries and enrolments) now work on Traveller Children's education. They are now offered a course in the form of a number of lectures using PowerPoint software so that they have a better understanding of the situation and diversity of Gypsy and "Traveller" communities. A small brochure for the very many teachers correcting work from home will be available on the internet shortly.

### **The "Traveller Cultures" module**

The 1989 Resolution called for account to be taken of "the history, culture and language of Gypsies and Travellers". Some years later Recommendation (2000)<sup>4</sup> of the Committee of Ministers to the member states of the Council of Europe reaffirmed the need to introduce "the history and culture of the Roma" into teaching materials. The Institut de Rouen offers pupils enrolled in remedial classes a module that outlines historical and cultural aspects of the various Traveller communities (fairground workers, bargees,

Circassians, Sinti, Yeniche) and of the Gypsies, most of whom are sedentary (Roma and Kalé).

### **Openness to interculturalism**

Mariano Lopez Oliver (Spain)

#### **Aims**

The general aim of the project Intercultur@net is to promote the tools needed to deal with the problem of cultural diversity in classes, that is, to promote interculturalism based on the educational community (bringing together pupils, young people and parents), using the new information and communication technologies.

This overall aim may be broken down into the following specific aims :

- To introduce the concept of interculturalism as a suitable means of dealing with cultural diversity
- To train the teaching profession to incorporate this concept as a “way of doing things” and to facilitate their work with immigrant and Gypsy ethnic minority children
- To make young people aware of the need to accept, learn about and integrate immigrant and Gypsy ethnic minority young people, whether living outside the community, within the community or as an independent community
- To use the opinions and experiences exchangeable throughout the educational community as a forum for expression
- To provide a resource and teaching material base on interculturalism, in relation to interests and bibliographical resources
- To foster and stimulate production of multimedia teaching material on interculturalism and its interactive dissemination
- To encourage the use of new information and communication technologies among members of the educational community, and ultimately throughout society.

The interculturalism by internet programme works in four ways :

- Courses and distance working groups using remote data links allowing guidance by teachers
- An interactive forum on cultural diversity in the education system
- Actions to raise awareness and solidarity against racism and xenophobia among secondary pupils
- Seminars, conferences and publications.

## **Working methodology**

The working methodology depends on the specific activity referred to (working groups, distance courses, forum, libraries and resources) although there is always a set of shared characteristics.

The ways of working in each of the activities which are run are shown with explanations and descriptions. The basic methodological aspects of the project are :

- Data link technology: use of the internet as a means of drawing together at any time and stage of the game is the framework for the other features of the project methodology.
- Openness: this is not a closed project but rather a “modus operandi”, a way of working made possible by latest generation tools to deal with the concept of interculturalism in society.

This mechanism can accommodate new subject matter, new ways of working and communicating, new ideas from the Advisory Committee, and different types of participation :

- Practical: it is intended that participants will become involved in the project in a variety of different ways, by taking part in debating forums, working groups, etc. As far as possible, there will also be activities for them such as the development of teaching materials (with the working groups), application of teaching units on particular themes (training courses), development of collected documents (debating forum), etc.
- Multidisciplinary: using the preceding features, and in part thanks to them, multidisciplinary will be achieved, enabling interculturalism to be addressed in a range of teaching and socio-cultural fields.

## **Networking of educational staff – Movement “R” (Hnutí R)**

Jaroslav Balvin (Czech Republic)

### **A brief history**

Movement “R” of Co-operative Schools was established on the initiative of the Institute for the Study of Roma Culture at Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Usti nad Labem on 21 March 1992. At first, 16 schools in Northern Bohemia took part in the movement.

Since 1995, Movement “R” has been recognised as a citizens’ association.

### **The current situation**

Movement “R” of Co-operative schools is an original Czech contribution to address the issue of education for Roma in the European context.

The movement seeks to link the humanist traditions of Czech education (J. A. Komensky, Frantisek Stampach, Premysl Pitter and others) with the reformist trends of European education (Waldorf Schools, Jena Plan, Freinet Movement, etc). Movement “R” is heavily committed to creating a European network of education for Roma children. The initiative of the Gypsy Research Centre in Paris is therefore welcome and it is our intention to integrate it into the network together with Movement “R”.

### **The main focuses of the work**

Gradual, and above all voluntary and non-violent, introduction of new alternative methods in school education.

Respect for and development of Roma culture in schools as an integral part of Czech society’s culture.

Development of multicultural approaches preserving the relationship with global education.

Helping to develop Roma identity.

Making every effort to develop an educational ethic in respect of children from different ethnic groups that is akin to Czech social pedagogy and the work of the reformer Premysl Pitter.

### **Future aims**

In 1995, Movement “R” of Co-operative Schools comprised 44 schools. In 2003, Movement “R” had a membership of approximately 300 schools, in which Roma assistant teachers accounted for almost half. They have set up their own association and work with Movement “R”. Each school with a member of Movement “R” adds value to the collective whole; it has a potential for development and can contribute to society through resources consisting of many different processes, methods and approaches for Roma pupils and the Roma community.



## **Possible future aims**

Developing “teaching for a new style of healthy living”;  
Developing theatre in a multicultural environment;  
Developing ethical relations through different ethical simulation games;  
Developing the arts to include Roma culture;  
Developing music on the basis of the natural relationship between Roma and their musical culture;  
Establishing contact with other schools focusing on multicultural education in Europe;  
Expanding co-operation with the Institute of Child Psychology in Graz, Austria, and gradually familiarising teachers with “Children’s Philosophy”, drawing on the philosophical and ethical richness of Roma culture.

## **The Association of Teachers with Gypsies**

(Asociación de Enseñantes con Gitanos) – Xavier Lluçh (Spain)

This association comprises teachers in preschool, primary and secondary education, and social workers. The majority are primary school teachers.

The members of the association are Gypsies and non-Gypsies. The majority are non-Gypsy, but there are also Gypsy colleagues and associates. They are a minority, but a minority with a great impact of symbolic importance to the majority.

The association is nearly 25 years old, and is independent of government, political organisations and trade unions.

The main aim of the association is to support social and educational work with the Gypsy people.

The other aims of the association are :

- To organise training days for teachers and social workers. Every year, a training day is organised with a conference in a Spanish city, bringing together some 150/200 people.
- To produce publications giving the association’s views on matters of public interest affecting the Gypsy people and other cultural minorities (3 or 4 newsletters are normally published each year).
- To play a critical part in educational administration.

- To support a Documentation Centre containing educational materials on intercultural education and Gypsy history and culture.

### **Networks of teachers in Ireland for the education of Travellers**

Owen Mac Carthy (Ireland)

Mr Mac Carthy has taught Traveller students and is involved in designing and delivering lifelong intercultural education. He also has an interest in intercultural education as a field of study.

#### *Travellers in Ireland*

Between 25 000 and 30 000 Travellers.

The largest ethnic minority (0.5 % of the total population).

A small number of recent immigrant Roma families.

#### *Travellers in education*

Until 1960, Travellers were outside the education system. Their school attendance amounted to only a few weeks – for religious education. Since the 1960s, official priority had been given to school enrolment and attendance. Success in primary education, progress at secondary level, but little impact on secondary education. However, educational outcomes do not yet represent success.

A need to research and re-evaluate support structures on the spot.

#### *Educational support structures:*

A member of Ministry staff responsible for Travellers.

40 peripatetic teachers for Travellers (described as educational social workers) – the main function being relations between the school and the family.

460 detached teachers for Travellers – a ratio of roughly 1 teacher to 20 children of school age.

#### *Teachers' organisations*

- Association of Teachers of Travellers (closed down in 2001)

Problem: fragility of a small group – tensions between needs of visiting teachers and resident teachers.

Little official support but use made of activities to demonstrate the commitment of the Travellers' Education Department.

- Involvement of the Exchange Union and Professional Association of Teachers in co-operation between trade unions and associations of professionals involved in matters of education.
- Irish National Teachers' Organisation (trade union).

- Irish Association of Teachers in Special Education (professional association).
- Lack of central institution representing the Traveller population.

### **IATSE** (Irish Association of Teachers in Special Education)

Professional development and networking in all regions where the term “special” was used in the late 1970s when the association was set up. Despite integration of previously “special” provision in a number of regions, professional commitment has been maintained in those regions.

#### *The work of the association*

Development of continuing professional training. Annual international conference and regional conferences. Conferences on different fields of interest: Travellers and intercultural issues are only one facet of the subject-matter.

Professional journal REACH (Dublin). Articles produced on situations and consultative documents.

#### *Travellers and intercultural work:*

Intercultural: 10 hours of lectures over five weeks on intercultural education – restricted because of funding. Consultation and establishment of networks with other teachers and minority organisations. Major contribution to research and production of consultation documents :

- Education for a Plural Society
- Proposals for Intercultural Education with the National Action Plan against Racism.
- Proposals to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment on the question of what subjects should be taught.

#### *Organisational limits*

The organisation is voluntary – no full-time or part-time staff.

Travellers – only in one of the regions – are dependent on the commitment of the representatives of the Committee in that particular region.

Funding (restrictions on research, networking, production of courses and development initiatives).

*National constraints affecting the establishment of networks and professional development*

Lack of effective structures involving professionals and minority organisations. Barriers between the (political) administration and the different institutional levels – academic and practical – reinforced particularly at the European level by the separate organisation of the Socrates and Erasmus Programmes.

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