

# Good practices and potentials in educational inclusion and desegregation

## ABSTRACT BOOKLET

**Inclusion4Schools International Conference 2022**  
**7-8 November 2022 – Budapest, Hungary**

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## Purpose of the conference

Involving other EU-funded projects, Inclusion4Schools is organising an international conference to bring together researchers, practitioners, journalists, and policy-makers to discuss the challenges and opportunities of education to reverse inequalities, to interpret existing narratives, national competences and European initiatives to present good practices resulting from the ongoing projects, and to inform political decision-making processes. In view of the COVID pandemic, this event offers a rare opportunity to engage with various stakeholders across Europe. The conference will take place in Budapest, Hungary on the 7th and 8th of November 2022.



## Opening Session

Moderator: Béla Kardon - Regional Centre for Information and Scientific Development

### **School-community Partnership for Reversing Inequality and Exclusion: Transformative Practices of Segregated Schools - introduction of the Inclusion4Schools project**

Zsuzsanna Hanna Bíró - John Wesley Theological College

#### **Short biography**

Ms Zsuzsanna Hanna Bíró PhD, graduated in German Studies (2000) and General and Applied Linguistics (2005). Her career is twofold: academic and managerial. She received her PhD in Education (2013), where she gained practice in building and analysing a higher education sociological database with more than ten thousand cases. (She wrote a book about this project, which was published in the oldest book serial of the sociology of education in Hungary.) An important element of her academic career is the comparative analysis of scientific and professional journals (in 2009), and analysis of the history of educational science, in which she exemplified the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. As a manager she has experience in the scientific, social and higher education spheres. At the request of the Institute for Educational Research, she was the leader of a project to produce a “map of Hungarian educational research”, which was the first self-reflection of an area that moved between social science and public administration. In “A Culturally Composite Elites, Regime Changes and Social Crises in Multi-Ethnic and Multi-Confessional Eastern Europe (The Carpathian Basin and the Baltics in Comparison 1900-1950)” FP-7 Research (Principal Investigator: Viktor Karady, host institute: Central European University) she gained experience in coordinating the work of Romanian, Slovakian, Hungarian, Serbian, Latvian and Estonian researchers between 2009 and 2012. The research created the largest historical database of European historical sociology, with one million cases. (<http://elites08.uni.hu>) Her interest in linguistics was converted into practical managerial activities when she organized the Hungarian Sign Language Program Office at the Request of the Public Foundation of Handicapped and became its director for some years. Since 2008 she is the member of the editorial board of the quarterly of *Educatio (R)*, an academic journal which focuses on the society questions of education. As head of the Wesley Department of Educational Sciences (since 2018), she focused its activity on studying the pedagogy of disadvantaged. She launched a monthly serial of events (called “PedLabor”) on actual questions in the Hungarian



educational system last year, which will be considered as one of the most community-building workshops and liberal forums to discuss educational issues.

### **Abstract**

The emerging European context is to a large extent characterized by widening and deepening inequalities, the crisis of democracy, and the disintegration of communities. It is especially the case in the Central-Eastern European semiperipheral, post-socialist context, where there is a growing tendency of rearticulating authoritarian, nationalist, neoconservative discourses, which are increasingly infiltrating the political landscape within and beyond Europe. This „retrotopia” is conducive to the hegemonic production of an imaginary social homogeneity, which consequently stirs up reactionary xenophobia, fear, and hatred through the construction of external intruders (e.g. the migrant) and enemies within (e.g. the Roma). Such a milieu steeped in fear tears up old wounds and produces new divisions as well, hence the construction of new walls – symbolically, as well as physically. Since the leitmotif of this programme is primarily educational, the proposed action targets such (imaginary, symbolic, and real) walls of exclusion which are intended to segregate children (based on class, ethnicity, gender, etc.), which are meant to divide and alienate the local communities to which those children nonetheless belong, thus actively (re)producing inequalities. In contrast to the power-relations of exclusion, the culture of silence, and the reproduction of unjust structures, the project aims to foster and promote pedagogical relations of inclusion, a culture of dialogue, and the transformation of unjust structures through education. Running in parallel to the research and innovation actions the central objectives of the proposed action are

- (1) to support and coordinate community schools (as being central to the constitution and maintenance of cohesive local communities) and their respective communities of practice, and
- (2) to create a place and culture of sharing (knowledge, praxis, solidarity) between such communities by initiating and coordinating the convergence and synergies of local, regional and transnational communities.

The expected impact of the proposed project is to contribute to the European initiatives and interventions that aim at reversing inequalities. Adopting a mission-oriented, impact-focused approach to address the specific challenges of the call, synergies will be enhanced between the relevant stakeholders through coordinating and supporting the cooperation between teachers, researchers, local communities and other relevant stakeholders (such as policy-makers), in order to generate networks of policy development and to promote the policy uptake of the project.



## Pioneering policies and practices tackling educational inequalities in Europe - introduction of the PIONEERED project

Juliette Torabian - Université Du Luxembourg

### Short biography

Juliette E. Torabian is the deputy coordinator of the EU- H2020 PIONEERED project, a postdoctoral researcher in sociology of education and a senior international specialist in international development and comparative education. She is the author of "wealth, values, culture & education: reviving the essentials for equality and sustainability" published by Springer (2022) and a renowned public speaker on higher education, social justice, and sustainable development. For the past 2 decades, Dr. Torabian has advised Ministries of education and their institutions in Asia, Africa, and Europe on their strategic planning and policy reforms for equity and inclusion. She is also a board member in several academic journals and professional networks.

### Abstract

A key objective of the Horizon 2020 framework programme 'Europe in a changing world' is to social cohesion, justice and equality. Within this framework, PIONEERED focuses on access, uptake, and success of all children- particularly those from vulnerable backgrounds. It, therefore, maps and analyzes pioneering policies and practices tackling education inequalities across 9 EU countries and in collaboration with 13 universities and research institutions. PIONEERED adopts an innovative approach to examine multilevel and life course educational inequalities from early childhood to tertiary education and across formal, informal, and non-formal education. The overall objective of PIONEERED is to inform a next generation of evidence-based policies and practices towards inclusive, equitable, and sustainable education across Europe.

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## Educational Common Spaces. Passing through enclosures and reversing inequalities - introduction of the SMOOTH project

Ioannis Kozaris - University of Thessaly

### Short biography

Dr Ioannis Kozaris, M.Sc., Ph.D., studied Open and Distance Learning in the Hellenic Open University, IC Technologies in Education (AUTH); doctorate in electronic learning environments (AUTH); Senior Researcher at the Lab of Sociology of Education in University of Thessaly; Co-authored of more than 24 European Union projects on education and inclusion subjects. Deputy coordinator of approximately eighteen national and European projects on science and education (Horizon2020, Erasmus+, FP7; COST; EuroMed Heritage II; Tempus; Lifelong Learning Programme). Responsible for the organisation of several intensive training programmes targeting mainly postgraduate students and professionals. Member of the Implementation Team of the Intensive Schools on Conservation Science and Key Competences.

### Abstract

Educational commons and active social inclusion

The educational commons concept relies on the idea of sharing space for collaboration, content creation, socialisation, governance, playing, and studying. The EU-funded SMOOTH project will focus on active social inclusion and examine if the educational commons can operate as a catalyst to inverse inequalities in education.

The project proposes an innovative action research programme engaging children and youth to reverse inequalities that children and youth of vulnerable social groups face. It will reinforce intercultural and intergenerational dialogue and social integration, develop essential social and personal skills for both children, youth, and adults, establish spaces of democratic citizenship, and build and support the community through differences. SMOOTH will also perform a cross-cutting and cross-disciplinary analysis of educational commons.

Objectives

SMOOTH intends to introduce the emergent paradigm of the ‘commons’ as an alternative value and action system in education for children and young people. The project critically draws out the implications of the commons for refiguring education and for social change in general, on a footing of equality, sharing, participation, togetherness, caring and freedom. The project will address social inclusion according to the ‘educational commons’, which we want to study if they can operate as a catalyst for reversing inequalities through various methods such as pedagogical documentation, pedagogy of active listening, ethnography, discourse analysis.

In particular, it proposes an innovative action research program with and by children to:

- reverse inequalities faced by children from vulnerable social groups;
- strengthen inter-cultural and inter-generational dialogue and social integration;
- develop vital social and personal skills for the children and adults;
- create smooth spaces of democratic citizenship and experimentation with new ways of thinking and doing based on equality, collaboration, collective creativity, sharing and caring;



- build and foster community through differences.

Universities, research labs, municipalities, NGOs, museums, and youth organisations, in different countries will work interdisciplinary and interculturally together to achieve the above aims from the point of view of educational commons. Specifically, various case studies will be conducted in educational premises to reverse inequalities and achieve an active social exclusion for vulnerable children and youth. In short, a cross-cutting, cross-disciplinary analysis about the role of educational commons must be seen as crucial to provide policymakers new, innovative and more efficient tools for proposing new policies to better engage children and adults in developing a more secure and resilient economic, political and social model of Europe.

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## Keynote speech: Reversing inequalities through Educational Commons

Yannis Pechtelidis - University of Thessaly

### Short biography

Yannis Pechtelidis, currently serves as an Associate Professor in Sociology of Education at the Department of Early Childhood Education, at the University of Thessaly in Greece. His research engages with the educational commons, childhood and youth from sociological and philosophical perspectives. He has been directing a Horizon 2020 (SMOOTH, 2021-2024) and an Erasmus + (COMPRA, 2020-2023) project on these topics, and has published numerous articles and books.

<http://www.ece.uth.gr/main/content/631-pechtelidis-yannis>

### Abstract

This presentation will focus on the contribution of the ‘educational commons’ to reverse inequalities in the educational field and enable active social inclusion. ‘Educational commons’ refer to learning communities where decisions about the educational process are made collectively by the three groups of teachers/educators, learners and their guardians (when they are minors). The very practice of education and learning becomes a ‘common good or resource’ which is collectively shaped and managed by the members of the educational community in terms of equality, freedom, and participation. In the ‘educational commons’, teachers, educators, facilitators, and students or pupils, children and youth, communicate and collaborate beyond the conventional divisions and hierarchies between teachers and students, in a process of collective exploration and learning that is open, critical and ongoing.

The presentation will be unfolded through the description of the context and the progress of the research has been done so far within the EU-funded SMOOTH project (H2020). In



particular, the SMOOTH project proposes an innovative action research program with and by children and youth to from a post-foundational perspective:

- reverse inequalities faced by children and young people;
- strengthen inter-cultural and inter-generational dialogue and social inclusion;
- develop vital social and personal skills and abilities for the children and adults;
- create smooth spaces of democratic citizenship and experimentation with new ways of thinking and doing on the basis of equality, collaboration, collective creativity, sharing and caring.

**Keywords:** Educational Commons; (in)equality; post-foundationalism; democratic citizenship; experimentation; and co-design.



## Session 2: Inclusion and access perspectives of disadvantaged groups in education

Moderator: Envina Xhemi - Albanian National Orphans Association

### Access and inclusion of disadvantaged groups in the Albanian Education System

Sander Kovaci - Polytechnic University of Tirana

#### Short biography

Sandër Kovaçi, currently serves as an Associate Professor in Mathematical Engineering at the Department of Mathematical Engineering at the Polytechnic University of Tirana, Albania. He holds a PhD Degree in Mathematics and a Master of Science Degree from University of Trieste, Italy. He was graduated in Applied Mathematics and also in Law from the University of Tirana, Albania. He has completed several postgraduate studies as in University of Pisa and University of Trieste (IT), Imperial College London (UK), Munich (GER), Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), etc. His field of interest are: Calculus, Statistics, ANN, Spatial Data Analysis, GIS, and Optimization. He has published several books and papers.

#### Abstract

Despite the significant results that Albania has achieved, in the last 30 years, towards establishing a democratic state, market economy, maintaining stable economic growth, and achieving human development, the implementation of social and education policies for the inclusion of vulnerable groups, particularly Roma and Egyptian communities and persons with disabilities, still remains problematic. In addition, some strategic concerns remain the issues related to income and social class inequality, the urban-rural divide, discrimination against minorities, such as Roma and Balkan Egyptians, and children with disabilities. There are still significant barriers to Roma educational equity and inclusion. In this regard, in this paper I will be particularly focused on the access and inclusion of disadvantaged groups in the Albanian Education System. I will analyse the current situation about the access of such groups to pre-school, pre-university and university education, including social and legal framework aspects of the issue. Despite the improvement and the fact that the inclusive education policy in Albania is part of different national and international efforts in education sector the goal that these groups have full access and inclusion in qualitative education without being subject to discrimination and segregation is still far from achieving. Inclusive education is an issue that involves a number of challenges and barriers to be faced, including



education policy – making, system development and implementation processes, in practice levels. With regard to children with disabilities there are still challenges to face in order to achieve the main outcomes of inclusive education already foreseen in Article 24 of the UNCRPD.

**Keywords:** education policy, inclusive education, segregation, vulnerable groups, minorities.

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## COVID 19 impact on disadvantaged children in education

Mirela Karabina - Barleti University of Tirana

### Short biography

Dr. Mirela Karabina is a Doctor of Educational Sciences. She has long professional experience in the field of teaching as a teacher, pedagogue and trainer in education. He also has experience in running and managing educational institutions.

Dr. Mirela Karabina as a researcher in education, has referred to national and international conferences and has published scientific articles in Albanian and international scientific journals. Dr. Mirela Karabina has been engaged in the academic staff in higher education institutions as a lecturer of subjects: Management and Administration in Education, Curriculum Development, Assessment in Education, Teaching Methods, Critical Thinking, Classroom Management, Educational Policies, Cultural Foundations of Education, Didactics of Albanian Language, Research Methods, Academic Writing.

From July 2021, Dr. Mirela Karabina is part of the academic staff of Barleti University.

In May 2017 she held the post of Minister of Education and Science.

### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of covid 19 on the academic achievement of disadvantaged students. The question raised in the study was: Has covid 19 impact the backwardness of the academic achievements of disadvantaged children? The hypothesis raised was: disadvantaged children remained in education two years later due to the inability to provide online learning throughout the pandemic. The main variables that were analyzed in the study were the lack of online learning delivery, the independent variable, and the two-year academic backwardness of disadvantaged children, the dependent variable. The interpretive method is key to analyzing the lack of service provided to disadvantaged children. The first method used is survey through semi-structured interviews with principals, teachers, students and parents from several representative regions of Albania, specifically in Tirana, Elbasan, Durrës, Kukës, Pogradec. The second method used in qualitative analysis is the



collection of data from the review of official documents, reports and statistics regarding the opportunity offered during online learning for disadvantaged children.

The instruments selected for the qualitative analysis between the lack of online learning delivery and the academic backwardness were selected according to the methods used. Interviews were conducted with school principals randomly selected from the list of schools. Teachers were randomly selected from the same school as the principals. Students and parents were selected from representatives of children from disadvantaged backgrounds and the Roma and Egyptian communities, randomly selected from the list of school children.

The content of the interviews and their analysis served as a basis to support the study work. On the other hand, the review of official documents, written reports and statistics on the lack of online learning for disadvantaged children with disabilities served as data that complement the data collected from interviews and together provide a clearer picture of the situation that occurred. Typology was used to analyze findings from interview data and review of official documents.

The hypothesis raised, the lack of online learning service and the backlog of about 2 years of academic achievement of disadvantaged children was based on qualitative data analysis. The findings of the study emerged from the qualitative analysis of interviews and review of official documents. Some of the findings from the interviews were that principals, teachers, students and parents found themselves unprepared for online learning. The lack of digital infrastructure and staff training made the normal implementation of online learning difficult. The lack of smart tools and internet service made it impossible for disadvantaged children to attend online learning. The lack of online education for the children of the needy and the Roma and Egyptian communities left these students without education for almost two years. Due to the poverty and impossibility of smart tools and internet service, even parents could not help their children.

Some of the findings from the review of official documents show that based on INSTAT 2020 data, out of almost 850,000 families living in Albania, only 82.2% of them have access to the internet, while about 153 thousand families found it impossible in this period to offer their children online learning. According to INSTAT, about 29.6% of children under the age of 17 are at risk of poverty, which means that they find it impossible to own a smart phone, tablet or computer.

Based on data from the Ministry of Education, the number of children who did not have access to online learning was 10,000. This number decreased when the Vodafone Albania Foundation donated 15,000 smart devices. The digital platform "RTSH school" for online learning was broadcasted by state television. But the lack of decoder in poor families (needy, Roma and Egyptian families) made it impossible for disadvantaged children to use tool. The number of children in public institutions in pre-university education was 571,616 at the start of the pandemic (2020).



The World Bank report released in early 2021 states that: “On average, one in ten families with students in the Western Balkans do not have a computer. In Albania, this figure increases by almost a third, 28 percent. There is a big difference between owning ICT resources and using them for education. While on average 86 percent of students report having access to a computer that they can use for homework, this percentage is likely to be lower in cases of isolation. The World Bank report estimates that 63 out of 100 students have limited access to education, otherwise referred to as educational poverty. These difficulties are from online learning.

School closures will deepen the learning inequality, which was large even without closing schools during a pandemic. The achievement gap between the poorest and richest students, which is currently from 1.5 years of schooling in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo (66 PISA points) to over 2 years in Northern Macedonia (90 PISA points), it’s likely to increase further, as students in poverty circumstances are less likely to benefit from distance learning methods.” (World Bank Report, 2021).

The conclusions drawn are based on the analysis of interview findings and the review of official documents. Some of the conclusions are that the ministry of education and the school were found unprepared for online learning. The digital structure was missing in Albanian schools. Disadvantaged children and their families were not supported with smart tools and free internet service to enable online communication. Even in cases when state television was used for teaching through "RTSH school", the lack of decoder in poor families (needy, Roma and Egyptian families) made it impossible for disadvantaged children to use the digital platform. Lack of attendance online deepened the gap between the disadvantaged and their families in their unequal access to education. Lack of education will increase the number of illiterates and functional illiterates.

The findings recommend that the Albanian government and the ministry of education should build action strategies to reduce this educational gap created between children. Their support with lessons in physical education and online lessons by providing free internet, would narrow this gap that poses a risk to the future of the country.

The findings and conclusions of the qualitative analysis of the impact of Covid 19 on the education of disadvantaged children are first relevant to the responsible institutions that direct and manage the education process in order to ensure the right to be educated qualitatively and equitably of all children. This analysis is also valid for teachers, students and parents.

**Keywords:** disadvantaged children, academic backwardness, covid 19, lack of online learning.



## Systemic determinants of social inequalities in education

Ides Nicaise - HIVA-KU - Research Institute for Work and Society, Leuven

### Short biography

Idesbald Nicaise is emeritus professor in ‘education and society’ and senior research manager at HIVA (Research Institute for Work and Society, KU Leuven). Emilie Franck is PhD student at HIVA.

**Abstract:** Social inequalities in education are determined partly by exogenous factors such as the socio-economic and cultural background of pupils (unequal opportunities), and partly by factors that are endogenous to the educational process (unequal treatment). Among the latter, we focus on determinants that are embedded in the institutional design. In particular, we analyse the relationship between various ‘academic segregation’ mechanisms (competition between schools, segregated special education, grade repetition and early tracking) that tend to reinforce inequalities – and policies that can help in attenuating them. We use multilevel analysis of PISA data and elements from the international literature for the interpretation of the relationship between segregation and unequal educational outcomes.

**Keywords:** systemic inequalities – segregation – unequal opportunities – unequal treatment – social justice

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## Inclusive education and educational support provision in Lithuania

Stefanija Alisauskiene, Lina Milteniene - Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania

### Short biography

Stefanija Alisauskiene is a professor in the Education Academy, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania. She specializes in educational support specialist education and teacher education for inclusion. Her research interest includes special needs and inclusive education, and early childhood intervention. She has an extensive expertise in special needs education and developments towards inclusive education acquired through national and international research projects.

Lina Milteniene is Associate Professor of Education in the Education Academy at the Vytautas Magnus University. She works in the field of special needs education, carry out research with a focus on creating an inclusive school culture and environment, development of support system for children having special educational needs. For three years she has been



working as a national expert in the project of the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education „Teacher Education for Inclusion“.

### **Abstract**

In accordance with the UN Sustainable Development Goal 4 and EU agenda (COM/2017/0247), Lithuania highlights the priority to promote changes in the educational system, aimed at ensuring quality of teacher education and quality education for every learner. Movement toward inclusive education (IE) involves systemic changes in educational policy, practice, culture, research, teacher education, terminology, and etc. Recently adopted changes of Education Law legitimate quality education for all; assure legal presumptions for inclusive education; strengthen educational support for all children, having any educational needs; and finally resign discriminative articles (e. g., stating that school cannot accept a child if school has not enough educational resources). Moreover, the findings of our research „Accessibility and efficiency of educational support“(2020 -2021) revealed some more positive and challenging issues on IE implementation in the country. The positive issues include as follow: legislation ensures IE and anti-discrimination; the accessibility of education is ensured by adapting the school environment, by offering psychological, special pedagogical, special and social pedagogical assistance, etc.; the needs of learners are being identified in a 3 level system: school level - Child Welfare Committee in cooperation with families; Municipality level - Pedagogical Psychological Services; and National level National Agency of Education; etc. The challenging issues relate with the lack of educational support professionals; incomplete adaptations of school environment, e. g., currently, only 10% of general schools are fully adapted for students with physical disabilities (wheelchair users), approx. 60 % of schools are partially adapted to accept such children, and only 3 % of schools are fully adapted for the visually impaired learners. The awareness raising there is not included into national education strategy and the campaigns regarding IE are seldom organised.

**Keywords:** Inclusive education, efficiency of educational support, systemic changes, positive and challenging issues



## Session 3: How to support educational inclusion at local level - interactions between NGO-s and local governments

Moderator: Ralitz Sechkova - Creating Effective Grassroots Alternatives – C.E.G.A. Foundation

### Long-term strategy and achievements in enhancing the inclusive education of Roma community – from dropouts to university. The case of Roma-Lom Foundation, Bulgaria (1996–2022)

Nikolay Kirilov - Roma-Lom Foundation

#### Short biography

Nikolay Kirilov, Roma-Lom Foundation (Bulgaria): MA in Public administration. Roma activist and senior expert with over 27 years of experience in developing, managing and evaluating programs for Roma inclusion, empowerment and educational integration. Co-founder of Roma-Lom Foundation (1996); Director of Pakiv-European Roma Fund (2001-2006), awarded the Theodor Hoys Prize for the Promotion of Democratic Practices in Europe; former chairman of the Municipal Council in Lom; First director of the Center for Educational Integration of Children and Pupils from Ethnic Minorities at the Ministry of Education.

#### Abstract

Since 1996 "Roma-Lom" Foundation (RLF) is operating in Northwestern Bulgaria, a region with high concentration of Roma in Europe, and is influencing the Roma focused policies at national level. The educational inequalities in Roma communities became a priority of RLF strategy from the very beginning, performed under different projects and donors' support and following the approaches of convincing institutions for adequate educational policies concerning Roma and empowering the Roma community to participate in policy making; creating synergy of all stakeholders' efforts and implementing integrated programs focused on improving the Roma access to quality education.

In 1996, over 90% of Roma children in Lom attended 5 segregated schools and did not continue their education beyond the 8th grade, less than 1% completed secondary education; in the so-called "elite" schools in the center there were 1-2 Roma children only. Initially, RLF tried to compensate for all the deficits in education attempting to 'replace' the obligations of the schools: organizing interest clubs, extracurricular forms, assistant teachers, teacher



trainings, Roma parents' motivation, etc. The analysis showed good results, but the educational desegregation required a different approach, convincing the educational institutions to take over their obligations for quality education of Roma children. Exploring the investments in education RLF identified a multiple difference in funding of schools by the municipal budget: 4 times less was invested in the 'Roma' schools, which affected the educational achievements. RLF organized a campaign that led to signing of the "Declaration of Equality", obliging the Municipal Council to ensure a fair distribution of the budget regardless ethnic origin. The second line of interventions was the opening of the kindergartens and the so-called "elite schools" to Roma children. As a result, a real change in Roma educational inclusion in Lom was achieved.

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## The challenges in involving municipalities and public social services to support the access to education of Roma children and youth in Bulgaria

Ralitz Sechkova - Creating Effective Grassroots Alternatives - C.E.G.A. Foundation

### Short biography

PhD in history. Experienced in research and projects for social inclusion, Roma community development, inclusive education, networking, capacity building of NGOs and professionals. Works with C.E.G.A. Foundation, Roma and non-Roma NGOs in Bulgaria since 1995; key expert in M&E of Roma projects in Romania (2005–2008); consultant at UNICEF Bulgaria in strategic planning of social services and in development of models of integrated outreach services for segregated Roma communities (2008–2019).

### Abstract

The presentation is focused on the interventions for involvement of the social system to contribute for addressing the educational inequalities in segregated Roma communities in Bulgaria. Together with Municipalities and NGOs UNICEF has promoted innovative model of outreach social services for support of most vulnerable Roma families, overcoming the aftermaths of the living in social exclusion and isolation from the macro society for generations in Roma communities and prevention of the risks of deeper marginalization. Multisectoral and multiethnic teams of social workers, nurses and social assistants from Roma origin are proactively identifying the children and families at risk, and are providing services and community development programs inside the Roma neighbourhoods. The educational exclusion and drop outs of Roma children are a key priority for the mobile teams, working with Roma children, parents, the whole household and with the key decision makers in the



Roma community for changing attitudes to education, motivation for better education, reintegration and keeping Roma children at school.

Since 2011, UNICEF has piloted the innovation in two regions; since 2021 – in 7 new municipalities in the framework of the European Child Guarantee project. Despite the established partnership with the responsible national institutions in Bulgaria and the proved evidence-based effectiveness of the outreach model of social and educational inclusion, the advocacy for national-wide rolling out faced hard challenges in ensuring sustainability and state delegated funding. Now, the model is adopted as a “social service community work” by the new Law for Social Services, but the fight for keeping the original methods and community-based approaches is still continuing.

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## The three pillars of support and success in Roma children’s lives

Mihail Mishev - Foundation Opre Roma for Community Empowerment (FORCE), Bulgaria

### Short biography

Mihail Mishev, Foundation Opre Roma for Community Empowerment (FORCE) (Bulgaria): Bachelor student majoring in Political Science and Psychology at the American University in Bulgaria. Roma activist with over 6 years of experience in the non-governmental sector. Intern at the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria; co-founder of Foundation Opre Roma for Community Empowerment (FORCE); Global Fellow at Open Society University Network (OSUN); Political analyzer at Strazha Foundation.

### Abstract

The presentation's goal is to shed light on the significance of proper child-parent-school connection.

Mihail, a Roma born in one of Bulgaria's largest Roma districts, the Nadezhda neighbourhood in Sliven, had the opportunity to attend both a segregated and an elite school. After finishing elementary school, he was admitted to the region's most prestigious high school, Dobri Chintulov Science and Mathematics High School. Mihail is the first Roma from the Nadezhda neighbourhood to be admitted to the high school in its over 140-year history. He got admitted to study political science and psychology at the renowned American University in Bulgaria after graduating from high school. He is still enrolled as a student there. Mihail is certain that the proper interaction between the child, parents, and representatives of the educational institution is the foundation of success, having had the opportunity to experience both worlds - the segregated school and the elite ones, as well as his professional experience.



## Session 4: Social context, social change and transformative school practices

Moderator: Éva Thun - John Wesley Theological College

### The effectiveness of equity funding of schools in Flanders

Ides Nicaise - HIVA-KU - Research Institute for Work and Society, Leuven

#### Short biography

Idesbald Nicaise is emeritus professor in ‘education and society’ and senior research manager at HIVA (Research Institute for Work and Society, KU Leuven). Emilie Franck is PhD student at HIVA. Dr. Sebastiano Cincinnato is a former researcher at the same institute.

#### Abstract

Many countries have introduced equity funding (also called needs-based or compensation funding) for schools that cater for socially disadvantaged student groups. Evaluation studies are relatively scarce but tend to conclude that the effectiveness of such schemes is lower than expected. Our evaluation uses a ‘difference-in-differences’ approach with multiple outcome criteria over a long window of observation. Our findings suggest that the Flemish scheme has been rather successful for students with a migration background but not for low-SES native students.

**Keywords:** equity funding – needs-based funding – positive discrimination – educational - effectiveness – social justice

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### What is the role of teachers in social change?

Éva Thun - John Wesley Theological College

#### Short biography

Éva Thun is an external lecturer and senior researcher at the Department of Education, John Wesley Theological College, Budapest, Hungary. She has published works on social and gender issues in public and higher education. She has contributed to a recent EU analysis of the implementation of equal opportunity policies in education in Hungary as a national expert:



Gender-related challenges in European education systems – EIGE/2016/OPER/08. Her current research focuses on the effect of the presence or absence of women educators' gender awareness on the construction of their professional identities.

### **Abstract**

Max Weber argued that schools teach and maintain particular “status cultures” through which groups in society with similar interests and positions in the status hierarchy are able to maintain their status, their power and dominance. If one accepts this argument, then one can raise the question if it is applicable to teacher education as well.

On the other hand, it is a widely spread view that education is a powerful means for upward mobility in the social hierarchy. Consequently, teachers should be located in a social space where they are able to exercise such power that is required to be accepted as agents for change. Teachers should possess active human agency so as to interact and mediate meanings which are indispensable for initiating such social interactions which form the basis of change.

In my presentation I intend to provide the theoretical analysis of both the position of teachers and the professional identity of teachers in the present-day Hungarian culture. I will rely on those theories which support the recognition of the teaching profession as autonomous, culturally, and societally embedded and having the potential to create a learning context supportive and beneficial for non-privileged students. A comparison will be drawn with the status of teachers when situated in a centrally organized educational system.

In support of the theoretical claim that teachers should be viewed as agents of change I will present case studies and the outcomes of interviews with teachers.

**Keywords:** professional identity, agency, interaction

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## **The struggle is real – How we try to integrate: what’s going well and where is still more work to do. An example from Switzerland**

Clemens W. Pachlatko - Board of Education of the city of Winterthur in Switzerland

### **Short biography**

Clemens W. Pachlatko is a former teacher and principal. His homebase is Switzerland but he has worked and taught in different countries (USA, Finland, Mexico, Libya, etc...). Now he is working with the Board of Education of the city of Winterthur in Switzerland. One of his focus-topics is educational integration and working with students with impairments and disabilities. That’s what his work is focusing on at the moment and with the approach of interdisciplinary work he tries to improve the integration abilities of the regular schools.



## Abstract

The city of Winterthur (115'000 inhabitants, 12'000 students) in Switzerland has approximately 700 students with special needs and impairments. About half of these students are integrated and included in regular schools, others need extra support in different institutions. We work together as an interdisciplinary team of psychologists, social workers, therapists and teachers to analyze each student's needs and try to find the best suitable setting. Many times this is successful, sometimes we face challenges during this process. The presentation should give an impression of the practical work in the 7th largest city in Switzerland and show, where it functions well and where there is still work to be done. It should also give an impression of the current demographic situation in Switzerland.

**Keywords:** Public administration, interdisciplinary work, special needs education

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## New currents in commons' thinking and practices: applying them in education

Alexandros Kioupkiolis - Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

### Short biography

Alexandros Kioupkiolis is Associate Professor of Contemporary Political Theory at Aristotle University, Thessaloniki, Greece. His research interests are focussed on radical democracy, the commons, social movements, and the philosophy of freedom. He has directed an ERC COG project on these topics (Heteropolitics, 2017-2020) and has published numerous relevant books and papers. Recent publications include the paper 'Education as Commons, Children as Commoners: The Case Study of the Little Tree Community', co-authored with Y.Pechtelidis (2020, Democracy and Education, 28, 1) and the monograph The Common and Counter-hegemonic Politics (Edinburgh University Press 2019).

## Abstract

In recent years, research and activity around the commons display certain distinct new emphases and conceptions which expand earlier theories and practices of the commons. This presentation will focus on the contribution mainly of D. Bollier and S. Helfrich (Free, Fair and Alive, 2019) and the P2P Foundation/Lab (The Commons Manifesto, 2019) to bring out some of these significant trends and to discuss their implications for education informed by the logics of the commons. We will dwell, more specifically, on the 'OntoShift', on 'patterns of commoning' in 'peer governance' and on 'cosmolocalism.' The OntoShift designates a



shift in our perception of being which profoundly affects how we imagine and build the world. By enhancing, first, the visibility of various acts of commoning in our midst we can start to further nourish and multiply existing commons. Commons systems break with fixed divisions of Western modernity, such as object/subject, individual/collective, public/private, matter/spirit. The other ontology and value system of the commons is profoundly relational, holistic and dynamic. Patterns of commoning are practical guidelines derived from practice itself that are fuzzy enough to orient and nudge action without dictating it. More specifically, the internal peer governance of the commons displays the ensuing patterns: Bring Diversity into Shared Purpose; Create Semi-Permeable Membranes; Share Knowledge Generously; Assure Consent in Decision Making; Rely on Heterarchy. Finally, cosmopolitanism refers to the combination of global networks of collaboration and sharing of knowledge with the local material production of goods in particular communities. This bridges a cosmopolitan outlook with direct local embeddedness in ways which foster care for the environment, a rich social life and direct empowerment along with translocal solidarities.

**Keywords:** Commons; ontoshift; patterns of commoning; cosmopolitanism; education



## Session 5: Good practices of the churches and their institutions in Slovakia to promote inclusion

Moderator: István Pásztori-Kupán - J. Selye University

### Good practices of the Greek Catholic church and their institutions in Slovakia to promote inclusion

Vojtech Boháč - Episcopal vicar of the Greek-Catholic Eparchy in Košice, Slovakia

#### Short biography

Studies:

1998 - 2002: Diploma in Catholic Theology (Dipl.-Theol.Univ.), Catholic University in Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Germany

2002 - 2007: Doctor Grade of Catholic Theology (Dr. theol.), Faculty of Theology in Paderborn, Germany.

Positions:

2003 - 2007 and 2010 - 2014: Assistant professor at the Department of Liturgical Studies, Paderborn.

2014 - 2016: Assistant professor at the Department of Pastoral Psychology, Paderborn.

2007 - 2010 and 2016 - 2020: Pastoral service in Bardejov and Košice, Slovakia.

2020 - : Episcopal vicar, Eparchy of Košice.

#### Abstract

The Roma belong to the largest national minorities in the Slovak Republic. A big part of Roma community lives in the East of Slovakia. They have low education, a very high rate of unemployment, and they struggle often with poverty. They are distinctly segregated from the majority society. Despite of long years working with the Roma minority, there is a very small success rate of their full adaptation to the society. That's why systematic work with this community is required. A major part of the Greek-Catholic Church is also concentrated in the East of Slovakia. That's why this church not just recognized and knew this problem, but she is permanently trying to implement different projects to resolve this situation. The most important of them is the pastoral activity with Roma. The church uses pastoral centers for this pastoral work. The goal is not only the gradual integration of the Roma into society, but also to respect all their mentality and originality with their particular needs. The everyday work is fulfilled with the spirit of the gospel. The pastoral care of community centers includes also social work, which is an inseparable part of the inclusion process. There are separate, for this mission dedicated priests, assigned to work just with this target group. The centers also



include employees from the majority society and the Roma minority group, who participate in the performance of activities and are very helpful in the pastoral and social care with this minority.

**Keywords:** Gypsies. Roma. Greek Catholic Church. Inclusion. Pastoral care.

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## Good practices of the Roman Catholic and Evangelical churches

István Pásztori-Kupán - J. Selye University

### Short biography

István Pásztori-Kupán had obtained his Licence in Theology in 1996 at the Protestant Theological Institute in Kolozsvár/Cluj, his Master of Theology (1999) and PhD (2002) at the University of Edinburgh, and habilitated (dr. habil., 2010) at the Reformed Theol. University of Debrecen. He has been a university professor in Kolozsvár and is currently teaching in Budapest (Károli Gáspár University) as well. His expertise includes the history and teachers of the Early Christian Church, having published, inter alia, a monograph at Routledge (Theodoret of Cyrus, Routledge, 2006).

### Abstract

This presentation focuses on the lessons and good practices of the Roman Catholic Church in Slovakia following the changes after 1989, especially in the field of inclusion policy. As it is evidenced by the most recent research of Matej Bílik, ‘with privileged position within legal system and support from public finances, comes a great deal of responsibility to use the position and moral authority well’ (Bílik, ‘The Role Of The Roman Catholic Parish In The Civic Life Of Slovak Rural Communities’, Bachelor thesis, Bratislava International School of Liberal Arts, 2020). We shall analyse some of the challenges brought about by the political changes starting from the 1990s, which all religious communities had to deal with throughout the past decades. Special attention will be given to the country reports on Slovakia by the Roman Catholic Caritas organisation. Their insights provide us with valuable information concerning the actions and result of community building, aiding the needy without exclusion, promoting acceptance and love of the neighbour. According to their assessment, ‘in the multiannual financial framework for 2014-2020 within the Europe 2020 strategy, the fight against poverty and social exclusion has been considered on an equal footing with other EU targets and objectives. [...] More efforts have been put in place to ensure that the challenges around social inclusion are addressed: 20% of the European Social Fund (ESF) should have been dedicated to policies and measures aimed at promoting social inclusion, and a specific



fund has been implemented to support Member States in the fight against poverty and social exclusion: the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) [...] Caritas Slovakia has been directly involved in the implementation of FEAD, but not involved in the implementation of the ESF. It considers that both the ESF and FEAD resources have been adequately used to fight poverty and social exclusion.’ (Caritas Report on Slovakia, 2019).

**Keywords:** Roman Catholic Church, Caritas in Slovakia, inclusion, Roma, mission, poverty

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## Good practices of the Reformed Christian Church in Slovakia and her institutions to promote inclusion

Rev. Dr. Attila Palcsó and Dr. Zsuzsanna Tóth - Slovakia

### Short biography

Attila Palcsó (PhD) studied theology at the Faculty of Theology of the Comenius University in Bratislava, graduated in 1998. He attended English language training at Oxford House College in London in 2006 and a postgraduate course at Lund University (Sweden) in 2009. As an consecrated theologian and assistant pastor he served as a pastor for seven years in Brzotín (Berzété) and its three daughter churches (1995-2002). He has been an elected pastor of the Reformed Congregation in Chotín (Hetény) since 2002. Between 1996 and 1999 he was the vice-president of the Rožňava Regional Committee of Csemadok (Hungarian Cultural Organization in Slovakia), in 1998 he was elected president of the Rožňava and Region Foundation, in which he founded the Rákóczi Hungarian House in Rožňava in 2000. He was a member of the board of the Association of Hungarian Television News and Program Producers in Slovakia between 2011-2018. He completed his doctoral studies at Reformed Theological faculty of J. Selye University in Komárno (Komárom) and in 2017 he received his doctorate (PhD). Since his appointment in 2015, he has been a councilor of foreign affairs of the Reformed Christian Church in Slovakia. He has been a founder of the Gólyavár Reformed Kindergarten of the Congregation in Chotín (Hetény) as the local pastor in 2022.

Zsuzsanna Tóth (PhD) studied pedagogy and catechetics at the Faculty of Education of the J. Selye University, major: Hungarian language and literature, graduated in 2009. She obtained doctoral degree at the Reformed Theological Faculty Department of Practical Theology of the J. Selye University in 2014. She has been serving in the Reformed Christian Church in Slovakia since 2013 as a Levite. Nowadays she is the referent of the Roma Mission and the



coordinator by HEKS supported Roma projects in the Reformed Christian Church in Slovakia.

### **Abstract**

In this paper we would like to emphasise how the Reformed Christian Church in Slovakia is living as an inclusive community. Our goal is to show with some good examples of inclusivity how the church actively promotes the fundamental biblical teaching of love to our neighbours. The Reformed Christian Church in Slovakia has very special position in the country. The congregations of the church are situated geographically mainly in the Southern part of Slovakia, close to the Hungarian borders. According to the peace agreements after the first and second world war the indigenous Hungarian inhabitants remained in these territories in their villages and cities and of course in their congregations too.

This is the special situation of the Reformed Christian Church in Slovakia and despite to the huge majority of Hungarian speaking congregations we use in the General Church level two languages, the Hungarian and the Slovak. The Slovak reformed people and Slovak congregations are naturally inclusive parts and bodies of the church and they have positive discrimination in the church.

The next example of inclusiveness is the Roma Mission in the church. There are regions with a huge majority of the Roma communities and our efforts are to help these people to find their proper position in the society. We would like to give a clearer picture to the audience how this mission works and to show the challenges and the huge efforts of the church towards to the inclusion and integration of Roma communities.

Beside the indigenous national communities in our church as Hungarians, Slovaks and Roma in the last decades we had welcoming some new national communities too. These people came to Slovakia because of their investments and their jobs. The one of the largest and well-organized community is from South-Korea. South-Korean people have their own Korean congregations but their strong effort is to build close connections with our church. There are some good examples of the inclusiveness in our church in different activities and missional efforts between Korean and Slovak reformed people.

The war in Ukraine caused the huge war refugee migration to our countries in the Central-Europe, especially to countries which have borders with Ukraine such as Slovakia. We have been faced since the beginning of the conflict with enormous refugee crises and our church did very important activities to create safe places and welcoming atmosphere for these people in need. We would like to give a short report about these examples of the inclusivity provided by our church in the situation of war and refugee crises.



## Good practices of the Evangelic Church and their institutions in Slovakia to promote inclusion

Juraj Bándy - Slovakia

### Short biography

Juraj Bándy was born in 1982 in Dunajska Streda, Slovakia. After studying German language and majoring in history (Mgr. 2006), he received his title PaedDr. (pedagogy) at the Pedagogical Faculty of Comenius University in Bratislava. In 2015, he earned his PhD title at the Theological Faculty of the Reformed Church at Selye Janos University in Komarno. He has been working as a teacher at the Technical Middle School in Samorin since 2015. He is married and has 3 children. His research area focuses on the Church History and Evangelical Church in Japan. He has been publishing and lecturing about his area of research since 2011.

### Abstract

The main purpose of this research paper is to present the mission among the Roma minority within the framework of the Evangelical Church in Slovakia. After 1989, Evangelical Church began to deal with the Roma minority in a purposeful and organized manner. In some places, after several trials, things were on a decline and saw no improvement, but in some places one can notice a visible success and improvement. This activity is not only a Christian mission, but also an effort to improve socialisation in Roma community. After conveying a survey with other pastors of the concerned parishes, this study gives an overview of the current state of the mission among Roma society.

**Keywords:** Lutheran, roma, mission,



## Session 6: The impact of prejudice and segregation on disadvantaged pupils and the concept of transformative practices in education

Moderator: Péter Tibor Nagy - Oltalom Charity Society

### The Nature of Prejudice and Discrimination of Roma Adolescent Girls in Schools

Hanna Szekeres - Eötvös Loránd University

#### Short biography

Hanna Szekeres is a social psychologist and an Assistant Professor at the Department of Social Psychology, at Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) in Hungary. Her research and field work focuses on prejudice against minorities in society, prejudice reduction programs, educational discrimination, and activism.

#### Abstract

Roma women are one of the most disempowered groups in Europe, and their fate is determined already in schools. While the educational gender gap for majority women slowly decreased over decades, in contrast, amongst Roma women it is still constantly present. The attainment gap is often explained through socioeconomic barriers that are produced by segregation, like poverty. However, evidence is missing in both academic and policy-making domains on how majority society's antigypsyism, especially those of teachers, creates obstacles to Roma students' educational integration. The goal of the present research is to assess the nature of prejudice among teachers that drive educational discrimination against Roma girls, with special focus on "paternalistic" educational attitudes (e.g., "Roma students should be given easier and less challenging tasks so they have a sense of accomplishment"). Across two studies, Hungarian preservice teachers (N=161) and experienced teachers (N=195) across the country evaluated portfolios of students whose gender and ethnicity were experimentally varied. We found that Roma students were evaluated worse and less likely recommended to higher school tracks than equally qualified majority students, and this effect was especially pronounced for Roma girls. Importantly, we also found that the discrimination of Roma girls was predicted by perceived competence (not perceived warmth or negative feelings) and through paternalistic (not hostile) educational attitudes. These results suggest a shift in focus of prejudice-reduction programs for educators, which are primarily comprised of



“sensitivity trainings” that focuses on decreasing affective dimensions of prejudice and neglects to address perceived competence-intelligence or paternalism.

**Keywords:** prejudice, education, Roma girls, paternalism

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## The relationship between segregated education and educational quality

Ágnes Kende - Oltalom Charity Society

### Short biography

Agnes Kende has earned her MA from Sociology in 1995 and she is completing her Ph.D. thesis in social policy at ELTE University.

She has worked in various EU-funded research projects at the CEU Center for Policy Studies since 2008, such as EDUMIGROM, a research project entitled Ethnic differences in education and diverging prospects for urban youth in an enlarged Europe; Reducing Early School Leaving in the EU (RESL.eu), a research project dedicated to reducing early school leaving in Europe; in the framework of SALEACOM Overcoming inequalities in schools and learning communities: innovative education for a new century she spent a one month long secondment in Barcelona visiting Roma NGOs and schools and she also visited the Stanford Graduate School of Education - Stanford University; and the Solidarity in European Societies: Empowerment, Social Justice and Citizenship (SOLIDUS) project was about to explore conceptually and empirically the current and future expressions of European solidarity from an inter-disciplinary approach. She is currently working in ETHOS - Towards a European Theory of Justice and Fairness research project on developing to create a new integrative perspective on justice and fairness at the School of Public Policy, and the Departments of International Relations and Legal Studies of Central European University and in the EDUC project the “Future Challenges to Education Systems in Central Eastern European Context” (EDUC) aiming at assessing the ability of the education systems of five Central-Eastern European countries to respond to various ongoing changes.

Earlier, Agnes Kende was engaged with the situation of Roma as a journalist, radio editor, and contributor to various policy studies, while later on, she acted as an expert in the implementation of school integration programs in Hungary.

In the past 25 years, she has participated in several international and domestic research projects on Roma issues, concerning education, poverty, and protection of children. Lately, she has been also been involved in numerous project evaluations, in Hungarian, and in English, concerning issues of the situation of Roma people, local programs against child



poverty, housing poverty and the impact of programs financed by the European Union on Roma integration.

### **Abstract**

Anti-Gypsyism is related to stereotypical and non-diversified perception of Roma people that leads to prejudice against them in both private and public areas. The anti-Gypsyism perspective talks about a complex beliefs and ideology system behind the school exclusion of Roma children. Anti-Gypsyism is therefore deeply embedded in social structures, especially in state institutions like the police, the military or the education system, and is constantly reproduced. Stigmatisation of Roma identity within the education systems happened through failing to include within the mainstream curricula any information on Roma history, arts and culture.

The schooling problems of the Roma children can be observed from two different aspects. On the one hand, one has to look at the assimilation process in Hungary, because that is how Roma children were placed in the education system in the first place and that is how all the prevailing negative tendencies got started. On the other hand, it is worth examining the schooling of the Roma children from the point of view of the education system, because their status is strongly determined by how developed the system is.

In the communist period the East and Central European states enforced to assimilate the Roma and bring them under state control. Although they remained at the bottom of all socio-economic indicators, the employment policies, free education and healthcare, state assistance in housing and child-rearing had considerably improved the objective conditions of many Roma in these countries. However, the cost of Roma assimilation was high, not only in terms of growing inter-ethnic tensions, but also in the loss of the rights to their own ethnic identity. The basic goal of communist systems was to control as large spectrum of socio-economic and political activities as possible. As the elites of these countries envisioned a process of homogenization to which nationalities posed a potential obstacle, the Roma, with their “deviant” lifestyles, did not fit into the communist design of a new society. Therefore, the fundamental goal was to assimilate them and to transform them into productive, cooperative, and supportive socialist citizens. The party-states followed several integral policies to ensure speedy Romani assimilation: dispersal of compact Gypsy communities and subsequent resettlement, mandatory education, and compulsory wage labor.

The party resolution of 1961 — that officially recognized, for the first time, the poverty and profound socio-economic marginality of the Roma — was a turning point that began the process of forceful assimilation in Hungary. In 1964 and 1968 Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party (HSWP) documents criticized the unimpressive results of the party’s educational, employment, and relocation policies and acknowledged that bridging the gap between the Roma and the rest of society might well take decades of thorough work and a large amount of resources. In many respects (primary education, employment, culture) the resultant policies



improved on the Roma's situation although in several regards (such as higher education) they were rather more superficial. Notwithstanding the HSWP's propaganda efforts, two-thirds of Roma still lived below the official poverty line in the 80s.

The impact of the socio-economic background of pupils on their educational outcomes in Hungary is one of the strongest in the EU. Concentration of disadvantaged and Roma children in certain schools has increased in the past decade, particularly in cities. Schools are increasingly characterised by the similar socio-economic background of their pupils, with concentrations of disadvantaged pupils in certain schools. The share of schools with over 50% of Roma students increased from around 9% in 2008 to around 14% in 2018 (2020 Country Report Hungary). The share of disadvantaged students admitted to higher education was very low at 1.4% in 2017, and the share of Roma was only 0.8% (MTA, 2020; KSH, 2018). Legislative changes in 2011 restricted schools' autonomy on teaching content, textbook choice and management of financial and human resources. Non-State schools are exempt from some legislative restrictions and in particular have broader room to select their students, thereby limiting the impact and enforceability of desegregation measures. The low effectiveness and equity in the school system are likely to be linked to the low level of curricular autonomy, the lack of socioeconomic diversity within schools and low teacher salaries.

The measure on the mandatory enrolment of children into kindergarten from the age of three effective as of 1 September 2015 can contribute to the development of severely disadvantaged children. At the same time the quality of early childhood education and school education is threatened by the chronic shortage of educators and teachers, something to which the government has been unable to find solutions for years. One tenth of the settlements are facing kindergarten teacher resourcing issues, mostly affecting the countryside and the eastern part of the country. Free of charge meals in institutions of public education are available for a wide range of children in need in Hungary.

In Hungary, access to quality education is restricted by the fact that there has been a consistent shortage of teachers, and that the number of classes held by non-specialist teachers in schools is growing as well – especially in districts where the ratio of disadvantaged children is high. In addition, it is also often the case that Roma students attend segregated institutions, which prevents them from accessing quality education, reduces the chances of relationships forming between different groups of young people, and contributes to maintaining already strong prejudices. The National Social Inclusion Strategy 2011-2020 (NSIS) emphasizes the integration and inclusion of the Roma in the Hungarian public education system as a major goal, but education related regulations in the last 8 years have facilitated the realization of school segregation by encouraging the expansion of state funded religious schools. The increasing number of religious schools adds to the deepening of selection because of their special rules for the admission of children. Typically, church schools are chosen by middle-class families or by local elite groups, while Roma children attend the ever-more



abandoned public schools. Most of the general primary schools attended by mainly Roma children are not able to give students the basic competences necessary for further studies. Hence after completing primary school, Roma students from such schools are generally only accepted at low level vocational schools or become enrolled in special bridging programs designed to prepare students to enter vocational schools, or the labour market.

In Hungary, every other Roma young person drops out of school without obtaining any qualifications (early school leaving) from the Hungarian educational system. More than half of those who complete secondary school complete a vocational school, and only one fifth graduates from a grammar school. The ratios are reversed in non-Roma populations; therefore, the gap between the two groups is growing. However, the enrolment into school of Roma young people is ensured for the most part, the biggest issue that this population faces high dropout rates, which means that their chances of continued education have failed to improve for years. Most Roma young people are taught in segregated classes, where it is very difficult to provide quality education. The ratio of students obtaining a baccalaureate diploma is 75 per cent among non-Roma students, and 24 per cent among the Roma students. Vocational schools have become a typical form of further education for disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged students. The introduction of three-year vocational school training (from the 2010/2011 school year) and the reduction of public knowledge training classes are problematic from a professional standpoint. Due to the fact that the average student that enrolls in a vocational school is characterised by basic skills deficiencies brought on from primary school, these students would require a longer training duration and remedial programmes to ensure that they can begin acquiring vocation specific knowledge without problems. There are virtually no paths leading from vocational schools to vocational grammar schools and grammar schools, where a baccalaureate diploma can be earned, which is a process that clearly reinforces segregation within the structures of education. The introduction of the dual training system and the reduction of the mandatory schooling age to 16 occurred virtually at the same time which had a direct negative effect on the career orientation of young people. The reduction of the mandatory school age to 16 an “inhibiting” measure, as increased dropout rates tremendously. The vast majority of Roma young people (living within a segregated area) do not usually choose a profession, rather they choose a school which is close by and is willing to admit them.

In Hungary, the phenomenon of separating Roma children from their non-Roma peers in schools has been discussed by academics since the early 1980s. Using statistical methods and available comprehensive data about the ethnic composition of Hungarian primary schools for 1980 and 2011, Kertesi and Kézdi (2013) found that school segregation of Roma children had significantly increased since the transition in 1989. The Hungarian educational system today is not only not able to compensate for the disadvantages arising from a child’s social background, but it is actually reinforcing them through the selection and segregation mechanisms present at all levels of public education. Segregation measured in primary



schools has been increasing sharply since 2010. The commuting of the children of higher status parents to “elite” schools resulted in the schools of certain towns becoming "ghetto schools" despite the fact that the towns themselves did not necessarily become Roma majority towns. Having had no assigned compulsory school districts, church-maintained primary schools contribute to heightening segregation in education. Church schools even in disadvantaged regions and in smaller towns are primarily engaged in the education of children of more affluent families, meaning that they help the local elite escape from state-maintained schools. From 2013 onwards the education system has become more centralized, however, the right to the freedom of choice of school and the most important school incentives remained the same. When examining the segregation processes at play Kertesi és Kézdi (2014) arrived at the conclusion that “the primary source of segregation in schools is not that non-Roma families are trying to avoid Roma students, but rather the strong selection that is based on the presumed quality of the schools and the observable abilities of the students, which is made possible by the freedom of choice of school and the low cost of commuting”.

**Keywords:** Segregation in education, the Roma, educational inequalities, selectivity in the education system, centralization, lack of school autonomy

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## Transformative practices for disadvantaged students: theoretical framework and practical applications

György Mészáros - Eötvös Loránd University

### Short biography

György Mészáros is an associate professor at the Faculty of Education and Psychology, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary. He worked as a secondary school teacher among Roma students for several years and is still engaged in different emancipatory practices. As a researcher, he does mainly critical ethnography, but his research interests include: democratic education, critical citizenship, pedagogical anthropology and sexuality and gender topics. He is a researcher at Wesley János Theological College in the Inclusion4Schools project. He is the head of the Anthropology of Education Research Group at his Faculty. He served as a member of the Administrative Council of the Association for Teacher Education in Europe between 2012 and 2018.

### Abstract

Research topic/aim:



The presentation aims to outline an approach developed in an international project on inclusion to share good practices, introducing the concept of transformative practices. The project targets schools that are working with disadvantaged, predominantly Roma children.

Theoretical framework:

The language of best or good practice in education is problematic (Fullan). The answer to the question of what practice is desirable in education, cannot be derived from what is already measured and what actually works (Biesta). Thus, transformative educational praxis and practices refer to combining action with reflection. A practice should be considered in its context, and it should be transmitted not as a tool, but as a process.

Methodological design and expected conclusions:

Following the above-outlined theory on transformative practices, already existing good practices (from Hungary, Albania and Bulgaria) were analysed through interpretive content analysis, and a complex template, self-evaluation and a process of transmitting practices have been developed for schools working with disadvantaged pupils.

