

Black and White Trapped in Integration

Equity for Romani Students and Multicultural Diversity in Education

Draft Research Paper

<u>1. Abstract</u>	3
<u>2. Introduction</u>	4
<u>3. Roma in Hungary after the Collapse of the Communism</u>	7
3.1. <u>Plight of the Roma</u>	7
3.2. <u>Number of Romani people in Hungary</u>	9
3.3. <u>State’s Obligations</u>	10
3.4. <u>Political representation</u>	12
<u>4. Romani Children in the Hungarian Education System</u>	13
4.1. <u>Legal background of Education</u>	13
4.1.1. <u>Decentralised Education System</u>	13
4.1.2. <u>Minority Rights in Acts</u>	14
4.1.3. <u>Pedagogical modernisation</u>	15
4.2. <u>Romani students’ access to education</u>	17
4.2.1. <u>Number of Romani students in schools</u>	18
4.2.2. <u>Shortcomings of normal schools</u>	19
4.2.3. <u>Teachers’ attitude</u>	23
4.2.4. <u>Selective mechanisms of schools</u>	25
4.3. <u>Segregated Roma schools</u>	29
4.3.1. <u>Spontaneously segregated schools</u>	29
4.3.2. <u>Roma children trapped in Remedial Education</u>	33
4.4. <u>Segregated Romani Classes</u>	42
4.4.1. <u>Threats of Roma programs</u>	42
4.4.2. <u>Special Talent Care Programs: Targeting non-Roma</u>	45
<u>5. Integration programs</u>	47
5.1. <u>New Education Integration Policy</u>	47
5.2. <u>Barriers of Integration</u>	52
<u>6. Conclusion</u>	58

1. Abstract

My research aims to examine and analyse the Hungarian education system for ensuring equity for Romani students and multicultural diversity in education. To begin, I will give an overview of the situation of Romani minority that significantly changed after the collapse of the communism. Presenting the political and legal environment, the main political intentions and goals I describe how Hungarian Roma education policy was formulated during the last decade.

I also analyse the impact of Hungarian education policies on the effectiveness of schools. I present and assess the current Roma education policy by reviewing the legal background, aims, implementation and achievements. Based on the results of my research paper, comparing the planned and realised actual implementation and consequences, I assess the changes, identify the weak points and formulate recommendations for the further improvement in my policy paper.

During my research I used both qualitative (e.g. documentary analysis, in depth interviews, analytical methods: grounded theory) and quantitative techniques. Research results are planned to be utilised in the improvement of Hungarian education policy.

2. Introduction

Education is considered to be means to break out of this social deprivation, and provides opportunity for integration and upwards social mobilization. There is a wide range of scientific literature dealing with education related aspects of deprivation. Kertesi, Kézdi (1996) and Radó (1997) agree that education does have a dominant impact on impeding the reproduction of a repetitive disadvantageous situation through generations.

Recent sociological research (Kertesi-Kézdi, 1996; Radó, 1997; Babusik 2000; Havas-Kemény-Liskó 2002; 2004) claims that the low performance and high drop-out rate of Romani students are due to a set of interweaving factors. These research gathered and analysed all related relevant factors: the role of pre-school education in Kindergartens, impact of deprived settlement, school facilities, equipment and buildings on school standards, undemanding requirements in school; hidden curricula in schools; discriminative attitude and negative expectations of teachers; selective and segregating mechanisms of schools; low qualification of parents; lack of motivation; tense situation between family and school, and all other consequences of *unequal access to quality education*.

Comprehensive sociological research has focused on schools with a high ratio of Romani children¹ and revealed segregation and substandard education of Romani children as a universal phenomenon in the Hungarian public education system almost at all level and in all education forms where Romani students are present². The research revealed that while numerous segregated Roma schools emerged based residential segregation of Romani neighbourhoods (*spontaneously, unintentionally segregated schools*), on areas with mixed

¹ Based on the last representative research of Kemény

² Based on international research we can conclude that these trends and phenomena appear in other countries of Central-Eastern-Europe (see: ERRC: STIGMATA, Segregated Schooling of Roma in Central and Eastern Europe)

population there are other forms of segregation that occur. Education institutions with mixed school population showed tendencies to separate Romani children in separate classes (*segregated classes*) arguing with implementing special school curricula (e.g. special pedagogical talent care programs targeting non-Romani and catch-up programs targeting Romani students).

The high ratio of Romani children in remedial special schools (originally established for mentally handicapped children) has anything to do with the capability of Romani children but on the contrary draw the attention to the shortcomings of the present education system and education policy. According to the report of the Parliamentary Commissioner for National and Ethnic Minority Rights (hereinafter: ombudsman) the Romani students are over represented in these institutions, moreover in same county (e.g. Borsod-Abauj-Zemplen county) the rate of Romani students following special remedial curriculum reaches 96 percent (Loss, 1998).

Several other forms of segregation occur in the education system. Primary schools often are not able to cope with the complex set of problems facing with the teaching of Romani students. Different social and cultural background, language or learning difficulties, ethnic origin, different socialisation seem to be "compelling" reasons for schools to move numerous Romani students into private student status. Without any chance returning to normal schools again, these students are squeezed out completely from the education system very soon.

The Ministry of Education facing the shocking results of segregation research developed a new strategy to promote integration.

In 2003 the Ministry established the National Educational Integration Centre and Network (hereinafter: Integration Centre and Network), meanwhile initiated several legal changes, too. The Integration Centre and Network aims to spread the new normative financial

system and encourage the schools to apply for it. The centre is also responsible to develop a pedagogical background to the integrated education and consider the pre-conditions to implement successfully the new system.

The method employed in my research paper includes an analytical overview of expert studies and research, examination of the legal background, analysis of statistical data on education, completed with the interviewing of people working in special Roma educational programs and integration programs, employees of the integration network, teachers, school directors, Romani families and children. By way of conclusion, based on the outcomes, in my policy paper I will present recommendations to improve the education policy.

In the following chapters – based on my research findings – after analyzing the legal changes and the new education policy (*integration policy*), I examine the applied tools in that sense that to which extent they are able to promote the integration and multicultural education in schools. While analyzing the new integration tools (primary the normative financing system) I highlight the possible impact on the content and quality of education in schools which used to face the critics of segregation and low standard education level. Finally I identify the threats and shortcomings of the integration policy that may place obstacles in the way of effective integration. In the last chapter I make policy recommendations to develop more effective integration policies in order to promote access for equal opportunity and realisation of a less selective and discriminative education system.

3. Roma in Hungary after the Collapse of the Communism

3.1. *Plight of the Roma*

After the break-down of Communism, the state – facing the shifted demands of the evolving market economy – closed down the huge loss-making industries. High proportion of unskilled Roma labourers – working previously in the construction and manufacturing industry became unemployed from one day to the next. The unemployment rate was three times higher among the Romani population (35.8%) than among non-Romani (11.2%). Especially the rate among young Romani people starting out on their careers was extremely high: among all unemployed it exceeded 46% (Speder, 1997).

Without appropriate qualifications they could not enter the work-force again, which resulted in extreme poverty and deprivation among the Roma. During the following years Romani families lacking their permanent source of income ended on the margins of society in large numbers. Economically the possibilities and living standards of the Romani population sharply decreased according to a longitudinal survey undertaken between 1992 and 1996 on Hungarian households.³ The survey examines different social groups according to certain social characteristics (for instance status, age, region and number of children, marital status). It reveals that there are some sub-groups which are highly represented among the most deprived groups of people: people living in North-Eastern Hungary, housewives, young people aged 15-19, widowed, and women with more than three children. All these factors

³ Speder, Zsolt, Habich, R. *Winners and Losers. Transformational outcomes in a comparative context.* 'Nyertesek és vesztesek' Hungarian Households Investigation, Budapest, 1997

increase the possibilities of belonging to the deprived groups. The pattern of the data undoubtedly shows that being a Roma implies the highest risk of belonging to one of the most deprived groups (Speder, 1997)

As a result of the economic transition the Romani population became internally more stratified and had many layers, divided mostly by their living standards. Unskilled labourers who lost their job when factories closed down and Romani people living in rural areas form the overwhelming majority of the local population who did not have an opportunity to break out, thus lost their hope and lived from one day to the next (Kertesi, 2000).⁴ Skilled workers, tradesmen, and other qualified workers belonged to a separate group. These people could preserve some skills from their previous employment that made them able to raise funds. They could attain a trade license and carry on trade and other businesses, or become market traders. A new, rather thin layer of Roma appeared, too: the successful, rich businessmen or entrepreneurs.

Thin layers of Romani society, educated people, often living in mixed-marriages, intended to integrate. Many of them supposed that the majority of the society would accept them only if they aimed to assimilate and took on the majority group values and customs. As a result, they often alienated from their original community, or their community was not inclined to re-adopt them. They have a kind of dual identity, because many of them accept the norms and values of the majority of society, but they do not abandon their traditional values either. They are under pressure to prove that they are integrated, and they keep on fighting to attain the same success as the majority of society. They have to make a much bigger effort to have a degree than non-Romani do, to prove their proficiency at the work force, and to hold their living standards despite doubts of the environment.

⁴ Kertesi, G. *The fall and structural transformation of Roma employment between 1984 and 1994*. 'A cigány foglalkoztatás leépülése és szerkezeti átalakulása 1984 és 1994 között' *Közgazdasági Szemle*, XLVII. 2000, May

Education is considered to be means to break out of this social deprivation, provides opportunity for integration, a prime way for upwards social mobilisation. It has a predominant impact on the acquiring and retaining of rewarding positions in the work-force. Promoting equal chances for Romani students in education and creating a non-selective and non-discriminatory education system based on acknowledging the diversity of ethnic values and culture are fundamental steps of ensuring a healthy multicultural society.

3.2. *Number of Romani people in Hungary*

The Hungarian census recorded 142.683 people of Romani nationality in 1991. In 1993 the representative data collection of the Central Statistic Office (KSH) on private households registered 394 000 Romani people, while the Sociological institute of the Hungarian Academia of Sciences recorded 482 000 people as Romani.

In 2001 the Hungarian census recorded 190.046 people of Romani nationality, but sociologist and experts speak about 450.000-600.000⁵ people. The significant deviation between numbers based on self- and external declaration refers to the fear and apprehension of declaring Romani identity nowadays in Hungary.

3.3. State's Obligations

In 1993 Hungary joined the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, as a member of the European Council. The Convention bans discrimination against minorities and promotes entire legal equality for minorities in every aspects of economic, social, political, and cultural life. In 1995 the institution of ombudsman appeared on the political scene, as a guarantee and legal control for the validation of these rights in practice.

Furthermore concerning language and culture protection the most important provision is the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1997), which obligates Hungary to acknowledge the protection of the language and culture of minorities. By signing the Charter Hungary had the right to provide special protection for all of the 13 minority languages recognized in Hungary. The government secured special protection for 6 minority languages (Croatian, German, Romanian, Serbian, Slovakian, Slovenian), but not including

neither Romani nor Beash⁶ that are the most regular languages (besides Hungarian language) used by the Roma community.

Accessing to the European Union the minority situation in Hungary got vital importance. The Commission's 2001 and 2003 report on Hungary's accession noted that Hungary should primarily "improve the integration of the Roma minority in the Hungarian society, through more efficient implementation and impact assessment of the medium-term Roma action programme, with particular emphasis on promoting access to mainstream education, fighting discrimination in society" (2001).

Also the Copenhagen criteria became very important. It states "membership requires that the candidate country has achieved stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the respect for and protection for minorities".⁷ Directive 29 June 2000 (Race Directive) sets forth that "all forms of discrimination on grounds of race or ethnic origin are prohibited".

⁵ Havas, Gábor and István Kemény and Gábor Kertesi *Kritika*, 1998/3. pp.31-33

⁶ The government refused special protection of Romani and Beash languages on the basis of that they are not connected to any certain land.

⁷ Bulletin of the European Community, 6/1993 at I.13.

3.4. Political representation

Democratic tendencies had an advantageous influence on the self-recognition and political awareness of the Roma in the 1990s. Mushrooming Romani associations, civil organisations and numerous Romani Self-governments (*Cigány Kisebbségi Önkormányzat*) evolved all around the country. Unfortunately they were soon faced with the lack of permanent financial resources, which resulted in difficulties in maintaining the newly established weak, unstable organisations and NGOs. In 1995 the state established the Public Foundation for the Hungarian National and Ethnic Minorities (*Magyarországi Nemzeti és Etnikai Kisebbségekért Közalapítvány*) in order to support minority initiatives and foster minority culture. The Public Foundation for Hungarian Gypsies (*Magyarországi Cigányokért Közalapítvány*), which was founded in the same year, helped mainly to launch agricultural programmes of Roma. The Office for National and Ethnic Minorities (*Nemzeti és Etnikai Kisebbségi Hivatal*) has assumed a variety of functions.

In 2002 in the new Socialist government the Prime Minister's Office appointed a Roma representative, László Teleki to the position of the "Political State Secretary for Roma affairs", a new position. This post gives a great opportunity for Roma politicians to have a deep influence on Hungarian Roma politics. There are Romani representatives hired in each Ministry to act for the Roma aspect of the programs.

Viktoria Mohacsi, a Romani woman was appointed to the position of Ministerial Commissioner for Integrated Education in the Ministry of Education, and another woman Éva Orsos Hegyesine became Deputy State Secretary in the Ministry of Health, Social and Family Affairs.

4. Romani Children in the Hungarian Education System

4.1. *Legal background of Education*

4.1.1. Decentralised Education System

Large-scale changes took place in Hungarian legislation in the years following the political transformation. Democratisation in Hungary brought about legislative changes. In the first years of transition, the education system was decentralised. Local self-governments became maintainers of schools with more responsibilities in local decision making. These changes are stated in Act LXV of 1990 on Local Self-governments (hereafter: “Act on Local Government”), which sets out conditions for the reorganisation of local level minority education. School maintainers are provided for the additional charges of the education of Romani students from a central budget since 1991.

The mayors of villages, towns or municipalities have a significant role and responsibility in securing and implementing legal rules that are to provide inclusive access to equal opportunities in education. They also may affect local public opinion and our understanding of these issues concerning local minorities, and do have responsibility in arranging disagreements and injustices. However, similarly, they may misuse their power and authority in order to endeavour accomplishing actions that definitely result in predictably negative consequences to a group of people.

Helsinki Watch⁸ states that in those villages where Romani people comprise a minority, their settlements at least *have* access to schools, health-care, and municipal services. As opposed to the relatively large number of small villages where Romani people form the overwhelming majority of the population and live under standard with only minimal infrastructure. A typical phenomenon is that if the number of Romani students starts to increase in a school the non-Romani parents take their children out of the schools and enrol them somewhere else, even if they have to travel every day to the next town. Finally there remain only Roma children attending the school.

4.1.2. Minority Rights in Acts

The public education system underwent complete transformation in the years following Communism. Act LXXVII of 1993 on National and Ethnic Minorities (hereafter: “Minority Act”) sets out a comprehensive system of minority rights. This act prescribes the rights of minorities in education and summarises rules and regulations regarding Romani education.

Regarding prohibitive provisions, there is a particular anti-discrimination text in Act LXXIX of 1993 on Public Education (hereinafter: “Public Education Act”). Article 4 (7) prohibits discrimination in public education for any reason, on any ground such as the child’s or its relative’s colour, gender, creed, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property or financial condition, age, lack or limit of disposing power, birth or other condition. The Public Education Act was modified several times, and very important supplements were added.

⁸ The gypsies in Hungary. Struggling for ethnic identity. Human Rights Watch, 1993

First modification was Act LXII of 1996 Amendment to Act LXXIX of 1993 on Public Education (hereafter: “Amendment to Public Education”) states that in Hungary the educational language is Hungarian or a minority language. Moreover it emphasises that the Republic of Hungary guarantees protection and various rights for all national and ethnic minorities to promote their own culture, to use their own language, and to receive school instruction in their mother tongue. Article 10 (3) of Public Education Act sets out further essential rights. Children have a right to participate in education based on their abilities, interests, makings; and have the right to continue education. The problem is that without reasonable financial sources these rights are not guaranteed – it is especially important to emphasise this point as regards Romani students. Education requires a considerable amount of money,⁹ and as we can see later, most of the Romani families can not afford these expenses. Therefore financial support for schooling is an indispensable condition for attaining positive results in education.

4.1.3. Pedagogical modernisation

The content of education was planned to be fundamentally regulated by introducing the National Standard Curriculum (hereafter: “NAT”) in 1998. It determined a framework and prescribed minimum standards for every subject at each school year. The Act was a result of pedagogical modernisation. It put a great emphasis on the relation of different subjects, and attempted to create comprehensive, complex subjects to connect segregated elements of knowledge. NAT stresses the importance of intercultural education, and draws attention to the ethnic character of Romani programs. Accordingly, language teaching and culture-based

⁹Although primary and secondary education (except foundations) are in principal free of charge, proper clothing, travelling expenses between the town and the village and board cost a lot of money.

programs are considered to be equally important for Romani students as well as for other national minorities. This was a significant point because programs for Romani students often aimed at only educational catch-up.

In 1995 the Ministry of Education and Culture made a proposal for the Roma Education Development Program (hereafter: “Romani Education Program”). This proposal aimed to increase the effectiveness of schools. It stressed the importance of improving the public education system through developing pre-school, school-preparatory and catch-up programs. In addition, it prescribed the development of particular educational programs for Romani children, such as an extended scholarship system and a talent-care net that would serve to eliminate disadvantages. It also emphasised the development of local curricula, textbooks, institutional facilities and teaching aids in schools that educate Romani children in large proportions. Unfortunately it did not include proper guarantees for the educational programs, which resulted in catch-up programs for many years. Regarding teachers and social workers the proposal recommends training. General curricula of college or university teachers at present do not contain proper knowledge on Roma. Such information would be crucial, considering that incomprehensive or discriminative attitude often stems from the lack of proper information on Romani socialisation, culture, living conditions and economic difficulties. Extensive training would contribute largely to eliminating prejudice and negative attitudes of teachers, since many of them are likely to educate increasing numbers of Romani children.

In the same year the Government enacted State Resolution No. 1093/1997 (29/07) on the Establishment of a Middle-term Package on the Development of Living Standards of Roma. The package concerned education, employment, and social, medical, anti-discriminative and mass media communication issues. In order to attain changes in Romani

education the program recommends preparation of the special educational program for Romani children in kindergarten and in primary schools and the formation of a talent care net. The guidelines recommend the examination of the effectiveness of public education and teaching methods. They also stress the importance of examining the operations of the Expert and Rehabilitation Committees¹⁰. Due to the automatic mechanisms of transfers by these Committees, many Romani children having learning difficulties, behavioural or other problems – which are not related to their mental capacity – have been mistakenly sent to special schools originally established for mentally handicapped children. The guidelines aim at raising the proportion of Romani students who study in secondary schools, by providing them with special aid. The 1021/2004. resolution on

By announcement of Act XXXI of 1993 on Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (Protocol No.12), Hungary accepted¹¹ the convention of Rome¹². The most relevant part of this Act regarding to minorities is set out in Article 14. It states “the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, color, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status”. Unequal access to quality education of Romani students jeopardise the right set forth in the Convention.

4.2. *Romani students’ access to education*

¹⁰ These above mentioned Committees are supposed to direct children to remedial special schools.

¹¹ The confirmation of Hungary was deposited at the secretary-general of the Council of Europe in November 1992.

¹² Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms signed at Rome on 4 November 1950 (hereinafter: “the Convention”)

4.2.1. Number of Romani students in schools

The real number of Romani students in the Hungarian education system and data concerning their education status can not be stated exactly. The last official data were presented by the Ministry of Education in the school year 1992/93. Subsequently Hungary ratified the Act LXIII of 1992 on the Protection of Personal Data and the Publicity of Data of Public Interest (hereafter: Data Protection Act). As a consequence since then schools are prohibited to register pupils as Roma that hinders gathering relevant statistical information on the real educational situation of Romani students.

In Hungary according to recent statistical data 908.000 students attend primary school in 2003/04, 22.000 children less than in the previous year – due to the falling born rate. Nevertheless in remedial special schools and classes the number of participants has slightly increased recently up to 53.000 students.

The last national representative survey including real education statistic on Roma was conducted in 1993, more than 10 years ago. Since there have been a significant shift in the school population as well as changes in the education system, we can reckon only trends concerning the participation of Romani children at different level of schools. Despite the fact that we may conclude that the number of Romani children studying and finishing primary school has been considerably increased, as well as their participation in secondary schools, but the number of students leaving the secondary education institutions with a final exam is still very low. While in 1993 – based on representative data – the 50 percent of non-Romani children got admission in secondary schools, in case of Romani children this ratio was only 3 percent. Nowadays based on the statistics of the Ministry of Education 94 percent of Romani students finish primary schools, and 85 percent carry on further education. Though many of

them never complete the secondary school since the drop-out rate of Romani children is meaningfully high, near to 40 percent (Havas-Kemény, 1995). An almost representative national survey was conducted in 2003 (Kemény-Janky, 2003). According to their findings- as opposed to the ministerial data - 20 percent of Romani children do not finish the primary school.

According to the reckon of a recent research¹³, the percentage of Romani students within the total school population has been considerably increasing in the last ten years. Between 1989 and 1999 the number of Romani pupils in schools has increased with 4.5 percent. On the contrary, the number of non-Romani pupils has decreased, on average, with 24.4 percent countrywide.

4.2.2. Shortcomings of normal schools

Recent results of the *Programme for International Student Assessment, 2003* (hereinafter: *PISA*) carried out in the OECD countries drew the attention to the general shortcomings of the Hungarian education system (OECD, 2004).¹⁴ Fifteen-year old Hungarian children scored well below the average on exercises testing their reading ability, text comprehension, mathematics and natural sciences. According to the socio-economic status-index¹⁵ of the between-country comparison, in other countries, despite the fact that family background has a fundamental influence on the performance of the students it does not automatically lead to students falling in school. On the contrary, in Hungary, the differences in opportunities that

¹³Havas, Gábor, Kemény, István, Liskó, Ilona: *Cigány gyerekek az általános iskolában*, Oktatókutató Intézet, 2001, Budapest

¹⁴ [Http://www.oki.hu/cikk.php?kod=2005-01-vt-Felvegi-Gyorsjelentes.html](http://www.oki.hu/cikk.php?kod=2005-01-vt-Felvegi-Gyorsjelentes.html)

¹⁵ OECD (2004), *Learning for tomorrow's world: First results from PISA 2003*, Figure 4.8, p.176

can be attributed to family background determine performance in school, far more than in any other OECD country. In addition, access to unequal opportunity increases in time with each year spent in school.

The Institute for Research in Education (Oktatáskutató Intézet), has recently carried out two similar studies in schools with a high ratio of Romani students. (Havas-Kemény-Liskó 2002; 2004). The results indicate that the poor performance in school of the Romani students are based on three main factors:

1.) *pre-conditions*: lack of pre-schooling; family background: marginalised situation, social and economical status of the parents, low professional qualification of relatives and parents; different socialisation; different language socialisation; lack of cultural capital;

2.) *determining factors*: size of the settlement; placement of school on the settlement; performance of school employees quality of school services; discrimination; the percentage of Romani and non-Romani children in school and classes; relationship between family and school; lack of mediators (Romani teachers, family co-ordinators, Romani social workers); segregation, lack of multicultural curricula

3.) *reinforcing factors*: old and rigid pedagogical models, rigid school system; shortcomings of the Hungarian education system (e.g. lack of independent individual learning ability; predominating lexical demands over practical applications); intolerance; negative expectations and attitudes of teachers; hidden curricula; selective and segregating school mechanisms.

While the factors of the first group are responsible for the occurrence of the early disadvantages, the factors identified in the second group prevent Romani from having access to quality education and, as a consequence, their fundamental rights are affected. Finally, due to the factors in the third group, largely attributable to the institution system and the general content of education, initial deficiencies accumulate during school years and finally become severe flaws.

Recent sociological research proves that the segregation of Romani children is present at all levels and forms of the education system: segregation may occur between schools in the same town, between classes within a school, and within a class, where Romani children can be segregated as individuals. Based on estimations by researchers there are approximately 700 completely segregated Romani classes in Hungary today, which means about 8000 Romani students receive low level education that may place definite obstacles in the way of their secondary or higher education studies. Based on residential segregation of Romani neighbourhoods several schools spontaneously segregated with a 90-100 percent overwhelming Romani school population.

Another disadvantageous mechanism of the Hungarian education system facing Romani children is their placement to remedial special schools in disproportionately high numbers. Subsequently the normative support for mentally handicapped children increased, the number of students in remedial special schools has increased also from 3.5 percent (2000) to 5.6 percent (2004). It shows that the normative support has a strong impact on the number of students labelled as mentally handicapped. At present, this number is two times higher than the average in the European Union¹⁶. On one hand, this shows the strong effect of the system-oriented management of these institutions: if the system needs more children, it absorbs more.

On the other hand, besides *de facto* mentally handicapped students, children with writing or counting disorders (dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia) or behavioural problems may belong to the same category in Hungary and are victims of transfer procedures, because they do not get the extra attention and differentiated education in the normal classes which they belong to.

Furthermore, the failure of socially disadvantaged Romani children on tests by Remedial Expert Comities often resulted in lack of pre-schooling education or culturally biased tests.

According to the research of the Hungarian Ombudsman, the proportion of Romani students in special remedial schools is approximately 6-7 times higher than the one of Romani children within the normal education system (Kaltenbach, 2000). In some special remedial schools in the countryside, Romani student account for 90-100 percent of total school population (Loss, 1998), which shows that these schools educate pseudo-handicapped Romani children in large numbers.

Romani children also lack access to integrated education in some schools with mixed school population. Due to pressure from non-Romani parents to keep their children in local schools, their maintainers often co-operate to create special educational programs in order to separate non-Romani and Romani children. They may launch special pedagogical programs for talented children aiming at gathering non-Romani children in one class and Romani children in another class, or they launch catch-up programs for Romani students to separate them.

The private student status is also a form of segregation. Through this, the school expels Romani children from school. Research and interviews with teachers, Romani children and their parents, have shown that once children are taken out of normal classes, the school practically ceases to function as an educational institution for them. The pupils are thus left on

¹⁶ <http://www.romnet.hu/interju/mohacsiv.html>

their own to face the difficulties of studying. In the current school system, the private pupil status is an opportunity for the school to avoid its responsibilities in education and instruction.

4.2.3. Teachers' attitude

Educational experts often ascribe the poor performance of Romani pupils in schools to the inflexibility of the majority school system, and to the inefficient techniques of addressing otherness. They argue that the school ought to adapt to the needs of Romani pupils, and not the other way around, as it is expected today by the dominant pedagogic view.

Hungarian public education aims to provide pupils with high-level theoretical knowledge so that they can move on to the next echelon of the educational system, by succeeding at the admission exams. Schools prefer to invest in talented pupils, who have a good chance of gaining admission to the institutions of the next educational level, as the schools' standing rests on these admission ratios. Pupils who lack the abilities of independent learning and efficient study face repeated obstacles in school advancement.

A study initiated by the Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for National and Ethnic Minority Rights has recently caused a great uproar. The focus of the poll was the prejudices against minorities among fresh graduates of 21 teacher - training colleges. The data of the poll¹⁷ indicated prejudices against minorities in 38,5 % of those asked, and showed mild prejudices in 36,5 % of those asked. Only 7,4 % of the graduates asked proved tolerant with minorities.

¹⁷ There are many criticisms concerning the validity of the poll. The 447 questionnaires are not representatives and reliable. News-articles: 28/11/2001 Népszabadság 6.o., Magyar Nemzet 4.o., Magyar Hírlap 1, 6, 11..o., Népszava 2.o.

Yet today we find Romani teachers in very few schools. According to a study done in 898 elementary schools with a high ratio of Roma pupils, among the 27730 teachers working in kindergartens and schools, only 45 declared themselves Roma¹⁸.

The Council of Europe has put forth a recommendation to ensure the training for teachers of Roma pupils, to make their communication more successful. Romani teacher - training has been a success in many countries. In Hungary, too, there are programs to raise the number of Romani teachers, and to familiarise those teachers who work in close contact with Roma with Romani culture.

The Ministry of Education initiated a program for disadvantaged children to eliminate the shortcomings of the normal education system. The program aims to improve the education level of disadvantaged children. According to draft estimation approximately 75 percent of them are Romani. The Ministry of Education applied a unique definition to identify “disadvantaged target group”. If the parents of the children have exactly or less than 8 classes, and receives the family supplementary support than belongs into this category.

Schools trying to integrate Romani children will receive 51.000 HUF/child/year which is a considerable contribution and stimulating amount to reach significant changes. By the launching of the integration program in September 2003, the Ministry of Education has to pass the 39E paragraph of 11/1994 MKM ordinance, that fix the amount of the normative supplementary support. First they would like to start the program in class 1, 5 and 9 which are turning points and times in schools for forming new classes.

A major condition of successful integration will be measured by the bias of Romani percentage of parallel classes in schools. If the difference between two classes is higher than 25% than the school can not receive the Integration quota.

¹⁸ Radó, Péter: Jelentés a magyarországi cigány tanulók oktatásáról, Szakértői tanulmány a Nemzeti és Etnikai Kisebbségi Hivatal számára, Budapest: 1997.

Undoubtedly there are many Romani parents who successfully adapt themselves to the required norms and values of the non-Romani society, although they definitely have to make compromises. The frame of this study and lack of time and place do not let me analyse the difference between successful integration and assimilation. However, we can conclude that both result in crashing of values between Roma and Hungarian society, within Romani families and between the original local Romani community and the Romani family as well. While successful integration presumably embodies keeping some traditional values, assimilation may result in giving up crucial and fundamental principals and traditional values. The price of adaptation may be low or high – depending on subjective judgements.

4.2.4. Selective mechanisms of schools

The frequent lack of `study` experience in the years of nursery or preparatory school would require a fast adjustment from Roma children to a new and strict school environment, which they are not able to do. During school years initial deficiencies accumulate and finally become severe flaws. By that time students are not able to catch up with the others any more. Teachers facing their own unsuitability in educating Roma students redirect them into correctional classes or support the idea of sending them to remedial special schools, depriving them of their last chances for further education or for getting lucrative positions at the labour market in the future.

Recent sociological research has focused on schools with a high ratio of Romani children¹⁹ and revealed segregation and substandard education of Romani children as a

¹⁹ Based on the last representative research of Kemény

universal phenomenon in the Hungarian public education system almost at all level and in all education forms where Romani students are present²⁰.

The rigid, centralised Hungarian public school system has been subject of extensive criticism by numerous educational experts and researchers. The main critics point out that the education system is neither able to cope with Romani students nor tolerate any kind of otherness that differs from the mainstream.

The negative mechanism and threats of substandard education are especially present in the countryside, where the rate of Romani students prevails²¹:

Table

The number and proportion of all Romani and non-Romani students in primary school, differentiated on basis of the settlement types they live, in 1992/93.

Type of settlement	All students (number)	All students (%)	Romani students (number)	Romani students (%)	Rate of Romani students among all (%)
Budapest	166145	15.93	6730	9.07	4.05
County Centre	195737	18.77	8031	10.82	4.10
City	291629	27.96	17744	23.90	6.08
Village	381508	37.34	41736	56.22	10.72
Total	1043019	100.00	74241	100.00	7.12

Source: Kertesi - Kézdi (1997)

Especially Romani children coming from deprived villages suffer the negative school mechanisms, already concerning pre-schooling. The regular attendance of children aged 5 and

²⁰ Based on international research we can conclude that these trends and phenomena appear in other countries of Central-Eastern-Europe (see: ERRC: STIGMATA, Segregated Schooling of Roma in Central and Eastern Europe)

²¹ According to a sociological estimation 29% of Romani population live in completely segregated environment, 23% live on settlements in which the proportion of Romani is outstandingly high, and a relatively small percent, 14% moved to places where non-Romani live, and a quarter of Roma live in mixed places. Havas, Gábor, Kemény, István, Liskó, Ilona: Cigány gyerekek az általános iskolában, Oktatáskutató Intézet, 2001, Budapest

above is compulsory.²² Pre-school education plays an important role in pre-socializing the children for school environment and institutional rules, developing language skills (e.g. vocabulary, communication skills) and as a result preventing effectively learning problems at the beginning of the first school year. Still, the attendance of Romani children to Kindergarten is relatively low.²³ Financial reasons, insufficient number of Kindergarten and/or places (especially in the Great Plain) and cultural reasons all contribute to this.

According to data presented by the Ministry of Education the number of children studying at different levels of education are as follows:

	1997 (thousand)	1999 (thousand)	2001 (thousand)
Kindergarten	385	367	342
Primary education	1 004	1 003	944
Vocational education	133	110	130
Secondary education	447	475	420

Source: KSH²⁴, 2001

Comparative sociological research projects undertaken in 1971 and 1993 present data on the increasing educational level of the Romani population. The qualification of Romani people has increased considerably in the last thirty years at both the primary and secondary level. The rate of those who successfully completed primary school²⁵ increased from 12% to 46% between 1971 and 1993. The proportion of Romani students graduating from secondary school did not increase significantly; failing to reach 2% in 1993. The rate of Romani students

²² Act LXXIX of 1993 Article 24

²³ A research carried out in Borsod-Abauj-Zemplen county showed that primarily defects in welfare payments and a lack of adequate equipment resulted in low attendance of Romani children in kindergartens. Pik, Katalin: Roma children and the kindergarten `A cigány gyerekek és az óvoda esete` In: Szalai J., Horváth Á., Landau E.: Born to be a gypsy. Budapest: AKA- New Mandatum Publisher, 2000

²⁴ Central Statistic Office (*Központi Statisztikai Hivatal*)

studying at tertiary level was only 0.2%; according to educational experts it may have increased a little in the last ten years, but not significantly.

The qualification of Romani people in the percentage of different age-groups in 1971
(N=3464)

Age	0 class	1-7 classes	8 classes	High school graduates	University graduates	Total
14 – 19	8.7	69.0	21.4	0.2	0.0	100
20 – 29	21.2	66.0	23.6	1.5	0.4	100
30 – 39	46.6	45.0	7.8	0.4	0.1	100
40 – 49	47.4	46.5	4.0	0.2	0.2	100
50 – 59	52.4	46.3	1.3	0.0	0.0	100
60 – 69	71.0	26.8	2.2	0.0	0.0	100
70 -	68.0	30.4	1.6	0.0	0.0	100
Total	35.9	51.3	12.1	0.5	0.2	100

Source: Kemény, 1996

The qualification of Romani people in the percentage of different age-groups in 1993
(N=5119)

	0 class	1-7 classes	8 classes	Vocational school	Secondary school	University	Total
14 – 19	1.5	32.4	55.3	1.4	0.4	0.0	100
20 – 29	1.7	22.4	59.7	14.5	1.7	0.0	100
30 – 39	4.6	32.5	47.4	12.5	2.5	0.3	100
40 – 49	10.1	39.7	40.8	7.4	1.4	0.6	100
50 – 59	32.0	42.3	20.5	3.7	1.4	0.2	100
60 – 69	39.6	51.2	6.4	2.1	0.4	0.4	100
70 -	50.9	40.2	7.8	1.0	0.0	0.0	100
Total	9.4	32.8	45.6	10.4	1.5	0.2	100

Source: Kertesi – Kézdi, 1997²⁶

²⁵ At the time of the research in the Hungarian education system primary school was 8 years

²⁶ Kertesi Gábor – Kézdi Gábor: *Cigány tanulók az általános iskolában*. In: *Educatio 3: Cigányok és iskola*. Educatio Kiadó, 1996, Budapest

Although the qualification level of Roma increased significantly since 1993, especially in primary education, this does not yield a significant leap forward in their situation, considering the new economical circumstances. Higher qualifications are required for employment in the '90s than were required in the '70s, and demanding a certificate of final examination²⁷ as a condition for employment is becoming more and more customary. The Roma community had to face the fact that completing 8 years of primary school education is insufficient to secure employment for them²⁸.

In fact, school officers are also aware of the fact that it is much more difficult to reveal injustice without reliable statistics. Despite the fact that it is illegal registering Romani students with their ethnic origin, and the awareness of school teachers and directors regarding the issue is evident, many school documents contain precise data on Romani students. Schools possessing an ethnic curriculum are evidently aware of and register the number of Romani students studying in the school; especially because they claim state supplementary ethnic funding given for each Romani child to the maintainer of the school.

4.3. Segregated Roma schools

4.3.1. Spontaneously segregated schools

Housing conditions play a crucial role in forming segregation in schools. In the 60's there were approximately 2100 backward Gypsy settlements in the country. According to a survey, 66% of the 320.000 Romani people lived on these deprived settlements, on the margins of Hungarian society, lacking basic comfort and infrastructure (Kemény, 1971). Since the beginning of the '70s the government has systematically wound up the so-called

²⁷ Students graduating from secondary schools have to take a final examination. Generally students study in apprenticeship schools and some of vocational schools are exceptions.

Gypsy settlements. Moving to houses was actually a positive tendency for Roma comparing the shanties they used to live in. Forced formations of co-operatives (“TSZ”, Socialist model) resulted in recession in agriculture and masses of despairing peasant left for the towns. Industrial development increased work opportunities in towns, which attracted a large number of people, who terminally left their homes behind in small villages. Poor layers of Roma community moved into these houses, but without work opportunity and development of local housing conditions these families gradually pauperised and their living standard gradually decreased. Not infrequently the whole population of villages was replaced. A similar process was perceptible in towns in the ‘80s.

The demolition of social industry resulted in the migration of the workers in large numbers, followed by Roma families trying to settle in the environment. The increasing number of Romani population often prompted the non-Romani population to relocate, so soon Romani communities formed the overwhelming majority of the population on the peripheries of towns. Transition in the end of the ‘80s further worsened the living standards of the Roma population. Although these relatively new ghetto settlements came to existence due to interwoven consequences of economic and social transition, they often contribute or bring about segregation in education.

According to a sociological estimation 29% of Romani population live in completely segregated circumstances, only Roma by themselves, and further 23% live on settlements in which the proportion of Romani is outstandingly high. Only a relatively small percent (14%) of Roma succeed in breaking out of ghetto settlements, and move to places where non-Romani live, and a quarter of Roma live in mixed places.²⁹

²⁸ Radó, Péter *Development of Roma education*. ‘A cigánység oktatásának fejlesztése.’ Iskolakultúra 1995/24

²⁹ Havas, Gábor, Kemény, István, Liskó, Ilona: *Cigány gyerekek az általános iskolában*, Oktatókutató Intézet, 2001, Budapest

Ghetto schools are those school, in which basically only Romani students study because of housing segregation or school-migration³⁰ of non-Romani parents. These schools offer a low requirement system as a possible way to solve their educational problems. On the surface they can produce good grades and the content may be hidden for years. However, the diminished level of education does not help students to achieve good results. Especially striking is that many ghetto schools employ teachers in a high number who lack sufficient qualification. These teachers definitely do not put any extra effort in creating a well-built up syllabus, which would take into consideration the personal learning ability and development speed of students and would effectively support these students. Ghetto schools often employ teachers who probably would not be employed in better schools.

Romani children living in gypsy settlements can not follow further education because there in the town there are usually no secondary school and parents can not afford the high expenses that studying in another town means (travelling cost, extra food, proper cloths).

As mentioned above the percentage of Romani students within the total school population has been considerably increasing in the last ten years. Between 1989 and 1999 the number of Romani pupils in schools has increased with almost 5 percent. On the contrary, the number of non-Romani pupils has decreased, on average approximately with 25 percent countrywide. The concentration of Romani children increased especially in those schools in which the rate of Romani students already exceeded 25 percent in 1993. According to the mentioned study, the rate of Romani students increased with 36,9 percent by 1999, while the percent of non-Romani students decreased radically with 32,7 percent. Overall, in these types of schools, the percent of Romani students increased from 18,6 to 24,3 percents in ten years, due to the segregation mechanisms that persist in housing conditions.

³⁰ School migration means that process, when non-Romani parents enroll their children to neighbouring towns or simply other schools of their own town, if the rate of Romani children exceeds a certain percentage.

The basic trend indicates that if the percentage of Romani students is above of 20-30% within a school population but remains under 60-70, then schools develop homogeneous Romani classes.³¹ Generally in reaction to the increasing number of Romani students, the number of non-Romani students start to decrease which enhances the overall proportion of Romani children in the school. To prevent non-Romani parents from taking their children out of the school, directors try to separate Romani children from non-Romani children in segregated, homogenous classes.³² Schools have a strong interest to keep all children there otherwise they lose the state fund given per capita.

It can also be shown that the learning environment of pupils is worse than in other schools in which non-Romani students are registered in a higher proportion. The size of the Romani population, the number and size of the schools in the town, the housing conditions, local atmosphere and other factors all contribute to the unequal chances in education.

Based on multidimensional set of prerequisites segregation of Romani students may appear *between schools in the town*. The typical manifestations of form of segregation is the presence of either remedial special schools for the mentally handicapped or inferior ghetto schools, although in some cases a combination of these two is also perceivable. According to the research of the Hungarian Ombudsman the proportion of Romani students in remedial special schools is approximately 6-7 times higher than the rate of Romani children within the education system³³. Another form of segregation prevails *within a school, between classes*. There are nearly 700 segregated classes in the country, which offer substandard education for approximately eight thousands Romani students (10 percent of all Romani students)³⁴.

³¹ Estimation based on the outcomes of the research 2002

³² Homogenous classes consist of either Romani children or of non-Romani only.

³³ Kaltenbach, Jenő ed., *Annual Report of the Parliamentary Commissioner for National and Ethnic Minority Rights* 'Beszámoló a nemzeti és etnikai kisebbségi jogok országgyűlési biztosának tevékenységéről'. Budapest: Parliamentary Commissioners' Office, 2000 pp.221

According to a survey, carried out in the 1999/2001 semester out of the 2722 classes examined in 192 schools, there were 311 completely homogenous Romani classes.³⁵ Which means that almost every 6th class (17,2%) was a “Gypsy class” among schools in which the rate of Romani students exceeded 40%. Based on this research and on the estimations of sociologists there are approximately 700 homogenous Romani classes in the country, which implies that more than 8000 Romani students study in a completely segregated environment suffering all its social, cultural and stigmatising disadvantages both short and long term³⁶. Nation-wide the same research reckons that 10% of Romani students are subjected to segregation in primary schools.

4.3.2. Roma children trapped in Remedial Education

4.3.2.1. Discriminatory practise

The discriminatory practice – to place disproportionate number of Romani children in remedial special schools – has been revealed already in the 70s-80s.³⁷ In the last decades there were numerous comprehensive pieces of research. Although all agreed that Romani students are placed in remedial specials school in striking numbers, the research outcomes concerning the exact percentage vary greatly.

³⁴ Havas, Gábor, Kemény, István, Liskó, Ilona: *Cigány gyerekek az általános iskolában*, Oktatókutató Intézet, 2001

³⁵ Havas, Gábor, Kemény, István, Liskó, Ilona: *Cigány gyerekek az általános iskolában*. Budapest: Oktatókutató Intézet, 2001.

³⁶ Havas, Gábor, Kemény, István, Liskó, Ilona: *Cigány gyerekek az általános iskolában*. Budapest: Oktatókutató Intézet, 2001.

In 1997 the Hungarian ombudsman³⁸ prepared a comprehensive investigation on minority education with an emphasis on remedial special schools. According to the report, the number of Romani pupils was extremely high at these places. Their proportion is approximately 6-7 times higher than the average rate of Romani children within the education system. Sociologists and professionals on that field reckon similarly³⁹. Additionally, the examination revealed that their rate had been steadily increasing during the last three decades. Although in the academic year of 1974/75 this rate was already a surprisingly high 26.1%, it further increased and reached 42.6% in the academic year of 1992/93. (see Table).

Table: Romani students in remedial special schools

Semester	All students (a)	Romani students (b)	Rate (b/a)
1974/75	29 617	7 730	26.1%
1977/78	31 666	9 753	30.8%
1981/82	33 079	12 107	36.6%
1985/86	39 395	15 640	39.7%
1992/93	32 099	13 662	42.6%

Source: Romani Students in the Primary and Secondary Education. Budapest: TARKI, 1986 (first 4 lines); MKM Statistical Major Department (last line), (Kaltenbach, 1999)⁴⁰

As the minority commissioner points out in his investigation on minority education remedial special schools create opportunities for indirect discrimination towards Romani students, as well as for segregation, separation and artificial exclusion.

³⁷ Bánfalvy, Csaba: A Budapest vizsgálat vitaanyagának szociológia szempontú összefoglalása, in: Illyés S. ed., *Nevelhetőség és általános iskola III. Oktatókutató Intézet*, Budapest: 1985

³⁸ Kaltenbach, Jenő ed., *Annual Report of the Parliamentary Commissioner for National and Ethnic Minority Rights 'Beszámoló a nemzeti és etnikai kisebbségi jogok országgyűlési biztosának tevékenységéről'*. Budapest: Parliamentary Commissioners' Office, 2000

³⁹ Radó, Péter: *Jelentés a magyarországi cigány tanulók oktatásáról, Szakértői tanulmány a Nemzeti és Etnikai Kisebbségi Hivatal számára*, Budapest: 1997.

⁴⁰ Kaltenbach, Jenő: *Beszámoló a nemzeti és etnikai kisebbségi jogok országgyűlési biztosának tevékenységéről*, Budapest, 1999

TÁRKI in 2001 undertook another research⁴¹, in which representatives of local government tried to estimate the number of Romani and non-Romani students in remedial special school. The research took place in the countryside and did not include schools of the capital. The results of the research are hardly acceptable taking into consideration that answers were given by the local government officers who could have manipulated data or simply misjudged the identity and, as a result, the number of Romani students. Based on the answers of 756 local governments countrywide, 4,5 percent of the school population attend remedial special school, while regarding Roma this rate approaches 13,5 percent. Narrowing down our focus to certain regions the outcomes are still more striking. In the Middle Transdanubia (Fejér, Veszprém, Komárom counties) almost five times (19,5 percent) as many Romani students attend remedial school than the average rate (3,9 percent) of students in such schools. Similarly, in schools in Pest County we can find five times as many Romani children (18,1) than the average (3,7). Although this data is questionable because of the methodology, we can not ignore the general tendency that emerges. Surprisingly, in regions where the rate of Romani people is much higher (North Great Plain or North Hungary) the rate of Romani students in such schools is around 10 percent. The research found a parallel between the size of the town and the increasing number of Romani students labelled mentally handicapped. In towns with a population up to 113 thousands the number of Romani students attending remedial schools approached 18 percent.

The curricula of the remedial special schools significantly differ from other national curricula. Lessons are more restricted and miss some academic subjects such as physics, chemistry or foreign languages. After one or two years spent at such schools children will not have a chance of getting back into the normal school system. Instead of the specialised

⁴¹ Amarodrom, March, 2002

subjects they are taught natural sciences which include only introduction to chemistry, biology and physics. According to the law on Public Education all children have the right to access quality education based on their abilities and natural endowments.⁴²

The diminished level of this education type was originally designed for the mentally handicapped, and therefore it is not suitable for the sound-minded Romani children, simply because most of them are not handicapped at all. Such a school is not able to provide them with a satisfactory level of education to develop their knowledge and abilities effectively. For those students who have writing or counting disorder, some of the methods are useful, but these problems could as well be handled and improved in a normal school. The curriculum of one year spent in a remedial special school covers more or less the first half-year curriculum in a normal primary school. By the end of the second year in remedial special school students finish the curriculum of the 3rd semester in the normal school. After the third year spent in remedial special school children almost reach the necessary knowledge required by the end of the second year of the primary school. After the fifth year in remedial special school they almost complete the curriculum of the 3rd year. This means that due to this slowed down progress the accumulated disadvantages keep the students back from returning to the normal school forever.

An unintended disruptive factor regarding remedial special schools is that remedial teachers are usually aware of the special problems and treatment and intend to adapt themselves to the children because they discover that otherwise they can not proceed. Teachers are trained to support these children according to their needs, which results in good atmosphere, satisfied children and less failure, which is indeed due to the diminished educational level. Teaching is person-centred and not-achievement centred, which contributes

⁴² Paragraph 3 (a) of Article 10 of Act LXXIX of 1993 on Public Education.

to the fact that children are less traumatised as opposed to the frustration that prevails due to the demanding curriculum in normal schools.

Besides the inferior education standards of remedial schools the lack of systematic measurement also contribute to the fact that Romani children stick to these schools once and for all.

4.3.2.2. Failures of the transfer procedure

Expert committees apply different tests to measure the IQ level of children. Many sociologists argued against the applicability of these tests, claiming that the questions and tasks fit essentially the knowledge of middle-class children, therefore Romani students can only achieve systematically lower grades. They also point out that the Romani students have a kind of knowledge that is not needed for answering the questions, and which, as a consequence, remains hidden.

Many Romani children would be able to cope with the difficulties if they had sufficient support. Providing them with person-tailored help could result in their increased chances of catching up with the others in 1-2 years. Teachers should pay more attention to these children and the educational system should be more flexible and should offer thoroughfare opportunities between classes in the first demanding school years.

An interview made with the director of a primary school in Miskolc revealed that applying special programs in education (for instance Step by Step program, initiated and granted originally by Soros Foundation) support properly Romani students to develop their learning capacity effectively and to achieve outstandingly good result.

Prejudicial and hostile attitude of the non-Romani environment in normal schools may also contribute to the phenomenon that many Romani parents do not propose against

remedial education. Schools with a high proportion of Romani students in particular make Romani parents accept that also their children have to go to these schools.

Some teachers allege that the poor financial background of the families also contributes to the fact that parents acquiesce in the decision that their children are directed to remedial special schools. Sometimes parents request to enrol their children in remedial special schools because they learn that books and meals are provided free of charge here. They are certainly not aware of the fact that these schools provide students with a very limited knowledge and the education level of these schools definitely deprives them of the possibility to study further.

These facts show that the high proportions of Romani students in remedial special schools caused by the lack of effective pedagogical programs and methods to compensate for this also contributes to this situation.

4.3.2.3. Strong effects of system-oriented processes

Staff and school officers of conservative institutions such as remedial special schools often insist on traditional methods, even if they have certainly faced the criticism that it is unjust to transfer Romani students in such a high proportion to these schools. This narrow-mindedness is connected to the fact that these institutions have to be filled with students and have to provide their staff with employment opportunities. They keep primarily their own interests in sight and often refuse other possibilities that parents may consider on the basis of the high loyalty and respect to their own institution. Furthermore, they often ignore statistical and sociological findings that convincingly prove that many Romani students have been

placed there by mistake. The diminished level of education in these remedial special schools is due to numerous factors that we shall present later

The teachers' expectations and ways of communication affect the children also indirectly. Further, prejudice and rigid, pre-conceived criticism may soon turn into a self-fulfilling prophecy: the Romani children, told off for their low level of self-control or reprimanded for their early difficulties in acquiring well-structured knowledge, will actually turn into unruly or poorly performing youngsters in normal schools. Another effect is that the teacher's assessment of the Romani children is often taken over, and even enhanced, by the non-Romani pupils, which leads to a deepening conflict between the majority and the minority, and prompts the majority to make the minority liable for all difficulties. The school and its maintainer - the local self-government intend to shift all responsibility back to the family, though they often have an interest to keep the Romani children segregated in a remedial special school. Allocating Romani children in high proportions to normal schools often causes that non-Romani parents take away their children to other schools in the town or in a neighbouring city. In fact it seems that remedial schools need these children much more than those children need these schools.

Romani parents are usually not informed about their rights and opportunities, and are therefore hardly able to assert the rights of their children. Their parental rights are violated numerous ways from the beginning of the transfer procedure till the end of the remedial education of their children.

The parents have to give their approval so that their children carry on their studies in remedial school. The expert committees often formally inform parents about the consequences of the transfer and did not provide sufficient information to help them to understand it with all its short and long-term negative consequences.

The Committee is not allowed to examine the child without parental approval, and the parents have the right to be present at the examination. If the parents do not accept the decision, they can ask for the re-examination of the child from the town-clerk. A further opportunity is to turn to court if they still do not agree with the decision made at the second level. The committee is obliged to provide the parents with information about possibilities of legal remedy. The transfer practise of the expert committees still often violates these prescriptions.

There are numerous criticisms made by educational expert and professionals concerning the high proportion of Romani students in remedial special schools. Educating Romani children in extremely high proportions in remedial special schools is not suitable to eliminate problems between the normal education system and Romani families. The paralysed regular school easily shifts the responsibility of educating Romani children to these remedial institutions which do not actually aim at such a function, and which have basically a different target group. Within 2-3 years Romani children placed there without appropriate support will not be able to catch up with the group which they are segregated from, and end up there forever.

Experts often criticize the reliability and validity of the tests applied by the Expert Committee in the course of deciding whether a Romani child is mentally handicapped or not. They made strong criticism and numerous remarks concerning the applied tests. The reliability of a test concerns the fact that it is not allowed to produce much deviation in results when repeating it.

The validity of a test describes whether a test really measures the articles that it is supposed to measure. It is an outstandingly important issue because children are directed to special schools based on a psychological evaluation including IQ tests. This evaluation procedure should reliably and satisfactorily measure the ability and schooling potential of

children to fulfil the requirements of normal school. Interviews with educational experts confirm that Romani children are often directed to schools for mentally handicapped because the psychological evaluation fails. Many interviewees stated that evaluations were based on the measurement of social disadvantage, “socio-cultural damage”, behaviour or culture related factors much more than on intelligence.

Accordingly, there are practical problems related to IQ tests, which largely contribute to the fact that a Romani child is placed in remedial special school. Because of social and cultural reasons Romani children may lack equipment, objects, books and opportunities that would enable them to perform well on tests.

Sometimes Romani children successfully enrol in basic schools but teachers do not want to bother with them and would like to eliminate the “problematic” student. Despite the fact that the first years of basic school is aimed to provide students with a basic knowledge if children have not had the opportunity to acquire it at home, school tends easily to shift the responsibility back onto the parents. Teachers would often like to get rid of these children who are in need of special attention and development but legal regulation fortunately binds their hands.

Many of these facts and questions are related to the flaws caused by social disadvantage and not exactly to the ability to attend normal education. Obviously the meaning of intelligence includes the answering these kinds of questions as well, but it is also known that these flaws can be well corrected in a short period of time. The real danger of transferring Romani children having flaws based on their social disadvantages into remedial special schools is that they will stay there for eight years – for their entire schooling time. Remedial schools – as we are going to see in the following chapter – further slow down the process of attaining basic knowledge, instead of aiming at rectifying flaws within a year. Instead of developing the abilities of children aiming to successfully re-integrate them in normal classes,

the diminished level of education further increases the gap between them and other students in basic schools. After one or two years it is nearly impossible to return and meet the requirements of the normal education system.

According to my interview with Viktória Mohácsi the new educational program aim to improve nation-wide the situation of disadvantaged children and to answers the criticism of remedial education. It implied also the modification of some discriminatory articles in the Hungarian legislation system. They changed educational articles that have negative consequences on many Romani youth and contribute to segregation in the educational system. An important part of the program is to place obstacles in the way of transmitting children – without factual mental defects – to remedial special schools.⁴³ They want to attain a decrease in the number of Romani children in remedial schools.

4.4. Segregated Romani Classes

4.4.1. Threats of Roma programs

According to Paragraph 2 of Article 67 of the Hungarian Constitution all parents possess the right to dispose on the education of their children. The first Paragraph of Article 13 of Act on Public Education sets out that parents are free to decide on which education to choose and whether they want to enrol their children in minority education. The Hungarian legal system prescribes certain requirements for kindergartens and schools to become an institution for minorities. The preconditions are described in Act on Public Education⁴⁴, which

⁴³ To reach this aim they have to modify the Law on Education 30, 120/1 paragraph, 20.

⁴⁴ Act LXXIX of 1993 on Public Education (Paragraph 6 of Article 121)

also refers to further article of the Minority Act⁴⁵. Accordingly, the funding document of the institution has to include teaching ethnic issues for students. Another condition that at least 25 percent of the students have to participate in the ethnic education. Minority program is not allowed to be launched without the intention of concerned parents. Article 43, paragraph 4 of Minority Act says: "At the request of the parents or legal representatives of eight students belonging to the same minority group, it is compulsory to establish and run a minority class or group."

There are numerous misinterpretation and misuse surround the application of this act, and as a consequence many school had been unlawfully applying for and receiving supplementary ethnic funding. This amount of money is considerably big to the school budget therefore they apply for it even if the certain requirements are not completed.

The ethnic curriculum is rarely integrated into the general curriculum of schools, although. Romani history and culture should be taught as part of both classes' history, Hungarian literature, manual activities and music classes. Organising afternoon activities, such as computer classes, Romani folklore dancing, Romani language, manual activities, memory development are more popular activities to include in the ethnic curriculum.

The Ministry of Culture and Education in 1997 set out the Guidelines for Nursery School and School Education of National and Ethnic Minorities⁴⁶ (hereafter: "Guidelines"). It states that minority education is supposed to stimulate individuals belonging to minority group to develop their identity and to express freely and foster their culture and values. Since 1998 the normative is distributed upon certain requirements relating to the ethnic content of programs. According to the Guidelines a prerequisite of the award of the supplementary

⁴⁵Act LXXXVII of 1993 on National and Ethnic Minorities (hereafter: Minority Act) (Paragraph 2 Article 29)

⁴⁶ Decree 32/1997. (XI. 5.) MKM on the Guidelines for Nursery School and School Education of National and Ethnic Minorities

ethnic funding is to present a Roma educational program in the school. It has to include ethnic awareness elements, and relate to development of culture or traditional values and development of skills. The ethnic content of the program has to include three elements out of the five followings⁴⁷:

- a) catch-up program in subjects;*
- b) developing the minority self-awareness;*
- c) developing socialisation and communication skills;*
- d) activities related to culture;*
- e) person-centred talent care;.*

None of other minority education provisions contains suggestions to implement catch-up programs for the members of the minority group. Educational experts state that this expression implies that Roma as an entire group has to catch-up to the mainstream society because they are falling behind concerning their educational achievement. By the same token, all young people belonging to the Roma community are degraded among under performers. As opposed to the minority education of other groups at which the law stresses the preservation of culture, value and identity primarily.

Another often-applied means of segregation was to launch catch-up or remedial classes with diminished level. The "ethnic curriculum" offers a means to form segregated classes. These classes are often entitled as follows: remedial class, slower class, irregular class or catch-up class. Comparing to the normal classes the diminished level of curriculum and the extremely high number of Romani students in these classes as opposed to their rate in the

⁴⁷ Decree 32/1997. (XI. 5.) MKM on the Guidelines for Nursery School and School Education of National and Ethnic Minorities, Paragraph 2 of Roma Minority education of Appendix 2

school population or parallel classes are striking. Romani children are placed into classes which are “slower”.

According to a research carried out in the 1999/2001 semester in Hungary, there were 311 completely homogenous Romani classes out of the 2722 classes of the examined 192 schools.⁴⁸ Which means that almost every 6th class (17,2%) was a “Gypsy class” among schools in which the rate of Romani students exceeded 40%. This fact evidently can not be reasoned for by the proportion of the school population or by a fatal accident. Based on the outcomes of this research and on estimations of sociologists there are approximately 700 homogenous Romani classes in the country, which implies that more than 8000 Romani students study in a completely segregated environment suffering all its social, cultural and stigmatising disadvantages both short and long term. Nation-wide the research reckons that 10% of Romani students are subjected to segregation in primary schools.

Teachers often refers to the migration of non-Romani children to other school, if they are educated together with Romani students. Teachers state that they segregate Romani children often for non-Romani parental requests

4.4.2. Special Talent Care Programs: Targeting non-Roma

According to other research⁴⁹ out of the 85⁵⁰ examined regular primary schools, 20 ran special classes (i.e. 25,5 % of all schools). Most special classes have pupils from different age groups (*merged classes*), and have often been formed by rational criteria, rather than pedagogic considerations. Teaching such „mixed” special classes is a huge challenge to the

⁴⁸ Havas, Gábor, Kemény, István, Liskó, Ilona: *Cigány gyerekek az általános iskolában*. Budapest: Oktatókutató Intézet, 2001.

⁴⁹ Girán, János-Kardos, Lajos: *A cigány gyerekek iskolai sikertelenségének háttere*, Iskolakultúra 1997/10.

⁵⁰ Researchers succeeded to obtain complete information about 57 schools.

teacher, as it requires addressing very different needs, personalities with a pool of knowledge that is equally widespread, since the pupils there come with difficulties in various areas. This structure expects far too much of the teacher, and certainly does not help the pupils learn how to study. Although the rate of Romani students was only 26,84% within the examined school population, their rate in the remedial classes was much higher. According to the data 67,92% of students were Romani in remedial classes. There were three classes of lower elementary school having pupils from different age groups (*merged classes*) in which the percent of Romani students was above 91%.

The existence of homogenous Roma or non-Roma classes in mixed schools can be justified in a number of ways. Dividing classes based on the capability of students is perhaps most common. School officials can introduce more advanced classes with special programs for talented pupils. Conversely catch-up or remedial classes can be established for students who are having difficulties in keeping pace with the regular curricula. While such divisions appear to be free of ethnic considerations, the fact is that both techniques are extremely effective ways to create homogenous Roma and non-Roma classes. While advanced classes keep Roma out, catch-up classes, sometimes in the context of minority education, are full of Romani pupils who receive a lower quality of education and who never actually catch-up. In fact, the segregation of Roma and non-Roma pupils in different classes of the same school rarely has anything to do with objectively measured capabilities of the children. In most cases it is the outcome of prejudice, with non-Romani parents refusing to allow their children to be taught together with Roma.

The segregation of Romani children in the Hungarian education system entails countless disadvantages which can be summarised by: *unequal access to quality education*. Stressing hereby some of these disadvantages: substandard education; undemanding

requirements in school; worse conditions in school facilities, equipment and buildings; less qualified teachers teaching them; diminished self-esteem and minimal chance to be employed. A further evident disadvantage is that segregation hampers the encounter with the expectations of the majority society and its opportunities meet the minority culture.

Subsequently there was only one nation-wide examination trying to reveal the extent of segregation. It was carried out for the request of the Ombudsman in 1999⁵¹ and it presented shocking data about the segregation of Romani students. According to the data approximately half (42,6%) of the remedial school population are Romani, which means that their proportion is 6-7 times higher in this school type. There is some county where the rate is even more extreme: in BAZ county 94% of students in remedial school were Romani in 1998. According to another research rate of Romani students studying by bias curriculum approached 67,92 percent in the country.⁵²

5. Integration programs

5.1. *New Education Integration Policy*

The Ministry of Education established the National Educational Integration Centre and Network to promote integration in the field of education in 2003. The Network consists of

⁵¹ Aáry-Tamás, Lajos: A Kisebbségi Ombudsman jelentése a kisebbségek oktatásának átfogó vizsgálatáról „Report of the Minority Ombudsman about the comprehensive research of minority education” In: Kaltenbach, Jenő: Beszámoló a nemzeti és etnikai kisebbségi jogok országgyűlési biztosának tevékenységéről, Budapest, 2000 pp.221-250

three regional offices (in North-Hungary, in North-Plain, South-Transdanubium) besides the co-ordinating central office, which is located in Budapest. The Network is responsible to popularise a new normative financial system for schools that want to take part in the “integration process”. The Centre aims also to co-ordinate redirection of misplacement of Romani children in remedial school. It aims to promote that mentally healthy children would not go to remedial special schools due to cultural-biased test, selective education system or mistakes of the Expert Committees.

In 2003 the OOIH assigned 45 schools to basis-institution. The teachers of these schools had to complete training focused on the Integrated Pedagogical System (IPR). Subsequently they had to develop their own complex model programs and methodology. Basis-institutions had to offer information and several services to other schools (50kms distance), such as organising professional presentations, visits, and ex-change programs for teachers, sport programs and quiz for children, etc. They were entitled to receive EUR 20.000-24.000 grant for their extended tasks (20 percent for management costs).

According to my research findings these basis-institutions aiming at implementing integration programs did not always meet the requirements prescribed in the MKM decree, which should have been occur in the selection process. Without an independent monitoring body assessing the integration process time to time at the local level, only accidentally came to truth if a “model-school” requesting integration normative did not necessarily took into consideration the special needs of Romani students, did not make real changes in its pedagogy practise, educated Romani students segregated, or surprisingly did not educate any Romani students at all in the school. In same case they happened to lack of appropriate institutional background, or they were not able to co-operate successfully with the local Kindergarten, the

⁵² Girán János-Kardos Lajos: *A cigány gyerekek iskolai sikertelenségének háttere*, Iskolakultúra 1997/10

local government or the minority self-government, which all jeopardized the integration process.

Problems occurred concerning the functioning of the expertise network too that aimed to promote the realisation of integration at local level. The network consisted of *small regional co-ordinators* and counsellors. The co-ordinators were usually Romani youngsters, responsible to co-ordinate the integration process between schools and other institutions locally and counsellors supposed to be professors, educational experts responsible for further developing the integration pedagogy and helping the adaptation process. Due to adhoc selection process of persons, lack of expertise, proficiency and definite tasks, furthermore without prescribed competency, responsibility this personal support and network resulted in low level performance and missing added value.

A ministerial decree, the *Guidelines for Nursery School and School Education of National and Ethnic Minorities*⁵³ used to ensure a legal opportunity for schools and their maintainers to create separated "catch-up" classes for Romani students for a long time.

Between 1998 and 2003 the normative support was distributed based on certain requirements relating to the ethnic content of programs. The discriminative aspect of this decree is evident in the fact that none of the education provisions for other minorities contained suggestions to implement catch-up programs for the members of the minority group; this is stated only in the case of Roma students.

The schools justified the creation of homogenous Romani or non-Romani classes in mixed schools in various ways. Dividing classes based on the capability of students was perhaps the most common of them. School officials often made use of special pedagogical programs for talented students to gather all non-Romani students in one class. Conversely,

⁵³ Decree No. 32/1997 of the Ministry of Education

catch-up or remedial classes were launched to bring together all Romani students within an other class that followed substandard curricula possibly with less qualified teachers. Such type of segregation kept the non-Romani groups of students from meeting and getting acquainted with the norms and values of their Romani peers while perpetuating a negative image on Roma.

In an attempt to eliminate the negative tendencies within the catch-up programs and their financing system, the Ministry of Education introduced new types of normatives from 2003. The 57/2002. (XI.18.) OM decree of the Ministry of Education⁵⁴ enacted (additionally to the 11/1994.MKM decree)⁵⁵ the 39/D.§ (4) and the (39/E.§) (4) paragraphs about *the talent-care and integration programs* aiming to promote the integration process among children coming from different social and cultural background. The "talent-care normative" is basically the renamed form of "catch-up normative" as far as supporting the children in catching-up goes.

School maintainers can request the *talent-care normative support* for a child if three conditions are present: 1.) the parents did not complete more than eight classes of primary school and 2.) receive regular family allowance (in addition, the director has the right to establish the children's needs independently in 10 percent of the cases) and 3.) the proportion of children participating in the integration process is between 50-80 percent from the total number of students in the school and 25-50 percent between two parallel classes.

The maintainers may request the *integration normative support* with similar preconditions for children who already participate in talent-care programs. The normative support bring a significant contribution for programs at schools with a mixed population⁵⁶, while schools with an overwhelmingly disadvantaged school population are deprived from the

⁵⁴ In: 143.sz. Magyar Közlöny

⁵⁵ In: Oktatási Közlöny 2003. aug.6-i száma

two normative types at the same time. Schools receiving the integration normative must take an active part in the desegregation process and are obliged to integrate 10 percent of disadvantaged students into other classes. Furthermore they must promote pedagogical changes in the first, fifth and ninth grade classes to promote equal access to education for all disadvantaged students. In 2003, based on the ministry's estimation, approximately 2000 students participated in the programs.

Despite of the fact that the integration policy is largely based on research that revealed the *Romani* children to be segregated in the education system (Havas-Kemény-Liskó 2002; 2004), the existing education policy and the normative support targets on *disadvantaged children* in general, not specifically on Roma. Consequently, this *mainstream policy* can cause a double mistake a.) *supporting the integration process of schools without a Romani school population* b.) *not supporting schools with Romani children studying within completely segregated circumstances*. According to my research, there are examples for both types in the Hungarian education system, which draws attention to the fact that this integration policy missed its intended target.

There are several misuses of the present financing options that also constitute a critical point and need to be revised. Schools and maintainers have a strong interest and an easy opportunity to manipulate the data concerning the number of disadvantaged children.

Without defining the exact target group of an integration process, the ministry seems to slip out of the responsibility to monitor the real effects of the implementation of the policy. Without an appropriate, regular monitoring system and follow-up checks on the use and financing of the integration normative, the integration process in the schools can not be

⁵⁶ The sum of talent-care normative is HUF 17.000 (EUR 68) and the integration normative is HUF 51.000 (EUR 204) after each child.

examined and confirmed. Schools and their maintainers can misuse the normative in a way that will not result in any changes in the situation of Romani children.

5.2. Barriers of Integration

The most relevant forms of segregation appear when the rate of Romani students in a given school approaches a certain percentage.⁵⁷ In reaction to the increasing number of Romani students the number of non-Romani students starts to decrease, which evidently enhances the quotient of Romani children compared to all children. To inhibit non-Romani parents to take away their children from the school, directors try to separate Romani children from non-Romani. According to our research outcomes, schools certainly can be blamed for launching different programs that aim at creating segregated, homogenous classes.⁵⁸ These segregating actions proceed basically in three different ways: schools sort out Romani children; sort out non-Romani children or eliminate Romani children altogether. While ethnic complementary funding contributes to school budget with a considerable amount, ethnic curriculum often serves a good reason to separate Romani students in special classes. Therefore this issue must be examined here from closer.

A set of problems stems from poor conditions of village schools as regards Romani education. Some significant data of a comparative sociological research shows data of schools in which Romani and non-Romani students studied together. The rate of Roma students is

⁵⁷ If the percentage of Romani students is above of 20-30% within the school population but remains under 60-70 then schools develop homogeneous Romani classes

⁵⁸ Homogenous classes consist of either Romani children or of non-Romani only.

considerably high (56%) in village schools, compared to the rate of all the students in villages (37%).⁵⁹

The number and proportion of all Roma and non-Roma students in primary school, differentiated on basis of the settlement types they live, in 1992/93.

Type of settlement	All students (number)	All students (%)	Romani students (number)	Romani students (%)	Rate of Romani students among all (%)
Budapest	166145	15.93	6730	9.07	4.05
County Center	195737	18.77	8031	10.82	4.10
City	291629	27.96	17744	23.90	6.08
Village	381508	37.34	41736	56.22	10.72
Total	1043019	100.00	74241	100.00	7.12

Source: Kertesi - Kézdi (1997)

In poor, deprived villages Romani students especially need suitable and high standard educational support because of their disadvantageous social situation. Unfortunately, they do not receive such support, and they are given very limited aid.

Examining schools in which Romani children continued their studies in large proportions, there are significant differences as opposed to regular schools of the country. As the following Table shows, there are significantly more Romani children (35%) in small sized⁶⁰ schools, and their representation in larger sized schools is very low.

⁵⁹ Kertesi Gábor – Kézdi Gábor: *Cigány tanulók az általános iskolában*. In: *Educatio 3: Cigányok és iskola*. Educatio Kiadó, 1996, Budapest

⁶⁰ Small sized means less than 250 students.

Table: The number and proportion of all Romani and non-Romani students in primary school, differentiated by the size⁶¹ of schools 1992-93.

School size (students)	All students (number)	All students (%)	Romani students (number)	Romani students (%)	Rate of Romani students among all (%)
- 30	7674	0.74	1166	1.57	15.19
31 – 60	10599	1.02	1132	1.52	10.68
61 – 120	36588	3.51	4187	5.64	11.44
121 – 250	175761	16.85	19679	26.51	11.20
251 – 500	356126	34.14	25921	34.91	7.28
501 – 750	323945	31.06	16695	22.49	5.15
750 -	132326	12.69	5461	7.36	4.13
Total	1043019	100.00	74244	100.00	7.12

Source: Kertesi - Kézdi (1997)

The number of poor quality classrooms and teachers without any or with only low qualification was considerably high in ghetto schools. Also the education level was very poor and undemanding. Also the attitude of the teachers shows that they do not provide Romani students with stimulating model and appropriate support to complete their education successfully. Often the distance of the school from the local Romani settlement is large.⁶²

Usually the primary schools are not able to cope with the complex set of problems they are faced with when teaching Roma students. Different social and cultural background, language difficulties, ethnic origin with all its consequences, and different socialisation home education, special - often more independent, more intense and passionate, therefore non-conformist - behaviour, hidden curricula in schools, discrimination and negative expectations and critiques made by teachers are other factors that make the relationship of Roma students with the school problematic.

⁶¹ The school size means the number of students studying there.

⁶² On the border of many villages and in the suburb of many towns the deprived Romani settlements still exist.

In Hungary the deprived type of settlement is significantly connected with other low economic indicators (pl. high unemployment rate, poor qualification, underprivileged social situation) of disadvantaged groups living there. Researchers (Havas-Kemény-Liskó, 2002; 2004) found that in these settlements a striking number of Romani students face the disadvantages of substandard education.

While the integration normative support ensures extra funding for schools with socially (and usually also ethnically) mixed school population, ghetto schools are deprived from this opportunity. Due to residential segregation Romani students do not have the chance to integrate with anyone. The school (based on parental request) can require ethnic normative to launch a Romani or Beash language program⁶³, but many parents nowadays do not claim this right.

Concerning institutional and organizational background, equipment and human resources, schools located in this deprived environment have the lowest chance to provide quality education. Nevertheless, applying special educational programs (e.g. children centred pedagogy, co-operative learning, step-by-step programs, differentiated education) using trained and experienced teachers would have a crucial importance under these circumstances since these schools frequently lack basic conditions for their effective functioning.

There is a long lasting debate on closing or supporting these ghetto schools. The answer should be the result of a thorough analysis of local resources and conditions. Carrying the children to other settlements by bus, besides destroying their social relationships and undermining their sense of stability, may also hinder school attendance. Researchers argue that closing the local school (and post office, shops) may result in destroying future perspectives of the inhabitants.

⁶³ Beash or Romani language program can be launched 32/1997 (V.11.) based on the Guidelines (In: Magyar Közlöny 1997/1995.) for the request of at least 8 parents.

Pre-school education is inevitably important in deprived villages. In small settlements Kindergartens prepare the children for schools and also compensate their flaws. Despite its primary importance, many villages (e.g.. Gilvánfalva, Csenyété) lack sufficient places in kindergarten. Therefore, Romani parents with a poor ability to assert their rights are often deprived from gaining access to kindergarten for their children.

Municipalities often lack sufficient financial resources to cover the expenses of all local services therefore they subordinate the qualitative functioning of institutions to financial rationalisation and economic interest. This happened to many kindergartens and primary schools (e.g. Miskolc, Nyíregyháza, Budapest) – municipalities merged 2 or 3 of them into one institution. In Miskolc 33 primary schools functioned in 2003-2004, then due to systematic merges this number decreased to 15 institutions in 2004. Unfortunately this “merge” happened only in principal, because in practise the children remained in two separated school buildings. It seems municipalities try to manipulate the rate of advantaged and disadvantaged students within one institution, and they merge homogenous Romani schools with homogenous non-Romani schools to show up the wanted figures. They can show that in the institution the proportion of Romani students is now 50 percent, that is an appropriate rate to request integration normative support. Still, there is no significant change in the situation of children.

Homogenous Romani schools are of two major types: a) substandard schools with poor conditions in all concerns (e.g. institution, staff, education) due to a combination of diverse factors or b) alternative quality education where the school tries to meet the demand of challenges based on the needs of children, they try to apply for extra money to cover the cost of differentiated schooling and programs to implement a high quality education.

These quality schools (e.g. Fazola Henrik Primary School in Miskolc running Step-by-Step program) got into worse conditions by merges. Recent research shows (Kertesi-

Kézdi, 2004) that spontaneous segregation of schools can be reinforced due to administrative decisions.

While the Ministry of Education attempted to motivate the local governments to suspend running Romani and non-Romani classes in parallel, the maintainers of the schools found the small gaps in the regulations and used their funds for other purposes. These small gaps often undermined educational achievements and stopped effective programs.

According to researchers (Kertesi-Kézdi, 2004) distributing *vouchers* for parents would provide them with the opportunity to encourage schools directly to launch high quality programs that would create competition among them to attract more and more children.

The Ministry of Education promised to fund those segregated schools, which can increase the number of non-Romani children in the school until 2008. This seems to be quite an impossible precondition, while non-Romani parents will take extra effort to enrol their children to schools with low Romani population. Without adequate help and support from a monitoring system these schools can not make changes and offer real perspectives to children from advantageous position by themselves.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Based on Lisko' s finding in 2002, Romani parents do not agree with any forms of segregated, isolated teaching.

6. Conclusion

Pre-school education is crucially important, especially in deprived settlements. Kindergartens have a major role to prepare the children for schools. Poverty, disadvantages of rural settlements, poor level of qualification are the most relevant factors that result in unemployment or very low wages. All these factors are interwoven, and deeply connect with each other, forming a never ending social vicious cycle.

Municipalities often lack sufficient financial resources to cover the expenses of all local services therefore they subordinate the qualitative functioning of institutions to financial rationalisation and economic interest. They happen to control the manifest rate of advantaged and disadvantaged students within one institution, and they merge homogenous Romani schools with homogenous non-Romani schools to present the necessary data.

According to the data of PISA, the educational performance of Hungarian children is determined by their origin and social background. Bringing substantial improvements to these main factors, as well as eliminating the negative reinforcing effect of schools, are the basic conditions to offer Roma real opportunities in the public education system and subsequently in real life.

Literature

Aáry-Tamás L., *A Kisebbségi Ombudsman jelentése a kisebbségek oktatásának átfogó vizsgálatáról* (Report of the Minority Ombudsman about the comprehensive research of minority education), Budapest: Kaltenbach Jenő, Nemzeti és Etnikai Kisebbségi Jogok Országgyűlési Biztosasága, 1998.

Girán J., Kardos, L. *A cigány gyerekek iskolai sikertelenségének háttere* (What is behind Gypsy children's failure at school). In *Az Iskolakultúra*, 10, 1997.

Havas Gábor – Kemény István – Liskó Ilona: *Cigány gyerekek az általános iskolában*, Educatio Kiadó, Bp., 2001

Havas Gábor, Kemény István, Liskó Ilona: *Cigány gyerekek az általános iskolában*, Oktatáskutató Intézet, Új Mandátum Kiadó, 2002

Havas Gábor, Kemény István: *A magyarországi romákról (Roma in Hungary)*. Szociológia, Bp. 1995/3.\

Kaltenbach, Jenő ed., *Annual Report of the Parliamentary Commissioner for National and Ethnic Minority Rights* 'Beszámoló a nemzeti és etnikai kisebbségi jogok országgyűlési biztosának tevékenységéről'. Budapest: Parliamentary Commissioners' Office, 2000 pp.221

Loss Sándor: Szakértői és Rehabilitációs Bizottságok hatásvizsgálata Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén megyében. kézirat, 1998

Kemény István. *A Romák és az iskola* (Roma and School), In *Education*, 1, 1996.

Kemény István. *Beszámoló a magyarországi cigányok helyzetével foglalkozó, 1971-ben végzett kutatásról*. (Report on a survey of Gypsies in Hungary conducted in 1971) Budapest, 1976.

Kemény István - Liskó, Ilona - Havas, Gábor, *Report of schools in the school year 1999-2000*, 2001.

Kemény István, Jankó Béla: National Roma Research of 2003.

http://www.mtaki.hu/kiadvanyok/kemeny_janky_lengyel_moi_ciganysag_main.html

Kertesi Gábor, *Roma children in schools, Roma adults on the labour market*. Budapest: 1st edition of the Közgazdasági Szemle, 1995.

Kertesi Gábor, Kézdi Gábor: *Cigány tanulók az általános iskolában* (Gypsy students in elementary school). in *Educatio Füzetek*, 3, 1996.

Kertesi Gábor, Kézdi Gábor: *Általános iskolai szegregáció –okok és következmények*. (Segregation in primary schools –causes and reasons) Kézirat/Manuscript 2004.dec.

Ladányi János, Amarodrom, Roma Café 2004.november

Loss Sándor: Szakértői és Rehabilitációs Bizottságok hatásvizsgálata Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén megyében. Kézirat/Manuscript 1998

Mohácsi Viktória: „Átfésüljük, átdolgozzuk az oktatásügyet!” (We rave over and remodel the education policy) <http://www.romnet.hu/interju/mohacsiv.html>

Mohácsi Viktória: Discriminatory treatment of Roma children in Education: What can be done about it?, Regional Seminar of Experts for Eastern Europe, Implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance: An Exchange of Ideas on How to Move Forward, Prague: Office of the UNHCHR, 24-26 September, 2003.

OECD (2004), *Learning for tomorrow's world: First results from PISA 2003*, Figure 4.8, p.176

Réger Zita, *Cigány gyerekek nyelvi problémái és iskolai esélyei* (Gipsy children's Language problems and chances in schools) Iskolakultúra Budapest: Pécsi Tudományegyetem, 1997.

Report on the Activities of the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities, 2000.

Stigmata: Segregated Schooling of Roma in Central and Eastern Europe, Budapest: European Roma Rights Centre, 2004, www.errc.org

Zolnay János: A romapolitika sarokpontjai és finanszírozás. (The angle and financing system of the Roma policy) Műhelytanulmányok 8. 2004