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SOCIAL PATHOLOGY

& PREVENTION

&

Silesian University in Opava

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CONTENTS

Dear readers,

you certainly sometimes think whether many of the preventive programs, which have been or are to be implemented, can be at least partially efficient or whether some undesirable social phenomena can be at least partially eliminated. You also think of the positive and negative factors of inclusive education. In connection with the above stated concerns, you will read not only a study of a team of authors that has an inspiring name, *Social disadvantage: challenge for pedagogy and teachers*, but also the critical review of a monograph called *Preschool child in socially excluded environment.* An example of good practice from social work presents the project called *Coexistence Village.* There are more than a hundred Roma inhabitants living in the Village and many undesirable behaviours occur there. A low-threshold facility is established there to eliminate such behaviours; it is primarily intended for children and youth, but its activities help also adults to get integrated into the society. The information from a conference that was held in Amsterdam pointed out that experts in other countries and in different continents also face the issues of challenging work with children and youth endangered by social exclusion and that those experts, similarly to our experts, also deal with crisis management of schools and with preventive practices. *The local strategy for the support of family literacy* study also constitutes an important contribution to the above stated topics. The study describes a project focused on Roma families, on the engagement of the partners, within the local strategy for support of the literacy of the family. The implemented project was aimed at increasing the literacy of the family, increasing at the same time the support of the Roma child at school. The topic of social disadvantage has been enjoying increased attention not only from researchers, which is evidenced by the fact that more and more teachers become aware that their profession includes also the issue of inclusion and integration. People living in a socially excluded environment will not be able to break out of their situation without an efficient help of the majority. It is also necessary to point out that the school should play a key role not only in prevention of risk behaviour but also in prevention of mental diseases. Some statistics show that most mental diseases manifest themselves already at the time when the child goes to elementary or secondary school. That is a very good reason to deal with this fact. Very inspiring in this context is also the Norwegian study called *Effects of preventive mental health in secondary schools*. The article describes in detail the results of the relevant study and the practical application of preventive programs. It is very inspiring in spite of a natural cultural difference of our countries, as the occurrence of mental disorders and diseases during adolescence and early youth is identical in essence, and help must be provided and the development of mental disorders must be detected. The teachers often are not aware of the importance they have for the pupils in this regard. Public education on mental health, on how to care for oneself and for relations with family and friends should be commonplace. What can the school do for it? Support the pupils' mental condition comprehensively in the long term and create a space in which it is normal to discuss mental health and disease.

The school can also implement projects to support mental health and the respective information.

Are you concerned with the above stated issues of integration, social disadvantage and mental health? We believe you are, and that is why we have prepared the first issue of the second volume of our magazine with studies and texts whose mutual interconnectedness is undeniable and interesting to a broad range of readers.

Dear readers, we wish you a pleasant and inspiring reading.

Jitka Skopalová

ARTICLES

SOCIAL DISADVANTAGE: CHALLENGE FOR EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES AND EDUCATORS

Martin Stanoev, Dušan Janák, Kateřina Tvrdá

Abstract

The aim of the theoretical/empirical study is the conceptual development of the concept of social disadvantage. Social disadvantage is a technical term as enshrined in the Act no. 561/2004 of legal code, on preschool, primary, secondary, tertiary technical and other training. According to the study authors, the importance of understanding this issue is currently growing. In practice, however, this term is associated with ambiguous interpretations. The study seeks to further develop and expand the findings of a case study of educational schemes of the towns of Krnov and Sokolov, which was focused just on the issue of education of socially disadvantaged pupils. The study describes the legislative basis of social disadvantage and understanding of this concept by pedagogical-psychological advisory centres and ordinary educators, as was captured by two case studies. In conclusion, based on analytical findings, the authors suggest a division of the concept of social disadvantage in three dimensions and formulate recommendations for practice.

Keywords

social disadvantage, social education, social risk, social exclusion

Introduction

Keller (2011, pp. 37–42) identifies current new social risks as the failure of three traditional pillars protecting the modern society against risk: the family, the labour market and the social state. The problem of new social risks came to the foreground more noticeably at the time when the economic crisis broke out in 2008, as well as in connection with so called austerity measures of the government presided by Petr Nečas. At present, the current Czech society is facing increasing homelessness (MPSV

(Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs), 2013), socially excluded localities (GAC, 2015), overindebtedness[1] and increasing number of beneficiaries of poverty benefits (MPSV, 2015).

But the above stated phenomena rather constitute the "most visible iceberg top". A larger segment of the society is affected by many other social risks consisting in high divorce rate[2], uncertainty of job stability or of sufficient security to be provided by social state systems in old age or in adverse social situation. As Keller (2011, pp. 155–157) mentions, the responsibility for the risks is asymmetrical: some people "undertake the risk" in order to increase their profit, while other people "bear the risk" in form of threat of poverty and adverse social situation. While the old risks depended, as Keller says, to a considerable degree on personal indispositions and were handled by the system, the new risks are produced by the system and are supposed to be handled individually (Keller, 2011, p. 44).

Although we may not accept Keller's analysis of new social risks responding to the economic crisis and to the neo-liberal discourse as a whole and in all aspects, it is indisputable that the educational sciences and practice in the Czech Republic are facing the problem of social disadvantage in a different form than in late 1990s. And it is also indisputable that the educational scheme of elementary and secondary schools can constitute an important tool to mitigate social risks and social disadvantage.

The goal of this empirical-theoretical study consists in analyzing the term of social disadvantage and the relation to its use in practice; as it is shown below, it is a quite multivocal term for many actors; its legislative stipulation is obsolete from the amendment of the School Act in 2016 (for the main changes see Zezulková, Kaleja 2016), but it will still constitute an important concept in the practice of inclusive education, and it is therefore relevant to know the interpretation of educators working in the elementary schools and pedagogical-psychological advisory centres. The statements of educators on social disadvantage were analyzed by qualitative and quantitative research methods. The methodology and the context of the research, the case studies of the educational schemes of the two towns stated above, will be specified in more detail below. The analysis of the perspectives of the educators on the issue of social disadvantage constitutes the base of further conceptual elaboration of the concept and of the formulation of suggestions for practice.

Although this study takes account also of the education of the Roma ethnic group, intensively focused by expert literature on social disadvantage in the context of

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[1] The media recently informed about the statistical data of the Executor Chamber about the number of multiple executions. According to the information from the media from October 2015, the number of people under four or more seizures amounted to 377,000. And the number of people under ten and more seizures amounted to 120,000 (Švejdová, 2015).

[2] According to a summarizing information of the Czech Statistical Office (ČSÚ) (2015), the divorce rate from 2001 to 2013 has been at a level of 45-50 % marriages ending by divorce.

education in the Czech Republic (e.g. Němec et al., 2010a, Kaleja et al., 2011), the above stated Keller's theses suggest that the problem of social disadvantage exceeds this issue by far[3].

In conclusion of the introductory part, the relation of social disadvantage and social exclusion as theoretical concepts used by the study authors in their research should be determined, although this study deals primarily with the issue of how the concept is handled by people from pedagogical practice who acted as respondents of the study. We consider social disadvantage a specific disposition for social exclusion. Not every person who is socially disadvantaged must be socially excluded. On the other hand, being socially excluded is an obvious disadvantage. Therefore everybody who is socially excluded is socially disadvantaged by definition. Social disadvantage is thus a broader category than social exclusion. The following part deals with the concept of social disadvantage, whose priority resulted from the legislative framework applicable at the time of writing the study. The legal regulations concerning social disadvantage in relation to education have changed. Social disadvantage as a legal term is not so important any more, but it keeps existing as a social phenomenon. It can even turn out to be a more burning social problem when the adequate denomination disappears from official reflection. At such point, it may start putting on its usual disguises of inborn dispositions and biologizing social stereotypes.

Interpretation of social disadvantage:
views of experts and elementary school teachers in case study
of two educational schemes

Methodological procedure and research context

The empirical study constituting the base for this analysis examined the transformation of educational schemes of the towns of Krnov and Sokolov. Both case studies were at the same time a part of a statewide project with other publication outputs related to the issue of social disadvantage and social exclusion (Kaleja, 2015; Kaleja et al, 2015; Kolaříková, 2015; Zezulková, 2015). Several years ago, both towns closed down the elementary schools attended primarily by Roma children. Both educational schemes in both towns had to cope with specific problems related to the above stated step. The transformation of the elementary school scheme in Krnov (implemented in school year 2008/2009) and in Sokolov (implemented in school year 2011/2012) was linked to two

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[3] For example Vítková et al. (2007) focus not only on the Roma but also on pupils-foreigners and on pupils with behaviour disorders in the framework of social disadvantage problems. But we consider this a too narrow focus as well.

problems. On one hand, there was the demand to reduce the school network because of decreasing number of pupils; on the other hand, there was the demand to reduce social selectivity of the educational scheme, i.e. to eliminate the existence of a school attended almost exclusively by socially disadvantaged pupils coming mainly from the Roma ethnic group. This study (Janák, Stanoev et al., 2015) showed that some problems transgressed the borders of the two above stated towns. One of the motives to write this study consisted in contributing to a more general discussion exceeding the borders of the two towns. One of the topics deserving wider attention and discussion concerns the perception of social disadvantage by educators and the issue of approach to this problem by educational sciences and practice.

The study was divided into four stages:

- **Stage 1:** At the beginning, a pilot study was carried out in form of non-structured interviews with relevant communication partners (school headmasters, heads of education departments) and secondary data and information sources were prepared to form the base for description of educational schemes of both towns and their transformations.

- **Stage 2:** That basic descriptive picture was followed by the first stage of qualitative research aimed at ascertaining the perception of the educational scheme in relation to social selectivity by different types of respondents (primarily educators, representatives of the towns, representatives of the non-profit sector, pedagogical-psychological advisory centres), as well as their evaluation of the recent changes.

- **Stage 3:** The findings of the qualitative research were complemented by the quantitative questionnaire research focused primarily on elementary school educators, with research questions operationalized and created on the basis of preceding qualitative research. A comprehensive research was carried out among elementary school educators of both towns, with a return rate of 84 % and the 317 analyzed questionnaires.

- **Stage 4:** The last stage included focus groups with educators and parents as the last base for interpretation of the research findings. The scenario of the focus groups was created on the basis of the findings from the preceding research stages. Furthermore, additional interviewing was carried out in some kindergartens and secondary schools.

Although the study makes use of both qualitative and quantitative research techniques, the general logic of the given study relied upon the qualitative paradigm: it was aimed at a thorough description and interpretation of the phenomenon in question. The study also used the photographs made by Jindřich Štreit, a professor of the Silesian University in Opava (a set of almost 1,500 photographs), during the implementation of the study in Krnov. Furthemore, the study tries to elaborate and extend the findings concerning the issue of socially disadvantaged pupils. And its goals are not limited only to analyze the situation in the educational schemes of Krnov and Sokolov.

**Social disadvantage in the context of activities
of pedagogical-psychological advisory centres**

Based on a phone inquiry, the Pedagogical-psychological advisory centre of Karlovy Vary - branch of Sokolov assesses the social disadvantage of pupils according to the following indicators:
• bilingualism in the family
• the child's not attending any preschool facilities
• the child's growing up in a "handicapped" - incomplete, numerous - family
• illiteracy of the parents or of the legal representative
• the child's insufficient stimulation in his/her natural environment
• the child's skills and knowledge depending on age (retardation)

The pedagogical-psychological advisory centre of Bruntál (where the pupils from Krnov belong) often verifies the information acquired from the parents in cooperation with the headmasters of the elementary schools and with the educators' assistants. The assessed criteria include the following facts:
• the pupil lives in a socially excluded locality
• the family receives poverty benefits
• one of the parents is serving imprisonment sentence
• based on expert experience with the pupil

The practice of the pedagogical-social advisory centres of Sokolov and Bruntál shows that children with social disadvantage caused by "family environment with low social-cultural status or endangerment by socially pathological phenomena" are officially diagnosed at a minimal degree (as compared to children-foreigners and children with ordered upbringing in a custody centre or imposed protective upbringing). But that does not mean that a number of other pupils do not have any educational needs, as the interviews with elementary school teachers of both towns showed.
On one hand, the identification of special educational means should help the pupils to overcome educational barriers; on the other hand, the need to have the social disadvantage "certified" by a psychological-pedagogical advisory centre constitutes other barriers. First, the parents had to overcome the barriers connected with submitting the application, arranging a meeting in the advisory centre, filling out a questionnaire and visiting the advisory centre with the child. Second, the diagnosis of social disadvantage as the cause of the pupil's school failure is very stigmatizing. It is particularly negatively approached in case of the majority part of the poverty-endangered families.

Social disadvantage as seen by the questionnaire inquiry among educators

When researching the transformation of the educational systems of Krnov and Sokolov, we wanted to know how the concept was approached by the educators who are in daily contact with the pupils. In order to reduce the potential halo effect (i.e. the influence

of the answer to the preceding questions of the questionnaire), we included the open-ended question "How would you define social disadvantage in relation to education with your own words?" at the very beginning of the questionnaire. The respondents did not get any variants to choose from; their own answers had to be subject to open coding.

In spite of some variedness of the answers, the respondents' reactions showed two most important dimensions: poverty and lowly stimulating family environment, although other variants could be found to a lesser extent too. We choose some typical examples from the respondents' answers, both from Krnov and from Sokolov, as no essential difference was identified between the two towns[4]:

> "*Social disadvantage is not always related to the approach to education, but only with the fact that poor parents cannot provide their children with extra things, other teaching aids, paid trips, excursions, workshops. The problem rather consists in disrespect for education, easy and simple life, lowly stimulating environment.*"

In the educators' eyes, social disadvantage in the approach to education is most frequently related to low motivation to education in the families, quite often linked with poverty. The answers show that the concept of social disadvantage in relation to education provokes negative association. The answers repeatedly feature negative prefixes and words: they cannot, don't have, don't want, unsuitable, lack of cooperation, disadvantageous, lack of interest, etc.

It may be primarily caused by an association characteristic of the language concept of "disadvantage" that leads to other negatively structured expressions. On the other hand, the analytical philosophy shows that to mean something is to actually do it and that language expressions are related to actions or activities, respectively. Understanding a language expression is related to understanding a specific activity. Negative connotations of the language expressions may support the social distance that is evident in some respondents' definitions.

We can even find a refusal of the usefulness of the concept of social disadvantage as an artificial problem, as motivation is considered something much more individual and not socially determined, which is aptly illustrated by the following quotations:

> "*If the child wants to educate himself/herself and is supported by the family, social disadvantage does not play any role.*"

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[4] The pre-printed answers are not extracts; they always constitute the complete answers to the question "How would you define, in your own words, the social disadvantage in relation to education?" In view of the fact that it is a question of a large questionnaire, the respondents most frequently gave short answers instead of long treatises, to save time. From the perspective of analysis of the answers, it is rather an advantage, as the answers could reflect the most essential primary associations.

"If both the pupil and the family are interested in education, there are no differences."

"They don't have money for interest groups and aids, but there are few of them; the most do have money, but they don't give it!"

"Motivation to achieve results by their own work and diligence is lacking. The parents are indifferent to the children's results and to the teachers' advice."

The above stated answers to the question requiring an own definition of social disadvantage can be interpreted as follows: Social disadvantage is something that, in the respondents' opinion, really exists but does not have substantial influence on the area of education. The child's (individual) motivation and the motivation of the child's family is the key. But the subjective motivation does not depend on objective social position; it does not have the character of an objectively socially determined dis/advantage; it is a subjective drawback with rather indirect link to an objectively disadvantageous situation. In other words, a considerable part of the respondents would probably support the following attitude: They are poor, but if they wanted, they would have good results. But this statement could be unambiguously confirmed only by a replicated questionnaire investigation.

A special chapter with respect to the Czech Republic as a whole and to the towns under research consists in the issue of social chances of the Roma. Statistically expressed, the Roma do not have equal social chances as the rest of the Czech society. They are disadvantaged both in the educational system and in the labour market. On average, the Roma achieve lower education than the Czech population in general and show higher unemployment values as a group. The basic mechanism of their social integration and thus of the comparison of their social chances with the remaining population consists in the area of education. For the above stated reasons, special attention was paid to the issue of ethnic selection, or to the issues related to the educational chances of the Roma in both towns under research, respectively, as well as to the degree of overlap of social disadvantage with ethnicity, as seen by the educators. Some answers to the question requiring the own definition of social disadvantage suggest a very close connection of the concept of social disadvantage with the ethnically based marginalization, as well as the refusal of such concept by pointing out its wrongness. The above stated answers indicate that a part of the educators perceive the question of social disadvantage as automatically connected with ethnicity, or Roma ethnicity, respectively, so that when asked to offer their own definition of social disadvantage in relation to education, they answer by refusing the implicitly supposed ethnic stereotype.

"I don't perceive the Roma ethnicity as a disadvantage."

"The fact of somebody having another nationality does not imply disadvantage in education."

"Based on the thirty years of my practice, I dare to state that nobody is socially disadvantaged with respect to elementary education. Provided the social

*benefits are used for the intended purpose. I don't perceive the Roma ethnicity
as a disadvantage but as an excuse."*

It seems that three interconnected stereotypes of the relationship between Roma
ethnicity and social disadvantage exist in the Czech society, or in its part, respectively:
The first stereotype connects social disadvantage in access to education with the Roma
ethnicity. The second stereotype expresses the assumption that there is a widespread
stereotype connecting social disadvantage with the Roma ethnicity. In other words,
the assumption that others think that the Roma are socially disadvantaged. The third
stereotype refuses to recognize the Roma ethnicity as a legitimate social disadvantage,
extending defensively the second stereotype.

In the Czech society, social disadvantage overlaps with ethnicity at the level of theory,
practice and in the educators' mind. The forms of interconnection are quite varied
and often ambivalent, including nuances from simple stating of objective connections
in own definition of social disadvantage (*In some cases, the children's families speak
Roma at home, and the children have then problems at school in Czech lessons and
in communication in general)* to explicit refusal (*I don't perceive the Roma ethnicity as
a disadvantage*), in case of one respondent.

Therefore we tried to specify more precisely, with the help of quantifiable indicators,
how the educators perceive the specific link between social disadvantage and the Roma
ethnicity, not only at a general level but also in the context of the school at which they
work. The set of indicators included in the questionnaire was aimed at different aspects of
overlapping of social disadvantage (whose essential features are consensually accepted
to some degree by the respondents) with the Roma ethnicity, as seen by the respondents
in the context of their specific workplaces.

In spite of some degree of consensus found in the answers of the educators from
both towns, there are slight differences, confirmed also by statistic correlations around
the value of 0.2. The analysis shows that in Sokolov, the educators perceive a closer
link between social disadvantage in access to education and the Roma ethnicity. The
statement "Social disadvantage in access to education overlaps almost completely with
Roma ethnicity at our school" was supported by 19 % educators from Krnov as against
28 % educators from Sokolov, while the contrary statement "The number of Roma pupils
with social disadvantage in the educational process is lower than the number of other
disadvantaged pupils at our school" was supported by 40 % educators from Krnov and
by 22 % educators from Sokolov.

In the context of other findings, we consider it adequate to conclude from the respondents'
reactions that a higher level of social disadvantage in relation to education linked to the
Roma ethnicity could be perceived in Sokolov than in Krnov, which is accompanied by an
ambivalent attitude to the Roma, implying both acknowledgement and refusal of social
disadvantage. At the same time, it must be highlighted that the above stated differences
are significant, but not dramatic. The educators' estimate of the number of Roma pupils
also confirms the assumption of a higher number of Roma pupils in Sokolov as against

Krnov (resulting from the analyses of socially excluded localities in the towns in question: Hůle et al., 2011, Szczepaniková et al., 2013).

From the perspective of the description of social disadvantage in relation to pupils from non-Roma environment, the respondents most frequently deny differences between Roma and non-Roma cases. The most frequently stated difference related to a non-Roma situation of socially complicated access to education consists in having a single parent who is too busy (which prevents the parent from helping the child with the homework), as well as having unemployed parents, which results in poverty. The educators of both towns also do not perceive the place of residence as a too important factor, although the concept of socially excluded localities situated in both towns could suggest it. Only about one fourth of the respondents attaches importance to the place of residence.

Social disadvantage as seen in qualitative research

Krnov

The educators in a focus group at one of the elementary school in Krnov agreed that it did not matter whether the socially disadvantaged pupil was or was not a Roma. They rather highlighted the fact that the problem of social disadvantage has been increasing in the non-Roma population. In their opinion, social disadvantage was linked to long lasting unemployment, intergenerational passing of patterns of passivity and dependence on social benefits, poorly stimulating social environment and lacking motivation of the child for work at school, as well as lacking motivation of the parents to search a job. It may be linked to lower intellect, but it can be primarily understood rather as lack of the necessary moral-volitional characteristics in the family, which has impact on the child:

> *"I don't speak about the Roma here, I speak about the socially weaker persons; there is either lower intellect, or there is no motivation, or there is no functional parent who sits down and gives remedial classes and prepares the child."*

> *"I perceive that at present, it does not concern only the Roma; there is higher and higher percentage of members of the majority society who are twenty or thirty years old and don't go to work."*

> *"If they see that the parent has not been working all life long, then the model is clear to them. If the child sees that I go to work, I leave at a specific time, I return at a specific time, I bring my work home, then the child is quite likely to take it over and to do the same. I will ask him to do it, and I am asking him to do it today already, but if such model doesn't work there any more, or in other words, if they rely that the state or somebody else will sustain them and they don't need to care, so the children take over such models, all the more so as they are their parents' models. Psychologists have known it for centuries, so I am not surprised that the problems are as they are. We are only facing the results."*

The focus group also mentioned the poverty of some families from the majority society as a problem, suggesting that such families may be insufficiently supported by the governmental welfare system. Which is linked to the assumption that poverty need not always imply "social disadvantage" that is related also to other characteristics of the individual or of the family.

> *"... this teacher has a girl in her class who lives only with the mother; her mother is ill, so she has only limited income. She paid the skiing course and then she did not have money for other school events like cinemas or theatres. She doesn't even have the seventy or eighty CZK because she spent it for that single thing. So it would be good that the town council finds some money for these children to enable them to go somewhere. That girl cannot attend interest groups, because if you want to develop your talent somewhere, it costs money today. It is not an issue of some crowns but of some thousands of crowns. When you see that the child is interested and diligent, it should be helped..."*

The statements of some educators showed attempts to perceive the failure of the educational process as a fault of the family: not only a poorly stimulating family environment but poor motivation and generally bad attitude to school. The educator's potential to influence such process is perceived as limited.

> *"But it cannot be only up to us to push them; the problem is that there is lacking cooperation or that their home environment isn't working well; if you want to live better than we do, you must do something for it - such pressure is missing there. Nothing will come to you by itself. If the children don't hear that at home, we cannot force them here to do something; and particularly if the parent-teacher communication is missing, then the children will keep having the attitude they have."*

> *"They may get motivation at school, but the main motivation should result from the ideas of the pupil, of the pupil's legal representative, about what the pupil will do in life, and that is where our effort runs out. We don't live at home with them. We are responsible for them at school; we even achieve a miracle at school; but the pupil returns home from school, and if he doesn't have the right environment to make himself useful for the society, than the school really cannot help..."*

The governmental pressure, i.e. external pressure from the state, exerted through the social department seems to be a corrective tool. The above stated attitude may reflect some helplessness of the teachers with respect to the education of some pupils where the available tools fail:

> *"A lot of money they get in form of social benefits is not used in favour of the children but in favour of the parents; that should be supervised. I know it is difficult but it should be supervised; if you don't meet your obligations toward*

your children, the benefits will be reduced. I think it wouldn't help immediately, because when we started working a little with the social department and they became aware that the social department knew about it, so it helped in some cases and it didn't help in other cases; but it slowly starts helping, because money is important to them; so I think that it will be the greatest punishment to them: if you don't fulfil your obligations, you will get lower benefits; I think then they would care more about the children."

On the other hand, the teachers in the focus group emphasized that the assessment of the experience with children from socially disadvantaged environment was individual; they definitely didn't state that there were no positive cases at all. Additionally to the above quoted statements, the focus discussion also included opinions that no generalization should be made; children from socially disadvantaged environment differ from each other. The preceding statements can be also interpreted as a frustration and helplessness in relation to the education of some children. On the contrary, the teacher's individual approach combined with empathy can bring results in the teachers' eyes.

When further focusing on the education of Roma children, we can mention the opinion of an elementary school teacher with respect to the approach to Roma children under use of emotions:

"Yes, yes, they seem more emotive to me; when I want them to remember something, I must act upon their hearts. And then it works better; when I say: Beware when crossing the street, it may not respect it, but when I say: Beware when crossing the street, or you could get injured, an ambulance would come to pick you up and your mother would cry, then it helps; it is a sort of blackmail from my side, but it works. It must touch the child and then the child takes a lesson from it."

It can be assumed that the teacher-child relation can be worked at and that it can constitute the base of educational influence and of motivation of pupils from Roma environment. But the educators mention a specific turn in the education of Roma pupils. They are divided over when it takes place, but they agree that it exists. They either speak of the passage to the higher elementary school or of the onset of puberty. According to the educators, the children become much less influenceable by the teacher at that time. Although it was not named so explicitly, we could seek the differences in social disadvantage by ethnicity here, because the turn was not so emphasized with respect to socially disadvantaged children from the majority population. The turn is related to the influence of peers and of the adolescence:

"It is rather related with the onset of puberty; if the child has one or two C's in the sixth class and then, in the eighth class, it fails in five subjects, then it is unambiguous..."

"The critical years, they constitute an unambiguous fact, it is a completely credible observation, we can't do anything about it..."

Additionally to the above stated fact, there is another interesting fact: the Roma families are not perceived as a homogeneous group by the educators with respect to the relation to school. The families were frequently divided into two groups: families that cooperate with the school somehow and support their children's education (minority) and families that do not cooperate with the school at all or only under pressure. A remedial class teacher describes the families interested in their children's education with the following words:

> "There are two types. There are parents, a minority, who really wish that their children get education, as they perceive it as a value. But that is a non-Roma perspective in principle. It is similar to a situation that if we make value systems, so the Roma, if they don't know that you want to have it there, they won't write it. There are such families, they usually don't live in this locality, but perhaps have their family here, so they naturally come here with their children and they say that they don't want the children to end like all the other people here; they perhaps live somewhere else and attended a special school when they were young, they have problems to find a job, they work in the municipal services or so, but at least they work, and they want their children to have a better life. They are in a minority, but there are some of them. Then the family is motivated, and in such case, when the time of the turn comes, the child may tend to experience the turn, but the family doesn't allow it, watches the child, and the child keeps going to school or learns at home..."

The interviews in Krnov also repeatedly presented information on successful Roma people who have passed the secondary-school leaving examination or have outstanding school results. The focus group held with Roma parents shows that they accept the school somehow in their life, which suggests the conclusion that school has some potential as an inclusive tool. We probably can distinguish Roma families by the importance they attach to school, and for some families, school can constitute one of the key tools to break out of their marginal social position. Yet the inclusion of the Roma minority through school often seems to fail. In our opinion, the approach of some actors in the educational area of Krnov ("the Krnov approach") is beneficial by asking the question: what is going wrong? An important actor of Krnov is the headmaster of an elementary school who, based on his own experience, has developed the theory of failure of the Roma in the educational process and of the cause of their disturbed education consisting primarily in their lacking knowledge, as compared to the majority population.

> "It was particularly due to the fact that we found out that the indiscipline and the disorder and the impossibility to teach in those classes was caused primarily by the fact that the children showed a huge difference in knowledge as compared to the other children. Yes, that means that when they were in the sixth class, their learning knowledge was at the level of the third class, and so they didn't

understand the schoolwork, it was a foreign language, foreign examples to them; so we tried to prepare them and to remove the handicaps from the beginning of the first class."

Based on his analysis of the problem, he created a club for remedial teaching in the excluded locality in cooperation with a non-profit organization. The club is interconnected with the school through Internet applications, allowing communication of the remedial teachers and the school. Furthermore, the school makes use of the work of a field worker who visits the families for example when a child is absent from school. The headmaster actually tries to create system (inclusive) tools in order to avoid a dependence of the educational success only on the teacher-child (family) relation, and he tries to work with social and cultural influences involved in education. In this respect, the problem is not seen in the individual (family) but in the social conditions that must be acted upon. The focus group held at the school in question (another focus group than the above stated one) shows that the teachers at that school did not challenge the given approach to the Roma. In their opinion, the given model works, but not for all pupils from the socially excluded locality, as some families are very difficult to cooperate with. At present, the actors are trying to extend the given model of cooperation to other elementary schools too. The questionnaire research and the qualitative interviews show that the inclusive efforts in Krnov are accompanies by consensus (although restrained in some cases).

Sokolov
As for education at the elementary school, the government (including the regional and municipal government) was referred to as a considerably important actor, providing the funds to support inclusive education. As one respondent stated, without creating adequate conditions, comparable to those of foreign countries, the results of educational activities will always remain limited:

"I will take it from the teacher's position; it is terrible to have thirty children in a class today. You know that you have a sum of money from which you must pay the teacher and the assistant. You know that it isn't much, but you want them to do a work of some quality. I visited some European schools and I saw it, they have twenty children in a class, the teacher and two assistants. It is a great work, then they can teach across classes, why not. But if you have thirty children, including several handicapped ones, then the teacher would have to be a Komenský raised to the tenth power. He may wish it desperately, he may be educated, he may be interested, but he cannot manage it physically."

The relation between the Roma ethnicity and social disadvantage is complicated, particularly due to the fact that there is no consensus with respect to the meaning of the latter concept. The different understanding of the meanings of the individual words and phrases results from the nature of the actual language. It is therefore not surprising

that also the focus groups held among educators experienced conflicts of different perspectives of the key concepts used by the actors to try to understand the reality of the educational failures of socially disadvantaged pupils.

The conflict formulated probably most openly was related to the concept of social disadvantage. While a part of the discussants understood it exclusively socio-economically, in the sense of financial or material shortage, others saw also socio-cultural aspects in it, for example the relatively insufficient vocabulary of the Roma children and their specific use of the language. The first quote expresses the disadvantage understood from exclusively economic perspective and opposed to ethnicity by the author. The second quote contains an example of socio-cultural disadvantage linked to the membership of the Roma group. In other words, in the first case, ethnicity is not identified as a distinctive source of social disadvantage, while in the second case it is:

> "I strongly disliked the word 'social disadvantage' used in the questionnaire. In my opinion, a single mother with three children is socially disadvantaged, regardless of her origin. She is socially disadvantaged, but that does not mean that her children will attend a special school. Her children may be able to study at the university, but she doesn't have money for it, and that is the social impact. Then we have rich Roma families, and they feature problems too, as their children will not learn and they will not work. And I think that this is not too closely related. It was too prompting from the ethnic perspective, and I think that it is not true. Many socially disadvantaged people just don't admit the disadvantage to us, the parents have different temporary jobs... and try to provide for the child in many ways. Such parents are ashamed of their social disadvantage. But on the other hand, we have a family that have cars, gold, silver, precious stones, and their boy just won't work."

> "The children don't speak Czech well, they don't understand a lot of words. They don't understand what you tell them. They learn the words when they use them. Then they seem to be stupid. The teachers in the first class think: 'Well, she doesn't understand me. She isn't able to solve the verbally formulated example.' She reads the example and doesn't understand the word 'flasket'. She doesn't know what it is and then she doesn't know that it contains apples. She doesn't ask. So she would need a translation. They use the Czech language for a purpose: 'Mum, do, give,' and other purpose-built words, but they don't comprehend the colourful character of the Czech language."

If the teacher is not able to identify the language handicap, the socio-cultural incompetence will be mistaken for mental insufficiency. The fragment from the discussion quoted below illustrates the situation; however, it is not evident whether the group of children referred to in the text equals to all children passed from the Sokolovská elementary school that was closed down or whether it represents a subgroup of children with a "mental disorder", as classified by one informant.

"I can understand that they didn't want the children to do miracles, (but) I never saw such children in the forty years (of my teaching practice), this group of children was extremely difficult to educate. I feel that when we speak Czech to them, they don't understand us at all, as they don't know a lot of words. Such children have no business here. In my opinion, they should go to the special school where they would be fine; a special teacher would work with them and would teach them some basics like reading and calculating. I am not a specialized special teacher, therefore we are catching up on something with them all the time and solving a million of problems."

Nevertheless, it is essential to identify the problem that was highlighted also by an assistant from a practical class. She spoke about a specific group of children who would manage common lessons if they had favourable conditions for it:

"There are children who could be successful if somebody attended to them, but there is no time for it now. Now in this situation, with thirty pupils in class, it is really impossible, you don't have any chance to attend to such children. They sometimes come and sometimes don't come. Such children are well with less pupils in class, and they are well in the special school. I see it myself that some children should go there and some not. I sometimes feel that we have children there that should be returned to the elementary school. But it worked well just at the school where there were few pupils in the classes and there was better chance to attend to them."

In the context of this statement, the problem does not consist in mere transfer of the children to schools outside the main education stream but in the actual unwillingness to deal with the proportion of the socio-cultural particularities of ethnic groups, or to legitimize them as one of the causes of failure of some Roma pupils at elementary schools. The measures aimed at pupils with special educational needs may provoke the impression of injustice with respect to pupils with common needs in this context. The concept of socially excluded locality is perceived inconsistently too. Although some participants to the qualitative interviews stated that it was not essential to their teaching practice, others mentioned it as an important clue to understand the specific educational needs of their pupils.

While in Krnov, a circumspect consensus accepting the *status quo* and the transformation steps can be felt, the educators and other education actors in Sokolov show quite different perspectives. The attitude indicators of the empiric study show better success of transformation from the perspective of social inclusion in Krnov, as compared to Sokolov, which can be expressed for example by lower declared tension in inter-ethnic relationships (the education of the Roma who constitute a substantial part of socially disadvantaged pupils is less loaded by emotions) or by the fact that, as compared to

Sokolov, the *status quo* is accepted more positively and that there is more confidence in some inclusive steps (remedial class programs, work with the children's parents, work of the teacher's assistant) and in positive results of the transformation with respect to education of socially disadvantaged pupils.

While Sokolov was typical by different perspectives and emotional tone with respect to education of socially disadvantaged (mainly Roma) pupils, the actors of Krnov succeeded in creating an innovative inclusive model that tries to act upon the social and cultural influences included in education. It was based rather on practical needs and on personal familiarization with the conditions of life in the socially excluded locality than on theory. Nevertheless, this text is not aimed at evaluating the educational systems and transformation steps of both towns but at contributing to the discussion of the problem of education of socially disadvantaged pupils. The above stated findings indicate primarily a disunited understanding of the given concept and the differences of the practical solution of education of socially disadvantaged pupils. On the basis of the given findings and of theoretical research, we will try to elaborate further the concept of social disadvantage and to submit recommendations aimed at practice.

Conclusions, discussion

The parents from the socially excluded environment include many parents who accept the value of education, wishing that their children have higher education than they have and that they are more successful on the labour market. But they do not dispose of the necessary cultural capital that they could invest in their children (for example they are not able to correct a Czech homework without self-learning). The notion of (subjective) lack of interest in school is only partially true and it must be indispensably completed with the notion of (objective) barriers preventing the creation of the team background needed for individual school success of pupils, and the issue of overcoming the objective barriers should be dealt with. Our study identified that different types of respondents refuse or do not reflect the issue of objective barriers (contrary to the subjective ones), and that is why it cannot be dealt with. The annex to the study includes photographic documentation from a socially excluded locality, underlining the existence of the objective education barriers.

The study was focused, with respect to the transformation steps, primarily on the education of socially disadvantaged pupils from among the Roma. But we consider significant the finding from Krnov, stating that socially disadvantaged pupils can be commonly found also among the majority population. The study also identified a great inhomogeneity (and also vagueness, for many respondents) of the concept of social disadvantage. Based on the study and on theoretical research, we suggest distinguishing the following three dimensions of the concept of social disadvantage:

1. Social disadvantage as a manifestation of alienation from the values of the majority society, combined with social marginalization. In this respect, social disadvantage

is often linked to unemployment, dependence on social benefits, higher tolerance to pathological behaviour. It is characterized by orientation on the present and by renunciation of the value of work or education. This dimension of social disadvantage is based on the concept of the poverty culture (Toušek, 2006; Lewis, 2006) as a specific subculture of poor people, leading to generational reproduction of poverty. At present, the concept of poverty culture is mingled with the concept of social exclusion in relation to socially excluded localities. But the study shows that even families from socially excluded localities do not completely pass over the value of education and that there may be families that view the education as a hope to break out from the marginal social position (compare Němec et al., 2010a).

2. Social disadvantage as a consequence of material poverty: low income, overindebtedness, frequent in present households of single parents (compare Horáková et al., 2013). But poverty is not linked to separation from the values of the majority society connected with work or education. However, poverty may be linked to some stigmatization or exclusion from some school activities.

3. Social disadvantage as manifestation of cultural difference: linked with national and ethnic minorities, families of asylum seekers or refugees. Cultural difference may be also linked with lack of knowledge of the Czech language and with problems to adapt to the school culture. But cultural difference need not be linked to social marginalization; the family of a national minority member may even have a high socio-economic status[5].

In our opinion, the above stated three dimensions of social disadvantage in education establish a situation requiring support or specific approach. But each of the dimensions requires a different approach. Passing over the social dimensions of education and stressing the allegedly equal conditions of the pupils may contribute to easier reproduction of social disadvantage[6].

In our opinion, broader social and cultural context of education, exceeding the level of pedagogical-psychological diagnostics or didactics, should be considered at the faculties of education when preparing the educators already. In our opinion, the present reflection of education often overlooks the social dimension of education in its non-trivial form. Social disadvantage is another "handicap" than the handicaps caused by the individual's health or mental condition. Nevertheless, sociological thinking rather points out the range of overlooked aspects and unintentional consequences instead of offering unambiguous methodical and diagnostic tools.

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[5] For example, when interviewing the educators in Sokolov, the opinion of trouble-free character of the Vietnam-ese minority in education could be heard. As an example of a high socio-economic status, we can present the picture of an asylum seeker from the Arabic world who has medical education.

[6] The reproduction of social status through the educational system does not necessarily concern only socially disadvanted people but also families of manual workers (compare Katrňák, 2004).

We see a potential enrichment in the development of social educational science (for definition of social educational science see Kraus, 2008; Němec et al., 2010b) and its more intensive application at schools and in preparation of future teachers. Not only because of greater analytical closeness to the sociological way of thinking, as against special educational science, but also because of greater closeness to social work and helping professions that are able to identify more sensitively the social disadvantage and work better with it. In this respect, a social educator or social-educational knowledge can facilitate not only the communication with the families of socially disadvantaged pupils but also with the non-profit sector, which is an important partner of the school when overcoming social barriers in approach to education. A contribution of social educational science can consist also in more accurate and more detailed elaboration of the concept of social disadvantage for the needs of educational sciences and of educational practice. While the classifications of health handicap or health disadvantage rely on relatively reliable medical or pedagogical-psychological diagnostics, we feel that it is much more difficult to create a reliable objective diagnostic tool for social disadvantage. Additionally, the issue of social disadvantage exceeds by far the educational process that takes place in a specific class or school. Another problem consists in the obvious stigmatization linked with such diagnose. It will not be perceived as a conclusion of the pupil's drawback but as a conclusion of the situation of the whole family.

From the perspective of social pathology, we can observe that the presence / absence of social pathology is what sets apart the individual dimensions of the concept of social disadvantage. It is present only in its first dimension. But without an adequate intervention, it may concern the other two above stated dimensions after some time.

Nevertheless, we should be aware that although social marginalization is related in this conceptualization with alienation from the values of the majority society and also with social pathology, we must not link it only with the problem of "asociality" of some citizens. On the contrary, the authors perceive it as a consequence of structural inequality, and in this sense, the use of the concept of social pathology should not tempt us to assume the view contributing to the marginalization.

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**Annex: Photographic documentation
from the socially excluded locality of Krnov (autor: Jindřich Štreit)**

Comments to the photographs: The acquisition of own housing and the operational costs of housing probably constitute the greatest part of standard costs of living in most European societies, regardless of the fact that there are great differences in housing

conditions. The photographs in this chapter show two Roma families. The pictures show us that in a family in a socially excluded environment, it is not commonplace for each child to have their own desk to do their homework; in this environment, it would definitely be a luxury that can hardly rank among the priorities of housing space planning and of household expenses. The children must do with the common table or the coffee table in the living room that obviously was not brought to the household from the Ikea department store. Our pictures show Roma families, because the field work and the photographer's interest was focused on making pictures of the Roma, but the same applies also to non-Roma families.

Comments to the photograph: With respect to social exclusion and integration, it is not so important whether we live in a battered block of flats at the beginning of our life cycle, but how we succeed in passing the school education system. Education keeps being the most important variable for the success in the labour market. Children who attended the kindergarten or another type of preschool preparation are statistically more successful at the elementary school. Children who succeed at the elementary school are more successful at the secondary school. Successful secondary school graduates have a good position in the labour market. However, children from battered blocks of flats attend statistically less often the kindergarten, which places them in an unfavourable position from the perspective of progress in other degrees of the educational system and finally of the labour market. Social disadvantage can smoothly pass into social exclusion.

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EFFECTS OF PREVENTIVE MENTAL HEALTH IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Bror Just Andersen

Abstract

In the research project in my doctoral thesis I wanted to test the effects of a short preventive mental health program in secondary school. In 2007 there was established a longitudinal study with a test group and a control group (N=1671), built upon Solomon's design. Data was collected through questionnaires prior to intervention and at 1, 6, 12, and 24 months after the intervention. Effect sizes on the various indices are estimated in terms of (a) differences in improvements of total percentage scores and (b) Cohen's d. From t0 to t1, t2 and t3 the intervention group showed significantly greater progress in 6 out of 7 knowledge indexes, and 12 months after the intervention we found significant effects in reduction of mental health problems.

Keywords

prevention, mental health, secondary school, research, intervention

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Introduction – Background

Clinical studies have shown that depression in adolescents is under-diagnosed and that too few receive treatment. In 2000 it was found in the U.S., that only 20% of severely depressed youth receive treatment. In the same study it was also found a high recidivism, and by the age of 24 years, many had developed other mental health problems and substance abuse problems in addition to depression, especially alcohol and drug abuse (Lewinsohn, Rhode, Seeley, Klein, & Gotlib, 2000). Studies in Norway have shown that between 15 and 20% of children have mental health problems that go beyond their ability to function, and between 5 and 7% the problems is so severe that they need professional treatment (NDH 2000, NOKC 2004).

Reports and research indicate that these figures could be reduced by increasing knowledge through universal prevention, including such as behavioral changes and that knowledge increase could reduce the duration of untreated problems. For such

a purpose, schools seem to be a suitable arena. "VIP" (the Norwegian abbreviation of Guidance and information about mental health), that was started in 2000 on the initiative of the user council at Blakstad hospital in 1999 (VV HT 2016). The background for initiating the intervention was that users felt that if they had gained knowledge about mental health problems, disorders and where they could seek help before the problems started, they'd probably tackled the problems in a better way and sought help set earlier. The intervention is short (approximately five school hours in two weeks) focusing, first and foremost, on reducing incidence of mental health problems through building knowledge about mental health among the youth. Secondly, it contributes to a closer relationship between primary everyday venues and primary service for young people, across professions, sectors and services.

In the school year 2007/08, VIP was conducted at 128 schools in 15 out of 19 counties. The program is founded on dialogue, empowerment and salutogenesis, and has elements of both prevention and promotion. In May 2005, the intervention was included in The Norwegian Directorate of Health cooperative project: "Mental Health in Schools" (NDH 2013).

Manuals for implementation are prepared for all parts of the project, and it requires no special prior knowledge of the teacher (more about the manuals, see the interventions website (VV HT 2016)).

The implementation of the project is interdisciplinary and cross-sectional. It involves the coordinator of mental health in the community, the school administration and teachers, school nurse and specialist metal health services. The intervention differs from many types of school-based prevention activities through the focus on knowledge-dialogue based presentation and by the degree of involvement of the local support agencies (VV HT 2016).

Previous Effect Evaluation of Psycho Educational Interventions

In international surveys, including both longitudinal studies (Spence, Sheffield, & Donovan, 2005) and reviews of universal preventive interventions in depression (Cuijpers, van Straten, Smit, Mihalopoulos, & Beekman, 2008; Cuijpers, Munoz, Clarke, & Lewinsohn, 2009; Durlak, & Wells, 1997; Horowitz, 2006; Merry, McDowell, Hetrick, Bir, & Muller, 2009) and mental health, the relevant comparable effect sizes vary, where such are reported, between 0.26 to 0.57 (Lipsey, & Wilson, 1993; Merry et al. 2009; Weist, & Albus, 2004; Weisz, Sandler, Durlak, & Anton, 2005). The dependent variables in the study encompass changing, self-perception, behavior, coping, problem solving, school and mental health climate, and referrals. Several review articles conclude positively about prevention and early intervention for anxiety and depression (Gillham, Shatte, & Freres, 2000; Greenberg, Domitrovich, & Bumbarger, 2001; Jané-Llopis, 2005, Tennant, Goens, Barlow, Day, & Stewart-Brown, 2007). When the interventions are universal, these generally accomplish a slightly weaker effect. On the other hand, they reach a much

larger number of people and therefore can be justified with a relatively lower power. Thus, variations in relation to generalized effect are larger, the orientation remains mainly significant and positive (Arnarson, & Craighead, 2009; Aune, & Stiles, 2009; Farrington, & Ttofi, 2010; Merry, & Spence, 2007; Neil, & Christensen, 2009).

There are a limited number of studies that have measurements at six and twelve months (Gladstone, & Beardslee, 2009; Lipsey, & Wilson, 1993). The studies that have a longitudinal design have made findings that are consistent with the findings made in my research (Andersen, & Nord, 2010a; Andersen, Johansen, & Nord, 2010b; Andersen, 2011; Andersen, Johansen, & Nord, 2012, available only in Norwegian). Some of the studies are of limited interest in our context, since they are selective and not universal (Neil, & Christensen, 2009; Merry, & Spence, 2007; Arnarson, & Craighead, 2009; Aune, & Stiles, 2009). These include programs that were aimed at reducing anxiety in anxiety patients.

The Effect Evaluation of VIP

The undersigned conducted from 2007–2010 an effect evaluation of VIP published as three articles in two Norwegian peer-reviewed journals (Andersen et al., 2010a; Andersen et al., 2010b; Andersen, 2011; Andersen et al., 2012). The t4 analysis is ready for publishing in winter/spring 2017.

The hypothesis has been that a universal preventive intervention in mental health, such as VIP, increases the level of knowledge, helping to change behavior and improving the mental health among adolescents. The research question was defined as:

"Do the adolescent self-reported mental health status and behavior in relation to seek help for mental health problems change through participation in a universal preventive intervention, which aims to increase the knowledge and the basis for decision regarding own or others' mental health problems?"

Method

The research was built as a quasi-experimental method with test and control groups with Solomon's design.

Figure 1. Solomons design

	t 0		t 1	t 2: 6 m	t 3: 12 m	t 4: 24 m
Group 1	Pretest	Intervention	Posttest 1	Posttest 2	Posttest 3	Posttest 4
Group 2	Pretest		Posttest 1	Posttest 2	Posttest 3	Posttest 4
Group 3		Intervention	Posttest 1	Posttest 2	Posttest 3	Posttest 4
Group 4			Posttest 1	Posttest 2	Posttest 3	Posttest 4

The key dependent variables in the project have been:
- self-reported mental health
- pupils' skills to recognize signs of mental disorders
- self-reported behavior in help-seeking
- students' knowledge level about mental health

I wanted to examine whether the intervention had an effect on these variables. Since I was interested in the whole range of indicators of mental health, and not primarily diagnosed disorder, I operationalized behavior and mental health through self-report. Nevertheless, I will emphasize that I am aware that there may be discrepancies between self-report and clinical ratings.

Changes are examined through self-reporting throughout repeated data collections among the same students. To assess the effects I have done comparisons of changes in sum scores or latent variables between the intervention and control group.

Design

For the assessment of mental health, I have used the self-report form of SDQ-Nor (Heyerdahl, 2003; Van Roy, Groholt, Heyerdah, & Clench-Aas, 2006; Ronning, Handegaard, Sourander, & Morch, 2004; Goodman, Meltzer, & Bailey, 1998). In the form, the various statements were answered as "not true," "somewhat true" or "certainly true" considered for the last six months. Each statement is scored the 0, 1 or 2.

Since anxiety represents a relatively stable 10–20% of the clinical cases reported in Norway and SDQ-Nor not explicitly cover this area, I have chosen to add to the scale "anxiety symptoms", from the longitudinal TOPP study organized through The Norwegian Public Health Institute (Mathisen, 2013). Scoring 0-10 ($\alpha = 0.68$).

To assess changes in the other three outcome variables there were developed 7 indexes:

1. Familiarity with mental illness. Rate Scale: 0–12.
2. General knowledge about mental health. Rate Scale: 0–15.
3. Knowledge of different expression of diagnoses. Score Scale: 0–44.
4. Ability to connect symptoms to diagnosis. Rate Scale: 0–50.
5. Confidence in treatment. Rate Scale: 0–12.
6. Knowledge of support services related to mental health in general. Rate Scale: 0–30.
7. Knowledge of local community support services in mental health. Rate Range: 0–8.

For questions about knowledge, in cooperation with two professors at the University of Oslo it was decided in advance what the right answer was. Similarly, for attitudinal and behavioral questions determined what is the most desired attitude or behavior.

Information was collected through questionnaire prior to the intervention (t0) and 1 (t1), 6 (t2), 12 (t3) and 24 (t4) months after the intervention. At each data collection point, knowledge was measured as a percentage of the maximum score on the set of indexes, while the incidence of problems was measured by SDQ-Nor and scale for anxiety.

To measure the dimensionality of the self developed indexes there are conducted analyzes of internal correlation and principal component analysis with Varimax rotation. The reliability is calculated using Cronbach Alpha/Kruder-Ricardsons (KR-20). The reliability of the scales and subscale has proven to be somewhat variable with alpha values between .437 and .972. For the analysis of the data sets collected we have used SPSS, version 14.

The internal consistency of the scales has been calculated using Cronbach's alpha, while reliability of the scale and any individual items used have been estimated through a test-retest study. Effect sizes have been specified as Cohen's d-values (Cohen, 1988). Since the intervention largely has an intrinsic goal of changes in the psychosocial school environment, the allocation to groups is carried out from school and not classes. In all the statistical analyzes where there have been such opportunities, I have controlled for cluster effects without any finding of such (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002; Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003; Goldstein, 1995).

Sample and Response Rate

The sample were a total of 880 pupils in Akershus county, where the intervention was implemented, compared with 811 students from Vestfold county who did not participate in this or other interventions on the completion date. Total average response rate from t0 to t3 was 79.3% for the intervention group and 76.7% for the control group. The individual questions were grouped, it was made basic additive sum scores, and changes were described using difference scores, total percent change, and Cohen d with its belonging significance test.

Table 1 Number of pupils in populations and selection and number of responses at different times.

	Akershus county				Vestfold county			
	t0	t1	t2	t3	t0	t1	t2	t3
Number of pupils in first grade in high schools	7731				3464			
Drawn for the evaluation project	730	943			206	963		
Did not meet the criteria for participation	20	63	0		12	152	0	
Included pupils	710	880	880	880	194	811	811	811
Dropouts	143	230	97	226	46	93	232	238
Usable responses	567	650	783	654	148	718	579	573
Response rate in %	79,9	73,9	89	74,3	76,3	88,5	71,4	70,6

Results

The main findings are that the program provides quite strong effects in the short-term when it comes to knowledge of mental health and support services. From t0 to t1, the intervention group significantly improved on the index "knowledge of mental disorders" (10.2% improvement, Cohen's d = 0.58), "general knowledge about mental health" (4.4% - 0.30), "ability to coupling of symptoms to diagnosis" (3.1% - 0.34), "knowledge of the support services in mental health in general" (11.6% - 0.51) and "knowledge of local community support services in mental health" (11.3% - 0.74). Knowledge about mental health seems to keep up pretty well in the first year after the intervention, while knowledge of the support services seems to be considerably forgotten. After six and twelve months we observed a small effect on help seeking.

Even more important, it seems to be a fairly surprising moderate to strong and significant beneficial effect on the prevalence of mental health problems. From time t1 to t3, we found significant differences between the intervention and control groups in change of the symptom level. On the SDQ-Nor total score I found a 16.5 % relative reduction in mental health problems, d = 0.15. In sub score "peers problems" (hereby also question about bullying) a relative reduction 31.8 %, d = 0.31, and a 53.5 % relative reduction anxiety problems, d = 0.37. The program also seems to be a cost-effective intervention for schools.

Table 2 Effects on everyday life. Changes in mental health problems 12 months after. Subscale of peer problems and anxiety.

Mental Health status (SDQ-Nor)	Intervention group 1 + 3	SD	N	Control group 2+4	SD	N
SDQ-Nor total score 0-40						
t1, directly after the intervention	9,22	5,8	276	8,88	5,1	249
t3, after12 m	8,9	5,4	276	10,08	6,2	249
Total difference of change 0-40	**16,50 %**					
Generalized effect, Cohens d	**0,15**					
Sig. t-test	**,007***					
Peer problems scale 0-10						
t1, directly after the intervention	1,54	1,7	276	1,34	1,6	249
t3, after12 m	1,34	1,6	276	1,63	1,9	249
Difference of change	**31,80 %**					
Generalized effect, Cohens d	**0,31**					
Sig. t-test	**,009****					

Mental Health status (SDQ-Nor)	Intervention group 1 + 3	SD	N	Control group 2+4	SD	N
Anxiety scale 0-10						
t1, directly after the intervention	1,27	1,8	269	1,01	1,5	240
t3, after12 m	0,94	1,5	269	1,36	2	240
Difference of change	53,50 %					
Generalized effect, Cohens d	0,37					
Sig. t-test	,001***					

Conclusion

The effects on mental health in the presented research project were most prominent in areas where improvement is largely dependent on the confidence and social contexts. The hypothesis is therefore that the psycho-educational effects of the intervention contribute, through changes in young people's insight/knowledge, which provide a higher degree of social support, increased knowledge for better decision making, reduction of stigma, lowering of the threshold for sharing problems and greater confidence in interpersonal processes, to improve the mental health of young people (Rüsch, Evans-Lacko, Henderson, Flach, & Thornicroft, 2011).

Besides this research project, there is currently little research evidence on the effects of universal preventive mental health interventions in terms of changes in mental health. A search in the databases PubMed, MedLine, PsycInfo, Embase, Cinahl, The Cochrane Library and Eric, conducted in November 2011, gave no hit on studies of universal preventive interventions in mental health and behavioral problems with power ratings/effect assessment of mental health indicators using internationally validated instruments as SDQ or HSCL-10. Nevertheless we know that many young people have mental health problems or disorders.

Previous clinical studies have also shown that early intervention is of great importance with respect to prognosis. Early help from the health care system will provide young people with mental problems faster recovery and reduced risk of recurrent, severe illness periods, simultaneously the chance that the patient can live a normal life increases significantly. In order to get early help, however, the youth knowledge of the area is essential.

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THE LOCAL STRATEGY FOR THE SUPPORT OF FAMILY LITERACY

Alica Petrasová

Abstract

The family literacy concept makes explicit what has been implicitly understood, and recognizes the family as an institution for education and learning and the role of parents as their children's first teachers. The starting point for the development of human resources within a culture is the family. Families provide an intergenerational transfer of language, thought, and values to the minds of their new-born infants and throughout the formative years of their children's lives. Families provide initial guidance in learning to use the cultural tools that will be valued and rewarded within the culture. Families interpret the culture for their children, and they mediate the understanding, use, and value placed on the cultural tools for learning and education, of which the capstone tools are language and literacy.

The author presents the European partnership project *Literacy Cubed – Focus on Roma Families*. The programme was piloted in three countries: Montenegro, Romania and Slovakia from December 2013 to November 2015. Project LIT[3] supports the reading and health literacy skills development of three generations: primary school children (aged 6–11), their parents/carers and their grandparents. The goal of Project LIT[3] was to raise the attainment level of Roma children in general education. Non-governmental organization Orava Association for Democratic learning is the main coordinator and implementer of the project in Slovakia. We present the experiences of the project team with requesting and engaging of stakeholders of the *Literacy Cubed – Focus on Roma families* (LIT3) project in the city of Dolný Kubín (Slovakia) in the paper.

Keywords

Roma family, family literacy – reading and health, children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds

Introduction

It is mentioned that the Roma population, in contrast to the European, is young; in the document of EU framework for national strategies for the Roma inclusion, that is part of the Europe 2020 strategy, nearly 36 % of Roman are in fact younger than fifteen

years compared to nearly 16 % of EU citizens. Likewise, the average age of the Roma is twenty-five years, while it is forty years in the EU. The Europe is losing labor when not using the Roma potential. A key aspect in this respect, therefore, will be particularly to emphasize their higher level of education in order to qualify for better jobs. The member states of the European Union still have the primary responsibility for the integration of the Roma population in hands at present because the main challenges that are faced by the Roma fall within their jurisdiction. In particular, it is about the area of access to the quality of education, the labor market, housing, basic services, and health care. The local and regional authorities are responsible for those policies in most cases within states. It means that the authorities at the national and regional levels are responsible for the inclusion of Roma.

The Slovak Republic is bound by the Convention on the Rights of the Child[1], which declares that education must lead to the development of the child's personality, talents and mental faculties to the most possible extent. It must prepare the child for an active life in adulthood in a free society, and reinforce respect for the child's parents, its own cultural identity, language, values and cultural background and values of others. Education of the Roma children and pupils, based on their social situation, the need to improve their educational level and participation in social life with success in the labor market require the complex solution of the problem from the perspective of children and pupils from the socially disadvantaged environment in the school educational system. Slovakia ranks among the countries with the greatest differences in the students' results by the achieved level of the parental education. The fact that Slovakia belongs to the countries with the greatest influence of student's socio-economic background of pupils on their performance is also an important finding. (PISA, 2003, 2006, 2012, 2015).

The school education of Romani pupils is specific and it requires taking into consideration preconditions for education with which a pupil begins his/her educational trajectory. School, or teachers who are working with these pupils should know socio-educative characteristics of Romani pupils from the environment of social exclusion, because it is their character that determines the course itself, the agents of education and subsequently the objective of the educational path. To emphasize the specificity of school education, including the importance of pre-school education, school maturity and preparedness, possible educational or pedagogical difficulties, educational needs, methods and models of management of the educational process, but also the necessity of active cooperation with family, or alternatively cooperation with non-profit sector is hopefully not necessary here (Kaleja, 2015; Kaleja, 2014; Kaleja, 2013; Kaleja, 2011; Kolaříková, 2015).

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[1] The General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child on 20 November 1989.

Literacy, Family Literacy and Family Literacy Programs

Literacy was once defined as the ability to read and write. It was considered as a set of neutral and objective skills independent of social context or ideology. Ethnographic research has shed light on a wide range of culturally specific literacy practices among different communities. Literacy extends beyond the acquisition of reading and writing skills. It entails the ability to use these skills in a socially appropriate context. The very notion of literacy is also evolving to include the skills required to function in a technological society. For example, literacy has come to be used to refer to a wider domain of activities, from media literacy and computer literacy to citizenship life. With this in mind, family literacy programs must address an expanded definition of literacy in all its complexity.

The term family literacy is used in several ways: (1) to describe the study of literacy in the family, (2) to describe a set of interventions related to literacy development of young children, and (3) to refer to a set of programs designed to enhance the literacy skills of more than one family member. This article explores family literacy in the second and third sense. It focuses on intergenerational family literacy programs that work with the family rather than on the child or the adult separately. Such programs assume that the greatest impact on literacy development is achieved by combining the effects of early childhood interventions; early parenting strategies, increased adult literacy, and enhanced parental support for children's school related functioning. Family literacy draws on multiple academic traditions, among them adult literacy, child literacy education – in particular the field of emergent literacy and special education, early childhood development, cognitive psychology, and parent education.

The partnerships between schools, families and communities contribute to improved student achievement and higher performance for schools. Effectively engaging families and communities around student literacy can lead to increased reading and writing skills for students. This is true for families from different backgrounds and income levels. Several research studies have supported a notion that many teachers have had for a long time: that children who have been read to at home and community come to school with important early literacy skills. They are prepared to learn to read and write. Children who have not had many experiences listening to books read aloud or talking about books typically start school with poor early literacy skills. These children often fall behind early in reading and writing and stay behind.

The concept of family literacy is firmly rooted in a substantial research base from several disciplines, including adult literacy, emergent literacy, child development, and systems analysis. Family literacy is a term used to describe parents and children – or more broadly adults and children – learning together. Also known as intergenerational literacy, and in some cases, community literacy, the rationale underlying such work is that parents (and adults in communities) are children's first teachers; that much learning occurs beyond traditional school settings, and that learning is a lifelong process.

Family literacy can describe the way parents, family and community members use literacy at home and in their communities. Literacy activity occurs naturally during the routines of

daily living and helps adults and children get things done. The ethnic, racial, and cultural heritages of families are reflected in the literacy activities in which they engage. Family literacy can apply to all families and all literacy activities that take place within the family, not just school-like activities. Although family literacy traditionally takes place within the family, family literacy activities and programs can be initiated by organizations outside of families.

Family Literacy programs are driven by comprehensive, holistic approaches to education in which parents and children learn and grow together. Family Literacy programs address the literacy strengths and needs of the family/community while promoting adults' involvement in children's education, recognizing adults as a powerful influence on children's academic success. Family literacy programs also recognize the reciprocal nature of parent-child relationships. Programs provide both parent-initiated and child-initiated activities to support development of those relationships and to increase the motivation to learn for both parent and child.

Designing and delivering literacy programs that benefit both parents (or other family members) and children make sense. But do family literacy programs really work? And if so, who benefits? School administrators, community leaders, and funding agents want to know the answers to these questions before deciding to support family literacy programs. In brief, the results show that family literacy programs do work and that at least four groups benefit: children, parents, families as units, and the larger society (Padak & Rasinski, 2013; Zezulková, 2015).

Children benefit from family literacy programs

- Children's achievement in school improves.
- Children attend school more regularly and are more likely to complete their educations.
- Children's oral language development accelerates. Reading aloud to children is the single most effective parent practice for enhancing language and literacy development.
- Children become more ready to attend school.
- Children's overall reading achievement improves.
- Children's reading vocabulary improves.
- Children's phonemic awareness and decoding ability improve. They become more able to recognize unknown words in print.
- Children's comprehension improves. These separate factors: vocabulary, decoding, and comprehension – combine to support overall achievement in reading.
- Children's writing improves.
- Children's math and science achievements improve. Gains in these 3 areas – writing, math, and science – are particularly impressive because so few family literacy programs address these subjects.

- Children's social skills, self-esteem, and attitudes toward school improve. All these have the potential to support children throughout their lives.
- Children are healthier. Aside from its general importance, good health is related to higher achievement at school.
- Children's understanding of print (forms and functions) grows.
- Children's motivation to read increases.

Parents benefit from family literacy programs

- Parents persist in family literacy programs longer than in other types of adult literacy programs. Those who persist have more opportunity to learn.
- Parents' attitudes to education improve; the value they perceive in education increases.
- Parents' reading achievement increases.
- Parents' writing ability improves.
- Parents' math and science knowledge increases. This is especially true when family literacy programs include focus on these areas.
- Parents' knowledge about parenting options and child development increases. For example, parents in one project became more confident about their abilities to foster their children's positive development.
- Parents' social awareness and self-advocacy increase.
- Parents enhance their employment status or job satisfaction.

Families benefit from family literacy programs

- Families learn to value education. This finding has emerged from studies of children, parents, and families.
- Families become more involved in schools. Family involvement in schools leads to better achievement for children.
- Families become emotionally closer, which creates a more supportive home environment.
- Families read more and engage in more literate behaviours at home.
- Families build foundations for lifelong learning.

Society benefit from family literacy programs

Parents persist in family literacy programs, and persistence leads to literacy achievement, which in turn can influence broader economic and social issues. In particular, family literacy programs positively affect (or have the potential to affect) several major social problems:
- Nutrition and health problems.
- Low school achievement and high school dropout rates.

- Teen parenting.
- Joblessness and welfare dependency.
- Social alienation.
- Home and community violence.

Family literacy is a rich and rewarding program with many potential benefits. Parents improve their literacy and parenting skills. They also increase their self-sufficiency and develop closer relationships with their children. Children are better prepared to enter school, have fewer absences, and are less likely to need additional services in school. Communities have more active and better-educated citizens. Family literacy helps agencies to manage comprehensive services in a coordinated way. It prevents duplication of services and frees up resources for other projects. It is also a program that requires dedication and hard work and a basic belief in the ability of all people to learn and be successful citizens in their own unique ways.

Family literacy programs do work, and their benefits are widespread and significant. The existing body of research points to the enormous potential of high quality family literacy programs to influence the lives of parents and children positively through family support and education.

About the Project *Literacy Cubed – Focus on Roma Families*

Project *Literacy Cubed – Focus on Roma Families* (hereinafter: Project LIT[3]) aimed to develop and disseminate effective strategies to promote family literacy (the support of reading and health education) in Roma communities with the respective to increase the educational success of Roma children in school and to improve the literacy of adult Roma. The aim of the project was to influence habits and attitudes of children and to support their parents to participate in education positively.

Project LIT[3] was implemented from 12 January 2013 to 30 November 2015, through partnership of three countries (Romania, Montenegro and Slovakia). The work was performed at three locations: in Cluj-Napoca city, Romania, where two Roma families, living in two different neighbourhoods, joined the project, but both are populated by an overwhelming majority of the Romani with low socio-economic status (in fact one of the "neighbourhoods" is urban landfill, from which people live by collecting recyclable materials); in the city of Dolný Kubín, Slovakia, where it was worked mostly with integrated Roma families. In Podgorica, Montenegro, the project was focused at the Roma families living in Konik refugee camp on the outskirts of the city.

The project benefits from a diverse partnership of a research institution, an international umbrella organization, and three national NGOs, as well as six associated partners (five Roma organizations and one bureau of education). Including stakeholders in two European-level partnership meetings will provide added value to this European cooperation project. The fact that stakeholders from European countries that are not involved in the project partnership will enhance the European dimension of the project,

and increase its chances of impact at the European level. The project's perspective on policies and practical aspects related to Roma families and education, as well as family literacy in general, will be enriched by the European partnership.

The dissemination strategy has been built on the partners' dissemination plans. The strategy includes clear indicators of successful outreach by categories of direct and indirect beneficiaries. The number of website visitors, the participants in conferences, workshop, stakeholders' WG meetings, and in roundtables will be carefully planned and monitored. Qualitative indicators are defined to ensure the optimal exploitation of results. Based on a thorough needs analysis, the family literacy program will be tested to ensure the evidence base that will inform the family literacy policy we will promote, and which will be the foundation of the local strategies for family literacy. Project LIT[3] implementation plan focuses on: research-based policy recommendations for European and local decision-makers; stakeholder engagement; family literacy programme development and family literacy programme testing.

In the project, forty-eight Roma primary schoolchildren from four schools (two in RO, one in MN and one in SK), and seventy-two adults (the children's parents and grandparents) will develop their literacy skills by attending forty-eight hours of literacy workshop activities. Forty-eight secondary school students will act as reading buddies for the Roma children. Three local working groups of stakeholders will develop local strategies under the guidance of the project team. 170 doctor's surgeries will receive flyers to promote health literacy in Roma communities (www.lit3-project.eu)[2].

Non-governmental organization Orava Association for Democratic Education[3] was the main coordinator and implementer of the project in Slovakia. We present the experiences of the project team with requesting and engaging of stakeholders of the *Literacy Cubed – Focus on the Roma Families* project in the city of Dolný Kubín (Slovakia)[4] in the paper.

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[2] The summary report presents findings from an evaluation conducted by the UCL Institute of Education (IOE) of a pilot Family Literacy Programme carried out as part of the *Literacy Cubed – Focus on Roma Families* project. See: http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/1475761/.

[3] Orava Association for Democratic Education (Orava ADE) is a non-governmental organization that efforts to improve the Slovak education system by promoting cooperation and communication between communities of teachers, schools, universities, libraries, non-governmental and governmental educational institutions from the 1995 year. The Orava Association elaborates the training programs and materials for teachers and parents. It organizes conferences, seminars, round tables negotiations and regular actions to promote reading (e.g. Week of Loud Reading). The Orava Association is a member of the several national and international networks and enjoys a long-term partnership with the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, the National Council of the Slovak Republic and other state administration bodies, regional and local municipality and non-governmental organizations.

[4] The author of the paper has been an active investigator of the project *Literacy Cubed – Focus on Roma Families*.

**The Stakeholders' Engagement as a Part of Local Strategy
for the Support of Family Literacy**

The aim of the project *Literacy Cubed – Focus on Roma Families* was to develop and support effective policies at the local level that affect the development of family literacy (readership and health literacy) in local communities. As the title says (The Literacy Cubed), program connected three generations (children-parents-grandparents). More than twenty children of primary school age, twelve adults (parents and grandparents). Ten children of older school age (as friends to read), eight volunteers and five trainers were involved in the family literacy program in Dolný Kubín.

When authors of the Project LIT[3] started to think how to ensure this project to be much more than a family literacy program in local community, the idea emerged to involve various key players or stakeholders. There were representatives of institutions, organizations and individuals with a legitimate interest at the local level in the Project LIT[3]. Among the groups of the project stakeholders were – apart from Roma families – representatives of local authorities, for example town hall, local and regional education authorities, social services, health authorities; schools and universities preparing the trainers, social workers and medical staff; families, parents and parents' associations; teaching assistants, doctors surgeries, hospitals, health care professionals; libraries and librarians; social workers; education and health non-governmental organizations, charities organization, donors, voluntary organizations, volunteers and publishers.

The main task was to gather a group of experienced and influential individuals who would represent their respective institutions and would add their family literacy in their job description. It was the step into the unknown for our project team since their participation should be voluntary, free and required their engagement. We were aware that if this project is to be active at the local level, we need to use all our local contacts and knowledge of local conditions and situations. The project team has therefore from the outset made a list of potential local stakeholders, whether individuals or institutions we approached later.

Requesting of the potential key players was realized mainly through personal meetings with the heads of the various bodies or institutions. The project team members tried to be precise in this, and although they could not always find first senior executive, they insisted to take part at the preparatory personal meeting at least. They were not sure how would requested people respond because each project was specific in something. However, they believed in the project idea and the work they performed, therefore it was not difficult for them to argue, communicate the ideas and so to gain people. Therefore, they hoped that people, who are requested, know other key players and give them more contacts, or designate people from their organizations, which turned out to be true. They also invited people and institutions that have been involved in the first phases of the project – to map the local needs.

They were aware that it was important to create highly competent and committed group of local stakeholders, the particular members of the project team have arranged personal

meetings with those who were labelled as "must" on our list. They did not want to lose the representatives of the most important institutions because of some unforeseen reasons or due to unclear communication. Moreover, they realized that the space where they worked was not large (about 20,000 inhabitants), therefore they could not afford to lose any important person. So they met with them personally prior to the invitation of people at first meeting of the working group. They believed that a personal meeting cannot be replaced by any other means of contact. The face-to-face meetings allowed them to introduce themselves and speak clearly about current projects and the efforts to explain the project objectives, expectations, and their potential roles as well as explore how the joint effort might be intensified by the future cooperation. In addition, it could be better explained orally what kind of experts and persons would project need to have in the working group[5]. The members of the project team were aware, from the previous experience, that first meeting was always critically important for further cooperation. Therefore, they paid attention to such aspects as: place, time, form of invitation, program, meeting reminder few days in advance, provide light lunch and snack, an appropriate presentation of the project, etc. They asked the representative of the town hall to provide them with a meeting room on their premises in order to choose a place that would be available easily for each of the stakeholders and would ensure sufficient respect and dignity of the working group. Ensuring the meeting room of the town hall was important for the implementation of the project and thus to demonstrate support of the project by the local municipality. Most of the project team meetings were held in ordinary meeting room of the municipality. One meeting was even in more prestigious meeting room of the Mayor. In addition, the settlement of the local television is in the same building, so it was easier to gain publicity activities for the project.

The cooperation with the officials of the participating institutions has been formally secured by signing of the Memorandum. The Memorandum of cooperation was signed with each institution only after the first meeting in order the stakeholders will have more time to consider their other commitments. Except for one, all institutions remained until the end. It turned out to be wise achievement by paying particular attention to the details of the Memorandum because it was possible to refer to the project in the course of its realization. The Memorandum contained specific roles for the particular stakeholders unless they were foreseeable at that time, such as providing a meeting room, allowing at least one representative of the institution to participate in the working group meetings, allowing the representative of the organization to travel to the international negotiations of the project, etc. These roles have been included in the text of the Memorandum, nothing that any other form of cooperation will be agreed subsequently in time by both sides additionally. Memorandum was possible to be updated later when further specific measures were clearly stated. Nevertheless, we are inclined to opinion that if the

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[5] Therefore, the term "group of experts" was used initially. Mostly managers of the offices and institutions were commissioned to the working group. The term "stakeholders" was later introduced in English and expresses this category of persons more accurately.

cooperation works well, this formalization is not always necessary. The main objective of cooperation in the framework of a permanent working group was to develop local strategy to promote family literacy of the local Roma community. The strategy began to form on the fourth meeting at which the project team has prepared all available resources such as outcomes and recommendations of the project, a framework for strategy development and so on. We worked in smaller groups for better effectivity and then the results were shared across the entire working group.

The project team did not know what to expect from this type of work at the beginning and to avoid disappointment; we were also satisfied with less ambitious expectations. We were aware that we, as a non-governmental organization, which initiated the project, had no power to require any commitments of the stakeholders. We felt that we had to respect the experience of our key players, to be honest and open in expressing our expectations and commitment to achieve our objective. Recognition and celebration of everyone, even the smallest success, gave us the impetus to move forward and to do a good job at meetings or via e-mail communication. We shared with each other and recognized each step that was made for the project support by any interested party.

The influential individuals can be very useful. We were successful in acquiring the most active stakeholders as we approached closer to the leaders of institutions who usually authorize other competent persons to represent their institution. We also tried to use the right meeting place – conference room at the local authorities served for this purpose very well. I agree that all stakeholders' groups should be represented equally in the dialogue in order to remain credible to the other stakeholders and the wider public. We insisted on the fact that each stakeholder has the space and opportunity to express their thoughts at meetings and make their opinions and recommendations contained in the record. After the meeting, the minutes were sent via e-mail, so that everyone can either approve what has been recorded, or to ask the interested stakeholder to supplement the explanations where necessary.

We have learned in our work that the size of the common good may be for representatives of stakeholders particularly interesting, especially if they work in the social field. As they expressed themselves, they joined the working team because of the objectives and problems that this project is facing. Solutions through family literacy are a relatively new concept, even if they saw some swallows in this area, too. Stakeholders also appreciated having the opportunity to meet with representatives of other institutions with similar objectives with whom they can share their experiences. At the end of the project, they expressed their desire not to waste a joint effort, which have lasted nearly two years, but they wished to have a good and feasible common strategy that would continue in started work and which would have the potential to engage and be beneficial to the whole local community, Roma and non-Roma, too.

Conclusion

The Europe 2020 is the strategic vision of Europe for the 21st Century. It explains how the EU can turn to smart, sustainable and socially inclusive economy delivering high level

of employment, productivity and social cohesion. Cohesion policy is operating there, where people live. It plays a key role in achieving the strategic objectives for the year 2020, while ensuring that those at risk of exclusion from the society will not remain on the periphery (www.europskaunia.sk).

Policy proposals directed at improving the integration of Roma into the mainstream society have a fundamental flaw. They are based on the assumption that there are some specific problems of Roma to be addressed. The work with Roma children and their families can be successful only if the wider local community is involved in it – parents, counselling centres, social workers, institutions and organizations dealing with family problems in the social exclusion, activation staff of the community and so on. The community is environment or group of people who are regardless of the differences, able to appreciate differences, allowing them openly and effectively communicate and work together to achieve common objective. The word community is often used as a synonym for the congregation. The word community comes from the Latin word root common with communicare, communication – communicate.

The community phenomenon of community allows creating and experiencing non-hierarchical, very deep interpersonal bonds, difficult to implement in the current social environment. It allows people to accept, transcend and celebrate their differences and divergences that enable them to communicate effectively, openly and to cooperate by achieving objectives that have been set for the common good. As a consequence, many members of the group, generating a sense of community, experience the feeling of their uniqueness and profound common unity that is rarely or never felt in other groups.

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REPORT

A WORLD OF CONNECTIONS!
SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS AS COMMUNICATORS, COLLABORATORS, ORGANIZERS AND MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCATES

Marta Kolaříková

On July 20–23, 2016, the 38th ISPA Conference was held in Amsterdam under the name: *"School Psychology 3.0: A World of Connections. School Psychologists as Communicators, Collaborators, Organizers and Mental Health Advocates."* It was attended by 571 participants from 54 countries of the world.

The main topic of the conference was inspired by the model of seven roles of the school psychologist by Peter Farrel and his colleagues.
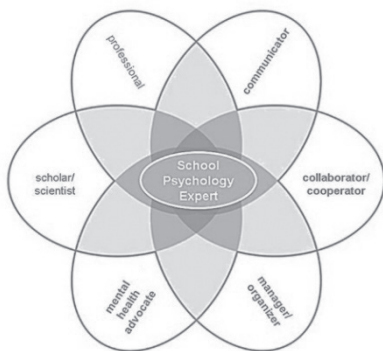
Using the model, we can distinguish seven professional roles / competency areas for the School Psychologist:
1. Expert
2. Communicator
3. Collaborator
4. Organizer
5. Mental Health Advocate
6. Scholar/scientist
7. Professional

In each of these roles, the school psychologist makes connections to pupils, teachers, parents, colleagues, the school management, town councils, medical doctors, social workers, etc. The chosen theme also highlights the fact that School Psychologists work within a system.

On Wednesday, 20 July, several Pre conference workshops took place, with focus on different topics. I attended a very interesting workshop of Elaine Fletcher-Janzen & Pip McGirl on the topic: *A Biopsychosocial Approach to the Assessment and Treatment of Trauma and Atachment Issues.* In the evening, an "Opening ceremony" was organized for all conference participants in the beautiful environment of the Royal Tropical Institute; the evening culminated in the Welcome reception at which the conference participants

discussed informally about their countries, the problems of school psychology, education systems and consultancy from many perspectives. Unfortunately, I was the only participant from the Czech Republic.

Both Thursday and Friday were full of events at the conference. All expert lectures took place in a very pleasant environment of the University of Amsterdam, which has a beautiful campus in the centre of Amsterdam with some new state of the art conference halls.

The papers were divided into topic sections that took ninety minutes each; then a lecture of the keynote speaker followed; after lunch, there were INTERACTION GROUPS followed by a lecture of another keynote speaker and by another topic section. At the end of the day, structured presentations of posters took place, with discussions on the individual topics that also enjoyed great interest, until late hours.

The lectures of the keynote speakers enjoyed great interest of the audience gathered in full conference rooms and in rooms to which the lectures were transmitted with the help of the technology.

The topics of the keynote speakers referred to current trends of research and practice. The following keynote speakers presented their lectures:

Drs. Noëlle Pameijer (School psychologist at a tailored education and inclusion center Unita in Hilversum, Netherlands) with the topic: *"Needs-based Assessment and Interventions"*,

Prof. Dr. Alexander Minnaert (University of Groningen) with the topic: *"Learning and Education in 21st Century Schools: Strengths and Challenges..."*

Dr. Bonnie Nastasi (Tulane University, New Orleans, LA, USA) with the topic: *"The School Psychologist as Mental Health Advocate"*

Prof. Dr. Han van der Maas (University of Amsterdam) with the topic: *"Adaptive Education"* Each 90-minute topic section consisted of presentations from different areas, e.g. Prevention, mental health promotion, Effective strategies that promote wellbeing and resilience, Screening programs that identify students with mental health needs, Crisis intervention, School and systems organizations, Home – school – community collaboration, Working with children and families from culturally diverse communities, Family involvement in education, Methods to facilitate communication with students, school personnel, families, community professionals and others.

The conference was really contributive and it emphasized one important fact. In different countries, on different continents, the experts face the issue of challenging work with children and young people endangered by exclusion through preventive activities and their real effect on the quality of life, but also through crisis management of schools. Regardless of different levels of cooperation between state, school and family, both the active and the passive conference participants agreed on one common point: it is important to be in contact not only with other experts but primarily with the families and the children whose quality of life is in question. Although I did not participate in the conference with my own paper, I established cooperation with important experts who agreed to become members of the editorial board of the Social Pathology and Prevention Magazine. They are:

Kelly Edyburn, M. Ed. from University of California, Santa Barbara, Gevirtz Graduate School of Education, Department of Counseling, Clinical, and School Psychology, USA

Junko Iida, PhD. Assoc. Professor from Education Bureau of the Laboratory Schools, Faculty of Human Science, University of Tsukuba, Japan

Assoc. Prof. Éva Szabó, PhD. From University of Szeged, Faculty of Arts, Institute of Psychology, Department of Social and Developmental Psychology, Hungary

Assoc. Prof. Ala Petrulytė from Lithuania University of Educational Sciences, Faculty of Education, Department of Developmental and Educational Psychology, Lithuania

We are looking forward to further cooperation.

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EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

DEPO LOW-THRESHOLD CLUB DEPO IN COEXISTENCE VILLAGE

Silvie Quisová

Introduction

The well working model of coexistence of Roma and non-Roma population in Ostrava is worth mentioning within good practice examples from the area of social work in excluded localities. It is a comprehensive social project called Coexistence Village in which ten Roma, ten non-Roma and ten mixed families, i.e. 135 persons in total, are living at present. The project helps families and individuals from socially disadvantaged environment to integrate into daily life. The Coexistence Village (Vesnička soužití) is situated in the locality of Silesian Ostrava-Muglinov and was opened in autumn 2002. The project was implemented by the Ostrava-Opava Diocesan Charity in cooperation with the citizens' association called Vzájemné soužití (Mutual Coexistence). Thirty housing buildings were built in the Village for citizens of Silesian Ostrava affected by the 1997 floods. The Coexistence Village includes the Community Centre – a multifunction building for implementation of a long-term social program. That shows that the Coexistence Village project deals not only with the housing issue but focuses on the humans with all their needs. The target group consists of children and youth aged three to eighteen years, endangered by socially undesirable phenomena, ethnic minorities, persons in crisis, persons living in socially excluded communities, persons leading a risk life style or endangered by such life style, and families with children. The workers active in the families or in the Community Centre provide the target group with the following social services: basic and special social consultancy, socially activation services for families with children, preschool club, field service and low-threshold facility for children and youth.
The goal of the article is to point out the need of intensive social work with people in excluded localities, primarily with children and youth, as well as the need of continuous personal development and education of the workers who provide social services, in view of the particularities of the target group.

Social Services in the Coexistence Village

The Coexistence Village is situated in an excluded locality of the city of Ostrava, with a great number of socio-culturally disadvantaged citizens, specifically the Romani. The area confronts a high level of socio-pathological phenomena like truancy, criminality,

drug abuse, promiscuity, unemployment, financial indebtedness, etc. The pathological phenomena in children are often supported by the parents, not only by the personal example of the parents but also by intentional instigation aimed at obtaining advantages for the family. The provision of social services in the Coexistence Village differs markedly from any other social work. The Roma community has a specific temperament; hardly a day goes by without quarrels, loud communication, vulgarisms, physical attacks, but also spontaneous musical and dancing productions in the public. Further, the own rules of the Roma community must be considered, as they are often diametrically different from the rules of the majority society. Each new worker in the Coexistence Village must first get acquainted with the particularities of the work with the Roma, to avoid useless misunderstandings and conflicts.

Housing is a priority for the adult inhabitants of the Village. The adults ask for professional consultancy services most frequently in cases of crisis, when for example their living in the Coexistence Village is endangered or when they are in a financial crisis. If something incurs the adults' displeasure, meetings of the inhabitants of the Coexistence Village are convoked in the Community Centre and, in spite of stormy and loud discussions of the hot-tempered inhabitants, the word of the director of the facility is respected.

All disputes and conflicts are forgotten during social events where the differences between the inhabitants and the workers fade away and the "coexistence" atmosphere can be fully seen, for example at celebrations of the anniversaries of the establishment of the Village, at dancing and musical performances of children, at Miss Roma elections, etc. The latter event, i.e. Miss Roma, brings mutual unification of the whole family and huge common effort aimed at their girl's respectable representation of the whole family. At the days just before the competition, the mothers borrowed dresses from wedding parlours for their daughters and adapted and remade them in the night. At the very event, not only the mothers but also the aunts, grandmothers, cousins and friends of all competitors gathered to watch their favourite. And at the end, according to the Roma tradition, the fathers of the award-winning girls experienced the highest prestige and fame. Such events are discussed long days afterwards.

Young families increasingly use the socially activating service for families with children (hereinafter referred to only as "SAS") in which the workers support and motivate the parents in the area of preschool education of their children and offer the parents help with the general development of their child. It turns up that the attitude of traditional Roma family to education, or to preparation for education, respectively, changes only very slowly. If the mothers had the opportunity to put their child to the preschool club, they perceived the service only as "watching" over their child while they could do their own things. Therefore the services focused on joint activities of the parents and the children prove to be more efficient. A positive result of the work with the Roma community consists in the finding that some young parents become aware of their drawbacks in parental competences and of the need to change the upbringing of their children. The SAS workers help the families both in field and in ambulant form, offering support in all areas of the family activities, e.g. training of care for the child, housekeeping, economic

activities, nutrition, etc.; they also mediate contacts with the social environment (school, physician, authorities, etc.), offer socially therapeutic activities and help at exercising rights and interests.

The low-threshold facility for children and youth (hereinafter referred to only as "LTFCY") in the Community Centre is the most frequently used service in the Coexistence Village; it is visited by children and youth not only from the Village but from wide surroundings including the localities of Muglinov, Liščina, Hrušov and Přívoz. And this is where the opportunity for slow change of thinking and life style of the incoming generation of young people starts.

Depo Low-Threshold Club

The target group of LTFCY consists of children and youth from six to nineteen years, primarily from Silesian Ostrava and the closest surroundings. LTFCY can be visited by clients from the target group regardless of gender, nation, faith, mother tongue, health condition and economic situation.

The LTFCY mission is to create a safe space for children and youth living in a low-stimulating social environment, to be supported during childhood and adolescence. The workers are close to the clients in difficult life situations, support the clients in mastering them and motivate them to active solution. To fulfil the LTFCY mission, the workers make use of consultancy and of custom-made educational and entertainment activities.

The LTFCY service aims at helping the clients with social integration among their peers, including involvement in the events of local community, at preventing or reducing health risks related to the clients' life style, at developing their abilities, skills and knowledge, at improving their quality of life and making positive changes in their life style. The LTFCY clients often have difficult access to adequate leisure time activities appropriate for their age, due to their social situation (lack of funds, unsatisfactory family environment, negative influence of social environment, etc.). Therefore the LTFCY workers strive to let the children and youth from the Coexistence Village and its surroundings in the facility as long as possible during its hours of operation, to enable them to go in for high-quality leisure time activities and to establish and maintain high-quality interpersonal relations. In such way, the facility tries to prevent socially pathological phenomena committed by young people who rove about the streets without adult supervision and are bored.

The Depo low-threshold club offers non-structured leisure time activities for children and youth in the premises of the Community Centre in the Coexistence Village, but it also organizes activities outside the centre and cooperates with other similar facilities, for example when organizing sports matches.

How are the services in the Depo club provided? The workers respect the following principles: We make no distinctions between each other. You need not tell your name. We are here for you. You can choose what you want to do and you can come and leave at any time during the opening hours. The club is free of charge. Nobody will learn anything

about you from us. The clients have rights and obligations including mutual respect, not hurting each other, not damaging the facility property, not using drugs, etc. The clients can have a talk with the workers about anything that worries them. The LTFCY workers are often the only persons to whom the children entrust their worries. As there are Roma persons among the LTFCY workers, the Roma children consider it easier to find a way to them and to trust them. Further, the clients can attend preventive, educational and pedagogical programs, discussions, debates and composed programs, e.g. the program for prevention of drug abuse, prevention of gambling, prevention of sexual abuse, debate on the topic of solution of crisis situations, etc. In spite of the Roma traditions that force the children to learn to know life primarily through practice, the children and young people are open to discuss friendship, bullying, criminality, drugs, but also partner relations, sex, contraception, etc. The Roma people are very curious, they like to ask questions, they even ask the workers about very personal and intimate things and want to know everything at once and sincerely. The LTFCY clients like sports activities, primarily the calcio (table soccer), ping-pong or other parlour games and activities. The workers often help the clients with their homework; the clients learn to work and to make use of the PC for learning and for entertainment; they can listen to music, watch films, go in for creative and artistic activities in the studio or play music instruments and sing in the music studio. The clients like new things to happen, they get annoyed by monotonous activities, by orders and bans, they love trips to the nature and to other towns. Many children know only the way to and from school; sometimes they even don't suspect how big their town is. Therefore the clients are glad to participate in trips lasting one day or several days, in workshops, discos, sports tournaments, etc. The offer is really very broad and many events and activities are initiated by the clients, e.g. the Miss election, dancing competitions, sports tournaments, concerts, external events, etc.

But even such a broad range of activities and leisure time opportunities does not satisfy every individual. The LTFCY is attended also by children and young people who cannot and don't want to get involved in the activities, refuse to change their habits, provoke conflicts and incite other clients to break the rules. Another problem for the workers consists in children who share their joys and worries with them one day, while another day, the same children are vulgar and rude against them, fight or intentionally destroy the LTFCY properties. Unfortunately, there are even children under ten years who smoke, abuse alcohol or other habit-forming substances, which makes their behaviour unpredictable. Everyday solving of conflict situations and the need to "be always on the toes" is very exhausting for the workers; it is therefore necessary that they carry out their job with love and professionalism at the same time. The Roma children find out very quickly that a worker doesn't like them; but on the other hand, they are able to quickly misuse a worker's weaknesses and missing borderlines in their relation.

In LTFCY, the children and adolescents get opportunity to trouble-free integration into the society; they have greater chance to change, as compared to their parents; it is only up to their choice to make use of such offer.

Fight in the Depo

Jožo (16 years) had a fight with Karel (17 years) in the Depo premises. It started by a sharp verbal fight, including vulgar words, and culminated by a fist fight. Everything occurred very quickly, and before the club workers had time to react, there was even blood. The worker separated the boys and started asking what had happened. All clients present in the club made an attentively listening public. Each of the boys loudly defended his truth; finally, the incident participants confirmed Karel's version stating that Jožo was the first to call names because of a past conflict; Karel didn't cope with the verbal fight and was the first to argue with his fist. The worker imposed a ban on entry for two months to Jožo and for one month to Karel; the sanctions were imposed in compliance with the club rules. Karel and other friends calmly left the club but Jožo was angry and, when leaving, he shouted that he wouldn't tolerate it and that he had right to be there.

On the next day, Jožo came to the club again and even managed to enter with a group of other clients; he didn't respond to the worker's repeated calls to leave the club. At one moment, he shut himself in the WC and intentionally spilled water on the floor. The worker repeatedly tried to banish Jožo from the club, but he was running around the room inciting the other clients to break the rules too. Then he took a ball gun from his bag and shot on the clients and on the worker. The worker called the facility director and threatened Jožo with calling the police. Jožo didn't react to anything and kept provoking and destroying the club property. After consulting the director, the workers announced a premature closing of the club, they turned the lights off and escorted the clients out of the club. Jožo was the last to leave and outside, he unloaded his anger on rubbish bins. On next days, Jožo didn't come any more.

The incident was discussed during supervision, the whole situation was analyzed and new measures and procedures for similar situations were adopted. Potential conflict triggers were gradually found out. Jožo had been visiting both the Depo club and another club in the locality where the rules are different from Depo; the clients often fight there and nobody cares about it. In addition, Jožo uses drugs, smokes weeds from time to time and snuffs pervitin. At the time of the incident, he was trying to get weed. Jožo is the youngest child from a large family where most siblings (seven) abuse habit-forming substances, the father is in jail for thefts and physical attack and the mother consumes too much alcohol. Jožo is a "street child" from his early years. On the day of the incident, there were many big boys, primarily irregular clients who didn't know each other well; tension could be felt from the beginning. On the next day, there were many small children who were loud, wild and required attention; therefore the workers overlooked Jožo entering the club. The motive of Jožo's behaviour on the next day probably was revenge for "public shame" suffered by Jožo when handling the incident. The workers had not experienced similar situation; they tried to solve the situation as they could, but nothing worked. In addition, the workers later became aware that they were tied down by fear how Jožo's aggression could escalate; they feared for the small children in the club and for each other. The fear for themselves arrived only later. The supervision brought the following procedures and measures: don't solve any disputes between clients "in public"; try to preserve the client's dignity; make use of preventive

measures to prevent potential clients' aggression (plan activities, change activities, music, reduce number of clients in the club, individual talks with risk clients, etc.); increase the number of workers in afternoon clubs when older clients come (e.g. make use of help of volunteers and interns); contact and arrange "emergency" cooperation with one of the Roma inhabitants of the Village who is a city policeman; have emergency buttons for quick calling of help on the phone; have the opportunity to trigger alarm in the building; establish cooperation with local police through personal negotiations and agreement of forms of cooperation; training of all club workers (including volunteers and interns) on the particularities of work with the Roma community and instructions on work with aggressive clients; use of communication skills for conflict solving, e.g. work with voice, space, etc.; have retreat paths; also risks of use of inadequate defence were discussed. The incident was a great experience for all club workers. The clients also felt the need to speak about the events; it turned out that they favoured the workers, that they didn't want such things to occur in the club, as it is one of the few places where they feel safe. The clients condemned Jožo's behaviour, they linked his emotion with drug abuse. Many clients appreciated the worker's procedure during the fight, they recognized her staying calm and being able to pacify boys who were a head taller than she was. The workers discussed the rules of the club, the meaning of the sanctions and bans, the club mission and building of mutual respect with the clients. A debate about drugs, their influence on the psyche and on the individual's behaviour followed. Policemen came to the club too and agreed regular rounds near the club in afternoon hours with the workers. The workers were trained on the particularities of work with the Roma community, on communication and efficient conflict solving. The incident with Jožo was a great experience for all persons involved (both the workers and the clients), as well as an opportunity to learn new skills for more efficient solving of crisis situations.

Conclusion

The provision of social services in the Coexistence Village includes permanent building of mutual trust and respect among the workers and the inhabitants. The workers must have not only the relevant education, but also personality qualities for work with the Roma. For the Roma, it is not easy at all to accept the fact that a "white" young worker tells them how to live, how to bring up their children, how to cook or how to manage their funds. But the Coexistence Village project has been working for fifteen years already, and children of the first clients start visiting LTFCY now. And the workers can continue the initiated change of mind and life style of new generation, with patience, kindness and professionalism.

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REVIEW

PRESCHOOL CHILD
IN SOCIALLY EXCLUDED ENVIRONMENT

Eva Šotolová

Kolaříková, M. (2015). *Dítě předškolního věku v prostředí sociální exkluze. [Preschool Child in Socially Excluded Environment]*. Opava: Silesian University in Opava.

The "Preschool Child in Socially Excluded Environment" publication is focused on a relevant topic that has not been paid sufficient attention by the existing epistemology of socially oriented sciences. The monograph presents, through applied qualitative research strategy, the issue of children in a given ontogenetic environment, whose development is significantly determined by the environment of social exclusion. It emphasizes the need of creation of adequate conditions for their preschool education. In view of frequently insufficient preparation of those children, their successful starting of the first class of the elementary school is considerably complicated. The crucial tasks of our education systems include the prevention of initial failures of Roma pupils from the first year of the elementary school, caused by their general social situation (Kaleja, 2015) and insufficient knowledge of the language of instruction (Šotolová, 2011; Zezulková, 2015). This fact and the categories of barriers of preschool education both on the side of the education institution and on the side of the socially excluded families, presented in the book, become an argumentation verbiage whose contextual framework relies on real empirical findings acquired by Marta Kolaříková through participation in the research project called "Sociological monitoring of educational inputs and outputs of children and pupils, including children and pupils with special educational needs in the Czech Republic (CZ.1.07/1.2.00/47.0009)".

The present Czech education system is characterized by the declared trend of inclusively oriented education, but the particularities of the Roma are only exceptionally respected in the approaches to education. They are rather provided with the majority model. Thus the principles of social integration are pushed to the background. In recent twenty years, quite little has changed in the area of preschool education of the target group in question. We can find confirmation in the "Rómovia Cigáni Kočovníci" publication that states: *"For the educational methods at schools to be efficient, the surroundings must perceive the child as an individual, with all related originality and cultural wealth. But the current education system is very far from such approach."* (Liégeois, 1995, p. 179)

A great number of Roma children keeps finishing only the elementary education. Former studies (Bartoňová, 2009, Petrasová, 2012, Portik, 2001, and others) show that in the past, the Roma children were often wrongfully sent to practical elementary school,

formerly called special schools. To stop the slump of the Roma communities, a high quality preschool preparation must be consequently observed. Therefore affirmative events must be implemented in the main education stream; such events are called compensatory procedures (Strategies.....) by the Czech government. They are allowed by the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and by the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. The approaches are aimed at integration and inclusion of the Roma, which is to be achieved primarily by activities focused on upbringing and education.

The monograph constitutes one of the outputs of the ESF OP VK project. It presents the results of the republic-wide study focused on the barriers of preschool education. In the theoretical part, the author summarized the essential characteristics and needs of a preschool child from the perspective of developmental psychology. She dealt with the assessment of school maturity and the degree of school preparedness with emphasis on children from socially excluded environment. Her theoretical foundations were based on a sufficient set of the sources used, as well as on practical experience. The research part of the monograph describes the basic categories that complicate the children's school attendance from the perspective of the parents. The selected methodological procedure complies with the purpose of the study. Based on semi-structured interviews with 105 respondents from socially excluded environment, the basic obstacles of the children's participation in preschool education were investigated, including: lack of places in kindergartens, the methods of admission of children to kindergartens, the level of information of the parents about the enrolment to kindergartens, financial demands, accessibility of kindergartens from the perspective of transport, insufficient appreciation of the importance of preschool preparation by parents, the teacher's personality, bad personal experience with kindergarten, underestimation of the importance of kindergarten, separation from own family, and other indicators. We see one of the primary reasons for the educational problems of the Roma pupils their unpreparedness with respect to language. The current Roma generation speaks better Czech than the past generations, but the influence of the Roma ethnolect survives. The author's study emphasizes this fact; some parents – respondents were fully aware of the importance of improvement of language competence of their children.

The author also emphasizes the contribution of non-profit organizations, which close the gap of the governmental sector. The low-threshold preschool preparation reacts to different reasons of the families resulting in non-admission of the children to kindergartens or preparatory classes. The preparation is primarily intended for children from socially disadvantaged environment.

In the final chapter, the author summarizes the results of the study, i.e. she describes the barriers preventing the parents of the children from socially excluded environment from participation in preschool education. They include the unavailability of kindergartens in the place of residence, their fullness, language barrier, insufficient activity of the parents in searching educational opportunities, resulting from lack of knowledge and distrust (the Roma learned to distrust institutions in the past), but also from the system of preschool preparations, etc.

Conclusion

The study focused on statements of predominantly Roma national minority when investigating the barriers of the children's kindergarten attendance or other forms of preschool preparation, and has a greater information value than a study of this area based on statements of members of the majority society.

People living in a socially excluded environment will not be able to break out of their situation without an efficient help of the majority in cooperation with the Roma intelligentsia. An intervention from outside can be implemented through those who don't have any prejudices and see a meaning in what they do.

Mgr. Marta Kolaříková, Ph.D., relying upon practical experience and extensive theoretical knowledge, emphasizes timely and systematic preschool preparation of children. She does not see a sufficient solution in compulsory preschool preparation of children from five years of age.

The "Preschool Child in Socially Excluded Environment" monograph is a contribution for teachers, special teachers, psychologists, social workers and other expert public.

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