



Pedagogická
fakulta
Faculty
of Education

Jihočeská univerzita
v Českých Budějovicích
University of South Bohemia
in České Budějovice

Jihočeská univerzita v Českých Budějovicích
Pedagogická fakulta
Katedra společenských věd

Bakalářská práce

Práce s romskými dětmi v předškolních
klubech nízkoprahových centrech

Work with Roma children in pre-school clubs
of community centres

Vypracovala: Kristýna Omelková
Vedoucí práce: PhDr. Salim Murad, Ph.D.

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Anotace

Práce se zabývá fungováním nízkoprahových center se zaměřením na romské děti a mládež. Rozebírá, jak nízkoprahová centra pomáhají romským dětem čelit jejich výzvy.

Práce je rozdělena do dvou hlavních částí. Teoretická část přibližuje celkovou situaci Romů v České republice, zaměřuje se na vzdělávání romských dětí. Dále popisuje vznik a práci komunitních center a nastiňuje, jaká jsou očekávání od jejich zakladatelů a zaměstnanců

Praktická část analyzuje strukturované rozhovory se sociálními pracovníky, které byly provedeny ve městech Ostrava a České Budějovice. Závěr praktické části je popis jednotlivých center a srovnávání komunitních center mezi městy Ostrava a České Budějovice. Práce je psána v anglickém jazyce.

Klíčová slova: Romové, romské dítě a romská mládež, Nízkoprahové zařízení pro děti a mládež, Ostrava, České Budějovice

Annotation

This bachelor thesis deals with the function of community centres for children and youth with a particular emphasis on Roma children. It analyses the challenges Roma children may face and what a role community centres can play in dealing with these challenges.

The thesis is basically divided into two main parts: theoretical part of the thesis provides an overview of the current situation of the Roma minority in the Czech Republic, especially education and upbringing of Roma children. It elaborates how the community centres were established, how they work and what the expectations of the founders and the employees are. Additionally, it describes the ways of curriculum work with children in these clubs and how they work.

The practical part analyzes structured interviews conducted with social workers from the community centres in two cities: Ostrava and České Budějovice. The outcome of the practical part is a comparison of the community centres within as well as between these two cities.

Keywords: Roma, Roma children and youth, community centres for children and youth, Ostrava, České Budějovice.

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1. Introduction

The main aim of this thesis is to describe the function of community centres and subsequently to compare the community centres located in České Budějovice and Ostrava.

Central to this thesis are pre-school clubs and community centres for children and youth with a particular emphasis on Roma children. Specifically these children are frequent visitors of the community centres as a result of their disadvantaged position, based on which they are identified as a target group of community centres. In fact, Roma children constitute the majority of clients using the services of community centres.

Decision for my Bachelor's thesis topic is motivated by my personal experience with a daily life of Roma in Ostrava. In November 2016 I had an opportunity to spend one week in the Coexistence Village in Ostrava, assisting as a translator at the research conducted by an incoming Nigerian student Marilyn. Living with a Roma family in the real context of their community changed my viewpoint on their lives and inspired me to base my thesis on a related topic.

This thesis argues that community centres represent an effective way to help and support Roma children and youth. Furthermore, it suggests that community centres positively shape the lives of children and give them hope for a better future. These statements are supported by following content, splitting into two main parts.

The theoretical part is divided into four main chapters. Firstly, it describes the basic characteristics and services, which community centres offer to children and youth. Subsequently, it elaborates general situation of Roma children in the Czech Republic. Education, characterized by the profile of Roma students, their leisure time and inclusive education, is put into the spotlight. Finally, this thesis describes pre-school clubs and highlights their importance.

The practical part analyzes structured interviews conducted with social workers from the community centres in two cities: Ostrava and České Budějovice. It includes interviews with workers of pre-school clubs that comment on the operation and aims of pre-school clubs. The data were structured in the table form and described accordingly, including activities provided by each centre. At the first place, centres within each city

were compared, followed by overall comparison of two cities of České Budějovice and Ostrava. Additionally to the final conclusion, the importance of pre-school clubs is pointed out.

2. THEORETICAL PART

2.1. The community centre

According to Baštecká (2009; in Zemanová, Dolejš, 2015) the community centres for children and youth are relatively new social services, since they have their beginnings in the 1990s (Čechlovský, 2005). They belong to a group of social prevention services with the aim to eliminate social exclusion and the spreading of undesirable social phenomena (e.g. crime, addiction to narcotics etc.) of children and youth.

Services are also available in the form of fieldwork. It is the only kind of social service that is oriented exclusively on children and youth. Personnel must be comprised of social workers with adequate qualification for working in the community centre (Zemanová, Dolejš, 2015). All together 256 community centres for youth and children are registered in the Czech Republic (Registr poskytovatelů sociálních služeb, 2017).¹

2.1.1. Services

The main objective of community centres is to improve the quality of the life of children and youth. This objective is to be achieved mainly through prevention and the reduction of social and health dangers related to their lifestyle. Community centres aim to create a space for children and youth that would facilitate solving their unfavourable social situations and help them to better understand their social environment. Services of community centres can be provided anonymously (Act No. 108/2006 Sb., § 62).² All services are complimentary and stable with no sudden interruptions. Provided services cover the following activities:

a) Education and activating activities

- Strengthening and training of motor, social and mental skills.
- Helping and supporting the family in a child care.
- Leisure activities and hobbies.

¹ The data is valid for 18.2.2017 and were found on: *Registr poskytovatelů sociálních služeb*: Portál MPSV (online). Praha: MPSV, 2017 (quoted 2017-02-18). Available from: http://iregistr.mpsv.cz/socreg/hledani_sluzby.do?SUBSESSION_ID=1487453319259_2&zak=&zaok=&sd=n%C3%ADzkoprahov%C3%A1+za%C5%99%C3%ADzen%C3%AD+pro+d%C4%9Bti+a+ml%C3%A1de%C5%BE

² Social services Act No. 108/2006 Coll. In: *Sbírka zákonů České republiky. Portál MPSV* (online). Praha: MPSV, 2017. Available from: http://www.mpsv.cz/files/clanky/13640/zakon_c_108_2006__stav_k_1.8.2016.pdf

b) Mediation in a contact with social surrounding

- Support in building related to the inclusion to normal social environment.

c) Social therapeutic activities

- Provision of this service leads to a development of personal and social skills, which in turn enhances social integration.

d) Support in the right enforcement and legitimate interests in personal matters.³

According to Klíma (2004; in Zemanová, Dolejš, 2015) importance of the community centres lies in the provision of professional help that is available to children and youth. The youth can better explore the interest of adults. Experienced workers provide an alternative approach for youth, showing that undesirable behaviour of the youth does not necessarily have to meet with supervising and normative approach that many adults tend to adopt.

2.1.2. Target group

Academic literature describes the term *target group* as an abstract social construction. However, the main target group of community centres consists of street work of social workers for socially vulnerable children and youth, who experienced various personal hardships (e.g. family breakdown, school problems), confrontational social situations (e.g. delinquent activity) or other harmful experiences (e.g. child abuse or using drugs, bullying, etc.) (Pojmosloví NZDM, 2008).

Target group can be categorized based on following age groups:

- a) from 6 to 12 years
- b) from 13 to 18 years
- c) from 19 to 26 years

There are some determining characteristics of the children and youth who visit the community centres. They cannot or do not want to attend standard leisure activities. They prefer to spend their leisure time out of the social group and family. Their lifestyle is full of conflicts, which negatively affect themselves or their surroundings (Pojmosloví NZDM, 2008).

³VYHLÁŠKA ze dne 15. listopadu 2006: kterou se provádějí některá ustanovení zákona o sociálních službách. In: . Praha: MPSV, 2006, ročník 2006, 505 Sb. Available from: http://www.mpsv.cz/files/clanky/6196/vyhlaska_505_2006.pdf

Another possible classification of the target group is based on the development tasks. “The concept of developmental tasks assumes that human development in modern societies is characterized by a long series of tasks that individuals have to learn throughout their lives. Some of these tasks are located in childhood and adolescence...” (encyclopedia, 2002). The development tasks are mainly based on physical maturation (learning to walk), another source relates to socio structural and cultural forces. The final source involves personal values and aspiration (encyclopedia, 2002).

If a person fails during fulfilling the tasks or feels frustrated about his or her own appearance, it can be difficult to communicate with the peers (Staníček et al., 2007).

Finally, there is a four-level definition of the target group according to (Šafaříková, 2012).

1. **Abstract level:** Threatened children or youth.
2. **General level:** Adolescents between the age 13-18 who have experienced a conflict in social situations.
3. **Concrete level:** Adolescents in the age 15-18 who have experienced conflict in social situations. They have an experience with committing crime, truancy and regular use of addictive substances.
4. **Working level:** Boys in the age 15-17 living only with their mother, not attending any children’s club. They have experienced conflict situations with their family (e.g. arguments with mother or with her partner) or in the school (e.g. truancy, arguments with teachers). Occurrence of small crimes (e.g. steal cigarettes, damage of public properties). Typically they are regular smokers, drink alcohol and can also smoke marijuana.

Klíma says (2004; in Zemanová, Dolejš, 2015) that the main challenge of social work is a creation of the professional concept of assistance. The success is measured by the acceptance and refusal of help by the children and the youth.

Substitution of priorities during definition of the target group can lead to labelling whole social groups. The aim of social work is to prevent the action of social discrimination and prejudices (Staníček et al., 2007).

2.1.3. Profile of a client of the community centre

In 2009, Národní institut dětí a mládeže in a co-operation with Street workers made a research called Healthy climate in leisure and informal education⁴. The aim of this research was to understand and describe the target group of community centres. The results benefit better integration within community centres.

Profile of a client according to the research looks as follows:

A boy at the age of 14 who attends an elementary school. Both of his parents have lower education, both are economically active. His parents care about his school performance, however, they do not pay too much attention to his leisure time and the way he spends it. Arguments are frequent in his family.

The boy generally does not like school. He does not prepare himself for the lessons, neither does he pay attention during them. In addition, he has been given an admonition from a teacher or headmaster.

He meets his friends daily outside and in community centres. His closest friends smoke cigarettes and marijuana and drink alcohol. Some of them play gambling machines, spray on an illegal surface(Healthy climate in leisure and informal education, 2009).⁵

⁴Zdravé klima v zájmovém a neformálním vzdělávání

⁵The whole research is available on: Zdravé klima v zájmovém a neformálním vzdělávání. *Klíče pro život: Rozvoj klíčových kompetencí v zájmovém a neformálním vzdělávání* (online). (quoted 2017-02-24). Available from: <http://userfiles.nidm.cz/file/zdrave-klima-prezentace.pdf>

2.2. Roma in the Czech Republic

Roma in the Czech Republic belong to the largest ethnic minority and at the same time they represent the only component of the Czech population with positive population growth. The exact number of the Roma population is not possible to find out as the national and ethnic attributes belong to personal characteristics. These data can be collected according to the international convention only with permission of the person (Weinerová, 2014).

The estimated number of Roma in the Czech Republic can be, however, found in the report on the status of the Roma minority for 2015 on the website of the Government of the Czech Republic. (Government of the Czech Republic, 2016) According to the website, the estimated number of Roma living in 2015 in the Czech Republic reached approximately 226 300 inhabitants. About half of this number is Roma who are integrated into the society. The other half is the people who live in an unfavourable situation that is also called social exclusion (Weinerová, 2014).

With regards to the social exclusion localities, there have been identified altogether 606 such places in the Czech Republic. The population amounts to 115 000 inhabitants, out of which the majority are Roma (Government of the Czech Republic, 2016).⁶

The position of Roma in the society should be perceived in the context of their social relation and bonds (especially the relation to the majority society). The essential thing is a willingness to perceive the problems of Roma community as a serious issue that has to be addressed. The key point is to understand the term social exclusion. This concept embraces several problems that Roma have to face (Navrátil et al., 2003).

2.2.1. Social exclusion

Definition of social exclusion is generally defined as socially excluded people who have limited access to institutions and services. The inequality leads to an isolation and separation from society and loss of social status in the society. Socially excluded people usually face a complex of problems which influence normal activity in the society (Agentura pro sociální začleňování, 2010). Historic and ethnographic analysis

⁶Numbers available on práva o stavu romské menšiny za rok 2015. *Vláda České Republiky* (online). Praha, 2016 (cit. 2017-02-25). Available from: <https://www.vlada.cz/cz/ppov/zalezitosti-romske-komunity/dokumenty/zprava-o-stavu-romske-mensiny-za-rok-2015-146576/>

give evidence that the Roma community has never been considered an equal member in Czech society. On the contrary, its place has always been at the margins of the society (Navrátil et al., 2003).

Generally speaking, it is assumed that poor and socially excluded people live in one isolated place. They also tend to have a different appearance to members of minority groups. Hirt and Jakoubek point out that this is exactly the reason why it is crucial to address this issue (Hirt a Jakoubek (eds.), 2006).

Šimíková describes reasons why the Roma community has always been facing social exclusion. During the 20th century, the position of the Roma community was undermined by three major events: **Firstly, mass killing** of the majority of integrated and assimilated Roma population in the concentration camps during World War II. **Secondly**, an important role was played by a **socialist experiment** connected with the forcible relocation of a large part of Roma community in the Czech Republic from rural surroundings to industrial urban zones. Finally, **market transformation resulted in job losses** of Roma people on a mass scale (Navrátil et al., 2003).

Following are the life areas that have an affect on social exclusion:

- a) Limited access to the labour market;
- b) Poverty and low income;
- c) Low social support, sparse or non-existent social background;
- d) Living in a context of the locality;
- e) Exclusion of services.

Limited access to the labour market

Agenda for a social inclusion (2017) considers limited access to labour as one of the main factors that causes social exclusion. Among the *external causes* of high unemployment belongs the lack of stimulation of social system, ineffective use of an active policy of employment and at the same time discrimination in the labour market. *Internal causes* of high unemployment include mainly a lack of education and qualification of the Roma and also debt (Agenda for a social inclusion, 2017).

One of the job possibilities is represented by seasonal or casual work. These options are in the majority of cases exclusively for men. Mostly this is the only possible way of finding a job via a registry office. At the same time, the Roma represent a group

that occupies most of these positions. Jobs offered within a grey economy are also quite common among Roma (Navrátil et al., 2003).

Despite the fact that the number of unemployed Roma is not available as the registry offices of the Czech Republic are not allowed to register the nationality of their clients, *the Government of the Czech Republic issued the following statement: "At the base of the general trend of development of unemployment in the Czech Republic, we can infer that the Roma situation is improving at the same time with the improvement of the whole society."*(Government of the Czech Republic, 2016).

Limited access to the labour market also has a negative impact on the young generation of Roma. They lose contacts and connection with employers. At the same time, in some cases they have not seen their parents working at all. This creates an idea that it is normal to be unemployed. Finding work is not a priority for them and consequently, they put less motivation and effort into being employed (Navrátil et al., 2003).

Poverty and low income

Poverty and low income are characteristics of the Roma community. It is noteworthy that this is not in regards to the specific mentality of Roma community, but with their social character (Hirt a Jakoubek, 2006).

Because of the state system of the social protection in the Czech Republic, a family that does not reach the so-called "living minimum", has a right to claim a support equal to the level of this „living minimum". This income is composed of social benefits. For most of the socially excluded families this income represents the main and stable source of the total household income (Hirt a Jakoubek, 2006).

Roma and community

The term "community" is misleadingly associated with Roma in the Czech Republic. This term in social science does not mean only the group of people, it can also refer to an inner grouping with existing social relations and interaction between members of the group of people. This grouping can be understood as a subject of a process. The community acts as a unit, it has its own representation and it deals with its neighbourhood etc (Hirt a Jakoubek, 2006).

The definition above offers an insight into the difficulty with defining Roma in the Czech Republic. Traditional social grouping stands for a family and relatives that are in nearly organized and operational. Measures of inner organization, solidarity, and cooperation are within Roma families various. Between not related families prevails a tendency to separate, and occasionally there could be a disregard. In conclusion, it is important to understand that a group of Roma living in one place is not automatically a community. This presumption often leads to wrong steps or action in work with this group (Hirt a Jakoubek, 2006).

2.2.2. Excluded locations

"In the Czech Republic, the number of excluded locations and people who are living there has risen. Currently, it makes 115 thousand people concentrated in 660 locations. It emerges from The Analysis of socially excluded localities in the Czech Republic, which was made by GAC spo.s.r.o. for The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs"(GAC, 2015).

Some of the reasons why the excluded locations come into existence are: **affordable apartments:** Roma families with low income prefer to move to these locations because of the low price. **Evicting Roma from lucrative apartments,** they offer to these families flats in areas with a high Roma population. The last mentioned reason is **controlled relocation,** which affects mainly people who do not pay the rent and who are profiling as delinquent or maladjusted (esf, 2006).

It is not necessary to call a place where Roma people live a "Roma locality." Obviously, there are socially excluded locations where Roma people are the minority or do not live at all. At the same time, it is important to realize that not all socially excluded Roma live in the excluded locations. It is also important to realize that there are also Roma families which are fully integrated into society. In conclusion, it is not necessary to equalize Roma and social exclusion (esf, 2006).

2.2.3. Term ghetto

Historically, the term ghetto stands for an area inhabited by Jewish ethnicity. Nowadays it is generally understood as an area inhabited by people that form a group of some ethnicity, culture, subculture or some religion. Their life is characterized by isolation from society. . Typical is the high rate of unemployment, poverty and generally poor living conditions. From the ethical point of view, it is associated with the

Roma population. Nowadays ghettos represent the concentration of socially and locally excluded groups of people (Artslexikon, 2016).

Ghettos in the Czech Republic

Czech ghettos began to form approximately fifteen years ago. A high number of ghettos exist especially in the poor areas of the north part of Bohemia and Moravia. The reason for these locations lies in the presence of heavy industry. However, generally speaking, there is no region in the Czech Republic which would not experience the presence of ghettos. Usually, such places are inhabited by people who have their difficulties with paying the lease and related services, or people who are considered as problematic (Ceskaghetta, 2006).

Examples of the indicators suggesting that the particular area can be called a ghetto are as follows: **Spatial segregation** which means there is no access to the infrastructure and that there are devastated houses in the outskirts or far behind cities. Another indicator is **inaccessibility** to offices, schools, doctors etc. Other things worth mentioning are **poor sanitary conditions, high rate of unemployment and insufficient education** (Ceskaghetta, 2006).

The way out of ghettos

The article from MF Dnes from the web of Člověk v tísní presents the idea that Ministry of Education sees a solution in an inclusive amendment to the Education Act. It should provide funds for schools that would target children from ghettos and help them overcome their handicaps. They believe this is the way to stop the expansion of ghettos (Clovekvtisni, 2016).

The non-government organization “Člověk v tísní” is engaged in the fields of social inclusion. Their aim is to prevent the existence of today's ghettos. They claim that the money which should be used from taxes for effective social policy is multiple times less than the money used to calm sharpened situations in these areas. The lack of ability to solve these problems leads to the waste of taxpayer funds and to an increase in nationalism

In general, there should be help and support for people who want to change their life situation and get out of ghettos. The way towards the majority of society is hard to find without help from professional social workers. Social workers are trained to

suggest an effective individual plan on the basis of a holistic knowledge of the problem(Clovekvtisni, 2013).

2.3. Roma and majority

The coexistence of Roma and the majority society in the Czech Republic undertakes different forms. To understand these shapes is the basis for a better understanding of this issue, and it is also important for finding ways of changes and reducing the conflicts. In the Czech Republic, the position of the Roma minority often depends on the level of coexistence between the majority group and the Roma group. Importantly, the improvement in the relationship between Roma people and the majority lies in respect of the difference between these communities (Navrátil et al., 2003).

According to a specialist in Roma culture and language, **PhDr. Milena Hübschmannová**, the attitude of Czech society towards Roma is as follows: *“The Czech society is differentiated. There are few people who approach the Roma with multidimensional understanding and awareness...”* *“There are also people willing to accept the Roma. Then there are the outright racists and with them, unfortunately, politicians and law are not able (or do not want or are afraid?) to deal”*(Romove radio, 2000).

Furthermore, she explained her opinion on how Czechs see the Roma and vice versa. Czechs condemn Roma theft, the devastation of dwellings (closer analysis to be found in her book *Šaj pes dovekeras in Romové rádio*) and their rude language. On the other hand, from the Roma point of view, Czechs see and judge all Roma as one group. They do not see individuals. The way towards a more harmonious coexistence is according to the author the education of people in order to make them realize that in today's world it is not possible to solve differences between people with their social exclusion. (Romove radio, 2000).In conclusion, the author sees the future of Roma in the Czech Republic as a realization of the emancipation process and the acceptance of Roma as a full right nation (Romove radio, 2000).

2.3.1. Extremist groups

The term extremism includes specific ideological positions, which are not in accordance with constitutional and statutory norms. It is characterized by elements of

intolerance and it breaks the fundamental democratic principles (Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, 2017).

Železný defines extremism as a summary of verbal, graphic, physical and others activities. Generally, there is an ideological subtext, which is manipulated with individuals or groups of people towards a concrete aim. A necessary precondition is the fact that extremist groups use illegal means and their activity involves public nuisance, attacking people and damaging property. This behaviour belongs to facts of a crime (Navrátil et al., 2003).

Furthermore, he divides the characteristics of this group as follows:

- a) High rate of demagogy, contempt law, intolerance opinion, refuse of compromise solutions;
- b) Attacks against groups of inhabitants with different skin color and denomination;
- c) Aggressiveness of Roma against citizens who they consider as members of external skinhead groups due to their appearance (clothes, hairstyles, etc.) (Balvín et al., 1997).

Nowadays, the Czech extreme right groups consist not only of political parties, but also from civic associations and informal and unregistered groups. An extreme right group can be divided into two different subgroups. The first one can be called *right extreme* or *nationalistic*. The second group is represented by so called *neo-nazi* and *anti-systemic* subgroups. According to the peer-reviewed online journal Rexter, the strategy experiences some changes. First of all, there are less young supporters (mostly first-time voters) of far right political parties. Also, the number of racially motivated murders declines. On the other hand, there is a greater radicalization of some extreme right-wing groups that commit violence in a more sophisticated manner. Extreme groups in the Czech Republic tend to takeover strategies, patterns and themes from abroad (Rexter, 2013).

2.3.2. The skinhead movement

The skinhead movement is usually formed by youth living in cities. It is based on resistance towards the consumer society. It is characterized by organizing into groups with almost a military style of organization. A very important aspect for the group is the symbols. Common appearance is a shaved head and some typical clothes

elements. Members practice different styles of martial arts and they are always ready for an action. Another characteristic is an emphasis on order and rules. They would like to have a power similar to the police in order to be able to control the behaviour of Vietnamese, Roma and other nationalities. (Tomin, 1991).

Their ideology is close to fascism and it is based on nationalism and patriotism. They do not accept other skin colors except for the white one. According to their ideology, immigrants endanger the Czech nation and that is why they are not acceptable. They believe that they take other people's jobs, their salaries are higher than the standard and they break rules. They are closely connected to music and skinhead bands. Their songs propagate nationalism, violence and have a focus on a resistance to Roma and other nationalities with different skin colour (Tomin, 1991).

Attitude towards Roma

There are different attitudes towards Roma among the groups of skinheads. **The most radical** one aims to force them to leave the Czech Republic and to relocate them to Slovakia or to India, where they originally come from. The **more "realistic"** „group aims to take away benefits like social, child support, etc. They suggest concrete steps aiming at reducing the Roma population, such as forced sterilization. They believe there is a serious threat of the dominance of the Roma population. According to their ideology, there is a willingness to co-exist with them in one country, however, Roma have to show respect towards them and change their behaviour in many ways. (Tomin, 1991).

For many years attitudes towards Roma have not changed. Very common are also protests against them. Examples of massive protests held against the Roma population were seen in 2013. Protests occurred in eight cities across the Czech Republic. The most dramatic situation was in the city of Ostrava, where hundreds of skinheads attempted pogrom⁷ on Roma. At the same time, there was a conflict between police and neo-nazis. Apart from Ostrava, in others cities like České Budějovice, Plzeň, Jičín etc., the demonstrations were without violence (Romea, 2013).

Security Information Service (BIS) states in the quarterly report on the development of the extremist scene that anti-Roma sentiments of the public may

⁷Vydra from the University of Pardubice defines pogrom as a collective form of physical violence against a specific ethnic or religious group. Word pogrom comes originally from Russian and it means plundering, looting and murdering. (Česká televize, 2013)

represent for national security a bigger problem than a group of right-wing extremists (Bis, 2013). The reason is the massive participation of ordinary citizens in anti-Roma demonstrations in České Budějovice and Duchov (Romea, 2013).

2.4. Education

One frequently asked question among teaching staff and the general public is the following: What does education mean to Roma children? Moreover, does school help them or does it not affect their bad reputation in society? Clear is the statement of the Roma children themselves. They perceive school as a repressive institute which is not trustworthy. Their attitude is influenced by a generally low education and the low cultural life of Roma families.

The school is taken as a "white" institution. For the families, education is not a priority but they rather focus on material values. The overall rate of education is low for the Roma ethnic group. School attendance is dependent on the family's decision. This leads to low or non-existent motivation for studying and getting good marks.

Bartoňová mentions further reasons why Roma children's attendance in school is low. Mothers do not send their children to school because they do not have money for snacks, the children have to take care of younger siblings, and the most alarming reason is that the children do not want to attend the lessons. Due to these facts, the children complete only a few classes of elementary school and quit compulsory education earlier than children of the same age from the majority group (Bartoňová, 2009).

Hornák comments the attitude of Roma mothers to schools as a place which educates and raises their children. For more actual results he compares Roma mothers and mothers of the majority society. Non-Roma mothers focus more on the performance of their children, how they feel in school, they put in a context with their learning outcomes. Compared to that, Roma mothers care how their children are treated by their teachers and classmates. Their attitude to school depends on the satisfaction of their children (Hornák, 2002).

It is important to build trust between the school and the Roma. For both parents and children it is important to trust. The first step should be made during school enrolment. The teacher should treat Roma parents patiently and respectfully. At the same time, teachers should be educated to eliminate the consequences of a lack of

upbringing from the families. They should comprehend the conditions of Roma children lives and try to understand their world (Bartoňová, 2009).

Home, family and school as a joint institution of education and raising children should co-operate together; as family environment inseparably influences educational achievements, school attendance and the general attitude towards the school of Roma students. It is important to build a strong connection between these institutions to achieve proper education for Roma children (Bartoňová, 2009).

2.4.1. Roma students

Roma intellectuals, Karel Holomek and Vlado Oláh, are authors of conceptual education of Roma students. They point at ways to motivate Roma students during lessons. The best method is to use the natural talent of Roma children. It lies in music, dancing, motor and dramatic fields (Balvín, 2007).

Sekyt points out that Roma children live in the present, which is why it is not effective to motivate them with the future. Their perception is slower and different, it is also accompanied by visual and hearing damage or reduced intelligence. They have a problem understanding the context of things and it is not easy for them to orientate in new situations. In practice, they have a problem focussing on subject matter, differentiation, analysis, and synthesis (Sekyt, 1998).

Roma children gradually manage individual thinking operations. Theoretical processes must be presented in the easiest and shortest way. For a better understanding it is good to support the theoretical processes with practical examples.

Subject matter should be passed experimentally. The thinking of many Roma children is created in conditions which are not adequate and stimulating for sensory perception, or speech development which leads to limited abilities. The lack of basic thinking causes a poor ability for generalization. It results in a process of studying which becomes hard in knowledge acquisition (Bartoňová, 2009).

A development program for Roma children cannot miss moral education which is really important for them in solving life situations. In the Czech family, the personality of children is formed by acquiring rules and customs. This is dissimilar to the Roma family where children live surrounded by family and they are not led to decide about things individually (Balvín, 2007).

Roma children often belong to a group of children who have diagnosed behavioural problems. The most common signs are aggression, truancy, and premature sexual activity.

Roma students are different in many ways, visually (body construction, the colour of skin, hairs and eyes) and mentally. Their inner regulation of work in school is based on their frame of mind. Unambiguous though is their need of nice things, surrounding and treatment (Bartoňová, 2009).

Leisure time of Roma children and educational aspects

The American sociologist H. Swedner, defines leisure time as a complex term for activities out of school, family and social commitments. The person uses this time for his/her relaxation, entertainment and freely improves his/her creative capacity (Balvín et al., 1997).

Knotná in Balvín mentions that leisure time affects all age groups and social classes. The functions of leisure time are **socialization** (social activity, acquisition of social norms), **compensatory** (school and responsibilities), **educational** (stimulation further learning, value orientation). The most common way of spending leisure time for children and youth is watching TV, playing computer games and listening to music. Boys are more interested in doing sport than girls (Balvín et al., 1997).

Leisure time of Roma children consists of activities which are easy for them. For example: physical activity and music. The children love listening to and singing songs. The adults can play music instruments without knowing sheet music. However, they miss patience in practicing music or sport (Balvín et al., 1997).

These days the most common activity is watching TV. Parents do not control how long and what their children are watching. Consequently, there are cases when children spend their whole day watching TV, even to the extent that they fall asleep and wake up in front of the TV. It causes sleeplessness, inattention and nervousness during lessons in school (Balvín et al., 1997).

Another problem is the occurrence of gambling during childhood. Frequently the parents get to know too late how their children spend their leisure time (Balvín et al., 1997).

Schools should grab and support what Roma children like to do during their leisure time. They should organize after school clubs aimed at sports activities with football tournaments, organize drama clubs and rehearse with children games or dancing classes followed by performances. These activities would support the improvement of the attitude of Roma children to school. Furthermore, it would improve relationships between Roma children and majority children and possibly it could help to find a way of Roma parents to schools and incline them to support their children (Balvín et al., 1997).

One example is the school of the headmaster Balabánová which is proving that this attitude is possible and beneficial for school and Roma children at the same time. Not all schools have such possibilities. One of the alternative solutions is co-operation with community centres (Balvín et al., 1997).

2.4.2. Pre-school clubs

Pre-school clubs work like an alternative to institutionalized kindergartens. They create social and educational service for children in pre-school age and for their families which are socially excluded. This service should work as a systematic care for these children and their involvement in the educational system (Clovekvtisni, 2015).

Pre-school preparation is a really important condition for socially disadvantaged children to successfully begin elementary education and to reach equal participation in education. The aims of clubs are basic communication and social skills which are important for elementary school. Children gain knowledge and competencies corresponding to the first grade of elementary schools. They develop their natural ability and study potential. Last but not least, clubs motivate personal growth and support inclusion among peers from the mainstream society (Clovekvtisni, 2015).

The causes of a low number of Roma children attending kindergarten are **external** and **internal**. To the **external** belong the insufficient capacities of kindergartens which create waiting lists. Mothers of socially disadvantaged children who are unemployed take last places in waiting lists. Additionally, there are more factors which influence the admission of children. The **internal** causes come directly from the families. They often do not consider pre-school education as important which ends up in not sending children to the kindergartens. A lack of financial means and challenging family situations, such as existential problems, as well as pathological

phenomena do not allow for the regular attendance of children in the kindergarten. (Clovekvitisni, 2015).

2.4.3. Problems of Roma children when beginning compulsory education

The first contact with school is hard for the children as they come to elementary schools only with skills from their families. They have to face new surrounding which is sometimes unfriendly. At the same time, they do not come in contact with familiar things. The teachers are also not Roma, books and school aids are adapted to the understanding of Czech pupils.

The guide for teachers indicates a list of the most common problems which Roma children face at the beginning of elementary school:

- a) **Lack of space and time for home preparation;**
- b) **The lack of interests of parents to ensure schools aids;**
- c) **Undeveloped fine motor skills and ability to draw and write;**
- d) **The missing of the daily schedule and doing activities requiring long-term focus** (Vzdělávání Romů v ČR, 2002).

Unpreparedness is also reflected by the fact that Roma children do not handle basic cultural and hygienic skills before beginning compulsory education. They have problems with adaption and accepting the role of student and authority of the teacher (Bartoňová, 2009).

2.4.4. Ways of integration of Roma students

The main tools to equalize conditions for Roma children when they enter schools are **kindergartens, preparatory classes, teaching assistants** and others.

- a) **Kindergartens:** The current status of attendance is low. Approximately 40% of Roma children attend kindergartens. The reasons why this number is so low are the poor motivation of Roma mothers to send their children there as well as the related costs of pre-school education. Another problem is that kindergartens do not have enough capacity.
- b) **Preparatory classes:** These classes are intended for children from non-stimulating environments. Their main tasks are to “even up” skills needed for elementary schools and eliminate barriers created by the environment. The classes help to decrease absence hours, and build the trust of parents to teachers.

They contribute to a better adaptation of children to school, they eliminate causes of further failure and they implement activities for language, logical thinking, and fine motor skills improvement. Disadvantages lie in a short term period of provision of services; it is usually around ten months.

- c) **Teaching assistants:** This service is popular and has widened. Teaching assistants are an equal member of the class and they work as a link between the parents and the family. Roma students perceive this person as a positive example as he/she knows the classroom environment, the personality of the student and his/her background. This leads to the prevention of misunderstandings between the students, school and family. The presence of teaching assistants means that the school is open to the neighbourhood. Drawbacks are that it can lead to a passive attitude of Roma parents to their children's education as well as the uncertain funding of this service
- d) **Others:** Individual approaches to each student, co-operation with the family, an offer of leisure activities. (Vzdělanostní dráhy a vzdělanostní šance romských žákyň a žáků základných škol v okolí vyloučených romských lokalit, 2009)

Teaching assistants and preparatory classes should be implemented in all places where Roma students achieve bad assessment. These students need this kind of preparation and help with the subject matter. Despite the fact that the numbers of this service have increased, it is still not sufficient for coverage needs (Balvín, 2007).

Another way to help Roma students to feel comfortable in school are **Roma teaching assistants**. They would help children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds to get over communication, adaptation and other barriers. The Roma teaching assistants have to be over 18 years. They have to finish high school education and complete a course where their eligibility for this work will be tested (Balvín et al., 1999).

“Preparatory classes (originally established for Roma children) are only attended by a small number of Roma children. Non-Roma children use these classes even less often. The two integration instruments, i.e. kindergartens and preparatory classes, are, as a rule, mutually exclusive; most parents only choose one” (oecd, 2011).

Ing. Eva Dobříšková in Balvín and the collective present a practical example. She mentions a school in an area called Chanov, which is located in Most. *"Interesting was the preparatory class for Roma children available from the age of five years. Despite the fact that the attendance is voluntary, most of the Roma children from Chanov are attending. The result is a far greater success in the first class. The school administrates two preparatory classes with 23 children. The aim is to reduce the Roma children handicap at the beginning of compulsory education"*(Balvín et al., 1996).

2.4.5. Teachers and Roma students

Teachers who are teaching Roma children have to face pressure from the general atmosphere of the society. The teacher is the person who is able to help the Roma student to get over their handicaps and positively influence them (Balvín et al., 1997).

Teachers who are intensively trained should be informed about the current situation in Roma education in the schools in the Czech Republic. They should be prepared for work in a multicultural environment and dominant approaches should be focused on work with Roma students (Balvín et al., 1999).

Teacher training faculties do not give sufficient attention to inclusive practices. Future teachers with specialisations receive more attention in terms of inclusive education than others. However, they do not receive systematic preparation for students with special needs. Instead of a proper planning process they can choose only from courses according to their preferences (*oecd, 2011*).

The concept of teacher education for Roma students is understood as a cultivation of personality of general knowledge from their field and focus on communication with Roma students. Teachers should also learn about Roma culture to understand and respect the situation of Roma students. He/she should operate with skills of motivation tailored for Roma students in line with the Roma culture (Balvín et al., 1999).

The main factor is a positive attitude towards Roma students. In spite of the assumption, experiences are different. According to a research by Masaryk University in Brno in 1994, 87% of teachers have a negative experience with Roma children (Balvín et al., 1999).

2.4.6. Discrimination of Roma students

Discrimination of Roma at schools in the Czech Republic has been a problem for many years. As an example in the 60s and 70s, there was a lack of access for Roma children to education (Amnesty International, 2015).

School segregation is not legally defined at the international level and also at the European level. The European Court of Human Rights sentenced several states for failure in slowing down the process of school segregation for Roma children. Education is the basic condition of Roma for their equal position in political, social, economic life (dare-net, 2014).

One of the states which the European Court of Human Rights sentenced ten years ago for discrimination of Roma children in the education system was the Czech Republic. The discrimination has three main forms: first, an **excessive representation** of Roma children (almost one third) in schools and classes specialized for children with mental disability. Another is the **segregation** of Roma students in mainstream education, and finally other forms of **different treatment** in mixed schools (Amnesty International, 2015).

The problem has not been properly solved yet. Important is the fact that the core of discrimination which Roma children face in school is based on ethnic prejudices. The only solution of the systematic infringement of equal rights for education for Roma children lies in deep school reform and a commitment to get rid of prejudices of Roma students (Amnesty International, 2015).

“There are several grant schemes financing the education of disadvantaged children. There are also many NGOs working with socially disadvantaged and Roma children. However, co-operation between schools and other institutions including NGOs is often insufficient, which is perceived as one of the main barriers preventing effective care of disadvantaged children“ (oecd, 2011).

In 2014, the Czech School Inspection made an investigation which aimed to identify the number of Roma children who are educated according to different educational programs at the elementary school. 4098 elementary schools were engaged.

Close to 15 000 children are studying in a program for mildly mentally retarded children, Roma children comprise 30% of that number (cscr, 2014)⁸.

“Roma children in the Czech Republic are segregated not only into practical elementary schools, but there are also regular primary schools with classes for pupils with mild mental disabilities, where most of its pupils are Roma children. Some regular primary schools even divide the class into two groups. In one group are educated children from mainstream society, and in the second group Roma children” (dare-net, pg. 26, 2014).

Schools which made the change in accepting Roma students according to a regulation from the year 2011 (*a regulation on the education of children, pupils and students with special educational needs and children, pupils and students*)⁹ which forced pedagogical counselling centres to be more strict during the diagnosing of mild mental retardation. Many headmasters who were asked by Amnesty International admitted that these centres were able to diagnose the mild mental retardation despite the fact that the child was healthy. One of the headmasters explained that the reason was to make the situation for the children easier. They were aware that the children are not able to manage school requirements and that led to the decision of group integration (Amnesty International, 2015).

The solution of this situation is that the Czech government has to keep its promise for rectification in the educational system and admit the extensive influence of prejudices against Roma students. It has to identify discriminatory practices and find a way of punishment for schools which violate the rights of Roma students for equal and quality education (Amnesty International, 2015).

Amnesty international suggested steps to accomplish the promise. One of the ways is that the Ministry of Education should set a plan with a schedule and finance for the gradual abolition of educational programs for pupils with mild mental disabilities. Another step is to put in place the necessary reforms for inclusive education of Roma students (Amnesty International, 2015).

⁸ The whole investigation is available on <http://www.romea.cz/dokumenty/TZ-Zaci-vzdelavani-v-jednotlivych-vzdelavacich-programech-ZV.pdf>

⁹ Vyhláška o vzdělávání dětí, žáků a studentů se speciálními vzdělávacími potřebami a dětí, žáků a studentů mimořádně nadaných. 27/2016 Sb. available on: <http://www.msmt.cz/dokumenty-3/vyhlaska-c-27-2016-sb-o-vzdelavani-zaku-se-specialnimi?lang=1>

Moreover, an amendment is needed to the Education Act to prevent the occurrence of ethnically segregated schools. The prevention should be made through the acceptance of a plan of elimination segregation and review of the catchment area of schools that led to segregation of schools (Amnesty International, 2015)

2.4.7. Inclusive education

“Inclusive education does not have a strong history in the Czech Republic. Therefore, it was an important step forward from a political-legislative point of view when the government adopted a National Action Plan for Inclusive Education in 2010“(sagepub, 2012).

Inclusive education should be seen as a high-quality education which allows equal access to education and at the same time respects all kinds of special needs of each student. It should also fully develop a potential of students without any barriers or dump down. The aim of the process is to set positive conditions for the education of all students, an adequate support measure which is necessary for ensuring educational needs for every student(msmt,2015).

On the other hand, the current educational system does not make an effort to support students with special needs in mainstream schools. It reflects that schools which support inclusion get fewer acknowledgements, which is reflected for example in the numbers of students who get a place at high school. In this field, Janebová and Habart (2011) explained that schools rather gain a number of students placed at high schools. With the high number is connected acknowledge of being an elite school. Rather than have a reputation of lesser quality school but offer quality education for all students (including students with special needs(sagepub, 2012).

According to a research from the Centre for Public Research, approximately 30% of Czechs are still convinced that Roma children should not attend elementary school. They are perceived as untrustworthy and not intellectually sufficient for studying. The idea that school is lower quality with a higher number of Roma students is coming from prejudices which affect even highly educated Czechs (Romea, 2017).

The World Bank and Open Society Foundation initiated a project called Decade. Eight states from Central and Eastern Europe got involved in 2005. The government of the Czech Republic decided to join Decade in 2005. They made a commitment to improving conditions for education, employment, housing and health of Roma until

2015. International organizations (for example World Health Organization) and other states (total number was 12) joined this project(Romea, 2015).

The final report from a closing conference held in Sarajevo shows that the project raised awareness about social exclusion of Roma but on the other hand, the ambitious aims were not fully accomplished. Decade initiated the important process in Europe in the field of Roma integration, but it was not enough to significantly affect the effect of segregation in each participating state. At the same time finance for each program seemed inadequate for the problems Decade wanted to solve (Romea, 2015).

According to the inquiry of Czech School Inspectorate, these days approximately 80% of Czech schools are involved in inclusive education. The number of children who switch from special schools to normal school is not high. It is around 205 pupils. Masaryk University in Brno offers two new fields of special and inclusive educations for future teachers at the faculty of Education. Preparation is needed as inclusion is still a new term and future teacher should know how to work with children with special needs (msmt, 2016).

At the Faculty of Education at the University of South Bohemia in October 2016an event called a week for inclusive education was held. During this week students had an opportunity to visit lectures and workshops from psychology and education on the topic of inclusion.

3. PRACTICAL PART

3.1. Aim of the research

Aim of the practical part of the thesis is the analysis of the qualitative research conducted in the cities of České Budějovice and Ostrava. The objective of the research is to describe activities of these community centres, analyse their functioning and subsequently to compare them. In addition, the pre-school clubs are analysed.

3.2. Methodology

As aforementioned, this thesis is based on the qualitative research, which can be generally characterised as “*Unstructured or semi-structured techniques, e.g. individual depth interviews or group discussions*” (snapsurveys, 2011). Through this type of research, the researcher can gain an understanding and insight into the setting of an examined problem. Findings are not conclusive and cannot be used to make generalizations about the population of interest.

Chosen methodology is twofold: structured interviews and participant observation. Using observation aids triangulating data and permits a more detailed understanding of informants' lives. Regarding interviews, open as well as closed types of questions were used. Open questions were directed to the employees of the community centres in order to obtain information about the functioning of the centres, and to find out their opinion and attitude towards their jobs. Employees of the pre-school clubs were asked questions about regarding functioning and educational programs.

Employees were asked also closed questions. However, the aim was to improve the knowledge about activities provided by the community centres. All these answers are structured in the table as seen in following chapter, which allows the comparison between community centres within the cities as well as the comparison between the cities themselves.

Open questions for employees of community centres:

1. Why is the existence of community centres important?
2. What are the advantages/disadvantages of the centres and in which field do they help the most?
3. Do you personally see a sense working in the centre? Do you like your work?

4. What is the biggest problem that the children are facing?
5. What is according to you the solution to this problem?
6. What do the children need most? (Motivation, space, time)
7. How do you motivate them?
8. What are the problems/limits during motivation?

Open questions for employees of pre-school clubs:

1. Does pre-school club replace classic elementary school?
2. Do you prepare children for elementary school?
3. Does the club co-operate with parents of the children?
4. Do you organize events for children from the minority group to get in touch with children from the majority group?
5. Do children after pre-school club attend community centres?

3.3. Description of the chosen community centres

For my research, I chose the cities **České Budějovice** and **Ostrava** which are different in many ways. From the location, size, and structure of the cities to the situation of Roma, the services of community centres, the presence of pre-school clubs and the access of Roma children to education.

For the comparison, I chose two community centres; one in **Ostrava** and one in the surrounding area called **Hrušov**. This club was chosen because there used to be a presence of a pre-school club. In **České Budějovice** I picked two community centres. The pre-school club is part of one of them.

3.3.1. Ostrava

Ostrava is the third largest city and is considered as a metropolis of the Silesian Region. It is located in the northwest part of the Czech Republic. The largest majority of Roma in the Czech Republic lives here. The exact number is difficult to define.

According to the map of socially excluded localities in the Czech Republic the population in socially excluded localities in Ostrava is around 6900 – 8700 people. The analysis of socially excluded localities in the Czech Republic was implemented by GAC spol. s.r.o. (esfcr, 2015)

In Ostrava there are many organizations which operate with community centres. There are **Salesian Youth Centre, Caritas, Salvation Army and Life together.**

For my research I choose Life together because of long and intensive co-operation with Faculty of Education at University of South Bohemia.

Life together

The community centres are administered by the non-governmental organization **Life together**¹⁰. The organization was established in 1997 when the Ostrava district **Hrušov** was badly affected by floods. They offered humanitarian and social assistance to people who lost their homes. ” *Life together was founded by a handful of enthusiastic volunteers headed by Mgr. Sri Kumar Vishwanathan, who collectively sought to mitigate negative attitudes among the Roma and non-Roma citizens*”(vzajemnesouziti, 2017).

A few years later it became a professional organization with 47 employees (Roma and non-Roma) and help from volunteers. The organization expanded its services on leisure activities for Roma children and young people, their education, and prevention of social pathologies. Gradually they established in different localities three community centres: **Hrušov, Liščina** and **Zárubek**. In cooperation with PRG Real Estate company they managed to lease 18 flats in the area **Horní Suchá** for people in crisis. On top of that they managed to open in this area a pre-school club (vzajemnesouziti, 2017).

In 2000 the organization in co-operation with Caritas Ostrava laid the foundation stone of the Coexistence Village.¹¹ It is a functional model of coexistence of the Roma and non-Roma population in Ostrava. In the Village there are ten Roma families, ten non-Roma families and ten mixed families. Three years later the co-operation ended and Life together had to leave premises of local community centres (vzajemnesouziti, 2017).

Mgr. Kumar Vishwanathan is a founder and central figure of Life together. He was appointed to Sopran (expert panel against racism and violence) by the Minister for Human Rights and Minorities. In 2010 he became the Czech ambassador to the European Year Against Poverty (vzajemnesouziti, 2017).

For my research I visited three mentioned centres: **Hrušov, Liština** and **Horní Suchá**.

¹⁰Vzájemné soužití

¹¹Vesnička soužití

Hrušov

The community centre Hrušov is located in a former workers' colony and nearby a former chemical plant. The centre has offered social services since 2001. There are working three social workers. I interviewed one of the workers **Martin Petera**.

He is an experienced worker, for the centre he has been working already 11 years. During this time he has been able to see how the community centre helps children to grow up and go to high schools. On the other hand he saw failures of the children from the centre. Some of them are for example in a prison.

His experience shows that the community centre is necessary for children. Parents of the children do not have money to pay for children clubs. Services of the centre are for free and accessible for everybody. The children can spend their free time there and do not roam around, steal things and do not take drugs. Not all of the children have a tendency to do such things but it works as prevention for everybody.

According to him the most important role of the centre is preparation for school. The parents are not educated enough to help their children with homework or they do not have time and space at home to study with them.

The centre faces problems of insecurity for financial support. There is not stable support. The other problem is the absence of heaters. The club is located in an area of coal mines. Therefore, the only solution is electric heaters. The building would also need a reconstruction and new equipment.

He further mentioned problems that children are facing. The main problem is that most of the children attend special schools and furthermore there is little chance to get a place at a good high school. When they attend high school they leave after one year. It is hard for them to fulfil school expectations. Most of them go to vocational schools.

The solution to this problem is really hard he claimed. Important is to co-operate with parents. They need to understand that even if it is hard for the children to be at a good elementary school, it is better for his/her future. The workers can support the children but the parents make the main decision. When they do not want to send their children to normal elementary school, the workers cannot do anything.

He mentioned that the children are missing assessment, especially at home. That is why they are missing any kind of motivation and achieve some goals. The workers try to praise their good behaviour or good marks. The children need to be praised. On the other hand when they do not behave properly or cause trouble, they must be rebuked.

Liščina

The community centre **Liščina** was established in 1997 and is located in an area called “**Osada**”¹². The building is a temporary portacabin which was bestowed by the city hall in Ostrava. Due to financial support they managed to expand and secure the premises. The centre has four social workers.

Veronika Kanalová is one of the social workers who gave me an interview. She sees this job as important.

According to her, the community centre is important for children as a place where they can study and prepare for school. They also can spend their free time with their friends there. It is good as they do not roam around and do not do crime.

She mentioned the advantages of the centre were that children can come and trust the workers. They can talk with them and the workers help them.

As a solution to discrimination in schools she sees that in every class an assistant should be present who would take care of Roma children.

The children need discipline. They are sometimes disrespectful to their teachers. The teachers should also be patient with Roma children and mostly they are not.

Finally, she described a system of motivating the children. They use their own paper money which they give to the children when they have good marks or study well. This money can be used by the children to buy sweets from the centre.

Horní Suchá

Horní Suchá is located in a mining community where the Life together implements community work - community development. There is a local afternoon club for children and youth and there used to be a pre-school club. The local centre is helping to develop community in many ways. For example **public spaces** (cleaning action,

¹²Settlement

children's recreational spaces, self-repair and modification of buildings and surroundings, etc.), **space for leisure time and developing the skills and abilities of the population of the community.**

The afternoon club has two social workers. One of them is **Nataša Horvátová** whom I interviewed. According to her, the existence of afternoon club is important because in that area there are no jobs. The youth have nothing to do, so at least they can spend time there and do not make crime.

She has been working for many years in the club and she can see that nothing has changed. There were children who were talented but they were not in a good school or did not finish elementary education at all. Another possibility is that their parents did not have enough money for the university. It is hard to find a job and because of that the youth make crime outside.

Afterwards she said the children need space to study and play. There are cases when one family with five children lives in a small room. The club is a place for them where they can play and do homework.

Finally she showed an example to motivate children. The workers take them for a walk and explain to them how to behave.

Pre-school club in Horní Suchá

Pre-school club **Brouček** was functioning from 2011 until 2015. Financial support came from the Ministry of Education Youth and Sports and Foundation Open Society Fun Prague. Unfortunately at the end of 2015 were not found enough financial support so the club had to be closed. Brouček was administrated from the non-government organization **Life Together**. **Radim Mikulšák** is on the executive team Hnízdo and Pomocná ruka, which are projects of Life together, and gave me information about the club.

Brouček was an informal pre-school educational program for children in the age group from 3 to 6 years and their parents. There were employed three workers. Two took care of children and one was a social worker. The club was visited on a regular basis by a psychologist and an external teacher.

Opening hours were from 8 am until 12 am. Afterward from 5 pm was so called home visiting. During this time the social workers were working with parents and other families in their homes and helped to solve their problems. The club was visited in a range 5 – 20 of children. The number depended on the season.

The employers tried to design and realize the program for individual needs of children who grew up in the socially excluded locality and have very limited possibility to gain entrance to majority society.

The aims of the club were to create positive conditions for the implementation of early care for children from a disadvantaged background and increase their chances of involvement in the mainstream education. Another is to strengthen the competence of the parents and involve them in the formal preschool education of their children. The last mentioned is to prepare children for the first grade in a normal elementary school.

Mikulšák also explained that the parents in the excluded locality Horní Suchá have problems registering their children for school. The main reasons are missing information and problems with relevant documents. The club offered counselling and support for families. The support also covered general help to the families to cope them with their difficult situation and with living. These factors also influence child development.

The process of co-operation with parents was evident from the beginning when the children went through the acceptance process to the club. Parents had to fill a form which showed the social background, skills of the child, and what parents expected and wanted their children to be learned. Every half a year these forms were evaluated and the progress discussed with the parents.

Progress of children was measured by a monitoring sheet. This sheet was made for each child individually and it was monitoring the cognitive, motor and social development of the child. In the evaluation it was seen if the children made progress or stagnated in each field. Based on the information discovered about skills and knowledge was adapted the teaching style for each child.

A weekly schedule was made by the worker and external teacher. Daily activities were continuously varied and did not have a fixed program. Everything was

adapted for children needs and the individual work pace of each child. They had enough time to finish their activities. Fixed time was only for arrival, leave and time for snacks.

In educational program the workers wanted to develop different kinds of fields:

- a) **Studying field:** lead children to attention, concentration, understand connections, asking question and searching for answers;
- b) **Communication field:** emphasis on pronunciation and vocabulary and create a space for the expression of their thoughts and communicate their experiences, feelings, moods;
- c) **Social and Personal field:** explain to the children to be responsible for their homework, to cooperate with their fellows and take care of their personal hygiene;
- d) **Physical field:** playing games, spend time outdoor. Children were very playful and sport was not a problem for them.

Further, he mentioned the difficulties the program had to face. First of all, it was not always a smooth co-operation with parents as they let children go to the club alone, in their pyjamas and dirty. At the beginning, the parents were not punctual and children did not attend the club regularly. Another was fluctuations of families, and new children often came in the middle of a year. On the other hand, these children were fast in adaption and learning.

The benefit of the club was that they offered snacks to the children for free. Most of the families were in an oppressive financial situation and were not able to buy snacks for their children. In the club, children were allowed to help during preparation of snacks, get ready and afterwards clean up the table. During these activities the children were practising self-service.

The club also organised trips to nature, cinema or to visit the classic kindergarten. The children came into contact with children from the majority society.

In conclusion it is important to mention why the pre-school club offered also support to families in different fields besides education. Families living in the excluded location Horní Suchá have lots of problems (financial, living etc.) That's why the families have different priorities than their children education. It is not effective to work only with parents in the field of education when they have these problems. For this

reason in this area was important community work and work in particular families. The social workers tried to help parents to create conditions for stimulation and healthy child development.

Barbora Černušáková

During a Roma conference in 2016 (which was held at the Faculty of Education at the University of South Bohemia) I had an opportunity to interview **Barbora Černušáková** who was a speaker at this conference. In the interview she explained her opinion towards the existence, advantages and disadvantages of community centres. Her research is mainly focused on the area **Přívoz** in **Ostrava**.

Barbora Černušáková is a researcher on human rights problems, specially she focuses on the Roma community, discrimination and hate crime. She is also working for Amnesty International as an expert on countries in East-Central Europe and the right of refugees and migrants. These days she is doing her Ph.D. in Sociology at the University of Manchester.

According to her opinion, success is when Roma children from the community centres are sent to good elementary schools. The centres offer support to children in school, which is the major thing. Their parents mostly are not able to help them with their studies. The children have an opportunity to go regularly to the centre and study there. She said that these centres substitute the state in some ways. The centres are founded where they are necessary.

In 2012 she started working in Přívoz and at that time it was normal that parents sent their children to special schools, despite the fact their children were smart enough for common elementary school. Their mental map was narrowed only for special schools like Ibsenova, Geubarova and Generála Píky.

During the years she can see a progress that parents send their children to good elementary schools in the city centre of Ostrava. There are stills schools which do not accept Roma children. She mentioned Waldorf School in Ostrava.

This progress is an effort of the community centre to broaden schools where the children are sent. This is a new experience for parents and schools as well. She said there is a need for co-operation from the side of parents and schools as well. There can appear signs of bullying which are mostly ignored. The important role is a teacher who

must take action. Unfortunately, it is not happening and they do not think it is something to pay attention to.

Her research is not exactly focusing on children and education. She has experience from Přívoz where there is a community centre called Jekhetane. The children go to the centre for dancing lessons. There is neither a playground nor another place where they can spend their free time.

There is an awareness that the Roma destroy everything. That is why the city hall is not willing to invest money in these areas. The community centre is important for the area where it is located. The family go there every day. The children study there, and do their homework. She mentioned one case of a boy, who started dancing hip-hop in the centre and attends dancing competitions, for him spending time in the centre is really important and valid. The centre works as a prevention of crime.

Finally, she mentioned her research in technical services. She met youth who used to visit community centres up to the age of fifteen. They used to play tennis and sometimes participate in dancing there. Regardless of the fact they were good in these activities they stopped them. The reasons were different. They moved to a different area or found a girlfriend. Her opinion is that the community centres should be in every area where they are needed. It would be easier for the children to change the club when they move than travel across the whole city to the old one.

3.3.2. České Budějovice

České Budějovice is the largest city and culture, economic and administrative centre in the South Bohemian Region. It is also the headquarters of world-renowned companies with a long tradition. For example Koh-i-noor Hardtmuth, a.s. and Budějovický Budvar.

Salesian Youth Centre¹³

Salesian has worked in the **České Budějovice** since 1980. After the political upheaval they got parish Čtyři dvory.

¹³Salesiánské středisko mládeže

The Salesian Society takes its name from its patron Saint Francis de Sales. The Congregation is dedicated to the education of youth. With this order, the Salesians operate a wide range of youth centres and similar activities. They live their lives as either priests or coadjutors and they work in the most countries (sasmcb, 2017).

Areas of services of Salesian are social, religious, cultural, educational and material assistance to youth. **Community centres Máj** is in the areas of Čtyři Dvory – housing estate Máj. It is a place for meeting all generations. The centre offers services such as social services, primary prevention as well as social counselling for children and youth. There is also a pre-school club and the community centre **Oráč**. Further, there is working a co-operation with families and family members. In each of the program there is emphasis on an individual approach. They also organize **weekend events and summer camps** for children and youth. Furthermore, there are important **volunteers** who work at the Centre as educational assistants in any program of their choice. They participate actively in the preparation, implementation, and evaluation of individual activities (sasmcb, 2017).

Oráč

The community centre **Oráč** is located in the housing estate Máj and is part of the community centre **Máj**. It was founded in 2002. The aim of the centre is to provide facilities, support and assistance to children and youth in České Budějovice, who are in difficult social situations and thus to improve their quality of life.

It has two social workers and one teaching staff member. One of the social workers is **Nikola Šrainerová** whom I interviewed.

She personally sees a sense in her job. She does not measure the job by her efforts but by when a child appreciates her job. This feeling boosts her up to continue in this job, despite the fact that the compliments from children come only twice a year.

She explained her opinion about the importance of the existence of community centres. It is important for children who do not have the possibility to spend their free time in paid children's clubs. They do not have to spend their time in the streets and can come to the community centre. The workers are there to help them.

Advantages of the community centres according to her are space for the children. They can come and think about their lives. When their families are not able to

help them, the workers help them with school, jobs and what they should do. They can talk with an adult who is neither their teacher nor their parent. The workers are like friends but still respect is necessary. Moreover, when they spend their free time in the centre they do not roam around, do not commit crime and also do not take drugs.

According to her, the problems the children face in schools are a lack of authority towards teachers. It means they do not study and often do not attend lessons. Consequently they leave schools without finishing elementary education. Other cases are that the children have an elementary education but were not able to finish vocational schools. At the age of 15 – 16 they are not able to find a proper job.

The way of motivating children to study and be present at school is really hard. In the centre, the behaviour of children is mostly different than in the schools. The workers cannot influence how the children behave in the schools. They talk with them and try to help them with their problems but that is all they can do. The main thing is motivation, especially which comes from the family, which is mostly missing.

In the end she introduced the way they motivate children. The way is individual as every child is different. Negative motivation is generally effective but it does not last for a long time. The curator threatens them with an institute. It is not clear which institute she meant. Then the children start working hard again. She does not prefer this way of motivation. A better way is to praise them for good behaviour, and explain to them what they do not understand. This is a harder and longer way.

Pre-school club in Oráč

Miroslava Bendová is a head of the program for a pre-school club in **České Budějovice**. The club is a part of the community centre **Oráč** which belongs to Salesian Youth Centre and is located in the housing estate Máj.

Opening hours in the club are daily from 10 am to 12 am. This time allocation is not enough for a full alternative to the mainstream kindergartens. Nevertheless, the program of the club is compiled along with the lines of kindergartens. All the services of the club are offered for free.

In the pre-school club are employed, three pedagogical workers. They care about children mostly from socially excluded families with specific needs. It is necessary to work individually with each child and his/her parents. Moreover, it is important to build

trust between the parents and the workers. It creates easier cooperation and has a good impact on the child as the parents send him/her to the club regularly.

The number of children who attend the club daily is from 8 to 10. They are Roma children in the age range from three to six years. Their mothers are usually on maternity leave with younger children or they do not want to send their children to the classic kindergartens. They also accept children at the age of two but the condition is the children are able to self-serve themselves. The children have to handle the separation from their mother, withstanding in a group of children, eat/drink alone and use a toilet alone (in this case it is also possible when the child is still wearing a diaper).

She explained that children usually stay only until the age of five. Then they go to the preparation class. This year a new law was published requiring compulsory pre-school education. It is expected that these children would also have to go to the classic kindergartens.

Further, she described the program of the club which is based on the thematic plan which is divided into weeks. Each week is a new topic and these topics follow each other. Within the program, the children are socialized, learn to cooperate in a group, accept other people authority and self-service.

The concept of the program is to reach the criteria of school readiness. The children receive pre-school preparation. The workers work with them on the base of thematic sheets. They work on the development of gross and fine motor skills. There are also music, activity, and creative parts. They use books and musical instruments. Emphasis is also placed on speech development, vocabulary, pronunciation, and understanding. The club attach great importance to snacks. Bendová explained that this is a place for practising self-services.

Parts of the programs of pre-school clubs are the creative program and parents' club. In the creative program are working together side-by-side children from minority and majority society. The parents' club is working with parents and develop their parental and didactic competencies. There is available a social worker who advises and helps the parents.

During a year the club and local kindergartens co-organize adaption days. They create a common program for children from both institutions. This means that Roma

children have the opportunity to spend more time with children from the majority society. Another advantage is that Roma parents get in touch with the environment of classic kindergartens and spend some time there. This can help in breaking the prejudices on both sides.

Besides these days, Bendová mentioned that they organize only for the children in the club different events. They celebrate together Christmas, Easter, St. Nicolas day and many other events. They also practice with children small performances for their parents.

In conclusion, she explained her opinion towards the club. According to her, the club is important for Roma children. It prepares them for the compulsory education and they get in touch with other people outside the family. This will make the start of the school easier. The parents also welcome this service as they know that their children are not discriminated against or badly treated.

Caritas the Czech Republic

“Caritas helps all who need help, regardless of the colour of their skin, their nationality, or their religion.” It is the non-governmental organization based on Christian principles (Charita, 2007).

Caritas in **České Budějovice** is the regional headquarters of charities in southern Bohemia, in addition it runs some projects to help people in need. It provides a wide system of social and health services. It is also a clinical workplace for students of the Health and Social Faculty at the University of South Bohemia and students from the Theological Faculty at the same university are pursuing the practice (Charita České Budějovice, 2007).

In České Budějovice, Caritas administer two community centres for children and youth. They are called **V.I.P.** and **Srdíčko – Jirolo**. Besides these centres in the field of social services they offer services for homeless people (**the reception centre, the doss-house, the afternoon centre for adults**), social activation services for families with children called **Sasanka** (Charita České Budějovice, 2007).

For my research I chose the community centre **Srdíčko – Jirolo**.

Srdíčko - Jirolo

The community centre **Srdíčko Jirolo** in **České Budějovice** was founded in 2006 and it has two social workers. The aim of Srdíčko is to motivate and support children and youth in the pursuit of positive change in a threatening way of life. I interviewed one of the workers **Tomáš David**.

He has been working in this centre as a social worker for half a year. Despite the fact he sees a sense in this work, he decided to leave it. He does not have any prejudice towards Roma children. More likely the problem is the slow pace and process of small steps. He prefers a progress that is faster and more intensive.

During the interview he said it is really important to have community centres because lots of children in these centres are able to achieve higher life goals. They can achieve more things than their surroundings offer them. Therefore the workers are there to motivate them and help in achieving their aims.

He further mentioned that in Česká Budějovice, 95% of the total children are Roma children. The centre is a great median to fill the gap between them and the majority population. The workers talk with them about society, explain to them what is expected from them and how it works. This will to some extent help them to understand and find their own way to integrate into the society.

Furthermore, he also mentioned the disadvantage of the community centre that all local families know the workers personally. Any kind of anonymity cannot work and generally community centres are based on anonymity. Consequently, the community centre works more like a kindergarten.

According to his opinion the biggest challenge that children face is the lack of attention from their parents. It makes their lives hard from the start. When the family will not give them any basic manners and will not care about the children, then it is less probable they will grow up properly. The workers can try as much as possible to give them attention and teach them, but the primary teachers are still parents.

The solution to this situation is to co-operate with their parents and try to change their attitude towards the children. It is hard to say what will be the real impact of this attitude.

On the other hand there are lots of families who work normally and the parents have jobs. They send their children to the community centre to spend time there and prepare for the school. He also mentioned cases when the parents came by themselves and asked for help with school preparations for their children. This happens hardly ever, but the workers are glad for every parental effort and interest.

The way the workers motivate the children is a verbal way, mainly through talks. To talk with them about their future jobs is still quite hard as most of the children attend elementary schools. It is still early for them to see the real possibilities, but there are few children who want to be doctors. Another way of motivation is through examples. The best examples are youth or adults who they know and were also part of this centre.

Finally, he mentioned what the children's limits are to achieve their goals. Children are at an age when they like school and dreaming to achieve their aims. When they reach a certain age, school starts to bother them and there is also an influence from peers. Suddenly they realise that is not as easy as they were thinking. They are able to accept the idea that they do not have to try hard to achieve what they wanted. Mostly it leads to adoption of the lifestyle which they see from their surroundings.

Unfortunately, the children lose interest quickly and it applies to all areas of their lives. He demonstrated his claim by giving an example whenever a child from the community centre finishes vocational school.

3.4. Comparison of the community centres within the cities

The role of community centres in the life of Roma children will be described in the following chapter. After I gathered the data from the different centres of the two cities **České Budějovice** and **Ostrava**, I made analysis in this comparison. The research focuses mainly on the area of education and activities regarding their personal development, which includes sports, the development of their moral principles and skills.

3.4.1. České Budějovice

The data is gathered from the two community centres of **České Budějovice**. The names of the centres are **Srdíčko - Jirolo** and **Oráč**.

Oráč

General description: The centre operates on three days per week for almost 4-4.5 hours. One of the social workers who operates this centre is Nikola Šrainerová. The centre includes one more social worker and one teaching staff member. The centre was founded in 2002. It is financed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, South Bohemian Region and České Budějovice City Hall. The official number of kids registered between age group 13-18 years is 170 but the daily capacity of the centre is 40 children.

Activities: The centre involves children in various indoor as well as outdoor sports activities including football, table tennis and it has a children's playground too. On the other hand the centre motivates the children in developing the useful skills like arts and crafts, dancing, singing and playing of musical instruments which are very beneficial for kids. The children are also taken to cinemas, sports events and football competitions (only if there is extra money left). The other outdoor activities include camping, boat trips and summer camps which are attended by young children only. However, children are not interested in attending cultural activities.

There are other services which are offered by the centre including health and social service, computer training, home education and helping children with their homework.

The other important area the centre focuses on is the Preventive council. The children are motivated to improve their food habits, advised against violence, crime and aggressive behavior. The children are advised not to smoke and not use drugs by telling them the harmful effects. The centre also focuses on the topic of sex education which is beneficial for them.

Education: It is one of the most important areas of this research. The number of children in the normal school is 37 and in the special school is only 1. The centre offers help with the vocabulary training and preschool education. The social workers teach children various learning styles which help them to make their capacity of learning better and quick. They also motivate the children for studying by giving them examples of successful people and how study changes their lives in making them successful. It also helps in developing the critical thinking skills by giving them training. Teaching of basic hygiene habits is also the part of the program.

Srdíčko – Jirolo

General information: This centre was founded in 2006 by Charitas in České Budějovice. It is financed by South Bohemian Region and Albert foundation. The name of one of the social workers is Tomáš David. The centre has a total of two social workers. The opening hours of the centres are five days a week and between 12:30-17:00. The official number of registered kids are much less compared to Oráč that (20). The daily capacity of the centre is however more than Oráč which is 50. The children in the age group between 6-25 years attend the centre.

Activities: The centre offers most of the same activities as Oráč. In addition to that, it also offers basketball, gym and gardening which are good according the personal interest of the children. Both centres help in developing the same moral principles which is a good thing because they cover most of the necessary skills.

Education: The number of children in normal school is less than Oráč, which is 30 and children who attend special school is roughly 3. However, the centre offers the correction of pronunciation which is a big plus. But on the other side preschool education is not given because of the lack of interest of the children, and different learning styles are not taught to them. The other skills include cooking which is very useful in daily life.

Other activities include attending of cultural activities, visits to museums and trips to castles.

Services Offered: Health and Social services are not offered which is a downside of this centre. The mid day snacks are also not provided to the children. There are a number of preventive councils offered by the centre including advice against theft, crime, and aggressive behaviour. But on the downside advice on improving food habits and sex education are not given.

Comparison: Both community centres of České Budějovice have their drawbacks and advantages over each other but they both meet the important necessities of the life for example Education and personal development of the moral values. Both centres are doing a good job to make the children better and responsible citizens.

3.4.2. Ostrava

The data are gathered from the three community centres located in the city of **Ostrava**. The three community centres which I visited were **Hrušov**, **Liščina** and **Horní Suchá**. I would like to describe the role of the above three community centres and focus mainly on the general information as well as the important part education.

Hrušov

General Information: The name of the centre is Hrušov. It was founded in 2001 and the financial funding of the centre comes from the Czech Government and EU. The centre runs for five days a week at two different times starting from 13:30-17:00 and from 17:30-20:00. There are three social workers taking care of this centre. I interviewed one of the social workers called Martin Petera. He shared with me some of the important details of this centre. The daily capacity of the centre is 30 kids but the official number of registered kids is 60, which is exactly double the daily capacity of the centre. The number of guest children visiting on a monthly basis is 20-30. The children who attend this centre are between the age group of 6-26 years.

Sports: The centre involves children in a wide variety of sports and outdoor activities which is important for their overall growth. The sports and outdoor activities include playing outside, gardening, and games like football, table tennis and gym.

The other services which are offered by the centre include health and social service, computer training, home education and helping children with their homework. The age of access to social media is 13.

The other important area the centre focuses on is the preventive council. The children are motivated to improve their food habits, advised against violence, crime and aggressive behavior. The children are advised not to smoke and not use drugs by telling them the harmful effects. The centre also focuses on the topic of sex education which is beneficial especially for girls.

Moral Principles: The centre plays an important role in developing all kinds of moral principles like social and emotional skills, obedience, persona development and growth and independence. I was very impressed after learning that this centre covers all the moral principles as they are very important in shaping the behavior of every human being.

Outdoor activities: The children in the centre can visit different places like museums, cinemas, theatre programs, swimming pools, summer camps, zoo and castles.

Education: The number of children in special schools is 54 and on the other hand the number of children in normal schools is only 6. The centre provides vocabulary training and also correct pronunciation. They also provide the motivation towards the studies and different types of learning. The schools offer basic hygiene habits which is a great plus

Skill: This centre teaches some of the useful daily life skills like cooking, arts and crafts and some of the extracurricular skills like dancing, singing, playing musical instruments, but it doesn't provide training regarding theatre performance.

Liščina

General Information: The second community centre that I visited was Liščina. This community centre was founded in 2000 and is financed by Different grants and Ostrava City Hall. The opening days are five days a week and the hours are decided on individual plans but starting from 13:30-20:00. The centre has 4 social workers. I interviewed one of the social workers named Veronika Kanalosová. The daily capacity of the kids is 50 and the official number of kids registered is 80. The centre offers the visits of guest children on a monthly basis which are more than 20. The children who are attending this centre range between the age group of 6-26 years.

Sports: The centre offers the same kinds of sports and outdoor activities that are provided in Hrušov. The only difference is that this centre provides an opportunity to play sports like basketball and also provides a children's playground.

Moral Principles: After asking the questions about the moral principles taught in this centre I was very amazed and impressed that this centre also offers every kind of important moral principles. From social skills to emotional skills, from personal growth to personal principles all are covered in this centre. All the principles are important and are exactly same which are taught in Hrušov.

Other Services: The other services like health related or social services offered are also the same as in Hrušov. Even the preventive councils are also the same as in Hrušov.

Education: Again in this centre the number of children in special school is much less compared to Hrušov(which is only 20), but on the other side the number of children in normal schools are ten times more than in Hrušov that is 60. The centre provides all the education related skills except preschool education. Critical thinking skills are also developed in this centre which is a major plus point as compared to Hrušov. At the same time in Liščina they invented their own style of motivation of the children. They have their own fake money which children can get for good marks in school or good behavior in the centre. They can use this money to buy sweets in the centre. This way the children are motivated to work hard and then buy sweets.

Time out of the centre: The community centre is superior in this category as it provides visits to technical museums, art galleries, sports events and football competitions which are not provided in **Hrušov**.

Horní Suchá

General Information: The third afternoon club that I visited is Horní Suchá. It was founded in the year 2013 and financed by the non-governmental organization Life together. This club is quite new compared to other centres discussed before. There are only two workers and I interviewed Nataša Horvátová. The capacity of the kids in this club is 14 and 13, mothers are also allowed which is not common in the all the other centres discussed before. The official number of kids registered in this centre is 14 and the number of guest children on a monthly basis is 10. The age group is 0-26 years for the kids in this club.

Sports: This club offers the same sports activities as Liščina and has the additional sport of basketball which is not offered by Hrušov.

Moral Principles: The moral principles are exactly the same as those taught in the previous two centres discussed. This is very impressive.

The other skills like cooking, arts and crafts etc., are also the same but singing is not developed in this club which is a kind of downside compared to the other two centres.

Services Offered: This club is superior in offering the services compared to the two discussed earlier as it allows birthday parties as well, but the age of access to social media is two years more at 15.

The preventive council however, is the worst of all three centres as it doesn't provide advice against violence, crime, smoking and usage of drugs. Sex education is also not provided in this centre which according to me is a major drawback.

Time out of the centre: The time out activities of this club are almost the same compared to the previous discussed centres but this club also provides visits to old people homes and camping.

Education: The number of children in the special school is 14 and children in normal schools are 14. However, this club is superior to all the other centres as it provides children with the preschool education.

Conclusion: After having visited and interviewed all three centres in this city I would conclude that all three centres provide exactly the same and all kinds of moral principles, which is very impressive. Horní Suchá, despite being the newest founded club lacks in providing most of the important preventive councils compared to the other two.

3.5. Comparison of community centres between the cities

Community centres in **České Budějovice** are noticeably better off in terms of its structures compared to the centres in **Ostrava**. To give an example, centre **Oráč** is located in a nice modern building, providing children with more space, more attractive surroundings and wider range of equipment than for example the centre in **Hrušov**, located in an old building in poor conditions.

This study furthermore suggests that social workers and employees of these centres should be adequately remunerated, since their work is crucial for the society and above all for the children, who are given the opportunity for a better life. Employees of the centres from both cities were very helpful and open and in the most of the cases keen on their work.

Education should be especially pointed out, since the cities differ mostly in this field. In **Ostrava**, the number of children attending a special school constitutes the majority in all three centres. On the other hand, the situation in **České Budějovice** is noticeably better. Number of children attending special school is negligible compared to

Ostrava. In both of the cities the community centre play an important role in the positive development of the Roma children.

Conclusively, the need of more pre-school clubs was identified, especially in Ostrava, since they have the potential to help Roma children with their pre-school preparation and their inclusion in the society. This would potentially lead to a higher number of children in regular schools and to an overall improvement of the educational level in the Czech Republic.

4. Conclusion

The main aim of this thesis was to describe the function of community centres and subsequently to compare the community centres located in České Budějovice and Ostrava.

Theoretical part dealt with the description of the function of community centre for children and youth. It can be basically divided into four main chapters. Firstly, the fundamental characteristics and services, which community centres offer to children and youth were described. Subsequently, general situation of Roma children in the Czech Republic was elaborated. Education, characterized by the profile of Roma students, their leisure time and inclusive education, was put into the spotlight. Finally, pre-school clubs were described and their importance highlighted.

Individual community centres were analysed and compared in the following practical part. Chosen methodology of the qualitative research was twofold: participant observation and structured interviews, using open as well as closed types of questions were used. Interviews were conducted in the community centres of České Budějovice and Ostrava. Interviewees were the social workers of the community centres.

Based on the responses, all the social workers agreed that community centres have a positive impact on the development Roma children and youth. All of them also confirmed the importance of the existence of such centres. The location of the community centres is usually in excluded areas, where the surroundings are not very beneficial for the development of children and youth. Social workers reasoned that community centres offer an alternative to a street – a safe place, where Roma children and youth they can spend their leisure time, instead of being exposed to the risk of misbehaviour, substance abuse, vandalism, truancy, etc. Practically speaking, community centres hold the potential to prevent the socio-pathological phenomena among children and youth.

As an advantage serves also a fact that the attendance is voluntary, hence children are more likely to obey the rules of the centre and to co-operate with the social workers. Moreover, they usually are in the company of children from similar background and with similar needs, therefore they do not have to feel excluded. Furthermore, social workers make always sure that children are aware of the

omnipresent possibility to talk with social workers whenever they need it and that they can rely on their help.

Research furthermore revealed that all selected centres provide a wide spectrum of activities, which were recorded and categorized by the author in the tables, accompanied by an explanatory description. It was found out that the most welcome activities among children are leisure activities, e.g. playing football, table tennis or using a computer.

Parents appreciated especially the help with homeworks and remedial education. Remedial education is in the form of a long period or short period work. These activities serve as prevention and teach children to be responsible for themselves. The option of remedial education is an opportunity for Roma children to succeed at school and to find a good job.

The comparison of the community centres in the cities can serve as an overview of situations of Roma and at the same time, it points out the importance of community centres and pre-school clubs mainly in the field of education.

The comparison of the community centres within and between the two cities revealed that community centres in **České Budějovice** are noticeably better off in terms of its structures compared to the centres in **Ostrava**. As an example, centre **Oráč** was put in the contrast with the centre in **Hrušov**. While centre **Oráč** is located in a nice modern building, providing children with sufficient space, attractive surroundings and wide range of equipment, centre in **Hrušov** is located in an old building in poor conditions, with all aforementioned aspects left underequipped.

Education was especially pointed out, since the cities differed mostly in this field. In **Ostrava**, the number of children attending a special school constitutes the majority in all three centres. On the other hand, the situation in **České Budějovice** turned out to be noticeably better. Number of children attending special school is negligible compared to **Ostrava**.

This study furthermore suggests that social workers and employees of these centres should be adequately remunerated, since their work is crucial for the society and above all for the children, who are given the opportunity for a better life.

Conclusively, the need of more pre-school clubs was identified, especially in Ostrava, since they have the potential to help Roma children with their pre-school preparation and their inclusion in the society. This would potentially lead to a higher number of children in regular schools and to an overall improvement of the educational level in the Czech Republic.

5. Závěr

Cílem této práce bylo popsat fungování komunitních center a následně porovnat tato centra v Českých Budějovicích a Ostravě.

Teoretická část se zabývá popisem fungování nízkoprahových center pro děti a mládež. Práce je rozdělena do čtyř hlavních kapitol. První kapitola se zabývá základní charakteristikou a popisem služeb, které jsou poskytovány nízkoprahovými centry pro děti a mládež. Následně je nastíněna všeobecná situace Romů v České republice. Dále je popsáno vzdělání z pohledu romských žáků, trávení jejich volného času a pojem inkluzivní vzdělávání. Na konec jsou uvedeny předškolní kluby a zdůrazněna jejich důležitost.

V následující praktické části jsou analyzována a srovnána jednotlivá nízkoprahová centra. Zvolená metodologie kvantitativního výzkumu je dvojí: pozorování účastníků a strukturované rozhovory. Byly použity otevřené a uzavřené typy otázek. Rozhovory byly provedeny se sociálními pracovníky v nízkoprahových centrech v Českých Budějovicích a Ostravě.

Všichni sociální pracovníci potvrdili důležitost fungování nízkoprahových center. Dále se všichni shodli na jejich pozitivním vlivu na rozvoji romských dětí a mládeže. Nízkoprahová centra jsou často umístěna ve vyloučených lokalitách, které mohou mít negativní vliv na rozvoj dítěte. Sociální pracovníci uvedli, že centra nabízí bezpečné místo k trávení volného času místo pobývání na ulici, kde romské děti často tráví svůj volný čas a jsou vystaveni problematickému chování, jako je užívání návykových látek, vandalismus a záškoláctví atd. Prakticky řečeno, komunitní centra mají potenciál k prevenci sociálně patologického chování mezi dětmi a mladistvými.

Dalšími výhodou je dobrovolná docházka, která vede děti k tomu, aby dodržovaly pravidla centra a spolupracovaly s pracovníky. Často se děti nacházejí ve společnosti vrstevníků ze stejného prostředí a stejnými potřebami. Tento jev vede k tomu, že se necítí vyloučení z kolektivu. Děti mohou s pracovníky center kdykoliv mluvit o svých problémech a pracovníci jim s nimi pomůžou.

Výzkum dále ukazuje široké spektrum nabízených aktivit, které byly zaznamenány a rozděleny autorkou do tabulky. Tyto aktivity slouží jako prevence a učí

děti zodpovědnosti za sebe samé. Možnost doučování je příležitost pro děti, aby byly úspěšné ve škole a následně, aby si našly dobrou práci.

Srovnání v rámci obou měst ukázalo, že nízkoprahová centra v **Českých Budějovicích** jsou výrazně lepší v jejich struktuře ve srovnání se středisky v **Ostravě**. Jako příklad je uváděno centrum **Oráč**, které je dáno do kontrastu s centrem **Hrušov**. Zatímco **Oráč** je umístěn v pěkné moderní budově, která nabízí dětem dostatečný prostor, příjemné prostředí a širokou škálu vybavení, **Hrušov** je umístěn ve staré budově se špatnými podmínkami a se všemi výše uvedenými aspekty je nevyhovující.

Zejména je zdůrazněno vzdělání, které se nejvíce liší v obou městech. Ve všech zkoumaných klubech v **Ostravě** většina dětí navštěvuje speciální školy. Na druhou stranu v Českých Budějovicích je situace zjevně lepší. Počet dětí ve speciálních školách je zanedbatelný v porovnání s **Ostravou**.

Tato práce také navrhuje, že sociální pracovníci a zaměstnanci center by měli být přiměřeně odměněni za jejich práci, která je přínosná nejen pro děti, ale i pro celou společnost. Dětem dávají šanci pro lepší život.

Závěrem je zjištění větší potřeby předškolních klubů, zejména v Ostravě. Předškolní kluby mají potenciál pro zlepšení předškolní připravenosti romských dětí a jejich začlenění do společnosti. Větší přítomnost předškolních klubů by vedla k většímu počtu dětí na normálních základních školách a k celkovému zlepšení vzdělání v České republice.

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7. List of attachments

Attachment 1 – Table of activities in České Budějovice

Attachment 2 – Table of activities in Ostrava

Attachment 1 - Table of activities in České Budějovice

	České Budějovice	
Name of the centre	Srdíčko Jirolo	NZDM Oráč, Salesiánské středisko mládeže
Opening hours	Monday-Friday (Including holidays) 12:30 – 17:00	Tuesday 14:00 – 18:80 Wednesday 16:45 – 19:45 Thursday 14:00 – 18:00
Name of social worker	Tomáš David	Nikola Šrainerová
Number of social workers	2	2 and 1 teaching staff member
Founding year of the centres	2006	2002
Financial funding of centre	South Bohemian Region, Albert foundation	MoLSA, South Bohemian Region, České Budějovice City Hall
Daily capacity of centre	50	40
Official number of registered kids	20	170
Number of guests children monthly	30	<i>It is hard to determine</i>
Age of children	6-25 YRS	13-18 YRS
Sport/ Outdoor activities		
Playing outside	✓	✓
Gardening	x <i>(It is planned.)</i>	x
Children's playground	✓	✓
Football	✓	✓
Table tennis	x	✓
Basketball	✓	x
Gym	✓	x
Badminton	x	x
Development of personal principles/ moral principles		
Social skills	✓	✓
Emotional skills	✓	✓
Morality (social)	✓	✓

Morality (personal)	✓	✓
Obedience	✓	✓
Development of personal principles	✓	✓
Development of moral principles	✓	✓
Personal growth	✓	✓
Independent	✓	✓
Education		
Number of children in special schools	1	Roughly 3
Number of children in normal schools	30	37
Correct pronunciation	✓	x
Vocabulary training	✓	✓
Preschool education	x <i>(They used to run preschool education but it was cancelled on the ground of lack of interest.)</i>	✓
Learning styles	x	✓
Motivation for studying	✓	✓
Critical thinking skills	✓ <i>(It was encountered with resistance.)</i>	✓
Basic hygiene habits	✓	✓
Skills		
Cooking	✓	x
Arts and Crafts	✓	✓
Hands on activities	x	x
Dancing	✓	✓
Singing	✓	✓
Playing music instruments	✓	✓
Theatre performance training	x	x
Time out of the centre		
Visit to libraries	x	x
Visit to museums	✓ <i>(Occasionally.)</i>	x
Visit technical museums	x	x
Attend cinemas	x	✓ <i>(Attend only if extra money is available.)</i>
Attend theatre programs	x	x
Visit art galleries	x	x
Swimming pools	x	x
Attend cultural activities	✓	x <i>(Children are not interested.)</i>
Attend sports events	x	✓

Attend football competitions	✓	✓
Attend ice hockey competitions	x	x
Summer camps	✓	✓ <i>(Attends only young children.)</i>
Trips to zoo	✓	✓
Trips to castles	✓	x
Visit old people home	x	x
Camping	x	✓
Boat trips	x	✓
Service offered		
Health and Social service	x	✓
Home education	✓	✓ <i>(For high school and upper elementary students is provided an education program.)</i>
Helping with homework	✓	✓
Fees	x	x
Snacks	x	✓ <i>(There is possibility to buy sweets.)</i>
Watching TV	x	x
Using computer	✓	✓ <i>(Only for school needs.)</i>
Computer training	x	✓
Age of access to social media	13	x
Allowing birthday parties	x	x
Preventive council		
Improving food habit	x	✓
Advice against violence	✓	✓
Advice against thefts	✓	x
Advice against crime	✓	✓
Advice against aggressive behaviour	✓	✓
Fire safety training	x	x
Advice against smoking	✓	✓
Advice against use of drugs	✓	✓
Sex education	x	✓ <i>(The most common topic.)</i>
Games		
Future jobs sample	✓	x
Table games	✓	✓
Team building games	✓	✓
Building blocks activities	✓	x
Others		

Cooperation with parents	✓	x (Is provided from field workers)
Advise parents on kids	x <i>(It used to be a part of Preschool education.)</i>	✓
Community events organising	✓	✓
Christmas parties	✓	✓
Roma days celebration	✓	✓
Halloween	✓	✓
St. Nicholas day	✓	✓
Carnival	x	✓
Guidance and counselling for kids	✓	✓
Membership in football teams	✓	✓
Existence of music band	✓	✓
Local responsibility training	✓	✓
Neighbours maintenance activities	✓	✓
Responsibility to city training	✓	✓ <i>(Children are lead to be eco friendly.)</i>
Religion training	x	✓ <i>(The priest is available.)</i>

Attachment 2 – Table of activities in Ostrava

	Ostrava		
Name of the centre	Hrušov	Liščina	Horní suchá
Opening hours	Monday-Friday 13:30 – 17:00 17:30 – 20:00	Monday – Friday 13:30 – 17:00 17:30 – 19:00 19:00- 20:00 (individual plans)	Monday – Friday 13:00 – 19:30
Name of social worker	Martin Petera	Veronika Kanaloso vá	Nataša Horvátová
Number of social workers	3	4	2
Founding year of the centres	2001	2000	2013 (kindergarten2012)
Financial funding of centre	Czech Govt., EU	Different grants, Ostrava City Hall	NGO (Vzájemné soužití)
Daily capacity of centre	30 kids	50 kids	14 kids, 13 mothers
Official number of registered kids	60	80	14
Number of guests children monthly	20-30	20+	10
Age of children	6-26 YRS	6-26 YRS	0-26 YRS
Sport/ Outdoor activities			
Playing outside	✓	✓	✓
Gardening	✓	✓	✓
Children's playground	×	✓	✓
Football	✓	✓	✓
Table tennis	✓	✓	✓
Basketball	×	✓	✓
Gym	✓	×	×
Badminton	×	×	×
Development of personal principles/ moral principles			
Social skills	✓	✓	✓
Emotional skills	✓	✓	✓
Morality (social)	✓	✓	✓
Morality (personal)	✓	✓	✓
Obedience ⁱ	✓	✓	✓
Development of personal principles	✓	✓	✓
Development of moral principles	✓	✓	✓
Personal growth	✓	✓	✓

Independent	✓	✓	✓
Education			
Number of children in special schools	54	20	14
Number of children in normal schools	6	60	14
Correct pronunciation ⁱⁱ	✓	✓	✓
Vocabulary training ⁱⁱⁱ	✓	✓	✓
Preschool education	×	×	✓
Learning styles	✓	✓	✓
Motivation for studying	✓	✓	✓
Critical thinking skills	×	✓	✓
Basic hygiene habits	✓	✓	✓
Skills			
Cooking	✓	✓	✓
Arts and Crafts	✓	✓	✓
Hands on activities	✓	✓	✓
Dancing	✓	✓	✓
Singing	✓	✓	×
Playing music instruments	✓	✓	×
Theatre performance training	×	×	×
Time out of the centre			
Visit to libraries	×	×	×
Visit to museums	✓	✓	✓
Visit technical museums	×	✓	×
Attend cinemas	✓	✓	✓
Attend theatre programs	✓	✓	✓
Visit art galleries	×	✓	×
Swimming pools	✓	✓	✓
Attend cultural activities	✓	✓	✓
Attend sports events	×	✓	×
Attend football competitions	×	✓	×
Attend ice hockey competitions	×	×	×
Summer camps	✓	✓	✓
Trips to zoo	✓	✓	✓
Trips to castles	✓	✓	✓
Visit old people home	×	×	✓
Camping	×	×	✓
Boat trips	✓	✓	✓
Service offered			
Health and Social service ^{iv}	✓	✓	✓
Home education	✓	✓	✓
Helping with homework	✓	✓	✓

Fees	×	×	×
Snacks	×	×	×
Watching TV	✓	×	✓
Using computer	✓	✓	✓
Computer training	✓	✓	✓
Age of access to social media	13	13	15
Allowing birthday parties	×	×	✓
Preventive council			
Improving food habit ^v	✓	✓	✓
Advice against violence	✓	✓	×
Advice against thefts	✓	✓	✓
Advice against crime	✓	✓	×
Advice against aggressive behaviour	✓	✓	✓
Fire safety training	✓	✓	×
Advice against smoking	✓	✓	×
Advice against use of drugs	✓	✓	×
Sex education	✓	✓	×
Games			
Future jobs sample activities	×	✓	✓
Table games	✓	✓	✓
Team building games	✓	✓	✓
Building blocks activities	×	✓	×
Others			
Cooperation with parents	✓	✓	✓
Advise parents on kids	✓	✓	✓
Community events organising	✓	✓	✓
Christmas parties	✓	✓	✓
Roma days celebration	✓	✓	✓
Halloween	×	✓	✓
St. Nicholas day	×	✓	✓
Carnival	✓	✓	✓
Guidance and counselling for kids	✓	✓	✓
Membership in football teams	✓	✓	✓
Existence of music band	✓	✓	×
Local responsibility training ^{vi}	✓	✓	✓
Neighbours maintenance activities	✓	✓	✓
Responsibility to city training ^{vii}	✓	✓	✓
Religion training	×	×	×

ⁱTeaching children respect towards authorities and adults.

ⁱⁱOral language development

ⁱⁱⁱ Oral language development

^{iv} To support children in poverty

^vImportance of vegetables and fruits.

^{vi} Leading children to be responsible and respectful to the area where they are living.

^{vii} Leading children to be responsible and respectful to the city where they are living.

Bc QUESTIONNAIRE KEY:

✓ **YES**

× **NO**