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Roma: European Integration through Education
*An analysis of an education program in
Florești in relation to the post-2020 EU-Framework for
National Roma Integration Strategies*

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tomas Abel de Jong", written over a light green rectangular background.



MA Programme Euroculture

Declaration

I, **Tomas Abel de Jong**, hereby declare that this thesis, entitled "**Roma: European Integration through Education**", submitted as partial requirement for the MA Programme Euroculture, is my own original work and expressed in my own words. Any use made within this text of works of other authors in any form (e.g. ideas, figures, texts, tables, etc.) are properly acknowledged in the text as well as in the bibliography.

I declare that the written (printed and bound) and the electronic copy of the submitted MA thesis are identical.

I hereby also acknowledge that I was informed about the regulations pertaining to the assessment of the MA thesis Euroculture and about the general completion rules for the Master of Arts Programme Euroculture.

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Abstract

This research attempts to analyse the integration of Roma in the European Union through the use of educational projects. This is done in the context of the 'EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation' by the European Commission. Currently, EU-attempts at policy learning in the development of Roma education to support integration, progress has been lacklustre, and no concrete examples of solutions are yet available. That is why this research attempts to find solutions by asking the question 'What example of a good practice in Roma education plans could contribute to wider European Union policy learning and how could it be applied across the EU to foster progress in Roma integration?'. To achieve this, the research takes a small-N (single case) qualitative approach using a semi-systematic literature review and theory building process tracing. In addition, field research is conducted in form of semi-structured interviews and analytical field notes. The literature review shows four focal points in Roma integration efforts in education. These are antigypsyism, societal organisation of Roma, form of integration strategy and state of education. A selection of 5 NGOs in Romania was made, after which Foundation Charis in Floreşti, Romania was selected because of its after-school education programme, 16 years of experience and official accreditation with the Romanian government. Field research was conducted from the 5th until the 11th of July during which 6 interviews were held. The single-case study conducted shows 5 crucial factors which lead to an improvement in access to education for the circa 2,000 Roma in Floreşti, as well as an improved attitude to the importance of education. These factors are long-term funding, long-term trust building, parental engagement, creating a safe environment and official accreditation of activities. Based on these findings, some general suggestions were made for a European policy approach to Roma integration. Based on the findings from the analysis, as well as existing policy analysis, two main suggestions are made. First, more attention should be given to local initiatives in Roma communities along with a long-term budget. Second, the EU-framework should provide funding for setting up a national or transnational NGO platform for exchanging expertise. The main findings of this research led to the formulation of a hypothesis. This hypothesis is 'The more focus there is on the long-term through inclusive community development, parental involvement and creating a safe environment for Roma children, the more likely their access to education is to improve.'

Keywords: Roma; Integration; EU Roma Strategic Framework; Non-Governmental Organisation; Intergenerational Learning; Inclusive Community Development; Theory Building Process Tracing; evidence-based policy; policy learning

Tytuł:

Romowie: integracja europejska poprzez edukację.

Analiza programu edukacyjnego we Florești w odniesieniu do unijnych ram dotyczących krajowych strategii integracji Romów w okresie po 2020 roku.

Streszczenie:

Niniejsza praca jest próbą analizy integracji Romów w krajach Unii Europejskiej poprzez wykorzystanie projektów edukacyjnych. Odbywa się to na zasadzie „Strategicznych ram UE wobec Romów na rzecz równości, włączenia i uczestnictwa” Komisji Europejskiej. Obecnie podejmowane przez UE próby w zakresie rozwoju edukacji Romów w celu wspierania integracji dają niewielkie efekty, a konkretne przykłady rozwiązań nie są jeszcze dostępne. Dlatego w niniejszej pracy próbuję znaleźć rozwiązania, zadając pytanie: jaki przykład dobrej praktyki w planach edukacji Romów może przyczynić się do szerszego uczenia się polityki Unii Europejskiej i jak można ją zastosować w całej UE, aby wspierać postęp w integracji Romów?. Aby ten cel osiągnąć i odpowiedzieć na pytanie, w badaniach przyjęto podejście jakościowe typu small-N (pojedynczy przypadek) z wykorzystaniem pół systematycznego przeglądu literatury i śledzenia procesu budowania teorii. Ponadto prowadzono badania terenowe w formie wywiadów częściowo ustrukturyzowanych oraz analitycznych notatek terenowych. Przegląd literatury wskazuje na cztery ważne zagadnienia w działaniach na rzecz integracji Romów w edukacji. Są to: „antycyganizm”, organizacja społeczna Romów, forma strategii integracji oraz stan edukacji. Dokonano wyboru 5 organizacji pozarządowych w Rumunii, po czym wybrano Fundację Charis we Florești w Rumunii ze względu na program edukacji pozaszkolnej, 16 lat doświadczenia i oficjalną akredytację rządu rumuńskiego. Badania terenowe prowadzono od 5 do 11 lipca i podczas nich przeprowadzono 6 wywiadów. Przeprowadzone pojedyncze studium przypadku wskazuje na 5 kluczowych czynników, które prowadzą do poprawy dostępu do edukacji dla około 2 000 Romów we Florești, a także poprawy ich nastawienia do znaczenia edukacji. Czynnikiemami tymi są: długoterminowe finansowanie, długoterminowe budowanie zaufania, zaangażowanie rodziców, tworzenie bezpiecznego środowiska oraz oficjalne prowadzenie działań (akredytacja). Na podstawie tych ustaleń sformułowano pewne ogólne sugestie, dotyczące europejskiego podejścia do integracji Romów. Na podstawie wyników badań oraz analizy istniejącej już polityki sformułowano dwie główne sugestie. Po pierwsze, należy zwrócić większą uwagę na lokalne inicjatywy w społecznościach romskich wraz z długoterminowym planowaniem budżetu. Po drugie, ramy UE powinny zapewnić finansowanie tworzenia krajowej lub ponadnarodowej platformy porozumienia, kontaktów organizacji pozarządowych w celu wymiany fachowej wiedzy. Główne ustalenia tych badań doprowadziły do sformułowania hipotezy. Ta hipoteza brzmi: „Im większy nacisk kładzie się na długofalowy rozwój społeczności, zaangażowanie rodziców i tworzenie bezpiecznego środowiska dla dzieci romskich, tym bardziej prawdopodobne jest, że poprawi się ich dostęp do edukacji”.

Słowa kluczowe:

Romowie; integracja; strategiczne ramy UE dotyczące Romów; organizacja pozarządowa; uczenie się międzypokoleniowe; inkluzywny rozwój społeczności; śledzenie procesu budowania teorii; polityka oparta na dowodach; uczenie się polityki

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Preface

“Oh ja?” zei Janmaat, “Oh ja? En waarom zou ik jou niet discrimineren en een ander wel?”

- Herman Finkers, Kalm aan en rap een beetje (1998)

“All that is gold does not glitter, not all those who wander are lost; The old that is strong does not wither, Deep roots are not reached by the frost.”

-J. R. R. Tolkien, “The Riddle of Strider”

When I started thinking about the topic of Roma integration, I had not expected the journey of my thesis to go quite like it did. I once started at the very abstract topic of “Roma integration”. It is perhaps not unsurprising that I ended up analysing the work of a small NGO embedded in a Roma community in Romania. My family has always had close ties with the area and with the NGO that I visited. Thanks to that inside, I not only finished my master’s degree on a topic I have a great passion for, but also got more involved with the region I have my roots in. Initially, I had wanted to conduct much more field research for this research. Unfortunately, the Corona crisis forced me to reduce my field work to only one short week. Despite this, I feel like I learned a lot about the topic I started with. At the same time, I feel like I only scratched the surface of the difficult topic that is the Roma of Europe. There are so many people that I want to thank for making it possible to go through the difficult task of writing a thesis on this topic. I will try to attempt to thank them all in no particular order. I want to thank my parents who indirectly got me involved in the topic of the Roma in the first place. I also thank them for providing me with a stable home during these uncertain times, allowing me to continue my work, as well as a nice home to always come back to. I would also like to thank Marien and Yvonne Kroon who selflessly decided to help me and provide me with all the information I needed and more. Them and their team who all made me feel extremely welcome and like I was at home. Both my supervisors, Zdzisław Mach and Jaroslav Šotola have been of so much help to me. Professor Mach in providing me with the access to crucial underlying concepts in this complicated topic. I have had the privilege to attend many of his different lectures, as well as personal conversations which helped me place my topic in an

academic context. Jaroslav I want to thank for the close contact and detailed feedback and pleasant discussion on the more specific topic of Roma integration. Unfortunately, I was unable to meet with either of the much due to the crisis, but their help has been invaluable to me. I would also like to send out a thank you to Jakub Lysek of the Palacký University who was crucial in helping me figure out the methodology of my research. His course on methodology, as well as his recommendations made it possible for me to at least make some sense of how to conduct my research. I would be remiss if I did not profusely thank the Euroculture coordinators for their patience with me as I went through my thesis writing process with ups and down. Tereza Lyckova, Karolina Czerska-Shaw and Dorota Krętkowska whose patience, understanding and help enabled me to go through the whole process at my own pace. On a more personal level, I want to thank some of my fellow Euroculture students who made the whole programme so much more fun for me. There was always someone to talk to about the difficulties that we all seemed to be facing. Stella, Carole, Vhiktoria, Esther, Adrian, Bryan (and oh so many more, I can't even list them all).

The two quotes I feature at the start of this preface, I put there because of their relation to my research topic. The first from a Dutch comedian who summarises the stupidity of discrimination by saying "why should I discriminate against someone else but not against you?" (bad translation, much better in Dutch). The second one of my favourite poems by my favourite author, John Tolkien. I think it is a nice description for the Roma, as "not all those who wander are lost".

List of Abbreviations

CEE – Central and Eastern-Europe

CoE – Council of Europe

EBP – Evidence-based Policy

ECMI – European Centre for Minority Issues

EP – European Parliament

EU-MIDIS – European Union minorities and discrimination survey

FRA – European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

ICD – Inclusive Community Development

NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation

NMS – New member states

NRIS – National Roma Integration Strategies

OMS – Old member states

The Council – The Council of the European Union

1. Introduction

1.1 Integration of Roma in the European Union

When people are asked to attribute a certain motto to the European Union, 'United in Diversity' is one of the many examples named. When looking at contemporary politics in the EU, the importance of this slogan is underlined in the political guidelines of the 2019 Von der Leyen Commission. Within those guidelines, the second priority named 'An economy that works for people' perhaps best envisions the idea of unity in diversity with its mention of 'A Union of equality'. It is clearly stated that this equality must apply to every single European.¹ Putting these two ideals together, the European Union should strive to unite its citizens, however diverse they may be, while attempting to provide them with equal opportunities. It is no secret that Europe has had a troubled history precisely when it comes to its diversity. Though an often-cited example is the dark history of the Jews in Europe, a less named group is the Romani people, or Roma for short. It is ironic less attention is paid to these Roma (or 'gypsies' as they are often referred to as well). The irony exists in what was perhaps best described by German Nobel Prize winner Günter Grass in his essay titled 'True Europeans' where he describes the Roma as "Europeans in the true and full meaning of the word".² As he continues to explain, the Roma live in Europe without frontiers as they travel around. At the same time, they do not have a true home to hail back to like the Jews now do with Israel.³ This idea lends itself well for the idea of a European in the sense of cosmopolitanism as a 'Community of Strangers', aptly described by Zapata-Barrero. As he states, this idea revolves around feeling like a stranger or different, which in turns causes a feeling of belonging or unity.⁴

'United in Diversity' or a 'Community of Strangers' are two very ideal ways to describe European society, but they are just that; ideals. When looking at Europe, the European Union and its institutions are an important part of the Roma integration question. It is the European Commission itself that states Roma are estimated to number around 10 to 12 million in Europe alone, around 6 million of them living in the European Union itself.⁵ Despite being the EU's largest minority, the Roma are also amongst its most marginalised groups. In its own communication to the European Parliament (EP) and Council of the European Union (The Council), the European Commission showed

¹ Ursula von der Leyen, *A Union that strives for more: My agenda for Europe*. Brussels: European Commission, 2019. 11

² Günter Grass, *True Europeans*. Index on Censorship 27.4, 1998: 51-53. 53

³ Günter Grass, *true Europeans*. 51-53

⁴ Ricard Zapata-Barrero. *Methodological interculturalism: breaking down epistemological barriers around diversity management*. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 42:3, 2019: 346-356. 352

⁵ European Commission. *Roma equality, inclusion and participation in the EU*. 2020-2030.

https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/roma-eu/roma-equality-inclusion-and-participation-eu_en (accessed March 22, 2021).

in 2020 that the state of Roma integration was still wanting: 41 percent of Roma experienced discrimination in the past 5 years, 80 percent were at risk of poverty, and 62 percent of Roma are not in education, employment or training.⁶ Luckily, these problems do not go unnoticed, and over the past two decades steps have already been taken to address Roma marginalisation.

Though Roma integration programmes have taken different names in the European Union, it has manifested itself strongly in one particular form. As of October 2020, the Commission has set up the new so-called ‘*EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation*’ which builds on the previous ‘*EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020*’ (NRIS).⁷ Both of these are the result of attempts to coordinate Roma integration strategies. Despite these efforts, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) has been critical of the Union’s approach to Roma integration. Being the EU’s designated agency for defending human rights, the FRA states this is mainly because the concept of *Antigypsyism* (discrimination against Roma) is neither a point of priority in the EU’s strategy, nor in national strategies.⁸ This is not for a lack of inclusion, as the Commission’s 2019 NRIS report not only mentions measures to fight antigypsyism, but even mentions *policy learning outcomes* from some national strategies.⁹ antigypsyism is important to mention as a concept. In a separate FRA report, its manifestations are extensively described in many forms. Essentially, antigypsyism can be seen as root cause for many of the problems Roma face and have faced in the past. The FRA itself describes this by stating that “Antigypsyism strongly affects all aspects of Roma’s lives. It contributes to deprivation in key areas, such as education, employment, living standards, as well as health and housing” (25).¹⁰ Taking this perspective, the interpretation may be that antigypsyism is the root cause for the marginalisation Roma face in almost all aspects of daily life. This concept is not completely lost on the Commission, as its most recent 2019 report explicitly states that antigypsyism and discrimination against Roma should also receive attention, linking the concept to four specific sectors. The sectors are education, employment, health, and housing.¹¹ Though antigypsyism is an important root cause, the strategies in these four sectors are what receive the most focus.

Even if none of these sectors deserve more attention than the other, education is an interesting one

⁶ European Commission. *EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation for 2020 - 2030*. Brussels: European Commission, 2020. 4-5

⁷ European Commission. *Roma equality inclusion and participation in the EU*.

⁸ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. *Fundamental Rights Report 2019*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2019. 118

⁹ European Commission. *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and Council: Report on the implementation of national Roma integration strategies - 2019*. Brussels: European Commission, 2019. 10-11

¹⁰ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. *A persisting concern: anti-Gypsyism as a barrier to Roma inclusion*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2018. 8-14

¹¹ European Commission. *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and Council*. 1



to highlight. A different FRA report from 2014 makes an interesting case when it states education has a special role in integration. Particularly because it may prove part of the solution of Roma marginalisation. This is because education is a source of good qualifications and a vehicle to move out of poverty, as the FRA states. As they describe it, a good education provides a chance for good employment, which in turn may help to gain access to other sectors of society.¹² That means, that focusing on integrating Roma more effectively in national education systems could prove to be a boon to integration in other sectors as well. Accordingly, education receives the most attention in national Roma integration strategies. Unfortunately, it is still not enough and a long-term structural approach is yet to be developed.¹³

When looking at it in practice, there are several indicators that Roma still have disproportionately low access to education. One indication of this is illustrated in an article by Alexiadou from 2019, which quotes that Roma students have a higher rate of early school leaving than students of other backgrounds. Alexiadou also states that, in European countries with a Roma population, about two-thirds of Roma aged from 16 to 24 are not in education, training, nor employment after having finished secondary education. Overall, this is shown to be the result of discrimination which has led to issues such as poverty and mental health among other things.¹⁴ This shows that, even though they may be educated, their chances for continuing education or finding employment are reduced. Furthermore, this reinforces the idea that antigypsyism stands at the root of a wider range of issues in Roma integration.

Within the framework, the Commission has had great difficulty defining a clear perspective on the timeline of improving Roma participation in the European Union. The Commission stated in a 2020 working document that it did not make an assessment of expected impacts of the Framework, mainly because of the wide scope and limited data available to make such an assessment.¹⁵ That same working document also mentions that part of the goal of the Framework is to work towards so-called 'policy learning' in order to more effectively develop integration efforts.¹⁶ In other words, the Commission knows what it wants to do to improve Roma participation, but it does not yet know when it will reach what objectives. Current progress of the slow rate of improvement in Roma participation does seem to underline these worries. The EU framework for NRIS up to 2020 has been

¹² European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. *Education: the situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States: Roma survey – Data in focus*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2014. 7

¹³ European Commission. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and Council. 3

¹⁴ Nafsika Alexiadou. *Framing education policies and transitions of Roma students in Europe*. *Comparative Education*, 55:3, 2019: 422-442. 423

¹⁵ European Commission. *Union of Equality: EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation and its accompanying proposal for a revised Council recommendation on national Roma strategic frameworks for equality, inclusion and participation*. Commission Staff Working Document, Brussels: European Commission, 2020. 38

¹⁶ European Commission. *Union of Equality*. 34



in place since 2010, yet social and economic progress for Roma has been lacklustre according to the FRA.¹⁷

When looking at this exposition, it is clear that a great effort should be made to evaluate the current state of the EU Roma Strategic Framework. Subsequently, the lessons taken from those evaluations should be implemented more widely to improve the results of the policy framework. This is encouraged by the Commission when it states in its 2020 report that those involved with NRIS should publish frequent reports to enable policy learning.¹⁸ Furthermore, earlier in that same report it is mentioned that the Commission will provide the necessary tools to national Roma integration strategies, shaping the overall direction while building on previous evaluations.¹⁹

This thesis contributes to these ambitious attempts by focusing specifically on the topic of education, seeing it as one of the most important focus points. Trying to contribute to policy learning by analysing Roma education programs is exactly where the topic gets complicated. It brings up a lot of questions such as ‘what should be analysed and evaluated?’, ‘what lessons can one take from these evaluations?’ and ‘what good practices could work in a wider context in Europe?’. The biggest question though, is how this thesis approaches this topic. This question is addressed in the next section of this chapter.

1.2 Problem Statement and Research Question

The introductory exposition already points in the direction of the problem that this thesis focuses on. To make this problem ‘workable’ in this thesis, a problem statement is first formulated. Based on this, a research question is formulated which is furthermore divided into sub-questions. Using this structure, the thesis is divided into separate chapter. As first step, the *problem statement* is based on the introduction and is formulated to logically flow from it as follows:

Despite EU-attempts at policy learning in the development of Roma education to support integration, progress has been lacklustre, and no concrete examples of solutions are yet available

This problem statement is very much focused on the topic of study. It stands subservient to the wider question which is mentioned here as *Roma continue to be disproportionately marginalised in*

¹⁷ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. *Fundamental Rights Report 2019*. 111

¹⁸ European Commission. *EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation for 2020 - 2030*. Brussels: European Commission, 2020. 11

¹⁹ European Commission. *EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation for 2020 - 2030*. 2



education across Europe. This thesis then contributes to the solution to this issue, by clarifying these *concrete examples* of solutions to support the integration progress in the field of education.

The second step is to formulate a research question. Simply stating that problem is not enough, as it needs to be approached from a research perspective. To facilitate this perspective, this thesis uses an overarching research question which sets the basic structure. This research question approaches the issue with the goal of working towards a solution. The key terms in the problem statement are used in the formulation of the research question: *policy learning, Roma education, integration, lacklustre progress, and examples*. Using these specific focus points, the main research question is structured and articulated as follows:

What *example of a good practice* in Roma education plans could contribute to wider European Union *policy learning* and how could it be *applied* across the EU to foster *progress* in Roma integration?

This research question is purposefully divided in separate sections which reflect in the research design. This is facilitated by linking a sub question to each section of the main research question. The first sub-question is *what is an example of a good practice in Roma education and how is it organised?* This first question focuses on a specific practice with an educational project targeting Roma in a European Union country. The second sub question is, *how does this good practice relate to the wider European Union policy learning frame?* This second question places the practice from the first sub question in a wider context. Here, it is compared to local schools and educational policy in its direct vicinity. Then the last sub question will be *how can this example be applied in other European Union countries to progress Roma integration?* This last question tries to lift the practice from the local and national level to the European level. This way, an attempt is made to provide a perspective to apply the practice to the European policy level. This divides the research into three sections which together contribute to the main conclusion which answer the main research question. In order to illustrate this, Figure 1 is referred to which outlines the progress that this structuring strives for. As it shows, the first sub question provides the groundwork for the second, which in turns provides the groundwork for the third. Combined, they answer the main research question.

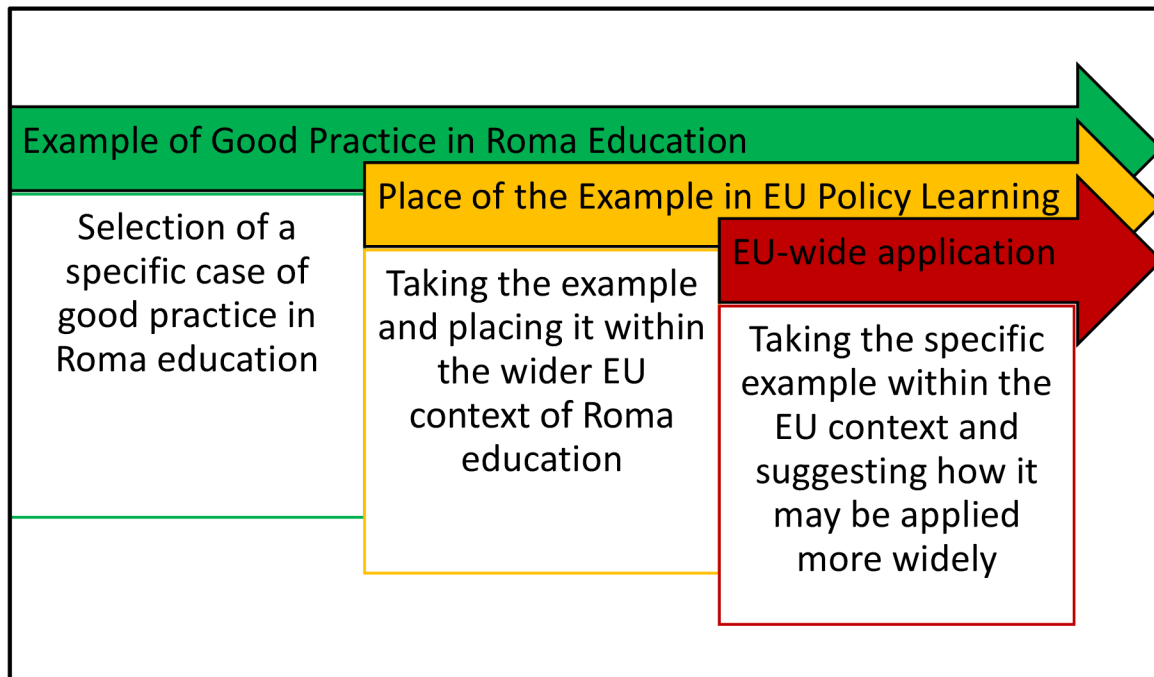


Figure 1 Sub-division of main research question

Thirdly and lastly, a *hypothesis* is formulated which is tested in the conclusion chapter of this thesis. This hypothesis is formulated on the basis of the structure of the research question and sub-questions. This is done on a logic of a variable attributed to each of the sections of the thesis. Based on the finding from the case study, a hypothesis is provided in the concluding chapter in this thesis.

2. Research Methodology

The previous chapter covered the context of the research topic, introducing some of the main themes and topics. In addition, it gave a general overview of the structure of this thesis. The following section goes more in-depth on the methods of research that are used in this report. Based on what is written here, the following chapters of literature review and research findings are placed in a clearer context through a clear explanation of the methodology.

2.1 Literature Review

The first step in this research is to contextualise, as well as conceptualise the topic of research. This is done through a literature review which revolves around some of the most important central themes. This allows for the creation of an outline of existing literature and work on the topics this thesis touches on. This literature review functions as a more in-depth academic introduction on the Sinti, Roma and Travellers and their integration in the European Union. For the purpose of this literature review, Hannah Snyder's typology of literature reviews is referred to. Specifically, this research utilises the specific form of a *semi-systematic literature review*.²⁰ According to Snyder, a semi-systematic literature review is a relevant method when a topic has been approached by different academic fields with varying scopes and focus points.²¹ As a result, a full systematic literature review is not an option, which means the literature review is limited and focuses on trying to outline how the research topic has developed.²² A 2020 article by Ioannoni, Vitale, Costa and Elliott states that research into Roma has developed rapidly recently and has been touched upon by a wide range of academic disciplines. They add that this has contributed to a large body of research which collectively could be referred to as 'Romani Studies'.²³ Based on this knowledge, the choice of a semi-systematic literature review is deemed the most fitting as Snyder's description of such a review coincides with the description of Romania Studies as posited by Ioannoni et al. This review is then used to analyse the topic, allowing for the identification of some of its central themes and developments which may inform the further research conducted in this thesis. It is essentially a tool to compare sources from different academic disciplines, identifying relevant themes for this research.

²⁰ Hannah Snyder. *Literature review as a research methodology: An overview and guidelines*. Journal of Business Research 104, 2019: 333-339. 335

²¹ Hannah Snyder. *Literature review as a research methodology*. 335

²² Hannah Snyder. *Literature review as a research methodology*. 335

²³ V. Ioannoni, T. Vitale, C. Costa, and I. Elliott. *Depicting communities of Romani studies: on the who, when and where of Roma related scientific publications*. Scientometrics, 122(3), 2020: 1473-1490. 1474



The first part of the review focuses mainly on the concept of Roma and their integration in the European Union. It has a more introductory purpose and answers the question '*what kinds of concepts does this research topic touch?*'. It serves as a deeper academic introduction to the topic of Roma integration and its most important theories. The second part of the review focuses on some of the theories and models that are highlighted in the first part of the literature review. This answers the more detailed question of '*what is the place of this topic in the wider context of existing research?*'. For the purpose of this research, this second section is referred to as the *theoretical framework*. Snyder uses terms like 'literature review', 'theoretical framework' and 'research background' interchangeably.²⁴ For the purpose of this research, the term theoretical framework is used to differentiate the two parts of the literature review as outlined in this section. The first part is the semi-systematic literature review and the second part the theoretical framework. This theoretical framework is a distillation of the most important concepts and models utilised in this research. This means it slightly ventures out of the main body of the literature review, also sourcing different concepts. Combining these two elements of the literature review creates the foundation for this research with a clear understanding of its underlying concepts. It is also a strong source of the independent variables used in the further research conducted for this thesis.

2.2 Case Analysis

As the problem statement in the previous chapter states, one of the most glaring issues of Roma integration is the lack of examples that can be applied to further the process of integration. This central issue is what informs the decision for research approach. To be able to provide a comprehensive and in-depth description of an educational integration approach, the choice is made to conduct small-N research. In particular, the choice is made to conduct a *single-case study*. As quoted in John Gerring, a single-case (small-N) case study takes the form of a comprehensive approach to research and is based on a particular type of evidence, to name the two most important aspects as relevant to this research.²⁵ Continuing to use Gerring's description of a case study, it is possible to provide a more in-depth description of exactly what kind of case study this research conducts. Since the case-study analyses a single case at one point in time, the typology of Gerring dictates a *synchronic single-case study* as part of a *within-case analysis*.²⁶ This is the formal definition given to the research method in this work, but this does not mean that there are no cross-case analyses included outright in this research. Gerring states that most research will employ some form

²⁴ Hannah Snyder. *Literature review as a research methodology*. 334

²⁵ John Gerring. *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. 17-18

²⁶ John Gerring. *Case Study Research*. 27



of combination of within-case and cross-case analysis, usually in a so-called *hierarchical model*.²⁷ Though this research does not formally take such a hierarchical form, it is important to note that there are aspects of cross-case analysis in this research.

Having established a *synchronic single-case study* as part of a *within-case analysis*, the internal workings of conducting such an analysis are also elaborated on. Concerning within-case analysis, Goertz and Mahoney describe the inherent concepts related to this method and also outline some of its shortcomings. For one, a small-N within-case analysis will inherently be less ideal for strong hypothesis testing.²⁸ On the other hand, such a method does allow for a much more in-depth understanding of the case, which would not be possible in a large-N dataset.²⁹ Testing a hypothesis is then inherently a difficult thing to do with the methodology used in this research. This relates to the concept of *causal inference* as well. Goertz and Mahoney describe this along the lines of so-called *causal-process observations* which allows for the observations to determine whether a causal factor can indeed be linked to the proposed hypothesis.³⁰ This is important to note, as this research attempts to set up a hypothesis. To formulate a sound hypothesis, it is crucial to make observations and try to relate these to that hypothesis. Thus, the use of causal-process observations is a fitting approach. It is important to mention again, that the goal of this research is not to provide a strong causal mechanism or a generally applied hypothesis, but rather to deeply explain the analysed case and the internal causal mechanism. That means the results of this research are very limited in scope which is to be expected as the goal is to first gain a thorough in-depth understanding of one particular case. As Goertz and Mahoney continue to explain, one of the main methods in within-case analysis is so-called *process-tracing*. This approach allows for the identification of the specific causes that lead to an observed outcome.³¹ Referring back to Gerring, an important point is made on the importance of this process-tracing for *internal validity*. This requires comprehensive and sound reasoning to identify the causes that lead to a certain outcome, focusing on different pieces of evidence.³² Gerring describes this as a *causal chain* which can essentially be summarised in the form of $X1 \rightarrow X2 \rightarrow X3 \rightarrow X4 = Y$.³³

²⁷ John Gerring. *Case Study Research*. 28

²⁸ Gary Goertz and James Mahoney. *A Tale of Two Cultures: Qualitative and Quantitative Research in the Social Sciences*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012. 87

²⁹ Gary Goertz and James Mahoney. *A Tale of Two Cultures*. 88

³⁰ Gary Goertz and James Mahoney. *A Tale of Two Cultures*. 90

³¹ Gary Goertz and James Mahoney. *A Tale of Two Cultures*. 93

³² John Gerring. *Case Study Research*. 172-173

³³ John Gerring. *Case Study Research*. 173



Simply stating this concept and its overall meaning is not enough to explain the methodology. As such, the work of Beach and Pedersen is referred to who provide a much more elaborate explanation of the method of process-tracing.

Beach and explaining-outcome process-tracing.³⁴ The goal of this thesis is to analyse a specific case, finding out what independent variables may have led to a specific outcome. In a way, this can be expressed in the way of a causal mechanism between X and Y, X being the independent variables that are present in the form of education and Y being the dependent variable or outcome of this form of education. Furthermore, this research aims to contribute to making possible the wider application of such an education system in other contexts. When consulting Beach and Pedersen's typology, their description of *theory-building process-tracing* seems to fit these research aims the most. According to Beach and Pedersen, this form of process-tracing has ambitions beyond the single case³⁵, which is true in this research. Furthermore, it is relevant when it is believed that there is some form of causal mechanism present. It then tries to explain how this mechanism looks with potential of also being relevant to different cases.³⁶ There is a strong relation present in this method to the causal chain as described by Gerring, quoted earlier in this section. Namely in the form of the first step being *collecting evidence*, the second being *inference of evidence* to outline a causal mechanism, and the third step being the *inference of a causal mechanism*.³⁷ This approach is very similar to the overall structure as outlined in section 1.2 of this thesis. To further elaborate the usefulness of process-tracing in this research, the work of Kay and Baker is referred to. In their 2015 review they conclude that *causal process-tracing* in small-N research can be a very useful tool in policy research as it can provide a more detailed account of policy or policy change.³⁸ They add to this that this usefulness is further expanded upon when a quantitative data analysis (for example Bayesian inference) is not possible or is unable to provide a comprehensive account of causality.³⁹ In the case of this research this is very relevant as a large scale quantitative analysis of education programs in the European Union is not possible because of the lack of data available, as is mentioned in a 2020 European Commission report.⁴⁰

³⁴ Derek Beach and Rasmus Brun Pedersen. *Process Tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2013. 14-18

³⁵ Derek Beach and Rasmus Brun Pedersen. *Process Tracing Methods*. 16

³⁶ Derek Beach and Rasmus Brun Pedersen. *Process Tracing Methods*. 16

³⁷ Derek Beach and Rasmus Brun Pedersen. *Process Tracing Methods*. 17-18

³⁸ Adrian Kay and Phillip Baker. *What Can Causal Process Tracing Offer to Policy Studies? A Review of the Literature*. *The Policy Studies Journal* 43(1), 2015: 1-21. 18

³⁹ Adrian Kay and Phillip Baker. *What Can Causal Process Tracing Offer to Policy Studies?* 18

⁴⁰ European Commission. *Union of Equality: EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation and its accompanying proposal for a revised Council recommendation on national Roma strategic frameworks for equality, inclusion and participation*. Commission Staff Working Document, Brussels: European Commission, 2020. 38



Thus far in this methodology chapter, the methods have been described on a very general level. The research itself focuses on a specific case, as mentioned repeatedly. However, in order to apply a theory-building process-tracing method, the topic of *case selection* is crucial. Simply picking a case at random may severely hamper the validity and applicability of the outcome of this research. Each of the methodology sources used thus far makes some mention of case selection strategies.

Accordingly, the method regarding this is given additional attention in this chapter too. Goertz and Mahoney state that, in qualitative research, the preference will generally be a case where both the *cause (X)* and *outcome (Y)* are present.⁴¹ A central question they pose is whether a research design should select a case based on the dependant variable or not. In the case of qualitative research, Goertz and Mahoney state that this can only be done when necessary conditions are defined for the outcome.⁴² What seems most applicable to this thesis, is what Goertz and Mahoney call a *substantively important case* which simply means that the researcher has excellent knowledge on the case or can obtain knowledge on the case easily.⁴³ Being a small-N study on a qualitative basis, such a case is sought out in this research. Beach and Pedersen provide an explanation of the most suitable case selection strategies relevant to theory-building process-tracing. Since this research conducts a within-case analysis where the dependant variable is already defined (i.e., the outcome is known), the main focus is to find out what kind of causal mechanism can be described to explain this outcome. When looking at such a situation, Beach and Pedersen name a *deviant case selection strategy* as the most suitable to find a case to research. As they quote, this means the case is defined in comparison to already available knowledge or explanations. Furthermore, this means that the generated theory can then be used in future large-N data analysis.⁴⁴

In case of this thesis, the broader goal is to see whether the uncovered causal mechanism could be applied to the NRIS of other European member states. This way, there is a perspective of providing concrete recommendations which may contribute to the policy-learning desires expressed in the European Commission reports on Roma integration. As a last remark, Gerring makes an important note on the use of deviant case study selection. Namely that, though the use of the weird deviant may denote an anomaly, this is subject to change. Once the deviant case has uncovered a certain causal mechanism, the case is no more deviant as it now confirms that mechanism.⁴⁵ This fits

⁴¹ Gary Goertz and James Mahoney. *A Tale of Two Cultures: Qualitative and Quantitative Research in the Social Sciences*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012. 178

⁴² Gary Goertz and James Mahoney. *A Tale of Two Cultures*. 179

⁴³ Gary Goertz and James Mahoney. *A Tale of Two Cultures*. 184-185

⁴⁴ Derek Beach and Rasmus Brun Pedersen. *Process Tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2013. 154-155

⁴⁵ John Gerring. *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. 106-107



perfectly with the aims of this research, confirming the decision to use a deviant case selection strategy.

Within this research, the field research segment is treated as the primary sources. These primary sources are the main sources used to prove or disprove the hypothesis. The next section describes the primary sources as interviews and field notes, but Beach and Pedersen show that a good way of triangulation (covered more in-depth in the next section) is to also use so-called *archival materials* which serve as records of a historical overview.⁴⁶ In the context of this research, this can take the form of documents published by the European Commission or the relevant national government. These are not always directly relevant, nor do they clearly describe approaches to education as a Roma integration instrument, but together they may play a large role in stringing together the NRIS of a given member state. Combined with the primary sources they may help making sense of the acquired information more easily. In relation to this is what Beach and Pedersen call *historical scholarship*, which plays a large role in this research as well. Beach and Pedersen refer to this as the historical description of what is being researched. As they continue, this account is often given to describe a certain theory, which means these accounts are often biased.⁴⁷ In case of this thesis, this historical account comes from the literature review and theoretical framework, applied to a specific case. That means the historical scholarship is directly applied in the research itself. This is also where the theories are scrutinised extensively so its subjectivity may be put in context. The archival materials and historical scholarship come back repeatedly in the main body of research and are explicitly mentioned when done so.

2.3 Field Research

The last topic to be addressed in this methodology section, is the topic of *triangulation*. This immediately provides the opportunity for the discussion of some of the more concrete methods of research utilised in this thesis. Referring once again to the work of Beach and Pedersen, conducting interviews is one of the most commonly used methods in process-tracing research.⁴⁸ In his work, Uwe Flick explains that triangulation should be applied to increase the validity of research. One way of doing so is through *verbal data*, in particular *interviews*.⁴⁹

Accordingly, Interviews are prominently featured in the research. For one, experts involved in the

⁴⁶ Derek Beach and Rasmus Brun Pedersen. *Process Tracing Methods*. 136

⁴⁷ Derek Beach and Rasmus Brun Pedersen. *Process Tracing Methods*. 141-142

⁴⁸ Derek Beach and Rasmus Brun Pedersen. *Process Tracing Methods*. 134

⁴⁹ Uwe Flick. *Triangulation in Qualitative Research*. In *A Companion to Qualitative Research*, by Ines Steinke and Uwe Flick Ernst Kardorff, 178-190. London: SAGE Publications, 2004. 178-179



selected case are interviewed for any relevant information concerning the methods of education in the community or school. Beach and Pedersen refer to this style as *expert interviews*, where individuals strongly involved with the research topic are interviewed.⁵⁰ In order to get as complete a picture as possible, interviews are conducted with as many involved actors as possible. These interviews are some of the most important primary sources of this research, allowing for a thorough understanding of the organisation of the educational project. To be more precise, the form of interviews used is *semi-structured interviews*. According to Bernard, semi-structured interviews are used when there will not be a chance for a second interview, meaning an *interview guide* is used as a guideline for questions.⁵¹ In some cases, there are interviewees who can be approached for additional information, but the use of an interview guide is deemed helpful for structuring the research. The methodology for conducting the interviews is informed by the work of Schmidt who explains that adhering to pre-conceived topics strictly often does not allow for complete interpretation and summarisation of the collected data.⁵² She proposes a structure to semi-structured interviews which consists of *analytical categories (1), category coding (2), material coding (3), quantifying surveys of material (4) and detailed case interpretation (5)*. This same structure is utilised for the process of interviewing for this thesis. The analytical categories are based on the independent variables of research, which result from the literature review and theoretical framework of this research. It is important to note that coding, in this research, refers to the formulation of the interview questions. This is based on the variables that result from the literature review. Coding these variables allows for formulating questions which cover the most important topics from the review. In doing so, it is believed that identifying the causes for success of the education project is more effective. Also important to note, are some of the tactics utilised during the interview process. Bernard names some concepts in interviewing such as *probing* for information, proper use of *language, pacing, presentation, taking notes* and the use of *recording devices* to help with *transcription*.⁵³ In the case of this research, there is no use of focus groups but rather a focus on individual interviewees to gain a concrete understanding of the analysed NGO and its education project. A last important point to make on the interviews, especially in relation to triangulation, is the fact that just interviews are not entirely reliable and should therefore also be triangulated

⁵⁰ Derek Beach and Rasmus Brun Pedersen. *Process Tracing Methods*. 134

⁵¹ H. Russell Bernard. *Research Methodology in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2006. 212

⁵² Christiane Schmidt. *The Analysis of Semi-structured Interviews*. In *A Companion to Qualitative Research*, by Uwe, von Kardorff Ernst and Steinke Ines (eds.) Flick, 253-258. London: Sage Publications Ltd., 2004. 253

⁵³ H. Russell Bernard. *Research Methodology in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2006. 215-232



themselves, as pointed out by Beach and Pedersen.⁵⁴ Bernard refers to this as *response effects* which can take the form of *deference* where the interviewee may change their answer to not offend, or the *threatening question* where the question itself may influence the answer given because of its wording. There may also simply be a problem with the accuracy of the answer.⁵⁵ These are important factors kept in mind during questioning, as well as in the formulation of the questions and the analysis of the interviews afterwards.

As an additional angle of research for the purpose of triangulation, *field notes* are utilised. The conduction of the interviews takes place in a one or two-week period on location (if the situation allows it). According to Bernard, the method of taking field notes is strongly related to the coding process of interviews⁵⁶, which makes it an excellent addition as an extra line of research. The main focus in this sense is the usage of *descriptive* in which reports on observations are made and made sense of during the field research.⁵⁷ Both the interviews and field notes, as well as the content analysis are coded according to the independent variables which result from the literature review. To be more precise, the specific form of coding used is what Andreas Böhm calls *open coding* with *in-vivo codes* which is an analytical breakdown of the data in categories specifically related to what is being researched.⁵⁸

In figure 2 on the next page, this overall methodology is schematically illustrated, showing a clearer sequence and structure as it occurs in the final analysis. Each square represents a separate section of the report with the larger, light blue lines showing the main order and the smaller, darker blue arrows showing information lines. This schematic is completely based on the explanation of the methodology as described in this chapter. With the next chapter, the actual research starts with the literature review of the topic of Roma integration.

⁵⁴ Derek Beach and Rasmus Brun Pedersen. *Process Tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2013. 135

⁵⁵ H. Russell Bernard. *Research Methodology in Anthropology*. 239-250

⁵⁶ H. Russell Bernard. *Research Methodology in Anthropology*. 387

⁵⁷ H. Russell Bernard. *Research Methodology in Anthropology*. 397-398

⁵⁸ Böhm, Andreas. *Theoretical Coding: Text Analysis in Grounded Theory*. In A Companion to Qualitative Research, by Uwe, von Kardorff, Ernst and Steinke, Ines (eds.) Flick, 270-275. London: SAGE Publications, 2004. 270



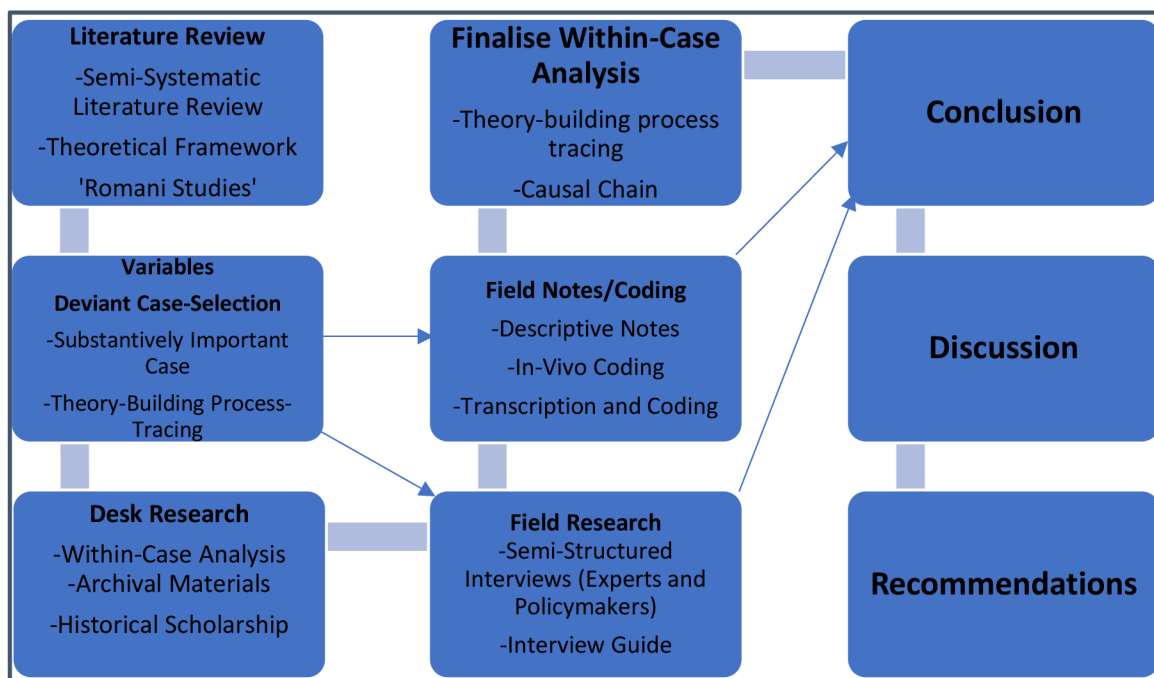


Figure 2 Schematic Structure of Research

3. Literature Review

The previous chapter outlines the entire methodology used in this thesis. The following chapter covers the semi-systematic literature review done for the topic of Roma integration in the European Union. A specific emphasis is placed on the role of education therein. Some initial links are already made here to the main body of research as well.

3.1 Roma and Travelers in Europe

Before getting into the literature review proper, it is important to make provide an important description. This thesis covers the 'Roma' extensively, but the term itself is quite elusive. Depending on language and time period, the name for the 'Roma' can change. A 2017 article by Gaja Maestri gives a good overview of the complexity of the many differing terms for the Roma. Maestri's overall conclusion is that the naming and categorization of the Roma even to this day leave something to be desired.⁵⁹ She makes mention of the glossary published by the Council of Europe (CoE), though describes it as only one of many different ways to make sense of the Roma minority.⁶⁰ Without going into too much depth, it is this glossary and its terminology that is used throughout this thesis. To quote the CoE's glossary "The term "Roma" used at the Council of Europe refers to Roma, Sinti, Kale and related groups in Europe, including Travellers and the Eastern groups (Dom and Lom), and covers the wide diversity of the groups concerned, including persons who identify themselves as Gypsies." (6).⁶¹ As such, the term Roma is used in this paper to refer to this group in this very broad sense. The word gypsy may also be used, as much of the literature refers to Roma in that way. The preferred term in this thesis is nevertheless 'Roma'. Where more specific sub-groups are targeted, clear mention is made.

3.2 Roma Integration in Europe and the European Union

Perhaps not unsurprisingly, the history of the integration of Roma in Europe could be the topic of an entirely separate research, covering many different time periods. In a 2014 historical overview, Taylor covers the extensive development of the place of Roma in Europe, as well as beyond it. She quotes that the Habsburg Empire under Maria Theresa and Joseph II attempted to forcibly assimilate

⁵⁹ Gaja Maestri. *Are they nomads, travellers or Roma? An analysis of the multiple effects of naming assemblages*. Area 49.1, 2017: 18-24. 23

⁶⁰ Gaja Maestri. *Are they nomads, travellers or Roma?* 19

⁶¹ Council of Europe. *Council of Europe Descriptive Glossary of terms relating to Roma issues*. 18 May 2012. <https://rm.coe.int/1680088eab> (accessed June 22, 2021).



Gypsies in order to 'humanize them'.⁶² Notably, she states that the spearhead of assimilation policies of Roma took place in Austria-Hungary in the late eighteenth century, sparking an emergence of more of such policies across Europe.⁶³ She also notes that regulation across Europe started targeting Gypsies more in the first half of the twentieth century, notably in the field of education in order to help create a larger working-class.⁶⁴ Jumping once again further in history, it is important to note that the Nazi German regime towards the Roma. Taylor mentions that this regime, either directly or indirectly, caused the demise of 219,700 officially confirmed Roma, with some estimates even going up to 500,000. Furthermore, there were cases of deportation and forced labour across the European continent.⁶⁵ The period of World War 2 is also notable for the topic of Roma integration. In the Western part of Europe, Roma faced mainly issues of the non-recognition of their experiences during the war, but in the eastern part of Europe this experience is more difficult to determine.⁶⁶ What Taylor does mention, is that here their recognition as a minority was problematic, while also being mobilised to a large degree as labourers.⁶⁷

This is only a small glimpse into the many different developments of the position of Roma in Europe. The reason that two events are mentioned here in particular, the forced assimilations of the Habsburg Empire and the Soviet Bloc, is because they feature prominently in a discussion by András Bíró. Just like in Taylor's work, Bíró notes that the Habsburgs were the first to undertake such forced assimilation which began a trend of the narrative of the so-called *gypsy question*. Similarly, he notes the difficulty of the recognition of the Porajmos, the extermination of Roma during World War 2. In addition, he names the limited attention paid to the Roma minority in the communist block.⁶⁸ Crucially, this has set the continuing trend of the marginalisation of the Roma which has affected their social and cultural traditions.⁶⁹ Subsequently, Bíró notes that this resulted in the creation of Non-Governmental Organisations, or NGOs, which he relates to a Roma *civil society*.⁷⁰ Despite these efforts, there is still an issue present in Europe in the form of *antigypsyism*. This concept is can be seen notably in the Central and Eastern-European region of Europe which is also related to

⁶² Becky Taylor. *Another Darkness, Another Dawn: A History of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers*. London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2014. 93-94

⁶³ Becky Taylor. *Another Darkness, Another Dawn*. London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2014. 97

⁶⁴ Becky Taylor. *Another Darkness, Another Dawn*. London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2014. 137-138

⁶⁵ Becky Taylor. *Another Darkness, Another Dawn*. London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2014. 164-165

⁶⁶ Becky Taylor. *Another Darkness, Another Dawn*. London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2014. 183

⁶⁷ Becky Taylor. *Another Darkness, Another Dawn: A History of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers*. London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2014. 183-185

⁶⁸ András Bíró. *The Price of Roma Integration*. In *From Victimhood to Citizenship: The Path of Roma Integration*, by Will Guy (ed.), 11-40. Budapest: Kossuth Publishing Corporation, 2013. 21

⁶⁹ András Bíró. *The Price of Roma Integration*. 24

⁷⁰ András Bíró. *The Price of Roma Integration*. 27



Eurosceptic rhetoric here. This culminates in a continuing marginalisation of Roma in the region.⁷¹

The literature review thus far notes that the biggest issues of Roma seem to take place in the Central and Eastern-European region, or CEE. The area appears to have a long-running history of marginalisation which is now dubbed antigypsyism.

Notably, antigypsyism and the so-called gypsy question have been a continuing issue the Roma have been ill-equipped to deal with. However, as the review shows thus far, the issue is definitely on the radar. In particular during the 1990s, the topic of the marginalisation of Roma has grown strongly.

As Mariushkova and Popov point out that the European Union, intergovernmental organisations, governments, and social actors have increased their efforts in finding possible solutions to the problems Roma faced. Lately, more and more discussion has started taking place on exactly what the right solution is to many of these issues.⁷² In addition, the topic is highly politicised, yet also very vague because the Roma as a group cannot be easily identified. As Kovats points out in a 2013 essay, people may or may not identify as Roma, or may simply be labelled as such. As such, political activism becomes much more difficult to realise, let alone defining objectives and solutions.⁷³

This issue is summarised quite well in the work of Sławomir Kapralski, who wrote on the national ideal of Roma in a 2012 article. According to Kapralski, there is considerable division amongst scholars when it comes to Roma practices or institutions related to some form of national imagination. As such, the process of any form of homogenisation of Roma is still ongoing, with a large role laid away for what Kapralski calls top leaders and grassroots.⁷⁴ This may be another example of this Roma civil society as described by Bíró. Furthermore, this coincides strongly with Kovats' statement on the large role for NGOs in Roma civil society. Kapralski adds a category of what he dubs *transnationalisation* of the Roma community. He describes this category as hybrid traditions between Roma and non-Roma, and another separate one specifically for Roma-related NGOs. This has led to the realisation that the only way to improve the standard of living will take place on a transnational or non-Romani plane.⁷⁵ It is therefore crucial to keep in mind that the process to

⁷¹ András Bíró. *The Price of Roma Integration*. 33-35

⁷² Elena Mariushkova and Vesselin Popov. *European Policies for Social Inclusion of Roma: Catch 22?* Social Inclusion 3(5), 2015: 19-31. 21-22

⁷³ Martin Kovats. *Integration and the Politicisation of Roma Identity*. In *From Victimhood to Citizenship: The Path of Roma Integration*, by Will Guy (ed.), 101-128. Budapest: Kossuth Publishing Corporation, 2013. 113-114

⁷⁴ Sławomir Kapralski. *Symbols and Rituals in the Mobilisation of the Romani National Ideal*. *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 12.1, 2012: 64-81. 76-78

⁷⁵ Sławomir Kapralski. *Memory, Identity and Roma Transnational Nationalism*. In *Transnational Memory: Circulation, Articulation, Scales*, by Chiara De Cesari and Ann Rigney (eds.), 195-218. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014. 209-210



improving the Roma standard of living is very much linked to the question of nationality of Roma, as this is linked to their ability to organise and politicise their civil society.

Whatever the case, the literature consulted thus far does point out that there are issues of discrimination in the form of antigypsyism, regardless of whether people identify as Roma or not. The concept of antigypsyism is relatively new and it is difficult to determine when exactly it went into use. As early as 2006, Nicolae stated that there was no definition of antigypsyism to speak of. Nicolae defines antigypsyism as a specific form of racism that is based on the Roma's historical persecution and negative stereotypes. Notably, both these factors lead to their exclusion from society in many forms.⁷⁶ Since this early attempt at defining the concept, research on antigypsyism has increased tremendously. The question then is why antigypsyism is such an important concept when talking about the inclusion of Roma. As expressed in the work of Carrera, Rostas and Vosyliūtė, an institutional approach to antigypsyism is crucial. As their research shows, antigypsyism manifests itself in many key policy areas in the form of *institutional antigypsyism*. This includes but is not limited to such policy areas like *housing, education, employment, and health*. Within this context, Roma are often seen as foreigners or non-integrated persons and are thus excluded to some degree. This can unfairly target Roma simply for the negative reputation they have gotten.⁷⁷ As Carrera et al. continue to argue, antigypsyism is an important concept because it highlights the manifestations of discrimination of Roma in institutions. It is somewhat comparable to antisemitism, except it is currently not institutionalized as a legal concept.⁷⁸ This exclusion is underlined in the European Commission's own reasoning as once of its agencies, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), extensively discusses the many manifestations that the concept has on Roma in the European Union in a 2018 report. As it reports, antigypsyism does not only result in *hate crime* and *discrimination*, but also causes marginalisation, a higher degree of *poverty* and limited access to *education, housing and health*.⁷⁹ This mirrors the scholarly description as earlier described in this review and confirms the importance of acknowledging antigypsyism at least in part to the marginalisation of Roma in the socio-economic sphere.

⁷⁶ Valeriu Nicolae. *Towards a Definition of Anti-Gypsyism*. In *Roma Diplomacy*, by Valeriu and Slavik, Hannah (eds.) Nicolae, 21-30. New York: Idebate Press, 2007. 21-22

⁷⁷ S. Carrera, I. Rostas, and L. Vosyliūtė. *Combating Institutional Anti-Gypsyism: Responses and promising practices in the EU and selected Member States*. CEPS Research Report No 2017/08, Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2017. 10-11

⁷⁸ S. Carrera, I. Rostas, and L. Vosyliūtė. *Combating Institutional Anti-Gypsyism*. 13

⁷⁹ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. *A persisting concern: anti-Gypsyism as a barrier to Roma inclusion*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2018. 8-14



However, this is only one side of antigypsyism, as there is another more deeply rooted issue concerning the topic. In her research, Mirga-Kruszelnicka mentions that academia contributes to 'othering' the Roma by *essentialising Roma discourse*. This discourse causes a homogenisation of Roma under either negative or positive connotations that are attributed to their ethnic group as a whole.⁸⁰ This homogenisation is of course complex, given what was already mentioned earlier in this review on the idea of a Roma identity or nationality. This means that antigypsyism, either in a positive or negative sense, is not limited to the social and political sphere, but also to the academic sphere. Thus far, scholarly opinions on the Roma seem divided on all the levels analysed which shows that any research related to Roma deserves very in-depth analysis from different perspectives. Given the influence of antigypsyism, the construction of a Roma civil society on a transnational level and the interplay between antigypsyism and Roma society, it is perhaps no surprise that the topic of Roma integration has steadily grown in importance within the European Union. Indeed, as Català-Oltra et al. describe the process of building towards an EU-wide framework for Roma integration started soon after the Soviet-era ended in Europe. This framework focused on topics of marginalisation and discrimination.⁸¹ Català-Oltra et al. analysed the NRIS within the framework up until 2020. They found that a glaring weakness of the NRIS was that there is a constant pointing out of the issues (diagnosing), but no concrete solutions are then offered. Furthermore, there is a so-called issue of *heteroidentification*. This refers to the fact that the each NRIS will differ because each country attributes a different form of identification to the Roma. As Català-Oltra et al. continue, this has an overall negative effect on the effectiveness of the NRIS because not every aspect of antigypsyism is addressed.⁸² This then seems to be a continuation of the extremely problematic issue of defining what is Roma, which differs per country and sector.

Antigypsyism was already prominently covered in this review, but what is perhaps more important is to outline what makes education such an important focus point in Roma integration strategies. Brüggemann and Friedman point out that, education has always played a very central role in policy. This is because equalising the rate of education between Roma and non-Roma could prove to improve other spheres of life as well.⁸³ However, they conclude (perhaps unsurprisingly), that there

⁸⁰ Anna Mirga-Kruszelnicka. *Challenging Anti-gypsyism in Academia: The Role of Romani Scholars*. Critical Romani Studies 1.1, 2018: 8-28. 11-12

⁸¹ Lluís Català-Oltra, Javier, Arza-Porras and Daniel La Parra-Casado. *Roma heteroidentification in the National Roma Integration Strategies of the European Union countries*. Ethnicities 0(0), 2020: 1-21. 2

⁸² Lluís Català-Oltra, Javier, Arza-Porras and Daniel La Parra-Casado. *Roma heteroidentification in the National Roma Integration Strategies of the European Union countries*. 16-17

⁸³ Christian Brüggemann and Eben Friedman. *The Decade of Roma Inclusion: Origins, Actors, and Legacies*. European Education 49, 2017: 1-9. 1-2



is often a disconnect between international education policies and the local initiatives that take place in the field of education among Roma. Subsequently, they believe that this topic proves an interesting subject of study.⁸⁴

Before such ideas can be created, it is important to describe the issues Roma face in the field of education. When analysing the period commonly called the *decade of Roma inclusion* between 2005 and 2015, Curcic et al. point out that Roma children have been subject to *segregation* in education. This has been done primarily through placing these children in segregated classes which subsequently also resulted in segregation from society itself.⁸⁵ Iulius Rostas pointed out in 2012 that the process of school segregation of Roma had been an ongoing process which can be compared across European countries using an *explanatory model*. Rostas continues to argue that policies across countries, influence on the government, contextual factors of influence and the influence of the judicial system can all be analysed using this model.⁸⁶ Ultimately, Rostas concluded in 2012 that there were three possible scenarios concerning the process of desegregation of Roma in schools: admitting failure (1), a continuation of the current inconsistent policies across countries with large Roma populations (2) and lastly these countries reconsidering their positions and implementing systematic reforms to make education more inclusive (3).⁸⁷ Rostas further elaborated on the topic of school segregation among Roma in a 2017 article, reflecting on his own work in 2012. He repeats that the focus should be on five points, namely mobilising Roma parents and communities (1), place less focus on educational frameworks (2), putting successful projects in action on a broader scale (3), strengthen bonds between the educators, students and the justice system (4) and lastly creating an inclusive agenda to gain government attention for the issue of school segregation (5).⁸⁸ He elaborates on these points, as those alone are not enough to get rid of segregation. Rostas believes that Roma segregation should be approached as a violation of *human rights*, as this allows for the issue to be placed on the international stage while also allowing the framing of the issue to be more easily understood by the public.⁸⁹ To conclude the issue of segregation, Rostas states that the issue still exists and is a form of *structurally reproducing inequality*, strongly related to antigypsyism.

⁸⁴ Christian Brüggemann and Eben Friedman. *The Decade of Roma Inclusion: Origins, Actors, and Legacies*. European Education 49, 2017: 1-9. 7

⁸⁵ Sjetlana Curcic, Maja, Miskovic, Shayna Plaut, and Ciprian Ceobanu. *Inclusion, Integration or Perpetual Exclusion?: A Critical Examination of the Decade of Roma Inclusion, 2005-2015*. European Educational Research Journal 13:3, 2014: 257-267. 259

⁸⁶ Iulius Rostas. *Conclusion*. In *Ten Years After: A History of Roma School Desegregation in Central and Eastern Europe*, by Iulius Rostas (ed.), 343-366. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2012. 343-345

⁸⁷ Iulius Rostas. *Conclusion*. 365

⁸⁸ Iulius Rostas. *Antigypsyism, education and the media: ways forward*. *Identities* 24:6, 2017: 760-768. 762

⁸⁹ Iulius Rostas. *Antigypsyism, education and the media*. 763-764

Furthermore, he states it is imperative that this is made clear to the those who were never subjected to such discrimination or segregation if the issue is to be resolved.⁹⁰

Another angle to analyse is the policy action that was taken on the international stage, though this is not exclusively focused on the topic of education. Thus far, the topic of antigypsyism and lack of education among Roma has proven to be very difficult questions to solve. When looking at Roma integration from the European institutional perspective, it was Will Guy who stated in 2009 that the most successful *good practices* in Roma integration were *bottom-up approaches* on a small scale. He continues that the key is then to map out these good practices, but make sure to keep the approach local to maximise its chances of success.⁹¹ Guy furthermore points out the risk of *Europeanisation* of the Roma integration question, as this shifts responsibility to the European Commission, away from national governments which would result in less progress as the Commission lacks the formal powers to drive meaningful change.⁹²

This is underlined in 2012 by Peter Vermeersch, who adds that the Commission is aware of the risks of Europeanisation, despite attempts to Europeanise approaches to Roma integration which seems logical given the cross-European nature of the Roma minority.⁹³ Vermeersch concludes that the role of European institutions is fourfold: keeping in mind that Europeanisation of Roma integration may shift responsibility from member states to the European Union (1), making possible ethnic mobilisation through initiatives at the European policy level, not just for Roma but for other groups as well (2), keeping in mind that the situation of Roma is not the same all across Europe (3), minding the rise of Euroscepticism also having negative effects for Roma as Roma can be seen as the 'winners' of European integration (4).⁹⁴

When looking more specifically at educational policy at the EU-level concerning Roma, Nafsika Alexiadou points out that policy is difficult to monitor as data on participation and progression among Roma is very difficult to acquire. She also states that education policy is difficult to apply to the Roma as they often do not have official citizenship in their countries of residence or may be a migrant population. All in all, she repeats the European Commission's own conclusions when saying

⁹⁰ Iulius Rostas. *Antigypsyism, education and the media: ways forward*. *Identities* 24:6, 2017: 760-768. 767

⁹¹ Will Guy. *EU Initiatives on Roma: Limitations and Ways Forward*. In *Romani Politics in Contemporary Europe: Poverty, Ethnic Mobilization, and the Neoliberal Order*, by Nando Sigona and Nidhi Trehan (eds.), 23-50. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. 42-43

⁹² Will Guy. *EU Initiatives on Roma*. 44-45

⁹³ Peter Vermeersch. *Reframing the Roma: EU Initiatives and the politics of reinterpretation*. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 38.8, 2012: 1195-1212. 1203-1204

⁹⁴ Peter Vermeersch. *Reframing the Roma*. 1208-1209

that progress has been lacklustre.⁹⁵ Alexiadou points out that the European Union will construct and frame the education policy in its international framework and may also point out options for policy change. However, she also points out that fostering equality in education is still a national responsibility rather than a European one, though the EU can still provide more focus on overall legal and policy approaches.⁹⁶

Overall, this literature review shows the complexity of the question of Roma integration on many different levels and with very differing intricacies across the board. Some trends relevant for this research have been identified, for example the constant mention of antigypsyism and the Roma civil society with an emphasis on NGOs. Taking the more specific concepts and models mentioned in this review, the main variables used in field research are set up, but before this can be done some more elaboration is required. The next sections of this review venture into some of the more important models used in this research, not directly related to the main literature review.

3.3 Evidence-based Policy

One of the central concepts mentioned in the introduction was the EU's approach towards *policy learning* as mentioned in its most recent report on National Roma Integration Strategies. At its core, this refers to the concept that educational practices from experience are lessons for future strategies on Roma integration. This alludes strongly to the concept of *evidence-based policy (EBP)*. This form of policy is relatively new but perfectly suited as a main point of focus in this research. When consulting the work of Parkhurst, evidence-based policy refers to the use of evidence to inform the 'right' decision in coming up with policy. The evidence can tell the policymaker what works and what does not, though this may also include a debate on the validity of that evidence.⁹⁷ Central to the application of evidence-based policy, is that it is not universal. Two points allude to this, that what works may be *socially undesirable (1)* and that *what works here may not work there (2)*.⁹⁸ Evidence-based policy, being inherently a political affair, is also liable to political bias. Thus, Parkhurst defines two forms of such biases that are important to be kept in mind. The first is the *technological bias* which may result from flaws in methodology through personal bias or manipulation of results.⁹⁹ The

⁹⁵ Nafsika Alexiadou. *Equality and Education Policy in the European Union—An Example from the Case of Roma*. In *Policy and Inequality in Education Vol. 1*, by Stephen Parker, Kalervo N. Gulson and Trevor Gale (eds.), 111-132. Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd., 2017. 123-124

⁹⁶ Nafsika Alexiadou. *Equality and Education Policy in the European Union*. 126-127

⁹⁷ Justin Parkhurst. *The Politics of Evidence: From evidence-based policy to the good governance of evidence*. Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2017. 14

⁹⁸ Justin Parkhurst. *The Politics of Evidence*. 19-20

⁹⁹ Justin Parkhurst. *The politics of Evidence*. 44-45



other may be *issue bias* which simply points to the fact that the important information has not been, or cannot be counted and therefore may skew what evidence is seen as valid.¹⁰⁰ To briefly conclude, these biases and reservations are important to keep in mind when the cases are selected for this research and need to be extensively analysed. This also counts for the literature review which is an important subject in EBP research.

The link between EBP and Roma integration is not merely implied, however. The introduction already showed a similar subject in *policy-learning*. The term evidence-based policy can also be found in scholarly work on the topic of Roma integration itself. Its relevance is particularly visible in most research that has taken place since the inception of the EU's framework on National Roma Integration Strategies, meaning in 2010s. The European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI) already mentioned EBP in a 2013 report on the new EU framework some of the challenges of its application in the EU framework. Tremlett and McGarry summarise that the use of EBP is limited for three reasons. That is that the evidence-based research can be '*positivistic*' and thus either refers to policy goals that are too high or too low (1). Another issue is that its application is too *rigid* and confirm to the status quo of integration strategy, allowing for little freedom for new creative solutions (2). Lastly, evidence-based research in the EU-context often *undermined* the expertise in the field and did not sufficiently keep the intricacies of contact with individuals and communities in mind (3).¹⁰¹ The challenge then revolves around both identifying more effective forms of evidence, as well as attempting to standardise them across all involved European member states.¹⁰² Marushiakova and Popov built on this concept and added that there exists a '*Catch 22*' in the sense that evidence-based policy was the solution to fighting the lacklustre social inclusion of Roma. However, social policy stigmatised Roma further and removed them from society even more.¹⁰³ This approach very strongly compares to the form of issue bias as was mentioned earlier in the literature review.

The InGRID network also mentions EBP in its endeavours towards social inclusion of Roma in Europe. The issue, as outlined by Bernát and Messing, revolves around the acquisition of data surrounding Roma. The problem related to EBP is that basic data on the living conditions of Roma is often lacking or incomplete which makes it difficult to inform policymakers.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ Justin Parkhurst. *The politics of Evidence*. 54-55

¹⁰¹ A. Tremlett and A. McGarry. *Challenges facing researchers on Roma minorities in contemporary Europe: Notes towards a research program*. Flensburg: European Centre for Minority Issues, 2013. 10

¹⁰² A. Tremlett and A. McGarry. *Challenges facing researchers on Roma minorities in contemporary Europe*. 11

¹⁰³ Elena Mariushiakova and Vesselin Popov. *European Policies for Social Inclusion of Roma: A Catch 22?* Social Inclusion 3(5), 2015: 19-31. 29

¹⁰⁴ A. Bernát and V. Messing. *Methodological and data infrastructure report on Roma population in the EU*: InGRID Working Paper MS20 3. Leuven: HIVA - Research Institute for Work and Society, 2016. 5



Additional issues mentioned by Bernát and Messing confirm earlier research. Again, the ambitions and goals of the framework for NRIS are too vaguely defined and the monitoring process too vague and not sufficiently evaluated.¹⁰⁵ Overall, it is clear then that evidence-based policy clearly is an important concept within Roma integration strategies, but its application is still severely limited. It is precisely these shortcomings that are the central building block that this research tries to create. However, this is only one part of the overall problem. ‘

3.4 Institutional Departure Model and Intergenerational Learning

It could be argued that education has a special position within the effects of antigypsyism. That is because it stands at the core of some of the other issues that result from antigypsyism. O’Higgins and Brüggemann analysed the implications of limited access to education in people of Roma decent in 2014 in the Czech Republic. They conclude that marginalisation in employment is not simply an effect of discrimination, but also a more structural problem related to limited access to education, as well as discrimination in education. The latter refers to Roma overrepresentation in *special schooling* as opposed to regular education.¹⁰⁶ This structural problem is underlined in a European Commission report, written by Farkas, on the status of access to education in the Roma community. This report states that access to public education is crucial to attain access to the labour market, as well as social inclusion in its entirety.¹⁰⁷

Torotcoi and Pecak in 2019 attribute this concept to Pinto’s *Institutional Department Model*. According to Torotcoi and Pecak, this theory helps explain how antigypsyism has a lasting effect on students’ motivation due to discrimination in education and within society.¹⁰⁸ These accounts all point to the same structural problems that have poor education as a result.

The importance of continued education can also be related to the concept of *intergenerational learning*. When it comes to Roma, Barbora Vaněk gives a good account on how important this concept is on the topic of Roma education. This is mainly through the fact that parents may develop a positive view on education for their children when they compare it to the education they received themselves.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ A. Bernát and V. Messing. Methodological and data infrastructure report on Roma population in the EU. 7

¹⁰⁶ Niall O’Higgins Christian Brüggemann. *The Consequences of Cumulative Discrimination: how special schooling influences employment and wages of Roma in the Czech Republic*. European Educational Research Journal 14(3), 2014: 282-294. 291

¹⁰⁷ Farkas, Lilla. Report on discrimination of Roma children in education. Brussels: European Union, 2014. 13

¹⁰⁸ Simona Torotcoi and Marco Pecak. *Path to Higher Education: Combating Antigypsyism by Building Roma Students’ Aspirations and Resilience*. In Dimensions of Antigypsyism in Europe, by Ismael Cortés Gómez and Marcus End (eds), 301-321. Brussels: European Network Against Racism and Central Council of German Sinti and Roma, 2019. 302

¹⁰⁹ Barbora Vaněk. *Roma People in Intergenerational Learning—Emerging Approach To Learning*. CBU International Conference Proceedings Vol. 6, 2018: 836-842. 839-840

3.5 Variable Matrix

Taking the main concepts and theories from the literature review and theoretical framework, the last step in this chapter is providing a form of summary that serves as an indicator for the main body of research. In this section, a matrix is provided of the main independent variables used in this research. These independent variables are all based on the main findings of the literature review, forming a structured frame upon which the methods are based.

Measured Variable	Coding	Description
1. Degree of Antigypsyism	1.1 Institutional antigypsyism 1.2 Discrimination 1.3 Othering of Roma 1.4 Standard of living	The degree of manifestations of marginalisation such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How structural antigypsyism is • Roma being discriminated against • Whether Roma are perceived as different from non-Roma • Degree of access to basic necessities
2. Form of Societal Organisation of Roma	2.1 Self-Identification 2.2 Homogenisation 2.3 Politicisation 2.4 Transnationalisation	The form of the Roma society analysed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What Roma self-identify as • Possibility to describe a more or less homogeneous group • How they are organised on the national and political level • Their relation to the non-Roma population
3. Form of the Integration Strategy	3.1 Heteroidentification 3.2 Policy disconnect 3.3 Europeanisation 3.4 Bottom-up approach	The formulation of national Roma integration policy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way in which the issue is identified and the goals are defined • the connect or disconnect between national and local policy

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The degree to which the issue has been Europeanised • Whether the approach is bottom-up or top-down
4. State of education	<p>4.1 School segregation</p> <p>4.2 School-leaving</p> <p>4.3 Roma involvement</p> <p>4.4 Level of support</p> <p>4.5 Legal basis</p>	<p>The educational state of Roma:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether Roma are segregated from mainstream education • Whether Roma have a high rate of school-leaving • Whether the Roma are directly involved and encouraged in education • Whether the educational system provides individual support to students • The educational laws as they pertain to Roma

Table 1 Variable Matrix

4. Case Study

Where the chapter before this covered the main concepts and theories related to Roma integration and the role of education therein, this chapter goes into the research proper. As explained in the methodology section, the first step for this research is the case selection and its justification, followed by the case analysis proper.

4.1 Case selection

What has been shown clearly from the introduction and the literature review, is that the question of Roma marginalisation is something that can be seen all across the European Union and even beyond. It is therefore important to first clarify the geographical area from which the case is selected. As mentioned in the introduction, Central and Eastern Europe has a large concentration of Roma. To illustrate, the second European Union minorities and discriminations survey from 2018 (EU-MIDIS II) published by the FRA surveyed the situation of Roma in 9 countries. These countries were Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Greece, Hungary, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain, together containing around 80% of the European Union's Roma minority.¹¹⁰ Estimated statistics like these are useful in identifying countries that have a large Roma minority, and as such the selection of the case is first limited to these countries. The question is whether, out of the countries mentioned here, the decision is made to pick a country that shows good progress or more lacking progress. The FRA reported in 2019 that the European Semester (a yearly policy framework to provide a perspective on how to develop policy in an inclusive way) provided policy recommendations on Roma inclusion for Bulgaria, Czechia, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia.¹¹¹ Based on the fact that improvement would then seem the most necessary in these countries, the decision is made here to pay attention specifically to one of these countries. As extensively discussed already, data on Roma is difficult to acquire and to confirm in official censuses, as quoted in Bernát and Messing.¹¹² In its evaluation for the Framework for NRIS in 2015, the European Parliament differentiates between new member states (NMS) and old member states (OMS).¹¹³ This thesis chooses to focus on these new member states, the member states that more recently joined the EU. The EP quoted in 2015 that, out of these NMS, the country

¹¹⁰ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. *Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey: Roma - Selected Findings*. Survey, Luxembourg: Publication Office of the European Union, 2018. 8

¹¹¹ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. *Fundamental Rights Report 2019*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2019. 112

¹¹² A. Bernát V. Messing. *Methodological and data infrastructure report on Roma population in the EU*: InGRID Working Paper MS20 3. Leuven: HIVA - Research Institute for Work and Society, 2016. 5

¹¹³ European Parliament Policy Department for Citizen's Rights and Constitutional Affairs. *Evaluation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies*. Brussels: European Union, 2015. 16



of Romania has the largest Roma minority with estimations ranging from 1.9 to 2.5 million.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, that EP report shows that Romania shows interesting practices on the topic of education, such as projects with pre-school participation, measures to combat school segregation and facilitating continued education among Roma and training Romani teachers.¹¹⁵ It is therefore assumed that Romania is a good source for finding a promising case of a Roma educational project to be analysed.

Selecting a suitable case study from the country of Romania was no small task. To make the selection, the researcher utilised both his own network, as well as conducting a simple online search for NGOs or foundations involved with Roma communities. Demand was that they did conduct some form of educational project targeting Roma exclusively, be that at the pre-school level or at the primary, or secondary education levels. This would preferably target some 30 to 50 children from the age range of 3 years until around 14 or 15 years. Based on the deviant case selection strategy used in this research, a number of criteria were defined. The educational project would have to take place on the local level, meaning town, village or community-based to fit the bottom-up approach(1). The project should be running for a period of at least 10 years to be able to identify some aspects of intergenerational learning. (2) The then years are chosen because this allows enough time for a child having finished at least primary education. The project should be run by an NGO existing in a mixed international form, consisting of a Romanian and some other national support, both in order to identify the transnational component of Roma civil society and to ease communication in field research (3).

Using these criteria, the search was narrowed down roughly to the geographical area of Transylvania, where some 5 NGOs were eligible for analysis. The main deciding factor for the final selected case was driven by reasons not mainly driven by these criteria though. The selected case was a Dutch-Romanian NGO called *Foundation Charis*, located in the village of Florești which is in the vicinity of the city of Cluj-Napoca. It prides itself on its Christian identity and is active in a small Roma community of around 2000 people. One of its main educational projects exists in the form of an after-school homework program that runs twice a week. It has been doing this project since 2005, meaning at the time of writing this thesis it has been running for 16 years.¹¹⁶¹¹⁷ In addition to this project, the NGO also has running projects concerning medical assistance, family care and

¹¹⁴ European Parliament Policy Department for Citizen's Rights and Constitutional Affairs. *Evaluation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies*. Brussels: European Union, 2015. 16

¹¹⁵ European Parliament Policy Department for Citizen's Rights and Constitutional Affairs. *Evaluation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies*. 52

¹¹⁶ Appendix 1: Meeting Notes Marien Kroon (Foundation Charis) in Dutch

¹¹⁷ Appendix 1 is written in Dutch, meaning the information used here has had to be translated. This was done with the utmost care by the author of this thesis who made sure to stick as close to the original text as possible.



construction.¹¹⁸ In addition the NGO runs a church, as well as separate programmes for children, teens and women.¹¹⁹ The team at the NGO is dynamic, but consists of some 12 Dutch and Romanian employees and volunteers. These factors mean the NGO perfectly fits the three criteria that were set up for case selection. There are additional factors that encouraged the use of this NGO as the deviant case, for example its central position in the area (1), the ability for the research to converse extensively in Dutch, providing ease of research (2), already-established contact with the NGO-leader who also functions as a gatekeeper to the Roma community (3) and its relative size being quite large and its organisation well-established in comparison to other NGOs (4). To wrap up the case selection, table 2 below shows the overall

Table 2 Case Characteristics

Criteria	Foundation Charis Characteristic
1. Community Size	1. Ca. 2,000 Roma in a town of about ca. 60,000
2. Form and Running time of Project	2. After-school homework programme, running for 16 years (2006-now)
3. Organisational Form	3. Mixed Dutch and Romanian team with foreign and domestic sponsors
Deviant Factor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing activities since 2006 • Focus on education rather than emergency care (food, clothes, housing) • Accredited for education by local government
Additional Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dutch-speaking community gatekeeper • Existing contact with NGO director • Central location in Transylvania

¹¹⁸ Foundation Charis. Projects. 2021. <https://stcharis.org/en/projects/> (accessed July 17, 2021).

¹¹⁹ Foundation Charis. Church. 2021. <https://stcharis.org/en/church/> (accessed July 17, 2021).



4.2 Case Analysis

The case study proper was conducted mainly through the field research as described in the methodology chapter of this thesis. One of the first steps taken took place in the form of a preliminary meeting on the 26th of January 2021 during which basic information on the NGO was acquired and possibilities for field research were discussed. Due to the Covid-19 crisis, travel to Romania was severely hampered. As a result, field research could not be conducted until much later, when travel restrictions between the Netherlands and Romania were lifted. The field research took place in week 27 of 2021, from the period of 4 July until 11 July. During this period, field notes were kept from 5 July until 9 July and 5 interviews were conducted, as well as one unplanned interview which was incorporated in the field notes of 9 July. The first interview was conducted with a kindergarten teacher for the Cluj municipality, close to Foundation Charis. The second interview was held with a representative of the Roma taskforce of the Florești municipality. It is important to note that this interview was held in Romanian and therefore there is no transcript, only interview notes in English. Unfortunately, no live interpretation was possible, so the notes were made up afterwards. This interview was instead conducted by miss Erzsebet Kocsis who is the social worker for Foundation Charis. Furthermore, mister Dorel disclosed he could not go into great detail on the topic of Roma integration because of certain classified topics. The third interview was held with the NGO director of the Coming Home Association from the city of Târgu Mureș. This is a different kind of NGO which focuses more on financing external projects rather than setting them up. The fourth interview was held with one of the Foundation Charis teachers from the educational program. The fifth interview was a wrap-up interview with the Foundation Charis director. An additional sixth, unplanned interview was held last with one of the Foundation Charis coordinators who was also the resident nurse.¹²⁰ This last interview was included in the field notes. In addition, visits were made to the Roma community, however this were somewhat limited given the Corona-restrictions. A further visit was made to a Roma community at the Pata Rât landfill near Cluj. The combination of this field research, the literature review and additional literature based on the findings has led to the following case analysis.

When looking at the case of Foundation Charis from a process-tracing standpoint, it is important to define the starting point of that process. Marien Kroon states that the foundation, as it exists now, started in 2006 in the Roma community of Florești. It was at this point that the main issues the Roma face were identified, and attempts were made to find a solution. As Kroon states: “if you want to

¹²⁰ Two out of the six interviews were held in Dutch for ease of interviewing. These were translated to Dutch, when necessary, by the author of this thesis. Utmost care has been taken to stick as close to the original meaning as possible.



make a change, you need to start with the children, so you have to set up an educational project”.¹²¹ As he describes, the NGO had no real idea on how to go about this in 2006, so they simply got started on it in the best way they could. Thanks to outside financing, a building could be purchased, and a teacher could be kept on board. However, straight from the start a point was made to focus on an after-school programme, so regular education is not undermined, and the child has a safe-space after school. This latter point is important because home situations could be quite bad.¹²² One of the most important factors that was repeatedly mentioned in the NGO interviews, was the question of resources. Charis set up an educational project with donator money in 2006, but the two other NGOs that were interviewed went through different stages. ProRoma (first NGO interviewed), for example, initially set up a kindergarten at Pata Rât, which was later taken over by the local government as an official kindergarten. Thanks to this construction, education is quite well organised in this area near Cluj-Napoca.¹²³ The Coming Home Association finances school projects itself, offering the resources to the schools themselves to provide the local Roma with the equipment they need to go to school. Daniel de Groot, the director, explains how it is difficult to make this structural because payment for teachers is a long-term cost that is often difficult to find a sponsor for.¹²⁴ The question of funding is extremely dividing when NGOs are compared. The earlier example of the kindergarten at the Pata Rât rubbish dump shows that education is well organised there as a lot of funds and attention go to this area. This is believed to be due to the fact that it is a rubbish dump, and therefore receives a lot of media attention.¹²⁵ An additional issue is that, besides structural funding being hard to find, when it is offered by the government it comes with a large amount of paperwork which may add additional costs. Anca Bâlc, a teacher at Charis, explained that the local council sometimes supports the educational program with short projects, but a lot of paperwork is expected to get access to funds. In addition, these funds are only on the short term, so not structural.¹²⁶ Importantly, the issue persists with European funds, as this topic was mentioned in 3 of the 5 planned interview with each interviewee mentioning European funding is only available for 2 years. As Kroon describes it this is a big issue, as that funding is used to expand the project, but then the funding disappears. This leaves a

¹²¹ Marien Kroon. Interview by Tomas de Jong. Semi-structured Interview. Florești, 9 July 2021. (Appendix 6, Timestamp 0:00)

¹²² Marien Kroon. Interview by Tomas de Jong. Semi-structured Interview. Florești, 9 July 2021. (Appendix 6, Timestamp 0:00)

¹²³ Anca Guzman. Interview by Tomas de Jong. Semi-Structured Interview. Cluj-Napoca, 5 July 2021. (Appendix 2, Question 1)

¹²⁴ Daniel de Groot. Interview by Tomas de Jong. Semi-Structured Interview. Targu Mures, 8 July 2021. (Appendix 4, Timestamp: 19:15).

¹²⁵ Tomas de Jong. Field Notes by Tomas de Jong. Descriptive Notes. 5 July 2021. (Appendix 7: Field Notes)

¹²⁶ Anca Bâlc. Interview by Tomas de Jong. Semi-Structured Interview. 9 July 2021. (Appendix 5, Timestamp: 21:50)

large hole in the budget after which progress would quickly disappear again.¹²⁷ Despite these issues, Charis has managed to set up a long-running educational programme. This was, however, realised by donators rather than public funding. When such funding is not available, or if funding is not organised or structured well, this can lead to an NGO having to shut down or pass over responsibility. The first factor that proves crucial in a successful educational project with Roma is then, perhaps unsurprisingly, consistent funding of the project in order to be able to set up a long-term perspective.

This long-term perspective is seen to be a consistent theme in NGO work with Roma. The second factor, that is addressed here, is an excellent example; building a bond of trust. Supporting a Roma community is an endeavour that runs for many generations and can only be done if the community trusts the NGO. A project can be organised well, but if there is no trust and relation built up with the community, it will fall through. The fact that the Roma Community at Florești has seen Charis' people active there for 15 years is an extremely important asset.¹²⁸ On the one hand, this relates to the topic of intergenerational learning as described in the literature review according to the work of Vaněk and the Institutional Departure Model as applied by Torotcoi and Pecak. In the Florești area, one of the biggest issues among young Roma is early school leaving and lack of parental involvement. This is often related to the fact that the children are required to stay at home to go out and beg in order to generate some income for the family.¹²⁹

This second issue, parental involvement, relates directly to the creation of a trust-based relationship which Kroon deems crucial. Ryder, Rostas and Taba introduced the concept of inclusive community development (ICD) in a 2014 article, relating this to Roma facing segregation in school. In doing so, they noted the importance of engaging the entire Roma community to solve this issue.¹³⁰ They too note, that NGOs were often underfunded in their attempts to engage in ICD, as governments did not get involved much.¹³¹ A 2020 article by Khalfaoui, García-Carrión and Vilardón-Gallego noted that trust-building has proven to be crucial in furthering the educational development of Roma. A personal relationship between parents and teachers creates a positive environment in which Roma

¹²⁷ Marien Kroon. Interview by Tomas de Jong. Semi-structured Interview. Florești, 9 July 2021. (Appendix 6, Timestamp 43:20)

¹²⁸ Marien Kroon. Interview by Tomas de Jong. Semi-structured Interview. Florești, 9 July 2021. (Appendix 6, Timestamp 48:45)

¹²⁹ Vidrean Dorel. Interview by Tomas de Jong. Structured Interview. Florești, 7 July 2021. (Appendix 3, Question 7)

¹³⁰ Ryder, AR, Rostas, I and Taba, M. "Nothing about us without us': the role of inclusive community development in school desegregation for Roma Communities." *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 17:4, 2014: 518-539. 519

¹³¹ Ryder, AR, Rostas, I and Taba, M. "Nothing about us without us': the role of inclusive community development in school desegregation for Roma Communities." *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 17:4, 2014: 518-539. 528



are actually involved in the education of their children.¹³² The reason these two concepts are mentioned here, is because a similar situation exists in the Roma community in Florești. Furthermore, similar opinions exist with the NGO representatives that were interviewed. Kroon mentioned that progress can be seen in the fact that some Roma children took part in the educational program in the past but dropped out later on. When these children grew up, they wanted their children to take part in the program because they ended up seeing the merits of it.¹³³ This is how the intergenerational learning effect can be noticed, but the parents are crucial in this because they are still the ones responsible for the children. When looking at the tangible effects of the educational program, Anca Bâlc estimates that some 80-85% of children now manage to finish all eight grades of primary education, but a lot of support was necessary because Roma parents often lacked the skills to help their children go through education.¹³⁴

The Coming Home Association director mentioned something similar on the role of parents. He states that it is very important to support parents where possible, but not to replace their role, but rather complement it. Where the parents require assistance, the NGO should provide it but leave the parents with the final say.¹³⁵ This also speaks to the larger issue with Roma in that the NGO should not completely take the responsible position but should offer the instruments to allow Roma to take responsibility for themselves. This is a clear goal in Charis as well in that one of their tangible objectives is to have Roma children be the teachers in the educational project themselves. The fact that the Charis Foundation has created this bond of trust is very apparent. In a visit to the Roma community itself, this became very apparent in the fact that the Roma greeted him amicably, showed him their homes and new purchases and cordially invited him over for a drink; they really seem to treat him as a friend.¹³⁶

This kind of achievement should not be underestimated in how crucial it is in running an educational project. Kroon, in fact, mentions the trust factor as the most important one, saying that any project that does not involve the parents becomes nearly impossible.¹³⁷ This is an uphill battle, as many examples were named of challenges the NGO had to face in trying to gain this trust or in trying to

¹³² A. Khalfaoui, R. García-Carrión and L. Villardón-Gallego. *Bridging the gap: engaging Roma and migrant families in early childhood education through trust-based relationships*. European Early Childhood Education Research Journal Vol. 28(5), 2020: 701-711. 706-707

¹³³ Tomas de Jong. Field Notes by Tomas de Jong. Descriptive Notes. 6 July 2021. (Appendix 7: Field Notes)

¹³⁴ Anca Bâlc. Interview by Tomas de Jong. Semi-Structured Interview. 9 July 2021. (Appendix 5, Timestamp: 17:00)

¹³⁵ Daniel de Groot. Interview by Tomas de Jong. Semi-Structured Interview. Targu Mures, 8 July 2021. (Appendix 4, Timestamp: 19:15).

¹³⁶ Tomas de Jong. Field Notes by Tomas de Jong. Descriptive Notes. 7 July 2021. (Appendix 7: Field Notes)

¹³⁷ Marien Kroon. Interview by Tomas de Jong. Semi-structured Interview. Florești, 9 July 2021. (Appendix 6, Timestamp 15:34)

involve parents in the educational program. To name one example, Marien mentioned in a remark that there was a situation of blackmail, where a Roma parent would only allow their child to go to school if the NGO would fix the door in their house.¹³⁸ It is therefore naïve to assume that the Roma are only in need of help; they also have a responsibility themselves in bettering their situation. To exemplify this, the situation at Pata Rât shows that the Roma receive a lot of opportunities for employment with good pay, as well as education. However, this does not better their situation as they do not handle the money well. Therefore, education is key, as it also teaches them how to better their situation and use their money responsibly.¹³⁹ It is important to note that this last statement on responsibility is difficult to take as fact. It has an anecdotal value to it, just as the story about school segregation told to miss Guzman by a friend. Both topics were still mentioned here, as they do confirm what is outlined in the literature review in this research.

A third factor looked at, is the living situation of the children themselves. This is somewhat related to parental involvement, but focuses on something slightly different as it also includes the topic of antigypsyism. As mentioned in the literature review, and briefly before this, the institutional departure model is quite relevant with Roma. The home situation naturally ties into this concept, as a bad home situation can discourage students from staying in school. Kroon mentions that the majority of Roma children in the programme are from 'disadvantaged families' where there may be issues at home. For this reason, he says, the focus should not be solely on education, but also on creating a safe space for these children where they are free to be children and to feel some appreciation.¹⁴⁰ The contrast becomes very clear when observing the children, for example during a graduation ceremony that was held at the foundation. The children showed up looking their best, and though some parents were present, there were also children who were there on their own which Kroon attributed to bad home situations.¹⁴¹

On the topic of racism, there are also issues. Anca Guzman, for example, speaks of an anecdote from a friend who works at a primary school where Roma children are segregated from the other Romanian children. This happens, for example, by placing them in a different schoolyard, but also through different treatment from the teachers. Guzman explains that the reaction of the Roma

¹³⁸ Tomas de Jong. Field Notes by Tomas de Jong. Descriptive Notes. 5 July 2021. (Appendix 7: Field Notes)

¹³⁹ Anca Guzman. Interview by Tomas de Jong. Semi-Structured Interview. Cluj-Napoca, 5 July 2021. (Appendix 2, Timestamp: 8:40)

¹⁴⁰ Marien Kroon. Interview by Tomas de Jong. Semi-structured Interview. Florești, 9 July 2021. (Appendix 6, Timestamp 14:34)

¹⁴¹ Tomas de Jong. Field Notes by Tomas de Jong. Descriptive Notes. 7 July 2021. (Appendix 7: Field Notes)



children, however, is also not good. They are difficult children to work with, and also very proud so they do not respond well to this kind of rejection, meaning their reactions may be very severe. This causes a vicious circle of bad treatment resulting in bad behaviour.¹⁴² This shows that the issue of antigypsyism is not a one-sided affair but comes from both the side of Romanians and Roma.

To further illustrate, Anca Bâlc from Charis describes that the children that join their educational program may often be surprised by the respect they are treated with in the educational project. Still, when they join the programme, they often have a lot to make up for in skills they lack which is a large challenge.¹⁴³ Small classes and individual attention are therefore key, which is something that these children may lack in regular education. They receive this in the educational program at Charis, which is extremely valuable. In this way, the negative home situation can be forgotten for a little while, while the children also realise their own potential and worth in the educational program at Charis. This seems to be an excellent way of reducing the negative causes for early school leaving. One thing is in this factor, and the previous on inclusive community development and parental involvement, is important to note. What is implied in both these factors is a sort of ‘cultural change’ in the attitude of Roma in order to provide them with the tools to better themselves. However, when referring back to what is said in the literature review on ‘essentialising Roma’, it is important not to make too big a deal of their being Roma. Kroon makes a point when he says “Roma should be free to remain Roma, but the question is how that can be integrated”.¹⁴⁴ The difficult question is how the discrimination can be taken away and how Roma can be themselves and have the same opportunities as other Europeans.

The concepts of Roma culture and cultural change are central to the entire Roma integration question. As mentioned earlier, intergenerational learning is a key concept in increasing the Roma standard of living. This relates strongly to Roma culture, as their culture has an influence on their attitudes to education and employment. Roma culture was already mentioned in the literature review of this research. To repeat, Sławomir Kaprański stated that there is no single Roma culture. Instead, there Roma culture can be described as transnational nationalism or transnationalism. This causes a manifestation of identity that reaches beyond borders and takes different forms across these borders. Despite this, there is still a tendency to adhere to a Roma identity across these

¹⁴² Anca Guzman. Interview by Tomas de Jong. Semi-Structured Interview. Cluj-Napoca, 5 July 2021. (Appendix 2, Timestamp: 15:26)

¹⁴³ Anca Bâlc. Interview by Tomas de Jong. Semi-Structured Interview. 9 July 2021. (Appendix 5, Timestamp: 4:14)

¹⁴⁴ Marien Kroon. Interview by Tomas de Jong. Semi-structured Interview. Florești, 9 July 2021. (Appendix 6, Timestamp 10:11)



borders.¹⁴⁵ Though culture itself may be less of a concern in NGO activities, it is still a topic that plays a central role. This is expressed mostly in the attempts to attain long-term effects in parental engagement, intergenerational learning and inclusive community development. A 2012 article by Schneeweis describes discourse on Roma in Romanian media. In her words, Roma are often seen in a negative way. One example she gives is the idea that Roma are criminals, unwilling to work or to make a living.¹⁴⁶ Uzunova underlines that this negative perspective exists. However, she also points out that a lack of common identity for Roma is a big hurdle in integration efforts. Furthermore, the Roma are unwilling to participate or take responsibility as a result.¹⁴⁷ This underlines some of the findings in this research. For example, when Kroon states that discrimination against Roma really comes from both the side of the Romanians and the Roma.¹⁴⁸ De Groot also underlines this when he says that to some degree Romanians have a point when they assume Roma children are likely to steal.¹⁴⁹ Though no true definition to Roma culture can be given, it is clear that it is still an important topic. The research done shows that a change in culture is necessary, and that education is the most useful tool to achieve this. Antigypsyism is an issue of two sides and cultural change is necessary to change Roma's attitude in order to solve this, not just making Romanians aware of what Roma culture is really about. That does not mean that Roma culture should be changed or assimilated, but simply that they should be given the tools to improve their standard of living. It is important that their 'being Roma' is not essentialised too much, as stated in the literature review. It is okay to be Roma and to identify with it, but it should not be the main focus of policy. Doing so may cause Roma to be even more removed from the rest of society.

A fourth factor to look at, is the organisation of an NGO, both internally and externally. Foundation Charis is rather unique in the fact that it is accredited by the Romanian government to offer after school programmes in its educational project. This already denotes the important point of cooperation with the government, which may not be self-evident. The local Florești government places a very high value in its cooperation with Foundation Charis. Furthermore, they note that most of their activities concerning Roma integration are done through cooperation with the foundation.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁵ Sławomir Kaprański. *Memory, Identity and Roma Transnational Nationalism*. In *Transnational Memory: Circulation, Articulation, Scales*, by Chiara De Cesari and Ann Rigney (eds.), 195-218. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014. 197

¹⁴⁶ Adina Schneeweis. *If they really wanted to, they would: The press discourse of integration of the European Roma, 1990–2006*. *International Communication Gazette* 74.7, 2012: 673-689. 677

¹⁴⁷ Iskra Uzunova. *Roma integration in Europe: Why minority rights are failing*. *Arizona Journal of International and Comparative Law* Vol. 27 No. 1, 2010: 283-333. 293

¹⁴⁸ Marien Kroon. Interview by Tomas de Jong. Semi-structured Interview. Florești, 9 July 2021. (Appendix 6, Timestamp 10:11)

¹⁴⁹ Daniel de Groot. Interview by Tomas de Jong. Semi-Structured Interview. Targu Mures, 8 July 2021. (Appendix 4, Timestamp: 6:30).

¹⁵⁰ Vidrean Dorel. Interview by Tomas de Jong. Structured Interview. Florești, 7 July 2021. (Appendix 3, Questions 4 and 5)



Yet the view from the foundation side is perhaps more interesting to analyse. Though local government may state that NGO-cooperation is crucial, the reality is that such cooperation does not often take place. Pata Rât is an exception, as the government has taken over the kindergarten school there, but Kroon notes that the local government in Florești is not deeply involved with the NGO's activities. There is some perspective for more cooperation as the new mayor seems open to cooperation, but the reality is that the local government and the NGO seem to be working separately.¹⁵¹ The way de Groot describes it, the NGO's existence is purely because it fills the gaps where the local government fails to deliver because of time or budget constraints.¹⁵² This is essentially wasted potential, as the NGO has a position of trust and influence with the Roma which the local government could utilise to gain more traction and set up more projects. Unfortunately, it is exactly these budget and time constraints that seem to be hampering internal and external cooperation the most.

As partly stated before, one of the biggest responsibilities of local government is to monitor education. Guzman is very positive about the way local government monitors, as it is well-organised with proper financing and a clear curriculum.¹⁵³ From the Charis perspective, Bâlc notes that the government is actually too controlling in its surveillance tasks. She believes local government should provide more support, with a smaller report load for the NGO to control for it. That is to say that the current report load for the NGO should be lowered some, and that some more room for long-term financial support should become available.¹⁵⁴ Cooperation with local government is not the only organisational matter. Both Kroon and de Groot note that cooperation between NGOs is desired in addition to cooperation with local government. NGOs possess great expertise in their fields but are unable to exchange this on a regular basis because there simply is no time or money to set up a platform for cooperation.¹⁵⁵ Furthermore, when such cooperation does take place, it often does not lead to any tangible results.¹⁵⁶ Because the work of NGOs is so intensive, there is little room for expansion and cooperation on both the national and international level. This is a shame as very

¹⁵¹ Marien Kroon. Interview by Tomas de Jong. Semi-structured Interview. Florești, 9 July 2021. (Appendix 6, Timestamp 24:40)

¹⁵² Daniel de Groot. Interview by Tomas de Jong. Semi-Structured Interview. Targu Mures, 8 July 2021. (Appendix 4, Timestamp: 26:57).

¹⁵³ Anca Guzman. Interview by Tomas de Jong. Semi-Structured Interview. Cluj-Napoca, 5 July 2021. (Appendix 2, Timestamp: 26:47)

¹⁵⁴ Anca Bâlc. Interview by Tomas de Jong. Semi-Structured Interview. 9 July 2021. (Appendix 5, Timestamp: 17:00)

¹⁵⁵ Daniel de Groot. Interview by Tomas de Jong. Semi-Structured Interview. Targu Mures, 8 July 2021. (Appendix 4, Timestamp: 33:54).

¹⁵⁶ Marien Kroon. Interview by Tomas de Jong. Semi-structured Interview. Florești, 9 July 2021. (Appendix 6, Timestamp 24:40)

specific forms of expertise can be lost, and many NGO's have to "reinvent the wheel" as put by Kroon.¹⁵⁷

When placing this in a more international perspective, it becomes clear that this is a topic that has not received much attention yet in this specific case. When asked about any cooperation with international NGOs, Kroon stated that, even though Roma face trouble all over Europe, he has not had any contact with NGOs who work with Roma outside of Romania.¹⁵⁸ An explanation for this might be in how Bâlc describes that every community in Romania may be different in some way and that what works in one place may not work in another.¹⁵⁹ This exemplified the idea of the heterogeneity of the Roma issue as described in the literature review, based on the work of Kapralski. Furthermore, this underlines the idea of EBP which makes the same claim that what works in one place may not work in another.¹⁶⁰ Despite this fact, the NGOs do express interest in cooperation with other NGOs, which is something that is currently not possible. Though there are differences, expertise can still be exchanged which may help with the setting up of more NGO-initiatives.

When looking at the internal organisation of Foundation Charis, a unique characteristic is the fact that it employs both Dutch and Romanian employees and volunteers. This is simply for the fact that the NGO was initially set up by an American foundation, later on taken over by Marien and Yvonne Kroon. As a result, Charis is a Romanian NGO with a Dutch board, though the foundation does have plans to 'Romanianize'. This is done with the idea in mind that, when Kroon himself is stepping down as director, the NGO can still continue in Romania without Dutch backing.¹⁶¹ This helps explain the fact that the NGO has made considerable efforts to get accreditation for its education, as well as involvement with the local government by employing an administrator and a social worker as required by national law.¹⁶² All of these activities are done with focus on the long-term credibility of the NGO and is something crucial in its success. In the end, the target country is still Romania, so it would only make sense that the work with Roma is done by Romanians themselves.

¹⁵⁷ Marien Kroon. Interview by Tomas de Jong. Semi-structured Interview. Florești, 9 July 2021. (Appendix 6, Timestamp 1:00:54)

¹⁵⁸ Marien Kroon. Interview by Tomas de Jong. Semi-structured Interview. Florești, 9 July 2021. (Appendix 6, Timestamp 29:08)

¹⁵⁹ Anca Bâlc. Interview by Tomas de Jong. Semi-Structured Interview. 9 July 2021. (Appendix 5, Timestamp: 26:47)

¹⁶⁰ Justin Parkhurst. *The Politics of Evidence: From evidence-based policy to the good governance of evidence*. Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2017. 19-20

¹⁶¹ Tomas de Jong. Field Notes by Tomas de Jong. Descriptive Notes. 5 July 2021. (Appendix 7: Field Notes)

¹⁶² Marien Kroon. Interview by Tomas de Jong. Semi-structured Interview. Florești, 9 July 2021. (Appendix 6, Timestamp 40:14)



A last point that should be made, is that the second variable that was used for designing the questionnaires did not come up in the results much. This concerns the variable *form of societal organisation* which revolved around Roma self-identification, homogenisation, politicisation and transnationalisation. Questions were asked on these topics, but the simple reality was that these are topics which do not currently play a large role in Charis' activities. The topic of transnationalisation was already addressed earlier in this chapter in the sense that transnationalising the issue seems unnecessary because of the vast differences between Roma communities. Homogenising the Roma is simply not realistic in this sense. Self-identification of Roma seems to play somewhat of a role, for example in what was mentioned earlier about Roma pride and their negative, and sometimes extreme, reactions to being rejected. The topic of politicisation was addressed briefly in the interview with Kroon when he made mention of the 'Partido Romilor' which is the Romanian Roma people's party in Parliament. As he describes it, the party has two seats but is ran in a chaotic matter. Furthermore, he believes Roma have difficulties with taking a responsible role in politics.¹⁶³ These topics in particular can be seen as secondary to the current activities of the foundation. That is to say that politicisation and transnationalisation of the Roma issue may happen further down the line and is a goal but is currently not realistic to take place. This is in a similar way to how increased living conditions, employment and higher education are also end goals that might be reached through effective projects that take place currently. Again, a long-term perspective and approach is key to leave these goals.

To make sense of the findings of this case study and to place them in the context of the theory-building process tracing method, a last step is to formulate a mechanism which may help explain the success thus far of the educational program of Foundation Charis. To briefly recap, the success in 16 years of the educational project do show. As mentioned, a roughly estimated 80-85% of Roma children in the program finalise primary education now after taking part in the after-school programme at Foundation Charis. A promising new development is that there is even a child from the community who may now be able to go into university. This would be the first time somebody from the Florești Roma community would go to university. This child took part in the programme for 8 years, but Bâlc does mention that she still requires a lot of convincing to actually take this step.¹⁶⁴ To also repeat, experience shows that Roma children who dropped out of the after-school programme are now parents themselves. They see the merits of good education now after having

¹⁶³ Marien Kroon. Interview by Tomas de Jong. Semi-structured Interview. Florești, 9 July 2021. (Appendix 6, Timestamp 24:40)

¹⁶⁴ Anca Bâlc. Interview by Tomas de Jong. Semi-Structured Interview. 9 July 2021. (Appendix 5, Timestamp: 17:00)



dropped out themselves. As a result, they encourage their own children to take part in the programme and to finalise education in the regular system. These are small steps, but a clear improvement owed largely to long-term involvement in the Roma community. The next step is to make sense of the factors that contributed to these successes.

One of the most important factors, perhaps not unsurprisingly, is *consistent long-term funding (X1)* which has allowed Foundation Charis to stay active for the better part of 16 years. Thanks to this fact, a long-term educational project could be set up which is starting to pay off. The second important factor is related to this and refers to the overall long-term focus of the foundation. This expressed itself in the second important factor, being *long-term trust building (X2)*. This can also be related to the concept of inclusive community development (ICD) as described by Ryder et al. Related to this is another central factor as described by Kroon, namely *parental engagement (X3)* which is key in changing the attitude of the Roma towards education. This has the added benefit of also opening up other avenues of growth such as in employment and overall standard of living, which is why Charis places such great emphasis on it. A fourth factor that can be identified, relates to antigypsyism and the home situation. The idea of the *creation of a safe environment (X4)* relates to offering Roma children a space where they can forget about their home situation for a short while is crucial. On the other hand, this also allows them to see the value in themselves as they are also strongly encouraged in the program. The last factor to identify relates to the organisational aspect of the foundation. Compared to other, similar NGOs in the area, Charis is officially accredited to offer an after school educational program with all the paperwork to prove it. The NGO itself is also officially registered in Romania. This allows the NGO to place itself on the map more, providing a perspective for stronger cooperation with local government. This may open up avenues for future growth and expansion of projects. This factor can then be described as *official accreditation of activities (X5)* which simply relates to officially registering the NGO and getting accreditation to conduct activities. Based on the interviews and observations done for this research, it is believed that these 5 factors are the most important contributors to the success of the foundation. That success is difficult to confirm in numbers or statistics as none exist and are also not extremely tangible. As stated before, this can mostly be seen in a majority of children partaking in the educational project managing to finish primary school, some already getting a perspective to get into university and the parents getting a more positive attitude towards education. The success is therefore defined here as *improved access to and attitude towards education (Y)*. The underlying figure 3 describes the mechanism as it was described for this case study. It follows a simple process tracing structure of $X1+X2+X3+X4+X5=Y$.

*Consistent long-term funding (X1) + long-term trust building (X2) + parental engagement (X3) + creation of a safe environment (X4) + official accreditation of activities (X5) = **improve access to and attitude towards education (Y)***

Figure 3 Process tracing Mechanism

With this mechanism formulated, the first part of the research question is addressed, being *what example of a good practice in Roma education plans could contribute to wider European Union policy learning?*

4.3 Roma equality, inclusion and participation in the EU

The second part of the research question then focuses on how these lessons can be applied in European Policy. This is quite difficult, as this concerns a single-case study which means it is not necessarily a good source of evidence. This is because of the principle that, what may work in one place may not work in another. Despite this, the conducted research does yield some results that can be applied to European policy on Roma integration. In order to analyse this properly, the current framework for Roma integration is analysed. Based on this short analysis, the lessons from the case study can be applied.

A policy analysis on the EU Roma strategic framework could be the subject of an entirely separate thesis. This makes it a difficult topic to approach, made even harder for the reason that such analyses are very rare. This is likely because it is not a topic that receives a lot of attention. Some of the most central policy analyses were already quoted in the literature review. Some of the relevant points made in those articles, are repeated here. It is important to note that the analysis done here is limited only to Romania, rather than on Europe-wide policy. That is because of this research being a single-case study, meaning it is only relevant to the case and the country it is located in. There are still some points to be made on the EU's policy on Roma integration in its entirety, but care is taken not to make generalisations.

Vermeersch noted in 2012, that the European Union tries to act where the member states fall short. In addition, it has a large responsibility in monitoring progress. As he continues, a large issue in the European Institutions, in particular in the European Parliament, is that the EU may allow national politicians to shift blame to the EU level where they may fail on policy. His main critique on the EU's approach to Roma integration back in 2012 was the potential risk of domestic politicians shirking their duties and then shifting blame to the EU (1), reinforcement of the boundaries between Roma

and other people if the EU does not pay mind to the needs of both sides (2), the risk of homogenising the Roma issue when in reality each country has different situations (3) and lastly the rise of populism and extremism against Roma because of the EU's strong support of the Roma as a minority (4).¹⁶⁵ These observations coincide strongly with what this research has uncovered in this particular case. Moving on to another significant policy analysis conducted by Alexiadou in 2019 makes the important point that the European Union serves as the vehicle to add a global dimension to the Roma question. Again, the risk here is that it shifts responsibility from the national level to the European level.¹⁶⁶ This essentially lays bare the unwillingness that still exists among member states to address the issues Roma face. Much like what was described in the interviews for this research, Alexiadou remarked in 2019 that NGOs substitute the role that should be taken by European and national governments.¹⁶⁷ Lastly, another important point Alexiadou makes, is the fact that many Roma wanted to improve their community after having been provided with chances for education.¹⁶⁸ This coincides with the long-term goals of Charis which also include the desire to have the community itself take a more involved role with the projects. This was described in the form of ICD, or inclusive community development.

When analysing the policy itself, the first thing to look at is Romania's national Roma integration strategy for 2015-2020. This plan shows clear goals for education in Roma, complete with quotas such as 40,000 Roma children receiving a support programme and at least 20,000 Roma children having taken part in an after-school programme (such as the one done by Foundation Charis).¹⁶⁹ Romania's strategy shows a clear explanation of the relevant institutions that are active in Roma integration efforts, but the decentralised part is much less clear. Supposedly, on the local level, a Joint Working Group (JWG), County Office for Roma (COR), local experts, Local Initiative Group (LIG) and Local Working Group (LWG) are set up. Furthermore, a point is made to involve civil society,¹⁷⁰ of which Foundation Charis is most certainly a part. Yet when asked about this, Kroon stated that no efforts had been made to reach out to his NGO and to involve it in reaching the goals that the government set for itself. In his words, he felt like he was "a voice crying in the wilderness" in the

¹⁶⁵ Peter Vermeersch. *Reframing the Roma: EU Initiatives and the politics of reinterpretation*. Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies 38.8, 2012: 1195-1212. 1208-1209

¹⁶⁶ Nafsika Alexiadou. *Framing education policies and transitions of Roma students in Europe*. Comparative Education, 55:3, 2019: 422-442. 430

¹⁶⁷ Nafsika Alexiadou. *Framing education policies and transitions of Roma students in Europe*. 422-442. 433

¹⁶⁸ Nafsika Alexiadou. *Framing education policies and transitions of Roma students in Europe*. 422-442. 436

¹⁶⁹ European Commission. *Roma inclusion in Romania*. ec.europa.eu. 2021. https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/roma-eu/roma-inclusion-eu-country/roma-inclusion-romania_en (accessed August 5, 2021). 30

¹⁷⁰ European Commission. *Roma inclusion in Romania*. 47-49



sense that nobody seemed to notice the work of the NGO.¹⁷¹ The plans and the goals are then in place, but somehow there seems to be a lack of actual involvement from the government. When then expanding this to the European level, a similar issue seems to take place. The Commission states in its third objective *'Promote participation through empowerment, cooperation and trust'*, that it would contact at least 90 NGOs in *'EU-wide coordinated Roma civil society monitoring'*.¹⁷² Yet mention of bottom-up approaches from smaller NGOs embedded in Roma communities seems to be lacking. This is considerably more puzzling given the fact that there has been outreach to his NGO from the European Parliament. Kroon states that a Parliament representative visited who showed promise, but this ultimately did not lead to any real action.¹⁷³ The goals in the EU framework are well-defined, but there seems to be a lack of clear strategies to achieve this, or to support the member states in achieving this. The Commission, as guardian of the treaties, is responsible for enforcing the Racial Equality Directive, and also takes a coordinating role in what it calls *'mainstreaming Roma equality in EU policy initiatives and mobilising EU funds for Roma'*.¹⁷⁴ Yet, what seems most important to small NGOs like Foundation Charis seems to be lacking in the Commission's plans. When talking about policy learning, the Commission listed the main practices that each member state should focus on. Among these were topics that are also relevant for this research. These are *'consider the needs of individual pupils'*, *'use inclusive and tailor-made teaching and learning methods'*, *'encourage parental involvement'* among other things.¹⁷⁵ Despite these issues being clear to the Commission and the member states, the small NGOs approached for this research reported little to no involvement from the EU or the Romanian government. When this involvement did take place, it was often only for short 2-year periods which was not enough to set up any long-term projects.

Based on what is analysed here, and on what has been mentioned in the interviews, a few recommendations can be made on future action for the European Commission. For one, the Commission needs to stick to the long-term commitments it outlines itself.¹⁷⁶ As can be seen in the previous section, in the case study, the local government has clear goals but lacks resources to act on them. This leads to an inability to support small NGOs in their activities. This is an issue that the

¹⁷¹ Marien Kroon. Interview by Tomas de Jong. Semi-structured Interview. Florești, 9 July 2021. (Appendix 6, Timestamp 24:40)

¹⁷² European Commission. *EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation for 2020 - 2030*. Brussels: European Commission, 2020. 4

¹⁷³ Marien Kroon. Interview by Tomas de Jong. Semi-structured Interview. Florești, 9 July 2021. (Appendix 6, Timestamp 24:40)

¹⁷⁴ European Commission. *EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation for 2020 - 2030*. Brussels: European Commission, 2020. 11-12

¹⁷⁵ European Commission. *Roma inclusion measures reported under the EU Framework for NRIS*. Brussels: European Commission, 2019. Table 4

¹⁷⁶ European Commission. *EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation for 2020 - 2030*. 3



Commission should see to in the near future, as it states it will make a Council recommendation to clearly state what measures each member state should take.¹⁷⁷ Based on findings of this research, this recommendation must ensure that national funding finds its way to the local level, making sure it goes to initiatives such as the one at Foundation Charis. Local government is aware of the success of such local initiatives and should have funds ready to support such initiatives. It appears that local government is also willing to work on the local level, but simply lacks proper funding or resources to realise this. Based on the success of the educational program at Charis, local funding is likely to be an effective way of ensuring Roma children stay in education. That means the Commission should ensure that it explicitly mentions that it recommends member states to *put priority on finding local initiatives in Roma communities and provides them with a long-term budget*. The research done for this thesis shows that such a long-term budget is key for setting up a successful educational project. In the case of Charis, this was only realised through the use of one loyal donor, but ideally local or national government would take this role. One cannot assume that every local initiative is a success story, however. This research looked into one case which was successful. There are definitely still many local initiatives which may be poorly managed, focusing on the wrong topics, or not taking care of their paperwork. A large challenge exists in mapping out these initiatives and establish contacts between the good practices. The ones that perform less well should, however, also be involved as they may learn much from the successful practices.

Secondly, an important topic that was found out through this research, was the idea of setting up NGO networks. Small NGOs possess extensive expertise on their respective communities and can exchange this expertise amongst each other. The issue, as outlined before, is that small NGOs are limited in their financial capabilities and have time constraints. As such, transnationalising their activities is near impossible if additional funding is not made available. Quality of integrational programmes can be improved through exchanging expertise, but small NGOs need resources to do this. Large NGOs may have the ability to do this, but is not just these NGOs that do the legwork in Roma integration. Therefore, the second recommendation made here is to *either provide funding for setting up a national or transnational NGO platform for exchanging expertise*. Ideally, this would focus on smaller NGOs embedded in Roma communities, rather than just large influential NGOs that work more on the higher level.

According to Kroon, there is already a national platform in place in Romania, but currently only meets once a year and does not provide any meaningful dialogue or call to action. Kroon believes meetings between boards or directors of small NGOs should be facilitated. These should then receive

¹⁷⁷ European Commission. EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation for 2020 - 2030. Brussels: European Commission, 2020. 6



a collective grant that they can divide amongst themselves. This allows for sharing capacity and at the same time makes it much easier to exchange expertise.¹⁷⁸ The key in these recommendations is more focused funding, and it should be said that the Commission seems to be making progress on paper. However, progress on paper is not automatically progress in reality. Based on the results of this research, more focus is necessary in funding based on what works. This coincides with the Commission's own belief that policy learning is the way forward.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁸ Marien Kroon. Interview by Tomas de Jong. Semi-structured Interview. Florești, 9 July 2021. (Appendix 6, Timestamp 1:00:54)

¹⁷⁹ European Commission. *EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation for 2020 - 2030*. 2020. 11



5. Conclusion and Discussion

The previous chapter outlined the main findings of the research, highlighting the most important parts of the interviews and relating them to existing Roma integration policy. The last step that remains is to conclude with these findings by answering the research question and formulating a hypothesis.

To repeat, the research question this thesis set out to answer was as follows:

What example of a good practice in Roma education plans could contribute to wider European Union policy learning and how could it be applied across the EU to foster progress in Roma integration?

The literature review of this research provided the foundation based on which this question could be answered. Existing literature on Roma integration was summarised in this thesis in four sections relating to *antigypsyism, societal organisation, integration strategy and education form*. These categories were used both for the selection of the case and the questionnaire used. The selected case, Foundation Charis in Florești near Cluj-Napoca showed to be a deviant case based on long-running activities, accreditation with the government and extensive focus on Roma education. Based on field research with cross-case analysis, using process tracing, the main good practices could be outlined. This research showed that the deciding factors in the success of this small NGO were fivefold: Namely through *consistent long-term funding, long-term trust building, parental engagement, creation of a safe environment, official accreditation of activities*. Based on the NGOs own experiences, this approach could be seen to lead through an *increased access to education* for children, as well as an *improved attitude towards education* in the Roma community overall. In this case, the good practice exists in the form of an after-school programme which supports Roma children in partaking in regular education. Another example that was encountered, was second a chance project which take a similar form, but also include adults. Other examples could include providing Roma children with the resources to partake in regular education. This could take the form of providing books, study materials or anything that may reduce their access to education. Education is the main vehicle out of poverty for Roma and the best way of improving education is to build a bond of trust with Roma communities. Taking one of these good practices and then providing consistent funding and gaining official accreditation with the government could prove extremely effective. In addition, a focus on building a bond of trust, creating a safe environment for children

and involving the parents as much as possible is key to improving Roma access to education. Key is to support Roma children in education, not replacing the regular educational system completely.

In order to take these good practices to a wider EU context, using policy learning, two recommendations can be made to the Commission in its Roma integration strategy framework.

Finding good practices and then providing structural and focused funding is key in this context.

The first focus point should be to *prioritise local initiatives in Roma communities and provides them with a long-term budget*. That means that similar projects to the after-school educational programme from Charis should be sought out, analysed and supported on a long-term. Based on this case analysis, this is the only way in which meaningful progress can be made. This is mainly because good education may trigger intergenerational learning. This may cause a 'cultural change' in which education is perceived in a more positive light. This is a question of decades, so long-term focus is essential. Through this case study, some clarification can be made on what constitutes a good practice and what underlying concepts lead to its success.

The second focus point should be the small NGOs themselves. Commission policy currently focuses on national governments and large networks. Instead, Commission plans should favour funding to the smaller scale, focusing on a bottom-up approach. This means finding these small NGOs, putting them into contact with each other so they can exchange their expertise and offering them a collective grant that they can distribute amongst themselves. This is because these small NGOs possess extensive expertise in their respective communities, but are lacking in resources and time. To answer the main research question and to make the results of this research more tangible, a last step is formulating a hypothesis. This hypothesis is based on the most important findings of this research based on the process-tracing method. As such, the hypothesis goes as follows:

The more focus there is on the long-term through inclusive community development, parental involvement and creating a safe environment for Roma children, the more likely their access to education is to improve.

This hypothesis is then a principle that can be applied in European policy. Such policy is inherently an extremely complex and convoluted topic and there are many different theories on what may work best for Roma integration. It is important to note that these findings are based on a single-case study and focused on the country of Romania. That means that this finding may not necessarily apply to other EU-countries. However, the principles laid out in this conclusion do show that the key lies at the local level. Small NGOs embedded in Roma communities spend their time with Roma every day,

so logically they know what these people need the most. It remains to be seen whether the European Commission and the EU are capable of connecting this local perspective with the much wider European perspective. Whatever the case, having the high and low levels meet with each other is the only way forward in Roma integration. This research has provided at least one example of a good practice conducted by a small NGO. Thanks to its experience, the underlying concepts that led to its success are now clear. That does not mean that this is the end all be all of Roma integration, but simply one example in one member state. It would be ideal if similar research could take place in other communities or member states to add to the body of knowledge of Roma integration. The European Union has come far, but still has a long way to go until Roma truly have the same chances as other Europeans. Thankfully, thanks to the tireless work of small NGOs (such as Foundation Charis) small steps can be made. If the European Union can find such small NGOs and support their work, as well as supporting the member states and local government in bolstering them, true progress can definitely be made. Hopefully it will be in this age, that it can be said that the Roma have the exact same changes as any other European. It will be then, that they can take their rightful place as the 'true Europeans'.

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7. Appendices

Appendix 1: Meeting Notes Marien Kroon (Foundation Charis) in Dutch

26-01-2021

Introductie

In voorbereiding op de bespreking over de mogelijkheden voor het onderzoek voor een scriptie, vormt dit document een korte beschrijving van het onderwerp zelf en de vragen die daarvoor relevant zijn. Voor de master Euroculture heb ik besloten om mijn eindscriptie te schrijven over het onderwerp van Roma-integratie in de Europese Unie. De concept-titel die ik momenteel hanteer is "Roma: European Integration through Education" (Roma: Europese Integratie door Onderwijs). Daaruit wordt al duidelijk dat ik mij graag wil richten op het onderwerp van onderwijs als een **integratie-instrument** voor de Roma als gemarginaliseerde groep in Europe. Een belangrijke basis hiervoor is het huidige **Europese Kader van Roma-integratiestrategieën 2020-2030**. De Europese Commissie poogt hiermee onder alle Europese lidstaten de integratie op een internationaal niveau voor een deel te sturen (wat uiteraard een erg ambitieuze onderneming is).

In dat Europese kader is een van de belangrijkste doelen om lessen te trekken uit strategieën die gewerkt hebben (policy-learning en evidence-based policy). Zodoende, wil ik me graag richten op het onderwijs in de gemeenschap in Florești. Aangezien jullie al grote vooruitgang hebben gemaakt wil ik graag identificeren wat wel werkt en wat niet, wellicht ook in andere gemeenschappen in de regio. Het algemene doel is om zo bij te dragen aan de vooruitgang van Roma-integratie in heel Europe door duidelijkheid te scheppen over goede strategieën wat betreft onderwijs van Roma-kinderen.

Vragen

1. Hoe is het (basis)onderwijs bij jullie georganiseerd? Gaan er ook kinderen naar scholen buiten de buurt?

*Fysiek onderwijs van de kinderen in de gemeenschap mag doorgaan. In 2005 is Charis kleinschalig begonnen in de gemeenschap. Tegenwoordig bestaat die uit ongeveer 2000 Roma. Dat kleinschalige is nog steeds het geval, maar dat is omdat het belangrijk is om kinderen aandacht te geven. Echter is het niet echt een school, maar meer een huiswerkbegeleidingsproject. De kinderen gaan gewoon naar een school in Florești en krijgen dan ondersteuning bij Charis waar ze ook een warme maaltijd krijgen. Dat zijn **2 middagen** in de week. Het gaat hier niet alleen om het onderwijs zelf, het gaat ook om een long-term effect om waarden te leren dat onderwijs belangrijk is. De ouders hebben vroeger wel dwarsgelegen en wilden niet dat hun kinderen naar school gingen. Er was zelfs chantage om bepaalde verbeteringen aan het huis te verkrijgen bijvoorbeeld. Het is dus erg belangrijk om vertrouwen te wekken bij de ouders en om de kinderen een goede les bij te brengen over het belang van onderwijs.*

Het generatie-effect is nu ook merkbaar omdat de kinderen van vroeger nu volwassen zijn en het belang van onderwijs zien en dat dit besef zich langzaam ontwikkelt. Toch is uitval nog steeds wel wat hoog en zijn er nog steeds wel Roma die geen zin Er wordt wel onderwijs gegeven in het project. Er zijn dus gewoon klassikaal lessen zoals wiskunde.

Er is zelfs een wachtlijst met kinderen maar er is geen ruimte en budget voor. Er gaat momenteel dus meer geld dan dat er inkomt. De projecten zelf zijn ook vaak niet op lange termijn, alleen met een paar uitzonderingen. Dat soort structurele projecten zijn juist heel belangrijk. De last vanuit de overheid is ook groot. Voor elk kind moet een rapport worden ingevuld en elke bonnetje moet bijgehouden worden. Dat is lastig maar wordt wel gedaan,

vaak met ondersteuning van maatschappelijke werkers. Qua onderwijs is Charis ook geaccrediteerd als organisatie.

2. Zijn er unieke aspecten aan het onderwijs in de wijk die afwijken van andere scholen?
3. In het verlengde van de vorige vraag, ben je op de hoogte van enige andere Roma-gemeenschappen die ook onderwijsprojecten hebben opgezet?

In Ternapeni vlakbij is ook een onderwijsproject, en er is ook een project geweest bij de vuilnisbelt. In Arad (ver weg) zijn ook wat nascholingsprojecten en rondom Mures ook. De NGOs proberen een keer per jaar bij elkaar te komen om te kijken waar iedereen is en om te kijken of bepaalde groepen nog ondersteuning nodig hebben. Echter is de tendens wel dat de groepen over het algemeen vrij afzonderlijk werken en dat de stap naar samenwerking nog lastig te nemen is.

4. Is er een concreet einddoel met het onderwijsproject? (Denk bijvoorbeeld aan aansluiting met het voortgezet onderwijs of de mogelijkheid voor de kinderen om buiten Floresti naar school te kunnen gaan)
Het belangrijkste is dat de kinderen de lagere school afmaken, dat ze kunnen lezen en schrijven en dat ze weerbaar zijn en basisvaardigheden hebben in het leven. Dat ze zichzelf ook ontwikkelen en leren over zichzelf. Echter is ook belangrijk dat er aansluiting is met het voortgezet onderwijs en dat ze daarna werk kunnen vinden. Als
5. Hoe vergelijkt het onderwijs bij jullie zich met andere onderwijsinstellingen in de regio en in vergelijking met andere onderwijsprojecten voor de Roma?
6. Hoe is jullie samenwerking op het gebied van onderwijs met de lokale regering (bijvoorbeeld in Cluj)? Zou er eventueel ook een gesprek kunnen worden georganiseerd met een lokale politicus? Zijn er bepaalde eisen waaraan moet worden voldaan en wat zijn die?

Floresti is een eigen dorp, ook het grootste dorp van Cluj. Het dorp is meer dan vertienvoudigd in inwoners sinds Charis werkzaam is in de regio. Met de vorige burgemeester, 8 jaar geleden, is gepoogd om een gesprek te hebben. Echter was er veel kritiek op het project van Charis en zei hij "onkruid moet je bestrijden". Vanwege officiële regels moest de lokale regering wel financiële steun krijgen. Echter werd dat zo gedaan dat het geld bijvoorbeeld in november gestuurd werd en dat het voor december uitgegeven moest worden. Dat is concreet natuurlijk erg lastig om te doen, dus werd het geld maar op korte termijn uitgegeven aan eten waardoor lange termijn projecten niet haalbaar zijn. Er zit nu een nieuwe burgemeester, een jongere, waar binnenkort ook een gesprek mee zal worden gehad. Overigens is er ook contact met de scholen zelf om bij te houden of de kinderen het ook gaat vergaan op school. Het probleem was wel dat kinderen in Roemenië vaak bleven zitten en dat dit voor de school een probleem was. De Roma gingen dus wel over terwijl ze nog niet klaar waren.

7. In hoeverre werken jullie samen met een institutie of organisatie van de Europese Unie?

Er worden projecten opgezet, vaak tweejarig. Echter raakt dat potje snel leeg en blijft er weinig aan resultaat over. Bijvoorbeeld een EU-project om werkgelegenheid te creëren. De mensen werden ingeschreven voor een baan, waaronder ook een vrouwtje met allerlei mankementen zoals epilepsie. Ze zou hovenier worden met een opleiding, echter zou ze daar niks aan hebben, ook al kan de EU wel zeggen dat de mensen een opleiding hebben gehad. Zeker op Europees gebied staat het ook tegen dat Charis maar een kleine NGO is en dus niet zo veel invloed heeft als de grote jongen. Daarnaast is het financieel lastig op te brengen, terwijl dat enorme budget niet echt terug kan worden gezien bij de NGO. Het nadeel is ook dat, wanneer zo'n project plaats zou vinden, zou dat ook een enorme administratielast opleveren die lastig is op te brengen.

Er was ook een onderwijsproject vanuit de EU met subsidie. Ze kregen een budget om schoolartikelen aan te schaffen zoals nieuw meubilair, tablets, nieuwe badkamer etc. Hier was veel tijd in gestoken en er kwam een voorschot. Echter moest daarna de EU analyseren wat er nodig was voor het project, in plaats van dat de NGO zelf de beslissing mocht maken. Achteraf zegt de EU dat bepaalde zaken niet nodig waren en dat het geld weer terug moest.

8. Zijn er ook bepaalde zaken of ondersteuning die jullie verlangen van de Europese Unie? Bijvoorbeeld in verbinding met het kader van nationale Roma-integratie strategieën?

Zie bovenstaande, in principe is de wens dat er een budget beschikbaar wordt besteld en dat dit vrijelijk besteed mag worden. Dit is ook belangrijk om het onderwijs bezig te houden.

9. Uiteraard afhankelijk van de crisis, bestaat er ook een mogelijkheid voor mij om een veldonderzoek te doen? Denk hierbij aan gesprekken met leraren, de kinderen zelf, lokale politici en andere belanghebbende organisaties?

Ik ben van harte welkom.

Appendix 2: Interview Anca Guzman

05-07-2021 14:20

Cluj-Napoca

Interviewer: Tomas de Jong

Interviewee: Anca Guzman (Freelance kindergarten teacher)

Present: Marien Kroon (Foundation Charis), János Guzman (Anca's husband)

Recording started

Question 1: Can you describe to me what kind of work your NGO does to benefit the living conditions of the Roma? How did your organisation develop to this point?

Tomas: So since we already started speaking about this a bit earlier, if you could repeat to me exactly what kind of work you do and how you came to teaching freelance as you described it earlier.

Anca: Well, I am a manicurist and work in a salon

Tomas: Yeah so you do manicures and you freelance as a teacher?

Anca: Well, it's the first time officially teaching in a school but I've worked with children over 20 years; since I was 16.

Tomas: So you had experience working with children?

Anca: Yes I had experience working with children, but in a church environment

Tomas: Right, and so what you do is you teach Roma kindergarteners - basically? In a school at the rubbish dump? So how exactly did you get into that line of work; for what foundation specifically did you work?

Anca: Well... eh... the... our friends for so many years... Bert and Margriet had the foundation called 'ProRoma' which made the kindergarten at Pata-Rât, my husband actually built it. So I knew the kindergarten and I knew Margriet who was the main organiser. So I knew everything about the kindergarten but never actually expected to get involved. But with the pandemic situation she asked me if I wanted to try something out because I was complaining about wanting a second job because the salon wasn't working. So she asked me "are you interested in working in the kindergarten". I said, "well, I don't know. It involves a lot of things, I don't know if I can handle it" and thinking about it for a while I said "well, let's try it" since me not being qualified, obviously not having the diplomas, the requirement for this kind of job, it put me to the section of an 'unqualified debutant'... Yes... 'unqualified kindergarten teacher: debutant'. Because of this, I had to give an exam every year, every September there is an exam, there is like a competition for how many they register for that kind of... for the job.

Tomas: So that is kind of to... maintain your license?

Anca: No, it's to actually get the job; it's like exam for getting the job because, even if you have a good grade, since the place is especially made for Roma teachers, if they are in the competition they have priority on me.

Tomas: So you mean teachers who are of Romani decent?

Anca: Yes, yes, yes. So It's me... I am secondary because in case they don't want the job, or they don't go to the exam.

Tomas: And you are actively teaching now? Well... not currently... but... up until recently?

Anca: Well, first year I tried to and it was somebody who was more qualified; a Romani girl...lady who got the job. And then last September I was called by the kindergarten director because she had my records from the previous year and she know from Margriet that I wanted it back then because she had no teachers, because in that place not everybody wants... even if you are Romani you don't want to go there because it's hard conditions which I don't see them... but it depends on how they think. So I went to the exam and I took the exam and so I started teaching in September last year and I got a contract for 9 or 10 months... 9 and a half months? Only doing, because I'm not qualified... I can't have unlimited contract and... I don't know... continue over the summer because usually kindergartens... that's how they work. They hire, they are qualified and they go 4 years.

Me, it's just from September when it starts 'til June when it ends. So my contract actually ends on 30th of June.

Tomas: Okay, clear, I think that covers... like I understand now how you came to that position.

Question 2: What kind of role does education play in the activities of your NGO?

Time: 6:00

Tomas: I'm not sure if you actually know the answers to this since you're not the head of the NGO in particular but eh... do you know how large a part the kindergarten... how large of a role it plays in the overall activity of the foundation?

Anca: Of ProRoma? Well... in the... when Bert was in charge, it played a pretty important place, but now... it doesn't. It's not even the... eh... they are not interested in continuing this project. Only if the state kindergarten, which kind of took over...

Tomas: So that's what's happened now? So this kindergarten for Roma is now a subsidiary of the... of the state?

Anca: -sighs- Only the building. The activities is everything under the state kindergarten, they are not a private kindergarten.

Tomas: But the activities you do are separate... sort of?

Anca: Everything I do... it belongs... it is under the kindergarten itself.

Tomas: Okay, and the kindergarten is part of sort of the state so that very complicated construction.

Anca: Yes... so I'm hired by the state through the kindergarten

Tomas: That's very interesting, but that's not how it originally was, right?

Anca: No, it was the same because mainly the foundation made the kindergarten and the state kindergarten kind of took it over so it could function legally. To have a private kindergarten here you have a license. Margriet doesn't have a license and the foundation doesn't have license so they had to work in collaboration with the state kindergarten which took over and gave them a license. So it has to be legal, so the kids have to be registered so they can go to school after that.

Tomas: Yes, and so that's how it's always been... basically?

Anca: Yes, but while Bert was with the foundation, and Margriet, they kind of financed everything. Now everything is financed by the kindergarten.

Tomas: So by the state.

Anca: Yes, by the state, exactly. Bert and Margriet financed everything but they basically... yeah... the government does that now.

Question 3: How would you say the Roma in your focus area are discriminated against? What effect does this have on their standard of living and/or access to education?

Time: 8:40

Tomas: So, I'd like to kind of shift now sort of... because a large part of the research I've done so far revolves around discrimination against Roma; so that's what they call 'antigypsyism', so that's specific racism against Roma. And I'm not sure if you know anything about this at all but, particularly considering the context of the educational program, in what way the Roma in that particular area, the rubbish dump, are discriminated against. With discrimination I don't mean just the active form of discrimination, but also how they are excluded from health care, education, that sort of thing.

Anca: Well uhm... they are not discriminated in a sense of jobs. They have access to... they had a lot of social workers and a lot of NGOs that went and offered them jobs, BUT in the limits of their qualifications because they have no qualifications; they have no school, they have nothing. But they offer them, some took it, some didn't, but more over the year they start taking jobs.

Tomas: So, just to clarify, they have access to jobs, but that is mainly through the help of charity work?

Anca: No, if... for example there is a garbage company. If they want a job they can knock and ask "do you have a job opportunity for me?"

Tomas: And do they often make use of that?

Anca: Some they just... like the employer goes through the camp and ask "does anybody want a job?" and so if they want they have access to employment.

Tomas: And so... do some of the make use of that?

Anca: Some do, some don't because they have to think from their perspective. They are gypsies, they don't have a native way of working. They want to... receive more than work, but because of the need they have they are forced to take a job.

Tomas: And how does that translate to their living conditions because... obviously I've been there and I've seen it and it's not... optimal to put it lightly...

Anca: Honestly, they have pretty good salaries; the ones that are working with the garbage company, they have higher salary than me... A LOT. So they live pretty well, but they don't really manage the money well.

Tomas: And so... I think I can then hook into the education program and... obviously this is still very early, but is that maybe a goal, or used to be, of the foundation where this education is sort of a first step into the educational process which would then teach them, for example, if they work at the rubbish dump that they manage their money well?

Anca: Well... Yes the kindergarten and then going to school helps them to manage their money better. But, because they learn from what they see more than from what they hear, from their parents. They have a chance, I talk with my kids. I explain them, if they go to school... It started with a girl, who said she wanted to be a teacher like me. I said, "Well of course, good for you, I encourage you... but, because of this, you have to go to school, come to kindergarten, then go to school and then to go to high school and then to college and then you are here in my place". And I encourage them to... even encourage to go to school to get better jobs and make better money and leave this place or have different lives.

Tomas: And then I guess the added complexity is that you have to somehow convince the parents of that... that's a whole different issue obviously.

Anca: That's the problem, because even with our kindergarten, kids are coming, they want to but they are not always sent by their parents. We have to work with parents to understand why this kindergarten is so important for their future. So we have to work with the parents.

Tomas: First with the parents, then with the children.

Anca: And we have... one of the girls that are in the foundation, 'Transformare', one of the new foundations that Henk and Margriet and János are having...

Tomas: (interjects) That's from ProRoma to Transformare?

Anca: Yes, and there's a girl; a lawyer; Andrea. She's going there every week to work with the mothers, to change their minds. Margriet goes there once a week, on Tuesday I think and Andrea is on Thursday. They are both trying to work with the mothers to change their mentality, to make them see how important school is.

Tomas: So I guess this is also sort of the main goal of the programme? Could I describe it as that?

Anca: No, not really... János knows better than me.

János chips in

János: It's a part of the transformation eh... involvement but not the main thing. That is to help the parents understand that their children can have a better future than them through education.

Anca: It's part of the vision.

Question 4: How are the Roma involved with your NGO? Do they play an active role in the activities and organisation?

Time: 15:26

Tomas: So while I was there, I noticed that somebody who lived in the neighbourhood had access to the school building, so that brings me kind of to my next question. How... in what way are the Roma involved in the organisation of the project? Do they play any role at all or are they just the beneficiaries.

Anca: No those people who are at the building... they just have a contract with the owner of the building.

Tomas: But what I mean specifically is: are the Roma beneficiaries of the project or are they also directly involved in a way?

Anca: No they are just beneficiaries, nobody is involved and the teachers are...

Tomas: And obviously as you said before the teachers are of Romani decent preferably.

Anca: Yes, those jobs are created for them.

Tomas: And in that way they are involved.

Anca: Yes, but not the community. Nobody in the community... it would be ideal to have teachers from the community. One of the kids from the programme who goes to school and then comes back to teach... that would be awesome; that's the ideal thing. But they started only 5 years ago so they are still in the process of getting these kids in the school, but that is the future ideal.

Tomas: Let's see here...

Anca: (interjects) You mentioned something about discrimination and I said in work, but I didn't mention anything about school.

Tomas: Oh yes, please continue.

Anca: Yes, that's a problem. It is not that I saw, but I heard teachers talking about it. Because it is a school on the way to the airport where half of it... they have place for the kids that are coming for five years, they keep coming to school because of the kindergarten. So it's from 1st grade to 8th grade and most of the kids are going to kindergarten. They are registered to then go to the school there, but I heard cases of them being discriminated against by teachers, some that didn't want them in their classes, who wanted them in their own classes.

Tomas: Yes, so that is actually in some of the research I've read where they talk about 'segregation', to separate the Roma children.

Anca: They even have different yards.

Tomas: Yes, so segregation proper where they have their separate yards.

Anca: Yes, they have a different yard to play in the yard of the Romanians and that's really bad. Of course they are problematic kids but from my point of view most of the problems that come from the kids is that they feel rejected. They feel treated different, they are very... proud... no... they have an ego. It is very sensitive to rejection and they react violently. But, when they feel treated equally and nice... they are... wow... they are friends and they are loyal and you can do a lot of things with them. If you treat them harsh with rejection, they react like... very volcanic, they are volcanic.

Tomas: So this segregation also plays into their view on life.

Anca: Yes, it's like a circle. Teachers are complaining they are bad, they are rejecting them, so they are just responding with rejection.

Tomas: Yeah... it's a vicious cycle.

Anca: Exactly, yeah.

Tomas: That's quite useful information actually, because I wasn't actually sure if it still happened.

Anca: Yeah... but it's only... Once they get to high school there is none of that anymore.

Tomas: So it's particularly in primary education.

Anca: Yes

Tomas: And so what you just described here... this only happens in a separate school, because these children they also go to your kindergarten?

Anca: No, there is only one kindergarten for Roma children, this one.

Tomas: And so then they go to primary school and that's when they get segregated.

Anca: Yes, I heard this specific to this school honestly. It could be that if you go to a different school... it's not like a gang... like more of them. It's one individual school.

Tomas: But it does happen and that's an important thing to mention, obviously. It's very useful that you've pointed that out.

Question 5: Could you describe what the goals of your NGO are, who you intend to cooperate with to achieve them and perhaps what role the local, national and European government levels could play or are playing in achieving those goals?

Time: 21:09

Tomas: I think we'll move on to the last part where I try to talk about the cooperation; how it's organised. Obviously what I am interested in is to find out what role you play, but also what the Romanian government or the local Cluj government plays and perhaps also the European Union. Could you try to briefly explain the role of the local government of Cluj because they are in charge of the school as you said. How exactly do they go about this project?

Anca: Well, they pay for everything (laughs). That's 'Consiliul Județean', that's the... uhm... how do you call it?

Marien chips in

Marien: I'll explain it in Dutch: that's the 'provincie'.

Tomas: Oh the provincial government.

Anca: They are in charge of paying all the bills, all the supplies, the jobs, the salaries.

Tomas: The costs and the organisations, but they don't have, for example, demands, goals. They just finance?

Anca: To us, this belongs to the kindergarten director.

Tomas: And the kindergarten director acts independently of the government to some degree?

Anca: Here in Romania, kindergartens have a curriculum they have to follow. They are always checked, always verified, they always report. I had to do a lot of reports on EVERYTHING.

Registering everything, send paper after paper. They have special programmes you have to do, like a whole big checklist you have to do and you are checked by this. So a lot of people now, they kind of avoid private kindergartens and they go to public kindergartens because of the difference of teaching. Private are more free and kids experience dirt... they get dirty and they do nothing. They come back like they were to their grandma's.

Tomas: So these public kindergartens are better, you'd say?

Anca: Yes, the public is better, private eh...

Tomas: So there is actually a merit to how the public system is organised?

Anca: Yes, so we opened the subjects at the salon uhm... Mothers are actually taking kids from the private and registering them to the public because of this curriculum.

Tomas: So that's local, does the national level play any role at all?

Anca: Yes, yes. National and eh... the minister...

Tomas: Like the Ministry of Education?

Anca: Yes, he has a lot to say in this but the... the 'Inspectoratul'... They make all this curriculum, so it's the same country to the whole country and the public schools.

Tomas: And the local governments, they just finance?

Anca: Yes... uhm, renovation that was another thing. We had a fire and that was paid by them.

Tomas: Oh, okay. So it's actually pretty well organised, you'd say?

Anca: Yes, security... surveillance, that's by them. They made a new one now, they made the latest...

Tomas: And to your knowledge, is there any involvement at the EU level or...

Anca: Hmm... No... I know that the NGO foundations they can get financing, but for themselves, not actually for the kindergarten. You can use it for your foundation, but they don't want to get anything for the kindergarten, they don't want this project at all.

Tomas: And in your opinion, they system as it's designed now, is that how... is that the best way to go about it at the national/local level? What would be your ideal organisation for a project like this.

National, local, European?

Anca: This one year of experience with the system: it's pretty good. I guess because I am in the kindergarten where the director is very involved. It has to do a lot with the director. Public kindergartens have a lot of organisation, internal organisation has a lot to do with the director. The



director is very involved, helpful, part of it, wants more, wants to the best way. She helps us in every way and is really part of us. She's really amazing.

Tomas: And just to clarify: we are now talking about the mix of national and local or is this more a local thing.

Anca: Like I said, the government provides the finances and the curriculum, but the director is the one that is managing.

Tomas: So that director is more like the local thing.

Anca: Yes, and not even just the local, but the city local, kindergarten local.

Tomas: That specific?

Anca: Yes, every house has its administrator. You have your administrator for your own house and even if I give you the same amount of money, but you choose how to administer what I gave you. That makes it successful or not so successful, but she's doing a very good job.

Tomas: So what you're saying is it's important to do it at the local level, but there is still that insecurity when the local person isn't as involved as they should be.

Anca: Yes, for example my sister is also a kindergarten teacher but with all the necessary paperwork. She was talking about her director not being involved or helpful. For example, she asked me how to do a lot of things because she received no information at all.

Tomas: And so, if your director is not as qualified it is still preferable to...

Anca: (interjects) No, no, no, you still need the qualification. There is no... to get a director you have to go through different stages. It's very well organised, every year they have a test and this year we were wondering if she will remain as the director or if she will be changed because of her exams not being right. I heard she did, because she is really good so we were like "yay"...

Marien interjects

Marien: But if she is taking off and you get another one... it is very demanding on the people who have the director... because if the next one doesn't care you can lose the whole heart of the project.

Anca: Yes exactly, but another thing is that the government appreciates and supports the directors and kindergartens that are taking this kind of project. They have more 'points' on their file, so they are always supporting this kind of project. They want to get more Romani people getting educated, so if the kindergarten has this kind of project that is amazing for them, they are supported by the government.

Concluding, spontaneous question:

Time: 31:00

Tomas: So I would like to conclude, but I was just wondering if you had seen any improvement with the children.

Anca: Oh yes! Yeah! I mean, you can see improvement in 2 or 3 weeks!

Tomas: On that short a term? That's pretty impressive!

Anca: Yeah! It's amazing, they come and they know nothing and they are a total mess. In one or two weeks, maximum three of rules and regulations they... wow! It's amazing.

Tomas: But then the issue is that if they move on to the primary school, there's the risk, maybe in some schools that they will...

Anca: Well... the percentage of more of succeeding. I talk with my colleague, because there are two classes. My colleague was a teacher at that class. She was a teacher there for four years, she said she even met a lot of students of the school with who she keeps a nice connection and she encourages them to go to school. That's what I like about the Romani teachers that are into the school. That they really encourage them to go farther and not quit school. They come to visit them, they visit them at home and encourage them to go to school 'don't quit, stay straight'. They stay involved, even over the school year. Once a week they come to visit and they go through the camp, it's really good.

Tomas: Okay, I think that concludes all the topics I wanted to cover. It is actually much more positive than I had initially thought.

Anca: Yeah, that's what I thought too and that's why I didn't want to initially take this, but once I got involved I changed my view on a lot of things.

Appendix 3: Interview Vidrean Dorel (Notes, no transcript)

Interviewer: Erzsebet Kocsis (Foundation Charis Social Worker)

Interviewee: Vidrean Dorel (Inspector People with the Service for Disabilities for the Social Benefits, School Medicine and Roma Issues of the Florești Town Hall)

Present: Tomas de Jong

1. Can you describe to me briefly how your local government is involved with Roma integration in the area specifically? What fields of Roma integration are you involved or not involved in and why or why not?

At the mayor's office they have social workers for different areas. These are things like social benefits, Roma problems, school medicine and child protection services. For Roma problems there is one social worker for Roma problems, one for child protection services, two for social benefits and lastly two for school medicine. These all fall under one coordinator. School medicine refers to health education. There are also two social workers for people with disabilities. They also had an EU project for Roma education and for inclusion, these all took place at the mayor's office. This project only runs for two years and there is no continuation afterwards. There was also a POAD programme in which they give food and hygienic articles to the Roma, which was basically social benefits. This POAD programme was not just focused on Roma, but also for Romanians and Hungarians. They are currently running the AJOFM-project to help Roma people get integrated, this is an employment programme.

2. What would you say are the biggest issues the Roma currently face that prevents them from a good standard of living or access to basic necessities? What role do you believe discrimination against Roma (antigypsyism) plays into this?

In their opinion the biggest issue is the way of thinking of the Roma people. It is normal for them to receive help but not have to do anything in return. They know what rights they have, but they skip their obligations. The lack of education is also a glaring problem. Discrimination is not the biggest problem, but the Roma do tend to hide behind this issue.

3. Do you play any role in educational programs or educational institutions specifically targeting Roma? If so, can you try to give a complete account on how this is organised and what the goals and objectives are? What do you believe is necessary to improve their access to education?

They collaborate with foundations, such as Charis, they collaborate with kindergartens and primary schools in Florești. There was also a 2-year EU project focused on education. The collaboration is also organised, that means that there are separate contracts for each cooperation they partake in. The main goal is to make sure all Roma are educated. There are not currently any ideas on how to improve education.

4. In what way are Roma directly involved in the work you do from the local government. Do you take their input or are they only beneficiaries of your activities?

They are not really involved directly with the activities. If they receive social benefits they need to do some public service that benefits the society, for example cleaning the streets or taking care of public space. It is also hard to collaborate with the Roma because of their mentality, once again this repeats saying that they know their rights but not their duties.

5. What role do you attribute to the NGOs in the area? Do you believe they should be in charge of integration activities, or do you believe that this task is more the responsibility of the local government?

They are very grateful for the work that the local NGOs do for the Roma community. In this area that is mainly the Charis foundation and a foster care house called Blythswood. They believe the responsibility is shared by the NGO and the local council equally.

6. In what way is the national Romanian government or ministry of education involved in your work? Additionally, In what way is the European Union involved in your work, if at all? Could you describe for each of these if they should be more or less involved?

They are involved because the Romanian parliament votes on the laws and the Ministry of Education is involved in controlling the laws. The EU is also involved, though there was no elaboration on how exactly. Overall, the council believes that the paperwork load should be reduced, and that all parties should be involved more.

7. More specifically, can you describe some of the issues Roma face in the field of education? Think about early school leaving, school segregation, parental involvement, individual support and so on. Can you provide some examples on if these issues are clear to you at all?

Early school leaving is by far the biggest issue that Roma face, second comes parental involvement, individual support comes third. Segregation is not as much of an issue because there are attempts to mix the classes to keep them as diverse as possible. An other issue that should be mentioned is that children are often kept at home to help begging as a way of getting some income. This is done instead of going to school, meaning it is related to early school leaving. For the second issue, the parents often do not supervise the kids, the kids are left mostly unsupervised without authority.

8. Do you pay equal attention to all areas or is there some difference in which areas within your jurisdiction receive more or less attention?

Early school-leaving and parental involvement are most important. These two things are the most important, but overall education is the most important sector to focus on.

Appendix 4: Interview Daniel de Groot (Dutch)

08-07-2021 12:10

Târgu Mureş

Interviewer: Tomas de Jong

Interviewee: Daniel de Groot (Director Coming Home Association)

Recording started

1. Can you describe to me what kind of work your NGO does to benefit the living conditions of the Roma? How did your organisation develop to this point?

Tomas: De eerste vraag, als je nog even de naam van je stichting... eh... organisatie wil noemen en gewoon uitleggen hoe die zich ontwikkeld heeft, hoe jullie begonnen zijn en hoe jullie bepaalde keuzes hebben gemaakt en hoe de organisatie er dus nu eigenlijk uitziet.

Daniel: De stichting is begonnen in eh... 2006... En het heette stichting 'Coming Home', dat is de stichting die toen is opgericht. Die is opgericht door een paar reisleiders die in aanraking zijn gekomen met een aantal straatkinderen in Târgu Mureş. Wij waren onderdeel van die reizen, dus onze reisleiders vormden het bestuur van 'Coming Home'. En... de droom was om voor die straatkinderen een inloophuis op te zetten om daarna hun zelfredzaamheid te vergroten, om impact te hebben op die groep, om die groep gewoon te helpen en daarna ook preventie zodat ze niet meer tot straatkinderen terugkomen. En uiteraard, het laatste is dan overdragen zodra het kan, lokaal overdragen.

Tomas: Ja, dus dat was meteen vanaf het begin al een doel?

Daniel: Dat was toen het bestuur het oprichtte al het idee. En als bonus zat daarbij een project om werkgelegenheid te creëren en eventueel plekken waar mensen kunnen wonen. Dat was in 2006 zo ongeveer het doel. Wij dus als reisdeelnemers, ik ging al op reis naar Roemenië sinds 2002 en in 2007 besloten toen mijn vriendin en ik om te gaan trouwen en niet een huis in Nederland te kopen, maar in ieder geval voor een jaar te gaan helpen om de droom van 'Coming Home' te verwezenlijken; Dat was dat inloophuis. Dus in 2008 zijn we hier aangekomen, toen hebben we samengewerkt met een stichting die werd geleid door een Zwitsers team, drie jaar, alleen die samenwerking die liep niet, dus die droom die 'Coming Home' had en wat die Zwitserse teamleiders wilden, dat ging niet samen en toen is in 2011 de Roemeense stichting, of eigenlijk vereniging... eh... vereniging 'Coming Home' opgericht en dat heet in Roemenië 'Asociatia Coming Home'.

Tomas: Ja, dus het is ook niet een stichting of... hoe... eh... hoe... zou dat technisch in elkaar zitten of hoe zou je de organisatie omschrijven?

Daniel: Heel technisch in Roemenië is het een vereniging, maar dat is gewoon puur juridisch gezien makkelijker op te zetten. Het verschil tussen een Roemeense stichting en een Roemeense vereniging is er bijna niet. Ze functioneren hetzelfde, ze doen hetzelfde, alleen voor een stichting heb je meer startkapitaal nodig.

Tomas: Ja... goed... maar... dus het is een associatie.

Daniel: Ja, een asociatia en dat is dus een association of een vereniging. Maar... iedereen praat dus over de stichting. Dat is de Roemeense organisatie en de Nederlandse organisatie. De naam is hetzelfde, maar verder eh... Dus in 2011 zijn we zelfstandig geworden, hebben we het inloophuis opgezet, begonnen we ook te werken met kinderbijbelclubs en kinderclubs in zigeunerwijken. En... we zagen gewoon, die kinderen moeten gewoon naar school. Armoede, wat er ook gebeurt, kinderen van 14-15 die niet kunnen lezen en schrijven, die gaan nooit meekunnen in de maatschappij. Dus zijn we begonnen om die kinderen te leren lezen en schrijven in hutjes. Collega's van mij die gingen gewoon die hutjes in en die gingen gewoon met 4-5 kinderen leren lezen en schrijven.

Tomas: Ja, dat was specifiek, dus dat was gewoon wat jullie deden? Om analfabetisme te bestrijden?

Daniel: Ja, ja zo zijn we begonnen. Uhm... dus dat was naast dat inloophuis. Dus we hadden een inloophuis waar zwervers en straatkinderen binnenkwamen, en we werkten in wijken om kinderen

de educatie te geven. Toen hoorden we van een initiatief van een school, die begon een 'tweede kans programma'. Dat was een initiatief van de overheid, waar vooral volwassenen naartoe gaan. Maar wij hebben dat met die directeur zo weten te regelen dat er ook jongere kinderen naartoe konden. En dan hebben we het over kinderen tussen de 8 en 14 jaar die gewoon met klas 1 begonnen. En onze collega's, die hielpen in die scholen, dat was gewoon een school... een project van de overheid, een lerares betaald door school en onze collega's helpen om de kwaliteit van in die klassen te verbeteren.

Tomas: Dat was in het kader van dat tweede kans project?

Daniel: Ja, en de directeur zag ook dat de vooruitgang van die kinderen gewoon vooruitgingen en die heeft ook zelf op video's van 'Coming Home' gezegd dat het gewoon... ja... ook mede komt door de hulp van de stichting 'Coming Home', dat die kinderen gewoon wel resultaten hadden in vergelijking met andere tweede kans projecten. En die kinderen kwamen, ze waren ook best wel vaak aanwezig omdat onze collega's, die gaven zeg maar echt aandacht, echte liefde, geven echte liefde en die geven om die kinderen, die kinderen voelen dat dus die komen echt voor mijn collega's. En die juffrouw kan de les geven maar ze komen omdat een van mijn collega's zegt... Iren, eh Olga... al dat soort namen zeg maar... Nou ja, ze zeggen "we komen voor Olga, we komen voor Iren" en daar kon... dus die lerares kon dan gewoon lesgeven. En dit programma loopt nog steeds, alleen hebben we wel gezien dat het tweede kans programma eh... is zeg maar goed om de achterstand te repareren van een aantal kinderen, maar kinderen die al niet lang naar school geweest zijn en 13...14...15 worden, de meisjes raken snel zwanger, de jongens die gaan op eh... op dievenpad (lucht), dus die worden gearresteerd en die gaan de gevangenis in, dus vaak op hun 14^e worden ze allemaal...

Tomas: En dan heb je het over kinderen die al in dat programma zaten en die daarna weer afdwalen?

Daniel: Ja, want die zijn 12 als ze op die school kwamen, dus die doen klas 1 tot 4, en dan zijn ze 14 en dan zijn ze zwanger. En dat heeft ons ook wel aangez... of bevestigd: je moet zo jong mogelijk beginnen.

Tomas: Dat is wel heel goed dat je dat nu meteen al zegt, want ik heb daar ook een aantal vragen over, dus het is wel goed dat je daarmee begint... met dit soort zaken dus...

2. How would you say the Roma in your focus area are discriminated against? What effect does this have on their standard of living and/or access to education?

Timestamp: 6:30

Tomas: Want dan zal ik even de overstap maken naar eh... want een deel van mijn scriptie richt zich ook specifiek op de discriminatie tegen de Roma omdat dat uiteraard ook een invloed kan hebben op toegang tot onderwijs. Ehm... heb je dat ook een beetje in beeld? Hoe zich dat hier manifesteert, hoe de discriminatie tegen de Roma specifiek leidt tot een... ja... toch verminderde toegang tot onderwijs?

Daniel: Eh... ja. En dat kan ik denk ik ook het beste omschrijven als ik vertel over het volgende educatieproject waar we daarna mee begonnen. Dus we hebben het tweede kans project, en dat loopt nog steeds, maar we zijn daar wel iets minder in betrokken omdat er steeds minder kinderen kwamen.

Tomas: Eh sorry... welk jaar hebben we het nu ongeveer over? Of hebben we het dan over nu?

Daniel: 2015 tot... 20... zeg tussen 2016 en 2020.

Tomas: Ja, het hoeft niet heel specifiek te zijn, maar het is dus vrij recent?

Daniel: Eh ja... gewoon tot nu. In 2015... 2016 zijn we begonnen met dat project en dat loopt tot nu. Maar, 2-3 jaar geleden kwamen we ook in contact met een lerares van een school die staat vlak bij die wijk en die heeft voor haarzelf... die had niet genoeg inschrijvingen voor haar klas, dus die is die zigeunerwijk in geweest en die heeft gewoon kinderen ingeschreven. En dat waren ook kinderen, dat waren broertjes en zusjes van die kinderen uit dat tweede kans project; dus al die gezinnen waar je al mee werkte. Dus hebben wij gezegd "we gaan ons niet volledig richten op het tweede kans project, we gaan ook een lerares of een assistent onderwijzeres of een van onze collega's inzetten om te helpen in die klassen". Want dat zijn jongere kinderen die gewoon in een reguliere school zitten. Dus die leeftijd hoort gewoon bij de klas waar ze in zitten, met wel dezelfde problemen, want die juffrouw die geeft les, alleen het systeem in Roemenië zit zo in elkaar dat, op het moment dat je je kind inschrijft in een school, moet je ook nog bijdragen aan het klassenfonds. Maar kinderen bijvoorbeeld, er is gewoon ieder begin van het jaar is een vergadering, maar er moet wel een paar honderd Lei lappen. En daarvan worden schriften, papieren, eh... zeker op scholen waar wat minder budgetten zijn, WC-papier... noem maar op alles moet gekocht worden.

Tomas: Dat is een soort schoolgeld waar...

Daniel: (onderbreekt) Maar de ouders betalen het niet want die hebben het niet, of die hebben het er niet voor over. Dat is weer een andere discussie. Maar, dat klassenfonds is er niet dus die juffrouw moet werken met bijna geen middelen. Dus wij als stichting zeggen "wij zorgen dat die klas alle middelen heeft". Dus computer neergezet, printer neergezet, toiletpapier, zeep, eten, lunch, drinken -die kinderen komen zonder ontbijt naar school, dat ze in ieder geval iets in de maag hebben-, pennen, etuis, tassen, noem maar op. Alles wat een kind nodig heeft om naar school te gaan, daar zorgen wij voor. Plus, het is heel moeilijk om die kinderen te disciplineren, want ze zijn nooit in een instituut geweest; nooit naar een kerk, nooit naar een school, nooit naar een crèche, ze zijn gewoon op de straat opgegroeid. Dus om tegen die kinderen te zeggen "ga zitten, als je je banaan ophebt moet 'ie in de vuilnisbak", daar ben je gewoon een jaar mee bezig. Het eerste jaar van die kinderen, dat is geen lesgeven, dat is gewoon discipline erin brengen. En daar helpt mijn collega bij, plus als ze zien dat de kinderen achterblijven, gaat ze bijles geven zodat we zorgen dat we de kwaliteit van de opleiding van de kinderen zo hoog mogelijk houden.

Een tweede punt is, op het moment dat een kind klaar is met school, krijgt hij huiswerk mee, die moet 's middags gemaakt worden. Mijn kinderen komen thuis, mijn vrouw zegt "ga zitten en zorg dat je je huiswerk maakt", en als ze het niet snapt, wat vaak gebeurt, dan helpt een van ons. De ouders van die kinderen zijn analfabeet, dus die kunnen niet helpen met huiswerk. Dus wat mijn collega's doen: ze helpen een beetje in de ochtenden in die school, maar vooral na 12 uur, als de school klaar is, de juffrouw naar huis gaat, dan geeft mijn collega huiswerkbegeleiding aan die kinderen.

Tomas: Ja... en eh... want dit wordt wel gedaan vanuit jullie organisatie zelf? Want je vertelde dus ook dat jullie toch wat meer in de bekostigingskant zitten, zeg maar. Hoe moet ik dat een beetje voor me zien? Jullie organiseren dat niet zelf?

Daniel: We proberen zo veel mogelijk gebruik te maken van de school, gebruik maken van de faciliteiten van school, er zitten alleen wel een paar belemmeringen aan, maar de juffrouw, die 's ochtends les geeft, dat is gewoon een taak van de overheid.

Tomas: Ja, dat is gewoon een publieke school?

Daniel: Ja, het feit dat die ouders niet kunnen helpen met huiswerkbegeleiding, dat is een probleem wat eigenlijk de overheid ook zou moeten oplossen, maar waar wij de taak van de ouders kunnen overnemen, proberen we dat te doen. Maar wel uit... op basis van een relatie, en niet op basis van 'jullie kunnen het niet, dus wij doen het wel even'. Maar meer met die ouders van 'we snappen dat jullie het niet kunnen, dus mogen wij het doen?'. Daar zien wij als stichting onze rol om de rol van de ouders te vervangen of aan te vullen en de school moet gewoon doen wat de school moet doen. En aangezien iedereen in iedere school... ieder schoolsysteem zo in elkaar zit dat er een klassenfonds is... ja... is dat gewoon... ja iedereen moet betalen. Als die ouders dat niet kunnen, proberen wij dat te doen voor die ouders. Maar we vinden wel dat de verantwoording van die school is dat die kinderen naar school gaan, dat alles klopt, dat er bankjes zijn, dat waar ieder kind recht op heeft, dat dat er ook is voor die kinderen. Uhm... daarnaast hebben wij natuurlijk een christelijke inslag, dus wij willen ook het Evangelie meegeven, we willen praten over de liefde van God, over... we geloven ook echt dat, waar iedereen denkt dat voor zigeuners geen toekomst is... dat God wel van ze houdt en wel een toekomst voor ze is.

Tomas: Jullie dragen dat ook als organisatie wel uit?

Daniel: Ja, op het moment wat minder omdat we geen eigen gebouw hebben. Kijk, andere stichtingen hebben daar een eigen inloopgebouw waar ze zelf kunnen bepalen wat ze doen. In school mag je niet officieel evangeliseren.

Tomas: Maar jullie doen dat buiten de school dan uiteraard?

Daniel: We willen dat buiten de school gaan doen in de toekomst, maar door de Corona hebben we ons eigen gebouw... eh... effe de huur opgezegd. Dus op dit moment werken we alleen in school. We hebben voor het komende jaar gebruikt of we een lokaal kunnen gebruiken voor ons als kantoor. En die directeur staat daar voor open. Dus we staan gewoon op goeie voet met die lokale overheden, we kunnen gewoon die directeur bellen en zeggen "heb je volgend jaar een lokaal voor me open?" "Oh, ik denk dat er volgend jaar wel een lokaal leegstaat". Nou goed zo, kunnen we de sleutel krijgen, gaat 'ie op slot, en dan is die van ons.

Eh... dan kom je in de richting van discriminatie... eh... Ja, zigeunerkinderen in een school is geen goed idee voor de normale Roemeen en ik wil dat niet direct discriminatie noemen want die Roemenen hebben nog gelijk ook. Want die kinderen die stelen, want twee weken geleden nog was hier een telefoon kwijt en op de camera's zag je gewoon een kind naar binnen gaan, de telefoon van het bureau pakken en weggaan. Nou, dat kind is opgepakt, politie thuis, telefoon thuis gevonden, ja... is dat discriminatie of is dat gewoon een feit? Dus ja, ik zou ook niet prettig vinden als mijn kind met een telefoon naar school gaat en er loopt gewoon een kind van Roma-klasse rond waarvan je weet dat die kinderen stelen. Dat is een feit, en dat is niet om het discrimineren, maar dat moet veranderd worden. Dus ja, als op scholen veel Roma-klassen zijn, doen andere ouders niet meer hun kinderen naar school. Dus ook het bestuur van zo'n school wil zorgen dat een school een zo schoon mogelijke uitstraling heeft. En daarom worden die kinderen nu apart, dus in een tweede gebouw... dat is dus een aparte afdeling waar al die Roma-klassen zitten. Officieel heet dat de Hongaarse afdeling, dus dat is niet zo 'dat is onze Roma-school', dus op papier is dat geen discriminatie maar dat is wel uit voorzorg gedaan. En ergens vind ik dat nog beter ook, want dan hebben die kinderen ook gewoon rust.

Tomas: Maar in feite vind er dus wel een soort... segregatie plaats? Nou ja... misschien een verkeerd woord, maar ze worden wel gescheiden van elkaar?

Daniel: Ja, maar dat is heel de samenleving hier. We hebben Hongaarse scholen, Roemeense scholen en zigeuners, en die groepen die leven hier door elkaar heen en iedereen heeft zijn eigen kerk, zijn eigen winkels, zijn eigen alles. Ja... zigeuners dan niet, maar... goed... ik heb het over Roma en zigeuners. Sommige mensen willen liever geen zigeuner genoemd worden, anderen zien het weer meer als een eretitel. Ik bedoel het niet verkeerd op het moment dat ik zeg "Roma of zigeuner".

Tomas: (lacht) Ja, dat is een oneindige discussie, die je daarover kan hebben.

Daniel: Ja precies, ik heb er respect voor en ik houd ervan dus eh... En als het gaat over discriminatie in dat tweede kans project... eh... een paar jaar terug, waar mijn collega's werkten. Die werkten in die klas. Maar die andere juffrouws... wij werden beschermd door die directeur, die vond het mooi wat wij deden. Die gaf zelfs gratis toetsen aan die kinderen, maar al het andere onderwijspersoon keek ons personeel niet eens aan. Die hoorden achter de rug om "oh, dat zijn die zigeunerleraren". Dus ja, in de samenleving is het er wel, maar die zigeuners die maken het er ook naar.

Tomas: Ja, het is wel een verhaal van twee kanten. Dat hoor ik ook wel van mensen waar ik hier over praat. Eigenlijk iedereen zegt het zelfde.

Daniel: Ja, en wij denken er toch aan om een relatie op te bouwen met die mensen. Die ouders willen echt het beste voor die kinderen. We zien ze gewoon taarten bakken voor de kinderen, het beste willen voor die kinderen, maar ze weten gewoon niet waar ze moeten beginnen. En daarom denken wij dat... educatie, daar moet je gewoon vol op gaan en zorgen dat dat niveau gewoon hoog blijft. Dus met huiswerkbegeleiding, zorgen dat je als kind de zo best mogelijke kansen hebt en een persoonlijke relatie met ze opbouwt, en als je veertien bent gewoon nog effe je benen bij elkaar moet houden en je niet moet laten nemen door alle buurjongen, want dan heb je een kind en dan is je leven voorbij.

Tomas: Dat is eigenlijk een cultuuromslag die je... nou ja... waar je naartoe werkt.

Daniel: En er zijn voorbeelden. We zien wel meisjes die opgroeien en het niet doen, ook in andere wijken, dus ik geloof ook wel dat het kan, echt een relatie aangaan, kinderen goed kennen. En ook weten dat 80 procent van je inzet misschien maar voor 20 procent van de kinderen succesvol gaat worden, als je geluk hebt.

Tomas: Ja, dat weerkaatst wel eigenlijk wat ik hoor met andere mensen waar ik het hier over heb.

3. How are the Roma involved with your NGO? Do they play an active role in the activities and organisation?

Timestamp: 16:40

Tomas: Uhm, even in het kort ben ik wel benieuwd of de Roma zelf in het werk dat jullie doen ook een rol spelen. Wat ik daarmee bedoel, is of ze direct betrokken worden of dat ze meer de doelgroep zijn, als je daar misschien wat over kan vertellen.

Daniel: Op dit moment in ons educatieproject hebben we geen Roma direct betrokken, maar het is wel een wens van ons.

Tomas: Ja, dat bijvoorbeeld een Roma kind later opgroeit en zelf docent wordt in het project?

Daniel: Ja... nee ik denk wel op korte termijn. Als we een gebouw hebben, dat is wel ons doel, wel een eigen plek waar we kunnen doen en laten wat we willen. Waar de kinderen uit school naartoe komen, gewoon het 'Coming Home', het thuiskomen-gevoel. Dan moeten die onderwijzeressen, die moeten onderwijs geven, maar er is nog iemand die die kinderen moet ontvangen, er moet schoongemaakt worden, er moet eten voorbereid worden, kinderen moeten in de gaten gehouden worden; dat kunnen best Roma-vrouwen zijn.

Tomas: In de ondersteunende rollen.

Daniel: Ja, want die kunnen vaak beter met die kinderen overweg, die spreken die taal beter, want die onderwijzeres moet ze leren dat een en een twee is. Dus in onze plannen staat dat wel en ik zou niet liever willen dat die Roma mensen groeien en tuurlijk: toekomstige leraressen moeten Roma zijn, dan hebben we het over twintig jaar. Maar voor nu, moeten die moeders en die vaders bij dat project betrokken zijn. Dat doe je door community te creëren, door de juiste mensen die

gemotiveerd zijn, die te vertrouwen zijn eruit te halen. En in ons verleden met die Zwitserse stichting hebben we ook wel gezien dat dat gewoon goed kan. Maar die mensen moeten betaald worden, heb je weer salaris voor nodig, dus vaak is het een probleem met geld. Want die mensen zijn anders alleen maar bezig met geld te zoeken, want je kan niet alleen maar zeggen "kom jij hier als vrijwilliger zitten". Dus moeten ze een salaris. Ik geloof niet in zwart uitbetalen dus ze moeten een officieel salaris. Dan is het gewoon keer twee voor de belasting en alles draait om geld en budget. Als je nu bijvoorbeeld bij werkprojecten gaat kijken, daar zijn ook Roma betrokken, 1 of 2.

4. What kind of role does education play in the activities of your NGO?

Timestamp: 19:15

Tomas: Nou, we hebben het hier al een beetje over gehad maar ik weet niet of verder nog toevoegingen hebt over de rol van onderwijs in jullie activiteiten, want je zegt zelf eigenlijk al "dat is heel belangrijk". Kan je daar zelf eventueel nog wat aan toevoegen?

Daniel: Ja, ik denk dat voor een kind moet er alles aan gedaan worden om hem een goed niveau onderwijs te genieten en te laten krijgen en ook zo hoog mogelijk afstudeert. Maar dat is eigenlijk alsof je iemand van de aarde naar de maan wil schieten; daar komt heel veel bij kijken. Want, natuurlijk gaat het erom je moet spullen in de klas zetten, je hebt leraressen nodig die die kinderen begrijpen, die liefde hebben voor die kinderen. Want ook discriminatie, ook die leraren moeten soms niks van die kinderen hebben. Die behandelen ze als oud vuil en die zitten er alleen maar voor dat salaris. Als het 's ochtends regent, komen die kinderen minder snel naar school. Als ze geen schoenen hebben, durven ze minder snel naar school. Met kleding precies hetzelfde. Als mama ziek is, stuurt ze het kind niet naar school. Als mama zwanger is, dat is ook wel bewezen uit andere stichtingen, dat na zes maanden zwangerschap die moeder minder betrokken is bij de kinderen. Dus die kinderen zie je absent zijn, die broertjes en zusjes zeg maar. Dus ook sociaal werk is net zo belangrijk, en het doel is wel die kinderen naar school brengen, maar je moet wel een relatie met die ouders thuis, een gezonde relatie. Dus je moet niet binnenkomen als de verlossers die eten brengt en schoenen brengt, want dan ga je de rol van die ouders vervangen en dan ondermijn je het gezag van die ouders. Die kinderen moeten die ouders zien voor wie ze zijn en zoals God het heeft bedoeld: papa, mama die hun kind opvoeden. Wij moeten die papa en mama helpen om voor dat kind te zorgen, en niet die papa en mama aan de kant schuiven in binnenkomen als de Nederlander die zegt "hier zijn wij, wij zullen je wel helpen want je papa en mama kunnen het niet".

Tomas: Je wil eigenlijk zorgen dat je de levensstandaard voor die kinderen verbeterd zodat de ingang van dat onderwijs vergemakkelijkt wordt, maar je wil...

Daniel: (onderbreekt) Die drempel voor dat onderwijs moet weggehaald worden en dan zijn er nog een aantal drempels waar je niet alleen onderwijzers voor nodig hebt, maar ook sociaal werk. Maar, daar gaan we weer: kost weer geld. Dat is wat mij betreft het belangrijkste in heel het werk met Roma's: er moet een relatie opgebouwd worden. Op papier kan je het niet oplossen, met voedselpakketten kan je het niet oplossen. Het is wel eens nodig, voedselpakketten, maar je hebt gewoon een leger van sociaal werkers nodig die met hart voor die mensen en die relatie aangaan met die mensen.

Tomas: Een vertrouwensband opbouwen.

Daniel: En dat kost geld, en heel veel projecten zeggen "moet je voedselpakketten, moet je kleding hebben?", en je zegt "nee, salaris" en dan zeggen ze vaak "ja... salarissen, dat is allemaal zo abstract". Dat merk je ook bij de achterban van onze stichting. Zodra je geld gaat vragen voor salarissen en personeel, dan gaan de inkomsten naar beneden, maar zodra je een voedseldrop doet... En dat is ook een van mijn frustraties, dat is een van de redenen dat ik... ik blijf niet de rest van mijn leven vragen om voedselpakketten. En als die Nederlanders weer komen met die vrachtwagens vol met spullen, ja... het is allemaal wel leuk, maar... En dat is eigenlijk wat ik zeg. Ik wil hier gewoon verschrikkelijk veel geld verdienen zodat ik gewoon mijn eigen mensen in dienst kan nemen en kan zeggen "joh, ik heb 10 man op kantoor en 2 zijn voor missie en jullie gaan zorgen dat die kinderen naar school gaan". En vanuit daar, dat is mijn heilige drive hier, ik wil commercieel denken, ik wil niet geld verdienen voor mezelf, God zorgt voor me, ik hoef niet rijk te worden. Het is wel lekker als je wat hebt natuurlijk, maar ik wil vooral gewoon hier het voorbeeld geven van "jongens, we hebben die Nederlanders niet nodig, wij verdienen hier met zijn allen geld en WIJ zorgen hier dat de maatschappij vooruit gaat." In onder andere in onderwijsprojecten.

Tomas: Ja, dat is wel weer een heel andere aanpak dan wat Marien doet.

Daniel: Marien doet fantastisch werk, maar die heeft wel zo'n leger van mensen die houden van die kinderen. Dat kost ook handen vol met geld, maar hij weet dat wel bij elkaar te krijgen en dat is super. Wat hij doet, zoiets zou ik ook wel overal op willen zetten.

Tomas: Maar jij bent meer de persoon die dat alles wil bekostigen zeg maar?

Daniel: Ja, ik kan niet de hele dag op kantoor zitten, dan wordt ik die ongelukkig.

5. If applicable, is it possible for you to describe the current state of education in your Roma community. Do they have access to education? Are they segregated? How are the parents involved?

Timestamp: 23:55

Tomas: Nou hebben we het ook wel gehad over de staat van het onderwijs, maar zou je misschien kort kunnen toelichten wat momenteel de staat van het onderwijs is voor die kinderen? Wat hebben ze bijvoorbeeld ter beschikking wat onderwijs betreft.

Daniel: Ik heb twee referentiepunten, want mijn eigen kinderen zitten gewoon op regulier onderwijs. In principe in hetzelfde systeem, maar ze staan wel bekend als de wat betere school, waar mijn kinderen naartoe gaan. Daar heb ik eigenlijk geen klagen over, je ziet wel dat er 35 kinderen in die klas zitten, dat is een beetje veel, maar de juffrouw is een jonge, beide juffrouwen zijn jonge, net afgestudeerde mensen in de 30 met gewoon serieus liefde voor de kinderen. Ik klaag niet over het schoolsysteem. Waarschijnlijk omdat dat een school is met een goeie uitstraling, met een directrice die van wanten weet.

Tomas: Dus er is wel onderscheid tussen specifieke scholen, maar het systeem wat daarboven staat is in principe goed ingericht?

Daniel: Ja, alleen is het probleem dat niet niemand wil werken op die scholen waar die zigeuners naartoe gaan. We hebben 20 scholen die in principe allemaal gelijk zijn, maar dat zijn ze in de realiteit niet, en daar zit misschien de crux.

Tomas: Dus de organisatie van het schoolsysteem van Roemenië is in principe goed, maar zodra je naar het niveau gaat van individuele scholen dan zie je het onderscheid.

Daniel: Ja, en voor onze stichting is het ook goed om een goede relatie te hebben met de directie. Als je erheen gaat neem je een bakje chocola mee, je geeft een hand, “blij dat je deze kinderen zo’n kans geeft, dat waarderen we zeer, waar kunnen we helpen?”. Dan voel je die mensen al groeien, “kun je me helpen, kunnen we ergens een lokaal krijgen?”, “ja, tuurlijk, regelen we”. Daar begint het ook, dat je niet als stichting iedereen wegtrekt en alles zelf gaat doen. Dus ook als we een eigen gebouw krijgen, zullen we in die klas actief blijven, maar wel tot het niveau waar onze verantwoording stopt.

6. Could you describe what the goals of your NGO are, who you intend to cooperate with to achieve them and perhaps what role the local, national and European government levels could play or are playing in achieving those goals?

Timestamp: 26:57

Tomas: Daarmee rollen we meteen een beetje in mijn volgende vraag. Dan gaan we het meer hebben over het organisatorische aspect. Kan je me kort uitleggen wat jullie concrete doelen zijn, en daarnaast wat voor rol je daarin toebedeelt aan de lokale regering, de nationale regering en misschien de Europese Unie. Hoe zie jij de beste organisatie daarin, welke verantwoordelijkheid zou elk niveau daarin moeten hebben?

Daniel: Ons doel is om kinderen die opgroeien in een kansarme omgeving, die niet gemotiveerd worden om naar school te gaan, om die te motiveren om naar school te gaan en die een diploma te halen. Dat is gewoon ons doel; een kindje van 3-4 waarvan je weet 'als je niks doet gaat die gewoon niet naar school'. Om zo door te groeien, dat is het doel.

Tomas: Waarmee je ook zorgt dat je een lange-termijn effect creëert waarmee je die kinderen in het reguliere systeem brengt zodat ze dezelfde kansen krijgen?

Daniel: Ja, en wat ons betreft is onze rol als stichting: onze stichting zou er niet moeten zijn. Dus wij doen het waar het systeem gebroken is. Dat proberen wij in te vullen. Dat begint bij de ouders die ook nooit naar school geweest zijn. Eigenlijk moeten de ouders dat doen en sociaal werkers moeten die ouders overtuigen dat die kinderen naar school moeten. Dat zou eigenlijk de lokale regering moeten doen maar die is beperkt in budget en kunnen. De overheid probeert dat wel in te vullen maar dat moet nog groeien. Dat lukt dus nog niet, dus ga je naar de maatschappij, zoals wat wij proberen op te zetten zoals lokale kerken. Het ontbreekt alleen nog aan de juiste mensen met visie, maar wat Marien doet... ik denk dat als die zo'n organisatie zo leidt, kan je echt wel een aantal lokale bedrijven overhalen om een paar duizend euro per jaar te betalen. Op dit moment ontbreekt het alleen nog aan het verhaal, want ik kan wel een goede directeur aannemen, maar dat kost gewoon geld. Dat kost twee keer zoveel als een lerares en ik geef nu nog gewoon liever het geld uit aan een lerares.

Daniel: Dat is de lokale overheid, de lokale overheid moet zijn geld weer krijgen van de nationale regering. Over de Europese Unie weet ik niet zo veel te zeggen qua verantwoording. Ik weet dat ze centen zat hebben en voor Roma centen willen geven. Hoe dat geabsorbeerd wordt in Roemenië, daar moet je ook weer iemand voor in dienst hebben die weet hoe zo'n plan werkt. Dus ik moet iemand aannemen om Europese fondsen te schrijven en zo kan hij zijn salaris terugverdienen, maar dat kost wel twee jaar om salaris af te dekken voor zo'n iemand. Je hebt naast een plan ook de goede mensen nodig hebben, want ik kan op papier alles goed doen, maar als dat alleen op papier blijft is het weggegooid geld.

Tomas: Los daarvan, de kritiek die ik ook vaak hoor is dat de Europese subsidie toch vaak op de korte termijn is.

Daniel: En ook niet op de salarissen, en op 2-3 jaar kun je niet veel doen, dat klopt. Wat mij betreft, in een ideale wereld heb je geen Europees geld nodig. Ik denk dat er lokaal genoeg fondsen beschikbaar zijn en genoeg bedrijven zijn die gewoon een leuk project kunnen runnen.

7. Do you believe education should be a focus point in Roma integration efforts? Why, or why not? If important, who do you believe should be involved in achieving a good educational program for Roma? (If possible, relate this to the Charis Foundation and its education project or a cooperational framework with other NGOs)

Timestamp: 33:54

Tomas: Dan lopen we meteen door naar de laatste vraag. Dat is een samenvattende vraag in dit geval. Denk je dat onderwijs echt de sleutel is voor de oplossing van dit probleem, of zijn er ook zaken waar meer aandacht naar moet gaan?

Daniel: (denkt) Hm... ik denk wel dat de grootste sleutel onderwijs is. Het leven van een kind draait om onderwijs, van 0 tot aan je 20^{ste}. Twintig jaar lang moet je onderwijs krijgen en dan ben je klaar voor de maatschappij. Dat is hoe onze maatschappij werkt. In dat onderwijs zitten heel veel elementen die erbij komen: je krijgt vrienden en vriendinnen, je krijgt voorbeelden, je hebt mensen in je leven die als voorbeelden kunnen dienen, je wordt uitgedaagd, je gaat op reis, je ziet wat van de wereld. Een normaal kind, ook jouw leven en mijn leven, speelde zich af tot je 20^{ste} op school. Als je vooruit wil in Nederland of Roemenië, moet je in het onderwijssysteem zitten. Als je in het onderwijssysteem zit heb je ook je papieren, je identiteitspapieren, want vaak zijn mensen nog niet geregistreerd. Op het moment dat je dan naar school gaat, tot je 18^e ben je automatisch verzekerd. Als je niet in het systeem zit ben je dat niet.

Extra question about NGO-networks

Tomas: Ik heb het er met Marien ook wel over gehad, dat NGO's vaak wel expertise willen uitwisselen, maar dat is vaak lastig. Vind jij dat een NGO-netwerk iets is waar aandacht voor moet komen of wat misschien vanuit nationaal of Europees niveau ondersteund moet worden?

Daniel: Ja, en Marien en ik nemen daar ook wel initiatief in. Bij Marien hebben we ook wel van die meetings.

Tomas: Ja, alleen wat Marien ook wel zegt dat je als NGO daar gewoon geen tijd voor hebt omdat je zo druk bezig bent met je eigen werk als NGO.

Daniel: Nou ja, wat je in Nederland bijvoorbeeld hebt is een platform. Bijvoorbeeld Christelijk Platform Oost-Europa. Die doen niet anders dan mensen bij elkaar brengen. Wij hebben wel, met Marien ook, best wel ver plannen uitgewerkt om ook een soort platform te beginnen, gewoon geregistreerd. Maar ja, je merkt wel dat je daar mensen voor nodig. Je hebt een iemand nodig die daar zijn hele dag aan besteed. We kunnen als stichting gewoon niet 300 euro per maand afdragen om zo'n platform in de lucht te houden. Maar ik geloof ik samenwerken, ik heb gewoon heel veel ideeën opgedaan door gewoon met Marien te praten. We zijn samen naar Arad geweest, we komen overal omdat iemand anders gewoon best wel meer kan weten dan jij. Het probleem met zigeuners is in ieder dorp hetzelfde; overal waar de kinderen 14 zijn worden ze zwanger, overal zijn de ouders analfabeet, dus het probleem is hetzelfde. Maar omdat je de aanpak moet doen vanuit de relatie, is het altijd zoeken naar de balans tussen een hele grote organisatie die bureaucratisch is, die op de cijfers stuurt. Dat kan bijna niet met Roma. Een hele kleine organisatie zoals wij, of een iets grotere zoals die van Marien, die heeft een hele persoonlijke relatie, dus dat is eigenlijk beter voor de hulpverlening, maar weer niet voor de monitoren. Niemand weet eigenlijk wat Marien doet, wat zijn resultaten zijn, wat de impact, hoe die kinderen eruit zouden zijn als Marien er niet was geweest. Hadden die kinderen die nu wel een diploma krijgen anders geen diploma gehaald. Maar je ziet bij een overheid, die kijken alleen maar naar nummers. Dat zie je ook bij een Europese Unie die, op het moment dat die plannen schrijft, dan moet je je lijsten met presentie inleveren. Als je onder die presentie-eis ziet moet je je geld terugbetalen. Ik heb wel verhalen gehoord van organisaties waar die presentie gewoon opgeklopt wordt. Dan ben je niet meer bezig met dat kind helpen, maar met je papieren inleveren om dat geld te krijgen.

Wat ik als een gevaar zie voor initiatieven, is dat ze vaak uit het buitenland gestuurd worden.

Initiatieven komen uit het buitenland en de besturen vertellen de lokale mensen wat ze moeten doen, en dan zijn ze weer weg. Op het moment dat wij als stichting budgetten willen hebben om samen te werken met anderen, dan worden ze toch een beetje van "ja... we doen het allemaal zelf

wel". Je merkt dat Marien daar minder last van heeft omdat hij daar overheen gegroeid is. Wij hebben ook altijd een goed bestuur gehad dus daar was ik altijd zeer tevreden mee. Die hebben zich nooit echt diep bemoeid met dat soort dingen, die hebben heel veel aan ons overgelaten. Het nieuwe bestuur ook, maar dat is niet overal zo en dat zie ik wel als een gevaar. Dat mensen zich hier niet kunnen ontplooiën omdat de mensen die leiding geven, die beslissen over het geld hier niet dagelijks zijn. Dat is een gevaar voor kleine stichtingen, dat niet de capabele mensen komen vertellen wat er moet gebeuren.

Tomas: Ik denk dat we hier alles kunnen afsluiten tenzij jij nog wat wil toevoegen.

Daniel: Nee, volgens mij heb ik wel alles gezegd.

Tomas: Nou dan sluit ik hier de opname af.

Appendix 5: Interview Anca Bâlc

09-07-2021

Florești, Foundation Charis

Interviewer: Tomas de Jong

Interviewee: Anca-Victoria Bâlc (Educational Programme teacher, Foundation Charis)

Recording Started

1. Could you describe to me how exactly your lessons look? What kind of topics do you cover with the children and what would a typical day look like?

Timestamp: 0:00

Tomas: So the first question I'm interested in is really about what you do so... uhm... if you could briefly explain to me what you do for the foundation here and then uhm... since I know that you're a teacher, more specifically what do your lessons look like, what kind of topics do you cover with the children and what does a typical as a teacher here and a typical day for the students look like?

Anca: Okay, so most of the time, all the time, we work with kids on homework. Because they have problems to resolve the homework they get at school, the parents from the neighbourhood, from the community... they can't help them. So, we go on math and Romanian... that's the main thing we do with them with the homework. When they don't understand the lesson at school, we explain the lesson here, we do more exercise with them here to make them understand what they teach at school.

Tomas: Yes, it's extra uhm... understanding.

Anca: Exactly, and uhm... of course I have a time of preparation for the lessons and... when we teach...- but we go with what they teach at school most of the time.

Tomas: I see... and we're talking about a school here right?

Anca: Yes, uhm... a public school... yes, a public school.

Tomas: So what I've heard before, for example, is often that parents of Roma here are analphabetic themselves so they can't read or write...-

Anca: Most of them had maybe only... the first grade or until the fourth grade and... they don't know how to write and how to read.

Tomas: And so you kind of take that role... teaching and helping them with homework...

Anca: Exactly, and many times if the parents... eh, the kid doesn't have eh... for example it's not the day to come to us... it's happened that the parents come with a book and with a notebook to explain to the kid how to do the homework. Even if the kid is not on that day with us, because the kids come only twice a week.

Tomas: Oh yes, exactly... and that is only on Tuesdays and Thursdays?

Anca: Depends, we split the kids in groups and they can on Monday and Wednesday, Tuesday and Thursday... it depends.

Tomas: And so... what exactly do these days look like? Like, at what time do they show up here?

Anca: Normally, after they finish school, they come here directly to us. When it wasn't Covid-time we served some lunch here, we eat together, we have some relaxing time and then we start to do the homework. And after we start the first part of the homework, we have another break to socialise, to play some games and then we do the rest of the work.

Tomas: Yeah, so there's not just the educational part but there's also-

Anca: Yeah, our work is not only the education-

-At this point there was a brief disturbance because somebody needed something from the room the interview was held in, after which the conversation continued-

Anca: So the thing we do for the education, but we want these kids to understand the value of the world, the value of the family, of the community and the value of themselves. Because many times the Roma kids... they don't value themselves, because they say we are... from another planet in a way, you know? They don't see appreciation from teacher many times at school, they are sitting in the back of the class, many times the people are saying "you are stupid, you are not good enough",

and we try to make them understand that they are smart, they are intelligent, they are good enough for the society, they are good enough for family, to have a family and to go to work and to get an education.

Tomas: Okay, will go in-depth into this into another question because... well I remember, when we were speaking at the school building, that you said that education isn't even necessarily the most important thing you do here and what you're saying now seems to kind of reflect that.

2. What do you believe are the biggest risk factors that may lead to the children dropping out of the educational program? Can you name any specific examples of this happening and perhaps how you have tried to prevent this from happening since?

Timestamp: 4:14

Tomas: I'd like to move on now to the next question and then ask more about the risks that these children face in the educational program. What I mean by that is, for example, what do you think are the biggest issues that these children face that cause them not to get proper access to the normal educational system here? So specific examples of this.

Anca: Okay, normally education in Romania is free. But, the teachers are buying more books than the school is giving, so the parents have to pay for those books. Many times, the parents of the Roma kids don't have the money to buy those books. So, then... they are feeling uhm... Another thing that happens is that at school they don't have many times lunch, they are not well-dressed and that's discrimination, in a way, from other kids.

Tomas: It's good that you mention that, because discrimination is often eh...-

Anca: It is, we say on the law we don't do discrimination, but if you go on the background, on the field, you see that there is discrimination. And they are feeling that, and they see that they... I'm sorry to say, starting with the teachers... some of them, and some with their colleagues.

Tomas: Yes, in the normal education system you mean? Where they are still somewhat treated differently.

Anca: Exactly, and for them it's like... when they are coming and they see they are treated normally, many times they are surprised. Of course we have to work with them because they... many of them, they don't have the seven years from home, you know? They don't know how to act, they don't know to keep quiet, to respect one another, to respect the teacher, how to eat, many times they don't know. We've had situation where they didn't know to use the fork and the knife.

Tomas: Yes, these are all lessons that they haven't necessarily

3. Could you describe the importance of the involvement of the children's parents? In what way do they influence the access to education and can you name some concrete examples of this? Could you possibly expand on the role of Romani themselves potentially being involved in the programme (i.e. becoming teachers themselves)?

Timestamp: 6:23

Tomas: That's also one of the questions I have here, regarding more the parents themselves because... as you say there are some issues with the home situation. Uhm... could you describe to me what kind of role do their parents exactly play in their lives? How important is the involvement of their parents when you relate it to their place in education?

Anca: I don't say that the involvement of the parents is 100 percent the same, you know... because there are parents that are involved in their kids' education, they go with the kids at the school, they take them to the kindergarten, they take care of them. But, their families... let's say maybe 60 percent of them or 70 percent... that they don't care about the kids' education.

Tomas: Well, they do care about the kids but they don't care... necessarily about the education?

Anca: Exactly, uhm... in the last years, that's when we saw an improvement because many moms are telling me: "I don't want my kid to be exactly like I was; to face the same issues I had to face. So that I am struggling to send them at school, I am struggling to help them get an education. Because I did have the possibility to have an education as a parent, and I want my kid to do better."

Tomas: Yeah, uhm... if I can just eh... because Marien also said that... at least... I don't know if you can confirm that, but that there are children who were in the educational project before, but dropped out, who are now parents themselves and are interested in actually getting their child into the education program because they themselves were unable to finish it.

Anca: That's true, that's happened.

Tomas: I think that's like one of the pieces of evidence that there's an improvement in the field of education in the community now.

Anca: It is, and you see that at the beginning they didn't appreciate what we are doing here. They were like: "Well, it's another fun stuff." I have kids who had the impression that they are coming to our after school project, to our project, and they said: "Okay, we go and play". Then they discovered we were really doing education and they were surprised. And I had a kid who really dropped the project because he had the impression that we were playing only games.

Tomas: Ah okay, so he came here expecting to have fun and play, but it turned out to be... (laughs)

Anca: Education, and a school in a way. Different from the public school, but school.

Tomas: So that's uhm... so that's an overall improvement and uhm... Sorry I haven't actually asked you this, but how long have you been teaching here at this program?

Anca: I've been teaching in this program for three years.

Tomas: So you've already maybe been able to see some improvement here?

Anca: Well four years, but I teach a year, then I went back in another city and I return from three years... so four.

4. Could you explain the importance of individual attention to the students and how you attempt to achieve this (or why if not applicable)?

Timestamp: 9:14

Tomas: So I think we can then kind of move on to the next question that ties into this a little bit. That's more about... well we already talked about this a little bit and I said I had a question about this and that's about... Individual attention that you give to the children. So, as you said education isn't necessarily the main thing that's important in this project, but if you could explain the importance of giving these children individual attention?

Anca: I've had situations, for example, with the girls, when they felt... at the public school they didn't have friends to play with them or uhm...-

-The conversation was briefly interrupted again at this point because someone had to get something from the room the interview was being held in-

Anca: So the girl... she felt she didn't fit; at school, with the family, with friends. And we had even a group of girls... who are talking about situation... they confront with the boys, you know. Because here, in the community, at 12 years old the girl is like... not at this time, but in previous years if she has 12 years old she was trying to get married. And now, to discuss with them the way they are clothing because they are not... the mothers don't tell them okay, it's not normal to clothe very tight or... you know, different. And I try to explain to them what is the importance of be okay how you clothe, the healthcare you have to take of yourself, the situation with some boys I had when they went begging and try to explain to them, talk to the parents about this situation.

Tomas: So these are all separate examples of where you tried to talk one on one with these... kind of guide them in the right direction.

Anca: Some of them are telling me some struggles they have with their parents at home, and I can only help that only when I am alone with the kid, because I don't want the other from the community... or I had a girl who... the parents are fighting, the uncle is fighting with the father, beaten, the police is coming. So they are facing a lot of situations, and try to explain your kid "but my father doesn't love me". "Well, he loves you but in his own way. You can't say your father doesn't love you because...". So, they are facing a lot of issues, and we try to help them in every aspect of their life.

Tomas: So, when you do this with these children and you try to teach them these lessons, I suppose a goal is also to ensure that they are better parents to their children in return as well? That's also part of this cultural change you try to achieve?

Anca: That's also a goal, in a way it's hard to break the circle. Because, they come here and I try to put in them some values about themselves, about education, about the future and they go into the society many times and the society just don't accept them. So they hear something here from us, and the society tells them something totally different, so it's a struggle for them.

Tomas: And are there also examples of the parents getting annoyed with the fact that you're teaching them certain things where they disagree, for example, with what you do?

Anca: Hm... no I never had a situation where a parent called me or come here to tell me that I did something wrong with a kid, because they respect us very much, they see that we care very much about the kid.

Tomas: I suppose that's also something that's developed over the years?

Anca: Over the years, at the beginning it wasn't like that. And now I'm very cautious and careful about what I talk about with them; to not be misunderstood. And it happened once, if I remember clearly, that the mom called me and asked me: "okay, what did you want to say?". And after I explained to her what I really wanted to say to the kid, she like: "ah, okay I understand now".

Tomas: Ah okay, so the parents do see the value now of education?

Anca: And it's a better communication between us and the parents nowadays. They are calling us even now, when they are missing from the classes in our project; they are calling us and say: "my kid is sick, he is not able to come". In the past, they were like: "Well, if he doesn't go to Casa Speranța he doesn't go, it doesn't matter", but now no.

Tomas: So they do take it seriously now?

Anca: Yeah.

Tomas: Okay, that's good.

5. To your knowledge, does racism against Roma limit their access to education in any way? Do you know of cases of school segregation for example?

Timestamp: 13:45

Tomas: Uhm, so the next question I have... we already kind of talked about this a little bit, it also relates to discrimination against Roma. But if you could repeat, for example, what exactly... what kinds of specific examples there are here in the area about how Roma children are limited in their access to education. You already talked about them having to sit in the back of the class, and that the teachers may treat them differently but... could you give me uhm... are those the only examples of the kinds of limitations they have or is there more?

Anca: Well... I can't say all the teachers treat them differently, that's for sure. There are teachers who help them, but most don't know how to... You know, you go in a class, you have a little bit more black skin, you see that you are a Roma kid. Normally, the people or even the classmates: "Okay, he's a gypsy". We are... the parents of the Romanian children many times say:

You don't play with a gypsy" and in the head of a child it's like: "Okay, I don't play with a gypsy. They are stupid, they have health issues, they are not good friends, they are not smart."

Tomas: All these stigmas?

Anca: Exactly. So, this is the beginning at school, and then bullying, you know? It's happened, because they don't take care of their health; many Roma kids are a little bit fat, they are getting too fat. And then the fun they are having at school. The teacher, uhm... it's true; even the Roma kids are acting badly at times. But if a Romanian kid fights with a Roma kid, the Roma kid is at fault. If the Romanian kid did something wrong, the teacher will often still say it was the Roma kid.

Tomas: And these are all things that discourage them from staying in school.

Anca: Exactly.

Tomas: And you mentioned earlier, that the parents don't have the money to pay for books or...-

Anca: Exactly, and then the kids are making fun of them. Or they see that the kids don't have the clothes that the other kids have. And I have a situation where a kid didn't want to go to school because he didn't have shoes, the right shoes, and he felt embarrassed about it. There are a lot of... on paper it looks great; we don't have discrimination. But we have discrimination.

Tomas: Yeah, this has been said by a lot of people I've spoken to.

Anca: And it's at the high level, let's say.

Tomas: Yeah, the school system is well-organised on paper, but when you look at the level of individual schools there are definitively issues of discrimination or segregation or lack of access to resources, if that makes sense the way I summarise that.

Anca: Yeah, that's true.

6. Could you describe the long-term goals of the educational project and the work you do? In what way do you believe it could foster long-term improvement?

Timestamp: 17:00

Tomas: Then we can move on to the next question, uhm... This is more the long-term view on the educational project. If you could describe what the long-term goals of the project itself are, so what exactly do you want to achieve? And how does that contribute to creating a long-term effect for the children?

Anca: Well, we have kids now in our project from the zero class until the eight grade. Our goal at the beginning, even now it is, that the kid can finish eight classes; finish primary education. Then we encourage them to go to high school. In the past, many of them did that; they went to high school. Or study at... how you say...

Tomas: Sort of practical... eh professional education to learn for a specific job?

Anca: Exactly, so this is the main goal for us; to finish school. Because many of them, they are dropping. In the last year they were dropping school after they finish the fourth grade, they didn't

go to the fifth; they just dropped school. And now I see that it's a big... let's say maybe 80-85 percent of them are going to finish the eight grade.

Tomas: And that's one thing, but how does that contribute to the wider picture? So they finish their eight classes of primary education, what extra benefits does that give them?

Anca: After that, of course you can go to study a job, to go to high school... Our main causes at the beginning were learning them how to write and read because their parents don't know how to do that, to get a better job in the future, because most of the parents are working in a chicken factory. It's hard work.

Tomas: With little pay.

Anca: Exactly, and many hours, and many of them don't have a contract. They are just paid in the hand with money. And, to go to university. We have a kid, a girl, who were in our project for eight years. Now she is in the eleventh class; in high school; a good high school in Cluj. And I encourage her, and I have a lot of discussion to her, after she finish high school to go to university.

Tomas: Wow, that's amazing. And would that be the first child from this community, if she would do that...-

Anca: Until I came here, yes. I don't know in the past but... eh yes. So she wants to become a lawyer, or a teacher, and she's smart. And I encourage her to do that, and the family is supporting her not that much; the father has big problems. So, she's struggling in a way alone, even now. Sometimes, when she has big project at high school, she comes to us and ask for help; and of course we help her.

Tomas: So you're also trying to help where you can to make it easier for her to actually do the education.

Anca: Yes, and even she told me that, in the high school at Cluj, she's the fifth person in her class; so she's that smart. But the classmates treat her different, not the teachers, but the classmates. It's good in Romania, at the university we have places for Roma. So they don't pay the studies.

Tomas: They get uhm... their tuition is paid?

Anca: Yes, so that's a good thing.

Tomas: And that's a system from the government?

Anca: Yes, it's a system from the government.

Tomas: So, when this is successful that would also be good practice and would show other people in the community. If more people do it, it is a way to improve your life, if I can summarise it like that?

Anca: Yeah, it's good that you summarise. Yeah, that's true.

7. Could you describe to me how exactly local government (or perhaps national government) factors into the work you do? For example the administrative load or any additional influence they may have.

Timestamp: 21:50

Tomas: Since we already started talking about government involvement; that is actually my next question. If you could describe to me how the government here is involved in what you do in terms of education. What kind of things are they involved with?

Anca: For us to be functioning according to the law, we need to have an accreditation. That comes once per five years, we do that. We have to do a lot of paperwork for it, we didn't have many problems with them because even the government, and the people from the government who come to check us, they see that we are doing something for these people, for this project. Of course we are in order with everything, because if you are not in order with everything they don't give you accreditation. But ehm... they appreciate what we do, not all of them, but some of them do. At the city council, we get some help once per year for the food, so they help us in the way they can.

Tomas: With the limited resources that they have?

Anca: Exactly. I don't know that, if we try to do more, if they would help us more. But in a way, when you work with the government, they will come with their expectation. They are telling you the way you have to do stuff. And since they don't have people who work with the community, in the field, they don't know exactly. They come with something written on a paper; this is what you have to do. Okay, but that does not apply to what we are facing and if you try to explain to them, they say: "well, it's on paper".

Tomas: And this is... because this is about education and here education is a public affair. So the government will give you some demands, like this is the minimal that these children need to have access to. But they do not know the specific situation of the Roma children here.

Anca: Because it's different, they are after schools in Florești for Romanian people, for Romanian kids, but they are different. They are not on the same level. The kids, the Roma, it's hard for them to be at the level of the school because even the school in Romania, they are asking a lot. And the Romanian kids have personal teachers that go home with them. And the Roma kids cannot afford to pay another teacher to teach them at home.

Tomas: So like a private teacher.

Anca: Exactly, a private teacher.

Tomas: But then that is also kind a job that you now also do (laughs).

Anca: Exactly.

Tomas: So basically, what the government does is administrative?

Anca: That's true.

Tomas: They force you to make reports on these children and...-

Anca: Well, I didn't study 100 percent about this situation, but I heard that they have some project that can help you. But you need to access to them, and they are asking a lot. A lot of paperwork, that you are able to go and access the funds.

Tomas: Well, what I've heard thus far is that the government... there's really a large administrative load that they put on you. Because they want to ensure proper education and this is the way they go about it. But you said earlier, they do also fund certain things as well?

Anca: For example for the catering, for the food we bring the kids, we are having not a contract, but we do the project from the main city hall here in Florești. And if they accept our project and they go with the mayor and everything, they will give us some money we don't have to return. They give us 80 percent of the money and we put 20 percent, but not for the entire year but just for a few months. For example this year, it will be, if we get the project because we don't know yet, it will be from September until the middle of December, that's four months. It's a help.

8. In your opinion, is there a change necessary in the involvement of local or national government (or perhaps even the European Union)? What would be the ideal role for each of this in your view?

Timestamp: 26:47

Tomas: So that rolls kind of into the last question I have. You've already kind of described to me how it works around here in terms of government. But do you think this should change; what the government is doing now. Is that sufficient, is that what they should be doing or should they be more involved in what you do here?

Anca: I think they should be more involved; the government. They should be more involved, but what is bad, in my opinion now, is that they want to control everything. Of course, after they help you with some money, with whatever you might need, of course you need to give some reports back. But not to make you say how you have to do it, because every community is different. We work with our community here, but I think in a different city the Roma community would be different. So, what applies here does not apply in another city. So what works in our project may not work in another city.

Tomas: That's interesting, because I spoke to somebody yesterday who said... they didn't say anything about communities specifically, but they said the problems that Roma face are very similar across Romania. So certain issues are the same.

Anca: Yes, there is poverty and there is lack of education. But how... like we as people are different, communities are as well.

Tomas: So they all need different kinds of approaches. But ideally if, for example, if the local government would get the resources to pay as much attention to these children as you do, would that be preferable to being a foundation that does that?

Anca: Can you repeat please?

Tomas: So what you do here, you do this work here with these children and you know these children very well. The government does not currently have the resources to put that much effort into learning about these children; what they need. But if the government would get an extra team with a big budget that could go into the community and learn about these children, would that be better than having your program here?

Anca: Any help is good, that's for sure. BUT, it depends on who helps the children because I as a teacher appreciate the child. I care about the child; I don't care if it's a Roma kid or not. And if people who are paid by government who don't have the heart to do it. It might be good if they want to help, but if just to get paid... that's a problem. Because, if you pay... okay... we do a bigger school here for the community, for example, and in the afternoon the teachers come and help the good. But if the teacher is just teaching the kid as a Roma kid and she's getting the salary and that's all... I don't see an improvement. So, you need to treat these kids not just as a teacher, but as a human person.

Tomas: And that still depends very largely on the kind of person who deals with the child, they need to have the heart for it and still need to be close to the community.

Anca: Exactly.

Tomas: So... it's really difficult to say something definitive about that, but as it stands, the people here at the foundation are still better suited to do that than the government could be.

Anca: And the community won't trust them that easily.

Tomas: To your knowledge, is there any help from the European level here? Have you used European funds or anything in your educational project?

Anca: In our programme currently, no, we do not use any European support. But, as I know you have two years of support. Let's say we do a project, we have two years of support for whatever we need. And after two years they stop, what do we do with the kid? Let's say we can hire two more teachers, for example, then we can get more kids in the project. After two years, they stop

the project, they stop the money, they stop everything. What do we do with the kid? It's like you're playing with somebody's life.

Tomas: Right, you can't set up any long-term plans because you only have the funding for two years, and you need structural support-

Anca: In the long-term, with them you need to work in the long term. We need funding for eight years, then we can work with them.

Tomas: Okay, that covers this question, I don't know if you have any comments from your side?

Anca: No not really, if everything is okay on your side.

Tomas: Yeah we've covered everything we need from my side. But that was really useful to actually talk to you because you are involved with these children... two times a week I think?

Anca: Yes I have two groups.

Tomas: Okay, I will stop the recording here then.

Recording stopped.

Appendix 6: Interview Marien Kroon (Dutch)

09-07-2021

Florești, Foundation Charis

Interviewer: Tomas de Jong

Interviewee: Marinus Kroon (Foundation Charis Director)

Recording Started

1. Could you describe to me the process of setting up the educational program, things that went wrong and that went well and the significance of the program now, especially when compared to other projects you run?

Timestamp: 0:00

Tomas: We beginnen bij de eerste vraag meteen uhm... Ik heb natuurlijk al best wel veel meegekregen van jullie project door te praten met allerlei verschillende mensen, maar als je mij nog een keer kan uitleggen wat het proces is geweest van het opzetten van het educatieprogramma. Dus, wanneer zijn jullie begonnen maar ook dingen als waar ging het misschien een keer fout, wat ging wel goed en hoe verhoudt dat project zich eigenlijk met de andere projecten die jullie ook doen hier?

Marien: Ja, je hebt natuurlijk een tweedeling in onze stichting. We zijn een stichting met een christelijke identiteit en dat proberen we een beetje uit elkaar te trekken. Dus dat eh... het belangrijkste in mijn beleving, in het humanitaire, is het onderwijsproject. Omdat ik geloof dat, door de tijd heen, we zijn al een tijd bezig, in het verleden hebben we heel veel andere dingen gedaan. We hebben huizen gebouwd, we geven in de winter voedsel aan de mensen, we delen wel eens kleding uit, we delen wel eens voedsel uit, dat is allemaal onderdeel van het werk wat we doen. Maar dat vind ik niet het belangrijkste wat we doen. Het belangrijkste binnen het humanitaire gebeuren -heeft natuurlijk een stukje aandacht voor de mens zelf, dat vind ik heel belangrijk; het gesprek hebben, een plek zijn waar mensen een verhaal kwijt kunnen- maar buiten dat vind ik het onderwijs zo ontzettend belangrijk. We zijn begonnen in... eh... we kwamen in deze wijk in 2005 terecht, er was nog geen gebouw.

Tomas: Dat was toen jullie nog helemaal aan het begin stonden?

Marien: Helemaal aan het begin, dus dit stond er allemaal nog niet, dus het was echt helemaal nul. Eh... nou ja, we zijn natuurlijk begonnen indertijd met een kinderprogramma, maar we kwamen er al heel snel achter dat heel veel Roma-kinderen, en jij kan dat waarschijnlijk beter weten hoeveel procentueel kinderen basisschool niet afmaken, dat is enorm. We zagen hier de enorme nood van de kinderen die hun basisschool niet afmaakten en ja wat ga je daaraan doen? Want ik denk: wil je echt iets bereiken, elke dag een bordje eten geven, dan heb je natuurlijk het verhaal van de hengel en het vissen, maar hoe ga je kinderen zelf leren 'vissen'. En natuurlijk, dat moet je ook... Er was een omslag nodig in ons denken, vanuit een 'ouderwetse' hulpverlening. Want, we komen natuurlijk vanuit eh... ik ben wat ouder, dus vroeger had je... de hulpverlening was vrachtwagens vol met oude kleren naar Roemenië rijden vanuit Nederland en die uitdelen: "Ach, het voelt zo goed". Dan ineens ga je zeggen: "ja dat kindje, dat dat spijkerbroekje draag, met een groene snottebel heeft wel onderwijs nodig."

Tomas: Ja, dat hadden jullie al vrij vroeg in de smiezen?

Marien: Dat had ik zelf vrij vroeg in de smiezen, ik denk; wil je echt iets gaan bereiken, wil je echt iets gaan veranderen, dan moet je beginnen met de kinderen en dan moet je een onderwijsproject op gaan zetten. Alleen, het was sinds 2005-2006 zo'n beetje, hoe ga je dat doen? We waren net begonnen, we hadden geen idee hoe het werkte, we hadden geen grote organisatie, we hadden geen voorbeeld, we hadden gewoon maar het idee. We geloven ook dat er nog een lijntje naar boven is, maar dat kan je waarschijnlijk niet in je rapport schrijven, dat..-

Tomas: Ja, maar dat is ook een beetje jullie visie, wat jullie uitdragen.

Marien: Wetenschappelijk gezien kan je dat niet altijd verklaren, maar ikzelf... ik heb maar gewoon een MBO-opleidinkje gedaan; ik ben helemaal geen slimme jongen. Maar ik zag wel: wil je iets

doen in zo'n wijk- ik kom natuurlijk zelf ook uit een achterstandssituatie, ik heb ook in een kindertehuis gezeten, bij ons thuis gingen heel veel dingen niet vanzelf, financieel ging het thuis niet vanzelf- en toen zag ik deze kinderen en toen zei ik: "wie gaat er nou staan voor deze kinderen". Toen dacht ik: er moet wat gaan gebeuren, ja hoe werkt het. En toen, die visie kregen we, die gingen we delen met mensen; nou, we zouden graag in de wijk willen waar we kunnen gaan starten met een onderwijsproject. Maar ja, waar begin je, hoe doe je het? In die tijd waren er nog geen andere organisaties die zoiets deden, dus we waren echt helemaal nieuw, vers. Iedereen was nog bezig met die vrachtwagens hulpgoederen uit te delen...-

-At this point the interview is briefly interrupted because Marien receives a call, after which the recording is started again to continue where the conversation was interrupted-

Tomas: Eh... ja.

Marien: Dus er moet iets gebeuren met deze kinderen, want we zagen kinderen met messen rondlopen en heel veel kinderen die de school niet afmaakten, die nauwelijks konden lezen en schrijven.

Tomas: Dus jullie gingen aan de slag?

Marien: Ja, dus eigenlijk zijn we... maar ja, waar ga je beginnen, hoe ga je beginnen?

Tomas: Hoe ging dat, zeg maar, in stappen?

Marien: Het gebouwtje kwam ineens in zicht, het voorste gebouwtje, het onderwijsproject. Dat was toen 40.000 euro, maar ja waar haal je dat vandaan? Van het begin eigenlijk al, dus toen zijn we begonnen, we hadden 10.000 euro aanbetaald, de rest van het geld zou uit Amerika komen. Die Amerikanen hadden toen gezegd: "we stoppen", dus toen hadden we opeens een gat van 30.000 euro dat opgevuld moest gaan worden. Je hebt nog geen kind geholpen, maar je hebt wel de visie en het pand daar.

Tomas: Dus dat stond er al, maar er was nog een schuld?

Marien: Nee, nee. We hadden pand nog geeneens gekocht, we hadden een aanbetaling gedaan. Die 30.000 euro moeten we nog betalen maar die hadden we dus niet meer. Dus... dat was best een hele eh... en... we waren nog een beetje in overleg. Via-via hoorde iemand dat en die zei van: "Nou, ik wil wel helpen, ik vind het een heel mooi streven en ik geef 30.000 euro waarvan 10.000 euro een gift is en die 20.000 euro is dan een lening. Dus jullie kunnen het gewoon gaan kopen." Want ja, anders ben je dat pand kwijt, die 10.000 euro kwijt en dat pand vonden wij toentertijd mooi, het is nou alweer te klein, maar we begonnen net. Het zat aan de rand van de wijk, je wil in de wijk zelf zitten maar niet midden in de wijk. Toen hebben we het kunnen aankopen en dan ga je gewoon beginnen. We hadden boven alleen kantooruimte, boven waren nog helemaal geen klasruimtes, we hadden eigenlijk... we waren met een klasje beneden begonnen. We zeiden: "als we beginnen, beginnen we met een klein klasje, maximaal 10 kinderen want dat vinden we te overzien en we beginnen gewoon maar". We hadden helemaal geen enkele ervaring met onderwijs, we hadden een vrouwtje uit Denemarken, dat gaf Roemeense lessen eh... Toen, op een gegeven moment, kwam Nicoleta en uiteindelijk hebben we... de stichting hebben we toen gekregen, te stichting die we nu hebben, die NGO. Die was opgezet door Amerikanen, dat vrouwtje dat het runde is teruggedaan naar Amerika en die stichting... die wist niet zo goed wat ze met die stichting moest. Dus we hebben haar onze plannen verteld, dus wat onze plannen waren en daarvan hebben we die stichting gekregen. Toen hebben we de naam veranderd en Nicoleta - werkte toen nog voor die stichting maar die had alleen twee jaar zwangerschapsverlof- en... die kwam op een gegeven moment van: "Ja, jullie moeten me aannemen of jullie moeten me ontslaan want ik ben officieel voor de stichting". Toen hebben we Nicoleta parttime in dienst genomen, toen hadden we gelijk een lerares binnen ons project en zo zijn we eigenlijk heel kleinschalig gestart.

Tomas: En zij gaf toen nog les?

Marien: Zij gaf ook lessen en het mooie was, bijvoorbeeld: een kerk uit Nederland -daar heb je hem: de PKN Leek- in het begin kwamen zij en ze vonden het een heel mooi project. Vanaf het begin, toen we nog geen kind geholpen hadden, hadden we eigenlijk al een soort van bevestiging

van “hee jongens, het kan!”. Die kerk is vanaf het begin betrokken bij ons project en dat vinden we heel waardevol. Dus je doet zo’n project niet alleen, maar met een heel team en mensen in Nederland, om me heen, die meewerken in zo’n project en zo zijn we maar heel klein begonnen met 10 kindertjes.

Tomas: Dus toen stond dat schooltje daar en je had een lerares en toen gingen jullie lessen geven aan die kinderen?

Marien: Nou, naschoolse opvang. We zijn gelijk begonnen met: “we willen geen school worden, we willen kinderen laten integreren in de school”, ik vind dat een hele belangrijke. Na school, want die kinderen gingen op ’s morgens en ’s middags naar school -nu gaan ze alleen maar ’s morgens- maar ’s middags krijgen die kinderen een hele berg huiswerk en daar is... of papa en mama werken of mama kan niet lezen of schrijven. Dus daarin, hebben we gezegd, daarin moet je dus wat gaan doen. Wij zijn geen school, maar dus wel dat die kinderen een plek vinden in de wijk, dat is Casa Speranța; een huis van hoop, waar je niet alleen onderwijs geeft maar waar het ook sociaal veilig is voor die kinderen, waar een kind even kind mag zijn, waar ze een keer verwend worden, waarin het kind even niet hoeft te zorgen voor het broertje of zusje. In het begin hadden we enorm veel uitval want jij kan een idee hebben, maar wie zit er op jou te wachten? Dus dat is een hele interessante vraag, achteraf gesteld, maar wisten wij veel? We zagen een nood en je begint maar gewoon en we hebben in het begin natuurlijk heel veel uitval gehad.

Tomas: Was dat ook iets wat eigenlijk wel te verwachten viel? Is dat eigenlijk iets waar je überhaupt wat aan kan doen?

Marien: Nee, dat moet je voor lief nemen denk ik. Alleen voor je sponsors is dat natuurlijk best ingewikkeld want die sponsors die zien continu nieuwe kinderen. Die denken: “je houdt niemand vast”, dat is het ingewikkelde daarvan, hoe ga je om met sponsoring daarin? Kijk, als je een bak EU-geld krijgt is het niet zo spannend, maar als je met sponsoring werkt met kinderen die je aan een sponsor vastzet, dat kindje verandert dan een paar keer. Nou die PKN, die keek niet zo krap, dus als een kindje een paar keer veranderde, die begrepen dat wel. Maar als een gezin een kindje sponsort en je verandert het kindje twee keer per jaar, ja... dat is geen reclame voor je project.

Tomas: Maar lang verhaal kort, het onderwijsproject is wel het centrale project geweest?

Marien: Nog steeds, al zou de hulpverlening wegvallen -kijk ik heb het niet over het christelijke programma-, de rest eromheen. Zouden we geen hulpgoederen meer krijgen; dat vind ik niet zo spannend. Wie zit er nou te wachten op tweedehands theezakjes uit Nederland, huisjes bouwen -als het niet meer kan- helaas. Maar het onderwijsproject en het sociale gebeuren, dus praten met de mensen, dat wil ik echt heel lang boven water houden.

Tomas: Dan is dat in ieder geval duidelijk voor die eerste vraag.

2. How would you say the Roma in your focus area are discriminated against? What effect does this have on their standard of living and/or access to education? Has this changed over the course of the educational program?

Timestamp: 10:11

Tomas: Dan stappen we even over naar een ander onderwerp voor de tweede vraag: Als we specifiek kijken op het gebied van discriminatie van de gemeenschap, kan je wat voorbeelden noemen van op wat voor manier dat zich manifesteert? En dan eigenlijk vooral op dit moment, waar ze mee te maken hebben en hoe dat zich specifiek verhoudt tot het gebied van educatie.

Marien: Bedoel je de kinderen of de volwassenen?

Tomas: Nou ja, de kinderen in principe, wat belemmert hun toegang tot onderwijs op dit moment?

Marien: Nou, je ziet... in het begin was het natuurlijk kleding, schoenen.

Tomas: Van die hele simpele dingen die...-

Marien: Van die hele simpele dingen die... ja... Als kind zijnde wil je er natuurlijk ook een beetje bij horen. Je wilt niet uitgelachen worden. Wat je ziet is dat er een enorm gat... En dat vind ik jammer en dat komt van twee kanten, ik wil daarin niemand... Je kan niet de geschiedenis van de ene zomaar veranderen; van oudsher waren de Roma slaven. De Roma waren de laatste gemeenschap in Europa wat nog slaaf was. De slavernij, toen ze geen slaven meer waren wie kreeg er geld? De landheren, niet de Roma's. Dus ja die Roma's hebben eigenlijk nooit wat gehad en dat hebben ze onder het Communisme proberen te breken, nou dat breek je allemaal niet. Maar wat je wel ziet is dat die discriminatie... het is niet van een paar jaartjes, die haat naar de Roma's toe is natuurlijk heel diep.

Tomas: Maar als je dat verhoudt tot hoe zich dat hier specifiek manifesteert in de omgeving, is die situatie dan ook verbeterd sinds jullie hier begonnen zijn? Is daar een stijgende lijn in?

Marien: We zien wel op school, bijvoorbeeld, in het begin hadden ze geen enkele aandacht voor de Roma-kinderen. Ze zaten gewoon achterin de klas en die kwamen gewoon totaal niet mee. Nu zien ook de leerkrachten dat Roma-kinderen mee gaan komen en dat is mede door ons project. Maar, ja, op school houd je toch een beetje die...

Tomas: Het blijft er wel, maar er is wel een verbetering te merken?

Marien: Ik zie verbetering, ja. Kijk, de Roma's mogen ook wat mij betreft Roma's blijven, alleen hoe krijg je dat geïntegreerd en dat dat is natuurlijk weer een ander verhaal. We hoeven ze geen Nederlanders te maken, we hoeven ze geen Roemenen te maken, maar ik denk gewoon standaard lezen en schrijven, maar het blijft een moeilijke. Overal waar je komt, als je zegt dat je met Roma's werkt of dat je de wijk in gaat of wat dan ook.

Tomas: Het is wel een kwestie van discriminatie nog steeds? Of, nou ja, in ieder geval een vooroordeel?

Marien: Nou, noem het maar gerust discriminatie. Als je bijvoorbeeld leest wat er soms op bepaalde forums, dan lees ik dat gewoon om te kijken wat zijn nou de meningen over bepaalde zaken, daar lusten de honden geen brood van: "Hitler had daar wel een oplossing voor" en zulk soort zaken. Dus daar komt ook... ik zie ook weinig van de overheid of iets van... een stukje van hoe kan je dat samen gaan binden.

Tomas: Het is wel interessant... want bij de Europese aanpak is dat wel het centrale, ze noemen dat 'antigypsyism', dus discriminatie tegen Roma is voor de EU-plannen het centrale focuspunt.

Marien: Maar ja, wat zie je ervan? Dat vind ik een hele interessante, want je ziet er hier helemaal niks van. Discriminatie, kijk ze doen er ook zelf aan mee, de Roma's. Het komt van twee kanten, laat ik dat heel duidelijk voorop stellen. Aan de andere kant, als jij Roma bent en je gaat solliciteren en je wordt drie keer afgewezen omdat je Roma bent... Aan de andere kant, je hebt ook Roma's die komen en die hebben een grote bek... en... Het is natuurlijk een heel ingewikkelde materie waarin je hoopt dat de nieuwe generatie het oppakt. Je mag er zijn, je mag best Roma zijn en je mag een Roemeen zijn, maar hoe kan je dat een beetje samenbinden. Dat zie je wel als we mensen hier hebben, als we nieuwe stagiaires krijgen, die schrikken een beetje omdat ze, omdat we met Roma's werken. Dus die kloof, dat... ja... een Europese Unie zegt natuurlijk dat moeten we

overbruggen, maar waarin moeten we dat zien? Want er is geen enkele NGO, er is niemand die op wat voor manier ook maar, sinds de 15 jaar dat ik hier zit, daar enigszins moeite voor heeft gedaan. De vorige burgemeester heeft gezegd: "Het onkruid moet je bestrijden".

Tomas: Ja, dat heb je eerder ook al gezegd inderdaad. Dat is wel een hele heftige uitspraak.

Marien: En ja... en een van zijn favoriete boeken was 'Mein Kampf',

Tomas: Ja, dat zegt wel genoeg.

Marien: Dus ja... discriminatie is van oudsher... het zal ook niet zomaar weggaan en hoe we het moeten doorbreken weet ik niet, maar ik hoop dat ergens dingen bij de kinderen op school verbeteren. We krijgen ook goeie complimenten vanuit de school en je hoopt ergens dat daar ook iets gebeurd, maar... dat... dat... ja... Ik weet het soms niet helemaal precies, hoe je dat goed zou kunnen veranderen. Het probleem is eigenlijk te groot voor een kleine NGO.

Tomas: Daar zou je eigenlijk een netwerk voor nodig hebben? Komt ook nog een vraag over later, gaan we het ook nog over hebben.

3. What do you believe are the most successful aspects of the educational programs, which aspects of it proved to be the most important?

Timestamp: 15:34

Tomas: Maar dan ben ik wel benieuwd over specifiek het onderwijsproject zelf. Wat denk jij, of wat denken jullie dat uit dat project de belangrijkste lessen zijn? Wat zijn good practices die je door zou kunnen zetten of door wil zetten in het project? Wat werkt echt goed en waar heb je het meeste effect van gezien?

Marien: Ehm... ik denk dat het heel belangrijk is, in zo'n onderwijsproject, de stabiliteit. Dus dat je vaste leerkrachten hebt die jaren mee met die kinderen lopen. En dat is in het verleden wel... als je een leerkracht verliest, merk je ook dat het invloed heeft op de kinderen. Je moet leerkrachten hebben die het niet alleen maar doen voor het geld, maar ook met hun hart erin. En dat geeft heel veel stabiliteit denk ik. Ook, als NGO moet je naar de ouders toe niet beter weten. Wees open voor relaties en door de jaren heen hebben ze wel gezien dat we betrouwbaar zijn. Zorg gewoon dat je je woord kan houden, zorg dat je er bent, zorg dat die kinderen lekker eten hebben. Stabiliteit is in zo'n project heel belangrijk: niet 'vandaag wel, morgen niet', 'ja, overmorgen is het er weer niet'. Zelfs in de Corona-tijd zijn we doorgegaan.

Tomas: Dus niet alleen het onderwijs zelf, de bijscholing die je geeft is belangrijk, maar ook de relatie die je opbouwt met de kinderen en dat je leert van wat er in hun leven speelt en wat ze nodig hebben.

Marien: Ja, ook relatie met de ouders. Als je ouders niet meehebt in dit project, dan kun je als NGO het allerbeste willen, maar is het bijna onmogelijk. Dat zie je bijna altijd, helaas, want ik zou het graag anders zien. Je ziet vaak dat een kind het uiteindelijk niet gaat redden.

Tomas: Ja, de ouders blijven uiteindelijk verantwoordelijk.

Marien: Daarom, dus als je ouders niet meehebt, wat je wel ziet soms is als een kind het uiteindelijk niet haalt, maar die komt... een generatie later heb je hun kinderen weer, dan heb je ze wel. Dus, door de jaren heen zijn we natuurlijk heel betrouwbaar geweest, want je ziet wel onderwijsprojecten die starten, stoppen en vallen dan weer weg. Wij zijn natuurlijk al 15 jaar bezig, en nu pas zien ze van: wij zijn betrouwbaar, ze zien de resultaten, dat we serieus zijn. Ik vind, als je zoiets doet, moet je het ook serieus doen. Je moet dat gewoon goed opgezet hebben, met leerkrachten, we hebben natuurlijk gekozen om dat helemaal op een professionele manier te doen. Op een gegeven moment hebben we die omslag moeten maken van wat gaan we doen. Gaan we het op dit niveau houden of ga je een omslag maken, maar wel met je hart erin; professioneel, maar wel met je hart erin. Ik zeg wel als mensen bij mij komen werken: "als je dit doet voor het geld, moet je hier helemaal niet zijn. Maar wil je de wereld een beetje mooier maken, dan kunnen we jou gebruiken." Maar je hart moet er echt inzitten, je moet gepassioneerd zijn voor deze kinderen en gewoon weten dat deze kinderen vaak uit sociale achterstandsgezinnen komen waarin heel veel problemen zijn, want met papa en mama kaatst het soms, waar alcoholproblemen zijn en noem maar op. Het zijn geen normale kinderen, maar je moet die kinderen niet beoordelen. Je moet een plek creëren waar het veilig is voor deze kinderen. Waar ze even niet gediscrimineerd worden, waar ze gewoon even kind mogen zijn, waar je een fout mag maken, waar je geliefd bent. Een veilige leeromgeving, dat is er vaak op school niet en dat is er vaak thuis niet. We hebben soms kinderen die vanaf 7-8 voor broertjes en zusjes moeten zorgen, dus je moet echt een plek creëren in de wijk waar het veilig is voor het kind. Het is niet alleen maar het onderwijs, vandaar dat we ook kiezen voor klassen, we kiezen voor kleine klassen, niet grote groepen, want dan is het gewoon een schot hagel en bereik je heel vaak veel minder. Als je kleine klassen hebt, door relaties, wat leeft in zo'n kind, wat gaat er om in zo'n kind, waar gaat zo'n kind doorheen. Als je daar als leerkracht naast kan gaan staan, dan denk ik dat zulk soort projecten het uiteindelijk wel gaan redden. Maar dat kost heel veel, want als je nou een leerkracht hebt voor 30 kinderen of een leerkracht hebt voor 10 kinderen; het financiële plaatje is natuurlijk heel anders, dus dit zijn financieel best intensieve projecten waarin je maar 1 leerkracht hebt voor 10 kinderen. Maar, ik geloof dat dat ook mede het succes is van ons project omdat we een langetermijnvisie

hebben. Soms heb je ook dat het enorm tegenvalt, ik heb wel eens op het punt gestaan om het project te stoppen, omdat het financieel... Het is gewoon heel simpel: het kost gewoon 50.000 euro per jaar. Dan hebben we geeneens huur, want we hebben nog ons eigen gebouw, elke week krijgen de kinderen een maaltijd via de catering, je leerkrachten, alles eromheen, het hele circus, een maatschappelijk werkster moet je in dienst nemen. Op een gegeven moment hadden we het financieel niet lekker, we hadden ook een keer twee leerkrachten die ineens weggingen, die wilden weggaan, dus je twee beste leerkrachten gaan opeens weg binnen twee weken, en dan? Dan heb je opeens een enorm probleem. Dus als ik het onderwijsproject niet zou doen, zou ik het financieel een heel stuk rustiger hebben. Want het is best een pittig project financieel.

Tomas: Maar het is ook meteen het centrale project.

Marien: Daarom, dus ik blijf me hard maken voor onderwijs want ik geloof dat de sleutel voor deze kinderen, uit de armoede... is die vishengel. Maar die vishengel kan je niet eenmalig geven, dat gaat over jaren. Het is een heel langgerekt verhaal, en je moet misschien wel een beetje gek zijn om dit werk te doen, gepassioneerd zijn. Want, ik heb... niemand heeft gezegd: "ik moet het gaan doen", ik ben zelf zo gek geweest om dit te gaan doen. Nog steeds geloof ik in het project, misschien nu wel meer dan voorheen.

Tomas: Omdat je ook ziet dat het werkt.

Marien: Het werkt en daarom ben ik gewoon... ik blijf gepassioneerd voor het project en ik blijf zorgen dat we gelden binnentrekken ergens vandaan en dat we door blijven gaan. Ik geloof zelf nog in groei, ik weet niet hoe, maar ik zie wel in de toekomst dat we nog verder kunnen gaan groeien in dit project.

4. How are the Roma involved with your NGO? Do they play an active role in the activities and organisation? Is this a goal of the program and is there any indication this may be achieved?

Timestamp: 21:48

Tomas: Dan zou ik nu de overstap willen maken naar hoe de gemeenschap zelf betrokken wordt bij het project of bij de projecten. Waar ik in geïnteresseerd ben is hoe de Roma zelf betrokken worden bij het project. Dan bedoel ik niet zozeer de kinderen die zelf in het project zitten, maar bijvoorbeeld de ouders, jullie hebben iemand hier die schoonmaakt voor jullie bijvoorbeeld. Is dat belangrijk en is het ook een doel dat iemand uit de gemeenschap leraar of lerares zou worden binnen het project?

Marien: Ja, ik in het verleden een leerkracht gehad, die was Roma.

Tomas: Niet uit deze gemeenschap, maar wel een Roma?

Marien: Ja. Ik zou heel graag meer Roma's betrokken hebben bij die project. Sowieso al meer Roemenen betrokken hebben bij het project. We hebben natuurlijk heel veel Nederlanders gehad, op zich is dat niet heel erg, maar de taalbarrière is nog best groot. Maar Roma's... vind ze, geef ze, dat meen ik echt. Ik zou heel graag mensen die uit de gemeenschap komen hebben, die begrijpen het verhaal veel beter. We hebben nu een schoonmaker, ze helpen mee als we een spelletjesdag hebben, dus we hebben best wel een hele groep vrijwilligers die mee willen helpen.

Tomas: Uit de gemeenschap zelf?

Marien: Ja hoor, als we een keer een spelletjesmiddag hebben, kunnen we zo moeders vragen, die kunnen echt belangeloos... we kunnen heel veel mensen vragen die ook een hart hebben en die het belang ervan inzien.

Tomas: En dat is belangrijk in het hele verhaal?

Marien: Ik denk dat het juist heel belangrijk is, dat je het samen doet met de gemeenschap. En dat zou ik graag nog wel meer willen zien. We zijn er nog niet, maar ik zou het wel erg graag willen. Ik zou heel graag een goeie Roma-lerares in mijn team willen hebben. Alleen ik had een Roma-leraar, op een gegeven moment ging die rekensommetjes maken en dat klopte voor geen meter (lacht).

Tomas: Maar de kern is wel, dat is uiteindelijk wat je wil?

Marien: Nou ja, in de toekomst willen we er misschien nog een winkeltje erbij hebben.

Tomas: Ja, met mensen uit de gemeenschap?

Marien: Juist, ja! Ik vind eigenlijk, en dat is kritiek naar mezelf toe, dat we nog te weinig Roma's in het team hebben.

Tomas: Nou ja, je kan zeggen dat het kritiek op jezelf is, maar is het ook momenteel wel realistisch om dat te doen? Kan dat?

Marien: Nog niet, maar ik zou het wel graag willen. Ik zou heel graag meer Roma's in dit project willen. Ik zou graag, het liefst, nog meer Roma's... dat een deel van de community het ook gaat overnemen in meerdere facetten. Dus ik zou het heel graag willen.

5. What role would you attribute to the political sphere when talking about Roma education? Is politicisation of the issue necessary? Should the international sphere be involved or is local work more important?

Timestamp: 24:40

Tomas: In het verlengde daarvan, hoe belangrijk vind je dat het onderdeel in de politiek komt? Dat het politieke aandacht krijgt en dan niet alleen lokaal, maar ook nationaal of internationaal.

Misschien ook met de Roma zelf. Is dat ook belangrijk?

Marien: Ik denk het wel, maar je hebt een Roma-partij, 'Partida Romilor' heet die, maar binnen die partij... dat is een grote chaos. Dat is allemaal machtsstructuren. Het probleem een beetje bij deze mensen is, als je ze macht geeft voelen ze zich gelijk wat en gaan ze boven andere mensen staan. Dat is een moeilijk iets, want je kan ze wel macht geven, maar je kan het niet zomaar terug gaan halen. Dat is een heel ingewikkeld vraagstuk. Ik zie vanuit de politiek weinig aandacht ervoor, eigenlijk van we hebben hier een probleem, bij de vorige burgermeester. Bij deze burgermeester zijn we geweest, we hebben vriendelijk gepraat met hem, we krijgen misschien wel subsidie, maar

echt op de kaart zetten vanuit landelijke politiek... Ik zie het niet. Ik volg het Roemeense nieuws best veel, zeker dit onderwerp, ik heb ook bepaalde Facebook-groepen met Roma's erin om te kijken: wat speelt er. Is er iets... heel vaak wel als er iets is gebeurd waar iedereen tegen is, maakt iedereen een hoop herrie. Maar, oplossingen of samenwerking... ja... 'Pata Rât' is natuurlijk veel in het nieuws geweest dus dan zie je... daar gaat al het nieuws naartoe. Maar Florești, waar 2000 Roma's wonen, die daar een hoop overlast geven, daar is verder niemand...

Tomas: Het is geen georganiseerde politieke aandacht, het is heel erg 'hier wat en daar wat'?

Marien: Totaal, ja. Als er een keer een burgermeester zegt: "Ik heb er een hart voor, ik ga wat doen", dan is daar even aandacht voor, maar vanuit de vorige burgermeester was daar heel weinig aandacht voor. Toen moest hij herkozen worden dus toen ging hij maar de Roma's geld geven om op stemmen te krijgen. Dus, ja... ik zie politiek gezien, lokaal, nationaal niveau, zie ik eigenlijk niks, dat daar aandacht is voor de problematiek van de Roma's. Ik heb zelfs nog met iemand gesproken uit het Europees Parlement, dan krijg je een leuk verhaaltje te horen, maar waar is iedereen? Ik vraag het me wel eens af, daar ben ik heel eerlijk in, waar is... Er is heel veel herrie, er wordt zoveel over gepraat, maar onderaan de streep als kleine NGO... terwijl, wij doen wat denk ik, kom kijken, kom alsjeblieft een keer kijken. Ik heb zelfs contact gehad met de ambassade gehad, ik heb met ambassadeurs gesproken, alle ambassadeurs die hier geweest zijn heb ik gesproken, ik heb het verhaal verteld. "Nou jongen goed werk", maar je voelt je soms een beetje een roeper in de woestijn. Iedereen vindt het mooi dat we het doen en nobel dat we het doen, maar voor de rest... iets landelijk, ik zou heel graag willen samenwerken met de lokale overheid, met de nationale overheid om dit probleem aan te kunnen pakken. Hoe meer mensen die probleem kunnen zien, alleen ja... als kleine stichting hebben we gewoon heel weinig in de melk te brokkelen. We hebben het er wel eens over gehad om met verschillende stichtingen wat meer te gaan samenwerken. Het probleem is alleen dat iedereen zo druk is dat we daar helemaal geen tijd voor hebben.

Tomas: Ja, daar gaan we het straks ook nog over hebben.

Marien: Maar ik zie op dit niveau, misschien dat een andere hulpverlener dat totaal anders ziet omdat daar iemand zegt dat het daar wel kan. Maar hier, we proberen het en ik sta er voor open, maar ik zie er eigenlijk nauwelijks tot niks van terug.

Tomas: Ja, dat beantwoord die vraag wel heel duidelijk. Het is wel nodig, maar het gebeurt gewoon niet zoals het zou moeten?

Marien: Ik zou er heel graag aandacht voor willen hebben, want we hebben een enorm probleem met de integratie van de Roma. Dat ligt niet alleen aan de Roemenen, de Roma's hebben ook een serieus probleem. Kijk maar naar Europa: overal waar je het woord 'Roma' hoort, is er een probleem. Daar ben ik heel eerlijk in, want we aren in Rome: 'pas op voor de Roma's. Kijk eens in Frankrijk, Parijs, overal.

6. Have you seen any examples of Roma communities or Roma integration projects outside of Romania? What is your overall view of these when compared to your own foundation and community?

Timestamp: 29:08

Tomas: Het is goed dat je daar nu over begint, want dat is mijn tweede vraag. Ik ben wel benieuwd, heb je in het buitenland voorbeelden gezien van Roma-gemeenschappen waar ook projecten werden gedaan en hoe kijk je daar naar vanuit het oogpunt van je eigen stichting?

Marien: Ik heb weinig projecten in het buitenland gezien, maar wat ik wel denk is dat je de Roma's op hun eigen plek moet gaan helpen zodat ze niet meer gaan zwerven. Als er geen hulp is op jouw plek, dan gaan ze zwerven. Het is ook een heel ingewikkelde materie want wat is hulp voor de Roma's? Je kan ze niet een zak geld geven want er zitten er ook heel veel tussen die niks willen doen en gewoon geld krijgen. Maar ik moet zeggen, ik heb weinig voorbeelden van projecten in het buitenland die eh...

Tomas: Ja, ik dacht ik vraag het even want dan heb je een beetje een referentiekader.

Marien: Ja, ik volg de Roma-problematiek nauwlettend want ik vind het een onderwerp waar mijn hart ligt. Er zijn gewoon heel veel problemen, ik bedoel, kijk naar Frankrijk. Ik weet niet of je het gezien hebt, maar eh...-

Tomas: Die uitzettingen bedoel je?

Marien: Die uitzettingen, maar ook die huisjes waar ze in wonen... Eh... in Rome hebben ze enorme problemen met de Roma's, in Engeland spelen een hoop dingen...

Tomas: Tsjechië, Slowakije, Hongarije...

Marien: Ja, er was een plek in Slowakije met een vuilnisbelt en die troep... Aan de andere kant denk ik ook, er moet een goed plan komen. Ook met 'Pata Rât', ik vind het anno 2021 dat er kinderen op een vuilnisbelt wonen... dat is mensonterend en dat moeten wij als een EU totaal niet willen pikken, en desnoods met dwang van een vuilnisbelt gooien. Niet dat ik zeg dat je die kinderen uit huis moet plaatsen, maar doe iets met die mensen! Ik vind niet dat we anno 2021 kinderen op een vuilnisbelt moeten hebben wonen. Ik vind ook in deze tijd: als een niet naar school komt, stuur een ambtenaar langs. Als jouw kind niet naar school gaat, ze krijgen kinderbijslag: neem die kinderbijslag in. Ik vind ook: je mag er ook best wel wat voor doen. Ik ben ook niet van het slappe aanpakken, van mij mag er best wel wat meer aanpak komen. Gaat jouw kind niet naar school? Waarom zou je kinderbijslag krijgen? Ook vanuit een EU, kinderen wonen op een vuilnisbelt. In onze tijd? In de EU? Willen we dat? Ja, ik ben misschien een hardliner bijna daarin, maar ik vind: dat mag niet, dat kan niet. Er zijn miljarden beschikbaar, als er geld voor beschikbaar is kunnen we daar best een oplossing voor vinden. Ook hier kinderen in de wijk: we hebben mensen hier in de wijk zonder WC, zonder riool. Jongens, kom op nou! En we kunnen ook niet iedereen zomaar alles aan gaan bieden, maar doe iets! Ze een plan neer, hier in de wijk is geen enkel plan; iedereen zet maar een gebouwtje neer, iedereen moddert maar aan. Dan denk ik: jongens, ook vanuit de overheid mag je best een beetje tegengas gaan geven. Niet met uit huis trappen en de andere kant op, maar hoe gaan we dat nou eens goed organiseren? Want er is geen enkel beleid op vanuit geen enkele kant. Ik word er wel eens boos om, dank denk ik: als je in Nederland je kind niet naar school stuurt, krijg je ook de leerambtenaar bij je thuis. Stuur je je Roma-kind niet naar school: geen haan die ernaar kraait hè? Ik vond het nog steeds een heel raar iets.

7. Do you believe that local government support for Roma is well organised and why that is? If not, how do you believe they should be involved?

Timestamp: 32:40

Tomas: Dat is ook meteen mijn volgende vraag: Het systeem hier lokaal zoals dat is georganiseerd, vind je dat op dit moment goed? Vind je dat dat goed gaat? Want bij Pata Rât was Anca er vrij positief over, ik heb ook hier gepraat met mensen die zeggen: 'in principe is het op papier goed, het systeem, maar in de praktijk is het niet zo'. Hoe zie jij dat?

Marien: Moet ik hier een wetenschappelijk antwoord gaan geven of...

Tomas: Geef gewoon jouw antwoord (lacht).

Marien: Nou, ik vind, wat ik net al zeg, dat het heel slap geregeld is. Ik vind dat er vanuit de overheid veel meer gedaan kan worden.

Tomas: En wat, zou jij zeggen, zou de overheid hier dan moeten doen? Waar schieten ze tekort?

Marien: Wat ik net al zei, als een kind niet naar school gaat, stuur een leerambtenaar. En die hebben ook middelen om te kunnen dreigen, vind ik.

Tomas: Ja, dan heb je het echt over handhaven van bepaalde regels. Maar moet de regering misschien ook denken aan ondersteuning op bepaalde vlakken, of wordt dat al gedaan?

Marien: Weinig, denk ik. Ik hoef echt geen bakken geld te hebben, maar een beetje hulp van de overheid zou ook wel eens lekker zijn. Wat je bijvoorbeeld nu ziet vanuit de EU is dat ze proberen mensen werk te geven, maar ga eens aan de voorkant kijken. Ga eens kijken bij het onderwijs, want die leerkrachten wil ik niks verwijten want die hebben gewoon een klas van 30 kinderen. Als daar 5-6 Roma kinderen niet mee kunnen komen heb je al een probleem en die leerkracht heeft gewoon niet de capaciteit om dat te kunnen doen. Zorg dan dat die kinderen erbij blijven, zorg dan dat je gaat samenwerken met een lokale NGO. Hoe kunnen we dit met elkaar aanpakken? En dat... jij bent natuurlijk op het gemeentehuis geweest, ze zeggen: "Ja, je doet geweldig werk". Ja, hartstikke mooi, ik doe geweldig werk, maar wat schiet ik ermee op als ik geen hulp krijg? Dan ben je als NGO eigenlijk heel erg op jezelf aangewezen want je krijgt weinig hulp vanuit het gemeentehuis. Ze vinden het heel leuk dat we het doen, maar wie betaalt de rekening? Dat zijn wij, dus ik vind dat dat eigenlijk... dat blijft mij verbazen binnen een EU, dat dat enorm hoog in een topje zit maar hier op dit niveau... Ik vind dat er eigenlijk gewoon niks gebeurt. Ook niet naar de kinderen toe, ook niet naar een lokale overheid of met een nationale overheid of met een provincieoverheid. Iedereen heeft zijn eigen hachje en zijn eigen dingetje, maar per saldo vind ik dat er weinig kinderen geholpen worden. Zouden ze meer kunnen doen? Ik denk het wel, er is al wat belangstelling voor dit project, alleen hoe kunnen we meer...

Tomas: Misschien een beetje betrokkenheid?

Marien: Een stukje betrokkenheid, ja. zulk soort dingen.

Tomas: Al is het maar een paar keer kijken hoe het in de wijk gaat.

Marien: Zulk soort dingen, alleen dat al. Ik ben heel erg open voor samenwerking, laat ik dat voorop stellen. Ik wil juist heel erg uitstralen dat we een open organisatie zijn waarmee je graag wil samenwerken. Daarom heb ik ook een gesprek aangevraagd met de burgemeester, omdat ik wil laten zien 'hé, we zijn er'.

Tomas: Dus daar zijn jullie nog mee bezig, dus het is nog even zien hoe hij daar op reageert?

Marien: Ja, dat is aardige jonge vent, ja. Dat was een beleefd gesprek, netjes. Met de vorige burgemeester was dat een wat onbeleefder gesprek. De hele ambtenarenstructuur is dat iedereen binnen zijn eigen dingetje wat mag doen. Ze mogen geluk hebben dat iemand iets anders kan doen en buiten de eigen area kan kijken. Ze waren heel erg bang, de controlerende factor, als ik iets doe wat niet mag, dan word ik gelijk uit mijn baan gezet. Dus het is natuurlijk ook heel erg hiërarchisch, de hele structuur hier, ook dit soort zaken. Terwijl, in Nederland denken we veel meer 'out of the box' in oplossingen, denk ik. Hier wordt heel weinig uit de box gedacht. Als het papierwerk maar klopt, ja voor de rest...

Tomas: Ja, dat is wat hier wel veel gezegd wordt: op het papier ziet het er heel rooskleurig uit, maar in de praktijk is het natuurlijk anders.

Marien: Ja, hier op het veld merken wij eigenlijk nauwelijks... Kijk, de gemeente is zeker niet tegen ons, we hebben er ook geen last van.

Tomas: En ze doen ook wel goed werk, laten we dat vooropstellen.

Marien: Oh, ja hoor.

Tomas: Maar het schiet wel te kort.

Marien: Ik denk het wel, ik denk het wel. Ik denk dat er ook meer op wat voor manier dan ook samengewerkt kan worden. Op nationaal niveau of wat dan ook. Wij zijn natuurlijk maar een klein projectje, en hier hebben de mensen het nog redelijk in onze wijk, maar als ik over heel Roemenië

kijk... Hoeveel Roma-kinderen leven in extreme armoede, dat gebeurt gewoon. Wij hebben misschien hier nog geluk gehad dat ze op ons project komen, maar hoeveel communities heb je wel niet waar gewoon geen enkele aandacht is voor zo'n Roma-kind. Roemenië steekt zijn kop in het zand, denk ik. Europees gezien is de Roma de grootste groep die geen land heeft en die groep wordt steeds groter.

Tomas: 10 tot 12 miljoen hebben ze het nu over en het zijn er waarschijnlijk meer.

Marien: Maar, als ik zie hoeveel kinderen er in armoede leven en wat gebeurt er voor deze kinderen? De NGO's die er dan zijn, zijn dan zo overwerkt en heel veel NGO's stoppen gewoon omdat het gewoon niet haalbaar is. Omdat, het onderwerp is te groot voor een kleine NGO om het goed te doen. Je bent met zoveel verschillende dingen bezig als kleine NGO. Vaak zie je, op ons niveau, we zijn vaak geen specialisten, we zijn ook maar simpele mensen die hun best doen.

Tomas: Maar je hebt natuurlijk wel een expertise opgebouwd.

Marien: Door de jaren heen zeker wel. Je kijkt, je ziet, je overziet, je denkt, je gaat er nog een keertje naar kijken. Maar ik zie wel, en misschien denk ik wat te groot nu, maar ik denk: 'jongens waar is iedereen?'. Ook op landelijk niveau, waar is... Ik zie geen enkel initiatief voor Roma, ik zie geen initiatief voor kinderen die naar school kunnen, ik zie geen enkel initiatief voor iets van... jongens hoe kunnen we deze gemeenschap, zeker deze kinderen, want ik vind een kind kan niet helpen dat die Roma is. Mijn kinderen zijn hier vlakbij opgegroeid, je ziet mijn dochters, mijn dochters kunnen naar de universiteit, mijn kinderen hebben een toekomst. Ook in Roemenië, dus het is niet 'Roemenië is een arm land'. Ook in Roemenië, mijn dochter heeft een hartstikke goed salaris dus er is toekomst in Roemenië. Maar dan woon je een kilometer verderop in een Roma-hutje en dan word je als klein Roma-kindje geboren. Wat voor kans heb je binnen de EU om iets te maken in het leven? Ja, ik denk dat je al met 5-0 achterstaat als Roma-kindje in je leven.

8. Have you received any support from the European Union concerning your projects or are you aware of any funding programmes organised from the EU level? Could you describe or expand on this topic?

Timestamp: 40:14

Tomas: Als we het dan toch over de EU hebben en als we het op dat niveau houden: jullie hebben wel gepoogd om met de Europese Unie samen te werken. Kan je concrete voorbeelden noemen van wat voor fondsen dat waren?

Marien: Nou, het probleem is, we kwamen op een bepaald moment tot de conclusie: wil je EU-geld genereren, dan moet je eigenlijk je NGO tot een hoger niveau gaan tillen. Dan moet je op een gegeven moment een jurist in dienst hebben, je moet een psycholoog in dienst hebben, er komen heel veel meer voorwaarden. We zijn goed, we zijn geaccrediteerd door de overheid om dit werk te doen. Maar wil je EU-subsidie vragen, dan moet je nog een paar stapjes hoger doen. Dus er kwam zelfs ter sprake dat je dan een nieuwe directeur moest hebben, want je moet iemand hebben die projectleider is. Ik denk dat ik heel veel ervaring heb en heel goed weet hoe ik een project moet leiden, maar ik heb natuurlijk niet de universiteit ervoor gedaan. Dus dan moet ik mijn leiding aan iemand anders geven?

Tomas: Die schijnbaar dan bevoegder zou zijn?

Marien: Ja, dat gaat niet werken. Plus, je moet een psycholoog in dienst gaan krijgen en wie gaat het salaris dan betalen? Je moet ook een jurist in dienst nemen, wat kost een jurist tegenwoordig? Dus je moet je hele organisatie op een hoger niveau gaan brengen, maar dan moet je wel eerst al die salariskosten gaan doen. Ik ben nou al blij dat ik de salarissen kan betalen. Plus, ook mijn boekhoudster: ik moest ook een andere boekhoudster in dienst nemen. Ik snap ook wel, er gaat heel veel mis in Oost-Europa; er gaat heel veel mis met financiën, dus de corruptie is enorm hier.

Tomas: Dus dat moet ook wel gecontroleerd worden.

Marien: Daar ben ik 100 procent voorstander van.

Tomas: Maar bied de middelen wel op zo'n manier dat het rendabel is voor een kleine organisatie.

Marien: Wij hebben ook geen 3 miljoen nodig, zij denken alleen in hele grote bedragen. Geef me gewoon per jaar... geef me een ton, bij wijze van. Geef me een bedrag, een klein bedrag, en ik kan

je alle bonnetjes... mijn financiën kloppen. Ik kan je 100 procent garanderen dat, alles wat ik doe kan ik helemaal verantwoorden. Maar ik heb geen zin, dat ik mijn hele organisatie op een nog hoger plan moet neer gaan zetten, dat ik allerlei salarissen moet gaan betalen en dat ik hier een nieuwe directeur moet gaan neerzetten terwijl ik zelf de organisatie opgebouwd heb. Dan denk ik: "ja vrienden, dat gaat hem niet worden, daar gaat het niet beter van worden".

**9. Do you believe there is a place for the European Union when it comes to Roma integration?
What role would you attribute to the EU?**

Timestamp: 43:20

Tomas: Maar vind jij dan wel dat er wel een plek is voor de Europese Unie in deze problematiek en wat voor rol zouden zij dan kunnen spelen?

Marien: Ik zou ze we wel heel graag willen zien?

Tomas: En wat voor rol zou jij ze dan toebedelen?

Marien: Nou ja, er zijn hoeveel miljarden beschikbaar voor Roma-integratie? Maar wat gebeurt er met dat geld op niveau? Geef me... daar ben ik heel eerlijk in, ik zou het heerlijk vinden als ik wat rust heb in mijn onderwijsproject. Ik ga binnenkort weer grote sponsors verliezen die zich al weer 2 jaar aan mijn verbinden. Na 2 jaar raak ik weer een grote sponsor kwijt, kost me 1500 euro per maand. Dat is natuurlijk voor een kleine NGO... je bent continu bezig om het project in de lucht te houden en dat gaat nog steeds goed. Maar het zou heerlijk zijn als... geef mij gewoon even wat centjes uit de EU pot, gecontroleerd, zodat ik mijn projectje wat rustiger kan doen. Dat geeft mij heel veel rust en vrede, plus, wat ik ook zie, is dat ik eigenlijk het salaris voor mijn mensen moet verhogen. Maar eigenlijk is het geld er niet voor, dus je bent continu bezig, financieel aan het kijken: hoe hou ik zo'n project in de lucht met hele beperkte middelen, met heel weinig geld.

Tomas: Maar om het even wat begrijpelijk te verwoorden: een Europese Unie zou in principe de rol kunnen spelen, dat die zorgt voor subsidie.

Marien: Subsidie, maar ook een stukje verbintenis. Misschien een stukje de discriminatie. Kijk... als we kijken naar de LGBT-beweging, hoe groot die tegenwoordig is.

Tomas: Ja, daar gaat veel aandacht naar uit, waarom zou dat niet kunnen voor de Roma?

Marien: Dat bedoel ik, daar gaan miljoenen in om dus dan komt er meteen een subsidiepot aan. Als je dan over Roma's praat, heel veel mensen vinden het een leuk verhaal wat we doen hier maar... je voelt je soms echt een roeper in de woestijn. Het zou wel fijn zijn dat je je gehoord vind daar ergens. Dat iemand eens een keer komt kijken. En het hoeft niet meteen 100.000 euro te zijn, maar gewoon jongens... Ik vraag me wel eens af: waar blijft al dat geld? En je moet natuurlijk ook oppassen dat je ook weer niet een EU-slaafje gaat worden dat je al het hart uit het werk gaat halen. Dat er op een gegeven moment alleen maar een grote zak met geld binnenkomt, dat is ook niet het belangrijkste. Het zou lekker zijn als we gewoon af en toe zelf eens wat kunnen doen.

~~10. Could you explain the significance of the involvement of the parents of Roma when it comes to the educational project? (question removed because it was answered in another one)~~

11. Could you describe what the goals of your NGO are, who you intend to cooperate with to achieve them and perhaps what role the local, national and European government levels could play or are playing in achieving those goals?

Timestamp: 46:07

Tomas: Als we dat dan wat breder trekken. Zoals jij het beschrijft lijkt de rol van de lokale overheid en de EU, die lijken wat op elkaar: zorgen voor de middelen en de betrokkenheid. Als jij het kort zou samenvatten: wat is de rol van de EU in het verhaal, wat is de rol van de lokale of de nationale overheid en wat is jullie rol?

Marien: Poeh, dat wordt een ingewikkelde. Kijk, eigenlijk, het werk wat wij doen is het werk van de overheid, denk ik een beetje.

Tomas: Ja, jullie doen eigenlijk waar de lokale overheid tekort schiet?

Marien: Ja, ik vind eigenlijk van wel, waar de lokale overheid tekort schiet.

Tomas: En de lokale overheid zou er dan een beetje zijn voor de controle?

Marien: Controle, hoe kunnen we samenwerken. Hoe kunnen we samenwerken met een school, een werkoverleg, wat voor problemen lopen we tegenaan, hoe kunnen we elkaar versterken?

Want het gemeentehuis heeft bijvoorbeeld heel weinig ingang in de wijk, wij hebben heel veel ingang in de wijk. Waarom gebruiken ze onze expertise niet om in de wijk in te graven? Ik noem een heel gek voorbeeld: bijvoorbeeld de vaccinatie, waarom gebruik je de NGO niet van: "Hee jongens, er wordt heel weinig gevaccineerd in de wijk". Kom hier een keer naartoe en maak iets met vaccinaties? Misschien iets met een geboortebeperving? Hoe kan je, niet alleen maar in onderwijs, maar in meer zaken met best wel veel kennis, meer met elkaar samenwerken.

Tomas: Dus eigenlijk is het heel logisch, de lokale regering helpt jullie op het lokale niveau en de Europese Unie kan jullie werk wat breder trekken Europawijd. Dat je op het hogere niveau kennis kan uitwisselen, maar ook weer het grote geld voor bepaalde projecten.

Marien: Ja, het zou mooi zijn als de EU zou zeggen: 'hee joh, hier heb je een stukje grond en we gaan een nieuw onderwijsproject opzetten'.

Tomas: Dus zo kan ik het samenvatten?

Marien: Ja, samenwerking op het lokale niveau, met de lokale overheid en op het grote niveau de EU.

Tomas: Klinkt eigenlijk heel logisch, maar het gaat niet zo.

Marien: Ja, ik heb wel eens een voorstel geschreven in de EU, ik heb wel eens wat moeite gedaan, maar ik ben ermee gestopt want het kost me heel veel energie. En ook met de ambassade, dan denk ik elk paar jaar weer een andere ambassadeur, wat heeft het voor zin voor mij? Want mijn tijd is erg beperkt en ik wil heel graag, maar waar moet ik heen? Wie, wat?

12. In your view, should education always be the main focus point in the broader topic of Roma integration? Do you believe it is the key to break the vicious cycle that is Roma marginalisation? Please try to describe the importance of different kinds of projects and how they interplay.

Timestamp: 48:45

Tomas: En als we kijken naar het probleem van de Roma, we gaan nu weer terug naar waar we het eerder over hadden, maar denk jij dat onderwijs ook echt de sleutel is voor de oplossing van het probleem van Roma-integratie?

Marien: Een van. Wel een hele belangrijke, maar ik denk ook dat je op een gegeven moment... wat ook wel een belangrijke is een stukje werkgelegenheid voor de Roma's. Alleen, dat kan je bijna niet meer als commerciële partij doen omdat het zo ingewikkeld is.

Tomas: Maar zou je niet kunnen zeggen: je kan zorgen voor werkgelegenheid, maar is het dan niet ook belangrijk dat je dan al een onderwijsproject hebt staan waardoor het voor die mensen makkelijker wordt om zo'n werktraject in te rollen. Het kan natuurlijk zijn dat je een werkgelegenheidsproject opzet, maar dat de Roma nog niet die arbeidsethos hebben?

Marien: Ja, dat zou heel goed samen kunnen gaan. Maar misschien ook voor de mannen bijvoorbeeld "wil je werken, nou prima, kom maar". Maar wat ik zeg, het is natuurlijk een hele ingewikkelde materie.

Tomas: Ja, maar ik zit natuurlijk wel een bepaalde kant op te sturen. Je kunt zorgen voor zo'n werkgelegenheidsproject, om dat voorbeeld maar aan te houden, maar dan weten ze bijvoorbeeld niet hoe ze moeten omgaan met hun geld? En daarom probeer ik een beetje te kijken: is onderwijs niet toch de belangrijkste van die sectoren waar je aandacht aan moet besteden?

Marien: Maar dat kost dan natuurlijk generaties. Het is niet een korte-termijnprojectje. Het is niet even dit, het is niet even dat. Het kost generaties, bijna. En dan nog verlies je heel veel mensen, ook tijdens het proces. Het best een heel kostbaar gebeuren wat je opzet en onderhoudt. Dan kom ik terug, ook naar je sponsors toe, mensen willen natuurlijk heel graag een spijkerbroekje geven, maar een kind tien jaar onderwijs geven is een heel ander kostenplaatje. Dat is een hele ingewikkelde, want zo'n kind; we willen graag een beeld zien van zo'n kindje met een snottebel. Dat is helaas waar je nog vaak tegen aanloopt als hulpverlener want we willen graag Roemenië arm houden, we willen graag... een project moet veel 'snottebelkindjes' hebben en de kindjes moeten geen schoentjes aanhebben en noem maar op. Maar dat is het volgens mij niet, het is veel meer: hoe betrek je dat kind? Hoe geef je dat kind een beter leven? Als het met dat kind dan goed gaat, dan ben je als project geslaagd denk ik. Maar het kost tien jaar, een kind hè?

Tomas: Ja, precies ja. Maar om het kort te samen te vatten kun je niet zeggen: dit is het belangrijkste waar de aandacht als allereerste naartoe moet gaan als je met de Roma-problematiek te maken hebt.

Marien: Ja onderwijs, maar je kan wel een onderwijsproject opzetten, maar als je geen relatie met de mensen hebt wordt het ook weer geen succes.

Tomas: Dus het relatie opbouwen met de mensen is cruciaal. Ik denk dat je kan zeggen, dat staat helemaal bovenaan. En daaronder in een kleiner balkje zou je educatie kunnen zetten. En de rest, dus gezondheidszorg, huisvesting, werkgelegenheid, dat valt dan weer net onder educatie.

Marien: Beetje wel in die trend ja, vertrouwen...-

Tomas: Ja, vertrouwen, onderwijs en de rest.

Marien: Ja, bijvoorbeeld, een vrouwtje dat haar kindje verlies. Wat gaan we doen als kerk of gemeenschap? We gaan er naartoe en gaan een pakketje brengen. Dat is relatie bouwen. Ik loop zo'n wijk in, je ziet me, en ik kan overall een praatje houden. Dat is heel belangrijk. Als je als buitenstaander zo'n wijk binnenloopt, je bent blank, je bent een buitenlander, je bent niet een van hun. Wij komen al heel lang in de wijk, dus ze kennen ons. Daarom denk ik dat ze ook in ons project betrokken zijn; omdat ze ons nu vertrouwen. Maar dat is wel 15 jaar met je knieën in de stront staan, windkracht 10 tegen. Ik heb ook wel vaak gezegd, Tomas, ik ga terug naar Nederland, ik ben er klaar mee, ik heb er geen zin meer in want het is keihard werken. Het klinkt wel heel idyllisch, hulpverlenertje zijn, maar de realiteit is gewoon keihard. Je moet gewoon zorgen dat je een onderwijsproject hebt, je hebt een team, dat loopt ook niet altijd even lekker. Je bent dag en nacht bezig voor deze tent. Dus het is niet zomaar even een hulpproject opzetten, het kost je je hele leven en alles wat je hebt.

Tomas: Ja, wat de hele week bij mij een beetje in mijn hoofd zat is: je moet gewoon een hele lange adem hebben.

Marien: Een lange adem en een beetje gek zijn. Als jij gaat vertellen, en dat is nog steeds zo, wij doet een project met Roma's, nou... 90 procent gaat vertellen: 'dat gaat niet werken'. Iedereen gaat jou vertellen waarom dat niet gaat werken. Iedereen gaat jou vertellen waarom het niet gaat werken, maar ja, willen we de wereld een beetje mooier maken, dan moet je misschien wel een beetje gek zijn. Je moet gepassioneerd zijn om dit te kunnen doen. Als je het gewoon maar met

een zak geld vanuit de EU doet, dan houd je het misschien twee jaar vol. Dan komt mijn christelijke hart er ook bij kijken; ik denk wel dat ik geroepen ben om dit te doen, dat ik hier in pas. Waarom zit ik nou net toevallig hier? Nou dat zal dan wel zo moeten zijn.

Tomas: Ik heb wel duidelijk in beeld hoe jij ziet dat de aanpak moet zijn. Er wordt helemaal niet zo veel gezegd over de relatie opbouwen. Dat dat cruciaal is, ik denk dat we dat wel even moeten benadrukken.

Marien: Wordt daar echt weinig over gesproken?

Tomas: Nee, het is heel veel concepten wat betreft de discriminatie, maar dat relatie opbouwen komt er niet heel duidelijk in naar voren.

Marien: Wat je ziet bij een gemiddelde Roma, is dat er enorme wantrouwen is tegenover de overheid. Als overheid zijnde, nou kijk maar naar gister. Er kwam iemand van het gemeentehuis, wie had die bij hem?

Tomas: Ja, de politie.

Marien: Dus dat spreekt voor mij al boekdelen, want die man durft dus niet alleen die wijk in te gaan. Want ze hebben enorme wantrouwen tegenover de overheid, omdat het overheid is. En ze doen niet alles netjes, laat ik dat effe voorop stellen, en als overheid heb je geen keuze.

Tomas: Ja, maar het is meer een symptoom wat je ziet.

Marien: Een symptoom, terwijl wij als kleine NGO: we kennen de mensen, we weten wie ze zijn, ik doe hun begrafenissen, ik doop ze, ik draag hun kinderen op, je bent zowel dominee als koopman hier. Maar, je hebt wel het vertrouwen van de wijk gewonnen door alle jaren heen. Ze zien "hé, Marien doet echt iets voor ons". Heel vaak zeggen ze: "jij moet onze burgermeester worden, want jij bent de enige die wat heeft betekent voor ons. Jij ben de enige die niet alleen maar zegt ook echt wat doet voor ons". Er was laatst weer een oud echtpaartje, het dak lekt, nou wie zit er dan weer op het dak met een kitspuitje? Marien en Bram. Dat vind ik ook belangrijk, dat is ook een relatie hebben met die mensen. Even door zo'n wijkje heenlopen, ik vind het ook wel grappig, maar als je dat niet hebt... die mensen durven niet hun kinderen te sturen naar jouw project. We besteden er wel aandacht aan, je hart zit er wel in. Het is niet: wij zijn de hulpverlener en we weten het beter. Nee, we zijn Marien en Yvonne, wij weten het ook allemaal niet zo goed, wij zijn ook maar begonnen met nul en we zijn ergens gekomen onderweg. Misschien ergens de juiste keuze gemaakt, misschien ergens de juiste afslag gepakt, heel vaak op onze bek gegaan en nog vaker weer opgestaan en daarna weer doorgedaan. En dat is wel de kracht van je project, plus jouw achterban, dat is ook heel belangrijk.

Tomas: Maar specifiek op het gebied van de Roma: vertrouwen, relatie.

Marien: Vertrouwen, relatie, vanuit een relatie kan je dingen zeggen. Als jij dingen ziet fout gaan kun je dat tegen die mensen zeggen. Maar ik ben niet iemand van het vingertje, ik ben meer iemand van 'mag ik naast je gaan staan' en van daaruit kan ik mensen helpen. We hebben een oud vrouwtje, dat ondersteunen we, ze is een moeder en haar man die werkt wel maar niet zo goed. Zij zegt: "ik wil graag mijn school afmaken" -ik meen ze is 35, maar- "ik wil graag mijn school afmaken zodat ik straks kan gaan werken zodat mijn kinderen een betere toekomst kunnen hebben". Wat wij hebben gedaan, is we ondersteunen dat vrouwtje zodat ze haar school kan afmaken. Als zij straks haar school afgemaakt heeft, kan ze een baan krijgen, kan ze dat gezin goed onderhouden.

Tomas: Ik denk dat dat een goed verhaal is om het allemaal mee samen te vatten.

Marien: Ja, want je hebt wel eens oude mensen, die geven een pakketje voedsel, maar dat helpt ook niet. Je moet dat af en toe wel blijven doen, maar uiteindelijk gaat het om die 'vishengel'. Als zo'n vrouwtje zegt 'ik wil dat doen zodat ik mijn gezin kan onderhouden', dan hebben we dat toch goed gedaan met elkaar. Als die kinderen straks hun school afmaken, als ik zo'n diploma-uitreiking zie, dan hebben we het wel geflikt terwijl iedereen zei: "het gaat niet lukken". Dat heb ik misschien ook wel een beetje; ik ben wel een beetje een straatvechter. Als ik kind heb ik ook wel eens moeten knokken, en nu knok ik ook voor dit project. Als mensen zeggen 'het gaat niet lukken'... ik ben een jochie uit een simpel dorpje -in Wilnis- en ik weet het ook allemaal niet, maar het gaat wel lukken. Ik ben wel iemand die kan analyseren, hoe processen werken, hoe dingen gaat. Als je

opgeeft verlies je, maar als je doorgaat... ergens op de weg gaat het lukken. Maar dan moet je vaker opstaan als vallen.

13. How important is the work of local NGOs embedded in Roma communities in your view? Should there be a platform where these NGOs can be organised and can exchange ideas?

Timestamp: 1:00:54

Tomas: Dan gaan we nog even naar de laatste vraag en dan zijn we daarna ook klaar. Dan ben ik nog even benieuwd naar een platform voor NGO's, in Roemenië, maar kan natuurlijk ook op een internationaal niveau. Hoe zie jij dat voor je? Wat is de meerwaarde van een platform opzetten voor NGO's die met Roma-integratie werken en hoe zou dat een beetje georganiseerd moeten worden?

Martien: We hebben het geprobeerd, Daan was daar ook bij betrokken, en andere mensen. Het probleem waar je tegenaan loopt, is dat als je zoiets gaat doen, dat iemand uit het veld de kar gaat trekken. Die ook organisaties bij elkaar gaan brengen, en kijken hoe zou je meer kunnen samenwerken op het gebied van, bijvoorbeeld, vrijwilligers of EU-subsidies, op het gebied van 'waar lopen jullie tegenaan', misschien een stukje Roma-cultuur, af en toe misschien een of twee keer per jaar samen komen, een stukje training geven, waar zit je met elkaar. Je werkt niet tegen elkaar, je werkt met mekaar aan hetzelfde probleem. Dat hele hulpverleningseilandje, als je dat in kaart kan brengen, de organisaties, dan zijn het allemaal kleine eilandjes en wel een beetje 'cowboytjes' die hun eigen terrein hebben.

Tomas: Dus je kan zeggen, je zet zelf vanuit je NGO's een platform op, maar als er vanuit de EU een initiatief zou komen waarmee ze actief bezig gaan om NGO's met elkaar te verbinden, zou dat bijvoorbeeld een...-

Marien: Ik zou meegaan in het verhaal, maar ik ben afwachtend. Ik zeg niet gelijk nee.

Tomas: Dat is natuurlijk wel een optie voor een suggestie die ik zou kunnen doen. Misschien is een netwerk opzetten vanuit de EU een optie. Om dat te faciliteren. Maar het zou natuurlijk op nationaal niveau kunnen worden gedaan.

Marien: Ja, wij hebben op lokaal niveau al een samenwerking. Ik werk al met verschillende organisaties samen. We komen een keer per jaar op nationaal niveau al samen, dat zijn allemaal christelijke organisaties. Maar, we hebben heel veel plannen, er komen heel veel plannen uit, maar aan het einde van het verhaal komt er weinig uit.

Tomas: Dus eigenlijk zou gefaciliteerd moeten worden dat er bij elke NGO nog iemand is die samenwerking als portefeuille heeft?

Marien: Ik denk dat je meer op het manager-niveau moet gaan rekenen en die wat met elkaar laten uitwisselen. Dat heeft meer impact in zo'n verhaal, beter dan dat je iemand aanstelt die weet hoe je papiertjes moet invullen. Ik heb mensen wel laten meedenken in dit verhaal, maar die kunnen vaak geen beslissingen nemen dus je moet wel wat bovenin gaan zitten.

Tomas: Dus directies of directeuren bij elkaar brengen?

Marien: Ja, een soort 'presidents of the foundations' of zulk soort mensen. Ik denk dat je dan meer zou kunnen bereiken dan met een 'commissie voor een commissie voor een commissie'.

Tomas: En die samen niet alleen kijken naar good practices, maar die ook samen voor subsidieaanvragen gaan of expertise uitwisselen? Alle zaken die bij het runnen van een kleine of grote NGO komen kijken.

Marien: Ja, als je misschien zegt we zitten met 7 of 8 NGO's bij elkaar en we kunnen met elkaar een miljoen krijgen en je verdeelt dat over al die potjes en daar heb je 1 financiële man voor die je uit die pot weer kan betalen... dan hoeft je dat als kleine NGO niet weer allemaal op het grote niveau te brengen want die capaciteit hebben we gewoon niet met zijn allen. Maar als je zegt, je maakt een overkoepelende organisatie en daar sluit je je als kleine NGO alleen bij dat project bij aan, maar we pakken met 8 of 9 NGO's een subsidiepot, daar zet je een commissie boven die betaald zijn uit die pot en je verdeelt dat netjes met alle rekeningen en het hele verhaal. Dat zou ook een optie kunnen zijn. We doen het met elkaar, met iemand die daarboven staat en toezicht houdt, en dan niet alleen financieel maar ook met andere zaken. Hoe werken de dingen, 'wat werkte bij jou wel in de praktijk?', want heel veel mensen zijn nu bezig dat wagenwielje zelf uit te vinden hier. Niemand heeft een oplossing, maar degene die een oplossing heeft krijgt geen stem naar boven toe. Iemand zei een keer: "hier bovenin zien ze wel dat het fout gaat, hier onderin weten ze hoe

het goed, maar daartussenin gaat alles fout.” Ik denk dat dat een heel mooi gezegde is, want dat klopt ook wel. Hierboven in de EU zien ze: “ja, jongens het werkt niet” en hier zitten we “ja, jongens het werkt wel”. Maar daartussen zitten allemaal mannetjes die zeggen: “ik krijg hier twee procent van en daar” en dat is wel het probleem met een EU-subsidie: het is allemaal twee jaar en allemaal snelle jongetjes met laptopjes en grote auto’s en na twee jaar is het subsidiepotje op, dan gaan we een nieuw subsidietje aanvragen. Wie wordt er geholpen? Ik denk die mannetjes met dat autootje en dat laptopje zijn wel blij, maar hier op de grond, waar het moet gebeuren, daar zien we niks van terug. Bovenin zien mensen het, onderin weten wij het, maar hiertussen...

Tomas: Ben je eigenlijk überhaupt wel eens voorbij het nationale niveau bij iets betrokken geweest op internationaal niveau met dit onderwerp?

Marien: Nee... nee...

Tomas: Dus daar ligt wel een groot gat.

Marien: Ja, maar misschien ben ik wel te zwart-wit; ik ben geen ambtenaar, ik ben een jochie uit de praktijk. Misschien praat ik ook wel niet de taal, ik weet het niet.

Tomas: Ja, maar het moet elkaar wel een beetje vinden. Ik denk dat je wel een goeie diagnose stelt van het probleem.

Marien: Hier in de wijk zie ik dat het beter wordt, maar ik weet het ook niet altijd.

Tomas: Ik denk dat dat een goed punt is om af te sluiten: ‘hoog en laag, het vindt elkaar niet echt.’ Dan sluit ik hier de opname af.

-Recording stopped-

Appendix 7: Field Notes

05-07-2021

Agenda

8:30-9:00 Daily briefing at Foundation Charis

9:00-11:00 Open discussion Marien Kroon (Charis coordinator)

11:15-12:00 Travel to Pata-Rât

12:00-13:00 Visiting Pata-Rât and its Roma kindergarten school

13:00-13:30 Travel to Anca Guzman, freelance teacher at the Roma kindergarten school

13:30-14:30 Introductions and open discussion

14:30-15:30 Interview with Anca Guzman

15:30-16:15 Return to Foundation, debrief and go home

17:00-20:00 Unwind

20:00-23:00 Transcription and field notes

Descriptive Notes

The initial discussion with Marien proved very useful already, as it served as a great preparation for the visit to Pata-Rât. First Marien spoke about some of the main challenges his NGO deals with, for example the large administrative load imposed upon them. Being an officially, accredited Romanian NGO, they are required to write extensive reports, as well as hiring a social worker. This is in particular for the educational project, where a report has to be made on each child a couple of times a year. Marien accepts this approach though, as he believes it is the best way to get results and may also be a way to make the NGO more noticeable to the government, as well as other potential donors.

He also spoke at length about the future of his NGO, as it is unique in the sense that it is a Romanian NGO with a Dutch board. He plans to try to 'Romanianize' the NGO when he passes on his role to somebody else.

We spoke briefly about an interesting issue within the educational program, where parents of children would blackmail the NGO fix the door in their house, else they would not send their child to the educational program. Marien believes that it is crucial to get children involved with the educational project because it increases their chances of continuing education.

Antigypsyism was mentioned briefly, where Marien believes firmly that it is an issue that comes from two sides. On the one hand you have the Romanians who still hold their reservations regarding Roma, whereas the Roma themselves tend to be mistrustful of anyone who is not part of their community; even people who are part of the NGO. Overall, he has noticed a large improvement in terms of trust, as more and more people from the Roma community have started trusting him and his NGO.

Marien does resent the fact that, in his case, the local government and the European Union seem to show no interest in his project at all. He has gone to great lengths to do everything by the books, yet somehow this has not sparked any interest in his project. This is especially strange, given the fact that there has been considerable funding for different projects which had no long-term effects. For example a case where a Swedish/Norwegian funding project offered improved housing for Roma, placing them in flats in Cluj. This was problematic as these Roma were not used to this style of living which resulted in them not being able to integrate properly, rendering the project useless.

An interesting discussion had later was that, despite being a community at a landfill, Pata-Rât receives amazing support. There are some 5 NGOs active there, employment is available, some of the Roma are offered housing elsewhere and they receive good provisions. However, on the flipside there is no structural improvement; the family situation is often bad with parents arguing and unwilling to work and improve their standard of living. This causes a generational problem where children pick up these habits from their parents which causes a vicious cycle (something also mentioned in the interview with Anca Guzman). In the end, one of the most important things is to make sure the parents are reached as well and their view on life is gradually changed to focus on the



importance of education and bettering yourself. An example of this mentioned is the 'Second Chance project' (<https://www.christianacluj.ro/proiecte/scoala-gimnaziala-christiana-program-a-doua-sansa/>) where early school-leavers and adults are offered workshops, education, reading and writing skills and employment skills, as well as psychological counselling.

06-07-2021

Agenda

8:30-9:00 Daily briefing at Foundation Charis

9:00-12:30 Thesis writing

13:00-13:30 Grocery shopping for graduation ceremony

14:00-15:00 Observing graduation ceremony with description and translation by Marien Kroon

16:00-17:00 Activities with the graduated children

17:30-20:00 Unwind

21:00-23:00 Write up field notes and prepare interview for next day

Descriptive Notes

Today was completely taken up by the graduation ceremony for the children in the educational program at Foundation Charis. There are about 45 primary school children involved and 9 students from secondary education, all in an after-school homework program along with three teachers who interchangeably teach during the week. This takes place at regular school times from September until June.

During conversations with Marien, taking place during the ceremony, he explained that most of the children manage to stay in the program now. This is as opposed to at the very start when a lot of students would quit the educational program. The effect that can be noticed now, is that the children who dropped out of the program back then are now mothers themselves and encourage their own children to partake in the program. The positive effects were very noticeable with the children proudly receiving their diplomas along with a gift. They also got their picture taken to celebrate the occasion. Some of the parents were also present, though not all of them were. This prompted the conversation on, despite the children successfully finishing the program this year and looking proud, there are still issues of bad home situations. This relates somewhat to the intergenerational transmission or culture change that the project tries to achieve. The educational program may provide the children with the opportunity to escape their negative home situations at some point, slowly creating a cultural change to improve standard of living.

Marien also spoke to the children themselves after they all separately received their diplomas. He told them how proud he was of them being able to finish the program, but also that none of it would have been possible without the help of the many donors that made the program possible. He also made a point of thanking the parents that were present, telling them how much he respects them for it. This seems to also allude to this intergenerational change, as well making the children realise the opportunities they receive in the educational program, allowing them to continue education which may allow them to find a good job later in life.

The impressions of the graduation ceremony seem to strongly imply that the educational program leads to a positive effect. This is reinforced in the fact that Marien speaks about more and more children being able to stick with it and complete it as opposed to when the project just started. The interviews planned later this week will hopefully shed more light on this specifically, allowing me to write up a more coherent and verifiable account.

07-07-2021

Agenda

8:30-9:00 Daily briefing at Charis

9:00-12:00 Thesis writing

12:00-12:30 Lunch break

12:30-13:45 Visiting the school building and then Roma shanty with Marien

14:00-15:45 Visiting Florești Council for interview with Social Assistance Service, School Medicine and Roma Issues

16:00-16:30 Debrief and writing up interview notes with Erzsebet Kocsis (social worker)

17:00-21:00 Unwin

21:00-22:30 Write up field notes and prepare interview

Descriptive Notes

One of the topics during the briefing was a girl from the educational project who has issues with dealing with authority, believed to be due to their home situation. From the teachers knowing her home situation, it is believed that the mother sets no rules and has no authority over the child, resulting in unhinged behaviour at times. Interestingly, this does not happen when the child is interacted with one-on-one.

Another issue mentioned is one of the neighbours next to the NGO-plot has a child who keeps trespassing on the terrain, prompting the discussion to start building a wall to keep them out. There is also mention of the frustration this brings, where these people receive help from the NGO but the Roma do not always return the favour, instead taking advantage of the situation. This also relates to issues with parental authority, as the child is not being reprimanded for trespassing.

Later during the day I got to visit the school building (Casa Speranță), which is well equipped and maintained. Unfortunately, it is undersized which is problematic as there are currently more children interested in partaking in the educational project than there is capacity to accommodate them. The foundation does have a desire to expand this in the future, but currently does not have the resources to do so. It does denote an improvement in the attitude towards education in the Roma community at Florești. Something important to mention is that the teachers themselves expressed that education itself is not the only important thing, but also the attention the children receive during the program. This reminds of the situation with the unruly teenager mentioned at the daily briefing.

After the visit to the school building, the Roma neighbourhood was visited. This gave a crucial insight into the living situation of the Roma, including the children who partake in the educational project. The neighbourhood really looks like a shanty with buildings built dangerously close together with poor build quality. There is little structure to it, but there is access to running water and electricity, though the means towards getting this are not entirely legal with one family connected to the main network and other families drawing off them. Based on observations and conversations with Marien, it seems the Roma in the neighbourhood mostly spend their day hanging around, talking and drinking together. The few Roma who did go abroad to work or perhaps found employment in Romania itself will often move out of the neighbourhood and into the better quality flats next to it. What is interesting to note, is the amicable relationship the community members have with Marien. They greet him, proudly show him their new purchases or changes to their house and invite him over for a drink.

One issue is the situation of the children, including the ones who partake in the educational project. They are often kept at home by their parents or sent out to beg on the streets to provide income for their parents. I actually experienced seeing this myself, as one of the children I met during the visit in the village, I later saw at the local supermarket begging the customers for money. This puts into perspective how problematic the situation of these children is.

After the visit, I visited the Florești Primăria (Florești town hall) for an interview with a representative from the Serviciul de Asistență Socială, Medicină Școlară și Probleme Romi (Social Assistance Service, School Medicine and Roma Issues). It is important to note that they spoke little to no English, so Foundation Charis' social worker, Erzsebet Kocsis came along as interpreter. This meant the quality

of the interview was reduced as there was little to no possibility to ask more in-depth questions. The interview was also not recorded for this reason. One more problem was that the representative interviewed, Vidrean Dorel, pointed out that he was not at liberty to go too in-depth on certain topics. Despite this, some of the information gained was quite useful and serves as a good addition to the data collected so far, putting it more into perspective. Unfortunately, all in all there was little room for nuance which does show in the answering of the questions.

One last addition is that Erzsebet showed a local primary school, as well as a relatively new kindergarten. She went on to explain that these schools have a policy of ensuring diverse classes, meaning Roma are also included when possible. This does seem to indicate that school segregation is not as big of an issue as may be the case elsewhere. This is confirmed in the interview at the town hall. It is unclear whether this means it is no issue at all, as the interview with Anca Guzman did mention an example of a school still segregating Roma, does this evidence is still to some degree anecdotal.

08-07-2021

Agenda

9:00 Meeting at Charis Foundation

9:00-11:00 Travel to Târgu Mureş

11:30-12:30 Interview with Daniel de Groot for the Coming Home Association

13:00-13:30 Travel to one of the Coming Home projects

13:30-14:00 Tour of the woodworking workshop project

14:00-16:00 Return to Cluj

16:00-21:00 Unwind

21:00-24:00 Transcript writing and writing up field notes

Descriptive Notes

Less to be reported on today because the activities revolved around an interview in a city far away, meaning most of the day was taken up by travel. The conversation was with a very different project, also run by a Dutch person. However, in this case it was an organisation that started out as a foundation, but now it more of a commercial organisations that uses its proceeds to set up projects, including with Roma. This also includes educational support for Roma. It shed a different light on the work of the Charis foundation. Most of this was shown in the interview itself which ran quite lengthily but covered most of the same topics that had already been covered in other interviews as well.

On the way back, one of Coming Home's previous projects was visited. This was a workshop that was initially supposed to employ homeless people or addicts. The goal was to employ them as woodworkers in a workshop. Unfortunately this project couldn't reach its objectives because the target group was difficult to keep engaged. In the end this was changed in such a way that the workshop was run by the few people that were willing to work there, expanding slowly with employees. The proceeds of this workshop are now reinvested in other projects supported by the Coming Home foundation. It shows a way of learning good and bad practices in a different way.

Appendix 8: Consent forms

Consent form for the collection and use of research data
Academic Research Ethics Committee at the Institute of European Studies at the Jagiellonian University

Respondent's / subject's consent form for collecting and using research data

Title of the research project: Roma: European Integration through Education

Date and place of research: 05-07-2021, Gdansk - Warsaw

Name of respondent: Grzegorz Mach

Short description of the purposes and methodologies of the study: Case study research into an education project with Roma to identify good practices which may be applied on a broader scale in the European Union

By signing this document, I hereby acknowledge and accept the following statements (by ticking the appropriate boxes and by filling in the appropriate text answers):

1. I confirm that [name of researcher]: Tomas Abel de Jong

is collecting research data in the form of [interview recordings, interview notes, an interview questionnaire, observation etc. - please describe]: Interview, interview notes and and interview recording

in order to use research conducted at the Institute of European Studies at the Jagiellonian University in the context of an academic research project.

2. I agree to the audio recording of my words / audio-visual recording of my words and image for the express purposes of the research project described above YES NO

My consent means compliance with the following principles:

o I will be informed about the start and end of recording.

o I will have the right to request that the researcher delete the entire recording of my interview.

o On request, I will receive a copy of the recording of my interview.

o All information which enables my identification in the recording or notes of the conversation will be kept secured and unpublished - unless I expressly agree to waive my anonymity. Any attributions of quotations which use my name also requires my permission.

o The collected data will be stored in a safe place for one year after the end of the project / submission of the Thesis.

3. I consent to the use of my research data for future scientific publications and academic research.
YES NO

Respondent's signature: _____

Date: 05.07.2021

Full name and email address of the researcher: Tomas Abel de Jong (jongdetomas@gmail.com)

Full name of the Thesis supervisor / academic tutor: Prof. dr hab. Zdzisław Mach (zdzislaw.mach@uj.edu.pl)
Mgr. Jaroslav Šotola, Ph.D. (jaroslav.sotola@upol.cz)

Consent form for the collection and use of research data
Academic Research Ethics Committee at the Institute of European Studies at the Jagiellonian University

Respondent's / subject's consent form for collecting and using research data

Title of the research project: Roma: European Integration through Education

Date and place of research: 07.07.2021 - COMUNA FLOREȘTI, JUDE. CLUJ, ROMANIA

Name of respondent: VIAREAN DOBEL

Short description of the purposes and methodologies of the study: Case study research into an education project with Romato identify good practices which may be applied on a broader scale in the European Union

By signing this document, I hereby acknowledge and accept the following statements (by ticking the appropriate boxes and by filling in the appropriate text answers):

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The collected data will be stored in a safe place for one year after the end of the project / submission of the Thesis.

3. I consent to the use of my research data for future scientific publications and academic research.

YES NO

Respondent's signature: 

Date: 07.07.2021

Full name and email address of the researcher: Tomas Abel de Jong (jongdetomas@gmail.com)

Full name of the Thesis supervisor / academic tutor: Prof. dr hab. Zdzisław Mach (zdzislaw.mach@uj.edu.pl)
Mgr. Jaroslav Šotola, Ph.D. (jaroslav.sotola@upol.cz)

Consent form for the collection and use of research data
Academic Research Ethics Committee at the Institute of European Studies at the Jagiellonian University

Respondent's / subject's consent form for collecting and using research data

Title of the research project: Roma: European Integration through Education

Date and place of research: 8-7-2021

Name of respondent: Daniel de Groot

Short description of the purposes and methodologies of the study: Case study research into an education project with Romato identify good practices which may be applied on a broader scale in the European Union

By signing this document, I hereby acknowledge and accept the following statements (by ticking the appropriate boxes and by filling in the appropriate text answers):

1. I confirm that [name of researcher]: Tomas Abel de Jong

is collecting research data in the form of [interview recordings, interview notes, an interview questionnaire, observation etc. - please describe]: Interview, interview notes and and interview recording

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The collected data will be stored in a safe place for one year after the end of the project / submission of the Thesis.

3. I consent to the use of my research data for future scientific publications and academic research.

YES NO

Respondent's signature: _____

Date: 8-7-2021

Full name and email address of the researcher: Tomas Abel de Jong (jongdetomas@gmail.com)

Full name of the Thesis supervisor / academic tutor: Prof. dr hab. Zdzisław Mach (zdzislaw.mach@uj.edu.pl)
Mgr. Jaroslav Šotola, Ph.D. (jaroslav.sotola@upol.cz)

Consent form for the collection and use of research data
Academic Research Ethics Committee at the Institute of European Studies at the Jagiellonian University

Respondent's / subject's consent form for collecting and using research data

Title of the research project: Roma: European Integration through Education

Date and place of research: 09.07.2021 - FLORESTI / CLUJ / ROMANIA

Name of respondent: BALC ANCA-VICTORIA

Short description of the purposes and methodologies of the study: Case study research into an education project with Romato identify good practices which may be applied on a broader scale in the European Union

By signing this document, I hereby acknowledge and accept the following statements (by ticking the appropriate boxes and by filling in the appropriate text answers):

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is collecting research data in the form of [interview recordings, interview notes, an interview questionnaire, observation etc. - please describe]: Interview, interview notes and and interview recording

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3. I consent to the use of my research data for future scientific publications and academic research.

YES NO

Respondent's signature: _____

Date: 09.07.2021

Full name and email address of the researcher: Tomas Abel de Jong (jongdetomas@gmail.com)

Full name of the Thesis supervisor / academic tutor: Prof. dr hab. Zdzisław Mach (zdzislaw.mach@uj.edu.pl)
Mgr. Jaroslav Šotola, Ph.D. (jaroslav.sotola@upol.cz)

Consent form for the collection and use of research data
Academic Research Ethics Committee at the Institute of European Studies at the Jagiellonian University

Respondent's / subject's consent form for collecting and using research data

Title of the research project: Roma: European Integration through Education

Date and place of research: 09-07-2021

Name of respondent: Krzysztof MARCIUS

Short description of the purposes and methodologies of the study: Case study research into an education project with Roma to identify good practices which may be applied on a broader scale in the European Union

By signing this document, I hereby acknowledge and accept the following statements (by ticking the appropriate boxes and by filling in the appropriate text answers):

1. I confirm that [name of researcher]: Tomas Abel de Jong

is collecting research data in the form of [interview recordings, interview notes, an interview questionnaire, observation etc. - please describe]: Interview, interview notes and and interview recording

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The collected data will be stored in a safe place for one year after the end of the project / submission of the Thesis.

3. I consent to the use of my research data for future scientific publications and academic research.

YES NO

Respondent's signature: 

Date: 09-07-2021

Full name and email address of the researcher: Tomas Abel de Jong (jongdetomas@gmail.com)

Full name of the Thesis supervisor / academic tutor: Prof. dr hab. Zdzisław Mach (zdzislaw.mach@uj.edu.pl)
Mgr. Jaroslav Šotola, Ph.D. (jaroslav.sotola@upol.cz)