



2014/ED/EFA/MRT/PI/21REV.

Background paper prepared for the
Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2013/4

Teaching and learning: Achieving quality for all

Education for Roma: the potential of inclusive, curriculum-based innovation to improve learning outcomes

Dr S. Themelis and B. Foster

2013

This paper was commissioned by the Education for All Global Monitoring Report as background information to assist in drafting the 2013/4 report. It has not been edited by the team. The views and opinions expressed in this paper are those of the author(s) and should not be attributed to the EFA Global Monitoring Report or to UNESCO. The papers can be cited with the following reference: "Paper commissioned for the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2013/4, Teaching and learning: Achieving quality for all" For further information, please contact efareport@unesco.org

Dr S. Themelis and B. Foster “Education for Roma: the potential of inclusive, curriculum-based innovation to improve learning outcomes”

Abstract

The aim of this report is to highlight the potential of innovation in Romani education. Specifically, it focuses on curriculum-based initiatives in three European countries, namely the UK, Cyprus and Bulgaria. It highlights aspects of curriculum delivery and resources, which have been shown to have contributed in raising school achievement and attainments of Roma pupils. The report draws some lessons that can be learnt from such approaches and concludes by emphasising their role in promoting school inclusion and potentially transforming the life chances of Roma children and young people.

1. Introduction

Since 2000 when the international community accepted the six ‘Education for All’ (EFA) goals (The World Education Forum, 2000), the world has changed significantly. While some countries have done a lot to achieve these targets, others have still a long way to go. The progress achieved has been severely compromised by the global economic and financial crisis, which has affected disproportionately poorer countries and the most marginalised groups almost everywhere.

This report shows why learning and teaching are central in maintaining the momentum and sustaining progress in such a rapidly changing context. It highlights the role of the curriculum, mainly understood here as delivery and resources, in transforming the life chances of people and societies, with a special emphasis on the European Roma¹. Specifically, it sheds light on inclusive programmes and practices that have produced

¹ There is no common denomination accepted by all groups and the term ‘Roma’ is often used from within and outside these communities (European Parliament, 2008). At the present time, in the UK, the umbrella term used to include all communities is ‘Gypsy, Roma and Traveller’, but many other terms are also used to distinguish these diverse groups (for more, see Themelis and Foster, 2013).

equitable access to learning and improved learning outcomes. It further showcases successful approaches from three European countries with diverse histories and educational systems, which have managed to extend access to education while improving learning outcomes for Roma pupils.

The opportunity for high quality learning is central to achieving an equitable system of education that benefits all children irrespective of location, background or circumstances. One social grouping that has historically been socially and educationally marginalised is the European Roma. A range of programmes has been initiated over the last two decades to support Roma education, with many of them focusing on access and retention. However, marginalised groups need not only to have access to school, but also to feel included and engaged. The purpose of this paper is to reflect on the potential of innovation in Roma education to support teachers in delivering an inclusive curriculum that promotes learning and can help reduce achievement gaps.

It is estimated that currently there are between 10 to 12 million Romani people living in the countries of the Council of Europe with approximately 70 per cent of them living in Central and Eastern Europe (Amnesty International, 2013). They form a remarkably heterogeneous set of groups and they possess rich as well as diverse cultures, languages, religions, lores, customs and traditions. Despite having been a part of various European societies for many centuries, the European Roma “experience *greater social exclusion* than the majority community, especially in accessing employment, education, health and social services: The Roma present high rates of illiteracy and poor school attendance of children.” (European Parliament, 2008, p. ii) [emphasis in original].

The curriculum has an impact on school inclusion, and an inclusive curriculum can help reduce prejudices and intolerance, which otherwise reinforce social exclusion. This report examines some curriculum related school initiatives that could enable teachers to accomplish their role in ensuring Roma children and young people are equipped with relevant knowledge and skills in order to raise their potential and contribute to wider societal

development. Innovative elements that underpin curriculum delivery and resources are presented and lessons to be learnt from them are highlighted.

2. The context of Roma education in Europe

Primary school attendance is compulsory in all EU (European Union) member states and an average of 97.5% of non-Roma children completes primary education across the EU (Eurostat, 2009). By contrast, in some EU countries only limited numbers of Roma children complete primary education while many of them tend to be over-represented in special education and segregated schools (Open Society Institute/OSI, 2008). The low rates of school enrolment and high school abandonment rates are alarming throughout Europe. For example, in 2008, in Bosnia and Herzegovina 76% of Roma children had never attended or completed primary school (UN Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, CERD, 2009), while in Serbia, in 2012, 62% of Roma children never attended primary school or they had enrolled but subsequently dropped out with only 9.2% finishing any form of post-primary education (Council of Europe, 2012).

In several EU member states, there are various educational policies and practices that separate Roma children from their counterparts and in places where Roma live in isolated communities, such as in rural slum settlements or urban ghettos, educational arrangements are frequently segregated (Council of Europe, 2012). In many cases, non-Roma parents choose to withdraw their children from schools with Roma pupils, which leads to the ghettoisation of such schools. The Council of Europe (2012) recently reported that “even in mainstream schools, Roma pupils are often separated from the majority ones by occupying specific areas of the class, or moved to entirely separate classes. Remedial classes, separate classes and segregation in the classroom have been reported in many European countries.” (p. 18).

In some countries, Roma children are disproportionately channelled into special schools, especially schools for children with intellectual disabilities. For example, in the Czech

Republic, evidence has been found of persistent segregation. In 2012, across the Czech Republic, approximately 30% of Roma children were still placed in schools for pupils with mild mental disabilities, compared to 2% for their non-Roma peers (Council of Europe, 2012). Similar practices are evident in a host of other countries. In Slovakia, for example, 36% of Roma pupils are found in all- or mostly-Roma classes, with 12% of Roma pupils reported to be in special schools. What is more, in the past decade only, the numbers of Roma pupils in special schools has doubled (ERPC, 2012). Countries like the UK who have a tradition of inclusive education still identify significantly higher proportions of children from these communities as having special needs (DfES, 2006).

Early years education is regarded as crucial in laying the foundations of later educational inclusion but in Slovakia only 28%, in the Czech Republic 32%, in Romania 37% and in Bulgaria 45% of Roma children aged 3-6 years old are in preschool settings, compared to an average for these countries of over 75% (The World Bank, 2012). In Hungary, the establishment of compulsory preschool education and the provision of government support for poor families for out-of-pocket expenses and school lunches, as well as government subsidies for regular preschool attendance, has borne fruits: preschool enrolment stands at 76% of Roma children (World Bank, 2012). In a sample of seven EU member states, only 10% of Roma students continued beyond the elementary school level (OSI, 2008), with the overall secondary-stage completion rate being very low across the EU.

Most reports focus on problems faced by Roma accessing education and various forms of segregated provision. Where there is mention of the curriculum it is in this context. In some cases where the curriculum takes account of the history, language and culture of Roma communities, it was found to be on a segregated basis:

Where Romani language, history or cultural lessons are provided in education, frequently they are targeted primarily or solely at Roma children, thus depriving non-Roma of the right to know about the contributions Roma have made to their own and other European societies. (Council of Europe, 2012, p. 19).

Improving the quality of education for all children requires more inclusive, intercultural content and resources, including Romani culture and history, in the standard curriculum.

3. Curriculum-based innovation to improve learning outcomes

3.1 The context of Romani education in the UK

The curriculum has an important part to play in promoting inclusion, even in segregated or semi-segregated systems. The contribution made by Roma communities to the societies within which they live is frequently omitted from the curriculum, thereby promoting notions that these communities are marginal and unimportant, thusly reinforcing their status as outsiders.

Jake Bowers (2008), a Romani journalist, described the impact of the invisibility of these (Roma) communities as follows: *“Go to most museums, libraries and schools and nothing about our history and culture is kept or taught. The result is a widespread ignorance about who we are, which sometimes turns to hatred, fear and misunderstanding. In schools, children learn more about the Romans, Vikings or even fairies than they do about our cultures and what we have contributed to this world.”* In a similar vein, Ofsted (1999) observed ‘considerable hesitancy’ (p.12) in schools with regard to recognising and celebrating Traveller² culture through the curriculum. In a later study, it was found that attempts to incorporate Traveller culture and lifestyles into the curriculum were too often ‘incidental’ and that Traveller pupils remained an ‘unseen minority ethnic group’ (Ofsted, 2003, p. 6).

Some community members are proud and open about their identity, but others choose, where possible, to “pass” as a member of the *gadje* [non-Roma] community. Children from mixed heritage backgrounds, either within the Roma and Traveller or *gadje* communities,

² Note that in the British context, various combinations and variations are used to describe groups of Gypsy, Roma or Traveller origin, such as Gypsy-Travellers, Travellers and many more (Bhopal and Myers, 2008).

may be genuinely uncertain about their core values and heritage. Where communities are socially excluded and accustomed to suffer isolation and prejudice, they are likely to do all they can to play down their ethnicity. Derrington and Kendall (2004), who studied the experiences of 44 Gypsy Travellers in UK secondary schools, suggest that many of their respondents experienced cultural dissonance, which in some cases led them to drop out of education. Most of the children they studied did “not want [their teachers and peers] to know anything. [...] This response was almost unanimous and quite emphatic.” (p. 99).

In combating these issues, school practices and the overall school ethos can play an important part in making members of minority communities feel recognised and respected. Many UK schools have a poster in their foyer, saying ‘welcome’ in the world’s main languages, which can operate as an effective inclusive device. In other cases, many culturally diverse schools celebrate all the groups represented in their school in displays and assemblies, which is a practice that promotes feelings of acceptance and respect among all school members.

Roma and Traveller communities have been excluded from mainstream education for much of their histories, so it is unsurprising that they have developed strategies for passing on the knowledge and skills required to survive and prosper from generation to generation. Some parents expect their children to take gender-specific roles in family trades which can undermine their commitment to education and the primary curriculum (Kiddle, 1999). Similarly, Roma and Travellers may feel that time spent in school could be better used learning a trade within the community. Guidance from the Scottish Executive on inclusive education for Gypsies and Travellers referred to an inherent tension among Roma and Traveller communities between maintaining their ways of living and fully participating in education (Scottish Executive, STEP, 2003). However, Derrington and Kendall (2004) found that some parents supported their children having professional careers although, as their children got older, parental expectations reverted to more traditional choices. Lloyd and McCluskey (2008) also note the preference amongst Gypsy and Traveller communities for

'experiential, family-based learning' (p. 11) and Derrington (2007) found vocational skills were given a higher priority than academic qualifications. However, Cemlyn and Clark (2005) found evidence of Gypsy and Traveller parents encouraging their children to stay on in school to achieve qualifications which might be useful in gaining employment and Padfield (2005) noted parents valuing ICT skills and accreditation in practical subjects, such as building and gardening.

3.2 Good practice in the UK

The UK and England, in particular, engaged in a significant experiment in inclusive education, initiated and led by central government. There was a growing concern that the normal curve of children's achievement was negatively skewed, giving rise to what is now commonly referred to as the "long tail of underachievement". (Smith, 2007, p. 13) There was a recognition, based on ethnic monitoring data, that certain ethnic minorities were over-represented in the "long tail", resulting in the development of a range of initiatives to raise the quality of mainstream education and specifically target ethnic minority groups (DfES, 2003a; b).

In addition to general guidance to schools on strategies to raise the attainment of ethnic minority groups that was issued, a separate guidance booklet (DfE, 2003) addressed Gypsy and Traveller underachievement. The reason for this extra guidance lied with the fact that despite these groups had lived in the British Isles for generations and spoke English as their first language, unlike most other ethnic groups, their experience of social exclusion was similar to that of many Roma groups in continental Europe, increasing numbers of whom were beginning to arrive in the UK as asylum applicants and since 2004 as EU citizens. The publication of the document "Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Gypsy Traveller Pupils" (DfES, 2003) included a powerful forward by the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools, Stephen Twigg;

All children and young people should be able to achieve their potential, whatever

their ethnic and cultural background and whichever school they attend. Working towards and achieving good practice in the education of Gypsy Traveller pupils is the responsibility of everyone within the education system – DfES, LEAs [Local Education Authorities], schools, teachers, governors, the Traveller Education Support Services, parents and pupils. (DfES, 2003, p.1).

Traveller Education Support Services (TESSs) were groups of teachers and other professionals employed by Local Educational Authorities (LEAs) with funding from central government to work in partnership with families and schools to promote the educational inclusion of and raise opportunities for children from communities with nomadic heritages and traditions. Although most LEAs (currently known as Local Authorities/LAs) were in existence prior to 1997, their role was mainstreamed and refocused under the Labour government that came to power in that year. (Foster and Cemlyn, 2012). “Aiming High” was drafted by officials and practitioners based on their experience of successful inclusive practice. It advocated:

- Informed senior management and an ethos of mutual respect.
- Training for all school staff, to increase knowledge and understanding, and raise expectations.
- A culturally relevant and affirming curriculum [our emphasis].
- A focus on induction of newly arrived pupils.
- Ethnic monitoring and data collection.
- Raising the profile of race equality in schools.
- Providing equal educational opportunities.
- Involving Traveller parents and the Roma and Traveller communities. (DfES, 2003)

Other initiatives were the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy, which were central

government interventions to raise standards of achievement for all children. A cascading training system with national, regional, and local consultants developed high quality training materials, teaching and learning frameworks to increase the capacity of teaching professionals and leaders of learning in schools, settings and local authorities (DfE, 2011). The focus of most programmes was on curriculum delivery, with the standards of achievement measured in national tests being used to evaluate success. The National Strategies advocated that to improve the performance of pupils who had historically attained lower grades, required a range of targeted interventions by schools, including:

- monitoring and tracking of pupils progress;
 - differentiated curriculum delivery;
 - use of appropriate interventions to address specific learning needs;
 - effective leadership and vision that challenges preconceptions about culture and attainment; and
- a focus on an inclusive curriculum. (Starks, 2011).

In 2003 the ethnic monitoring categories were revised and for the first time included Gypsy/Roma and Traveller of Irish Heritage categories. The annual school census returns from schools revealed the extent of underachievement of certain groups of minority ethnic children, with the low achievement of Roma and Traveller groups³ giving serious cause for concern (DES, 2006). The National Strategies established programmes of support dedicated to narrowing the gaps in attainment, initially targeting Black Caribbean, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Somali and Turkish pupils and subsequently, in 2008, the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Achievement Programme (GRTAP) was launched.

The materials produced for the GRTAP suggested a number of strategies to make schools

³ It has to be noted that numbers returned for Roma and Traveller pupils in the school census were small.

more inclusive, such as engagement of parents and use of culturally relevant artefacts. It was designed to improve outcomes, meet educational aspirations through personalised learning, promote race equality, improve levels of cultural understanding among school and Local Authority personnel, and tailor mainstream resources. It comprised three overlapping phases of two years, each funding 12 selected LAs and six schools or settings from each authority.

Case studies and guidance were published in newsletters, on CD-ROM, online, and as hard copies (DCSF, 2009b; DCSF, 2009c). The GRTAP did much to develop good practice and disseminate it to schools nationally. The high quality resources it produced represented an effective partnership between regional advisers, LA strategy teams, TESSs, schools and communities. Starks (2011, p. 66) found that:

Advisory teachers are working with schools to develop a GRT [Gypsy, Roma and Traveller] focus in the curriculum by helping develop lesson plans that include GRT history and culture. TES teachers have worked with the SLT [Senior Leadership Team] in primary schools who are responsible for religious education and PSHE [Personal, Social and Health Education] to help develop the curriculum.

In addition, Starks (2011) found strong evidence of community engagement resulting in an increase in trust and confidence among parents of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils, and more pupils ascribing to the Gypsy/Roma and Traveller of Irish Heritage ethnic categories. There was some evidence of improved attainment at age 11. Primary schools supporting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils are more likely to have used the materials and in secondary schools, senior leaders given responsibility for the agenda were aware of the materials (Starks, 2011).

A major UK research study (Wilkin et al., 2010) was based on a survey of 875 schools to identify strategies that resulted in improved outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils. Responses were followed up by a second survey focusing more closely on the areas

identified, visits to ten secondary and five primary schools and a statistical analysis of the national dataset of pupils ascribing to the Gypsy/Roma and Traveller of Irish Heritage ethnic categories. The outcomes identified by the research were: attainment, attendance, engagement, retention, progress, health and wellbeing, enjoyment, transfer and transition.

The data analysis found that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils mainly attended schools with poorer results and made less progress between tests at age 6 and 11. No one-to-one connection was found between inputs and outcomes, but the research concluded, “there are complex, inter-related reasons why the outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils fall significantly below those for other children, and that schools are employing a range of strategies in response.” (p.ix).

In primary schools the curriculum was viewed as a tool for building mutual understanding and respect between children, while in the secondary phase a flexible curriculum was identified as the key strategy for keeping older students engaged and attending regularly: “Interviewees spoke of the effectiveness of devising bespoke curriculum pathways for each pupil, based on their interests, strengths and possible progression intentions” (p.77). Others identified particular curriculum areas such as drama and business studies, which reflected students’ interests and allowed them to shine. Detailed examples of good practice focusing on the curriculum are included in the appendix.

3.2.1 Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller History Month (GRTHM)

The first Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller History Month (GRTHM) was announced in June 2008 by Lord Andrew Adonis, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools, in “The Inclusion of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children and Young People” (DCSF, 2008) guidance to schools document. Acton and Ryder (2012) saw “the establishment of GRTHM was the culmination of a long and difficult process of trying to resolve the question of what role GRT culture should play in the curriculum.” (p.137).

GRTHM provided an opportunity to raise awareness and explore the history, culture, and

language of these communities, which are not usually included in the curriculum for all pupils. In this way schools can challenge myths, tackle prejudices, and be in a position to offer a balanced debate about the issues. A modest budget was identified to fund a website, a magazine, a launch event, a national competition for schools, and regional and local events. LA services, such as libraries, used their experience in organising and, in some cases, funding events. Schools contacted local Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller families and communities and TESSs and voluntary groups organised events and provided resources.

Although the GRTHM initially provoked some racist responses and was characterised by some newspapers as a waste of money (Daily Express, 2008), it nevertheless “achieved much by mobilising many community members to organise activities and go into schools to present on their culture, and many young GRT have been able to feel a sense of pride in their culture in a school environment.” (Acton and Ryder, 2012, p. 142).

The second time it was organised (June 2009), it transcended some of the tensions and anxieties of the first, and went on to become a genuinely community-owned event. Although government funding was withdrawn in 2011, schools, local authorities and community groups continue to organise events.

3.2.2 Preschool initiatives

Preschool settings provide an important opportunity to implement an inclusive curriculum through content and practice. Local Sure Start programmes developed close links with TESSs and have played a key role in reaching out and supporting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families. ‘Play Boxes’ and ‘Play Sacks’, were developed by TESSs, focusing on the six areas of learning of the Foundation Stage (DfES, 2003). These resources contain high quality learning materials and are borrowed by parents. Trained members of staff discuss with parents how to use these resources with their children and receive feedback when they are returned.

The National Strategies Early Years guidance “Building Futures: Developing Trust” (DCSF,

2009c) emphasised the importance of creating inclusive learning environments:

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children live within communities that have rich and unique cultures that have long been marginalised and excluded. It is crucial [...] that service providers rigorously scrutinise their learning environments for ways in which they can promote positive outcomes. (p. 27).

The guidance emphasised how good Early Years practice takes account of children's culture and life experiences to create a welcoming physical and emotional environment, with familiar images and artefacts, where diversity is valued and recognised in discussions and activities, and children's prior knowledge and experiences are the foundations for new learning.

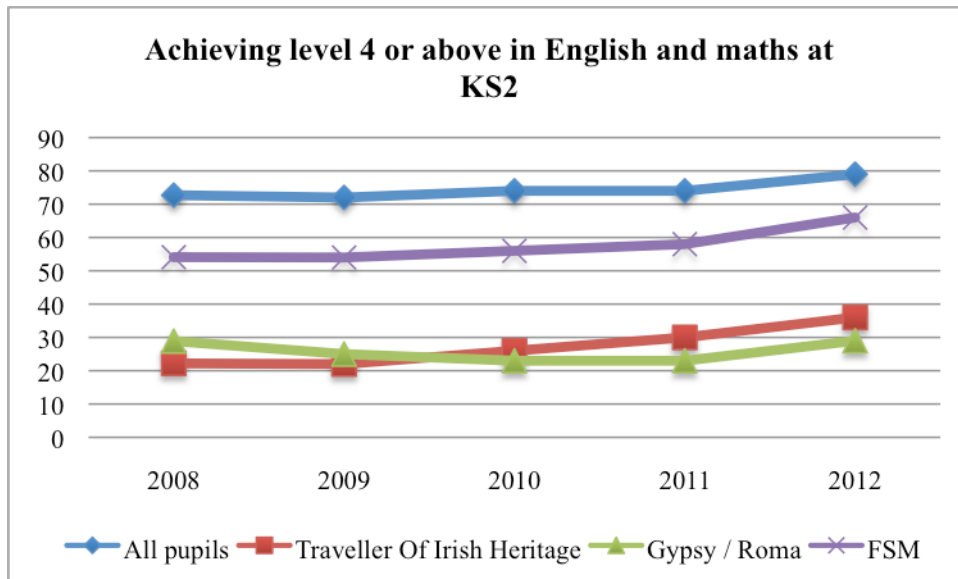
3.2.3 National Curriculum

In the UK much of what children are taught in state-maintained schools is prescribed by the National Curriculum. It is compulsory although allowing room for interpretation by teachers. The current curriculum (DfE, 2011) offers fewer opportunities for teachers to "present a full and rounded picture of Traveller life, culture, history, and languages focusing on engendering a respect for, and a valuing of, diversity in our society." (DfES, 2003, p. 9-10).

3.2.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

Since 2003 it has been possible to monitor the achievements of pupils of Gypsy/Roma and Traveller of Irish Heritage. There have been issues of under-identification addressed by government guidance (DCSF, 2008), and changes of ethnic identification in the secondary phase (Wilkin, et al, 2010). Probably the most effective indicator is attainment in English and Mathematics in the KS2 (11 year old) national tests, where pupils are expected to achieve Level 4. It can be seen from the chart below (ACERT, 2013) that Gypsy/Roma and Traveller of Irish Heritage groups underachieve significantly, even compared to children entitled to free school meals (FSM). There is some evidence that children ascribed to the Traveller of Irish Heritage are beginning to narrow the gap, but this is not the case with Gypsy/Roma pupils. There is evidence that the arrival of Roma from Eastern Europe, most of whom are

learners of English as an additional language, has depressed the average attainment of this group.



(Source: ACERT, 2013, p. 1⁴).

All research and guidance described above suggests that the gap of attainment is due to multiple factors and must be counteracted by a range of coordinated initiatives, within and outside the school. The curriculum could play an important part in this process, but only very detailed research would be able to disaggregate its impact from that of other factors.

3.3. Good practice in Cyprus

In Cyprus⁵, the turn of the new millennium saw the development of approaches and

⁴ FSM stands for Free School Meals, and is usually used as a proxy for pupils from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

materials that were underpinned by a commitment to intercultural education. This approach includes in-service training of teachers and school principals as well as a focus on language issues. The emphasis on language is of relevance to the education of Roma students, most of whom are classified as non-native Greek speakers and usually learn Greek as a second language (European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia/EUMC, 2006).

In 2003 the Cypriot Ministry of Education and Culture set up the 'Education Priority Zones' (EPZ) programme in order to combat illiteracy and educational exclusion as well as for “the qualitative improvement of the educational system, which is defined by its effectiveness to lead all students to school success” (Cypriot ministry of Education and Culture/CMEC, 2007, p. 18). The programme was underpinned by recognition of diversity and the adaptation of the educational system for the support for all students.

Examples of good practice and inclusive curriculum include the 18th primary school of Limassol (also known as Agios Antonios school). The school is located in Agios Antonios, an area characterised by ethnic, cultural and religious diversity and with a high proportion of Greek Cypriot refugees, Turkish Cypriots, Roma and economic immigrants. The socioeconomic and education level of the area is considered as lower than average. In 2010/11, the school was one of the 12 primary schools that became part of the 'Education Priority Zones' programme. During the same year there were 35 Roma students on the roll out of a total of 85 (Demetriou, 2011). All Roma students had Turkish as their mother tongue (Savvidou, 2011). At school, they were taught only Greek, which is the official language across the south part of the country. However, since 2004 the Cypriot Ministry of Education and Culture has hired Turkish-Cypriot tutors to provide lessons to Roma students in their mother tongue, namely in Turkish. This initiative was based on the results of a survey conducted by the school itself, which asked Roma parents if they wanted their children to be

⁵ When reference is made to Cyprus, it is restricted to the formally recognised by the United Nations and other international organisations Republic of Cyprus in the south part of the island. Northern Cyprus is not of relevance to this report.

taught the Turkish language (personal communication with school staff, 2013).

The majority of the pupils frequently attending school are boys. The remit of the school's 'Good Education Practice' code was to promote equal opportunities and inclusion, fight racism and provide good quality education, while respecting the ethnic, cultural and religious diversity of its students. The code placed some emphasis on the inclusion of Turkish-Cypriot and Roma students, while funding was received from various sources, such as governmental and other not-for-profit organisations. Despite the general finding by the Authority Against Discrimination in Cyprus that "existing educational policy in respect of the Roma does not adequately take into account their Roma identity" (Demetriou, 2011), some positive outcomes have been evidenced. Individual or group student progress reviews are not available, but from anecdotal evidence it appears that some students have raised their achievement record. However, for the majority of them, achievement improvement has been modest and it is largely contingent upon their socioeconomic situation and living conditions. Furthermore, achievement among students who frequently attend have improved and overall reading levels have increased in both Greek and Turkish languages (personal communication with school staff, 2013). Although retention has significantly improved, problems with the inclusion of some students is still an issue, especially in relation to girls whose progress into secondary education is problematic (Demetriou, 2011).

Some of the measures adopted in order to implement the 'Good Education Practice' code were the selection of highly experienced personnel, the employment of a Greek-Turkish interpreter on a full-time basis, the appointment of two full-time Turkish-Cypriot teachers to teach Turkish language and culture to Turkish-Cypriot students in morning and afternoon classes, as well as the appointment of an educational psychologist and a speech therapist in order to provide support to children with learning difficulties. Moreover, class sizes across the school were restricted to 12-16 pupils and a number of extracurricular lessons were offered to any student identified as requiring further support. Visits to sites of religious importance, such as Christian Orthodox churches and Muslim mosques, were organised and

religious representatives from both religions visited the school on various occasions. A bilingual (Turkish and Greek) student calendar and newspaper were produced, while the school organised a free-of-charge summer school and various educational trips. Moreover, a strong emphasis was placed on the active involvement and participation of parents from all groups represented in the school in various activities, such as the parents' council. Finally, the school provided free breakfast and lunch to all students and assisted those from low socioeconomic households in a number of ways, which included free provision of school uniform, stationary, and the waving of registration fees and insurance cover.

3.4 Good practice in Bulgaria

In Bulgaria, initiatives to promote the inclusion of Roma students usually come under the label 'desegregation projects'. The desegregation project in Vidin is funded by the Roma Education Fund (REF) and the Bulgarian government through EU structural funds; in the past, the scheme was funded by the 'Participation Programme' of the Open Society Institute (OSI) (REF, 2007). Low participation and attainment rates were thought to be influenced by the appointment of teachers who were not highly qualified, poor facilities and the operation of racial prejudices against Roma students, rather than the curriculum per se. Since 1992 an attempt to mainstream Romani neighbourhood schools was made, which included the provision in these schools of the standard curriculum (that is to say, the same curriculum offered in non-Romani schools) (Panayotova and Evgeniev, 2002).

The desegregation project “was a major challenge to the pattern of continued educational segregation of Romani children in Bulgaria, by offering the Romani children an opportunity to integrate in the mainstream educational system.” (Open Society Institute et al., 2001). The scheme is one of more than 18 such initiatives in Bulgaria that “help children to integrate desegregated schools outside of the Roma settlements, provide after-school support for children, and include outreach components to support parents in establishing a better

relationship with their children's schools and to increase parental motivation." (REF, 2007, p. 52). The programme puts emphasis on the creation of a positive environment both within the Romani as well as the wider community (Panayotova and Evgeniev, 2002). Its key features are the transportation of students to the schools where they study and the provision of additional academic support (UNICEF, 2010), such as the organisation of teacher-parent meetings, additional classes for students with learning difficulties or low attainment, the provision of free meals (it only lasted for the first few years of the programme's life) and the provision of "textbooks and school aids to the Roma children following criteria agreed with the parents and teachers" (Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, 2008, p. 33). In the academic year 2006/07 alone, various extra-curricular activities were organised including essay competitions, evening events in Roma folklore, a Christmas party titled "Children are Tolerant" and so on (Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, 2008).

The Vidin project has received wide press coverage and has been one of the most highly acclaimed initiatives in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). The organisation responsible for implementing the activities of the project is the Roma NGO, Drom. The project's success was marked from the first semester of its implementation, when a 100 percent attendance record was established (Ringold et al., 2005). Moreover, the end-of-term final grade averages of the Roma students matched those of their non-Roma peers, parents and teachers were satisfied and no incidents of anti-Roma prejudice were reported (Ringold et al., 2005). According to the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (2008) the project was successful both at enrolling and retaining students even after primary school is completed, which leads to significant increases in Roma students attending secondary school. By the end of the first year of the programme's implementation, 460 Romani children had graduated from desegregated schools, while in its second year this number rose to 611, that is 75% of all Romani children attended school in the specific settlement, namely 'Nov Pat', where the project was implemented (Panayotova and Evgeniev, 2002). Since the programme was launched in 2000, for "each academic year [it refers to academic years 2001/02-2006/07],

the proportion of participant Roma children at the elementary and primary levels is decreasing, while their proportion is increasing at the secondary level. This confirms that the project is not only enrolling students in the city schools but is also managing to keep them there after they complete their primary education.” (Bulgarian Helsinki Committee 2008, p. 29). Given the centralised character of education in Bulgaria (REF, 2007) the success of the programme rests more with curriculum delivery, as there is little space for innovation in curriculum content. According to Ringold et al. (2005), Roma students in integrated schools performed 1.75 and 1.10 points higher on state exams in Bulgarian language and mathematics respectively (out of a top score of 4 points), than Roma students in Roma-only schools. UNICEF (2010) noted that the project has also been very effective in enrolling and retaining students from remote areas in mixed mainstream schools. The success of the programme led to its expansion between 2000 to 2005 to other areas of Bulgaria, namely in Silven, Pleven, Montana, Stara-Zagora, Haskovo and Plovdiv.

4. Lessons to be learnt in relation to curriculum delivery and resources

1. The curriculum has a number of different meanings. In most European countries there is a prescribed list of what should be taught and at what stage in a pupil’s education. The national curriculum may be open to interpretation by teachers and they may also be permitted to expand upon it. The authors are unaware of any specific references to Roma or Travellers in national curricula, although the guidance materials produced, for example by UK National Strategies, encouraged schools to adopt a culture of respect through the curriculum.
2. Many resources have been developed to encourage the recognition of Roma and Traveller identities in the curriculum in the UK and Europe. Most of these, aim to make children from these communities feel welcome in school, while others seek to promote understanding and respect between all children. The best resources make connections between the experiences of children with different cultural heritages.

3. The flexible curriculum choices available to students over 14 years old in UK schools has been welcomed by parents of Roma and Traveller children and, according to schools evaluations, has contributed to them remaining in education and achieving better qualifications. It is important, however, that choices of curricula are available to all children and that Roma and Traveller children are not only offered vocational options.

4. A number of initiatives that enhance curriculum delivery have been found to be effective, such as mother tongue tuition for Romani students, progress tracking, small class sizes, targeted interventions and, where necessary, in situ support by experts, such as educational psychologists and other highly-skilled professionals.

5. The selection and training of highly qualified teachers seems to enhance curriculum delivery and promotion of inclusion for all pupils, Roma and non-Roma alike. It is also one of the key elements in securing high educational outcomes.

6. Parental and community engagement can go a long way in supporting retention and participation of Roma students and can have significant benefits in making school more inclusive. This has spill over effects in terms of Romani students perceiving the curriculum as relevant or supportive of their Romani identity, hence making their participation in school more successful.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

Roma and Traveller communities are socially excluded across Europe and educational inclusion is dependent on social, economic and cultural pressures, relating to health, employment and accommodation. As the European Commission (2010, p. 4) stated “the disadvantages experienced by Roma in one field lay barriers for them to access rights and opportunities on equal grounds in many other fields.” Even within the education domain, issues such as safety and trust, flexibility, partnership working, mutual respect, high expectations and practical considerations all have an impact on inclusion and achievement.

(Wilkin et al., 2010). The curriculum is a single, yet important component of educational good practice. If it is defined narrowly as what is taught, its impact on the inclusion will be limited. If, however, the curriculum embraces the ethos of the school, then it has real potential to create change. The evidence in this report suggests that delivery and resourcing of the curriculum have a greater impact on inclusion and are more susceptible to change at school level than content, which is usually prescribed centrally.

The European Union constitutes a unique case of policy dissonance, whereby support for some of the most innovative educational initiatives is undermined by accommodation, social policy, employment, health and judicial challenges facing the Roma groups. Since the onset of the global economic and financial crisis in 2008, many EU countries have allowed anti-Gypsyism and overt Roma discrimination to dismantle positive and much needed educational and social provision for the Roma built over the previous two decades. This development, in combination with austerity measures and attendant spending cuts, has seen the reduction of funds for initiatives to promote social inclusion. Critically, improvements in social inclusion of Roma evident in many European countries before the crisis have been brought to a halt (European Parliament, 2009).

5.2 Recommendations

- The curriculum should encourage flexibility and personalisation according to students' needs and life experiences, and take account of diverse backgrounds, cultures and traditions. The engagement of parents can provide interesting, accurate and relevant curriculum content, at the school level. Any programme, initiative and innovation pertaining to curriculum delivery and resources needs to involve community members in its design, delivery and evaluation.
- Textbooks and other resources used in the classroom should become more inclusive and considerate of the contribution of the various Roma cultures, groups and

traditions. Books in classrooms and libraries, images and classroom displays should be inclusive and respect diversity. Some examples are given in the appendix, below.

- The inclusive curriculum should be understood by all stakeholders to mean what is learnt rather than solely what is taught. As such, it has the potential to embrace all aspects of schools' policies and practices, which contribute to the inclusion of Roma and other students. For example, the way a school implements equalities policies, recognises and responds to racist incidents, engages with parents, celebrates diversity, stocks its library and so on, will all contribute to the creation of a relevant and inclusive learning experience for all pupils.
- Schools need to be alert to the operation of the hidden curriculum (Giroux and Penna, 1983), which perpetuates the status hierarchies prevalent in society and exacerbate social exclusion. The ethos of the school needs to be examined critically to ensure it supports educational achievement and opportunities for all pupils.
- Enlightened teachers may include the experiences of Roma in their teaching of the holocaust, the contribution of Roma to the sciences, letters, the professions, mainstream musical traditions and so on, and good practice may be shared and disseminated. More research is required to establish the extent to which this "voluntary" approach contributes to inclusion.
- Where Romani language, history or cultural lessons are provided in education, they should be available to all children so they grow up understanding about the contributions Roma have made and their history.
- More research is necessary in order to establish not only 'what' constitutes good curriculum delivery and resources but also 'how' resources can be developed and disseminated to endure the test of time and changing needs. An international review of the delivery of national curricula could identify ways in which they can be made

more inclusive, and suggest the resources and training required to encourage teachers to make appropriate use of them.

Bibliography

Advisory Council for the Education of Romany and other Travellers (ACERT) (2013) *2012 education data*. Available at <http://www.acert.org.uk/key-documents/education-data/>

Acton, T.A. and Ryder, A. (2012) "Recognising Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History and Culture" in A. Ryder and J. Richardson *Gypsies and Travellers: Empowerment and inclusion in British society*. PLACE: The Policy Press.

Amnesty International (2010) Human rights on the margins: Roma in Europe. Available at: http://www.amnesty.org.uk/uploads/documents/doc_21165.pdf.

Bhopal, K. and Myers, M. (2008) *Insiders, Outsiders and Others: Gypsies and Identity*. Hertfordshire: University of Hertfordshire Press.

Bowers, J., (2008) *What is GRTHM?* Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month. Available at: <http://schools.leicester.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/getresource.axdAssetID=10105&type=full&servicetype=Attachment>.

Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (2008) *On the Road to Maturity; Evaluation of the Non-Governmental Desegregation Process In Bulgaria*. Sofia: Bulgaria. Available at: www.romadocument.sk/index.php/.../70-on-the-road-to-maturity.html

Cemlyn, S. and Clark, C. (2005) *The Social Exclusion of Gypsy and Traveller Children*, in G. Preston (ed.) *At Greatest Risk: the children most likely to be poor*. CPAG, London.

Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) (2009) *Eighth periodic reports of States parties due in 2008 Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Available at:

<http://www.refworld.org/type,STATEPARTIESREP,CERD,BIH,4c84a7882,0.html>

Council of Europe (COE) (2012) *Human rights of Roma and Travellers in Europe*. Available at: http://book.coe.int/EN/ficheouvrage.php?PAGEID=36&lang=EN&produit_aliasid=2691

Council of Europe – Committee of Ministers (2009) Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the education of Roma and Travellers in Europe (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 17 June 2009 at the 1061st meeting of the Ministers' Deputies). Available at: <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1462637>

Council of the European Union (2008) *Council conclusions on inclusion of the Roma*. Brussels, Belgium. Available at: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/108377.pdf

Cypriot Ministry of Education and Culture/CMEC (2007) *Strategic planning for education. Total reform of the educational system*. (In Greek). Available at: http://www.paideia.org.cy/upload/Arthrografia/17_1_2008_stratigikos_shediasmos_anatheorimenos.pdf

Daily Express (2008) £70,000 'wasted' on telling pupils Elvis was a gypsy. Available at: <http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/51813/70-000-wasted-on-telling-pupils-Elvis-was-a-gypsy>

Decade for Roma Inclusion (2005) About. Available at: <http://www.romadecade.org/about>

Demetriou, C. (2011) Report of the anti-discrimination authority regarding the education of Roma children in Cyprus. Available at: <http://www.non-discrimination.net/content/media/CY98FR%20annual%20report%20Antidiscrimination%20Authority%202011.pdf>

Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) (2008) *The inclusion of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people*. Available at: <http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/8138/1/Inclusion%20of%20Gypsy%20Roma.pdf>

Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) (2009a) Building Futures:

Developing Trust; A Focus on Provision for Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Backgrounds in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Available at: <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/00741-2009BKT-EN.pdf>

Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) (2009b) *Moving forward together: Raising Gypsy, Roma and Traveller achievement*. Booklet 1: Introduction; Booklet 2: Leadership and management; Booklet 3: Teaching and Learning; Booklet 4: Engagement with parents, carers and the wider community. Available at: <http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/2386/>

Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) (2010) *Case study: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller achievement: Curriculum links with the local community*. Available at: <http://wsassets.s3.amazonaws.com/ws/nso/pdf/c31cb74b6367ffb97542d4be6c4ee4aa.pdf>

Department for Education (DfE) (2011a) *The National Strategies 1997–2011: A brief summary of the impact and effectiveness of the National Strategies*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175408/DFE-00032-2011.pdf

Department for Education (DfE) (2011b) *The school curriculum* Available at <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/curriculum>

Department for Education (2013) *Web-based Good practice case studies*. Available at <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/inclusionandlearnersupport/mea/improvingachievement/a0012528/gypsy,-roma-and-traveller-achievement>

Department for Education and Skills (DfES) (2003). *Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Gypsy Traveller Pupils*. Available at: <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/0443%202003MIG1977.pdf>

Department for Education and Skills (DfES) (2006) *Ethnicity and Education: The Evidence on Minority Ethnic Pupils aged 5-16* Available at: <http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/6306/1/0208-2006dom-en.pdf>

Derrington, C. (2007). 'Fight, flight and playing white: an examination of coping strategies adopted by Gypsy Traveller adolescents in English secondary schools', *International Journal of Educational Research*, 46, 6: 357-367.

Derrington, C. and Kendall, S. (2004). *Gypsy Traveller Students in Secondary Schools: culture, identity and achievement*. Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books.

European Commission (EC) (2012) *Roma Platform*. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/roma-platform/index_en.htm

European Roma Policy Coalition (ERPC) (2012) *Roma Education at a Glance 2012: Europe's Failure Is Europe's Shame*. Available at <http://romapolicy.eu/roma-education-at-a-glance-2012-europes-failure-is-europes-shame/>

European Commission (EC) (2009) *EU Platform for Roma Inclusion*. Available at: MEMO/09/193. Available at: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-09-193_en.htm#PR_metaPressRelease_bottom

European Commission (EU) (2010) *Improving the tools for the social inclusion and non-discrimination of Roma in the EU*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Available at: <http://www.errc.org/cms/upload/file/improving-the-tools-for-the-social-inclusion-and-non-discrimination-of-roma-in-the-eu-summary-and-selected-projects-2010.pdf>.

European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) (2006) *Roma and Travellers in public education*. Available at: http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/179-roma_report.pdf

European Parliament (2008) *The social situation of the Roma and their improved access to the labour market in the EU*. Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:087E:0060:0069:EN:PDF>.

Eurostat (2009) *Labour Force Survey*. Available at: <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/microdata/lfs>

Foster, B and Cemlyn, S. (2012) 'Education, inclusion and government policy', in A. Ryder and J. Richardson *Gypsies and Travellers: Empowerment and inclusion in British society*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Giroux, H. and Penna, A. (1983) 'Social Education in the Classroom: The Dynamics of the Hidden Curriculum', in H. Giroux, and D. Purpel (1983) *The Hidden Curriculum and Moral Education*. Berkeley, California: McCutchan Publishing Corporation, pp. 100–121.

Kiddle, C. (1999) *Traveller Children: a voice for themselves*. London: Jessica Kingsley.

Le Bas, D. and Acton. T. (eds) (2010) *All Change! Romani Studies Through Romani Eyes*. Hatfield : University of Hertfordshire Press.

Lloyd, G. and McCluskey, G. (2008) "Education and Gypsies/Travellers: contradictions and significant silences", *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 12, 4: 331-345.

Lundgren, G. (2012) *Sofia Z-4515*. London: Mantra Lingua.

Minority Rights Group International (2010) *State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2010 – Cyprus*. Available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4c33311a13.html>

Lockwood, C. (2009) *Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Resources Catalogue*. National Association of Teachers of Travellers and Other Professionals (NATT+). Available at: www.natt.org.uk

National College for School Leadership (NCSL) (2005) *Effective Leadership in Multi-Ethnic Schools*. National College for School Leadership. Available at: <http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/5312/>

Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) (1999) *Raising the Attainment of Minority Ethnic Pupils*. London: Ofsted Publications Centre. Available at: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/raising-attainment-of-minority-ethnic-pupils-school-and-lea-responses>

Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) (2003) *Provision*

and Support for Traveller pupils. London: Ofsted Publications Centre. Available at: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/provision-and-support-for-traveller-pupils>

Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) (2008) *Evaluation of the Primary and Secondary National Strategies 2005–07*. Reference no: 070033. Available at: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/evaluation-of-primary-and-secondary-national-strategies>

Open Society Foundations (OSF) (2011) *Beyond Rhetoric: Roma Integration Roadmap for 2020: Priorities for an EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies*. Available at: <http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/sites/default/files/beyond-rhetoric-2011-0616.pdf>

Open Society Institute (OSI) (2008) *International Comparative Data Set on Roma Education*. Available at: <http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/reports/monitoring-education-roma>

Open Society Institute, European Roma Rights Center, Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, and the Human Rights Project (2001) *Joint press release*. Available at: http://www.errc.org/popup-article-view.php?article_id=241

Padfield, P. (2005) 'Inclusive educational approaches for Gypsy/Traveller pupils and their families: an "urgent need for progress"?', *Scottish Educational Review*, 37, 2, 127-144.

Panayotova, D. and Evgeniev, E. (2002) *Successful Romani school desegregation: The Vidin case*. Available at: <http://www.errc.org/article/successful-romani-school-desegregation-the-vidin-case/1630>

Ringold, D., Orenstein, M. A., and Wilkens, E. (2005) *Roma in an expanding Europe: Breaking the poverty cycle*. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank. Available at:

http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTROMA/Resources/roma_in_expanding_europe.pdf

Roma Education Fund (REF) (2007) *Advancing Roma Education in Bulgaria*. Available at:

<http://www.erisee.org/downloads/2013/2/b/Advancing%20Roma%20Education%20ENG%202007.pdf>

Roma Education Fund (REF) (2013) *REF in One Page*. Available at:

<http://www.romaeducationfund.hu/ref-one-page>

Saunders, P. et al (2007) *Open Roads, Open Minds* Available at:

<http://www.grtleeds.co.uk/storytelling/storytellingDVD.html#>

Savvidou, E. (2011) Report of the authority against the discrimination Roma students. (In Greek). Available at:

<http://www.nodiscrimination.ombudsman.gov.cy/sites/default/files/akr18.2008-27092011.doc>

Scottish Executive (2003) *Inclusive Educational Approached for Gypsies and Travellers within the Context of Interrupted Learning: Guidance for Local Authorities and Schools*. Glasgow: Learning and Teaching Scotland.

Available at: <http://www.scottishtravellered.net/reources/STEPNationalGuidance.pdf>

Smith, E. (2007) *Analysing Underachievement in Schools*. London: Continuum International.

Show Racism the Red Card (SRTRC) (2011) *Out of Site*. Available at:

<http://www.theredcard.org/uploaded/out%20of%20site%20PRINT%20rev2.pdf>

Starks, L. (2011) *Evaluation of Support and Resources for Narrowing the Gaps* York Consulting. Available at:

<http://wsassets.s3.amazonaws.com/ws/nso/pdf/bfc023536136cc8a8579552a3621c8eb.pdf>

Themelis, S. and Foster, B. (2013) 'The Educational Situation of Roma and Travellers in Ireland and Great Britain', in S. Hornberg (ed.) *Die Bildungssituation von Sinti und Roma in Europa [The educational situation of Sinti and Roma in Europe]*. Beyrouth University, Germany.

The World Bank (2012) Toward An Equal Start: Closing The Early Learning Gap For Roma Children In Eastern Europe. Available at:

http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTROMA/Resources/RomaECD_FinalReport.pdf

The World Education Forum (2000) The Dakar Framework for Action. Education For All: Meeting Our Collective Commitments. Dakar, Senegal. Available at:

<http://www.unesco.org/education/wef/en-conf/dakframeng.shtm>

UNICEF (2010) Towards Roma Inclusion. A Review of Roma Education Initiatives in Central and South-eastern Europe. UNICEF Regional Office for CEE/CIS. Available at:

http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/ROMA_PAPER_FINAL_LAST.pdf

Wilkin, A., Derrington, C., White, R., Martin, K., Foster, B., Kinder, K. and Rutt, S. (2010) *Improving the outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils: final report*. Department for Education (DFE): London. Available at:

<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DFE-RR043.pdf>

Appendix: Selected strategies and programmes that promote education for Roma children.

European Union Strategies

The European Union has been very active in setting up initiatives and strategies for the promotion of Roma children's education, especially in the areas of rights, policies, financial support and awareness-raising. According to the European Commission (2009), the following actions have been taken:

- Roma are fully covered by EU legislation which prohibits discrimination on grounds of ethnic origin in employment, social protection and education as well as access to goods and services, including housing.
- The coordination of Member States' policies on education, employment and social inclusion provides a framework for mutual learning and the identification of good practice.
- The European Social Fund is a powerful tool to improve the employability of Roma and can be mobilised for a broad range of actions, such as tailor-made vocational training. During the last programming period 2000-2006, some 275 million Euros were devoted to projects specifically targeted at Roma. During the same time approximately 1 billion Euros was spent on measures targeted at vulnerable groups, including the Roma.
- The European Commission organises an internship scheme for young Roma graduates in partnership with the Open Society Institute. Twice a year, ten young Roma join the Commission for five months to work as trainees. (European Commission, 2009)

The 'Decade for Roma Inclusion', 2005-2015

The 'Decade for Roma Inclusion' is a multinational, inter-agency initiative that was launched in 2005. Currently, twelve countries participate in it, namely Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Spain (additionally, Slovenia and the United States occupy the status of the observer). The key partners of the Decade are spread in various countries mainly in Central and South East Europe but also elsewhere. Some of them include the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme, the Open Society Foundations, the Roma Education Fund, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe and several Roma NGOs. The Decade has allowed national governments of the abovementioned countries as well as supranational organisations (such as the EU, UNICEF, The World Bank and others) to coordinate their efforts in improving the living conditions of many Roma people and combating discrimination against them.

The Roma Education Fund (REF)

Part of the Decade of Roma Inclusion is the 'The Roma Education Fund' (REF). The REF is part of the set of initiatives that derive from the Decade of Roma Inclusion. It was also set up in 2005 and its "mission and ultimate goal is to close the gap in educational outcomes between Roma and non-Roma. In order to achieve this goal, the organization supports policies and programs which ensure quality education for Roma, including the desegregation of education systems." (REF, 2013).

The REF runs five main programs:

1. Project Support Program which finances projects and programs.
2. REF Scholarship Program which is the largest tertiary scholarship program for Roma students.
3. Policy Development and Capacity Building Program which supports activities that help

create a framework for dialogue with governments and civil society on education reform and Roma inclusion.

4. Communication and Cross Country Learning Program which includes activities to promote the exchange of knowledge on education reforms and Roma inclusion.

5. Reimbursable Grant Program to help Roma NGOs and local governments access EU funds for the purpose of Roma education. (REF, 2013).

The European Platform for Roma Inclusion

The European Roma Platform is the outcome of the First European Roma Summit that took place in Brussels in 2008. It “brings together national governments, the EU, international organisations and Roma civil society representatives. It aims at stimulating cooperation and exchanges of experience along all stakeholders on successful Roma inclusion and integration policies and practices” (European Commission, 2012). The European Roma Platform has a strong emphasis on education. For example, the second meeting in 2009 focused on the Education of Roma children, while the fourth meeting discussed the quality of early childhood services provided for Roma children and their families.

Pan-European Coordination of Roma Integration Methods

Funded by Directorate General (DG) Regional Policy, the Pan-European Coordination of Roma Integration Methods focuses on improving the access of Roma children to quality early childhood education, and the enhancement of child development for Roma children aged 0-6 years old. An important goal of this initiative is to provide the necessary evidence for introducing and scaling up early childhood education and care (European Commission 2010a). Another project explicitly designed to draw attention to the high returns of ECD has been launched by DG Employment in collaboration with UNICEF (RGS). It specifies “10 Goals for Improving Access to Education for Roma” (OSF, 2011, p. 19):

1. Collect reliable, comprehensive, and comparable data on enrollment, completion, and performance rates

2. Regular monitoring, review, and revision of educational policy to ensure that principles of equity and non-discrimination are fully applied at local level.

3. Develop robust mechanisms to confront and combat racism and discriminatory practices in the schools to ensure that Roma children are not humiliated by ethnic majority staff or pupils.

4. Design and scale up effective national desegregation policies, setting clear implementation targets for all municipalities within a defined timeframe to bring an end to all forms of segregation that deny Roma children full access to quality mainstream education in an integrated environment.

5. Coordinate a Europe-wide drive to ensure that all Roma children acquire a minimum of two-year's preschool. Ensure wide access to early childhood interventions which are vital for cognitive development and especially needed to compensate for the multiple disadvantages faced by Roma children.

6. Reduce the impact of poverty and bureaucracy on enrollment, attendance, and completion of school. Simplify standard requirement procedures and provide the necessary package of benefits to cover free meals and expenses associated with schooling for all disadvantaged children. Provide after-school support programs for those children from deprived home environments.

7. Introduce child-centred teaching methods and provide teachers with diversity training. In the countries monitored, despite official policies requiring more interactive child-centred teaching methods, it was clear that teachers have been slow on the uptake and are often and obviously unprepared for working with diverse groups of children. Countries need to adopt standardized requirements for teachers to regularly update their skills, including training to meet the challenges of working in a diverse and multicultural environment in general, and with Roma children in particular.

8. Involve Roma parents and the community in education. There is a need to

establish formalized channels of communication with parents and communities to overcome the legacy of long-standing segregation and isolation of Roma communities, to build trust between the community and institutions, and to empower the parents as active participants in their children's progress and well-being.

9. Establish teacher training and programs in bilingual education. Governments should ensure that Roma children whose first language is not the language of instruction receive assistance by supporting in-service and pre-service teacher training courses in language acquisition, bilingual education methodology, and the teaching of Romanes.

Governments should develop preschool programs that place particular emphasis on language acquisition and bilingual techniques. Governments should ensure systematic solutions for the professional engagement of Roma teaching assistants, and find incentives and affirmative action measures to include more Roma in the training and education necessary for this job.

10. Integrate diversity and Roma culture into the curriculum for all children, to counter the biased and distorted stereotypes of Roma, to compensate for the dearth of available information about the history and identity of Roma, and to sensitize all children to cultural diversity and mutual tolerance.

The above serves as a valuable checklist of strategies that must be implemented if there is to be significant progress towards inclusion of Roma and Travellers into mainstream educational systems. The inclusive curriculum comes last in the list, perhaps because the focus is on the majority rather than the excluded minority but the development of an inclusive curriculum will contribute to and benefit from most of the other items on the list.

UK Resources

National College for School Leadership (NCSL) (2005, p. 17) observed:

“Both the level of resources devoted to multicultural activities and the distribution of

resources in support of a multicultural curriculum can provide a benchmark for the school's seriousness with regard to multiculturalism.”

The National Association of Teachers of Travellers and other professionals (NATT+) was approached by the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) in June 2007 to run a Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Resources Project with nominated schools and educational settings in England. The aim of the project was to promote Gypsy, Roma and Traveller history and culture into schools and educational settings by giving them a variety of high quality Gypsy, Roma and Traveller resources to be used with staff, pupils and the wider community.

The Department funded NATT+ to publish a resources catalogue (Lockwood, 2009) and a wide selection of resources can be purchased through their website. Most of the resources were developed in collaboration with TESSs.

These resources aim to make Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children feel welcome and at home in school and many of them were written or commissioned by Traveller Education Support Services. There are some resources which aim to increase mutual understanding and respect, often written by community members or in collaboration with them. Some community members are commercially published writers and some children's authors have written stories which reflect the cultures in a positive light. Several established children's authors such as Caroline Binch, Alan Gibbons and Gaye Hicyilmaz have produced books including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller themes. There are books (including audio books) by Roma and Traveller storytellers, such as Duncan Williamson, Jess Smith and Richard O'Neil. 'Open Roads, Open Minds' (Saunders et al, 2007) is a storytelling learning resource comprising a DVD, wall poster, storyteller and artist portraits.

'Sofia Z-4515' (Lundgren, 2012) is a true account of a Roma survivor of Auschwitz-Birkenau in comic-book format, which could be used to support the mainstream curriculum dealing with the Holocaust.

Other resources include 'Out of site' (SRTRC, 2010), a pack published by *Show Racism the Red Card*, in order to tackle racism towards Gypsy, Roma and Travellers, and it contains a variety of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic activities suitable for students from Key Stage 2 level and above (it deals with stereotyping, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, role models, racist violence, culture and way of living, and media reporting.)

Case Studies

The case studies below are to be found on the Department for Education website under *Gypsy, Roma and Traveller achievement* (DfE, 2013).

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/inclusionandlearnersupport/mea/improvingachievement/a0012528/gypsy,-roma-and-traveller-achievement>

Excerpts from Case studies with relevance to the curriculum are reproduced here.

John Masefield High School and Sixth Form Centre. We run projects to promote and celebrate the lifestyle and beliefs of members of our travelling community. We mark traveller awareness month and provide displays of work produced by relevant students and information designed to challenge stereotypes and promote understanding and aspiration. We celebrate role models who have traveller heritage and have been involved in creative schemes to help traveller students to feel proud. Perhaps the best example of a creative project was our construction of a traveller caravan which was built, painted and furnished by students from traveller and non-traveller backgrounds. The caravan has been proudly displayed in one of our playgrounds and is a piece of work that students have taken a great pride in working with.

St Edmund's Catholic School, Dover. In the latest census, we [St Edmund's Catholic School, Dover] have 15% (119) of the roll who do not have English as their first Language and 37 students where the language difficulties faced are compounded by having a Roma/ traveller

background. This figure may be greater as the Roma origins are often hidden especially if they are not from the Czech Republic or Slovakia. As they have moved across continental Europe they have met with hardship and intolerance and it is not a surprise to the school when we see, especially from new families, an expectation of intolerance and prejudice. Dover is a very deprived community and with many jobless fighting for diminishing job opportunities we experience levels of intolerance from those born and brought up in Dover. Thus with all parts of the community our work has to be carried out with great sensitivity.

As a specialist Performing Arts school our first efforts to integrate the Eastern European communities involved the Performing Arts. The very first Roma student, a young lady, went on to become quite proficient at music, playing the violin. But by 2006 we still had not managed to address the poor levels of attendance and in the year 2006 we carried out our first arts project aimed at all Eastern European children. The idea of trying to just target Roma children would not have been feasible given the difficulty of defining this group.

We paired up with Creative Partnerships, now 'Future Creative', to entice students to share some of their culture as a group, looking at Song, Costume, Rap and Dance from a variety of European Countries. They added some musical composition to the project and the culmination of the project was a performance at The Marlowe Theatre at Canterbury.

The impact of this was that at last we were developing our working partnership with the different Eastern European Communities. The project paralleled with a partnership with the London Philharmonia and some of our year 7 and 8 talented musicians who shared the stage in the 'Around the world in 80 minutes' production. The performance was the climax of the ten week project which took place at school in the form of two hour workshops each week.

The following case study appeared originally on the National Strategies website, which has since been archived.

North East Primary school (DCSF, 2010)

<http://wsassets.s3.amazonaws.com/ws/nso/pdf/c31cb74b6367ffb97542d4be6c4ee4aa.pdf>

Background

A North East primary school has always had some Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children on its roll as it is situated close to the nearby local authority Traveller site; the children making up to 3.5% of the school population. Some of the children travel during the summer months and the ethnicities of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children are known to most of the school.

However, while auditing the school's responses to work with this particular group of children, it became obvious that very little was known about their lifestyle and few children or adults, including staff, had been to the local site. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller culture was not represented in the curriculum.

Links with parents were good and had been built up over many years. For example, teachers were aware that some families required information verbally due to restricted literacy skills and made a conscious effort to ensure information was relayed to all parents. However these links with parents needed to impact more on learning and teaching.

A whole-school policy decision was taken to change the way the curriculum was organised and taught from the previous approach, based around tightly-described study units, to a more creative curriculum. This gave staff the chance to identify opportunities to reflect Gypsy, Roma and Traveller culture within the whole-school curriculum. It also provided the opportunity to improve on the links with the local community and how those links were manifested in the curriculum.

The school identified a named Gypsy, Roma and Traveller curriculum coordinator.

To begin with, all staff, including teachers, teaching assistants, lunchtime supervisors, office

staff and the caretaker, received training about Gypsy, Roma and Traveller culture from the local Traveller Education Support Service (TESS). The first stage to be adapted was the Early Years Foundation Stage. Resources that reflected the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller lifestyle were incorporated into areas of learning and a female Gypsy, Roma and Traveller persona doll was successfully used to draw children's attention to some of the negative issues which had previously arisen in class.

During this first cycle of the new curriculum, a role-play 'Hobby' (a trailer caravan) was brought into the Year 1 classroom when the children were learning about homes. This was an exciting addition to the classroom and curriculum. This study unit was further developed to include a class visit to the local site, accompanied by the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children as guides. Also, the loan of a vardo (a traditional horse-drawn wagon used by Gypsies), placed in the school grounds, further developed all children's understanding of the rich cultural tradition that was 'on the door step' of the community.

The GRT coordinator visited the school's families on site to discuss any issues they felt they had with their children's education and how their progress could be further developed both at home and when they travel. Responses to the consultation were two-fold:

the school began to provide the families with a home-school support package to demonstrate ways in which their children can be supported while on site;

individual packages were developed, with the support of the TESS, for the children's periods of travel during the summer months.

Outcomes

- Home and school links have been dramatically strengthened.
- The curriculum has been enhanced for all pupils and this will continue to be built upon in forthcoming years; ensuring, for example, that the visit to the local site continues to be on offer to all Year 1 children.
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children's self-esteem rose regarding their own culture within the local community.

- Educational support from home has strengthened.

Individualised learning packs will be developed and used for a variety of pupils throughout the school.