

**Roma Children Integration Policies and Practices in the Czech Republic in Comparison
with Glasgow, Scotland**

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1. INTRODUCTION

Social integration is not an easy task to achieve even in the more progressive countries. However, when social inclusion is attempted in a country with deeply rooted systemic discrimination based on ethnic or other background, there can be a long set of policies attempting to address the issue yet achieve very little. The Czech Republic is one such country. This paper will focus on the issue of integration policies and segregation practices in the Czech Republic and will compare the situation of Czech Roma Students with the situation of their counterparts in Glasgow, Scotland.

While the majority of Roma students in Glasgow attend only a handful of schools which might therefore be considered segregated if the Czech standards applied, students in these schools are not receiving lesser education, their wellbeing is prioritised and their integration is ensured through school engagements and NGO activities. The aim of this paper will be to examine the factors which lead to either social inclusion or exclusion in either country – why, despite having well-developed policies as a compliance with the European Court of Human Rights judgement, is the Czech Republic struggling with segregation and worse levels of education attainment for Roma students?

To answer this question, this paper will examine three areas. First, it will look at identity as perceived by members of the Roma community and by non-members. This will help establish the position of Roma in society in each country and the situation in which they find themselves. It will also demonstrate the relationship between Roma communities and non-Roma communities and underline the problems which might arise due to this relationship. Second, a brief overview of European Human Rights framework will be given to contextualise the obligations of both countries and the European jurisprudence. Next, each country will be examined in terms of policies and laws which promote inclusion and their implementation.

This will include a short case study involving relevant schools and projects, as well as the engagement of NGOs with the schools and with Roma pupils. The Czech section will also begin with an examination of the school system; however, this is not relevant in the Scottish context and will therefore be omitted.

It has to be noted that due to the current pandemic it was not possible for the author to establish communication with schools or NGOs or other stakeholders in either country, and this paper is therefore based solely on research. However, in an ideal situation, the case study would be conducted with the participation of stakeholders and especially with the participation of students themselves in order to truthfully reflect their experiences.

1.1 ROMA HISTORY AND IDENTITY IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Throughout the history, the situation of Roma people in the Czech Republic has not been a pleasant one. We can trace historical records back to the 14th Century¹, when their lifestyle was considered to be in opposition with the desired behaviour of the majority. Unfortunately, the situation of the Roma has not been progressing as quickly and with as positive outcomes, as one might have hoped for. They have always been an easy target for negative and discriminatory policies - whether it were discriminatory policies and arbitrary arrests for pauperism, expulsions from the country, or persecution during the Second World War when the Roma were of similar status in society as Jewish Czechs, which resulted in the detention of Roma in concentration camps and the death of many².

After the Second World War, during the Communist regime, Roma communities were subject to forceful assimilation, forced sterilisations of Roma women, and degradation of traditional

¹ DANIEL, B, *Dějiny romů: vybrané kapitoly z dějin romů v západní Evropě, v Českých zemích a na Slovensku*, (Olomouc; Univerzita Palackého, 1994), p. 39.

² Lhotka, P, *The Gypsy Camp at Lety* [online] Holocaust.cz Available at: <https://www.holocaust.cz/en/history/concentration-camps-and-ghettos/the-gypsy-camp-at-lety/> [Accessed 21 Jan 2019].

Roma culture³. Moreover, this is when we can see the consideration of Roma students as second-class children, and their classification into special schools.⁴ This illustrates the long history of discrimination facing Roma students in Czechoslovakia at first, and the Czech Republic now.

After a rocky historical experience of Czech Roma, the current situation has not seen much improvement. From physical attacks, such as the 2009 arsonist attack on a Roma home in which a 3-year-old girl suffered burns on 80% of her body⁵, verbal attacks by prominent politicians and political parties⁶, to constant discrimination in fields of employment, housing, and of course education⁷. As we can see, the minority group suffers constant attacks and discrimination from the majority population, including the government and its agents, media and even popular culture. They are often accused of unwillingness to assimilate – they are not trying hard enough to escape their disadvantaged situation, while simultaneously any success story is dismissed as an outlier and a result of affirmative action-type of help. In this way, Romani people are denied agency, and their discrimination is justified through their alleged passivity. While many other minority groups share this common issue, today, the Roma are one of the main groups experiencing this treatment in post-colonial Europe.⁸ The Czech Republic is most definitely not alone in its discriminatory approach to Romani citizens⁹.

³ Romea.cz, ‘Tady jsou fakta, jak se žilo Romům během komunismu, pane Zemaně! Nucená asimilace, děti ve zvláštních školách, sterilizace romských žen’

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ European Roma Rights Centre, *Attacks against Roma in the Czech Republic: January 2008-July 2012* (2012), Available at: http://www.errc.org/uploads/upload_en/file/attacks-list-in-czech-republic.pdf, p. 23. The European Roma Rights Centre reports at least 47 violent attacks against Roma between 2008 and 2012. The aforementioned case is prominent and well known in the Czech Republic due to the publicity it received. On the other hand, there has been relatively little attention paid to other attacks.

⁶ Anti-Roma rhetoric has been used as a tool to attract voters in many instances. Further, the Czech president Miloš Zeman is known for his anti-Roma opinions.

⁷ Romea.cz, *EU Fundamental Rights Agency: Czech Republic's Roma still have problems accessing education, housing and jobs* (2019), Available at: <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/czech/eu-fundamental-rights-agency-czech-republic-apos-s-roma-still-have-problems-accessing-education-housing-and-jobs> [Accessed 02 May 2020].

⁸ Fekete, L, “Europe against the Roma.” In *Race & Class* Vol 55, no. 3 (January 2014): 60–70.

⁹ 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)

One way we can explain this problem is to look at Czech identity as a whole. The Czech Republic is extremely homogenous. Apart from traditional minorities which include incomers from neighbouring countries, as well as small number of Vietnamese groups who arrived to Czechoslovakia during the Socialist era, the Roma are the only sizeable minority group in the country. However, estimations as to how many Romani people actually live in the country are difficult due to self-assessment¹⁰, but the EU estimates that there are around 240 thousand Roma in the Czech Republic.¹¹ Roma therefore consist less than 3% of the Czech Population. The origins of Czech identity building can be traced to the Czech National Revival during the 18th and 19th Centuries, when literary and cultural personalities of this time initiated the revival of the Czech language, cultural input and national identity as independently Czech. At this time, German language was used as the official language, which led to the Czech language slowly dying. Culturally distinct Czech identity was also being lost to the influence of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Therefore, Czech identity has, from its start, been created as not only distinct, but as defining itself *in opposition to* something else, as having to fight for itself. In this period, Czech identity was also strongly linked with the re-emerging Czech language. On the other hand, Roma population was historically marginalised and shunned, therefore often living in separate communities, using their own language and having a distinct culture. Hence, we can see that the newly formed Czech identity was created to mostly exclude the Roma, leading to further marginalisation and exclusion. As Fatima El-Tayeb puts it: “National identity revolves around the production and institutionalization of a common past. Whether minorities find a place in

¹⁰ During a census people self-assess their origin, however, only a small percentage of Roma actually do so, precisely due to fears of discrimination and accusations of unwillingness to integrate. Another issue is data collection in schools, where the government claims the schools cannot estimate their students’ ethnicity due to discrimination policies and GDPR issues.

¹¹ EURIDYCE, *Czech Republic: Population: Demographic Situation, Languages and Religions* (2019), Available at: https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/population-demographic-situation-languages-and-religions-21_en [Accessed 05 May 2020].

the larger community thus also depends on their relation to its narrative of national origin”.¹²

The Czech majority population can be said to have constructed Roma identity as outsiders in their own country, or as the “unwanted others”¹³, while depriving them of the agency to construct their identity on their own.

The status of the Roma people has recently been improving – at least in legal terms. After the dissolution of Czechoslovakia and the founding of independent Czech Republic, the Roma community was finally acknowledged as an independent ethnic group¹⁴, which provides them with a specific status under Czech Constitution Chapter 3, Articles 24 and 25, which state that members of ethnic minorities have the right of all-round development.¹⁵

1.2 ROMA HISTORY AND IDENTITY IN SCOTLAND

As we can see, the history of the Roma people in the Czech Republic has been spanning across centuries and has overall been rather full of hardship. On the other hand, while the United Kingdom has had more experience with immigration when compared to the Czech Republic due to its history of imperialism and colonization, Roma people have mostly immigrated from former socialist Eastern and Central European countries after their respective independences, but especially after their joining the European Union (the Czech Republic Joined the EU in 2004). The estimated number of Roma living in the UK is around 225,000 to 300,000 people, out of which, according to a 2013 Scottish Government study, only about 4,000 to 5,000 of UK Roma live in Scotland. Most of the Scottish Roma members are concentrated in the Govanhill Area of Glasgow, however, there are communities in other cities.¹⁶

¹² Fatima El-Tayeb, *European Others Queering Ethnicity in Postnational Europe* (Minneapolis; University of Minnesota Press, 2011), p. 4.

¹³ McGarry, A, *Who speaks for Roma? Political Representation of a Transnational Minority Community* (London: Continuum, 2010).

¹⁴ HORVÁTHOVÁ, J. *Základní informace o dějinách a kultuře Romů*, (Praha; MŠMT, 1998), p. 31 – 35.

¹⁵ CHARTER OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS, Chapter 3 (Articles 24, 25), Available at: https://www.usoud.cz/fileadmin/user_upload/ustavni_soud_www/Pravni_uprava/AJ/Listina_English_version.pdf [Accessed 04 April 2020].

¹⁶ Scottish Government: *Mapping the Roma Community in Scotland Final Report* (2013), p. 14.

If in the Czech Republic the Roma can be identified as sort of perpetual immigrants – despite their long history in the country they are not considered full citizens, they do not fully belong into a country where they have lived for centuries; in the United Kingdom, this multifaceted identity becomes even more complex. Their identities in the UK are an intersection of their identities as Roma, as Czechs, as immigrants from Central or Eastern Europe, as well as a multitude of other factors that inform their identity.

Moreover, Roma in the UK are sometimes rather incorrectly grouped together with Irish Travellers or Gypsies¹⁷, including in some governmental policies, while ignoring differences in their situations, origins and lifestyle – the Scottish Government uses the term Gypsy/Traveller for “Roma, Romany Gypsies, Scottish and Irish Travellers – who consider the travelling lifestyle part of their ethnic identity”¹⁸. Does this mean the government assumes all Roma adopted travelling lifestyle, or do they apply these specific policies only to those who have travelling lifestyle? This lack of definition befuddles the distinction between these two cultures and makes it more difficult to focus on policies specifically targeted at British Roma, who more than not are not travelling communities¹⁹. While Scotland has a Gypsy/Traveller policy, there is no such document specifically focusing on Roma, rather in policies the focus is often only on Gypsy/Travellers with Roma being included more as a footnote or an afterthought. Whether this approach is more beneficial to Romani schoolchildren will be discussed in the following chapters, however, we can see that this approach to policy design is

¹⁷ Scottish Government, *Gypsy/Travellers – Policy*, Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/policies/gypsy-travellers/> [Accessed 06 May 2020].

¹⁸ European policy documents state that the term “Roma” is commonly used as an umbrella term encompassing other groups such as Gypsies, Travellers and Sinti, and GRT (Gypsy/Roma/Traveller) is currently the term used in UK policy documents. Levinson, M. (2014) ‘What’s the plan?’ ‘What plan?’ Changing aspirations among Gypsy youngsters, and implications for future cultural identities and group membership. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 36, 1149—1169.

¹⁹ A large proportion of Scottish Roma live in the Govanhill Area of Glasgow which is the main focus of this paper, however, there are also communities in most major cities of Scotland. On the contrary, the travelling lifestyle is associated almost exclusively with domestic Traveller communities. Scottish Government: *Mapping the Roma Community in Scotland Final Report* (2013), p. 14.

very different to that of the Czech Republic, where the Roma are often singled out and considered as a target and beneficiary of inclusive policies, which however, often has the unwanted effect of social exclusion instead as is demonstrated by practice and the reality of the situation in the country.

Therefore, while that is not to say that European Roma immigrants to Scotland do not face difficulties or discrimination in their new home country, the level of othering is different than in the Czech Republic. As Clark suggests, the negative public opinions now associated with Roma in Glasgow area, as well as issues such as poverty, discrimination in access to housing, health or access to work and education, are the same as would have been associated with immigrants from Pakistan, Ireland or Poland in previous generations²⁰, which may suggest these are rather general attitudes towards migrants rather than specific targeting of Roma in particular.

While Roma in Scotland still face a myriad of issues and problems which they had previously faced in their home countries, the historical experience of Scotland would suggest that they are now accepted as another wave of immigrants²¹, rather than as a singled-out group of “non-citizens” as is the reality in the Czech Republic. Moreover, a study conducted on Slovak Roma schoolchildren, suggested that the children felt more strongly to be Slovak, rather than Roma²²: “It is noticeable with a number of the participants that national identity appears to be considered as more significant than ethnic identity”²³. This is not to suggest that their position in Scotland is necessarily better, however, it could mean that their integration might follow a similar path

²⁰ Clark, C, ‘Glasgow’s Ellis Island? The integration and stigmatisation of Govanhill’s Roma population’ in *People, Place and Policy* (2014): 8/1, p. 41.

²¹ Hryniewicz L, Dewaele J-M, ‘EXPLORING THE INTERCULTURAL IDENTITY OF SLOVAKROMA SCHOOLCHILDREN IN THE UK’ in *Russian Journal of Linguistics* 2017 Vol. 21 No. 2, p. 289.

²² Ibid, pp. 297 – 298.

²³ Ibid. p. 292.

as that of previous “waves” of immigration which had been successful, such as that of immigrants from Pakistan or Poland.

1.3 HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMEWORK

The European Convention on Human Rights provides the source of legislation, as both the United Kingdom and the Czech Republic ratified the treaty. Specifically, Article 14 – Prohibition of Discrimination and Article 2 of Protocol 1 – Right to Education are the two main provisions regarding the discrimination in education. The ECHR came into force in the Czech Republic on the 1st of January 1993 (on the day of the establishment of the Czech Republic) and on the 3rd of September 1953 in the UK²⁴.

Article 14 prohibits discrimination on the grounds of “sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status”, which therefore creates an obligation for states and their agents to ensure that all Convention rights are enjoyed by all citizens equally.²⁵ Moreover, states have the positive obligation to correct factual inequalities where such exist for a disadvantaged group – therefore, the Court allows for different treatment of minority groups if they are intended to remedy an inequality. Roma have been found to be such a disadvantaged group, which entitles them to special protection under European Law²⁶.

Article 2 of Protocol 1 protects the right to education and the right of parents to choose the type of education based on their beliefs. However, the Article is silent on many specificities of this

²⁴ Council of Europe, *Chart of signatures and ratifications of Treaty 005 (Status as of 04/06/2020)* [online] Available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/005/signatures> [Accessed 04 June 2020].

²⁵ The article and its application have been criticized for being lackluster. The Court sometimes hesitates to apply it even in cases with clear discrimination, such as in some violence against women cases (*Valiulienė v. Lithuania* Application no. 33234/07 (ECtHR 26/03/2013)). For discussion on Article 14 limitations see O'Connell, R, "Cinderella Comes to the Ball: Art 14 and the Right to Non-Discrimination in the ECHR." In *Legal Studies*, vol. 29, no. 2, 2009, p. 211-229

²⁶ Akoglu, K, S, 'Removing Arbitrary Handicaps: Protecting the Right to Education in *Horváth and Kiss v. Hungary*' in *Boston College International and Comparative Law Review* Volume 37 Issue 3 (2014), p. 10.

right, such as on the quality of education provided by states or, notably, respect for equality in education²⁷. The provision therefore does not in itself protect from different and discriminatory treatment in schools. Instead, cases dealing with discrimination in education need to be read in conjunction with Article 14 which protects rights and freedoms enshrined in the Convention, including the right to education.

In reference to Roma rights and their violation through discrimination in education, there has been a strong jurisprudence by the European Court of Human Rights, most notably in the *D. H. and others case*²⁸, which will be discussed separately, and in the later *Horváth and Kiss v. Hungary case*²⁹ from 2013. In the latter, an important acknowledgement from the Court was the dismissal of the Hungarian government's argument that the reason for differential and discriminatory treatment of Roma children was the poor socio-economic situation of the minority. Instead, the Court states that "the State has specific positive obligations to avoid the perpetuation of past discrimination or discriminative practices disguised in allegedly neutral tests."³⁰ In this, the Court directly refuses the possibility to use socio-economic background as a defence. Further, the Court established a positive obligation where "member states must implement positive measures which assist citizens with difficulties they may encounter in the school curriculum. This may include additional steps in social services to provide equal opportunities in schools."³¹

In the two examined countries this is observed in two very different ways. In the Czech Republic, the state policies see the Roma minority as disadvantaged and are therefore intended to correct this disadvantage on a structural level. On the other hand, Scotland (and the United

²⁷ EQUALITY AND THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION, HUMAN RIGHTS REVIEW 2012, supra note 76, p. 425.

²⁸ CASE OF D.H. AND OTHERS v. THE CZECH REPUBLIC, Application no. 57325/00, (13 November 2007), Available at: <http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-83256>

²⁹ Horváth and Kiss v. Hungary Application no. 11146/11 (ECtHR 29/01/2013)

³⁰ Ibid. para. 116.

³¹ Akoglu, K, S, 'Removing Arbitrary Handicaps: Protecting the Right to Education in Horváth and Kiss v. Hungary' in *Boston College International and Comparative Law Review* Volume 37 Issue 3 (2014), p. 10.

Kingdom in general) lacks this special focus on Roma students and instead focuses on correcting the disadvantages Roma immigrants to the UK are facing on individual level. The next part of this paper will examine these practices.

2. EDUCATION SYSTEMS WITH FOCUS ON INTEGRATION

2.1 EDUCATION SYSTEM IN CZECHIA WITH FOCUS ON ROMA STUDENTS

In the Czech Republic, 9 years of schooling are compulsory – regardless of whether a pupil has repeated any years, they only have to attend school for 9 years altogether (the maximum age for finishing primary school is 17 years). All levels of education which are provided by the state (preschool, primary, secondary and tertiary education) are free of charge, unless the student attends a private school. Primary school is 9 years after which the pupil can go to 4-year secondary school or a vocational training. However, one can also choose to take entrance exams into gymnázium after 5 or 7 years of primary school, which provides more advanced teaching and which in most cases ensures successful path towards university. University education is split into 3 years of bachelor's studies and 2 years of master's studies.³²

However, an aspect of schooling highly relevant to Roma students and their discrimination in the education system, is the existence of so-called special schools. Prior to the *D. H. case*, the Czech system allowed for the existence of schools for children with special needs – a concept which largely is a relic of the socialist educational system. While in theory, it can be seen as positive – a place which provides individual education “to pupils with intellectual, sensory or physical disabilities, pupils with communication difficulties, pupils with autism, pupils

³² Embassy of the Czech Republic in Washington D.C., *Education System in the Czech Republic*, Available at: https://www.mzv.cz/washington/en/culture_events/education/education_system_in_the_czech_republic/index.html [Accessed 02 April 2020].

with complex needs, and pupils with learning and/or behavioural difficulties”³³ they have been misused by discriminatory practices, especially in relation to the rights of education of Roma pupils. The data supplied by the applicants in the *D. H. case* showed that in Ostrava Roma students were 27 times more likely to be placed in special school than non-Roma children.³⁴ This was mainly due to the testing on which such placement was done. The tests used were not adapted for Roma whose background gave them a certain socio-economic disadvantage. During the 1990s the situation was slowly improving for Roma students, however, the number of Roma pupils in special schools was still disproportionate compared to their representation in the population – “the total number of pupils placed in special schools in Ostrava came to 1,360, of whom 762 (56%) were Roma. Conversely, Roma represented only 2.26% of the total of 33,372 primary-school pupils in Ostrava”.³⁵ The state argued that intent of the special school was to take into consideration the applicants’ disadvantages with a view to provide an alternative, but not superior education.³⁶ However, this argument takes a narrow approach to the purpose of education, as it only tries to provide a base level of education for the applicants and Roma students in general, while not recognizing its other values.³⁷ Moreover, the education provided in special schools was more basic and thus of lesser quality.³⁸ As a reaction to the *D. H. case*, the Czech government has since abolished these schools. However, despite the adoption of inclusion policies and laws, special schools have

³³ European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, *Country information for Czech Republic - Systems of support and specialist provision* (2020), Available at: <https://www.european-agency.org/country-information/czech-republic/systems-of-support-and-specialist-provision> [Accessed 04 April 2020].

³⁴ CASE OF D.H. AND OTHERS v. THE CZECH REPUBLIC, Application no. 57325/00, (13 November 2007), Available at: <http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-83256>, para 18.

³⁵ Ibid, para. 18.

³⁶ Ibid, para. 157.

³⁷ Such as the UNESCO four pillars: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be.

³⁸ CASE OF D.H. AND OTHERS v. THE CZECH REPUBLIC, Application no. 57325/00, (13 November 2007), Available at: <http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-83256> [Accessed 04 April 2020], para. 207.

been partially replaced by “practical schools” and by the creation of segregated Roma-majority schools or classrooms.

Practical schools under the new education systems parents of students who have been deemed to have light mental disability can now decide whether they want to place them into a mainstream school where they would be using assistance, into a mainstream school in which a special class for children with light mental disabilities exists, or into a school for pupils with light mental disability (practical school). Former special schools also had the option to choose which type of education they will provide.³⁹ This system then allows for the existence of segregated classrooms under regular primary schools under the educational law para 16 article 9, however, according to the Ministry of Education this constitutes “social integration”.⁴⁰ While the parents can decide which type their child will attend, it might be decided by the authorities to transfer the pupil into a practical school based on his needs, with the consent of the parent. However, this poses risks, as the same principle functioned under the pre-D. H. system and the consent of parents was often not informed. Further, the possibility of creation of special classes in mainstream schools instead of providing additional support for the student creates the issue of segregation. As O’Nions states: “Separate schooling for Roma pupils usually means lower educational standards and a reduced curriculum, which in turn reinforces the view that Roma pupils are educationally inferior,”⁴¹ thus only deepening the discrimination of Roma.

This has now largely become the main problem in integration of Roma students in the Czech Republic. While there is an issue with data collection and analysis as the Czech Republic either does not collect ethnicity-based data or relies on self-assessment in which Roma often choose

³⁹ Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, *PRAKTICKÉ A SPECIÁLNÍ ŠKOLY*, p.1.

⁴⁰ Ibid, Article 3 (b), p. 2 .

⁴¹ O’Nions, H, ‘Different and unequal: the educational segregation of Roma pupils in Europe’ in *Intercultural Education*, vol 21 issue 1, p. 3.

to not identify as such, the Czech School Inspection revealed that in 2015 the percentage of Roma students assessed as having light mental disability and therefore either requiring assistance or being taught in separate classes was 32.4 % out of the total number of pupils.⁴² Further, a process of homogenization of schools is now becoming more common as Roma students are being taught in mainstream schools with specific support. This phenomenon, often called “white flight”, was first examined by J. Coleman in 1966 in the US desegregation context and describes a process in which white parents transfer their children from schools attended by minority students. After the amendment of the education law the same process became more common in the Czech Republic, as Kašparová and Souralová describe – this often leads to funding issues and budget cuts, leaving of teachers and decrease in teaching quality.⁴³ According to the Segregation Analysis by the Ministry of Education from 2019, there are 12 primary schools attended exclusively by Roma pupils and 80 schools in which they constitute 50% of pupils.⁴⁴ Budgeted issues pose another problem for Roma students attending mainstream schools, as they constitute the main reason given by schools for why they are not providing Roma pupils with the specific support they need – nearly 53% of schools stated that they are not providing any support at all, despite having to do so by law.⁴⁵

2.1.1 NEW LAWS AND POLICIES IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE ECHR

Czech education system and its standards are enshrined in the Education Law of 2004 (školský zákon, valid in the 2019 updated version), which in its first article states that education in the country is based on “ a) equal access of every citizen of the Czech Republic or another member state of the EU to education without discrimination based on race, skin colour...ethnic or social

⁴² ČŠI, *Tematická zpráva: Žáci vzdělávání podle RVP ZV –přílohy upravující vzdělávání žáků s LMP* (Praha: ČŠI, 2015), p. 6.

⁴³ Kašparová, I. a Souralová, A, ‘„Od lokální k cikánské škole“: homogenizace školní třídy a měnící se role učitele’ in *Orbis scholae* vol 1 (2010), pp. 79–96.

⁴⁴ Úřad vlády České republiky, *Analýza segregace v základních školách z pohledu sociálního vyloučení* (Úřad vlády České republiky Odbor pro sociální začleňování; Praha, 2019), p. 34

⁴⁵ ČŠI, *Tematická zpráva: Žáci vzdělávání podle RVP ZV –přílohy upravující vzdělávání žáků s LMP* (Praha: ČŠI, 2015), p. 8.

background..., b) taking into account the educational needs of each individual”⁴⁶ Further, the law mentions respect for human rights and respect for ethnic, religious, cultural and language identity of each individual⁴⁷. This respect for human rights and equality is emphasised by its position in the law – it precludes all practical articles and should therefore inform how education is conducted in the Czech Republic.

Yet, as the Ministry admits in the Strategy for Education Policy of the Czech Republic until 2020: “One feature typical of the Czech education system and, at the same time, one of its chronic problems is the persisting and even deepening educational inequality among children and young people”⁴⁸. The Strategy suggests that while Czech education system has been moving forward, it is still creating an unequal opportunities for students based on their socio-economic background, where pupils from privileged families have much more opportunities to leave basic schools and study at advanced six and eight-year gymnáziums, at the expense of poorer students who are prevented from receiving better quality of education due to their lack of supportive environment⁴⁹. However, the Strategy fails to mention the segregation of students into “practical” schools, as well as segregation into Roma-majority classes or schools and instead suggests that separating children into more advanced programmes is the main issue.

The aim of the policy is for all students to “achieve at least a basic level of knowledge and skills”⁵⁰. However, while this is a pragmatic goal, it might also lead to lack of effort from schools, teachers and authorities as they might feel satisfied when children achieve this level and not feel obliged to continue with development. The Strategy does contain an outline of

⁴⁶ Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, ZÁKON ze dne 24. září 2004 o předškolním, základním, středním, vyšším odborném a jiném vzdělávání (školský zákon), Article 1 (a, b). Translation by the author.

⁴⁷ Ibid, Article 2 (c, e).

⁴⁸ Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Strategy for Education Policy of the Czech Republic until 2020, Available at: http://www.vzdelavani2020.cz/images_obsah/dokumenty/strategy_web_en.pdf [Accessed 04 April 2020], p. 13.

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 16.

⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 13.

measures that should be implemented, however, these focus more on improving secondary vocation education and connections with the labour market, rather than on concrete steps institutions should take to improve the quality of basic education. Further, the focus of the policy is more on schools and streamlining the progress of a pupil from basic to further education, which while being an integral part of improvement of education, does not take into consideration the conditions of the students themselves. While the policy does admit that education alone cannot make up for problems children might be experiencing in education due to their family backgrounds⁵¹, it does not propose any changes towards a holistic approach to wellbeing of the children.

A more focused approach to inclusion in education is presented in the Inclusive Education Action Plan 2016-2018⁵², which outlines necessary steps which the system must take to reform itself in order to promote inclusivity and address issues of segregation and exclusion of children with various backgrounds or disabilities. It is a well-developed strategy that focuses on change on multiple levels, from legislation⁵³ to support of schools, headteachers and teachers, therefore offering a multi-level reform into inclusive education. However, the action plan does not consider the possible help from NGOs, apart from the case of at-risk children with behavioural problems who might otherwise be at risk of being taken from their families and placed into institutional care. In this situation there is an assumed cooperation between educational, healthcare, social care institutions and NGOs, thus creating a multi-agency coordinated

⁵¹ Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Strategy for Education Policy of the Czech Republic until 2020, Available at: http://www.vzdelavani2020.cz/images_obsah/dokumenty/strategy_web_en.pdf [Accessed 04 April 2020], p. 14.

⁵² Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, *AKČNÍ PLÁN INKLUZIVNÍHO VZDĚLÁVÁNÍ NA OBDOBÍ 2016 - 2018*, Available at: http://www.vzdelavani2020.cz/images_obsah/dokumenty/apiv_2016_2018.pdf [Accessed 04 April 2020].

⁵³ This mainly concerns the introduction of amendment to the Education Law which requires inclusion of children with special education needs, formerly classified as children with physical disabilities or socially disadvantaged.

response⁵⁴. Yet, this approach is completely absent from working with disadvantaged children, including Roma children.

On the other hand, the policy prioritizes an individual approach to children's extra needs in cases of pupils with disabilities or social disadvantages. This includes recommendations from either the school or educational advisory institution, which should produce an individual educational plan for children who need such accommodations⁵⁵. One of the goals proposed in the policy is to create systemic conditions for the function of school counsellors⁵⁶. However, in practice and also as proposed in the Action Plan, this is also supplemented by outsourcing this position to separate institutions called pedagogical-psychological counselling centres or special pedagogical centres, while in schools the function is usually performed by an educational consultant, sometimes as an extra responsibility on top of their teaching duties. Counselling centres are however not readily available in many locations, in Ostrava there exists only one such institution and in general such agencies exist mainly in larger cities or towns.

A large portion of the Action Plan is concerned with inclusive education in municipalities in which socially secluded areas exist. This process includes a wide range of actors – municipalities, headteachers, teachers, but also parents and the public, NGOs and counselling services, as well as other actors if it is deemed appropriate. This plan is intended to take into consideration the individual needs of socially disadvantaged students and should produce blueprints for similar programmes in other areas as well (one such programme will be examined in a following chapter). This approach is very valuable, as it does include multiple actors and focuses on pressing issues of municipalities with socially segregated areas, such as

⁵⁴ Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, *AKČNÍ PLÁN INKLUZIVNÍHO VZDĚLÁVÁNÍ NA OBDOBÍ 2016 - 2018*, Available at: http://www.vzdelavani2020.cz/images_obsah/dokumenty/apiv_2016_2018.pdf [Accessed 04 April 2020], para 1.8.

⁵⁵ Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, *AKČNÍ PLÁN INKLUZIVNÍHO VZDĚLÁVÁNÍ NA OBDOBÍ 2016 - 2018*, Available at: http://www.vzdelavani2020.cz/images_obsah/dokumenty/apiv_2016_2018.pdf [Accessed 04 April 2020], para A1.

⁵⁶ Ibid, para 4.4

segregated classrooms or parents transferring their children from integrated schools. However, there are no specific steps to improve these phenomena.

Overall, this Action Plan addresses some important issues and sets out good strategies to tackle them. The main success has been the introduction of inclusive education legislation in 2017. However, a clear shortcoming of the policy is the absence of fully integrated and more individualised approach to services for every child, especially when compared to Scotland.

2.1.2 APPROACH OF SCHOOLS AND TO INTEGRATION/SEGREGATION

While the Czech Republic has the necessary policies and legislation to implement a sound integration strategy, there seems to be little progress in terms of improving the education of Roma students and their integration into mainstream education. The Action Plan often refers to various programmes and steps to implement the integration strategy. One such initiative is the “Development of equal access to education in the city of Ostrava III”. The aim of this project is to improve the quality and accessibility of education for primary school pupils from socially excluded areas of the city, mostly therefore targeting Roma pupils.⁵⁷ There is very little official documentation on the results of the previous project (Development of equal access to education in the city of Ostrava II), however, under the project there have been set up counselling services with social and special educationalists and school psychologists, school inclusion coordinator and a school assistant. Further, there are workshops and meetings organised under the flagship of the project, including meetings with NGOs.

Overall, 25 schools from Ostrava are participating in the current project. Under the previous project there had been created positions for 31 school psychologists, 23 special educationalists, 17 social educationalists and 12 assistants across 28 schools, as well as workshops in which

⁵⁷ talentOVA, *Rozvoj rovného přístupu ke vzdělávání* (2019) [online] Available at: <https://talentova.cz/projekty-mesta/rozvoj-rovneho-pristupu-ke-vzdelavani/> [Accessed 01 June 2020].

over 700 teachers took part.⁵⁸ To see how these have been implemented, we can examine two schools from Ostrava which took part in the project. One of the schools, Gebauerova 8, have merged with a former special school, Ibsenova, but now operates under the regular educational framework. It has also been mentioned in the D. H. data provided by applicants as to have nearly 30% of Roma pupils in 1998.⁵⁹ Further, the Roma students consisted of 94.11% of all students at the former special school.⁶⁰ The school is located near a socially excluded area of Ostrava and while current data based on ethnicity of the students is not available, it can be assumed that a large number of students is of Roma background and has the risk of being ethnically segregated.

According to the last available report from the Czech School Inspection, there have been 69 pupils with specific educational needs and 61 pupils have individual educational plans – out of 352 pupils altogether⁶¹. The inspection showed that the school struggles with high absence rates, which however, paradoxically, helps with calmer conduct in classes where teachers can work in smaller groups and pay more attention to individual students. School assistants are an especially valuable asset, as they not only help the students who require their assistance by law, but all students in the class.⁶² However, the school struggles with motivating older pupils and the student body consistently exhibits poor educational achievements, which the Inspection agency attributes to family background of the pupils.⁶³

⁵⁸ Rozvoj rovného přístupu ke vzdělávání, *STOVKY PEDAGOGŮ POMOHLÝ TISÍCŮM ŽÁKŮ OHROŽENÝCH ŠKOLNÍM NEÚSPĚCHEM* (2019) [online] Available at: <https://socialnizaclenovani.ostrava.cz/stovky-pedagogu-pomohly-tisicum-zaku-ohrozenych-skolnim-neuspechem/> [Accessed 01 June 2020].

⁵⁹ ECHR, Application (18 April 2000), p. 14.

⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 13.

⁶¹ Česká školní inspekce, *INSPEKČNÍ ZPRÁVA Čj. ČŠIT-1081/19-T* (2019), p. 2.

⁶² Ibid, p. 3.

⁶³ Ibid, p. 3.

The other school which took part in the project was the Ostrčilova 10 bilingual basic school, which according to the D. H. application data had 0% of Roma students in 1999.⁶⁴ Once again, current data is not available, however, the school is located in the centre of the city and is not near an excluded area. Out of 735 pupils, 40 have specific educational needs and school counsellor and special educationalist, who assist these students. In comparison to the Gebauerova basic school, children in Ostrčilova school achieve excellent results.⁶⁵

Both of these schools took part in both versions of the project and both have received assistants, educationalists and psychologists, however, we still see a rather large difference in performance. Despite missing current data it can be deduced that the main difference and the cause of underperformance of the Gebauerova school is the fact that the school is in a socially excluded area and is attended mainly by Roma students, making it a segregated school. While the project aims to help such schools it might be impossible to do so in the current situation, and thus the Ostrčilova basic school will have paradoxically benefited by the programme more than the school which is actually attended by socially disadvantaged students.

2.2 EDUCATION SYSTEM IN SCOTLAND WITH FOCUS OF ROMA STUDENTS

2.2.1 LAWS AND POLICIES REGARDING INTEGRATION/SEGREGATION

The 2016 Education (Scotland) Act supplements the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 and adds provisions highly relevant for the situation of Scottish Roma. The 2016 Act takes makes provision for consideration of socio-economic conditions of students and their effect on education, and establishes additional support measures intended to overcome them.

Section 3A of the 2016 Act addresses poorer education outcomes as a result of socio-economic disadvantages. When making a strategic decisions, the authorities must design them in a way

⁶⁴ ECHR, Application (18 April 2000), p. 14.

⁶⁵ Česká školní inspekce, *INSPEKČNÍ ZPRÁVA Čj. ČŠIT-2018/17-T* (2017).

that reduces inequalities of outcome for socio-economically disadvantaged pupils and in doing so must consult (as it sees appropriate) headteachers, parents and students affected, as well as voluntary organisations (NGOs and charities).⁶⁶

Further, the Standards Act 2000 requires that the majority of children be taught in mainstream schools. The act sets out 3 exceptions to the rule – a child may be taught in a special school if schooling in mainstream institution: “(a) would not be suited to the ability or aptitude of the child; (b) would be incompatible with the provision of efficient education for the children with whom the child would be educated; or (c) would result in unreasonable public expenditure being incurred which would not ordinarily be incurred, and it *shall be presumed that those circumstances arise only exceptionally*” (emphasis added).⁶⁷

Therefore, these two pieces of legislation set out a standard which schools and authorities are supposed to follow – most children are to be educated in mainstream institutions and the authorities, as well as schools need to be aware of socio-economic obstacles children might be facing in achieving equal results with their peers. Further, authorities should work on improving the situation and consult those who are affected by it, alongside experts. While socio-economic conditions might lead to poorer results in school, they are not a reason for segregation or exclusion, but a condition that the authorities are set to improve on. This is further elaborated in the Child Poverty Strategy for Scotland (2010), which establishes targets for poverty alleviation. However, this policy predates the Austerity measures introduced UK-wide in 2011, which not only slashed school budgets, but also negatively affected poverty

⁶⁶ The Education (Scotland) Act of 2016, Part I (1) Section 3A (2), Section 3B, Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2016/8/contents/enacted> [Accessed 03 April 2020].

⁶⁷ Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000, Article 15, Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2000/6/contents> [Accessed 03 April 2020].

levels as Social Policy Association reports.⁶⁸ New targets for 2030 were established in the Child Poverty (Scotland) Bill 2017.⁶⁹

An interesting policy addition is the Getting it Right for Every Child policy which is directly based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as Article 2 of Protocol 1 of the ECHR. The policy takes a holistic approach to children's wellbeing⁷⁰. This is not specifically related to education, however, two indicators – whether a child is Achieving and Nurtured – are directly relevant. This approach is both individual (through establishment of a specific person to which parents and children can turn to) and holistic, in that it does not concentrate on one factor of a child's life – such as their being of a Roma origin, immigrant, or from a specific socio-economic background (which are factored into the “Included” indicator) – and amplify it. Instead, in total 8 factors are examined, thus ensuring a wholesome assessment of the situation. The policy has been legislated through the Children and Young People's Act 2014 and is intended to provide each child with a plan which integrates multiple agencies including the school, healthcare and social care agencies. The importance of a specific person in schools to which students and parents can turn to for counsel, and who would then be in good position to assess the situation and contact necessary agencies is extremely valuable and is in stark contrast to Czech inclusion policy which counts on external counselling centres which are rather sparse, or on the function of a school educational counsellor who is often a teacher with only extended responsibilities.

This non-exhaustive analysis of legislation and policy drivers which ensure that children are treated equally, and their backgrounds and situations are not an obstacle which eliminates them

⁶⁸ Social Policy Association, *Austerity adversely targets children in need* (2018), [online] Available at: <http://www.social-policy.org.uk/50-for-50/austerity-children/> [Accessed 01 June 2020].

⁶⁹ Child Poverty (Scotland) Bill 2017, Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2017/6/contents/enacted> [Accessed 01 June 2020].

⁷⁰ Getting in Right for Every Child, *Understanding Wellbeing* (2018).

from mainstream education. Instead, through the GIRFEC policy the state tries to assess each case individually and consider a wide range of factors which might prevent a child from doing well in school setting. Special schools are an exception and are intended mainly for sensory or physically impaired children, rather than socially disadvantaged children who might be underperforming due to their backgrounds.

2.2.2 APPROACH OF SCHOOLS AND NGOS TO INTEGRATION/SEGREGATION

The situation of Roma in Glasgow is quite different from that of Czech students. Because most of the arriving Roma (including from Slovakia, Romania, the Czech Republic etc.) settle in Govanhill area, where most children attend a handful of schools, one of which will be examined further. Govanhill, in itself a very diverse and multi-ethnic area, is a constituency of the Scottish First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, who is aware of the issues Roma immigrants are facing and is working on improving them.⁷¹ Further, there is a strong sense of community which manifests through the various community and non-profit organisations which help with improving the quality of life and interpersonal relations between the Roma and non-Roma population in the area. The Glasgow City Council is also deeply interested in the wellbeing of the Govanhill population and helps the community as well.⁷²

While the Scottish Roma undoubtedly experience racism and discrimination⁷³, there is a steady and strong effort to improve their situation, as well as the relationship between them and non-Roma Glaswegians. The main organisation that is active in the area is Romano Lav (Roma Voice), which organises a multitude of events which help bring Roma culture closer to Scottish people, and ensure the representation of Roma voices in local social and political domains. The

⁷¹ Clark, C, 'Glasgow's Ellis Island? The integration and stigmatisation of Govanhill's Roma population' in *People, Place and Policy* (2014): 8/1, pp. 44-45

⁷² Ibid. p. 45

⁷³ BBC, *Holocaust rose tree destroyed by vandals in Glasgow* [online] Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-50335198> [Accessed 26 May 2020].

Space Glasgow, another non-profit organisation which works as a community centre for the Roma community, has recently helped a group of Roma women gain language certificates. Therefore, it is clear that there is a strong push from within the community to be accepted and integrated.

When CEE Roma arrive, they usually choose Annette Street Primary School in Govanhill, which is almost exclusively attended by children who have English as their second language, most of whom are Roma immigrants from Slovakia or Romania – over 80% of the school population. In the Czech context, this would make it a segregated school, therefore bringing issues of funding and quality of teaching. However, the school, is committed to follow the Scottish education curriculum and provide the children with the same standard of education as the non-Roma population.

This is done through small classes which build trust between the children and teachers, extra English language classes and varied activities in which the children engage.⁷⁴ The positive value of learning English is especially noticeable as it has an extensive effect on the relationship with the pupil's family and the community in general. Due to the limited language skills of the adults, it is often the child who acts as an unofficial translator and thus makes engagement with the child's parents easier, which then helps develop the child's skills and engagement in school.⁷⁵ A very positive attitude of teachers is noted in the inspection report which praises the school's relationship with the parents.⁷⁶ Due to this positive approach the school has been able to perform successfully and attain satisfactory to good levels of literacy, numerical skills and

⁷⁴ Education Scotland, *Summarised inspection findings: Annette Street Primary School* (2019) [online] Available at: <https://education.gov.scot/media/hgthgnj4/annettestreetpssif210519.pdf> [Accessed 25 April 2020], p. 15.

⁷⁵ Ofsted, *Overcoming barriers: ensuring that Roma children are fully engaged and achieving in education December 2014; No. 140195* (2014), p. 10.

⁷⁶ Education Scotland, *Summarised inspection findings: Annette Street Primary School* (2019) [online] Available at: <https://education.gov.scot/media/hgthgnj4/annettestreetpssif210519.pdf> [Accessed 25 April 2020], p. 6.

other skills, despite the children having English as a second language and often not experiencing formal education in their home countries.⁷⁷ This has led to the children winning a First Minister's Reading Challenge Award.⁷⁸ A great deal of attention is placed on the children's wellbeing and children are supported by assistants when needed. The school cooperates with Romano Lav⁷⁹ and other organisations in order to engage children in activities which respect and celebrate their culture and backgrounds.

3. CONCLUSION

This paper presents two very different situations in which Roma children find themselves. While in the Czech Republic Roma people face discrimination and through their long history of being on the margins of society they are regarded as deserving of this reality. Roma children find themselves receiving substandard education even after the ECHR judgement either through attending segregated schools or regular schools where they are often segregated into separate classrooms. On the other hand, the Scottish example showed that while the school should be considered segregated due to its high percentage of Roma students, the quality of education is not suffering – despite added problems with language and culture barriers. In the light of the analysis presented in this paper we can conclude why that is.

First, the history of the community is very different in both countries. The longer history of Roma in the Czech Republic led to more deeply engrained negative perceptions of the Roma and their position in society, longer persecution and simultaneously longer discrimination in education. On the other hand, Scotland saw the largest number of Roma immigrants after 2004

⁷⁷ Education Scotland, *Summarised inspection findings: Annette Street Primary School* (2019) [online] Available at: <https://education.gov.scot/media/hgthgnj4/annettestreetpssif210519.pdf> [Accessed 25 April 2020], pp. 10 – 14.

⁷⁸ English, P, 'Children in one of Scotland's most-deprived neighbourhoods celebrate after winning national reading award' in *The Sunday Post* (2018) [online] Available at: <https://www.sundaypost.com/fp/children-in-one-of-scotlands-most-deprived-neighbourhoods-celebrate-after-winning-national-reading-award/> [Accessed 06 June 2020].

⁷⁹ As per the school's twitter account: <https://twitter.com/annettestreetps?lang=cs> [Accessed 25 April 2020].

and while they still face discrimination, the society as a whole and especially the state have not been built on their discrimination. This is linked with Roma identity in both countries as well, but also with how their identity is perceived by others. The Czech Republic only allows Roma people to be defined by their ethnicity and socio-economic background. However, in Scotland they are perceived more as immigrants, rather than Roma specifically, as the negative connotations linked to one being of Roma origin are not as strong here.

Second, state policies and practices are, when taken by their face value, rather similar. They aim to establish systems that help children from socio-economically disadvantaged background to achieve a good level of education. However, in the Czech Republic, this is often not enforced. From the pre-D. H. segregation into special schools to the current school segregation, the structural racism engrained in the government and in all levels of society prevents even well-developed policies from being successful. Roma people are discriminated against not only in education, but when accessing the job market, trying to rent a home or in healthcare. This speaks about deep institutional and structural problem which needs to be addressed if the standard of education for Roma children is to be systemically improved. In contrast to the Czech Republic, while it would be naïve to assume that they are flawless in their implementation, do seem to be more successful than their Czech counterparts. They take the wellbeing of a student into the forefront, acknowledge that various socio-economic backgrounds might pose an obstacle in achieving good results – but it is never seen as a reason to offer an education of a lower standard.

The last point of divergence is the approach of schools and parents. As it has been reported, parents tend to transfer their children to different schools to bypass inclusion, or to avoid this

process schools segregate Roma students in separate classes.⁸⁰ There seems to be little will to solve this problem. Further, while NGOs do work with Roma pupils to improve their performance in schools, funding remains the main issue for lack of assistance to Roma pupils who require it. The approach of the one examined Scottish school is then very different. The high percentage of Roma pupils is seen not as an obstacle, but a challenge on which the school is willing to work hard through cooperation with NGOs, prioritising inclusive education and through their engagement with the parents.

This paper is by no means an exhaustive analysis. There are, of course, many more factors which influence Roma education attainment and inclusion. However, there is something to be learned from the Scottish approach. The key is in treating Roma students not exclusively as Roma, but as children who do not deserve to be defined by deeply engrained ethnic stereotypes. The practical part of this paper will offer a short list of recommendations based on the Scottish approach.

⁸⁰ Mačí, J, 'Vzdělání rodiče často obchází inkluzi. Přehlašují děti na jiné školy, upozorňuje analýza' in *Seznam Zprávy* (2019) Available at: <https://www.seznamzpravy.cz/clanek/vzdelani-rodice-casto-obchazeji-inkluzi-prehlasuji-deti-na-jine-skoly-upozornuje-analyza-82730> [Accessed 03 June 2020].

4. ANNEX

Capstone Practical Component

Advocacy Project – Recommendations for Improving the Integration of Roma Students

The outcome of the ideal policy change would not be only increased integration of Roma students, but also an improvement in many other factors which prevent Roma students from attaining good education – lowering in absences, improving student's engagement and improving the position of Roma population in society through education. However, despite these recommendations, the ideal change would be a reform of the Czech education system which is currently heavily based on selectivity and encourages non-Roma parents to transfer their children into better-funded schools, thus bypassing inclusive policies.

1. Increase integration in schools through better implementation of inclusive policies

Target audience: The Ministry of Education, regions and communalities which run schools, headteachers

Issue: Despite legal changes schools remain segregated and schools find ways to avoid the implementation of inclusive policies

Steps: The authorities running the schools need to conduct inspections to monitor the state of inclusivity in schools. Segregated classrooms cannot be tolerated, as this completely disregards the goals of social inclusion. As it can be initially difficult to adapt to new teaching environment, the State needs to provide teachers with better training in inclusive practices. Regions and authorities responsible for the functioning of schools need to provide funding for more school counsellors, psychologists and special educationalists and establish the position of a contact person to whom children can turn for help.

2. Promote overall wellbeing of students

Target audience: Schools, teachers, policy makers

Issue: Roma students are often seen primarily through the ethnic lens and any problems they might be exhibiting ascribed to their background

Steps: The Scottish policy *Getting it Right for Every Child* is a wonderful example of how a holistic approach should work in education. Due to the heavy focus on their ethnic or socio-economic background, Roma students might not reach help they actually need. What is needed is an individualistic and holistic assessment of each child in order to understand their situation and the obstacles they might be facing. This would then necessitate a multi-agency response through education, social, healthcare and other services and would be initiated by the contact person in each school.

3. Systemic support of schools and their cooperation with NGOs

Target audience: Ministry of Education, regions, cities, schools

Issue: Low funding is stated to be the biggest obstacle in providing support to Roma students⁸¹

Steps: Schools in the Czech Republic are dealing with funding issues, however, Scottish schools are struggling with the same problem, while remaining their standard of education and inclusion. In 2019 the Scottish government announced that it would be spending £15 million specifically on 1000 teaching assistants for children who have additional support needs. The Czech government needs to take its commitment to inclusion seriously and invest in support for disadvantaged children as well. Further, Czech schools need to deepen their cooperation with community organisations and NGOs in order to provide additional support, but also to introduce varied cultural experiences for their students. In Glasgow, the community organisations not only help Roma students with educational needs, but they celebrate their community and heritage

⁸¹ Česká Školní Inspekce, *Tematická zpráva: Žáci vzdělávání podle RVP ZV - přílohy upravující vzdělávání žáků s LMP*. (Praha: ČŠI, 2015), p. 7.

– something that is missing from Czech curricula. This would in turn deepen the effect of inclusion and foster more open and diverse society.

4. Improve parental engagement

Target audience: Primarily schools, NGOs

Issue: Schools often complain of high absences of Roma students and low engagement from their families

Steps: Schools in the UK in general, including Annette Street Primary, often consider parental engagement to be crucial in helping students achieve good results. However, they do not expect them to automatically take interest in actively communicating with the school. Their strategy often includes informal meetings, cultural and social events, common breakfasts or clubs. Thus, they are able to establish trust between the teachers and the parents, a factor that is also helped by the function of the student as an informal translator. While this is rarely applicable in the Czech context, a deeper level of trust is a key element in improving the standing of students in their schools. This approach would also deepen social inclusion through for example exposure of non-Roma students to different cultures and traditions.

This short set of recommendations is targeted at various levels of the school system, from the state and policy makers, to teachers. This is especially important, as a systemic change cannot come from merely one source – the engagement of civil society and individuals is just as required as the setting of policies.

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