I CHOOSE EDUCATION

Interview:
Mirko Pusara

Successful Roma:
Sava Aleksandrovic
INTRODUCTION

Dear readers,

Happy anniversary of our monthly magazine! We wish it to be more interesting, more read and purposeful!

We would like to point out one exceptionally important fact about our monthly magazine: for several months we have been the only magazine on the territory of the entire Republic of Serbia which deals with the problems of Roma only – we inform our readers of the problems of Roma, their culture and history in Roma, Serbian and English and we are trying to show and prove that the Roma are as equally valuable as any other nation and thus deserve the same opportunity to be educated, employed and given health care. However…

When we say – the only magazine…

We cannot say that we are proud of it…

We have a great responsibility for being the only one. Our greatest wish is to help individuals, organizations and institutions to solve certain Roma issues in their environment, according to the model we offer them, but also we wish to contribute to the elimination of prejudices which non-Roma have against Roma population. We wish to motivate Roma, with the positive example of their countrymen, to try hard, make progress and start thinking – If he/she can do it, so can I.

The criticisms we received so far have been only oral and mainly positive. We want to believe that that was not done only out of politeness.

We believe that in the last year, in the period of our existence, we got to know each other and that we can already ask each other everything. Also, we are ready to hear you, the reason of our existence, and to adjust to your taste and to consider your opinion.

We wish to communicate with you, which is why we are introducing an innovation: all your comments for our monthly magazine, positive and negative criticism, recommendations related to the topics you would (not) like to see in our and your magazine, all of which you can send on our e-mail address: redakcija.sugestije@gmail.com and contribute to the quality of our magazine “Decade of Roma in AP Vojvodina”.

We want to hear your opinion and to justify your trust…

The Team
EDUCATION OF ROMA — BETWEEN STRATEGY AND PRACTICE

Since the beginning of the Decade of Roma, education has been one of the priority areas. Problems of education of Roma have become part of state politics; the Roma issue has entered strategic documents related to education, as well as general and sector strategies and action plans concerned with the development of Serbia and its joining EU. However, discrepancy between their goals and implementation in practice is visible and indisputable. Various obstacles whose solutions have not been approached adequately are identified. In Serbia, as in most other countries, there is a lack of reliable data about Roma in the system of education. Even though seven years have passed since the beginning of the Decade of Roma, a systemic methodology of monitoring of achieved results in all areas of the Decade, including education, has not been established.

Obstacles and problems

There are numerous problems and obstacles that Roma children face and which complicate and restrict most Roma children’s education. Some of them are: limited access to educational system, high rate of low school attendance and early school leaving, lower quality of education, too big an inclusion in specialized schools or classes, too big an inclusion in schools for education of adults, exposure to different forms of hidden or open discrimination and segregation, disrespect for Roma identity.

Poor school grades are most common in the Roma population. This later becomes one of the primary reasons of poverty which is transferred from one generation to another. According to data from the 2002 Census, 61.9% Roma did not finish elementary school, 29% finished elementary school, 7.8% finished high school, and only 0.3% acquired higher education. It is assumed that the educational structure is even lower in comparison with the majority population and other communities, and women’s lower education is even more emphasized (World Bank, 2004). Roma women represent a group of women with the lowest education, whose percentage of illiteracy is about 80% and whose upper educational limit is four grades of elementary school, without any qualifications.

Lack of relevant and reliable data about the national membership is a problem which is emphasized in most strategic documents and reports. It is difficult to assess how many Roma children are never enrolled on school and how many of them leave school, but it is certain, based on data from different sources, that that number is extremely high. Reasons for non-inclusion in school or late leaving of school are numerous and various and include family and financial situation, inability to adapt to educational institutions and a high level of discrimination in them, as well as a lack of help for children in learning. Exclusion from the educational system is only one of indicators of general marginalization of the Roma community.

Discrimination

Results of a research of public opinion about discrimination and inequality in Serbia show that the discrimination against Roma is present in Serbia and that the public is aware of that (project “Support for the Conduction of Anti-discriminatory Law and Mediation in Serbia”, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and UNDP, 2009). The Strategy for the promotion of education of Roma in Serbia states that discrimination is one of main obstacles for an equal availability of high-quality education for Roma. Roma are exposed to different forms of discrimination, such as unjustified referring of Roma to specialized schools, unequal treatment by some teachers and school managements, even harassment and maltreatment by other children and parents of non-Roma nationality. These are some of the visible and obvious examples of discrimination against Roma students; however, there are those which are not so open, but which are more common. Teachers often do not encourage Roma children to study and make progress; they have lower expectations from them in comparison with other students, all of which affect their poorer
This month’s topic: I choose education

results. Discrimination against Roma is certainly one of main reasons why Roma children are excluded from the educational system and why many of them leave school so early or finish school with low grades.

Why do Roma children leave school?

The main reason of Roma children’s leaving school is poverty and school expenses, then misconduct of other children and teachers, as well as the fact that they do not speak Serbian. The majority of them do not want to go to school and believe that even if they finish school they will not get a job. There are those who live far away from school. In addition, one of the most frequent reasons is the lack of decent clothes, which affects a very poor self-confidence they have at school. As far as Roma girls are concerned, in most cases they do not have the right to independently decide on their education. Although they achieve better grades, they are often forced to leave school in puberty due to patriarchal traditions and stereotypes, according to which girls do not need education, especially not higher education. They are expected to get married early and take care of their families and households.

Social distance towards Roma children

Results of a research “Social Distance and Stereotypes towards Roma in Novi Sad Elementary Schools”, conducted within a project “Integration of Roma Children in the School System of Serbia”, show that the greatest social distance at children’s age still exist towards Roma ethnic group. More than half of children-subjects would not want to have Roma in their street or school, and they especially would not like to sit with them at their school desks. That is connected with Roma children’s low grades, as well as with stereotypes according to which Roma are dirty and bad-mannered.

The most alarming information is that the social distance towards Roma exists even among the Roma themselves. This information says a lot about the status of Roma in our country. It can be explained with the fact that persons from minority groups develop lower self-esteem when meeting the majority group. Additionally, they can leave their primary group and thus lose one of their social identities and go into another group that provides them with a better social status. A large number of Roma children declare their ethnic nationality based on their parent’s non-Roma nationality.

The research concludes that only equal contact of all participants in education with Roma children will enable a decrease of the social distance. In a specific situation, such as a school class, it is more easily to overcome prejudices, of course, with great efforts of all those who can contribute to the solution of this problem. Class teachers are one of powerful agents of socialization, besides parents.

D.J.
This month’s topic: I choose education

SEPTEMBER FEVER

Economic crisis and the period of transition affect the organization of economic system, life standard, as well as the social status of the citizens of Serbia. In that situation, the majority of parents fight a bitter battle in order to provide their children with uninterrupted education.

This September 73,000 first-graders will start school. Both parents and children are nervous because of the school start. Even though the school start is a cheerful event for the entire family, the majority of parents are a bit worried, because they are aware of all expenses that await them. In addition to the purchase of school equipment, the majority of people think that that special moment requires head-to-toe new clothes for a future first-grader.

It is a great relief that the Government provided free textbooks for first-graders. Parents will have to give an entire salary to buy other things for school.

The school bag is the first and the most important thing. The prices range from 1500 to 10,000 dinars, depending on whether or not it is an anatomically shaped bag. Psychologists believe that the school bag/backpack should be medium-sized, because children fill their bags with different things, as long as there is any space left, frightened that they will forget something.

Pencil cases can be bought empty or full, so the price depends on their content. Empty pencil cases cost between 500 and 1500 dinars. Equipped pencil cases cost between 500 and even 2000 dinars. The price depends on famous characters on them, as well as on the quality and number of pencils, crayons and felt-tip pens.

First-graders also need notebooks. 10 notebooks cost between 260 and 800 dinars, paper for drawing about 70 dinars, but there are also other necessities, such as erasers, crayons, felt-tip pens... Physical Education requires equipment – shorts, t-shirt, sneakers, all of which cost between 5000 and 20,000 dinars. As far as new clothes and shoes are concerned, it is best to wait the end of August, because most shops offer season discount.

It is easy to spend one salary on all that, if you have one. Unfortunately, more and more people are becoming unemployed. On the other hand, what about parents who have more than one student to send to school this September? The question is: who is going to have more problems this September – the first-graders, who are about to start their journey with books, or parents, who are about to start their journey with credits and debt? It seems that all of them are going to have an equally difficult time.

D.J.
This month’s topic: I choose education

STUDENT’S WORD

September is the month of new beginnings. We talked about school beginnings with Sandra Kovac, who started pre-school, Milica Kovac and Sabit Itaj, who started the first grade and Zeljana Kovac, their friend from another class.

Milica Kovac, 6 years old, 1. grade

School – the best thing in her life

“I remember my first day at school. We were singing all day and the teacher was calling out our names to check if we were all present. I have two teachers, Snezana and one who teaches us English which I really like to study!

Every day at the beginning of class we sing, to become active and awake. Then we take out our books and start studying. My favorite subject is Music because we sing a lot. I also love Serbian, because we learn letters, both block letters and cursive writing. I sit with Milan and Stefan at the school desk. Milan is my cousin. I have a brother Nikola, but he still does not go to school. And Stefan is my friend. My best friend is Vanja. She helps me with my homework, when it’s difficult or when I don’t know how to do it. My favorite time is recess, because we eat or drink juice and sometimes we play. Now we have a school snack which is made by Mr. Laza. He makes really nice cakes; we’ve just had some for snack.

It was strange for me to hear the school bell ringing at the beginning and end of classes. I had never heard it before. When the school bell rings, it means that we go outside on recess to Mr. Laza for snack.

I got ready for school by having my mom buy me pencils, crayons and notebooks and I also got them at school. I got notebooks without any lines or squares and those with lines and those with squares.

I feel good at school; my best time in life is when I am at school and in the library.”

Sabit Itaj, 7 years old, 1. grade

First school days – excitement and strangeness

“I was feeling excited and I was looking at the teacher. I was standing in front of the door and waiting to come in and sit down. As soon as I sat, I immediately started to study.

As for school, I love to do homework, write and read and my favorite subject is Serbian.

I also love to play with Aleksa. He is my best friend and we sit together at the school desk. I love going to school and I love my teacher most of all. She teaches us letters and numbers and how to draw children who play with a ball.

When the school bell rings it is recess and we all come out to play and eat, and when the school bell rings again, we all come in.

The teacher does not let us go to the toilet to drink water during class, and that’s why I carry a bottle of water. When I am thirsty I drink water but I don’t want the teacher to see me, because if she sees me, she scorns me and yells at me.

When I started school, the board was so strange to me. I had never seen such a big board. Some children did not know
what it was. When I asked the teacher what it was, she told that it was the board used for writing with chalk. She asked me to come to the board and write on it, and then she wrote. It was also strange to me when we had PE. The boys played football and the girls played volleyball. We were separated and before we always played together.

I prepared for school by studying letters at my aunt’s and in the library. Even now, after school, I do homework during the extended stay. When I finish my homework, I go to the library straightaway.”

Zeljana Kovac, 8 years old, 2. grade

She missed her patient teacher Dina

“The first day in the second grade was very exciting for me. I couldn’t wait to see my teacher Dina, because I was really looking forward to seeing her. That’s why I was really happy when September came. The teacher Dina was very good to me and has a lot of patience to teach me everything. That’s why I love going to school. My favorite subject is Art. We draw what the teacher tells us or make something out of plastcine or glue something with collage paper. Still, I have to say that I love to read and write, so Serbian is one of my favorite subjects. And I love most when the teacher tells me to do something and I do it good, and then she praises in front of the whole class!

I sit with Ivana and Tamara and they are my best friends. We always help each other when it’s necessary, with Serbian or Math.

Even though I haven’t had school snack and have been hungry a few times, I really like going to school. Today I have started getting school snack and now during recess I eat my snack like my friends and I am very happy for that. I got books and some school equipment from the school and I am grateful for that, because they are really useful. Every day we study from those books, so I don’t know how I would study if they hadn’t given them to me.

I learned a lot of things and I can’t wait to learn many other things that are waiting for me in the second grade!”

Sandra Kovac, 6 years old, pre-school

After the little school to the big school

“I love going to kindergarten, which is also called little school. It is like a small school and when I finish it, I will go to the big school, like my sister Zeljana. My pre-school teacher’s name is Bilja. She is very good and I love her very much. In the kindergarten I play with a baby and a baby buggy and blocks. And sometimes we study and paint. Then we have lunch and go to sleep. I love sleeping at kindergarten and I never cry like other children.

My best friend’s name is Tina. She had a birthday recently and she brought to the kindergarten a Hello Kitty cake, glasses and juice to celebrate. We sang her a song Happy Birthday to You and she was happy.”

Marija Spasojević
The Roma Decade in AP Vojvodina

Project “Improving Employment of Roma in AP Vojvodina” was started by the Roma Inclusion Office in cooperation with the secretariat during the last year. The value of this program was intended to be 237,795 euro and its duration two years. The project’s main objective, for which the EU allocated 208,794 euro, is the improvement of the social-economic position of members of the Roma national community in Vojvodina, i.e. creation of new possibilities for employment of this national community, by increasing their qualifications in sectors of production and provision of services. The project is being realized in 20 municipalities in Vojvodina: Novi Knezevac, Kikinda, Sombor, Apatin, Kula, Becej, Senta, Zitiste, Odzaci, Srbobran, Zabalj, Zrenjanin, Novi Sad, Beocin, Indija, Ruma, Pecinci, Pancevo, Kovic and Bela Crkva. It is emphasized that the project offers trainings in skills necessary for professions in deficit for 100 Roma, as well as trainings for a well-known employer. It also includes projects of self-employment of Roma. In the first year of business, entrepreneurs will have free accounting, computer equipment, company’s logo, seal and business cards, as well as help and support of their business mentors.

Provincial secretary Miroslav Vasin said that that was a continuation of a practice which encourages Roma in the best way possible, i.e. by offering new jobs and opening a po-

Milica Nikolic, owner of a hair salon “MN Stile”, is signing the contract
The Roma Decade in AP Vojvodina

possibility of founding companies and getting education, as well as solving cases of bad housing conditions of persons in Roma national community. Vasin said that the Roma are the most vulnerable community whose problems can be solved step by step.

“We are proud to hear that the Roma, their representatives from the Roma Inclusion Office and Roma National Council emphasize that the position of Roma in Vojvodina and the attempt to help it are more successful here than in the rest of Serbia”, Vasin said and added that he was also proud during his last-year visit to Brussels, when EU invited them to present Vojvodina model for solving Roma problems, which was assessed as a potential model for solving this problem in the entire Europe.

While talking about the significance of these projects for the Roma population, director of the Roma Inclusion Office Dusko Jovanovic reminded us that in the last five years four open competitions for self-employment of Roma enabled the founding of over 70 companies.

“My venture is extremely important, because you show that Roma, just like other citizens of Serbia, have a lot of potential, capacity and courage to accept their obligations and responsibility, knowing what obligations an entrepreneur has”, Jovanovic said and promised full logistic support to all who participate in this unique project, not only in Serbia, but also in Europe.

Director Jovanovic thinks that this should be a good example which state institutions should adopt as a model for solving problems of the Roma national community.

D.J.

**Companies founded:**

Marijana 021, workshop for production of new and restoration of old instruments; entrepreneur Stevan Zlatarev from Curug.

Gradjevina MS Ilic, construction of residential and non-residential objects; entrepreneur Sladjana Ilic from Odzaci.

Bata Zelenilo DOO, organization and maintenance of green areas; founders Djulbehara and Sacip Karamani.

Deki 025, collection of secondary raw materials; entrepreneur Dejan Petrovic.

Giga Junior, masonry; entrepreneur Jovica Novakov Banatsko Novo Selo.

Pedja i sin, fish shop; entrepreneur Branko Mijatov from Curug.

MN Stille, hair salon; entrepreneur Milica Nikolic from Novi Sad.

Sever otpad, collection of secondary raw materials; entrepreneur Rodzer Radivojevic from Srpski Krstur.

Diavolo 021, café – pancake shop; entrepreneur Sabina Jovanovic from Novi Sad.

Pale stop, pest control and exterminator; entrepreneur Zoran Soralov from Curug.
Mirko Pusara is the newly elected president of the municipality of Bac. As our interviewee, he presented to us its municipality and not such a favorable situation the municipality is facing. In addition, we learned about the priority plans, among which a special attention is paid to the creation and implementation of a strategy for help for Roma population, whose progress, in our interviewee’s opinion, is not possible without joint forces of the state, provincial and local institutions on one side and Roma on the other. One of the most responsible roles of the newly elected president is to restore the trust of the Roma in the municipal administration, considering that it has been lost by frequent political manipulations.

*Present to us your municipality.*

The municipality of Bac is located in the southwest of Backa. It incorporates six settlements: Bac, Backo Novo Selo, Plavna, Vajska, Bodjani and Selenca. The municipality of Bac is next to the border. Its west border is the river Danube, 43 km in length. It is mostly an agricultural municipality. Members of twenty-two nationalities live on its territory. Each one of them nourishes its tradition and customs and that makes our municipality rich. The economy of the municipality of Bac is unfortunately destroyed, primarily by bad privatization. About 3,500 people lost their jobs.

*Considering that you have been working on this position since June, 18th of this year, what plans are you going to realize first?*

Our municipality is currently the most undeveloped municipality in the Province. During last year, we made less than 300,000,000 of profit. The municipality of Titel, which also belongs to undeveloped municipalities, made 320,000,000, while, for example, Backa Palanka made 1,780,000,000. When you have such a big amount, then it is easy to find the means to start something yourselves. Here we do not really have enough room for that.

The municipality also has a lot of debts. Considering that we are also the new municipal authority, we are trying to make a good strategy which could help us go through this not so easy period with as little pain as possible.

It is a complete paradox that a municipality such as ours, with a good position which is close to the border with the Republic of Croatia, has such a bad economic status. We are negotiating with the state authorities about the stimulating funds that could help us in the realization of our plans.

Moreover, we formed a team which will be in charge of monitoring and applying for open competitions on republican, provincial and international levels. Taking into account that we are a municipality on the border, projects of cross-border cooperation will bring us significant funds.

As far as the plans are concerned, it is necessary to do the systematization and reorganization of the municipal administration as soon as possible.

*What position do Roma have in your municipality?*

The majority of Roma in our municipality belong to the category of unemployed population. Unemployment is one of the main causes of poverty. However, it is clear that education has an important role here, because it is on a very low level as far as the Roma population is concerned.

As for the Roma population, we actively work on raising
awareness about the protection of environment. In the previous period, Roma, especially those from Vajska, made serious problems. They would burn the garbage during night. All that created dissatisfaction of other citizens, since it largely polluted the air and thus affected the quality of life.

Of course, not all Roma are problematic. I must say that we have examples of really successful Roma families on our territory.

*What is your municipality’s strategy when it comes to helping Roma population?*

The working contract of a person who has so far worked as a coordinator for Roma issues has expired. At the moment the budget is being revised, which is the topic for the next meeting. We hope that in the next month we will hire a person who will be in charge of the problems of Roma and Romanian population, considering that the number of these persons, in addition to members of Slovak nationality, is the largest on the territory of our municipality. That working position will be filled by Nada Petrovic, since she is the most educated candidate. She will become our employee and will be given a full-time job. Another plus is that she is from our town and there will be no need to pay travel expenses.

My idea is that our municipality should, together with republican and provincial organs, provide funds which will be used for the opening of a secondary raw material processing company for Roma from our municipality. As a municipality we will provide the land for this company. Moreover, we will satisfy the infrastructural needs. The company would consist of a recycling center which would deal with several types of raw materials. Within the company, they could open a treasury in which they could collect money that would be invested in the business, but also in the improvement of the living conditions in their settlements.

That would enable them to legalize their work, because the majority of them work illegally. Besides, that would connect them. That will be useful for both the state and the municipality. We cannot only ask for things and whine. Let’s work and make something for a change. That is my idea and wish.

Furthermore, Roma in Vajska need a road and a sewer network.

On the other hand, we have a problem with Roma, because they do not obey the rule of throwing garbage in places intended for that. Of course there are good reasons for that, because a large number of Roma do not have any vehicle that would enable them to transport the garbage to the landfill. We hope that we will succeed in educating them about how important it is to follow these rules and that we will find a solution that will be acceptable for both sides.

We will certainly continue to monitor and help socially vulnerable families, which mostly belong to the Roma population. However, in the previous period it happened that all these forms of help were misused. I think that hiring a person in charge of Roma and Romanians will prevent these things from happening again.

The thing that I said to all people who work in social and health services is that they must treat everyone equally, with full attention and understanding and that they must not make any difference between people. If anything like that happens, they will receive a harsh punishment. It simply must not happen.

We will make sure that the percentage of persons of Roma nationality who will be hired in new companies is proportional to the number of Roma residents in our municipality.

*What message do you have for Roma?*

I know a really large number of Roma. Many of them are my old friends. Among them there are those who are very successful businessmen, hard-working, honest and capable. My message to Roma is to try to be like those people. I am sure that the majority of them know such a person. It is clear that education is one of the main prerequisites for a better and brighter future.

It is clear that Roma cannot make it alone and that they need support on local, provincial and republican levels. I will try, as much as I can, to understand their needs and help them solve their problems. I am willing. Communicating with them, I learned that they were often used in political purposes, which created certain distrust. However, I hope and I will really work on restoring their trust in the municipal administration. Of course, we will seek the help of both Province and Republic, when our possibilities are exhausted. It is clear that we can only succeed and survive with joint forces.

Dragana Dimitrov
Aleksandar Stojkov is a pedagogical assistant in the Elementary School “Fejes Klara” in Kikinda. We saw a great dissatisfaction in him through conversation with him, caused by a bad relationship of teachers, pedagogue and school principal to children, primarily of Roma nationality, who are often unable to successfully follow classes. In this conversation we learned that, since the beginning or more precisely, introduction of Roma assistants in schools, there have been problems in the school where he works, because they did not want to open the competition and hire a Roma assistant in their school.

* Ministry of Education paid great attention to pedagogical assistants. You are one of the assistants who received trainings and expanded their knowledge, in order to have bigger chances to “pass” the open competition which was about to become public?

- We went to seminars and worked as we were supposed to – without salary and under pressure, until the school received a letter from the Ministry of Education saying that pedagogical assistants are to enter the educational system and that a working position of a pedagogical assistant is to be systematized. When the schools were supposed to do their share of work, it came to a halt, because some schools did not open the competition, even though they had to. Teachers who had worked with Roma children that needed special support were hired and I did not understand why. According to the report of a counselor Angelina Skarep in the Ministry of Education, the competition was opened much later. After that, numerous problems occurred and teaching staff was rejected.

* Are there many students who need help in studying?

- I don’t know how many children need support in school, because when I want to find out, the school principal, pedagogue and certain teachers tell me that it is all individualized and I am familiar with the fact that there are some children who were unable to write and read from the first grade and now they are in the second grade and come to see me in special classes. So I am wondering what method or form of class was organized for those children, what class activities and how long this individualization lasts. Pedagogical profile, i.e. activities for an individualized work, was not created for many Roma children.

* Are there many students who need help in studying?

* Explain to us what individualization represents.

- Individual educational plan is actually a document which determines the work with a student in a certain period. If we are talking about a first-grade student who needs additional support, then four individualized educational plans for one school year, one for each quarter, are created...
for him/her and two educational plans, one for each semester, are made for all other children. In a nutshell, that includes all methods, techniques, forms of work, and measures of support for that child, all of which are applied during one school year with the goal to maximally engage the child in activities and use all his potentials in order to make progress.

* Are you trying to say that teachers did not fulfill their obligations?
- I want to say that there is no such individualization of class, or at least that I did not participate in planning and working with teaching staff. I copy tasks myself and I prepare for classes myself. I often do not know what I must do with a certain child because his/her pedagogical profile, according to which I work, is not created.

* In your opinion, when do the teachers show the greatest lack of interest?
- Certain teachers forget to send students to my class and some do not give them tasks that the students should do with me. I often have to work by heart or waste my time trying to find out child’s week points… There is more, but I dare not say it, because I don’t want to have problems later…

* Do you at least have parents’ support? Are you satisfied with your cooperation with them?
- The situation is not great, but the progress is visible. More parents come to school and are interested in work and want cooperation; they ask questions about their children’s education…

* Even though many important pre-requisites for a high-quality work are lacking, did you manage to make progress when it comes to children’s knowledge?
- Of course. Progress can be seen in lower-grade children’s reading; the number of children who enroll on pre-school and school is higher; more students enrolled on the first grade; fourth-grade students are more successful; more students do their homework, more students attend additional classes and much more, which is my main motivator and stops me from quitting.

Dragana Dimitrov

Students of Aleksandar Stojkov

Aleksandar Stojkov visiting students’ parents
CHANCE OF EDUCATION ON MOTHER TONGUE

In school year 1995/96 the Ministry of Education introduced for the first time elective subject – the Roma language with elements of national culture. The classes first started in Tovarisevo and Obrovac in the municipality of Backa Palanka, then in Deronje in the municipality of Odzaci. Nowadays, this subject has the status of an optional subject.

The start of the new school year was marked by a reintroduction of this school subject on the territory of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina. One of the conditions for Roma language teachers was the attendance at a seminar organized by Matica Romska, the Vojvodina Society for Language, Literature and Culture of Roma and the Association of Roma Teachers of Vojvodina, in cooperation with the Roma Inclusion Office of AP Vojvodina. After the finished seminar, the attendees receive a certificate, which is necessary for their employment.

This year the seminar was held on the 6th of September in the Assembly of AP Vojvodina. It included ten attendees. At the beginning Petar Nikolic, president of Matica Romska and Dusko Jovanovic, director of the Roma Inclusion Office of AP Vojvodina addressed the attendees.

The seminar consisted of two parts. The first part included introducing the attendees with this subject, its curriculum and necessary preparatory methods and legal parts. The first part of the training was held by Romeo Mihajlovic from the Roma Inclusion Office.

The second part of the training was held by Ranko Rajko Jovanovic, president of the Association of Roma Teachers of Vojvodina and one of the initiators of the introduction and starting of this subject, and Maja Jovanovic, pedagogical assistant and teacher of Roma language with elements of national culture in the Elementary School “Vuk Karadzic” in Deronje in the municipality of Odzaci.

Great experience with pre-school students

Popov Nada from Novo Milosevo is the oldest attendee. She graduated from the Higher Technical School of Textile in Zrenjanin. She had great experience in work with pre-school students and believes that this is only a way to improve that experience. Her advantage is that she personally knows the majority of Roma children from Novi Becej, where she would teach the Roma language with elements of national culture,
which is certainly going to make her job easier at the beginning.

**Help for fellow countrymen**

The youngest attendee was Suzana Nikolić from Temerin. Suzana has not yet finished high school, so she will not be able to start working in this round. She says that she applied for seminar because she would like to work as a teacher of Roma language with elements of national culture after she graduates, in order to help her countrymen overcome certain obstacles in education, which is the only way to better lives of Roma people. Thus, she would like to continue her education after high school.

**Additional classes for Roma children**

Amela Demiri from Beocin is currently a sophomore of the Faculty of Law at the University of Novi Sad. She is an activist of the Association of Roma from Beocin. So far she has had experience in working with Roma children. She held additional classes for them from different subjects. Considering that their cooperation was good and that it brought good results, as a teacher of Roma language with elements of national culture she will be able to continue that cooperation in the right way, to strengthen it and raise it to the institutional level.

“The only problem in my case is that only thirty students chose to study the Roma language, while the statistics shows that the number of Roma children is even three times bigger. I hope that that will change and that I will manage to arouse interest of more Roma children in this subject, which has multiple roles: it encourages the strengthening of Roma identity, affirmation of Roma tradition and it facilitates the process of educational integration of Roma.”

**Non-Roma learn the Roma language**

Zivka Fan enrolled on the Faculty of Law at the University of Novi Sad this year. She works as a pedagogical assistant in Elementary School “Djura Jaksic” in Curug. Twenty students opted for Roma language with elements of national culture, including students of non-Roma population, which is a particular joy for her.

“I know how much my presence as a pedagogical assistant helped Roma children. Introduction of this subject is another step in the process of integration of Roma. I am happy to be a part of it.”

The introduction of this optional subject provides Roma with the opportunity to get institutional education on their mother tongue. Thus, one of the Preconditions for the inclusion of Roma in all spheres of social life is fulfilled.

*Dragana Dimitrov*
REWARDS FOR 7 BEST SCHOLARS

Seven high school graduates of Roma nationality had excellent grades at the end of school year 2011/12. Their education was largely facilitated by mentors’ and financial support provided by the project “Inclusion of Children of Roma Nationality in High Schools in AP Vojvodina” whose leader is the Provincial Government. These students were presented with rewards – laptops, which were given to them in the middle of September.

Happy students came with their proud parents to the headquarters of the Government of Vojvodina to be presented with their rewards. Project manager Prof. Dr. Jeges Zoltan and president of the Council for Integration of Roma presented the best graduates and scholars of a project whose leader is the Provincial Government with computers.

Other parties who attended the ceremony were representatives of the donor Open Society Fund from Belgrade and Roma Education Fund from Budapest, as well as the principal of the College in Vrsac, which includes Roma language preschool teacher major.

Professor Dr. Jeges Zoltan congratulated the rewarded students and emphasized that the project of scholarships was not a social program, but an educational one and that their successful grades proved that a good direction had been chosen. “This project had a considerable influence not just on Roma population, but on the entire educational system in Vojvodina. Promise me that we will meet again when you all finish faculties. With this laptop you will take the responsibility that, when you finish faculty and become independent, you will take care of yourself and your community. The only thing no one can take away from you in life is knowledge”, he asked the students to remember this fact.

President of the Council for Integration of Roma in AP Vojvodina Petar Nikolic first addressed parents of the rewarded students: “You know that we are the poorest of poorest. No one can choose their parents and that is why you have the biggest responsibility. I congratulate you and your children on your excellent success but I do not wish them to stop here. I want them to become students of the University of Novi Sad and to successfully finish their studies.”

Leader of the project “Inclusion of Children of Roma Nationality in High Schools in AP Vojvodina” is the Government of AP Vojvodina, i.e. Provincial Secretariat for Education, Administration and National Communities. The project is financially supported by the Open Society Fund from Belgrade and Roma Education Fund from Budapest. It has been realized only in Vojvodina for the last six years, although there are indications that it will be expanded to entire Serbia next year.

So far, the project has included more than 800 students. Through this project direct users (students) are provided with scholarships and mentors’ support, but also various activities, such as educational-recreational camp for best female students, English language course, excursions etc.
Jadranka Stojanovic spoke on behalf of the Open Society Fund and emphasized the fact that there was only one boy among the students rewarded, which she recognized as a result of a fight for gender equality which is present in Vojvodina.

“I am very happy to celebrate your success; you are the best example of what we do. You achieved great success with your work and we only helped you a bit. I think that your success will contribute to the breaking of prejudices about Roma who do not wish to study and who cannot achieve good grades. What you accomplished is something that all communities should look up to. You deserve admiration of your friends, parents, professors, all of us. You certainly have clear goals and dreams and I wish that you will fulfill them.”

Representative of the Roma Education Fund from Budapest Natasa Kocic Rakocevic was satisfied with the fact that the program of scholarships included more and more students each round and that the number of excellent students was rising. She directed future university students to “Romaversitas Serbia” (a program which helps students) and mentioned that the Fund from Budapest also provided scholarships for university students.

“When I called and informed them that the Council of the project decided to reward the best students who received scholarships with laptops, students and their parents or guardians could not believe it. It was a great surprise for them. They could not wait to come to the ceremony. They called me every day and asked when they would get their rewards. It did not bother me. I also enjoyed their happiness and did everything I could to schedule the ceremony as soon as possible”, director of the project Dragana Dimitrov said.

Students rewarded:
1. Renata Novakov, Technical School “23 Maj”, Pancevo
2. Jasmina Drmaku, High School “Svetozar Miletic”, Novi Sad
3. Dejana Bluzanski, Vocational High School “Dr Radivoj Uvalic”, Backa Palanka
6. Anastasija Kis Juhas, High School of Medicine, Senta
7. Mile Stojkov, Technical School, Kikinda

Students who received scholarships were proud of their success and very excited, but it seemed as though they were not aware of their success. They still do not know that their results are the success of the entire nation.

One of the students rewarded, Jasmina Drmaku from Beocin, said: “I least expected a laptop. This reward means a lot to me, because it shows that someone monitored and appreciated our efforts and work. I enrolled on the Faculty of Economy in Novi Sad (finances, banking and insurance) and I hope that, with a lot of work, I will manage to finish everything on time and defend my MA thesis in four years. After all that, I know that it’s ambitious, but I see myself in the World Bank.”

Redaction of the magazine “Decade of Roma in AP Vojvodina” would also like to congratulate all scholars and wish them success in further education.

Dragana Dimitrov
The public’s attention has been captured by a project “I Can and So Can You”, which is realized by Matija Romška in cooperation with the Roma Inclusion Office of the Government of AP Vojvodina and the Public Broadcasting Service of Vojvodina, and financially supported by the City of Novi Sad.

The project was designed with the goal to develop a safety culture, tolerance and decrease of discrimination and violence between Roma and non-Roma population. The target group in this project was the young adults aged 15-30 of Roma and non-Roma population from Novi Sad. The results have shown that the young people assessed the state of safety as satisfactory, although various forms of violence (family, peer), discrimination and intolerance are present.

The research incorporated one hundred of Roma and non-Roma students from the University of Novi Sad, who gave answers about the situation in the society and the relation of the young people of other nationalities and Roma population and vice versa. The subjects mostly responded that they felt safe, but that they did have certain fears. Young Roma were mostly uncertain about their future, while the majority of subjects said that they were victims of discrimination at least once. They also expressed their dissatisfaction with the attention that was paid to the topic of discrimination and safety in the society. Based on this research, a series of documentaries is planned, where every episode will show one personal story of a successful young Roma who managed to fight for themselves and become successful despite poverty.

The Roma Inclusion Office provides logistic and cadre support for the project. Director of the Office Dusko Jovanovic said that these projects serve to turn not just the public’s attention, but also attention of domestic and international institutions to problems which occur in our country. He also said that, in addition to education, upbringing must have a great significance in our school and educational system.

“We must teach young people to be honest and useful citizens of this society. If we manage to do that, then we can say that we are creating a healthy society with an atmosphere in which young people will have a future”, Jovanovic said and expressed hope that projects like this one will contribute to that.

Project’s coordinator Dragana Dimitrov said that the project team consisted of young, educated Roma and non-Roma, so the project’s primary objective was starting to be achieved in its initial phases. “By broadcasting this series, we wish to help non-Roma population to meet educated and successful Roma. Our goal is for Roma to send message to their peers, a message which will say: I Can and So Can You.”

Dragana Dimitrov
ANOTHER SUCCESSFULLY PASSED EXAM

Within the project “Improving Employment of Roma in AP Vojvodina” 150 persons of Roma nationality are being trained. The main objective of this project is the promotion of social-economic position of members of Roma national community in Vojvodina. Project’s specific objective is to create possibilities for the employment of Roma population in AP Vojvodina by increasing their qualifications in the sector of production and service provision. On the thirteenth of September in premises of the University “Bozidar Adzija” in Novi Sad, attendees of the training for hairdressers and manicurists and pedicurists successfully passed their final examination which will bring them a certificate and chance for employment.

The trainings lasted for two months. They were organized as weekly four-hour lectures, which included connecting theoretical and practical parts. The training for hairdressers was held by Sanja Tasic; the training for manicurists by Dusanka Visnjic and for pedicurists by Dragana Pilic. Five persons attended the training for hairdressers, three persons attended the training for both manicurists and pedicurists and two persons attended the training for manicurists only.

Ready to learn and change themselves

According to the lecturers, all attendees were interested in trainings. They regularly attended classes and were hard-working and diligent. The cooperation was excellent. The lecturers agreed that no employer would make a mistake if he or she hired any of the attendees, because they would get an excellent worker with a lot of knowledge and skills and what is the most important – an employee who is ready to learn, accept criticism and better himself/herself.

What do attendees say?

We waited for the attendees after they successfully passed their final examination, in order to discuss with them their impressions.

Snezana Dimic finished the course for manicurists and pedicurists.

“I applied for this training because that was always interesting for me and it offers great possibilities of employment, even for starting your own business. The certificate that we will soon receive is recognized even abroad, which means that...”
A new round of trainings within the project “Improving Employment of Roma in AP Vojvodina” was started after the signing of a contract on trainings for hairdressers and electricians in the Reception Hall of the municipality of Pecinci. Thirteen persons of Roma nationality applied for the training for hairdressers, while seven Roma applied for the trainings for electricians. Representatives of the municipal management, the Roma Inclusion Office and the National University “Bozidar Adzija” were present during the contract signing.

Trainings will be realized on the territory of this Municipality and they will include 60 theoretical and 240 practical classes. Theoretical classes will be held by accredited lecturers hired by “Bozidar Adzija”, while practice will be organized in cooperation with factories and hair salons on the municipality’s territory.

Project of great significance for the local self-government

Representatives of the municipal management wished the attendees luck in finding job, which will lead them to a far better world. According to them, this project is very significant for the local self-government, because it increases the number of qualified work force, which can find its place in work.
Employment

Unique opportunity

Director Dusko Jovanovic presented the project “Improving Employment of Roma in AP Vojvodina”, which includes the trainings of persons of Roma nationality for professions which are in deficit, in order to employ the attendees as soon as possible.

“What makes me especially joyful is that I can see here a large number of women among

you, since Roma women are doubly discriminated against, by being women and being Roma. Trend that the whole world is following is that women must have their role and place in the development of communities. Within this project we also nourished that trend.”

Jovanovic added that all attendees have to come regularly to trainings and accept this unique chance in a responsible way in order to master the necessary knowledge and skills.

“You get the opportunity, a privilege to attend, for free, trainings which are not cheap at all, while members of other nationalities have to pay for them. You also get reimbursement for travel expenses. Thus, you get the chance to provide for your family and since our goal is to create conditions for the education of Roma children and youth, when you find job and stop being users of social welfare, your children will no longer receive free textbooks and free school snacks. The state’s interest is to change social welfare users to persons who are ready and able to provide for themselves – that is the bottom line.”

For a successful race on the job market

Natasa Ilic Milovac addressed the audience on behalf of the National University “Bozidar Adzija”, whose task is to organize trainings in this project and which has a long tradition when it comes to the education of adults.

“Education is a key element of the development of every community. Education is important if people want to be ready to enter the race on the job market. These trainings are your opportunity for that. We hope that you will take this seriously and responsibly and use this opportunity in the best way possible.”

Dragana Dimitrov

Compensation for what is lost

Slobodanka Berbic did not finish high school and that is something she regrets. This training will provide qualifications that will enable her to find job, which was questionable before, considering that she only finished elementary school. She learned about the project from the president of the association Roma from Pecinci, Ivan Jovanovic.

Slobodanka Berbic signing the contract for hairdresser training

Jelena Jovanovic attends the first year of High School of Trade. She always wished to become a hairdresser, but there is no school for this profession in Pecinci. This project enabled her to fulfill her wish. Besides her, her sister Marijana Jovanovic applied for the training because she would like to open a hair salon with her sister in the future.
The Roma Decade in AP Vojvodina

**ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF ROMA**

*Project of the Roma Resource Center of Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization (EHO RRC) “Social Inclusion and Improvement of Housing Conditions of Roma in AP Vojvodina, the Republic of Serbia” is based on EHO RRC’s fifteen-year experience of working with vulnerable groups. The project is realized in cooperation with the municipality of Ruma and the Roma Inclusion Office of AP Vojvodina, the Republic of Serbia. This project is conducted in four municipalities in AP Vojvodina, one of them being the municipality of Ruma, which includes the village Donji Petrovci.*

In order to solve problems in Roma settlements in AP Vojvodina, EHO RRS developed a unique model of work with members of the Roma national community – “Sustainable Reform of Roma Settlements”. This model consists in a comprehensive approach to solving the existing problems and participatory methods of work, which include the participation of all interested parties in the decision-making process.

The settlement’s reform is managed by inhabitants who have professional experience. The settlement’s inhabitants are in charge of the whole process of settlement’s reform, i.e. construction of bathrooms: inhabitants carry out the construction themselves or directly pay the masons and other professionals. They receive help in that process from professionals (technical support), who are mostly Roma with work experience, and from our associates.

In the last five years EHO RRC constructed 234 cesspits and 310 bathrooms, conducted a project of house adaptation in 11 objects and built 2 small houses from used building materials, together with the Roma from the settlement of Banglades in Novi Sad, Ciganski Kraj in Djurdjevo, the Roma from Curug, Backo Gradiste and Becej. Housing conditions for 420 families in 354 houses were improved by this project.

In cooperation with Roma and other socially vulnerable population in Donji Petrovci in the municipality of Ruma, EHO RRC is going to construct cesspits and bathrooms for 26 most...
vulnerable families until the end of 2012. So far 26 families have been supported in this settlement. 22 bathrooms and 1 small family house (core house) will be constructed and housing conditions in three houses will be improved.

The construction is in the final phase at the moment, i.e. sanitary equipment is being installed in bathrooms. In addition, low-voltage network for project participants who do not have regular electricity supply is also being installed. Installation of water network in the settlement has been finished. Thus, the local self-government fulfilled its part of obligations taken at the beginning of the project’s realization.

In addition to project activities whose goal is to improve housing conditions, EHO RRC organized working with children and the young in the area of education. At the beginning of September children in Donji Petrovci were given vouchers for the procurement of school equipment.

Residents of the settlement will get the possibility of regulating their legally guaranteed rights through organized house visits of EHO RRC lawyers. Moreover, the settlement’s residents participate in a program of vocational training, employment and self-employment – they attend three-month vocational courses.

EOH RRC allocated 63 770.00 € (approximately 7 million dinars) for the realization of this project in the municipality of Ruma.

All EHO RRC activities are in accordance with the National action plan for housing (part of the strategy for the improvement of the position of Roma in the Republic of Serbia). At the moment, EHO RRC is the only association in Serbia which is successfully conducting projects for the improvement of the housing conditions of Roma in Serbia.

Partnership with local and provincial institutions

The municipality of Ruma allocated funds from the budget totaling 49 500.00 € (approximately 5.8 million dinars) invested in infrastructure projects – paving of two streets, additional construction of water network and construction of a low-voltage electric network and electric meters.

The Roma Inclusion Office of the Government of AP Vojvodina has continually given technical support during the project’s realization and it was an active partner on the project

**Stanka Dimitrov**
Provincial Institute for Social Protection, as a cooperating organization on the project “Pandora’s Box”, which is realized by the Novi Sad School of Journalism and financially supported by the European Commission, carried out a research on cases of sexual abuse and harassment of children, which have been registered in the center for social work on the territory of AP Vojvodina in the previous five years. In our society, centers for social work (CSW) are a main service for the protection of children from all types of abuse and their key role in this process is clearly defined by the General Protocol on Protection of Children from Abuse and Neglect. It stems from the fact that CSW as an institution has the largest number of roles and tasks in the process of protection of children from abuse and neglect and provision of preventive and protective measures within social-legal protection. By adopting the General Rules on Organization, Norms and Standards of centers for social work (2008), the role of the Center for Social Work was more concretely secured, where within the reception, an assessment of all applications of citizens, potential users of this service, is carried out. This assessment determines the degree of the priority of the conduction of one’s case (immediate, urgent and regular), the intensity and order of steps of centers’ activities, as well as the intensity and dynamics of the inclusion of representatives of other systems of child help and support. The distribution of roles of all participants in child protection should create a basis for prompt identification, collection and assessment of data, ending of violence and provision of adequate social and family-legal measures which will mitigate traumatic consequences of abuse to a certain extent.

Sexual abuse and harassment are the most severe forms of harassment, because they usually involve other forms of violence (physical, emotional) and they are hidden by “a veil of mystery”, thus leaving deep permanent psychophysical and social consequences for children’s development. In our country, sexual abuse remains a secret for a long time and certain data suggest that, on average, more than nine years pass between the first incident and final reporting. Pedophilia is classified as a mental disorder which includes sexual orientation towards children of pre-puberty age (thirteen years and younger). It is characterized by sexual drive, fantasies or behaviors which can include sexual activities with children and they are repeated minimally in a period of six months. Persons who are identified as pedophiles are at least 16 years old and at least five years older than children or a child they have intercourse with. Their behavior involves activities ranging from exhibitionism to penetration. Certain data of Incest Trauma Center from Belgrade suggest that 10% of all perpetrators of sexual abuse of children are pedophiles.

This research incorporated 41 centers for social work from 45 municipalities in AP Vojvodina. The goal of the research was to collect data on cases of sexual abuse and harassment of children, victims and offenders. The technique applied was a questionnaire, created for this research and distributed electronically to all centers. The research was realized in April-May of 2011. It should be noted that the representation of data which is related to acts outside of families and data related to offenders do not include data from CSW Novi Sad, because this center
does not keep a detailed register of the above-mentioned, so it was not possible to obtain such data. The Republic of Serbia does not have a unique system of registers in the system of social protection and monitoring of violence against children, which represents a basis for the planning of activities in the protection of children against abuse. Data that we have are only a ‘tip of iceberg’, because the majority of these cases are never reported or are only discovered in the adulthood when it is too late for investigation or treatment. According to the research related to data in the last five years, OFFENDER’S PROFILE for all given crimes is (in 90% of cases) a male, usually middle-aged, with elementary education and mostly a person familiar to the child but outside of his/her family (even in 39% of total number of cases). The victim is usually female and the most common group is girls aged 6-14. Furthermore, the research also revealed an important data – the fact that 42% of children victims were included in some programs/processes of rehabilitation or reintegration of centers for social work, hence less than a half of children who were victims of some form of sexual abuse or harassment. According to data from the centers for social work, just 4% of children victims were included in programs/processes of rehabilitation or reintegration within some other system. In addition, the centers pointed out that people employed in the system do not have expert knowledge for direct work with children victims.

The research has shown that it is certainly necessary to establish a system that will enable the identification of children who are exposed to risks or who experienced abuse and neglect and ensure that there is a quick and coordinated procedure that will protect children from further abuse and neglect and offer them further uninterrupted development. This identification and further intervention require cooperation between all experts who work with children and families. All experts who work with children and families must be completely sure that they know how to act when they suspect that a child is exposed to abuse and neglect. Moreover, we emphasize the following significant recommendations:

- Development of a system of data collection and reporting as a basis for the creation of a database and high-quality informational system;
- Work on the development and promotion of preventive programs and protective measures and activities in the process of child protection;
- Development of new services in the community intended for children and their families with the goal to identify and influence risk factors in abuse;
- Development and promotion of preventive programs through informing wide public of how to recognize the problem, where and how to report it, what the consequences of sexual abuse of children are, risk factors of children and families which lead to abuse;
- Development of services in the community whose goal is to reintegrate children and families (daily services in the community, counseling, SOS, children’s help line...);
- Development of protocol on documenting of violence and development of reporting procedures;
- To enable the training of a large number of experts for the implementation of the General Protocol on Protection of Children from Abuse and Neglect in centers for social work;
- To train experts who work with children how to perform forensic interview, especially with children of younger age;
- To train professionals in the system of social protection for therapeutic work with children who were victims of abuse;
- To put into practice intersector cooperation of participants in the process of the protection of children from abuse and neglect;
- To provide an adequate space in centers for social work for children-victims of abuse and their families.

Ivana Koprivica
ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE – AGAINST CITIZENS.
CRIMINAL LAW JURISDICTION OF NATIONAL
COMMITTEES IN TERMS OF „PUNISHMENT” OF
ROMANIES IN THE FORMER CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

1. Introduction

„On behalf of the people – against citizens.” Even so, it can be paraphrased as the criminal jurisdiction of national committees in the years 1948 – 1954, which further highlighted the undemocracy of many elements in the system of national committees. On a scale of forms of illegality there was punishment without trial at the highest rung. The entire state mechanism has been adjusted to the political and power motivated changes in the society. In contradiction to „popular democracy”, the National Committee is considered to be of acceptably wide powers. It refers mainly to the fact that in the field of criminal law there is not the correct tool for the suppression of long tails of capitalism.

2. Theoretical definition of the field

However, national committees have not been prepared for such an extensive exercise of criminal jurisdiction. It has been reflected particularly in deciding of classifying Commission, where in many cases they acted illegally and by political and class criteria. This was due to staffing of the national committees that were understaffed, and filled with people without appropriate education. There was an action of 65 000 officials who passed in the production as third of the planned number of staff in 1948 and in 1951 during the action of 77 000 went to the production 51 215 officials. In the years 1948-1950 national committees declined by 69 742 state officials. These measures have created a presumption of political purges in the ranks of administrative officials. At that time the government ordered that at filling the posts and assessment of salary to ignore the prescribed education, as it has been practiced in all fields. Intelligence considered that as the general underestimation of their skills. Civil servants in the administration hit the abolition of state tenure that they previously ensuring for permanent employment and to protect them against dismissal for political reasons. In this state of the person’s national committees, no courts, no offense, no committing the crime was allowed to commissions of national committees to punish the so-called enemies of the state and put them into forced labor camps. At the same time allowing them, inter alia, to withdraw the citizens of constitutionally guaranteed civil right to vote. Local National Committees as a matter of fact, should the obligation, at the receiving of the assessment on taking place the citizen to the forced labor camp, exclude him from the list of voters for a term of imprisonment. As we document the historical materials in this group there was largely undisputed and Gypsies who had been punished as antisocial elements-loafer. Administrative and violent methods were used against them by employees of the national committees, particularly in cases when it came to their inclusion in forced labor camps. Presidential Decree No 18/1944 Central Committee on the national committees is anchored that in the transitional period at the liberated territory of former Czechoslovakia will all state power be exercised by a sovereign people, through elected local, district and regional national committees. Post-war development was completed by Act No 280/1948 Coll. establishment of the county. This law repealed the regulations previously in Slovakia and the establishment of provincial and county has been replaced by regional establishment. Although the aim was to provide for national committees as well as municipal authorities, it failed. The reason was the universality of the national committees as the organs of state power and government, depending on government. The government managed national committees as a whole.

The self-government of the solutions of local issues was suppressed by the prescriptive decision-making and canceling of state sovereignty. The Act establishing the county in § 16 enumeratively listed the powerful ingredients that have – Board Chairman, officer and committee. The Commissions along the lines of § 23 of the Act has an advisory role with the fact that the Council could authorize the National Committee to the extent that the Commission has determined to decide on its behalf. New KNV shaped the intermediate level between central authorities and districts. Even more to suppress the role of national authorities. On the Board of Commissioners and
the National Committee of 6 in Slovakia there are decision-makers and government ministries. The powerful state bodies clearly outweighed the Embassy. In the National Committees has applied the officialese system.

Elections to local bodies are constantly put off. Individual papers cover KNV government in virtually all spheres of society, with emphasis on their ruling function. The KNV security papers has incurred, which had the task of protecting and strengthening the people’s democratic establishment, human rights and freedoms are guaranteed by the Constitution, to ensure public order, take care of the civil protection of the federal case, and assembly. Errors that occurred in the exercise of criminal jurisdiction of the national committees, tried to remove the Board of Commissioners resolutions. However, by means of this it did not differentiate the causes of the excessive punishment of citizens by the national committees from the administrative measures. The National Committees should punish according to the „class principle” and more use the educational page. Instead of flat, or mass punishment by the administrative ways, they should therefore examine individual cases and handle them quickly, but in many cases did not correspond with reality. The Board of Commissioners were aware and that the staffing of public authorities, which have criminal jurisdiction, was the low professional level, and therefore held various coaching particularly security commission. The criticism of the exercise criminal jurisdiction of the national committee has been narrowed to the criticism of using the administrative methods. The problem was particularly in the papers that the national committees punish the national committees just because they have had to do it. By the considering of the criminal jurisdiction of the National Committees should be based mainly on the fact that their system is expressed by the strongly centralized and bureaucratic state system. It was magnified by a formal position of representative bodies towards executive and the representative authorities do not vote directly, or at all. Without the courts, without the committing of crime or offense, the classifying Commissions of regional national committees designated persons to forced labor camps. In all social classes, the legality of fit in particular that the level of penalties, taking into account their social situation, although at that time determined the law. The authorities, however, at that time probably followed by the „class instinct”.

By the Governmental Decree № 301/1948 Coll. of 28 December 1948 on the regional security papers of national committees, the government of Czechoslovakia ordered according to § 8, par. 3, letter. a) and § 19, par. 3 of the Act of 21 December 1948, № 280 C., on regional establishment in § 1, at each Regional National Committee to set up a security department, who had procured all tasks pertaining national security and regional national committees with effect from January 1, 1949. In the intentions § 1 of par. 6 of the quoted directive on the proper execution of the criminal proceedings could KNV establish the criminal Commission. In § 2 it was imposed to Ministry of Interior to issue detailed regulations which should define the scope of security papers KNV. During the last months of 1948 was the central authorities gradually constituted to direction of TNP. Ministry of Interior has established a separate department and later Division III/b A (after the reorganization of the department in January 1949 BP/10 – note of VG), from which later became the TNP report. Job services in Slovakia were on 6th December 1948 renamed the TNP and their agenda has been taken on the Commission of the Interior Department BK / 8 by the Department BK / 8. It was formed on 1 January 1949 and there were 13 employees, such as primarily, Deputy Head (at the same time head of organizational paper – note of VG), 6 officers and 5 auxiliary officers. Act no. 247/1948 Coll. was only general and the implementing regulation has not been issued to him, therefore the department staff had to work out the guidelines for the operation of the classifying Commissions at the National Committee and camp administration. Just in 1949 the department BK / 8 issued together 53 of such normative orders and proceeds. We illustrate some of these lists. In order to unify procedures in proceedings before the Commission, the Directive. 246/10-13/- 1949-BK/8 - Rules of Procedure (temporary) – way of proceeding
before the Commission has been issued. Directive №. 246/10-10/2-1949-BK/8 from 18th February 1949 was set the procedure of giving the people to TNP, who has been arrested for attempting to illegally escape abroad. Regional National Committees should gradually take over the role of individual TNP agenda. Until the adoption of law on the establishment of the county and its implementation, the Ministry of Interior performed the function of a National Committee. Since November 1948 three Judges were also established at the National Committee of the Commission. According to the law it should decide on inclusion in the camp, as well as the duration of stay in the camp. The Ministry of Interior, who temporarily fulfilled duties of National Committee, established by Decree no. 3037 of 27 November 1948 nineteen of three committees. Eighteen, in Bohemia and Moravia, has started to work on 15th December 1948, the nineteenth, for the territory of Slovakia located in Bratislava, followed-up to previous work at the implementation of the norm. Searching for suitable persons to TNP and processing and presenting proposals to include security officers have been assigned to District National Committee (MRD). In this work together with social MRD officers, public and state security, the financial authorities, customs services and economic control, political and mass organizations. The proposal for inclusion in the TNP Safety Officer may also submit individual citizens. If officer concluded that the facts have been proved to be insufficient to place, to the Commission, together with a proposal to the person to TNP step, and the proposal to the length of this post. If the proposal was not complete or sufficiently demonstrated by means of proof necessary to supplement the officer ordered through ZNB. Officer to provide the Commission and negative opinions. The final verdict, however, depended only on the decision of the members of classifying (security) Commission. Each proposal should include the inclusion of information about the offender and his family. Box g) states svetonáhľad offender. Almost in all personnel files of Gypsies, which have been discus-

Conclusion

The question of the Romany population in Slovakia becomes the object of scientific analysis. Timeliness issues are compounded by rapid quantitative growth of the Romany population and a growing disproportion of their lifestyle compared to the average of the whole society. This becomes increasingly more determined attention to yourself and you probably also usurp the need and effective solutions. Knowing the legal and historical facts and their interpretation, any new knowledge naturally raises further questions for answers in re-search and explore new unexplained problems.

prof. dr Vladimír Gecelovský

Source: authors archive
You finished the Faculty of Economy. What was your motivation for education and who was your support?

- I realized early that I had to choose education in order not to become what I didn’t want to become. I was planning to be a serviceman, but my parents agreed not to let me do that. So, when my elder sister Julka Dimic suggested that I should study to become a waiter, I enrolled on that school against my will, but only not to lose a year.

I quickly realized that I had to have excellent grades, and I succeeded in that. My teachers strongly supported me to become a waiter, I enrolled on that school against my will, but only not to lose a year.

I enrolled on the Higher School of Professional Business Studies in Novi Sad, majoring in organization of labor and I managed to pass all exams in the given period.

That was about twenty years ago. Were there any Roma among your colleagues?

- I was the only Roma at the Higher School. And in the high school there were only my brother and I. By the way, no one minded the skin color then. It was a different time, the “time of Tito”. The system of values was different. No one asked you if you were multi-colored, blonde, of this religion or that religion, it was only important to deserve attention with your own work and effort.

* You mentioned that you were a good student. Was it easy for you to decide to continue your education after the Higher School?

- When I finished the Higher School, professors suggested that I should continue my education.

I was having second thoughts, considering my financial problems. Still, I decided to take that step and I enrolled on the Faculty of Economy.

* Were there any privileges for Roma then?

- No. Honestly, everything I have ever achieved and what I am doing now was not a gift, it was all my own work and support of friends and family.

* What did you do after you had finished your studies?

- Having graduated, I started working in the municipality of Titel as a market inspector. I stayed there for fifteen years. Due to certain social circumstances, I spent the next four-five years unemployed, after which I came to the position which makes me really proud.

* You work in the Service for Common Affairs of the City of Novi Sad. What are your responsibilities?

- The service is run by our boss and I am his deputy. We have more than two hundred employees. We coordinate and manage the work of the Service and provide the Mayor’s cabinet with a complete logistic support. Our responsibilities include finances, security, cleaning, restaurant, public procurements, computer equipment… It is a very complicated system.

* Your job is not connected in any way with Roma population; yet, you are not neglecting your people. You have an NGO “Phralipe”, which deals with realizations of projects which help Roma people.

- That is my way out. By the way, I directed the association to my children and now I am educating them how to run it, so I am slowly giving them the organization’s work.

* You mentioned your children. Did you manage to convince them that education is a prerequisite of success?

- That is a constant struggle with children. However, I think that my children realized that.
Sasa is on the fourth year of the Academy in Kragujevac, and my daughter is a second-year student of the Academy of Art in Novi Sad. I am proud of them.

* Your organization is focused on children. Why is that so?
  - Somehow, it is more pleasant to cooperate with them. Only children are not corrupted. Only with them is the cooperation the most honest. When I work with them, I feel that I have really done something valuable. I teach them some values that can help them in life.

* You started helping Roma via your organization even before the Decade of Roma. Can you compare the period before and after? Are you satisfied with the progress made?
  - In 2003 I founded the association and started dealing with Roma issues. I can tell you that people had great expectations when we entered the Decade. We were not ready as a nation when we entered the Decade, but I also think that the majority population failed with their honest intentions.

Anyway, there is some progress: scholarships for students helped the education of Roma children, a database has been created; there is some progress, but it is below the expectations. Everything has slightly stopped now. Europe gave a lot of money through both the budget channel and projects for the non-governmental sector. 10-12% of the expected has been done.

* Many things depended on the majority population. Do you think that they were not motivated enough to participate and help the Roma population?
  - Non-Roma population was very motivated as far as the finances are concerned. That is true of the great majority. Money and earning your own living are one thing, while the need to truly help a poor and uneducated nation is another.

* Can you give us the names of people who really stood out either as good or bad?
  - Thanks to those who supported our media, I am referring to “Them”, Roma redaction RTV and our radio stations which succeeded; to guardians of the written word – our Istvan Farkas who is fighting without any material support, Rajko Djuric and our Rajko Jovanovic.

As far as the majority population is concerned, I would praise “the provincials” who at least founded the Roma Inclusion Office, which will function the way it can and which is, obviously, the only address our people can go to.

* Do you have any idea that you have not realized so far and that you think could significantly help Roma population?
  - I don’t know what’s more urgent for our people. I have a feeling that wherever you look, something can be improved.

One thing is certain; all my ideas will always be concerned with children only. We will work on the preservation of the Roma language, nurturing of the cultural creativity… We should invest in our children and they will make it…

* Year 2015 is near, i.e. the end of the Decade of Roma. Do you think that the progress of the Roma community which was started with such difficulties will be stopped then? Do you think that everything will stop then?
  - It has already started to stop. Do you know of any association that is functioning just fine?

A lot of money was invested and a lot of effort was made, expectations were also great, but I think that they were not fulfilled.

* Is there any chance that your need to work with children will stop too?
  - It never will, I will always think of something new for children, even if I do not receive any money for that.

Dragana Dimitrov
“Days of Poetry of Trifun Dimic” is traditionally organized in the Novi Sad City Library’s branch “Trifun Dimic” in Sangaj. The celebration is intended to preserve and nurture the Roma language. The program consisted of a literary and a musical part. Celebration’s participants were children from elementary schools and high schools.

Apart from the children from Sangaj, children from other places, such as Sajkas, Djurdjevo, Kac and Zabalj participated in the program, as well as students from the High School “22 Oktobar” from Zabalj and Technical School “Pavel Savic” from Novi Sad.

Verses of Trifun Dimic’s poetry pealed out in the library which was named after the well-known romologist. One of the participants of the musical part was Aleksandra Aleksandrovic, a second-year student of the Academy of Art in Novi Sad, who played on a tamburica and introduced the audience with sounds this instrument makes.

This year the celebration was planned for children only: children participated in the program and they were in audience.

“I am participating in the program, because I am going to recite a poem Kamavipe, which means Love. I am a little nervous, but I have already participated many times in various events, so I know that I will recite well”, Dusanka Fan from Sajkas said and added that she is looking forward to a great applause which she sees as a reward.

“We like going to the library. Here we study, work on the computer, read and many more… We never miss these events, because it is always fun. We would also like to learn how to recite in Roma, even though we do not attend Roma classes”, boys Marko, Luka and Vukasin from Sangaj said.

The celebration was organized by the citizen association “Phralipe”, whose representative Sava Aleksandrovic said:

“Trifun Dimic wrote poetry, prose, philological and historical studies and he was a journalist. He published a collection of national poems “Coming from a Fair”, followed by a book “Curses, Pledges and Blessings of Roma”. He translated capital literary pieces as a gift to his people: “Song of Songs”, “The Holy Bible”, “Torah”, “Sluzebnik”, but also the sacred book of Muslims “The Quran”. He also published collections of poems: “God, Destroy Those Roads”, “Time of Solitude” and “Feet in Dust”. He started and edited a scientific journal “Romologist” and a magazine for Roma culture and literature “Word of Roma”.

“I love cooperating with children and all my projects are exclusively intended for them. I am particularly satisfied to visit the Sangaj library, because it is a guardian of our written word, considering that it possesses a certain number of books written in Roma.”

Aleksandrovic informed us that a computer course intended for the young will soon start in this library: “We got five computers and brought them here, hired an educator and planned for the course to start in October.”

Dragana Dimitrov (librarian of this library) spoke on the behalf of “Trifun Dimic” Library:

“It is our honor and pleasure to host this celebration, which is traditionally organized in our library. The children are well acquainted with Roma poetry, especially with the works of the great Trifun Dimic, which can be attributed to Roma language teacher Djordje Fan, who often (while teaching in Sangaj) taught Roma in the library, where he had an easy access to Dimic’s collections of poems.”

After the program had finished, many friendships were formed among the children from different places, which proves how important this celebration is.

Dragana Dimitrov