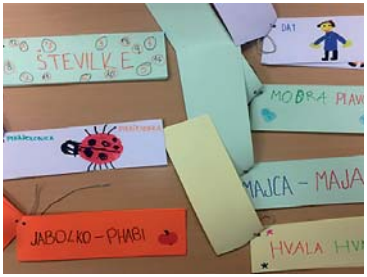

School Education, Minorities and Life Opportunities

Roma Inclusive School Experiences

Edited by Maria José Casa-Nova
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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This text is the fruit of the Roma Inclusive School Experiences (RISE) project, financed as part of the 2016 call of the Justice and Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (REC) (2014-2020), with the topic: Action grants to support national or transnational projects on non-discrimination and Roma integration in the European Union.

This transnational project lasted for over two years, and involved the creation of a partnership between the Department of Education Studies 'Giovanni Maria Bertin' at the University of Bologna - Alma Mater Studiorum (Italy), as the international coordinator; the Institute of Education of the University of Minho (Portugal); the Development and Education Centre Novo Mesto (Slovenia); and the Istituto degli Innocenti in Florence (Italy). The latter, as per the Programme, handled the assessment, not being directly involved in the activities conducted by the other partners.

RISE thus began as an international cooperation project. From the very beginning, it was a resource that allowed partners to share ideas and perspectives, and to imagine and find alternative, innovative solutions to identify and respond to similar problems in different contexts. The project is thus an expression of different points of view tied to different situations and the various policies of the participating countries. However, its vision is a collective one due to the fact that it is rooted in the co-construction of the actions developed.

The project arose from an institutional framework that was determined by the promotion of Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, by supporting related state policies and national strategies through innovative actions focusing on inclusive education for Roma children; the enactment of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies

(EU Communication N.173/2011); and the adoption of the Common Basic Principles for Roma Inclusion.

The Roma make up the largest historical-cultural minority in the EU, but also the group which is most subject to inequalities in access to work, education, housing and healthcare. Antigypsyism continuously produces and reproduces negative stereotypes and discriminatory practices, often institutionally legitimised by policies that exclude or limit access to the rights of citizens (FRA, 2017).

Discrimination against Roma population is reflected and amplified among children and adolescents that grow up in particularly fragile social conditions, and with a very wide range of unmet rights. Among them, the right to education is still a challenge for many countries in the EU. The data available reflect this reality, indicating low rates of enrolment in schools of all levels, high rates of 'wastage' and of early-leavers, and limited access to services and educational activities outside of school (FRA, 2014).

Low education levels, widespread illiteracy among Roma communities, together with racism in its various forms are the main obstacles, with an impact on access to the job market, the use of services and active participation in public life. But the quality and quantity of Roma school attendance and performance are often influenced by the educational strategies and teaching models implemented in schools and by school organizations: whether adopted deliberately or not, models and strategies and organization showed how they can either promote or discourage success and inclusion of Roma children in school.

The RISE Project gains importance precisely because it is contextualised within this framework.

The project aimed to: a) promote a more welcoming and inclusive school for Roma children aged between 6 and 14 years of age, which would ensure their educational success in the regular official curriculum; b) combat discrimination in education; c) reduce absenteeism and school failure for Roma children; d) prevent school dropout; e) develop strategies for the production and sharing of best practices based on active, meaningful, inclusive pedagogical approaches; and f) foster positive, stable relationships between Roma families, the various educational agents, and the wider community.

Each partner in the project prepared its own programme, considering local needs and issues, the institutional and legal policies applicable to the

context, the existing network of services, and past interventions regarding Roma communities. The goals were subdivided into a set of actions:

- exploratory research, aimed at carrying out a contextual analysis through the collection of quantitative and qualitative data. The fields investigated were: national legislation, policies on social and educational inclusion of Roma children, educational outcomes, attendance and exclusion rates for Roma and non-Roma pupils. To delve deeper into the topic of inclusive schools, individual interviews were conducted with teachers, parents and social workers, as well as focus groups and collective interviews with primary and lower secondary school students.

- action-research that covered the entire project with the goal of grappling, in progress, with the problems of educational practice, as they come up within learning contexts, and with the characteristic of the actions undertaken being based on the collaboration between teachers, parents and social workers.

- training, aimed at teachers and social workers, to provide them with the methodological basis for in-class cooperative learning, with the principles of intercultural pedagogy, and with knowledge about the history and culture of the Roma population.

- the promotion of educational workshops for all students in the classes involved, aimed at enhancing social skills, participation, interculturalism, fight gender discrimination and the development of prejudice. Some workshops also involved the use of animation techniques.

- the sharing of best practices, aimed at creating a widespread, inclusive educational model at national and international level.

Through a dedicated website, the project's partners were given a platform for direct exchanges on the activities promoted locally, and members of the public could access ad-hoc documentation as the project was being implemented.

What most characterised the RISE project, and could even be defined as its main 'ingredient', was the simultaneous construction of an inclusive model of school where the concept of 'inclusion' is considered a common good. An inclusive school is deeply linked to the quality of the school system, and is a resource from which all pupils, teachers and parents should benefit. For this project, Roma and Sinti children and adolescents have been, in some way, the unit of measurement for a welcoming school. In other words, their ability to feel good at school has become the yardstick of an environment's ability to promote the wellness of an entire community.

For this reason, the inclusive model developed by the RISE project has potential to be applied to many other contexts and goes well beyond the integration of children belonging to minority groups. This project, as underlined in the local choices, has indeed transformed the inclusion of Roma children and pre-adolescents in schools from a problem to a resource.

The following text is divided into a few different sections: theories on inequality with specific reference to the educational system; a sort of 'inclusion dictionary' with a look at key concepts useful for the creation of an inclusive school model; the action-research methodology, which was consistently used throughout the project; a detailed description of the actions promoted locally in Italy, Portugal and Slovenia; and a final assessment.

This book, containing the content and as a way of making the results of the project visible, is intended to be a modest contribution towards a more sustained reflection and towards the possibility of modifying professional practices.

This book and all Rise Project could not have been possible without the participation and support of so many people whose names may not all be enumerated. Their contributions, expressed in different ways, were all very important for the success of the project.

However, on behalf of the international research teams, we would like to thank all the teachers, the principals, the school staff, the social workers, the administrative directors involved, the Roma parents. The reflections, the debates, their determination, their courage to imagine a new school model developed through action-research have also helped the growth of the researchers involved.

A special thanks goes to the Roma parents, Roma social workers, Roma trainers who have accompanied us in this process. Without them this project would not have produced the same results.

But we are especially grateful to students, female and male, Roma and non Roma. This project has left in our hearts their enthusiasm and hope for a fair, just, and more equitable world. Their words, expressed in the videos, in the educational materials, in the lyrics of the songs will remain as a tangible sign of the path taken.

We also express our gratitude to REC-Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme of European Union. Without international projects, researchers'

ideas would remain confined to small territories, with no chance to grow in exchanges and produce innovation.

Maria Teresa Tagliaventi
(International coordinator of the RISE project)

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CHAPTER 1. SOCIETIES AND SCHOOLS: TOWARDS A BETTER HUMANITY?

Maria José Casa-Nova[1] and Teresa Tagliaventi[2]

Introduction

The advance of Science has brought extraordinary developments to societies. Computational and robotic technologies, the biological at the interface with the digital, seem to promise a future of opportunities; a kind of "promised land" that looks like a "no man's land", and, at the same time, a land for the whole human species. But these technologies, which bring together people from all over the world, who get to know each other in the unknown, who interrelate without relating, globalizing the world more sharply, have not been able to bring people together, to deconstruct stereotypes, to humanize societies, thus making the human less inhuman. Where, then, are we all? What world do we paint, what mosaics do we build, instead of bazaars where everything is found, where everything is painted, where everything mixes, miscegenates for each one to find him/herself in his/her uniqueness built and painted by several hands, from various worlds? Where is the development of Science that makes us feel like spectators and expectants of a world of several worlds, where connections seem to disconnect instead of uniting in the differences? When inequalities become naturalized, invisible, what meaning can be attributed to Human Rights and to its effective implementation? When people look at the world and do not see inequalities and socio-cultural hierarchies, how is it possible to combat such inequalities? When everything seems to say "the world is just like that", how can this fatality - transformed into human inaction - be questioned and deconstructed so that societies become humanized?

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The purpose of this text is not to answer these questions, but to highlight the degree of social commitment of its authors as social scientists to the construction of a better world. We draw attention to the fact that it is absolutely fundamental to see each and every human being as the human he/she is and not as an infra-human; to build solidarity in symmetry and not as goodness; to build human rights as the right for humanity to fulfil itself (Casa-Nova, 2013).

1. Social hierarchies and structural subordination

In an increasingly globalized world – marked by increased migrations to face the lack of material resources and to escape situations of armed conflict – inequalities of class, gender, ethnic-cultural, phenotypic, regional, tend to become more and more evident and often stronger. In such multifaceted, multiclassist, multicultural contexts, the perception of the multiple differences that intertwine in different daily lives tends to generate hierarchies of human beings. And although the norm is for such hierarchy to occur from socio-cultural groups with economic, cultural, academic and symbolic power, to groups without socially valued power, it also happens among socio-cultural groups that are deprived of those types of power. Such asymmetric relationships are guided by variables such as age, gender and position regarding one's profession, even if these are located in the same segment of undifferentiated professions, located at the base of the hierarchy of professions. In a "trajectory of employment in carousel" (Diogo, 2010, p. 32), even if individuals change jobs or professions throughout their lives, "they do not give up the same class location (p. 32)." And those who are dominated tend to develop relationships of domination within their sphere of relationships, in a logic similar to that of the domination to which they are targeted.

The reality is, therefore, much more complex than the variables that any research can predict. The absence of power and social prestige segregates individuals to the margins of societies, functioning as a guide of social and relational normativity ("we are not like them"). Social relations without parity of power lead to the absence of participation in the public sphere and to inhibiting the exercise of citizenship in its various dimensions, with the consequent loss of dignity by a significant part of human beings, who end up experiencing structural subordination. Such structural subordination means secular, naturalized subordination, embedded in societies; it means

the occupation of subordinate positions in the various spheres of society; worse paid jobs; living in so-called social housing neighbourhoods; "ethnic neighbourhoods", living on the borderlines of society (Casa-Nova, 2020). It means the absence of power and participation in decision-making processes. The absence of economic redistribution, based on wages and not on state social benefits, plays an important role here, given that the wage value functions as an indicator of social well-being and power. And the people who perform the lowest paid jobs are the so-called working class and minority people, like the Roma[3].

On the other hand, the lack of cultural recognition produces humiliation, lack of dignity and lack of respect. It is in this sense that Fraser's theory (2000, 2010), with its emphasis on a three-dimensional model of justice, contains much potential for socio-cultural emancipation of social actors. According to Fraser (2010), economic redistribution, cultural recognition and parity of participation in the public sphere would place human beings on social and cultural parity, without institutionalized subordination of status. For this author, "overcoming injustice means dismantling institutionalized obstacles that prevent some people from participating on a par with others, as full partners in social interaction" (2010, p. 16). And to achieve this, Fraser considers that "theories of justice must become three-dimensional, incorporating the political dimension of representation, alongside the economic dimension of distribution and the cultural dimension of recognition (2010, p. 15). When explaining its three-dimensional theory of justice, the author states:

> "(...) people can be impeded from full participation by economic structures that deny them the resources they need in order to interact with others as peers; in that case they suffer from distributive injustice or maldistribution. (...) people can also be prevented from interacting on terms of parity by institutionalized hierarchies of cultural value that deny them the requisite standing; in that case they suffer from status inequality or misrecognition. The third dimension of justice is the political (...) concerned chiefly with representation" (pp. 16-17).

3. Cheryl Harris, in a very interesting article entitled "Whiteness as Property", reflects on a kind of natural rights that would be the privilege of white people. Quoting the author in her reflections on her grandmother's life, "It was a given for my grandmother that being white automatically ensured higher economic returns in the short term and greater economic, political, and social security in the long run" (2003, p. 76). This means that being white automatically brings with it a set of formal and tacit rights that black and brown people do not access in the same terms throughout their lives. Then, whiteness appears as a property, a colour that becomes "having"

With regard to the Roma population, the stigma and racism they have been subject to over the centuries remain as strong constraints to living with dignity through access to the three-dimensional justice theorized by Fraser. The absence of material resources (a large part lives in poverty) and cultural recognition (their culture is not socially recognized as valid) have functioned as strong inhibitors for equal participation in the various social spheres, which means that these three dimensions are strongly articulated, functioning in an interdependent way.

And long and successful school trajectories also play a fundamental role, because without access to the academic knowledge that confers power and prestige in society, the Roma population will remain on the margins of society. It is therefore important to look at the School as a place of multiple learnings, and the access to it a way to fundamental knowledge and academic power that enhance life opportunities.

2. Educational inequalities: Old and new forms

Indeed, in contemporary society – known as knowledge society –, formal education is an essential immaterial asset, and a source of social power for both individuals and society as a whole. However, despite it being formally available for everyone, acquiring formal degrees is still not something consistent for the entire population.

Inequalities in educational processes were underscored with the advent of compulsory education, which makes the problem of the influence of social stratification in terms of access, attendance and marks clearly visible (Besozzi, 2017). As education becomes a source of social power, sought out by a growing number of individuals, its 'distribution' across different social classes makes various forms of social inequality much more striking. Widespread, free, mandatory schooling, operating through a deeply-rooted system of selection, paves the way for debate on opportunities for success (educational and social).

In sociology and sociology of education, starting from the 1960s, extensive scientific production[4] has shown that children from the so-called working

4. See, among others, the classic studies of Baudelot & Establet (1971, 1975) Bourdieu & Passeron (1972), Benavente (1976), Benavente et al. (1994), Grácio & Miranda (1977), Young (1982 [1971]), Bernstein (1982 [1971]), Iturra (1990), Duru-Bellat (2000, 2002), Dubet (2001, 2003).

class - and from certain minorities - have greater failure rates at school, which means that school success and failure are unevenly distributed among different social classes and minorities. According to the sociological knowledge produced in this field until the 1950s and 1960s, school failure was attributed to deficient socialization and education in the family environment. Failure was justified by the *deficit* theory; by the socio-cultural *handicap* theory: the problem lay with families, who did not know how to educate children.

In the 1970s, with authors such as Bourdieu and Passeron, schools came to be seen as institutions that reproduce the social structure in their classes. The research conducted by social and cultural reproduction theorists in the context of conflictual approaches highlighted how compulsory education has not improved social mobility; it rather further amplified the inequalities already present when accessing education. School and education thus become a repository of the ruling class, which has ended up relegating all that is different into the category of 'subculture". According Bourdieu (1978), school is the place in which privilege is transformed into merit (Bourdieu, 1978). Also, in the early 1970s, authors like Young (1982 [1971]), questioned the neutral role hitherto attributed to the formal curriculum, considering it a product of the cultural choices of certain social classes. Under the influence of the New English Sociology, some studies tried to show how school played its own, active role in the production of inequalities. In other words, it not only reproduced the inequalities mentioned by Bourdieu and Passeron, but it was also a producer of inequalities itself. As stated by Dubet (2001, p. 13), "several 'non-egalitarian effects' were evidenced: class effect, educational establishment effect, teacher effect. In this way, the school adds social inequalities to its own inequalities." In other words, schools, as institutions, although they have contributed and do contribute - through democratised access to education - to reducing economic and social inequalities, have shown to be effectively unable to change the structure of social inequalities. As institutions, schools are thus accused of being - in the words of Milani (1967, p. 20) – "like a hospital that treats the healthy and rejects the ill": in treating everyone equally, schools favour the children from upper classes, not questioning the background of their pupils, which means neglecting the person who inhabits the student, forgetting that it is actually schools that transform children into students. The classic variables that influence educational success are quite well known: structural invariants such as social class, gender, ethnicity and "race". These variables are located outside the school.

The educational system has not been able to deal with them so as to diminish its effects - although it has started an internal reflection that has led to educational policies more attentive to reproductive mechanisms (including pressure from the European Union).

In the late 1990s, social mobility studies highlighted how social equality in educational opportunities was still an issue in Europe (Breen, 2004). These discrepancies are even more striking in terms of graduation from upper secondary school and in obtaining a university diploma (Ballarino & Panichella, 2017). For example, in the 2000s, in Italy, the child of a manager or self-employed professional was five times more likely to get a university degree than the child of a labourer: 36.5% versus 7.3% (Barone, 2012).

The topic of inequality is again being examined as it applies to increasingly multi-ethnic classes with a student population that varies greatly in terms of social, cultural and economic origin, and diversity in terms of motivations, expectations, and requirements for learning (Besozzi, 2017). In Europe, inequality in education is loudly and clearly seen in the 'wastage' rate - i.e. the phenomenon that covers all failures, repeated academic years and drop-outs, and which describes the discontinuity of pathways with respect to the regularity required by law - especially for immigrant pupils not born in Europe.

According to one of the latest Eurydice reports (2019), in almost all European nations, early-dropout rates for students born abroad are higher than for native-born children, reaching the highest percentage in Turkey (over 60%), followed by Spain and Italy (over 30%). In general, the children of immigrants are particularly disadvantaged in terms of opportunities for school success, and are more likely than native pupils to achieve lower degrees and dropout or evade school obligations (Colombo, 2010), as is the case with the Roma minority. That disadvantage is made up mainly by economic vulnerability, and cultural, linguistic and social barriers (Barone, 2012), as well as other factors. In addition to the well-known variables at the root of inequality, presently there are new issues that intertwine with those of the past, in a pluralisation of areas that feed into differences in educational pathways. Qualitative research teases out the question of the actors' choice and intentionality, personal motivations for learning, and expectations related to school – all of this within a system of constraints and social conditioning (Colombo, 2010).

Debates on the topic of equality have consequently developed around the issues of acceptance, inclusion, active and conscious participation in the

teaching/learning process, and citizen rights (Besozzi, 2017). National policies play a fundamental role in this – and not just policies relating to education, but also those covering receptiveness, health and well-being, workplace policies, social security, and housing regulations.

In the last decade, the topic of inequality has been dealt with in part through qualitative analyses on the efficacy of the educational system. Carried out since 2000, the OECD-PISA surveys have brought important indicators to light: in addition to establishing how scholastic learning and achievements after mandatory schooling are closely correlated to the students' social and economic background, they have also highlighted how the 'performance' of educational systems is correlated to the organisation of the school system (nationally and locally) and to its structural features. The different ways in which studies are programmed and organised in various nations play an important role in terms of the degrees of inequality between students, and thus in the construction of social reproduction mechanisms. Even if reproduction lingers as the general 'law' of education systems, the degree of reproduction depends on how schools are organised, the way their classes are composed (if there are ethnically segregated classes) (Dubet, Duru-Bellat, & Vérétout, 2010), the teaching styles adopted, and the methods used.

Fighting inequality in education takes place through the identification of teaching methods, the choices and abilities of teachers, and their specific training, policies, styles, strategies, techniques, and relationships, which define everyday educational contexts (between students, students and teachers, members of the teaching staff and other school actors), relationships with families, and relationships with the local context. For change to occur, one must also intervene on the interactive mechanisms within the school and on the role of the teaching staff. When working with diversity, it is important to be aware of the degree to which social actors are bearers of prejudice and assimilationist perspectives, often disguised behind welcoming attitudes. The existence of prejudice or racism towards Roma students, for example, by teachers, school staff, and other students or family members, is one of the main issues that precludes and discourages their success at school, at work, and in social life (FRA, 2018a).

The most alarming data reporting strong discrimination in education are those concerning the Roma younger generation. Indeed, "school segregation is still an unfortunate reality in Europe today. Its negative consequences affect in particular Roma children, children with disabilities, children with a migrant

background, and other children due to their social or personal circumstances" (Council of Europe, 2017, p. 5). This is how the Council of Europe 2017 Report begins, according to which school segregation keeps affecting Roma children in most EU countries, where a disproportionate number of children attend *remedial classrooms* and *special schools*, receiving an education according to a minimalist curriculum (p. 8). Such evidence means denying access to knowledge regularly conveyed at school, lowering the level of academic demand, and, consequently, contributing towards maintaining a situation of educational and social disadvantage, which, consequently, keeps feeding the vicious circle of poverty and stigmatization. Channelling Roma children to so-called special education often means transforming cultural difference into mental disability (Casa-Nova, 2006), that is, what is unknown and appears outside the standard is judged according to the norms of mainstream culture, with society determining that certain people be called "disabled" or "abnormal", a clinical judgment based on social norms and, often, on IQ tests where the cultural dimension associated with mainstream culture is very strong.

FRA's Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey (EU-MIDIS II) results, conducted in nine EU Member States[5] in 2016, showed that Roma children lag behind their non-Roma peers on all education indicators. Only about half (53 %) of Roma children aged between four and the age for initiating compulsory primary education actually take part in early childhood education. The proportion of Roma early school-leavers is disproportionately high compared with the general population. Among young Roma aged 16–24 no longer in education, more than three quarters have completed at most only lower secondary education. Half of the Roma youth aged between 6 and 24 years do not attend school. Of those who do, only 1 % attend school at a higher level than the one corresponding to their age; 18 % attend at an educational level lower than the one corresponding to their age, either because they repeated classes, started school later, or both. This share is higher (20 %) among Roma in the age of upper secondary education.

5. EU-MIDIS II – Transition from education to employment of young Roma in nine EU Member States (FRA, 2018b) collected information from over 25,500 respondents from different ethnic minority and immigrant backgrounds in all 28 EU Member States. The findings summarized in this paper are based on 7,947 individual interviews with Roma respondents in Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain. The data are representative for Roma living in geographic or administrative units with density of Roma population higher than 10 %, who self-identify as "Roma" or as members of one of the other groups covered by this umbrella term.

Against this backdrop, the contribution of the RISE Project in the fight against different forms of inequality in education is clear: if given the proper support, schools can actually mitigate the impact of social inequality on educational inequality[6]. RISE worked at the micro level, but articulating with the meso and the macro, proposing a change of perspective for the schools involved, starting with the action research method, teacher training, and the use of inclusive teaching methods, namely the development of pedagogical devices and cooperative learning, which this book deals with largely in its latter part.

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6. In this regard, see Teresa Seabra (2008), among others.

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CHAPTER 2. BASIC CONCEPTS FOR A THEORETICALLY SUSTAINED PRACTICE

Maria Alfredo Moreira[1], Maria José Casa-Nova[2] and Daniela Silva[3]

1. Inter/multicultural education

European societies are made up by a multiplicity of endogenous heterogeneities originating from gender, class, regional, ethno-cultural, etc., belongings. To these internal heterogeneities, the immigration process has added many other diversities coming from multiple national belongings, translating into increasingly complex societies and schools from the point of view of social relationships and understanding of different socio-cultural universes.

The participation of these different social actors in the school and educational space challenges institutionalized discourses and practices, calling for a mental de-structuring and restructuring in order to accommodate multiple differences, while enhancing the grasping of academic knowledge and values that fit in the construction of more humanized societies. It is in this context that it makes perfect sense to think of school education as an education that mobilizes all the actor-subjects that inhabit the school towards the same educational project around academic success and the promotion of human rights. Thus, when we talk about inter/ multicultural education, we mean an education that includes cultural diversity in terms of social classes, ethnicities and genders and, within each of these categories, the diversity arising from cultural particularities and from forms of individual appropriation of school and extra-school knowledge, as well as from contexts and processes. In our understanding, this inter/ multicultural education should, therefore, have an

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underlying 'nonsynchronous approach' (McCarthy, 1994) which suggests the possibility that minority groups - in their relationship and interaction with economic, political and cultural institutions - may not always reveal the same posture, needs, interests or expectations, and it is thus essential that we stop looking at and treating each social class, ethnicity or gender as homogeneous, uniform blocks, but rather as cultural entities whose relations are complex, contradictory, and not parallel (Casa-Nova, 2002).[4]

For the construction of an inter/ multicultural education in schools, it is important to pay attention to some stages that seem essential to a professional practice that considers the multiplicity of differences:

1. Recognize the existence of a plurality of cultures within the school space, and the need to respect differences, which highlights the importance of collective participation in the construction of an egalitarian social project;

2. Take up a commitment with the principles of integration in a pedagogical project for school success, increasing the dialogue between all cultures, genders and social classes present in the school space;

3. Think about and raise awareness towards a theoretical-conceptual framework about what is a mono, multi and intercultural education;

4. Deepen the existing knowledge on the various cultures present in the social and school space;

5. Develop action-research or a research practice in the sense of constant (re)construction of pedagogical practices in order to include the greatest number of differences, that is, to develop the most comprehensive pedagogical practices possible (Casa-Nova, 2002).

Central to the development of inter/ multicultural education is the development of *cultural bilingualism*. It can be defined as sensitivity to the existence of different socio-economic and cultural groups within the classroom (Cortesão & Stoer, 1999), which translates into diverse *learning-teaching* proposals (Casa-Nova, 2018)[5], and into equal opportunities in terms of school access and success. It means the mastery of two (or more) cultural universes, making human beings permeable and flexible in the face of multiple dif-

4. For more in-depth knowledge and reflection on inter / multicultural education, see the second edition of the Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education, edited by Banks and Banks (2004).

5. In the "teaching-learning" equation, the focus is on the teacher, who teaches; in the "learning-teaching" equation, the focus is on the student, who learns and, in this learning process, is the protagonist of the action. This shift in focus underlies the pedagogical differentiation devices.

ferences. The promotion of an inter/ multicultural education and cultural bilingualism, at the service of a democratic school, promoting participatory, critical, emancipatory and humanistic citizenship, implies teachers with an inter/multicultural profile (Stoer, 1994), in other words, teachers that:

1. See cultural diversity as a source of wealth for the teaching/ learning teaching process;

2. Take practical advantage of different types of knowledge and cultures;

3. Consider cultural diversity within the classroom, making it a condition for confrontation between cultures;

4. Redo the map of his/her cultural identity to overcome cultural ethnocentrism;

5. Advocate the decentralization of school, i.e., that school sees itself as part of the local community;

6. Know cultural differences through the development of pedagogical devices, based on the notion of culture as a social practice.

Since culture is a social practice (Willis, 1991) that also develops within the school context, acknowledging, appreciating and integrating the various cultures that inhabit within students is operationalised through the development of *pedagogical differentiation devices*. The aim of pedagogical differentiation is to make academic knowledge significant by adapting contents and processes to the particular characteristics of each student, in order to achieve the success of the largest possible number of students, allowing each one to find his/her best way of learning according to his/her own characteristics. Pedagogical differentiation devices (or pedagogical devices) develop as such through: educational proposals that enable the construction of dialogues (which, although may be conflicting, will necessarily have to be fruitful) between family and school culture; valuing and promoting the students' culture of origin, through the incorporation of that culture in the construction of educational practices; access to cultural bilingualism by any children, thus increasing their possibilities of accessing the cultural codes conveyed by the school, the skills to understand the rationality of the other, and reciprocal integration. Therefore, pedagogical devices are pedagogical practices whose aim is to grasp the school culture without losing the culture of origin, in a process that aims at cultural integration and not cultural assimilation.[6]

6. On the concepts of integration and assimilation, see Casa-Nova (2013). The concept of integration, as we have defined it, transposed into school life means educational practices that enhance the success of students in the

2. Practices at school and in the classroom

In order to develop inter/multicultural education at school, one must establish some conditions that can help ensure an inclusive environment (Roth & Duarte, 2008):

1. Existence of a clear school 'philosophy' on inclusion in general and on inter/ multicultural education in particular, which is shared by all and that acts as a basis for communication between parents/ guardians, teachers, students, staff, and technical officers.

2. Support, at school, to programs and projects aimed at improving learning outcomes.

3. High expectations of academic success for all students, in all curricular areas. Rejection of 'minimum curricula', in favour of demanding content and learning.

4. Monitoring of all students, in order to put into practice a set of measures that allow egalitarian practices and that enrich the cultural capital of each student. The collected data will be analysed comparatively with other schools at regional level.

5. The school integrates the perspectives and voices of students and parents/ guardians; existence of relationships of mutual respect and trust, based on acknowledging the value of the knowledge that families hold, which must be integrated as a learning resource.[7]

6. A school environment of openness, reflexivity and integration, where everyone is clearly committed with anti-discriminatory modes of action, using explicit written rules to deal with discriminatory behaviours, but also with the implementation of projects in that direction.

In order to fulfil the school's educational project and service, it is essential to establish partnerships between the school and the community. Acknowledging that "it takes a village to educate a child,"[8] and that the role of organizations, associations, and other civil society partnerships are fundamental to provide the support and support structures for schooling, partnerships with families take up a central role.

mainstream curriculum, as a way of developing an emancipatory school integration and social justice approach.

7. See the concept of 'funds of knowledge', which views families as possessing valuable knowledge and resources that should be integrated and valued in the pedagogical practices of schools (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005).

8. Proverb attributed to various African cultures.

The positive effects of family participation and involvement in children's school life are widely documented (DaRos-Voseles & Fillmore, 2015). The school environment, academic performance, social development and student behaviour improve when families work as a team with the school and with teachers. The participation of families in school and their involvement take on different nuances, which may include participation in activities and events promoted by the school; presence in meetings and invitations from the school, and in parents' associations; support to school assignments and promotion of academic skills at home. However, the most successful practices of effective school-family partnership in an inter/multicultural framework highlight the importance of valuing the role of families in school and their empowerment (Norris, 2018). Examples of good practices include school policies and practices that are culturally relevant and adapted to the needs of families; modes of communication that are continuous, effective, intentional and adapted to the needs and resources of families; deep knowledge of families, their interests, know-how and needs, which leads to a relationship based on mutual respect and trust; programming of culturally relevant and integrating school activities, far from cultural stereotypes and superficial relationships, which promote authentic and mutually enriching interpersonal relationships that overcome attitudes of distrust on both sides (Norris, 2018).

On the other hand, the curriculum to be implemented in schools integrates issues of interest to students, having been planned in a collaborative way, between teachers and between teachers and students, without neglecting the effective grasping of academic knowledge. A curriculum that seeks to integrate the knowledge coming from the various subjects - academic knowledge - with topics, issues and interests of students, and with the knowledge and know-how coming from students and their families. Even if teaching and learning are directed towards what appears to be instruction based on subjects, curricular integration creates a thematic context. In addition to endowing the classroom with a democratic and participatory nature, curricular integration endows knowledge with meaning to be learned which integrates, harmoniously, the various types of knowledge coming from the subject fields with the students' cultural and social knowledge and experiences:

> (...) young people involved with curricular integration will be more likely to be involved with richer, more sophisticated and more complex forms of knowledge, than those who are limited within the parameters of the various subjects: critical and creative thinking, valuing and

> developing meanings, problem solving and social action. (...) as knowledge is applied instrumentally to significant topics, we finally see, in these classrooms, a demonstration of the old slogan, 'knowledge is power'" (Beane, 2003, p. 106, transl.).

The aim of curricular integration is to promote social integration (Beane, 2003) and academic success. It seeks to create democratic communities within the classroom, as well as practices of pedagogical differentiation that adequately respond to different paces, interests, motivations, capabilities, etc., such as diversifying content, resources, tasks, and organizing pedagogical work in different ways (project work, tutorials, cooperative learning, debates, problem solving and learning by discovery, presentations, exhibitions, demonstration of skills, multimodality in processes and products, formative evaluation, and continuous feedback, etc.).

In the development of pedagogical differentiation devices, cooperative learning is particularly important as a form of learning in which group members work together, in order to maximize their own learning and the learning of others (PPDS, n/d). It allows obtaining inputs from different sources and using different resources, interacting significantly, and achieving results that are the product of a combination of efforts and differentiated contributions.

In cooperative learning, the development of social skills is very important. Groups are formally organized and each person has a specific role, working, not in a group, but as a group. In setting up and functioning of groups, the following must be considered (PPDS, n/d):

- The less time there is, the smaller the group must be;
- The larger the group, the more effective students must be in managing interaction, and the more support they will need to carry out the task;
- The nature of the task and the available resources should dictate the size of the group; with children, as they gain experience, they can work in groups of three, then four, and possibly five;
- The allocation of roles (such as speaker, listener, supporter; speaker, listener, noise manager; scribe, reader, questioner; speaker, questioner, scribe/ secretary, task manager, rapporteur...) facilitates work management, and all members of the group should experience different roles, as group work skills are not instinctive;

- Social skills for group work must be taught; there are two areas under development and evaluation in group work: the task itself and the group work skills;

- Give students the opportunity to create their own group work rules and 'internal rules' to regulate the task (STOP, volume down, completion, and help request signs...).

In an inter/multicultural education, (re)thinking learning assessment practices is critical, as they convey messages about what is important to evaluate and how. In line with the collaborative way of working, students and teachers generally work together in order to establish relevant and appropriate learning assessment methods and criteria (Beane, 2003). It is important to expand the objects to be evaluated, to diversify the parties involved in the evaluation; the timings, spaces, assessment strategies and instruments (in addition to the well-known tests, to develop assessment by portfolio, project, demonstrations and exhibitions, etc.), as well as the ways of implementation (individual, in pairs, as a group), developing a type of socio-constructivist evaluation (Fernandes, 2005).

Such evaluation shows the complexity and subjectivity of the evaluation process, recognizing that it is impossible to fully grasp what students actually know and are capable of doing. Evaluation is always carried out within a context, so it is localised, and thus it is influenced by factors such as investment, motivation, attitudes, reactions and affective relationships, feelings and expectations. To account for such complexity and situational nature, evaluation must be integrated into the teaching processes (and not carried out separately, at different, separate points in times), count on meaningful tasks, consistent with the curriculum and instruction in the classroom. It is important to consider gathering information not only on students' knowledge, but also on their skills and learning strategies, their difficulties and issues. It must be fair and equitable, serving the creation of different moments and opportunities for learning, which are offered regardless of factors such as previous (lack of) success, gender, ethnicity, language, or the student's economic or sociocultural environment.

3. Organization of teaching work

Inter/multicultural education in schools requires certain attitudes and knowledge from teachers, such as sociolinguistic awareness, cultural empathy, openness to new ideas, social commitment and critical reflexivity (Roth, & Duarte, 2008, pp. 26-27). It is important that schools are able to communicate successfully with students and their families from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, which requires cultural empathy, as well as an open mind to be able to interact impartially.

Reflection ensures that teachers are aware of their performance, in order to adapt their practices to the needs of a culturally diverse teaching context. It is essential that such teachers are mentally available to critically question their personal theories and practices, to cooperate in planning an inclusive education, to evaluate together, and offer support and advice. They do this while also contributing to the development of a common school philosophy that regards inclusive education as being open to difference, and which asserts the democratic participation of all as part of a successful school.

In the critical regulation of teaching work, peer supervision takes on a central role. As theory and practice of critical and collaborative regulation of teaching-learning and professional development processes in a formal educational context, based on a vision of education as a space for the transformation of subjects and contexts (Vieira, 2010; Vieira & Moreira, 2011), supervision places itself at the service of the school's mission and at the implementation of its educational project (Glickman et al., 2001). In this ethical-conceptual framework, supervision in schools serves a social transformation project, when it aligns teaching work - in the sense of seeing education as a space for personal and social emancipation - with the purposes of developing schools as communities of learning in a humanist and democratic society.

There are several pedagogical supervision strategies, carried out among peers or in a hierarchical way (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1. Supervision strategies (Vieira, & Moreira, 2011, p. 27, transl.)

STRATEGIES	REGISTERING COLLECTING INFORMATION	SUPERVISORY PRINCIPLES	PARTICIPANTS/ Supervisory actors)
Self-questioning/ Self-assessment	Questionaires/guides Filed notes Reflective records	Critical Inquiry Critical Intervention Democracity Dialogue Participation Emancipation	Teacher Educator-supervisor Trainee-Teacher Students (Other collaborators)
Reflexive dialogue	Audio/video recording Field notes Reflective records		
Document analysis	Grids/guides		
Inquiry	Questionnaire Interview (field notes/ redordings		
Classroom observation	Grids Audio/video recording Field notes Reflective records		
Professional narratives	Field notes Reflective records		
Teaching portfolio	Documents of practice Reflective records		
Action research	(All the above)		

Among the various strategies, classroom observation takes on a central role, as it gathers direct information on the learning and teaching processes that take place in classrooms. However, it only fulfils the purposes identified above when it focuses on imagining possibilities or alternatives rather than verifying expected, predetermined behaviours. Observing in order to imagine possibilities redirects one's gaze to what is not, to what may still come to be, so that the observation of classes is at the service of the transformation of professional action and schools. Observation is not an end in itself, it is rather part of a process of understanding and intervening based on critical inquiry and comprehension, reflexivity, dialogue, and informed praxis (Moreira, 2011).

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CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

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Introduction

The research work carried out within the scope of the RISE Project was based on the socio-critical paradigm, concerned with the reduction of social inequalities and injustices that hit socio-cultural groups in a situation of structural subordination. In this sense, the research method used was action-research, a qualitative method that articulates research with action and training in a simultaneous process. Against the backdrop of the objectives of the RISE Project, the choice for this method was based on the potential it offers, not only in the professional development of teachers for cultural diversity, but also in changing educational practices. This would result from an analytical introspection exercise of their pedagogical practices, whose ultimate purpose is the development of inter/multicultural education through the construction of pedagogical devices. This methodological option highlights the importance of identifying the RISE Project team and the intervening actors as one of the central features of this paradigm. The commitment to a certain conscious and critical social transformation, with regard to power relations and social inequalities, is required to enhance a type of inter/multicultural education that contributes to the emancipation of the Roma minority within the school socio-cultural territory.

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The methodological component is divided into three parts: one dedicated to the explanation of the action research method; the other to the presentation of research and intervention techniques, and finally, the results of data analysis in the diagnostic phase of the project.

1. The action research methodology

Action research is a reference method when one seeks to change the social and power relations of certain minorities present in society and in the school system, as is the case of the Roma minority. The option for this method was not neutral, and, in the words of Santos (1999), there is nothing less neutral than making methodological and technical options, since they are rooted in epistemological choices, that is, in the choice for a certain paradigm and knowledge production model. The arguments supporting this methodological option made by the RISE Project gravitated around a set of principles rooted in a certain vision of society, of social science and, consequently, of knowledge production that aims at building less unfair societies, contributing to its humanization.[4] Thus, the construction of knowledge is not neutral, but rather political, based on the values of social justice.

Action research is the method that enhances this ideal, which should be present in the consciousness of all teachers, promoting education "for social and political responsibility" (Freire, n/d, p. 88). This responsibility of the act of educating implies disclosing and recognizing the existing power relations in a given society or context and that lead to social and cultural reproduction (Bourdieu & Passeron, n/d), so that, from such acknowledgement, it can combine reflection with practice, transforming the teacher into a 'transformative-intellectuals' (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1992), involved in a process of social transformation. Thus, teachers also play the role of researchers in their pedagogical practices, building knowledge from reflection on their own practices.

Goyette and Lessard-Herbert (1987), talking about the theoretical foundations of research-action in Kurt Lewin, considered the father of the method, refer that for the author, action research productively articulates action,

4. We talk about building less unfair societies (which means changes within the same paradigm) because for the construction of paradigmatic changes we need a step-by-step approach to the social ideal that we intend to build, undermining the inequalities inside, in the social structures that are hidden and naturalized.

research and training in order to produce social change. In this sense, "knowledge is produced in *direct confrontation* with reality, trying to transform it, and *social knowledge is produced collectively by social actors, deconstructing* the role of 'specialist' normally assigned to the social scientist" (Guerra, 2000, p. 75). Indeed, in this method, all social actors are both practical and theoretical, producing knowledge from the analysis of reality and the action on it.

In action research, implication and transformation are an integral part of the process (Freire, n/d), two of the fundamental features of this method and that make it unique in the set of research methods, as it discloses the importance of power in society and the role of the school in the definition of social reality (Bourdieu & Passeron, n/d). It requires educators who are conscious, critical, reflective and committed to the transformation of school and society. For this purpose, researchers and practitioners form a single group, where each of its elements is simultaneously theoretical and practical, actively participating in the process of building knowledge and thus constituting the 'collective researcher'. Teachers and students become co-producers of knowledge (Haguette, 1992), a situation that not only has the merit of - for 'ethical' reasons - respecting research participants, but also for 'epistemological and methodological' reasons, enhancing 'real' knowledge about the population when it becomes part of the research process. Still, for 'ideological' reasons, it claims that oppressed populations must generate their own knowledge about their own reality, in order to become aware of the situation of domination in which they live and, in an organized way, fight for the transformation of the causes of such oppression (Haguette, 1992). For this, the oppressed populations need academic knowledge that enhances the production of knowledge about their realities and social condition.

Participants in critical participatory action research

> aim to change their social world collectively, by thinking about it differently, acting differently, and relating to one another differently – by constructing other practice architectures to enable and constrain their practice in ways that are more rational (in the sense that are more reasonable), more productive and sustainable, and more just and inclusive. (Kemmis, McTaggart, & Nixon, 2014, p. 17).

They embrace a commitment to social justice and thus an involvement with people in oppressing conditions, living situations characterized by

inequality and/or social, political and cultural segregation, as is the case of the most Roma communities.

In summary, considering action research in education means:

a) becoming aware that knowledge is power and not something purely technical or instrumental, and which may be either at the service of domination or of social autonomy and freedom;

b) understanding the importance of analytical and critical approaches at naturalized social phenomena, identifying ideological interpretations as false awareness;

c) identifying macro-structural constraints that interfere in the possibilities of action of social actor-subjects, which often appear naturalized and, consequently, invisible to an analysis of society theoretically unprepared.

Therefore, these were the assumptions that guided the development of the RISE Project and the involvement of teachers, technical staff, students and families in a logic of action research. Through it we sought to overcome the subject-object dichotomous perspective of research, and foster a work of collective construction of knowledge and application of that knowledge of which the pedagogical differentiation devices developed by teachers and technicians are good examples.

2. Research techniques

In order to respond to the purpose of the project, and to the research and intervention objectives, we defined the following techniques for collecting and analysing information: document analysis, semi structured interviews, direct observation, and content analysis.

2.1 Document analysis

In a first stage of the implementation of the RISE Project, it was important to know and characterize the situation of Roma communities, not only at national level but also at local level, more specifically at the level of the schools where the project was being developed. Documents analysis is essential to understand the plan of guidelines for action, by which the various organizational actors govern their actions.

Thus, document analysis allows us to understand the context of a given community through statistical data, as well as to understand the principles that govern such community. Bearing in mind the objectives of the RISE Project, a selection of fundamental national legislation documents was carried out, and the respective content analysis was conducted. Several categories of analysis were developed in order to carry out the analysis, namely: Cultural difference, Racism, Non-discrimination, Inclusion or Integration, Equal access/ success, Democratization, Human Rights.

From the content analysis developed it was visible that the most expressive category in all legislative documents of the three countries is **Equality of access/success**, followed by the categories **Inclusion/Integration,** and **Democratization and Non-Discrimination** (Table 3.1.). These categories are present in all the analysed legislation of Portugal, Italy and Slovenia. On the other hand, the least expressive category in all legislative documents is **Racism**, which does not appear both in the Portuguese and Italian Constitutions, but is present in the Slovenian one. The categories **Human rights** and **Cultural difference** have reduced expression. The first (Human rights) is present with one article in the Portuguese, Italian and Slovenian Constitutions and one article in the Portuguese and Slovenian Laws on the educational system, while the second (Cultural difference) is only present in two articles of the Basic Law of the Educational System (Portugal) and in one article in the Italian and Slovenian Constitutions. However, 'cultural difference' is implied in expressions such as 'religion' and 'language'. Concerning the category **Racism**, although it does not have any correspondence in articles in both the Portuguese and Italian Constitutions, the word "race" is referenced to emphasize that no one should be 'privileged' or 'disadvantaged' on the basis of that origin. An explanatory hypothesis for the very reduced expression of this category is that there is a difficulty in recognizing, discursively, the existence of racism in the three countries, Portugal, Italy and Slovenia.

Table 3.1. Categories present in the legislative documents (Constitution, educational laws and National Strategies) and its expression

	Countries		
Categories	**Portugal**	**Italy**	**Slovenia**
Democratization	xxx	xxx	xxx
Equality of access/success	xxxxx	xxxxx	xxxxx
Inclusion/Integration	xxx	xxxx	xxxx
Non-discrimination	xx	xx	xx
Human rights	xx	x	x
Cultural difference	x	xx	xx
Racism			x

Legend: xxxx - high expression / xxx and xx - medium expression / x - minor expression

2.2 Direct observation

Direct observation was another of the techniques used. Direct observation implies a time in places to be observed without great interaction from the researchers with the subject-actors who interact in these contexts (Neves, 2008; Casa-Nova, 2009). This technique was important during individual and collective interviews, as well as in the classroom, during the development of pedagogical devices. During the interviews, it allowed to articulate the non-verbal language with the content of the conversation, allowing a minimal triangulation of the data; during the construction of the pedagogical devices, it allowed to perceive how this pedagogical tool enabled the apprehension of academic knowledge, the increase of the students' self-esteem and autonomy.

2.3 Semi-structured Interviews (individual and collective)

In addition to the document analysis, individual and collective semi-structured interviews were also conducted to key stakeholders of the schools: members of the school management board; teachers; technical staff of the schools; operational assistants; Roma fathers and mothers. The choice for this research technique is of paramount importance as it allowed us to get to

know, through the voice of the educational actors interviewed, their opinions on certain fundamental aspects for the practical foundation of the project. The option for semi-structured interviews, that is, interviews that are not entirely open nor guided by a large number of precise questions, allowed interviewees to better explain and develop their thoughts, through new questions that would appear in the course of the interview.

Prior to conducting the interviews, the project was presented to all respondents with regard to its purposes, objectives, activities, as well as the objectives relating to the interviews to be conducted and information on the use of the information gathered in the interviews. Anonymity was also ensured and recording of the interview was requested. Based on this information, and in accordance with scientific and ethical requirements, interviewees and researchers signed an informed consent. In the case of children (with children, collective semi-structured interviews were conducted), informed consent was requested from their parents/ guardians. At the time of the interviews, the children verbally expressed their consent, which was also recorded. Table 3.2. presents a summary of the number of educational actors from the schools involved in the project that were interviewed.

Table 3.2. Data on the number and type of educational actors interviewed in the project

		School managers	Teachers	Social workers	Other school professionals	Presidents of Parents' Association	Parents	Students
Portugal		2	8	4	3	2	5 Roma	12 (6 Roma)
Italy	Bari	1	2	4	—	—	3 (2 Roma)	3 Roma
	Bolonha	2	4	2	——	—	2 (1 Roma)	13 (4 Roma)
Slovenia		5	9	—	—	—	6 (4 Roma)	8 (4 Roma)

In Portugal, 24 interviews were held: individual interviews were carried out to two school managers, eight teachers (6 from primary schools and 2 from a lower secondary school, 7 women and 1 man with an average of 20 years of experience in teaching); to four social workers (one men from the partner NGO and three women working in the schools involved in the project - 2 social assistants and 1 psychologist); to three other school professionals, all women; individual interviews to five Roma parents (two men and three women); and to two presidents of the Parent´s Association

(2 mothers). Four collective interviews were carried out with three Roma students and three non-Roma students, in two schools, aged between 6 and 11, in separate groups.

In Italy, 20 interviews were developed: individual interviews were made to three school managers from two schools in Bologna and one school in Bari; to six teachers (four from primary schools and two from lower secondary schools, five women and one man of ages between 36 and 59, with an average of 20 years of experience in teaching); to five parents (three Roma and Sinti parents, four mothers and one father of ages between 29 and 48); to six social workers from public and private social services. These included three educators and two social workers, a psychologist and a social assistant. Furthermore, three collective interviews were carried out with children and teenagers that involved Italian and foreign Roma and Sinti children between 7 and 14 years old.

In Slovenia, 20 individual interviews were held with: five school directors (their average age is 47 and they have about 17 years of experience in teaching; all of them have experience in working with Roma children); nine teachers; six parents (four Roma and two Non-Roma). In addition to the individual interviews, two extended meetings were carried out with 71 teachers, social workers, Roma assistants, and four Roma and four non-Roma children. Lastly, six focus groups interviews with teachers were carried out in the participating schools.

The interviews were fundamental for understanding the situation of Roma children in their community context (social, economic, family), in their school context, and in the context of their classroom, from the perspective of various actors, whether teachers, social workers, guardians, and the children themselves.

All interviews were fully transcribed and anonymized and, after transcription, a content analysis was carried out based on a priori categories (resulting from the interview scripts), and through the construction of emerging categories (resulting from the analysis of the interview contents). There were some categories common to the content analysis of the interviews in the three countries, namely *school attendance, absenteeism and school dropout; importance of pre-school; difficulties in the transition between primary and secondary school; difficulties in the learning process; language and problems in communicating and learning; sociocultural and familiar context; acquisition of social skills; tailored learning practices; interpersonal relations; discrimination*

towards Roma children and families; intercultural education; parents involvement with schools; and *teacher´s role***.**

There are different realities in the three countries and even within countries, with some regions/ schools managing to greatly reduce the rates of absenteeism and dropout of Roma students. The transition from one schooling cycle to another, from one school to another, or even from one teacher to another is regarded as problematic, as the relationship between Roma families and the school, perceived as distant and lacking trust on both ends.

Generally, Roma students are perceived by teachers as immature, lacking interest in academic matters, having low cognitive abilities, coming from deprived family and sociocultural contexts, and having scarce or non-existent identification with the school institution. Their lack of proficiency in the language of instruction plays an additional negative role.

On the other hand, Roma children and teenagers interviewed agreed that the greatest difficulties faced by them belong to the sphere of relationships with their peers. Teasing, slights and even bullying are all situations which threaten the well-being of children and teenagers, as well as their self-esteem, making them feel insecure in relationships with their peers and demotivated in terms of school commitment.

For all educational actors, it appears to be very important to create an inclusive learning environment, the construction of positive relationships between all, of mutual trust, especially between teachers and Roma students and parents. Building positive relationships and a fruitful dialogue with the students should result in a curriculum plan capable of involving them in the lessons, of stimulating them, and of generating interest.

An important issue addressed in the three countries is the prejudice and discrimination towards Roma children and families, from other students and parents. Constructing relationships based on awareness and respect towards differences appears to be of paramount importance. To that end, additional work focusing on the construction of positive relationships among all actors is needed. Regarding the teachers' work in the classroom, there is a recognition of the need to advance professional development actions aimed at developing didactic plans tailored to suit each individual student, capable of valorising the potential and talents of each pupil, while also intervening to help them with specific shortcomings and fragilities. Another important aspect that arises as a facilitator for the inclusion of Roma children in classes

is the acquisition of social skills, as the observance of school rules and school routines and schedules.

Conclusion

The results of the diagnostic phase of the RISE project reinforced the need for it to take place: Roma students and their families keep on lingering on the fringes of the social, educational, and economic abysses created by centuries of exclusion, discrimination, and racism. In spite of the contextual differences found, with regions/ schools managing to have higher success in reducing absenteeism and dropout, in approximating Roma and non-Roma, in minimising the lack of trust of Roma families in the school, etc., the fact remains that these students present the lowest rates of attendance and academic success in the three countries.

The results of the interviews highlight the key role of schools, but mainly of the teachers, in advancing a social justice agenda. The teacher is a facilitator and coordinator of the inclusion process, a guide in building positive and non-discriminatory relationships between peers, who takes into account the diversified (relational, educational and didactic) needs of students in his/her class, valuing the potential and skills shown by each student without forgetting to involve parents in their children's learning process.

In increasingly heterogeneous schools and classes (in terms of cultural, ethnic or religious backgrounds, of class belonging, or of personal and family-related situations and experiences), the figure of the teacher takes on a central role. Teachers are responsible for selecting the method to be used with the class and play a key role in involving and stimulating the students during daily activities, managing the times and rhythm of each lesson, and also identifying the correct moment for pauses, dialogue and reciprocal acquaintance. In the next part of the book, we will show how the participating teachers, aided by other social actors like mediators, psychologists, or social workers, working in a participatory action research mode with their students and their families, can become agents of transformative change in their schools (Zeichner, 2019).

We will also see that, with differences between countries and between schools within the same country, the development of the project has made it possible to reduce absenteeism and school failure.

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CHAPTER 4. AN INCLUSIVE PERSPECTIVE ACROSS NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN ITALY

Maria Teresa Tagliaventi, Giovanna Guerzoni, Luca Ferrari, Marco Nenzioni and Licia Masoni[1]

1. Rethinking inclusive school education: Rise project, a model meant to be shared

As has been noted already, within a framework of general action that has been decided upon collectively, each partner in the project has presented its intervention, considering the regional context, local institutional policies, efforts completed before the Rise project, and the existing network of local services.

In Italy, the project was launched in Bologna and Bari in collaboration with their respective municipalities. Two different areas, one in the North (Emilia Romagna) and one in the South (Apulia), were chosen to broaden the study's perspectives. The two cities differ in terms of the degree of inclusion of Roma children and existing social policies. The Roma communities in each location are also different. In Bologna, the community is mainly Roma-Sinti (Italian citizens), while in Bari the majority is from Romania and from former Yugoslavia.

In Bologna, the Roma and Sinti community is estimated to have about 750-800 people, 300 of whom reside in three authorised camps (Erbosa, Bargellino, Savena) managed directly by the municipality of Bologna through collaboration with volunteer organisations. Many families reside in public housing provided by social services. Some groups also live in unauthorised settlements, some of which are supported by social service entities working to provide stable housing.

In Bari, the population is estimated to have about 350-400 Roma from Romania in particular, almost all of them residing in unauthorised,

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scattered settlements mainly in the peripheral areas of Japigia, Carbonara and Poggiofranco, or in an authorised camp (Japigia-Santa Teresa).

All settlements have many children of school age, who are not always given the opportunity to attend school regularly.

According to the latest Fondazione ISMU-MIUR report (2016, school year 2014-2015), 121 Roma children aged between 6 and 14, and 79 Roma children aged between 6 and 14 were enrolled in school. These figures might be underestimated, because families may not claim to belong to Roma or Sinti communities. Considering the number of children in the settlements, as recorded by both the local municipal administration and by the associations working with Roma communities, there is a high rate of evasion and early school drop-out. The percentage of pupils not admitted in subsequent school years is also very high.

In Italy, the social policies regarding Roma and Sinti communities are based on both national and regional regulations. The national framework of reference is the *National Roma, Sinti and Camminanti Inclusion Strategy 2012-2020*, which was adopted by the Council of Ministers on 24/02/2012, delivered to the European Commission on 28/02/2012, and approved on 22/05/2012.

On a regional level, the effort undertaken by Emilia Romagna compared to Apulia regarding Roma communities is a bit older, dating back to 1988 (Regional Law of November 23 1988, No. 47, "Norme per le minoranze nomadi in Emilia-Romagna"), and included the issuance of a specific law. It was followed by the approval of another law in 2015 (Regional Law of July 16 2015, No. 11, "Norme per l'inclusione sociale di rom e sinti"), aimed at aligning regional policies with European Union recommendations and with the aforementioned National Strategy.[2]

The Region of Apulia has still not issued its own law on the policies and interventions to be adopted regarding Roma communities. Instead, it has referred to Regional Law No. 32/2009, aimed at defining the areas of intervention that would benefit EU and non-EU citizens.

Since 2013, the cities of Bologna and Bari have participated in the National Project for the Inclusion and Integration of Roma, Sinti and Caminanti children promoted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, currently financed through the PON (National Operation Policy) inclusion programme. That

2. Regional Law. 11/2015 is organized into four basic axes: living, school and training, work, and health.

project is aimed at further integrating Roma and Sinti children through activities related to school, camps and other areas of daily life, while also getting their families involved. In the city of Bari, this project was the first of its kind regarding Roma children. In Bologna, on the other hand, the project was preceded by various interventions organised by local services, and specific activities financed by European funds. The two settings (Bologna and Bari) are thus quite different: the first has a history of past interventions, while the second is almost a newcomer to the field.

Within the context of the Rise Project, and for both cities, the Italian team decided to work with schools and/or classes that were not involved in the project overseen by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, asking local administrations to continue the project, and to adopt it, if it is ultimately deemed effective.

The collaboration with local administrations, i.e. the municipalities of Bologna and Bari, was a good choice as it acted as an effort multiplier, and ensured that the project could work in synergy with the local social services staff.

1.1 Project details

Before examining the details of the project, it is important to remember that the context analysis was at the base of the definition of the various actions. It was carried out through a study on available statistical data, laws and qualitative research (with interviews to key stakeholders), which can already be considered part of the action research as described in previous chapters. The results were used as a starting point.

Ever since the beginning, the project has been defined by its complexity, caused by a multiplicity of actions, entailing the involvement of various professions, the need to work as a network and to have a long-term plan for all activities, shared as much as possible by all those involved. The work was then doubled, as it was carried out in two locations and adapted to each participant's different needs.

The idea of inclusion as a common good, aimed at building a receptive system that is inclusive for all, has been transformed into a series of initiatives. Many of these initiatives were identified when the Rise Project was drafted, while others were added later on, as they were considered as necessary.

The courses of action were:

- a training programme for teachers, social workers and ATA staff, on inclusive educational methods, and on discrimination, intercultural pedagogy, and the history of the Roma and Sinti communities;

- activation of action research throughout the entire process, used as a tool to observe, analyse, interpret, and refocus the activities of the group participating in the training sessions and the researchers (Figure 4.1.);

- meetings with the participation of local services that oversee actions geared towards Roma children and adolescents facing particular challenges and their families;

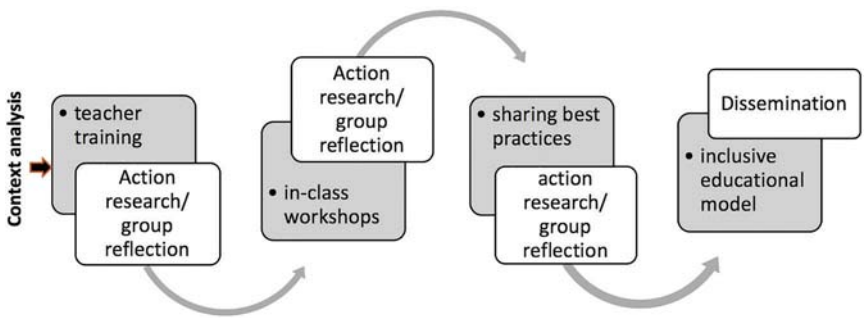
- promotion of educational workshops for all students in the classes involved, aimed at enhancing social skills, participation or know-how;

- implementation of storytelling workshops for all students in the classes involved, aimed at creating a story that deals with the topics of interculturalism, prejudice, or gender discrimination, through the use of animation techniques;

- organisation of a workshop entitled "Rise English: Connecting with the World" (see section 6 below);

- sharing of best practices aimed at creating a widespread, inclusive educational model. This point included the publication of a booklet entitled "For an inclusive school. Best practice proposals" , written by 24 teachers involved in the project and distributed to all teachers, social workers and schools taking part in the project.

Figure 4.1. Project Management



Before moving on to a discussion of the various action steps, we should highlight a few of the project's organisational strengths, and it should be noted that they have helped make the project useful and effective, impacting various activities:

constant co-planning of the project's various steps with all professionals involved, starting from school heads and local managers of social-educational services from both municipalities, teachers, children, pre-adolescents and, whenever possible, with their families and representatives of the Roma community. This has taken time and energy, especially during the initial organisational phase in which one had to explain the project and its overall structure multiple times, and support the active involvement of various actors;

the aforementioned *collaboration with local administrations*, i.e. the municipalities of Bologna and Bari – which have helped strengthen the project locally and helped make it an active part of the local network of services – aimed at supporting Roma and Sinti minors and their families in their respective municipalities. This synergy has made it possible for the research group at the University of Bologna to collaborate with social services and educational institutions, agreeing on each of the project's actions, through a clear definition of mutual responsibilities and shared choices;

the presence of *two tutors/researchers* whom, on a local level, have not only coordinated and organised various actions, but have also acted as an 'antenna' for special requests coming from teachers and other professionals, making it possible to amplify discussions on action research and intervene quickly when problems or requests were identified;

the *involvement of various experts*, both in-house and external to the Department of Education Studies at the University of Bologna. They were selected for their specific expertise and have taken part in various ways, either by guiding the entire project or just part of it, plus the formation of a research committee within the Department related to different fields: sociology, education, anthropology and foreign literature[3]. It is also worth mentioning the importance of the five interns from the 2nd-cycle degree in Education at the University of Bologna, who dedicated 300 hours each to the project. They supported the work of the teachers at school, carrying out

3. The Department of Education Studies of the University of Bologna team consists of Maria Teresa Tagliaventi (Coordinator), Emmanuel di Tommaso (Project manager), Giovanna Guerzoni, Ivana Bolognesi, Lisa Cerantola, Franco Fiore, Luca Ferrari, Marco Nenzioni, Licia Masoni, and Federica Tarabusi.

in-class observation, checking in with some boys and girls in particularly critical situations, and providing support to social works in the field. Through their contributions and the reading and subsequent discussions of their daily 'logbooks', the project has consistently been able to identify problems and prospects for change in real time, and to bring a different 'face' to the project;

a *robust programme of meetings* to check in on and monitor the project by the group of researchers, which included the involvement of local contacts or school heads, depending on the topic being addressed;

the use of a few assessment tools along the way, in addition to those programmed into the project's evaluation system, coordinated by Istituto degli Innocenti. Of all the tools used, it is worth mentioning the *sociometric test* (Moreno, 1980), adopted by various teachers in order to create a graphic map (sociogram) of relationships within the class and identify the position that individual students occupy within the social group at the time of administration, and the *focus groups* with teachers and other social actors.

1.2. Target and subjects

The need to reflect on an inclusive school starting from Roma and Sinti children's needs, and the desire for a scientific institutional framework in which to place the classroom activities in relation to a multitude of cultural affiliations, was quite clear by the number of comprehensive schools and teachers that participated in the Rise Project, exceeding our expectations.

The government that was in office for a significant part of the project did not seem favourable to its development. From June 1 2018 to September 5 2019, the Minister of the Interior and Deputy Prime Minister was in fact a member of the Lega Party (nationalist right-wing). Matteo Salvini is a politician known for having sided against the Roma population on many occasions, expressing his ideas through colourful wording and even making a formal request for an ethnic census. Despite this political context, requests to take part in the project increased gradually as it solidified, so much so that the data below do not include all the teachers and social workers who participated in the various training sessions – as some did not have Roma students in their class – but only those with Roma and Sinti students in their classes who were involved from the very beginning. The decision made by school officials to distribute Roma students through different class groups (i.e. to

avoid placing Roma students in the same class, even if they were of the same age), explains the high number of classes involved. The teachers of these classes voluntarily chose to be part of the project and, at times, explicitly requested to participate in the training.

As shown in Table 4.1., the project involved the participation of teachers and students from Comprehensive Schools 4, 5, 9, 10, 11 and 14 in Bologna, and those of the Japigia district in Bari: XVII (known as Poggiofranco), EL/7 (known as Montello-S.M. Mantomauro). In total, 15 schools were involved, with 38 class groups, 78 teachers, 779 primary and middle school (lower secondary school) pupils, 54 of whom were either Roma or Sinti. The number of teachers and social workers participating in the training events on Roma culture and history, not directly involved in the Rise project, was over 40.

In Bologna, the project was mostly aimed at middle schools, considered the weak link in the education system due to the high percentage of truancy among Roma students, and the lack of institutional intervention. In Bari, it took place mostly at primary schools due to the young age of the Roma students involved.

In Bari, all participating students resided in local settlements. One of these camps has been regularized by the municipality, while the other, located on a private plot of land, is not in compliance with the law. This settlement suffers from hygiene and health-related issues. The families live in self-made houses, built with recycled materials. In Bologna, the students involved lived in authorised caravan parks, in temporary housing solutions (campers) or in public housing structures.

Table 4.1. Teachers and students involved by city and type of school

		Number of classes	Number of students	Type of school	Number of Roma students	Number of teachers
Bari	Primary school	13	248	4	19	32
	Lower secondary school	6	128	1	7	15
	Total Bari	19	376	5	26	47

Bologna	Primary school	8	179	5	15	9
	Lower secondary school	11	224	5	13	22
	Total Bologna	19	403	10	28	31
	Total	38	779	15	54	78

2. Developing knowledge: Teachers', school staff and social workers' training

To better understand how teacher training was structured, we will need to briefly refer to the history of the integration of Roma, Sinti and Caminanti children in Italian schools over the last 50 years.

In Italy, between 1965 and 1982, and informally through the late 1980s, 'special classes for gypsies' were managed by the Opera Nomadi, a non-profit organisation. Their educational and training activities were defined by the Centro Studi Zingari (Roma Studies Centre) in Rome, and by Mirella Karpati in particular, the creator of 'gypsy pedagogy' (Bravi, 2013). These experiences were heavily criticised after their implementation, as they reinforced the idea that Roma and Sinti students had cognitive difficulties (Bravi, 2013; Piasere, 2010). In addition, they sanctioned a model of 'inclusive' schools that provided Roma students with a low-profile education, which was considered more suitable to them, and carried out in places that were physically separated from the class. Subsequently, schooling for younger Roma generations was governed by fragmented instructions or memos, or as part of policies regarding pupils without Italian citizenship facing issues with learning Italian as a second language, even if more than half of the students were Italian or coming from families residing in Italy for decades. Today's compulsory education system pays plenty of attention to multiculturalism, including through targeted projects. However, inclusion of Roma children is still seen as a problem, and often resolved through a teacher's aide who, in the best of cases, works with the class or with small heterogeneous groups, or in the worst of cases, with individual students outside of class.

The teacher training that was part of Rise took place against this backdrop. As per the project plan, it was split into two branches: one concerning Roma history and culture, the formation of prejudice, and various aspects

of intercultural education;[4] the second concerning knowledge about and in-class use of inclusive teaching methods, especially cooperative learning.[5]

The first training 'branch' was designed around the idea that, in order to promote change, we must intervene not only in the knowledge system, but also in more personal aspects. These have to do with the system in which reality is understood and constructed, with empathy, personal interrelationships, awareness of the ways in which one's social representations are constructed, and how they influence attitudes and opinions. With this in mind, the chosen trainers were experts belonging to the Roma and Sinti community who have grappled with the topics of prejudice, and Roma and Sinti history, by using their own personal life stories as a starting point. Two meetings with two Roma youths (a choreographer and a university student) were particularly important, describing and analysing their relationship with the school, the meaning attributed to being part of the Roma community, their close ties with their families of origin, and the prospects for cultural change present in all communities. These meetings were aimed at unpacking social representations; questioning the widespread belief that the Roma community is a group incapable of having a place in society and which posits 'gypsy students' as inherently problematic; and at generating change in the way the majority group perceives the minority. In addition, Roma history was covered through two theatre/ training performances on the Porajmos, carried out in Bologna and Bari. Through a reading of historic documents, two actor-trainers grappled with the historic process that led to the persecution of Roma and Sinti people, and to the eventual extermination of 23,000 Roma in the Zigeunerlager (Roma camp), spurring the teachers and social workers to reflect on the reasons why has Roma history disappeared from history books and from the cultural background of Europeans. In this case, training was also used as an attempt to recover a shared memory: the reading of a tragic event is enriched by a new point of view, founded upon an

4. In addition to the researchers belonging to the Department of Education Studies at the University of Bologna, other trainers were: Luca Bravi, researcher, University of Florence; Ernesto Grandini, representative of the Sinti community of Prato; Eva Rizzin, researcher, University of Verona; Antonio Ciniero, researcher, University of Salento; Pino Petruzzelli, director/actor, Teatro Stabile of Genoa; Stefania Pontrandolfo, researcher, University of Verona; Senada Ramovsky, university student; Denny Lanza, choreographer and art director; Tomas Fulli, cultural mediator, OpenGroup, Bologna; and Suzana Jovanovic, researcher, University of Verona.

5. The trainers for this curriculum were Stefania Lamberti, Claudia Ciampa, Nadia Olivieri of the InAgorà Research Group / CSI University of Verona.

encounter with the other through sharing and empathy (Bravi, 2009). This sort of 'pedagogy of memory' was tasked with stitching together the historical relationships between the two groups, highlighting the contribution that Roma people have made to Italian and European history.

Each teacher participated in at least 10 hours of training on these topics, and a few chose to take part in additional training events, exceeding the training hours established during the planning stage and that were agreed upon with the school heads.

Cooperative learning training sessions, led by the trainers at the Cooperative Learning Study-Research-Training Group of the Intercultural Studies Centre at the University of Verona, were split into three groups of teachers according to their educational needs: one in Bari and two in Bologna. In two groups (Bologna and Bari), the course was set up as basic training, although implemented according to the needs of the various school grades: more specific for middle-school teachers in Bologna (12 hours), and ad hoc for primary school teachers in Bari (12 hours). It included in-person classroom training (4 hours for each teacher, in addition to the 12 hours), truly a winning choice. At the end of the initial training programme, teachers were asked to design an educational module aimed at their students, based on their own teaching materials, and formulated according to cognitive objectives and the assessment system. They were then asked to implement it with the supervision of trainers. In so doing, the trainers provided the teaching staff with classroom support in the creation of learning spaces in which, encouraged by a positive relational climate, children and pre-adolescents were led to transform each activity into a 'group problem solving' process, achieving objectives that required the personal contribution of all involved (Lamberti, 2010).

This step with 'on the field' training was very much appreciated by teachers, as it helped even the most hesitant and sceptical of them feel confident and competent regarding the changes in perspective required by cooperative learning. During the training programme, particular attention was paid to improving the climate at school (effective in conditioning the learning process), in its two components linked to the interaction between different subjects (regarding emotional, affective and relational aspects) and the organisational/ managerial elements of the class (Chiari, 1997). Applying cooperative learning in class led all students, and especially Roma and Sinti students, to rediscover 'their place' – meaning their place within the class

group – through the knowledge that is essential for the entire educational community (i.e. other students and teaching staff). That frequently led to redefining the often tense or frayed relationships with the school's entire community (managers, ATA staff, families, etc.).

A third group of teachers – composed of primary school teachers who had already completed a basic training course – was given the option to participate in training for 'cooperative learning trainers' (12 hours). In this way, the Rise Project was a knowledge multiplier, as it trained a group of teachers to help promote and spread inclusive methodologies to other teachers, and thus become an inclusive education reference point for their schools.

The topics frequently covered in the training sessions were: the characteristics of and proposals for an inclusive school; the teacher's role; the fundamental elements of cooperative learning, class building and direct teaching of social skills for generating a positive climate in class; the relationship between social skills and positive interdependence, which includes theoretical foundations, direct experience, and planning activities with pupils.

Last but not least in this excursus, it is worth mentioning, within the Rise context, the training of ATA staff members (school staff, administrative secretaries, etc.), which content stemmed from the requirements expressed by some school heads. It was aimed at encouraging those involved to think not only about the Roma minority, but also about the inequalities and differences of all children and pre-adolescents that attend compulsory education. Lasting eight hours and attended by 16 people, who reported being quite satisfied at the end of the programme, the course covered: relationships with families and students; social representation and discrimination at school; communication between families and the school; critical issues and opportunities in intercultural relationships; and school staff and their role in the creation of an inclusive school.

3. Action research, a tool for enhancing teachers' skills

The action research method – by now quite widespread in social research with a focus on schools – is based on the creation of a process that begins by sharing an emerging issue, and on a type of reflexivity that can guide the development of educational actions, as well as on continuous co-planning, with the teacher's professional activities understood as a qualifying element.

This research method can help implement a "planning-reflexive process that proceeds via exploration and discussion, continuously questioning the knowledge, expertise and competencies of those involved" (Nuzzaci, 2018, p. 138). The decision to use this type of approach, shared since the kick-off meeting with the Rise Project partners, could be placed within the framework of two important debates found in all areas of research today: one concerning basic vs applied research (Colajanni, 2014), and one which has led – especially in recent years – to a debate around the methodological, deontological and ethical boundaries between research and engagement. That is, regarding the need for research to both reflect upon its applicational dimensions (in this case, on its impact on inclusive educational processes in school contexts) and, in particular, on the need and manner of 'choosing a side' regarding the very context(s) in which the research is being carried out. "We are facing knowledge that attempts to influence action, and collaborates for the stable construction (based on knowledge) of adequate know-how" (Colajanni, 2014, p. 32). In this sense, creating a complex action research programme, in order to promote truly inclusive schools for all – starting with Sinti and Roma minorities – means operating at scale. By so doing, participatory research projects in 'micro' contexts (the class, relationships in peer groups, the student/ teacher relationship, even the educational strategies adopted, and the school as an organisation) can be developed with the need for a broader view, which can grasp the relationships with 'meso' and 'macro' levels, turning the participatory action research experience into a tool that teachers can use to reflect on the role of schools in community development and, ultimately, their current role in society.

The action research programme for the Rise Project required innovative teacher training regarding the teachers' course structure and, in particular, it required reinforcing their ability to analyse the context (both in and out of school), and a professional reflection on their job as teachers. Nudging the protagonists of school contexts (teachers, administrators, students, educational collaborators) towards reflexive paths in which not everything is taken for granted (the way education is carried out, the lack of school success for some minorities, family absence, etc.) means re-examining school through a new lens, reflecting upon which organisational, educational, and curricular transformations are required in order to create a truly inclusive school. This reflective practice comes to terms with the right to education of minorities. In fact, it can't help but go beyond a process of cultural criticism of 'normality',

of the ability of those who work at school to look at their context and the practices within it 'from a proper distance'. In summary, the added value of the Rise Project perhaps lies more in the process than in its end results.

3.1 Knowing/recognising: 'rejection' as a reflexivity tool in educational professions

Reflexivity and recursivity at the centre of action research take advantage of a plurality of views, including actors that normally are not part of the school or institutional context being studied (academic researchers and educators in training). As such, they can bring out the implicit elements in academic actions: representations of otherness, efficacy and self-efficacy of teaching/ learning methods, the school structure itself, etc. In this way, a guided process of de-familiarisation with the view of the profession and the 'usual' work settings (such as schools) can take place. Education and schooling do not consist merely in supporting the full development of individual personalities, but also in complex, interrelated actions that depend on the development of the community.

According to the experience of anthropological thinking, decentralising the view that can trigger reflection, which starts 'from the side-lines' to deliberate on the processes that it is part of, nourishes the performative ability of critical thinking. In other words, in the dichotomies between centre/ periphery, sedentary/ nomadic cultures, integration/ exclusion (in/ from school), capturing the 'point of view' of the other, of his/her way of constructing and co-participating in the school experience (in our case) 'from the margins', including his/her (and our) failures, is a chance to critically examine the 'normality' that constructs, defines and solidifies the 'centre' of the school experience, its 'normality', thereby allowing us to question it (Aime, 2008).

Operationally speaking, participatory action research methods and the epistemological perspectives of social sciences share

> the goal of producing social change, the planning of a series of coordinated, consistent actions designed for that aim, and the mobilisation of concepts, categories, and targeted anthropological investigations that emerge as conditions specific to this field of action research, which has earned an important space in modern anthropology. The fundamental elements of this tendency are thus: 1. The desire for social change and the formulation of precise objectives and goals (which is all the result of a decision-making process); 2. Planning (drafting of models

> for change, availability of adequate tools, prediction of outcomes); 3. The social and cultural knowledge necessary to achieve the goals indicated (investigations into actions and reactions of the social subjects involved). (Colajanni, 2014, p. 33)

3.2 Why use action research methods at school: the Rise Project experience

As has already been highlighted, the educational activities and school experiences of the Rise Project were carried out according to an action research approach, sharing the goals of the study, its contexts, and the activities implemented with the heads and teachers of the schools involved from day one. That approach involved sending the working group on a path of reflexivity, which was analysed on an ongoing basis, sharing strengths and weaknesses and even identifying, when necessary, sub-objectives or new goals that emerged along the process, as well as the necessary 'adjustments' required for improvement. In effect, the Rise Project has developed the action research model in conjunction with the previously described training setting, making up three working groups[6] (two in Bologna and one in Bari), with teachers from different schools. The groups were entrusted with the task of monitoring the various activities of the project, implementing moments of reflexivity on the pathway and on its impact in the classroom, and considering the specificity of the biographical trajectories of Roma and Sinti children, compared to their backgrounds. The project's research approach was the same in Bari and Bologna, though adapted to each region's needs, both with respect to the participating schools and to the local socio-cultural reality of the Sinti and Roma communities. It is within this pathway that one can speak of research-training, which can be considered a tool for professional development: a situational approach to training that, through the problematisation of a part of the teaching/learning process, aims to change the conditions of the process, starting from the understanding of one's own

6. The action research programme for the Rise Project involved: for Bologna, two groups (one coordinated by Ivana Bolognesi, the other by Giovanna Guerzoni) composed of 18 teachers (middle school), 5 pedagogists in training (interns from the 2nd-cycle degree programme in Pedagogy at the Department of Education Studies of the University of Bologna), and a researcher (Lisa Cerantola). Each of the two groups held 4 meetings during the 2018-19 academic year, plus the first all-hands meeting at the beginning of the project. The Bari group, coordinated by Ivana Bolognesi and tutor Franco Fiore, consisted of 31 teachers. Like Bologna, the training programme was also divided into 4 meetings.

models of reference (implicit and explicit) and the learning conditions (of those involved) (Traverso, 2015, p. 245). Training and research, school procedures and reflexivity have shaped the educational activities in class that have been implemented and then recounted, highlighting the various dimensions that impact schools (from the construction of identity to relationships with others and even broader social dimensions).

What steps should thus be shared with the team of teachers, in order to implement inclusive practices? Presently, what has actually changed in the way of operating and in reflexivity to make schools and education more inclusive? Is individual educational success truly the only way to evaluate 'best practices' in schools? What is meant by an 'inclusive school' (i.e. do we share the same language)? What are the practices and the context that, during the process, prove to be most effective in terms of inclusion? Are there specific features that define the school experiences of Sinti and Roma children, understood as minorities that have historically been discriminated against?

The action research path was implemented through four meetings per group. In these meetings, participants focused their attention on the inclusion/ exclusion practices implemented in their classes or schools, on the addition of Rise laboratories on educational curricular activities, and on the activities of educators in training (interns) to support the inclusion of children and adolescents in the classes involved during normal school hours. For instance, we will take look at the action research project of the Bologna group during the 2018-2019 academic year.

As noted before, carrying out action research through a specific theoretical contribution involves analysing educational *practices starting from and along with the social actors that implement it*, sharing:

- the identification of a *situation-problem* that those involved consider important or pressing;
- the *co-construction* of the goals, method and activities of the intervention;
- *reflexivity* as an intrinsic action of the process and part of its goal;
- the aim of constructing, together, *changes for the better* in the *procedure* itself;
- *process*-related aspects of the project, thanks to the ability to receive *feedback* and use it to identify new actions;

- the *recursivity* (or recursive process[7]) of the study between theory and practice;
- the non-neutrality of the study, its necessarily (politically) engaged nature, which leads to including the repeatability of the project in other contexts or on the upper levels of the organisational structure;
- the need to work towards individual and community empowerment.

The meetings have made it possible to discuss the choices and experiences of each teacher, and the concrete reality of his/her class within the specific context of the school system that the class was part of, with those of other professionals from other contexts.[8] Action research "includes, however, a precondition for its assertion, i.e. that the teachers feel the need to spur change in their professional practice (Elliott, 1991a; 1991b), as their greatest hurdle is often being able to admit that there may be a problem in their way of acting, one that undermines their self-perception and their way of teaching (Elliott, 1991b, p. 141)" (Nuzzaci, 2018, p. 141).

The first step was to investigate the preconceptions that teachers have about their Roma and Sinti pupils. This theme has remained at the centre of the action research project, working as its common thread. Although taking on the biographical trajectory of each Roma student was at the centre of the meetings with teachers, their depictions of the school experience of Roma children were characterised by the use of 'objective' data. The first problematic piece of data mentioned by teachers regarded their irregular attendance, a matter that calls into question the relationships with families and their socio-economic background. The second regards their unsatisfactory, or often drastically insufficient school performance, in part because there is a tendency to 'limit' that evaluation to the fundamental subjects concerning

7. "Recursivity" is used as a qualifying dimension of action research, which consists in implementing a cyclical process, regarding both the dialogical relationship between theory and practice, and the processes of knowledge in the relationship and through the relationship.

8. As an example, we propose one of the 'tracks' followed to conduct the final moment of the action research project (Academic Year 2018/2019): 1. How did this year go with the Rise Project? 2. Do you think the actions (cooperative learning, laboratories, etc.) implemented as part of the Rise Project were helpful in improving your teaching (in relation to inclusion)? 3. What role did the introduction of cooperative learning play in this year's class work? (A. What does it reinforce? B. What did not work? C. What change(s) have you noticed?) 4. What role did the Rise Project workshops play? How did they fit into the curriculum (or how did they not)? 5. Thanks to the Rise Project, have you learned anything new about the RSC (Roma, Sinti and Caminanti) children in your class and their families? 6. In your opinion, what role did the presence of the intern play in the classroom? 7. Are there other aspects impacted by the Rise Project that you would like to bring to our attention?

primary literacy (reading/ writing and mathematics). Ultimately, teachers did not seem to be fully aware of the socialisation process in the peer group, described as an indicator to help demonstrate the advanced degree of acceptance of the class in addition to the relational skills of Roma and Sinti children. At times, even when their integration with the class was described positively, it was contrasted with the data collected by the sociogram, bringing to light the marginal position of most Roma and Sinti children in their peer group:

> Teacher1: we do that at school, but it isn't enough, because you always carry something inside you, and in some cases *maybe the problem is upstream*, meaning it is deeper, and so we can even create different, less traditional experiences...
> R: but *could we define this upstream problem*...
> Teacher2: *there's too big a difference* between their (Roma students) daily lives and the school. I see them as *two different worlds*, and then, in the camp (caravan park), there's no motivation. I mean, I study, I go to school, basically I'm even supported, but when I go home I know that my everyday life won't change. It's pointless for me to go to school and study, in part because I already know what my future is. It's the same future as 30 years ago, that my parents had, and that's hard to change. On the other hand, with the carnival operators, it's different, I mean, there's more familiarity than at school. They're more motivated.
> R. so *the problem could be everyday life*
> Teacher3: I get the impression that there's a rational level where everyone is nice and good, where everyone wants inclusion, and then there's a more unconscious, 'below the surface' level that is also thornier...
> Teacher6: but what my colleague said is interesting, *because it's like they have two parallel lives*. So, it's quite different to have a total lack of rules, to live outdoors, I don't know... to spend all day taking bicycles and scooters apart, *working with their hands*, and then school is indoors, seated at desks doing activities, 90% of which are *abstract activities*. Of course our model of school doesn't work for them.
> Teacher3: you'd need an apprenticeship like in the old days, to become an electrician, to fix scooters.
> Teacher1: In my opinion, however, *we have a prejudice that's upstream*. I have little experience in this area, which is what led me to want to participate in this course with the university and the Rise Project. I met this student that didn't live in a camp, but who lived with his family in a house and he didn't have the issues that we might imagine a Roma or Sinti kid having... And then we have, on the other hand, a Sinti girl this year who is really integrated. So, we try to provide answers, trying to fit Roma and Sinti students into the worst kinds of boxes, stereotypes that even we are mistaken in believing upstream, because they're kids that have the same issues as other pre-adolescents and adolescents living in today's world.[9]

9. From a recording of the work of the Bologna action research group – academic year 2018/2019; for an analysis of the content and process of the action research, see Bolognesi (2020).

Even if along the action research training path it was possible to deconstruct some of the bases upon which the notions held by teachers about the school experiences of Roma and Sinti children were structured, the implicit elements underlying these narratives refer to the idea that inconsistent attendance or dropping out of school are attributable to the 'cultural otherness' of Roma and Sinti students. As a result, their lack of success at school and their risk of marginalisation in peer relationships cannot help but be the result of their lives outside of school (living in a settlement, the inability to have friends from school over to their homes, etc.). This otherness is once again described in terms of cultural essentialism, as it refers to the topic of nomadism as a state considered 'incompatible' with the construction of the learning experience, an exercise that is necessarily stable, continuous, and negotiated by a hierarchical relationship between teacher and student. This 'culturalist' vision seems much stronger to the extent that it actually stops teachers from identifying empirically valid solutions regarding specific cases and situations. Throughout the action research project it was possible to discuss and propose more inclusive alternative solutions, and which often – and not by chance – were interpreted as 'exceptions to the rule' or as a sort of 'professional alibi' behind which teachers often entrenched themselves, namely by noting that 'we did everything we could' or 'we already did that'. In fact, after an analysis that was more attentive to the individual backgrounds of Roma and Sinti students (and thanks to the collaboration of the Municipality of Bologna, a partner in the project), one could identify solutions that have proven that it is possible to dynamically grapple with the school experience of the students, as well as with the interest and willingness of Roma and Sinti families to participate. The teachers' representation of the school experience of their Roma pupils (which often weaves in with other, previous 'cases' they have come across professionally), refers to the way they see the other, crystallised in a form that is much more static when compared to other 'minorities'. Ultimately, it reinforces the idea that their educational failure is an inevitable outcome attributable to their student status of belonging to a minority.

Ethnographic studies conducted by John Ogbu in the 1990s (Ogbu, 2008), on the schooling of voluntary and involuntary minorities in the United States, demonstrated that the ways in which each actor in the school context evaluates his/her own school experience, even the marks received, were not exclusively attributable to in-class teaching activities and their respective

rules, but were instead related to the students' belonging to minority groups. Students from involuntary minority groups in fact interpreted their lack of success using cultural models learned outside of school, which mediated the relationships between majority and minority, and between minorities. The representation of African Americans as inferior, in the American social context, influenced the forms of participation of African American students in the school experience. In particular, it influenced the way in which they made sense of their performance and, ultimately, their educational destiny.

During the central stage of the action research programme, teachers discussed the use of innovative teaching methods, such as cooperative learning, the subject of the teacher-training package for the project, as a tool for socio-educational inclusion. The reflection on didactics has brought forth different positions, while spotlighting, on the one hand, the weight of the 'classroom environment' (the sociocultural composition of the class group, the greater or lesser socio-cultural heterogeneity, the role of other teachers in terms of collaboration or, vice versa, 'resistance' to the inclusion of Roma and Sinti children, the role of school leadership, etc.); on the other, the still rather deeply 'disciplinarian' view of the act of teaching, which clearly distinguishes inclusive practices in primary and secondary schools, the latter being mostly focused on its subdivision into distinct subjects. Teachers who participated in the project considered cooperative learning to be an inclusive resource, though a few did not think it was applicable to all contents in their curricula, in addition to requiring substantial preparatory work. When all was 'said and done', when reflection on the use of cooperative learning in classroom teaching activities made it possible to talk about didactic effectiveness in terms of educational inclusion – considering the work one was doing along the way and taking advantage of the participatory observation of 'educators in training' – the action research meetings were not always sufficient in providing teachers with tools to collect quantitative-qualitative data, to evaluate efficacy, and to completely 'render' the entire path.

On the other hand, throughout the action research programme, it was possible to highlight the often-assimilationist 'micro politics' that often still pervade the school experience, and that are comparatively revealed by a small 'untamed' minority – the Roma and Sinti children. The action research programme has thus made it possible to put into practice the 'proper distance' that alone can demonstrate that which rejection (of the success of best practices where they work, as well as their failures) highlights, offering

a critical eye not only on the efficacy of inclusive actions but also on the very meaning of the school experience. As such, at the end of the 2018-19 academic year, the research group had to take on a position as mediator in negotiating shared reflections that would include the final evaluation (pass or fail) of Roma and Sinti students, which had to be an integral part of the RISE action research project.

3.3 Reflecting on inclusive processes at school

It is useful to rethink the experience of the RISE action research project in light of the new situation brought about by the coronavirus emergency. Not considering it would almost be paradoxical, as it would risk making the rendering of an experience focused on the idea of an inclusive school based on the participatory, reflective contribution of those working in it entirely in vain. Currently, for the first time in modern history, we are forced to face a situation in which many aspects of the best practices of inclusive education (dialogue, mutual recognition, participation, etc.) seem to break down, generating a certain degree of collective disorientation, including the very solutions of 'virtual learning' put into place, which must be assessed in terms of the merit of their inclusivity or exclusion, especially for the most disadvantaged or socially vulnerable classes. For this and other reasons, we believe that

> It is perhaps useful to remember that there are a few basic 'principles and values' that should guide all social promotion research and activities that use an anthropological approach: 1. The idea of cultural pluralism and 'equality of cultures'; 2. Respect for human rights (social and cultural); 3. Defence of minority rights; 4. The promotion, in every way possible, of the equality between human beings and justice; 5. Respect for, and the careful consideration of, the 'points of view' of social actors and the presence of mind to avoid them being damaged (in any way) by the researcher directly or indirectly. (Colajanni, 2014, p. 34).

Nowadays, speaking about processes that have progressively transformed our school in a multicultural sense often engenders the idea that the issue is attributable to the impact of migratory processes upon Italian schools. This implies forgetting that the issue of cultural diversity has been a constant presence in Italian schools, starting from the construction of a national identity based on the assertion of a language and a national literary culture (Homi Bhaba, 1997), at the cost of the plurality of languages found in Italy, and the

subsequent fact that local cultures came to be considered as 'folk' or 'subordinate' cultures from that moment onwards. On the margins of this process, in a position of greater invisibility, we have the Sinti and Roma communities found in Italy in an official form at least from the 15th century, the target of inferiorising representations, and social, political and cultural discrimination. Such representations and cultural prejudice have paved the way for the persecutions that the Sinti and Roma communities (Piasere, 2009) have been subject to at various points in Italian and European history, up to their deportation to concentration camps, uniting their tragic destiny to that of the Jewish community and other groups and individuals persecuted by fascists and Nazis (Bravi, 2014). Despite the fact that diversity should be considered a structural condition of school practices, a shared field of reflection for those working in schools and who have much to learn from the action research of the Rise Project involves a critical analysis of integration/ inclusion processes and of the 'assimilatory' or 'accessory' risks that they imply. On the other hand, the innovative teaching and education methods that are attentive to the specificity of historical-cultural relationships with other cultures that characterise the school experience for teachers and students, as a necessary transformation in the plural sense of school work, must also become an arena for reflection. School is nourished by many scholastic integration experiences, many of which are quite innovative. However, what truly constitutes the qualifying field of education is the achievement of an inclusive culture in terms of: consideration for the background of students and their families; educational goals and their content; teaching methods as well as the tools used to verify and evaluate goals; and, in particular, teachers' reflective capabilities regarding inclusivity in multicultural school environments.

4. Didactic workshops as inclusion promoting tools

For many years, an internal debate has been sparked in Italian schools on how to mend the relationship between traditional deductive teaching methods and practical, situated learning methods. Workshop-based teaching is surely one such tool, and, even if not widely practised, it has nevertheless entered into ministerial programmes.

The use of workshops in the Rise Project went beyond the goal of fostering joint, theoretical and practical learning. Indeed, the workshops had multiple

purposes since they were also used to promote the active participation and integration of all students. Workshops often were the driving force behind the school attendance of Roma and Sinti children and pre-adolescents, as they fully piqued their interest through particularly appealing activities.

Moreover, school – and middle-school in particular – is intrinsically problematic due to dealing with increasingly complex, abstract subjects, often taught via traditional methods (as has emerged from the action research project). Workshop-based teaching can help 'deconstruct' that setting, offering a way of learning the subject matter that is less 'stereotyped', and in which listening, dialogue and action combine to create 'cultural artefacts', the result of collaboration between all members of the class.

As has already been highlighted, the close collaboration of the Department of Education Studies research group with the teaching staff and the representatives of the two municipalities involved has produced a quite detailed workshop system that met the needs of each class, with specific reference to the needs and backgrounds of the Roma and Sinti students present. The programme was calibrated according to the requirements discussed with the teachers and social workers, and co-constructed upon the interests of Roma and Sinti students, and on the difficulties within the class group in general.

Workshop experts were also informed of the true objectives of the programme and it was assured that they would keep an eye out for the Roma and Sinti children in class, creating an environment in which all students could actively participate and fully express their potential.

In general, beyond their specific subjects and topics, all workshops were used as tools to:

- promote social and ethical values such as respect for others, awareness of diversity and inequalities, an understanding of the multiplicity of choices and life paths, and solidarity;
- experience places for construction of knowledge and metacognition, i.e. aimed at a kind of learning that doesn't just define the acquisition of new information and abilities, but also the ways they are understood and used. In this sense, workshops were also used as a tool to define new learning styles on the part of the students;
- redesign teaching styles, experimenting with inclusive education methods, especially cooperative learning and group problem solving;

- change the roles and representations of some students in the class with respect to knowledge and competencies that are unable to emerge in traditionally-taught curricular subjects;
- sustain a positive classroom climate, understood as the atmosphere that, in a learning context, 'reflects the scholastic and socio-emotional life of the class and conditions the process of learning/ teaching through the subtle elements that engage teachers, students, families, the educational community and the social context' (Fisher, 2003, p. 264). A positive classroom climate, founded on intense social-emotional relational dynamics, improves the educational success of all students;
- train students in the practice of active, democratic citizenship.

All proposed workshops enhanced the creativity, imagination and curiosity of students, using art, music, theatre, photography and practical abilities. Depending on the needs and potential of single students and those of the class group, some specific ad hoc workshops were created, according to the requirements of each class. The storytelling workshop on the other hand, was implemented for all classes participating in the project. All workshops were carried out at school, during school hours, in coordination with and in the presence of the teachers involved in the project. Learning-by-doing workshops included a school trip.

4.1 The rap workshop: self-expression and reflections on inequality

I think the rap workshop was a hit, they really liked it and, reflecting on it with colleagues, it fit perfectly in the curriculum because there's this whole reflection on vocabulary, with rhymes and rhetorical figures...It was really great, the kids were really excited about it. [A., lower secondary school teacher, Bologna]

With the rap workshop, having the kids make a single product together, they really felt like part of a group. [C., lower secondary school teacher, Bologna]

The hip hop/rap workshop let the boys and girls express their own way of speaking, their own stories, and their own values, much more than any others. It was carried out in three middle-school classes for a total of about 20 hours per class.

Hip hop is an expression of street culture that arose in New York in the early 1970s, characterised by the practice of four art forms: MCing (the vocal side of rap music), turntablism (the art of DJing, which transforms turntables into a musical instrument), breaking (or breakdancing/b-boying) and writing (graffiti). The Rise Project offered a MCing workshop. The art of MCing is called rapping.

Due to its intense commercialisation, rap has become the most widely-known hip hop element, listened to by adolescents who are fascinated and engaged by it. Rap music is based on biographical narrations that young people identify with, that can help them 'find themselves' or that they can distance themselves from: a large part of rap lyrics are fragments of life stories told in the first person (Fant, 2015). The history of rap is particularly interesting because it came about as a criticism of social and racial inequality.

Through this workshop, even boys and girls who have a hard time writing, reading and communicating were engaged in composing lyrics with great satisfaction, using a communication channel that, on the one hand, encompasses the direct element of spoken language, and, on the other, requires the use of metric rules, rhyme and assonance.

Rap was used as an immediate tool to be shared by all, able to organise one's own language and reasoning. But most importantly, it was a tool through which students were able to talk about themselves, their lives, the way they are represented in the world, and their seeking and recognising themselves in it.

The workshop required the students involved to learn, to enrich their cultural knowledge, to expand their vocabulary as much as possible, and to work with others in order to create a collectively written piece, starting from their own personal stories (Figure 4.2.). It was an instrument to interpret their emotions through artistic expression, and to use music as a way to reflect on how they interact and express their ideas.

Figure 4.2. Rap lab pictures: writing and recording a lyric

The resulting lyrics are quite significant in demonstrating how the rap workshop was a communication space that integrated verbal and non-verbal languages, a landscape in which personal experiences intersect with the lives of others, thereby creating shared meaning[10]:

Intro: We are a passion, as united as a family.
Family, passion, nation... We have a massive mission
We are wild tornadoes
we are a union of different cultures (melting pot)
we are a smiling sun
like a burning star
and a shining moon
we are a tangle of languages
We are a mythical class
like in epic tales
we write our poetry

We are always together
even when we suffer pains and sorrows
we can solve matters pretty well
by meeting up every evening,
choosing the truest things
with the anger that keeps us going,
we all defend ourselves together
through the friendship that sustains us.

We are wandering stars,
traveling clouds
like mountains way up high
we are always together and never in solitude.
We are moody hills
like mathematical operations
we are fantastical cities
more or less friendly.
We are like schools full of students
and our teachers always congratulate us.
We are one person
with one mind,
and now we fly.

10. Students songs are available on www.projectrise.eu

REFRAIN:
Many different people, but one nation; many scattered ideas and one reason, one strength driven by a great mission: this is our opportunity, a new passion.
Many different people, but one nation; many scattered ideas and one reason, one strength driven by a great mission: this is our opportunity, a new passion [...]
[composed by I R Class, "Besta" lower secondary school, Bologna]

For the boys and girls involved, the lyrics became a vehicle, a way to talk about their daily lives, their relationships with others, their teachers, and their families.

The workshops were organised in such a way so that, by the end of the programme, the students would:

- be knowledgeable about the hip hop movement from the 1970s to the present (in America, Italy and locally), in order to understand its role in contemporary history, with specific reference to the use of rap as a tool to speak up against social inequality;
-
- understand the message contained in various songs and recognise the essential codes of verbal and non-verbal communication when interpreting musical works;
- grasp the logical relationships between the various components of oral texts;
- explain personal experiences, lyrics they have heard, and the content of the songs proposed in the classroom in a clear, logical and consistent way;
- -ecognise different musical communication registers;
- express their ideas and experiences on specific topics (e.g. gender differences, integration, etc.), and be able to present and express them in writing;
- use rhetorical figures, rhyme, assonance and consonance in a rap song;
- internalise the ideas of rhythm and metrics in the composition of a song;
- use the microphone and other musical equipment (speakers, the mixer, cables, etc.);
- understand the contexts, the purpose and the audience of the message conveyed.

In order to craft the lyrics, first each student wrote it on their own, then in small groups, then as a collective group. It should be mentioned that this workshop was a strategic tool in getting two Roma students who had stopped attending classes at other schools to start coming to class. In this sense, the fun of rapping won out over the hurdles faced by the students at school.

4.2 Theatre workshops: socialisation and conflict management

The most beautiful moment was when we did the theatre lab within Rise the project... Roma pupil X was great, he learned all his parts. And on the same day of the performance he said to me: No prof, I'm not coming. And I said: No, are you kidding? So imagine all the anxiety... But then he came, the performance was perfect, he was great and in the end he started crying and let himself be hugged. I saw he was another person. [L., secondary school teacher, Bologna]

In order to meet the socialisation needs, and to structure a more cohesive class group in the face of internal conflicts, a theatre workshop was implemented for two middle-school classes. In terms of socialisation, in fact, dramatization ensures communication between students and helps develop a group spirit via shared ideas and emotions, as they create, realise and portray a story. Due to its physical, expressive nature, theatre can be an effective way to enhance skills and abilities that are hard to tease out in classroom learning. Each class could benefit from a theatre course spread out over 22 hours, including a performance open to the public, attended by parents and other family members.

The heterogeneity of members in the two classes involved, due in part to their different language and cultural competencies, and to different personal backgrounds, led to defining the following workshop goals:

- embracing differences in the contribution that each one can make towards a shared project, and transforming conflict into collaboration;
- developing self-awareness and awareness of one's relationship with others;
- strengthening peer relationships;
- developing creative and expressive abilities, both individually and as a group;

- developing observation and critical abilities;
- promoting interdisciplinary learning as part of the school programme;
- acquiring basic stagecraft techniques.

The first part of the meetings was dedicated to illustrating and learning basic stagecraft techniques, which took place through propaedeutic theatre activities made up of games and exercises. The second part of the project was aimed at creating the screenplay and its staging, in a performance that allowed participants to use the tools they had learned during the course via a direct relationship with the audience. The script was written by a theatre expert along with the students, starting from a few ideas suggested by the teachers.

Each meeting began with games and exercises aimed at developing and improving listening abilities through the body and emotions, and to generate trust between the members of the group. The goal was to create a working environment in which everyone felt free to express him/herself without being judged in terms of merit and ability, in a context where mistakes were valued and seen as a necessary learning tool.

Analysis of gestures, the composition of an action, rhythm, and variations in the speed of movements were principles around which students explored the expressive abilities of the body, their breathing, the emission of sound, the articulation of words in syllables, and the possible variations in the timbre and rhythm of a sentence were all used to explore the voice.

Individual, paired or group improvisation was an effective tool in producing materials that subsequently were added to the scenes of the final performance.

One class created a performance starting from a reinterpretation of 'The Star of Andra and Tati', a novel by Alessandra Viola and Rosalba Vitellaro that recounts the experience of two young Jewish girls deported to Auschwitz during WWII. The topic was then connected by the literature teacher to an in-depth reflection on the Porajmos, carried out in class during school hours.

4.3 Learning by doing: envisioning one's future starting with practical skills

Have science or maths ever actually been useful to you? [M., Roma student, Bologna]

A workshop that students really liked, despite being apparently unrelated to their daily activities, was 'Learning by Doing', a broad category that included different courses. Five middle-school classes decided to participate in this workshop.

The main goal of the workshop can be inferred from the title, and consisted of introducing students to an artisan and his working methods by engaging the class in practical activities to help them discover 'new', little-known occupations. The artisans involved in these workshops were a male 'pasta maker' (*sfoglino*),[11] and a circus performer/director (Figures 4.3. and 4.4.).

The artisan's act of 'making' was used as a tool to experience a form of knowledge that is often quite distant from what is required by and offered in schools. It was also used to encourage reflection on the act of carrying out practical activities, which require both skill and effort. This workshop was designed in part to respond to students' need for guidance when choosing what secondary school to go to, which takes place at the age of 14 in Italy, after attending middle school. It was also meant to encourage reflection on the life paths of others, on the multiplicity of choices, and on individual interests and passions. Guidance is the process of accompanying students in gaining the ability to make decisions, which should be started early on in life, and which implies responsibility for one's own decisions and the awareness of the effort required by choice (Colombo, 2010). Choosing what secondary school to attend means projecting oneself into the future, based on knowledge of oneself in the present. Having to imagine one's future is not simple for any child, even more so for those who belong to vulnerable groups or who have families who are unable to support them.

Figure 4.3. Rolling out and making pasta by hand

11. A *sfoglina* is someone who, in and around Bologna, rolls out and makes pasta exclusively by hand, with a rolling pin. In Italian, the term generally ends in 'a', gendering it as female, as traditionally it is work done by women.

Figure 4.4. Learning the abilities of a circus actor

The workshop was divided into 3 meetings, in a total of 8 hours for each class.

In the first meeting, the artisan used his own life story to introduce himself, his job, and his training stages, speaking in-depth about the characteristics of his profession and his personal experiences. A time slot was intentionally left for students to ask questions. For the pasta maker, questions often intertwined with reflections on gender, and on familial and social recognition, as the job is often labelled as a female occupation.

The second meeting was mostly a practical experience, depending on the professional's craft: making fresh pasta or theatrical/ juggling training. This meeting was a chance to produce cognitive dissonance both regarding stereotypes about practical activities – on both male and female roles – and regarding the skills required to carry out the assigned task: students who struggle in school discovered that they are actually capable and talented when teaching their classmates and teachers strategies on how to roll pasta dough or how do a specific clown trick.

The third meeting was organised around a school trip. Students went out to visit various places and carry out activities similar to the occupations explored, albeit through rather unusual perspectives. According to the profession studied, the classes were taken on a visit to FICO, a large farmer's market where they could enter into the production of sweets or grapple with the topic of ethical tomatoes[12]; or they got to learn about the 'open' fields of Arvaia, a cooperative of organic farmers; or they got to see the other 'face' of theatre and the work done behind the scenes, carrying out an activity in the big tent used for the circus-theatre.

12. The students met a manager of Funky Tomato, an ethical organic canned tomato grower that does not exploit its workers at any phase in the production chain, from picking the tomatoes to the final product.

Both classes were able to expand upon the workshop with two activities proposed by an education studies intern, which would then become part of her thesis (Micheletto, 2019). The first activity, called 'Taking pictures of our skills', consisted of thinking about one's abilities starting from photographs that the artisan and the students brought to class, which they considered representative of their skills (Figure 4.5.).

Figure 4.5. *Students' skills with their own considerations*

The second activity was aimed at investigating the positive atmosphere of the classroom in general and in carrying out the RISE educational workshop. The latter was designed, as has been mentioned, to create a welcoming, inclusive setting at school, in line with one of the quality points of the 'Feeling good at school while learning' workshop-based teaching. Two simple questions were asked,[13] which students answered independently, on their own; then the answers were put into two boxes and drawn randomly. The teachers and students reflected on teaching methods, on what contributes to the

13. The questions were:
1. Can you think of a time when you felt good or were happy in class? What was it? Can you briefly describe it?
2. Can you write down what 'a positive classroom climate' means to you?

pleasure of being in class, and on the ways in which personal and collective well-being can be encouraged.

A 'learning by doing' workshop was also conducted in two primary school classes (with students in their last year of primary school). It was an experience involving carpentry activities (6 hours per class). By building a wooden object and using carpentry tools, students learned how to turn an abstract idea into something concrete, gaining confidence in their ability to make or build things. It also created the emotional premise for a spirit of sharing in the future through the satisfaction of designing and building something together. The keywords for this laboratory were: manual skills, design, creativity, knowledge of raw materials, ecology of resources and respect for them, respect and sharing.

4.4 Music: dialogue among cultures

I will never forget how S.'s eyes [Roma student] lit up when she realized that the excellent musician who was teaching her class was a Roma. [E., primary school teacher, Bari]

The music workshop was carried out in the primary schools of Bari, and involved an exceptional musician of Roma origin, Claudio 'Cavallo' Giagnotti, the leader of Mascarimirì, an internationally-famous music band. This Roma artist was chosen to encourage a positive image of the Roma community in a context that, before the Rise Project, was anything but welcoming. Various families had in fact objected to the enrolment of Roma children in a school system that, for the first time, pushed by local social services, had to welcome students living in an illegal parking area near the school. The workshop aimed to engage children during school hours, and also involve their families (Roma and non-Roma families) outside of school through the organisation of a music party.

Teachers and social workers used the presence of the artist – who was incredibly popular among kids and adults alike – to work on the low self-esteem of some Roma children, whose self-image is probably a reflection of the image of a community that often feels inferior and unable to address the challenges of the interaction required by the school system.

By using his tambourine, Mr Giagnotti explained how, over the centuries, music has been influenced by different sources, borrowing from them, and making it one of the main channels of integration between different cultures. In fact, the harmonies and melodies of different musical traditions from the Balkans, Portugal, Spain and Naples have fused in a universal language now known as 'pizzica'. Though currently considered to be Apulian folk music, this genre is shared, loved and understood by all its listeners (Figure 4.6.).

Figure 4.6. *Making collective music with hands and tambourine*

5. Digital Storytelling for reducing stereotypes and prejudice in the classroom

When considering the educational value of Digital Storytelling (DST) experiences at school, one must understand both the context and the conditions that may facilitate, or hinder, the implementation of a participatory approach conveyed by the use of digital technology. It is with this purpose in mind that the DST laboratory – described in the following paragraphs – was carried out within the Italian context and, in particular, in the Emilia-Romagna and Puglia regions. The first data we investigated concerned the frequency (in %) with which teachers carried out teaching and learning activities with the use of digital technologies. The AGCOM data (2019) underline an important "split" among Italian teachers. Approximately 50% of them use digital technologies daily, 27% weekly, 13% once a month, 7% sometimes during the year, 5% stated they never use it. Furthermore, those data underline that Italian teachers not only use digital technologies with different frequencies, but they also do it in different ways. A 'worrying' finding shows, for example,

that among the types of activities carried out with digital technology by teachers, most of them are related to "Consultation of sources" (48%) and, only a few to sustain "collaborative work and interaction in the classroom" (20%). Technologies represent a "reinforcement" or "replication" of the frontal lesson. The scenario of collaborative or co-construction of knowledge, through stimulating active learning approaches, seems to be lacking. However, considering these obstacles, both linked to the low use of digital technologies in the classroom, the DST experience promoted within the framework of RISE project, and carried out by the pilot schools, tried to stimulate an active, inclusive, collaborative approach to knowledge.

This contribution presents a synthesis of the guidelines supporting the methodological implementation – in the 18 pilot classes in the city of Bologna, and in eight classes in the city of Bari – of the DST activities; on the other hand, it outlines the first results of an exploratory survey of the activity conducted in Bologna.

The RISE project strongly takes up the challenge posed by the right to inclusion and education, in the educational field, of Roma children, on which, for some years, there has been an ongoing debate within the European Union (European Union, 2011, 2012). Promoting a culture of inclusion also means breaking down all discriminatory attitudes and prejudice that cause not only a rate of school disaffection, but also exclusion from social life. Indeed, as described above, the DST laboratory was developed in this direction.

In order to ensure greater participation by each student in the work process, an educational setting of their own (also) cooperative learning was used. In all three work stages (drafting the story text, creating the graphics, and final editing of the digital clip) the class was divided into small, heterogeneous work groups, both from the point of view of behavioural characteristics and cultural affiliation. Within the work teams, a precise role was assigned to each participant (writer, graphic-designer, coordinator, time-manager) to foster the dynamics of 'positive interdependence': each member should perceive that he/she was essential for the whole group, in order to understand that without his/her contribution the team could not achieve its objectives, and vice versa. All this, then, implies comparison with social skills, such as: respecting different opinions; learning how to make decisions; helping colleagues by supporting them in activities that affect their role, and many other dynamics within the set of social and emotional skills (Goleman, 2015; Marani & Schiralli, 2012).

5.1 DST for inclusive education

The rapid and pervasive diffusion of digital technologies in our global society is contributing (with 'lights and shadows') to amplifying the possibilities every human has of also being heard and of representing themselves through new media. DST consists in using multimedia software (online and/or offline) and Internet resources in order to build, tell and publish a story. What sets it apart from the mere practice of assembling multimedia materials for making a video is its characteristic of relying on *storytelling*, that is, on personal stories with strong emotional connotations, and above all, told with the precise intention of being shared with other people through specific online environments (Petrucco & De Rossi, 2009). Not only is DST a multimedia product, but it is also a real process in and of itself, which does not end with its production, as it lives in a "without-end chain" formed by social actors, technology and cultural artefacts. DST, in the context of this publication, can represent a lever capable of promoting the active participation of individual pupils within an individual and social dimension of learning. The inclusive perspective interprets education as an agent of change, rather than a reproducer of social inequalities (Oliver, 1992).

5.2 Students' perception on the DST laboratory

This part describes how the work process was articulated in the DST laboratory.

The first meeting: after a general introduction to the activities and concept of DST, the class was divided into working groups (heterogeneous), and the narrative was written by beginning to find its main parts, that is, introduction, core of the story, conclusion and final message. In this step, the groups had three types of potential scenarios (animal environment, unknown planet, world of inanimate objects) from which to draw up the story.

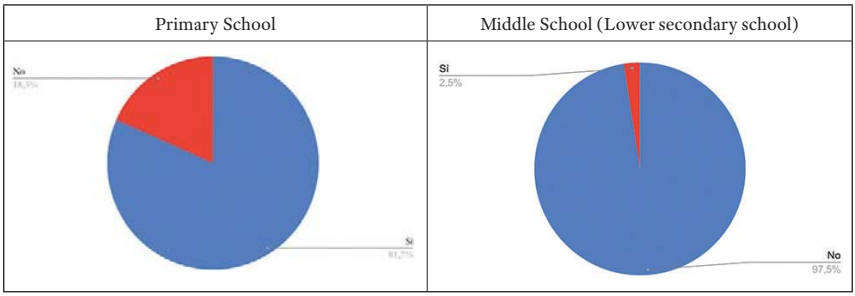
Second meeting: taking back what was written in the first day and producing a graphic translation (freehand drawings) of the text of the story. During the activity, the conductor, assisted by class tutors, supports the groups in organizing the work of creating the "Storyboard".

Third meeting: graphic creations were digitally collected and, after inserting them sequentially into a video editing software, each member of the group

recorded his/her voice by reading parts of the story they had created in order to generate a vocal track that acted as an external narrator.

At the end of the project process within the schools, a semi-structured questionnaire was administered with the aim of stimulating a meta-reflection among students on the activities carried out in the classroom. The data reported in this chapter refer to the Emilia-Romagna context. The dimensions investigated were: their appreciation of the experience, how used they were to working in a group, their commitment to carry out the activity, and their skills in using digital technologies. In general, pupils rated their DST experience as quite positive and did not report any particular difficulties in doing the work required. The main 'critical' aspect that emerged from the questionnaire concerns their not being used to carrying out group assignments, and therefore to abandon the traditional training setting typical of one-to-many teaching and to stress the meeting between peers. In fact, to the question *had you done group work before?* students answered as shown in Graph 4.1.

Graph 4.1. Students who had some experience in group assignments before the DST Lab



As can be seen from the Graph 4.1., the primary school classes involved seemed to be more used to group work, as opposed to middle school students, where only 2.5% of students say they had already engaged in group work in the past.

Taking into account the question "What difficulties did you encounter working in a group?", the students highlighted two types of difficulties. The first concerns mutual help and the involvement of all team members; the second regards the difficulties in the graphic realization of the drawings. Some students underlined that "not everyone collaborated", "the males did not give us [to the girls] the floor", "most members did not write, draw

and propose anything", "we were undecided and disagreed". Instead, when asked, "What's the most important thing you learned with your group?" the students firmly highlighted that what they learned during the co-working experience concerned the "respect for the other person", his/her diversity, and the importance of suspending judgment without first knowing people. Most respondents sustained that "we must accept everyone, because we are all special in our own way", "we must not judge people who do not know each other", "diversity is a value, not a weakness", "difference in culture doesn't matter, you don't have to be racist" (Figure 4.7.).

Figure 4.7. Storytelling Title and Slogan ("Strange friends"; "We are all trees from the same garden")

Being focused on the topic of inclusion of other ethnic groups, at the end of the lab we collected the final messages conveyed by the digital narrations (84 stories). By analysing the many final messages, one can draw a general picture on the positive impact, or not, of DST activities. Most of the stories recall the importance of being different but, at the same time, "all the same"; the need of getting away from racist thoughts; and the beauty of discovering other cultures. In this regard, some students stressed that "even if we are different, we can still get along", "we must not judge people without knowing them", "even if we are different, we must love each other", "we must show our particularities with courage and without fear", "the colour of the skin doesn't matter, the important thing is to be friends".

These are just some of the many answers received, but, even if with different words and through stories with different protagonists and settings, all the groups in both school levels have very carefully grasped the value of this

laboratory by creating digital video-narratives centred on erasing stereotypes and prejudice concerning 'those different' from oneself.

5.3 Recommendations

Taking in account the 'in progress' data shortly presented, the DST activities have fostered knowledge and socialization processes between different cultures, through the promotion of cooperative learning practices. Mediators – such as DST – play a key role as they can be considered facilitators in the teaching-learning and socialisation processes (Ferrari, 2015). Furthermore, students' motivation and commitment have been recognized as fundamental elements for the success of our laboratory experience. It is quite clear that when the use of DST is supported by collaborative teaching approaches, the horizon of possibilities can be broadened, both for the expression of one's self and for the development of cognitive, social and relational skills (Garzotto & Bordogna, 2010). Thus, digital technologies should accompany accessible and inclusive teaching practices, in particular when they follow the Universal Design for Learning approach (Cast, 2011; Fogarolo & Campagna, 2012).

However, despite the excellent feedback received from the students who participated in our labs, we have to consider that – as underlined by international literature – most DST educational projects "are largely based on episodic and short-lived experiences involving a limited number of teachers and students for a short period of time" (Di Blas, Garzotto, Paolini & Sabiescu, 2009).

For these reasons, today more than ever, investments are needed to support "initial and continuous teachers training aimed at experimenting new [teaching-learning] models which go beyond the traditional frontal and unidirectional lesson, also useful for understanding the potential of technology and translating it into didactic paradigms [widespread on a large scale and sustainable over time]" (AGCOM, 2019, p. 42).

6. Reaching Out to International Peers through English

The module "RISE ENGLISH: Connecting with the world" is a component of the RISE project designed to enable students to virtually interact through a dedicated communication platform, as a symbolic conclusion of their

participation in the project. What follows describes the communicational input that was initially given by the researcher, how teachers tailored it to their students to guide preparatory work in class and, ultimately, how then students transformed it through their communicational power during their video calls.

The exchanges took place once, in the month of January 2020, and involved a little over 100 pupils aged 8 to 13, distributed over four classes in Italy, Slovenia and Portugal. Third grade children attending 'Japigia Verga' Primary School (Bari) communicated with fourth grade children in 'Grm' Primary School (Novo Mesto), while second year students attending 'Besta' Middle School (Bologna), interacted with their peers in the Braga District school.

6.1 General Guidelines

Guidelines for this communicational activity had to take into account affective filters deriving from English being the medium of communication. Aside from emotional barriers, due to naturally occurring shyness caused by having to speak live in an unfamiliar context, these virtual communications could potentially suffer from the use of a foreign language many of them knew only at an elementary level, and which also coincided with it being a sometimes dreaded school subject. In order to avoid fears related to academic performance, the guidelines emphasised the communicative nature of this assignment: the focus was on successful, fulfilling communication, rather than on language learning and linguistic performance.

In line with the general spirit of RISE, and with the aim of bypassing affective filters (Du, 2009), students were asked to present themselves as a group, describing their strengths and peculiarities, using mixed media and making ample use of visual and non-verbal aural communication. Consistent with a communicative approach (Littlewood & William, 1981), the guidelines were based on Task-Based Learning, which makes students fully responsible for finding and modulating the language they need in order to fulfil their tasks and produce meaningful linguistic experiences in the foreign language (Ellis, 2003).

The two general tasks submitted to both teachers and students were the following:

a) Describe your class to students of other countries during video chats. In particular, in the spirit of interconnectedness (with regards to identity), the students were required to create slogans and mottos with which they could all identify. Slogans could be verbal or visual, and children could choose to work on whatever aspect, including a list of class values or class rules, balancing individual and collective perspectives (ex. "When I enter this class, I am..."). Slogans relied on simple but effective language structures (easy enough to handle), and seemed to provide a sufficient amount of constraints which could make children feel supported in their production, while at the same time granting them full creative power (with the extra support of non-verbal inputs they were encouraged to maximise).
b) Produce your own mixed-media TIME CAPSULE: a box you will leave for future generations, in order to show them what is special about your class today. The contents of this box, which could range from drawings to music and dancing, would then be revealed to and commented with their international peers during the call.

These tasks implied a balance between individual and collective contributions. Studies confirm that "task-based [...] activities may be more conducive to creating a more collaborative learning environment and also providing opportunities for real life-like language use" (Erten & Altay, 2009, p. 33). Students involved in this module were already accustomed to cooperating and working in groups, and they were likewise familiar with the production of slogans and mottos which they had devised during various RISE stages. Transferring this knowledge into English could provide them with an opportunity to employ natural, current language to express their thoughts, thus moving away from the view of English as a totally foreign language.

In terms of language support, researchers and teachers agreed on giving participants enough language guidance so as to enable them to freely design their slogans and introductions, but to avoid correcting them when errors did not hamper comprehension. Primary pupils needed more language support, which at times meant translating from their mother tongues whatever they wished to express. Middle school students were generally more independent, although their teachers provided constant support and scaffolding when asked.

6.2 Classroom Work: teachers and students

Teachers introduced the tasks to their classes and helped them tailor the content to context and communication needs. The Bologna students had incidentally been working on a time capsule in the past, and so they decided to replicate the experience in English. The Bari children had been researching and visiting apiaries and beehives, fully experiencing the integration of individual and group identity, and therefore decided to develop this metaphor, by showing their individual roles within the 'school hive' (Figure 4.8.), and conveying how individual strengths can benefit the cohesion of the group.

All the students engaged with enthusiasm in the task, and produced very impressive collective self-representations, through fine examples of art and wordplay. The Novo Mesto children conceived a dance and a song, which described their class and their school life in terms of collaboration and collective effort: "more time to play, if we follow the rules". The Braga District school students focussed on how they felt as a group (and in the group), and what each individual added to it. Examples included: "I am free to be creative", "I am happy here", "I love this class", "I learn new things", "We make our future", "We laugh and have fun", "We are all good friends", "We are strong together" (Figure 4.9.). Alternating between 'I' and 'we' statements, students were able to portray themselves as a cohesive entity where individuals have freedom of expression, and where they feel free to be who they are, while at the same time reinforcing their collective identity.

Figure 4.8. Bari: "We are like bees"

Figure 4.9. Braga district: Signs designed by the students

The students' reflections in this leading up phase where very impressive. One such case was in Bologna, where the symbolism the class created to represent itself was impressive. The class was highly multicultural, and some students in the past had moved permanently to other cities or countries: for this reason, they thought of themselves as a railway station, where people come and people go. However, even being distant, they felt that their friendship would never end, and hence adopted the symbol of infinity; as well as a sun, to represent their positive and 'sunny' nature. All of these symbols were skilfully drawn and included in their time capsule.

6.3 The calls

The calls were extremely successful, and all students said they were fully satisfied. They agreed to take turns in presenting their materials, taking roughly 15 minutes each, then allowing time for free questions. Despite some natural shyness, almost all students came forward to the camera and said something, holding up written signs, photos or drawings, of which all the classes made ample use. All participants watched and listened attentively to what their peers said and did.

The Novo Mesto dance was highly appreciated, and so were all the colourful bee-hive posters and classroom activities presented by their peers in Bari. The lasting impression from this call was one of joy, natural curiosity and colourful enthusiasm, which ended with a big sign held up by the Slovenian children, "Have a nice day!", and with the promise of repeating the same experience again next year.

The middle school children said they fully enjoyed the experience, despite technical issues they overcame through their enthusiasm and their will to interact. They shared their thoughts through signs, drawings and music, and they succeeded in communicating who they are.

This phase of previously structured interaction provided a sort of safe icebreaker, which facilitated a very meaningful subsequent phase of spontaneous, free questions. Had there been enough time, there would have been no end to the questions all four classes wanted to ask. Some had been anticipated and prepared, but most of them were triggered by actually seeing their peers, their classrooms or library, and by interacting with them. A few questions were asked in English (with teacher support), while many were formulated in their mother tongue and translated by their teachers. There was a great deal of curiosity about their peers: the students acted as real ethnographers, and provided a vivid idea of what kind of information mattered to them. Examples of questions were: "Do you get homework?", "Have you got a school library?", "Do you like school?", "How much time do you spend at school every day?", "What music do you listen to?". An interesting case was the conversation between the two primary classes. Novo Mesto children were particularly interested in where the Italian children kept their school material, given that Bari had described a "without a backpack" approach (Orsi, 2006): What did that mean? Were they really spared from having to carry a school bag? Did they share pencils and books? The answers were mostly physical/visual: the children kept bringing objects close to the camera or pointing at places, containers, drawers, posters and corners in their classroom. They were literally hosting their international peers in their school spaces.

6.4 Implications for language learning

All along, teachers acted as interpreters, giving their students a most valuable example of effective second language users and successful communicators. In terms of language learning, there were two main results. One was a strive for language and communicational independence. Many children wanted to ask their questions in English – with a little help. When words were lacking, many of them made use of body language, mime actions and objects, thus succeeding in getting their messages across. This led them to say that they wanted to improve their English skills in order to communicate independently,

rather than relying on someone else's translation. Thus, providing children with an opportunity to interact in real life boosted their motivation to learn. Allowing students to foresee practical communication uses can help them and their teachers come together to design meaningful, effective learning environments. With a goal in mind, foreign languages becomes less foreign, and learning them makes much more sense (Masoni, 2018).

But there was also another important aspect related to language. Students used English to talk about their own mother tongues. This was quite clear in requests such as "We'd like to hear you count to 10 in Italian". English acquired the extra meaning of pivot/ bridge language, an intermediary which enabled them to explore other languages and cultures. This is especially important in multi-cultural classes, where a pivot language can sometimes help clarify meaning and avoiding misunderstandings (Stille, 2015).

Overall, this experience cries out for replication, to the point of turning it into a routine (see e-Twinning network). Children proved how much they need to reach out to their international peers, discover similarities and differences through their own questions and answers, find like-minded people in another country, and even a home away from home, as in the case of two Brazilian students, one in Bologna and one in Braga, who were able to come together in that virtual space and speak in their mother tongue.

There is a very strong case for boosting these virtual interactions in the school environment. Schools can provide safe virtual spaces (where students can come together as groups and benefit from the guidance and language support of their teachers), thus promoting a positive, constructive use of communication platforms to reach out to the Other.

Conclusion

As shown above, so far, the RISE project in Italy has been extremely articulated and designed to respond to specific needs, in order to promote change towards a more inclusive school. For some of the schools involved, it was a pilot and a pioneering project, where innovation was implemented in the methodological approach used, which was deconstructed and reconstructed on the basis of needs, problems, and suggestions that emerged through action–research, as well as during training sessions for teachers and other

social actors – in the workshop techniques applied, in the articulation of proposals, and in the use of a multiple evaluation system.

The concept of inclusion, understood as a resource that can be shared by all students, has brought tangible results in the classroom, creating a positive classroom climate, promoting constructive relationships among pupils, and between pupils and teachers, and improving collaboration among teachers, school staff, and Roma families.

Positive results were also measured by the evaluation system set up by the Istituto degli Innocenti through a combination of tools: i) *an attendance timetable*, monitoring children's presence at school and their success rate; ii) an *inclusion index* that detected the point of view of teachers and students, in order to record the project's effect upon schools; and iii) a *satisfaction survey* submitted to teachers to understand which kind of skills they acquired through training and to record their opinion on the workshops.

But the benefits of the project reached far beyond tangible outputs.

There are outcomes that are difficult to translate into indicators. Such as those produced by the work in progress, for example relational outcomes, which emerged during the debates between teachers and social workers involved in action research. These results concern, for instance, the transformation of relationships between different cultures within the same society.

This project has certainly implemented processes aimed at rethinking (1) the role of social actors such as teachers, students, school staff and parents within a school designed to be more welcoming for all, and also (2) the management of social representations and stereotypes towards diversity in everyday life. But the challenge remains for schools and local contexts. The impact of all this will develop over time, beyond the Rise project.

Nevertheless, we must be aware that this project also has its limitations, the first of which is represented by its implementation time: it was far too short to support a process that is in itself long and difficult, because it requires structural changes to remove inclusive actions from the field of discretion. The second is that in Italy there have been unresolved issues, for years now, concerning Roma people and their younger generations.

This project cannot solve various problems that need to be approached at a political level and that concern housing, work, health protection and citizenship rights of the Roma population, which are essential for the full realization of an inclusive path.

But the 'lesson learned' from the strategy adopted so far remains: Roma and Sinti children can be transformed from 'problems' into resources for the whole community, and this project has indeed transformed the inclusion of Roma children and pre-adolescents in schools from a problem to a resource.

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CHAPTER 5. AN INCLUSIVE PERSPECTIVE ACROSS SOUTHEAST SLOVENIA

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1. Description of the local context

The situation of the Roma Community in Slovenia is quite complex. The Slovenian Roma are officially divided into two categories. The first includes three groups that historically settled in the territories of the Republic, namely, the Roma living in the Prekmurje and Dolenjska regions, and the Sinti of Gorenjska. The latter present the same living standard as the mainstream population, while the Roma of Dolenjska often live in illegal settlements, with no access to fundamental public utilities like water and electricity, and with high unemployment rates, which can reach up to 90% in some villages.

The culture and language of the autochthonous Roma are protected under the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia (Art. 65) and the Law on the Roma Groups (Zakon o Romski skupnosti v Republiki Sloveniji). These two legal documents award autochthonous Roma the same rights given to the other two recognized ethnic minorities, the Hungarians and the Italians. On the other hand, the rights of non-autochthonous Roma, mostly composed by communities that have migrated from other countries of the former Yugoslavian Federation, are regulated by the law on foreign population, and therefore are not included in the specific actions that have been started to improve the situation of the Roma communities.

In the 2002 census – the latest data, since there was no census after 2002 – 3,246 persons stated that they were members of the Roma Community, and 3,834 persons stated that their mother tongue was the Roma language. Therefore, we assume that the number of Roma is higher than the number of citizens declaring themselves as Roma. According to the estimates of various

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institutions (social centres, administrative units, non-governmental organisations), there are approximately 7,000 to 12,000 Roma living in Slovenia.

While in the region of Prekmurje, both Roma and public organizations have already started a long-term action to promote the education of Roma children, also by creating an organization led by Roma students, the Roma of Dolenjska still struggle with high school dropout rates. The figure of the Roma teaching assistant was created to mediate parents and school personnel, and to help children do their homework. However, due to the low level of education of Roma assistants in Dolenjska, they still do not have enough power and knowledge to take specific, efficient actions.

According to data from the Decade of Roma Inclusion, 1,547 Roma children were enrolled in primary education in the year 2008, 40 were attending high school, while the declared Roma students were 5, out of a declared Roma population of 3,246 individuals. This also confirms our assumption that the declared Roma population does not reflect reality (Roma Integration 2020 – Regional Cooperation Council, 2017). While looking at these data, we have, however, to keep in mind that the number of Roma inhabitants living in Slovenia is estimated to be at least two times higher than the 3,246 individuals stated in the 2002 census. Thus, we should expect a significant variation on the number of Roma children enrolled in the Slovenian educational institutions.

In Slovenia, the Rise project was implemented in the Dolenjska and Bela Krajina region, where Novo Mesto and Črnomelj are located. The local Roma groups living in these two regions are affected by the highest school dropout rates of all Roma pupils. This situation is due to different factors, for example, the environment, which has an important influence on the development of children's abilities. The socio-cultural environment and living conditions in which Roma children grow up, for the most part, does not give them the possibility of developing themselves in pre-school years. Previous knowledge is one of the basic problems when entering school, and most children do not understand the Slovene language, for instance. Here we could also add different life experiences, hygiene and working habits (as they do not have academic qualifications, which creates obstacles when looking for a job, plus their lifestyle, lowers the possibilities of developing working habits), which all lead to lower success rates at school than they could reach in more normal conditions. Many local schools attended by Roma pupils do have a high percentage of them, especially when they are located in a village near a

big Roma settlement. Schools implement additional programmes, including support by Roma Assistants, to improve the Roma pupils' acquired knowledge and achievements. However, not all of these programmes and actions have proved successful enough.

All Roma children attend primary school. The biggest problem is their coming to class. The number of children completing primary school is rising, but the final percent is still very low (based on observations, as there are no official statistics). Adult Roma are included in education and training programmes provided by different providers, and some institutions also carry out different shorter and longer education and training programmes. However, all this I not enough to contribute to make them have better chances of finding an employment, or for greater participation of adults in educational programmes for obtaining a qualification.

According to the historical data, Roma began to settle permanently in Slovenia in the 17th and the 18th Centuries. Based on where they were coming from, we can distinguish three main groups of Roma: the Roma settlement in the Prekmurje region (NE of Slovenia) came from the Hungarian direction, the Roma settlement in the regions of Dolenjska, Bela Krajina, and Posavje (SE of Slovenia), arrived from Croatia, as well as the Sinti in the Gorenjska region. Compared to the mainstream population, Romani people were defined by their nomadic way of living. People linked them to stealing, begging and crime, which eventually lead to stigmatization of the Roma as a group, which deals with illegal business and delinquency, and is involved in various criminal acts. Throughout history, Romani people usually lived in the outskirts of communities, without ethnic or national belonging. A number of measures have been adopted for their forced accommodation in individual areas or for expulsion from other areas. Roma communities settled mostly on the outskirts of settlements or villages, and were excluded from social life.

A more detailed description of their special lifestyle is given in the Decree from the Ministry of Interior dated from 1916: *This decree considers gypsies as nomadic people with a travelling way of life, who do not have a residence and travel – either alone, with families or in groups – to gather their means of subsistence by carrying out travelling crafts and trading, or by begging or in other irregular manners.*

The authorities persecuted them and tried to deter them from their nomadic way of life and to 'force them to work'. During the Austro-Hungarian Empire, a number of regulations were adopted to suppress the 'gypsy scourge'.

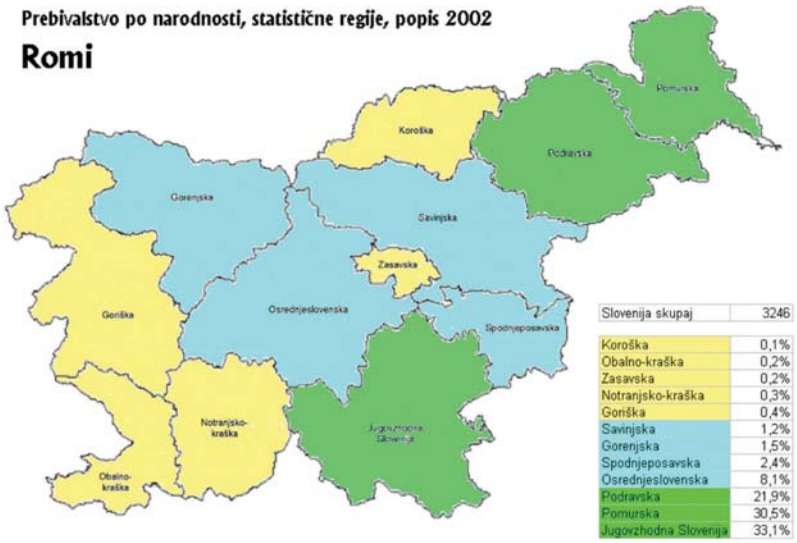
The message from the district headquarters in Rudolfswerd (presently Novo Mesto) from July 25th 1900 is clear in this respect:

"All the duties of the gypsy children to attend school should be announced by the mayor to the respective district school councils or school leaders to admit them to school. The parents of these children are asked to take care of the necessary attire. Gypsies, who will not send their children to school, should be announced to the district school council. The main aspect is for the mayor to force gypsies to work" (Klopčič 2007, p. 58).

Currently the Roma in Slovenia traditionally inhabit mainly the regions of Prekmurje, Dolenjska, and Bela Krajina. Most of them live in isolated settlements on the outskirts of villages and urban settlements. The largest part of traditionally settled Roma lives in Prekmurje, in the municipality of Murska Sobota (Pušča settlement), and in the vicinity of Novo Mesto in the Dolenjska region. Roma who came from other parts of the former Yugoslavia mainly live in major industrial centres: Maribor, Velenje, and Ljubljana (Figure 5.1.).

In the 2002 census, 3,246 persons claimed to belong to the Roma community; the settlements with the highest number of Romani people are: Maribor 613, Novo Mesto 562, Murska Sobota 439, Ljubljana 218, Puconci 137, Kočevje 127, Šentjernej 98, Metlika 90, Lendava/ Lendva 86, Tišina 86 and Črnomelj 85 (SURS - Statistični urad Republike Slovenije, 2002). Unofficial estimates of the number of Roma living in Slovenia calculate between 7,000 and 10,000 people.

Figure 5.1. Slovenian Population by Nationality, 2004



Analysing the political context of social inclusion of Roma people in Slovenia, and the general minority policies in Slovenia since its independence, it must be emphasized that the existing legal order is based on principles of respect for human rights, the development of democracy, and on the fact that all the inhabitants of Slovenia are entitled to enjoy all human rights without discrimination (Art. 14 of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia). The Anti-Discrimination Law sets forth the protection of every individual against discrimination irrespective of gender, ethnicity, race or ethnic origin, language, religion or belief, disability, age, sexual orientation, sexual identity and sexual expression, social status, property, education or any other personal circumstance (hereinafter: personal circumstance) in various fields of social life, in the exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms, in the exercise of rights and obligations and in other legal relations in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or other fields.

All individuals have the right to express their culture, use their language and script, and express their religious beliefs (Art. 61 of the Constitution), which is an incentive towards the preservation of cultural diversity. This is further emphasized in documents on the realization of public interest in the field of culture, functioning of libraries, Radio Television of Slovenia and

the media, whose work is based on the principles of access to public goods. The promotion of racial and religious intolerance is prohibited both in the Constitution and in the Penal Code of the Republic of Slovenia, where the violation of equality or the dissemination of ideas on the superiority of races is designated as a criminal offence.

In addition to this universal approach to human rights and non-discrimination, the Constitution lists three minority groups (Italians, Hungarians and Roma), and, in addition, provides them with collective, special rights designed to preserve their identity. Funds for exercising these rights are provided from the state budget. The regulations in the legal field are based on the territorial principle, so that special rights are exercised in the areas traditionally inhabited by these communities. This is also reflected in the approach to the legal regulations on the situation of the Roma. In addition to ensuring the human rights guaranteed to each individual, a number of legal acts in the field of education, culture, political participation, etc., relating to the realization of special rights for the Roma community, have been adopted in Slovenia or are included in the special articles of systemic laws relating to the Roma community. In 2007, a special law was adopted on the Roma, and certain areas were regulated in special articles in the systemic laws. As a preliminary point, the National Action Programme for Roma 2017-2021 (1st problem area), due to the historical circumstances and to the poor socio-economic situation of the Roma in the present, concludes that the provisions on equal treatment are not a sufficient guarantee for the social inclusion of Roma. The legal order, therefore, gives them special rights and more favourable treatment compared to other residents, which is referred to as "positive discrimination". Thus, in the analysis of the context of legal regulations, it can be easily established that the legal order, in addition to ensuring respect for individual human rights and protection against discrimination for each individual, provides the Roma community with specific collective rights as an ethnic group, as a way to preserve their identity, language and culture.

In the field of education, it is important to emphasize that all general educational objectives are important for the integration of Roma, as well as specific provisions relating to the Roma. The ZOFVI / Law and the Funding of Education Act state – among the general principles of education – the goals and possibilities for optimal personal development:

- ensure the optimal development of individuals, irrespective of gender, social and cultural background, religion, national affiliation, and physical and mental condition;
- education for mutual tolerance, awareness of gender equality, respect for diversity and cooperation with others, respect for children's rights, human rights and fundamental freedoms, equal opportunities for both sexes, and thus the ability to live in a democratic society;
- ensure equal opportunities for the development and education of children from socially underprivileged environments.

In addition, special articles were adopted specifically for the Roma community in the systematic laws on kindergartens, elementary school and financing of education, which provide more favourable criteria for designing and financing departments with Roma students. The purpose of these measures is to facilitate the integration of Roma students, overcoming language barriers, and the development of social skills. As regards the content of these measures, the basic document is the Strategy for the Education of Roma in the Republic of Slovenia, which aims to successfully integrate Roma students, also with the help of Roma assistants.

It is important to draw attention to the fact that the NPUR 2017-2021 (Republika Slovenija, 2017) foresees a Strategy updating, also based on the results of international projects implemented in Slovenia over the last decade. Thus, the updates will also be based on the findings from the measures implemented for the integration of Roma in the field of education. International projects co-financed by European funds pay special attention to the implementation of extra-curricular activities, to the education of Roma assistants, and to the additional training of teaching staff.

The data collected by the RISE project was quite valuable for checking the key elements for protecting the Roma community in practical terms, and for designing improvements in the future. The results of the measures undertaken in the field of Roma inclusion in education depend, to a large extent, on the general atmosphere in the context and on the support from the local community. Despite the widespread activity of educational professionals, NGOs, and the programs and strategies adopted for Roma inclusion in education, these efforts have so far been only partially successful in eliminating prejudice against the Roma and in overcoming the stigmatization of members of the Roma community.

2. Schools involved

In Slovenia, children start elementary education when they are six years old and it lasts for nine years. Six primary schools participated in the project, including a school for the education of children and youth with intellectual disabilities. This school carries out a nine-year adapted educational program and a special education program. The six schools involved in the project in Slovenia are:

- Primary school Loka, Črnomelj
- Primary school Milke Šobar-Nataše, Črnomelj
- Primary school Drska, Novo Mesto
- Primary school Centre, Novo Mesto
- Primary school Bršljin, Novo Mesto
- Primary school Grm, Novo Mesto

Four schools are located in the regional capital Novo Mesto, and two schools in Črnomelj. Each school had two or more classes involved, depending on the status of the school (Table 5.1.).

Table 5.1. Schools involved in the project, Slovenia

School	Grade and class involved	Number of children per school	Number of students per class	Number of Roma students per class
Primary school Drska, Novo Mesto	1.A	82	19	3
	1.C		19	4
	1.D		20	3
	2.C		24	1
Primary school Grm, Novo Mesto	1.A	51	24	2
	4.B		27	2
Primary school Centre, Novo Mesto	3.A	70	24	1
	3.B		25	1
	3.C		21	1
Primary school Bršljin, Novo Mesto	1.a	55	20	3
	2.a		17	3
	3.a		18	4

Primary school Loka, Črnomelj	3.a	49	15	4
	4.a		17	3
	4.b		17	3
Primary school Milke Šobar-Nataše, Črnomelj	1.a	37	3	1
	2.A, 3.A		4	1
	4.a		5	3
	5.a		2	1
	6.a and 7.a		6	4
	8.A and 9.A		5	3
	PPVI I,II		2	1
	PPVI III		3	1
	PPVI IV, V		7	5
6		344	344	58

Classes are significantly different regarding the total number of children, as well as per the number of Roma children involved in the class. Comparing the various schools, we can see that some schools include a high number of Roma children, while others have a lower number. Roma children represent, on average, 6-10% of all students in the schools involved. Therefore, to further improve lectures, lessons and other educational activities, the RIC Novo Mesto carried out meetings with the school authorities to establish a successful collaboration, to plan the training initiatives, and to present the projects. We conducted interviews and focus groups with primary school teachers, parents (Roma and non-Roma parents), social workers, and Roma assistants employed in Slovenian schools. Before the focus groups, individual interviews were conducted. Different guidelines were prepared for teachers, school principals, parents, Roma parents and children. The aim of the interviews was to invite participants to reflect on the selected topics. Analysing the answers and the information gathered helped us to analyse the level of inclusion of Roma children in the schools cooperating in our project, and thus implement focus groups more effectively, as we had time to get to know participants, develop trust, and enable them to feel more comfortable when talking about their experiences.

An important part of the teacher training preparation was the interview analysis and the event organized within the 7th Regional Festival in Slovenia, on September 26th 2018. Several events were organized for promoting the

RISE project. We gathered the teachers, and after presenting the main objectives of our project, we held a discussion (brainstorming) on training topics required for teachers. After analysing the data, we prepared a full training and cooperation program. The first training activity took place on November 24th 2018 in RIC Novo Mesto.

We observed some of the schools with long-term experiences working with Roma children; moreover, they were very keen to improve their knowledge about Roma inclusion. All these characteristics brought very interesting results and provided a great opportunity to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and best practices, and to promote cooperation between schools on the inclusion of Roma children in the local environment in the near future.

Interviews with school professionals revealed many difficulties faced by schools while working with children from different social groups. In one of the schools, more than half of the students live in families with low or very low economic status.

The school professionals stated that most of the Roma children attend school and try to meet the minimum standards; however, they also stated that about 10-20% of them do not make any effort, disturb the lessons constantly, and only a small number of Roma children have learning results above the average. Classes are different from each other. Some groups have a very positive attitude towards each other and cooperate well with teachers and other school workers. There are also classes in which students do not understand each other well, and so they are divided into small groups. Some students openly show a very negative attitude towards Roma children, namely by offending them in front of others and refusing to sit with them.

Most teachers interviewed noticed that some of their students do not accept students who are different, especially Roma children, which proves that there is a problem of discrimination and a clear lack of inclusion among some students. The reason for such prejudice could be the model of behaviour observed at home by those students. There are classes in which students openly showed a negative attitude and caused Roma children to withdraw from the class, which made it quite difficult to work with them. On the other hand, in most classes, Roma children are accepted and invited to work with the group. Students usually enjoy listening about Roma culture, their families and traditions.

Students have too many responsibilities and are overwhelmed with homework and additional assignments. There is not enough time to spend on the

children who need it the most. Another issue is also the intolerance towards the Roma community that is transferred from parents to children, although the situation is slowly improving. In addition, a big problem that emerged from the analysis of the context is the poor knowledge of Slovenian language. The language barrier is a very important issue, as it is very difficult to teach or learn without knowing the local language. Many Roma children do not understand Slovenian language, and therefore they have many problems with communication. Additionally, communication between school principals and Roma parents is also difficult, as they often do not attend parent meetings, and do not visit teachers to ask about the progress of their children. Roma parents rarely take part in school events or in their preparation.

According to answers received from the discussion, Roma children are more prone to have difficulties in acknowledging authority, listening to instructions given by teachers, and cooperating with other students. Some of the students do not attend school regularly. We assume that these problems arise from cultural differences.

Teachers mostly expressed the difficulties of Roma students. Roma children have many problems and specific needs at schools: difficulties to integrate with the group; the language barrier; extremely low vocabulary; a poor socio-economic situation; difficulties in all types of learning; problems with their concentration and attention span; and teacher's instructions are often not understood. If Roma children do not have conditions at home to do their homework, they just do not do it. However, more and more students are progressing and completing the ninth grade of elementary education. On the other hand, some Roma students like going to school, and are very friendly and grateful for the additional attention they occasionally receive from teachers.

The schools in the project are trying to uphold a vision of good relationships among all people involved, and to have a positive working environment, in collaboration with the parents or guardians, in order to educate and teach children important life lessons. These schools facilitate learning programs where pupils can successfully integrate and meet the basics standards in their learning materials. Roma children are encouraged to participate and learn in all the different support programs.

3. Relations with Roma families

For all schools participating in the project, it appears to be very important to create an inclusive learning environment. One of the schools described that they involve Roma children in all activities, as their classes are small. Another good practice is also preparing workshops for Roma children in their settlements, especially during school holidays. Other good practices are the additional help provided in the form of tutoring, additional individual support, tutoring in the settlements on which they might do their homework (teacher sends teaching materials to DRPD workers - Association for Developing Voluntary Work), medical workshops, etc.

Teachers mentioned that schools had cultural days to which they invited parents of students coming from other countries, as well as Roma parents, to present their countries to students and their most typical characteristics. They also hold workshops for participants. However, these events do not take place in the classrooms, do not take place regularly, and therefore cannot be defined as intercultural education. Schools participate in the Erasmus+ projects, and in exchange experiences with teachers and pupils from Poland and Portugal. Schools cooperate with the DRPD, and some teachers and social workers attend Roma events in Roma settlements or other locations. On International Roma Day, schools prepare an exhibition on their life at school, introduce products made by children, and sometimes also hold a cultural event. Many foreigners come to the participating schools. Education specialists try to find out about their culture and to integrate them as much as possible into school life.

Most parents stated that their children feel good at school, but one of them clearly stated that his three children do not like going to school and do not feel good. The parent stated that they try to encourage their children to attend school regularly but they refuse to go. The reasons given for skipping school are that they oversleep and feel embarrassed when they interrupt lessons after they have already begun. The focus groups implemented at schools with parents revealed that some Rome parents do not know how to set an alarm clock. Roma parents stated that they do not always attend parents' meetings, and usually prefer to meet with the social workers at school than with teachers. All parents said that their children have good relationships with other parents and with other pupils, and no direct conflicts were described. Out of four parents interviewed, three of them informed us that their child

will repeat the class. All of the parents think that their children trust them and that they talk to them to solve conflicts. One of the parents also turns to the social worker at school when in need of help. One of the parents said that he has three children and that all of them are planning to pursue their education after graduating from primary school in order to have an occupation.

To make the teachers' work easier, school counsellors are working on specific strategies on how to better work together with Roma parents and their children. Parents are being shown how further schooling is beneficial for their children in ways easy for them to understand.

4. Roma assistants as mediators for Roma families

One of the important factors helping to create an inclusive school is the fact that schools in Slovenia get help from Roma assistants. Roma assistants are often members of the Roma community, so they understand their situation and can help translating and mediating communication with Roma families. They often also help Roma pupils with their homework and assist them in solving conflicts.

Primary school Loka joined the project «Successful integration of Roma in education». Two school employees, an assistant for Roma children, and her supervisor participated in numerous team-oriented educational trainings and meetings. Previous best practices were exchanged with newfound knowledge from other schools. This new knowledge was then successfully delivered to other educators and teachers in this school and to the students in the classrooms as well. The expertise of those workers was later further improved through some of the RISE project training activities.

In Primary schools Loka Črnomelj, Bršljin and Centre the Roma assistants were included in all school activities, and in planning or analyses, and their presence in the classroom is a must. They also play a very significant role as the link between the school and parents. Roma parents often lack trust towards teachers, and a mediator provides visible support. They report, explain, listen to parents' opinions and suggestions, and then pass them to the school, thus enhancing the communication between parents and the school.

They inform parents about the school activities and take care of written matters, like filling in the documentation, whenever necessary. Roma assistants

also help pupils who have issues at school or at home. When professional help is needed, they take the child to an educational assistant.

5. Teacher training and strategies for inclusion in the classroom

The project activities were aimed at school professionals and elementary school students, both Roma and non-Roma. As a result of the project, an 18-hour training program was created, for both teachers, Roma assistants, and social workers. Two training sessions were conducted at RIC Novo Mesto, attended by 54 professionals from seven primary schools. The training topics focused on promoting Roma inclusion in education. The first meeting included communication in situations of conflict, constructive ways of resolving conflicts, and developing positive social and intercultural competences among students, using transactional analysis. The second training initiative was primarily aimed at modern teaching methods, like collaborative learning, and at encouraging students to become independent, to participate, to accept the opinions of others in the group, and to enhancing communication skills. In addition, teachers learned about the Playness pedagogy, which contains learning through movement and play.

5.1 Transactional analysis for successful inclusion of Roma in education

This training initiative had two parts to it: Part I: Communication in situations of conflict, and constructive ways to conflict resolution; and Part II. Motivation to successfully integrate and develop positive social and intercultural competences.

During the training initiative the definition of conflict, the theory of personality, and psychotherapy to achieve personal growth and change were all addressed. Concrete conflict situations and methods of solving them were learned.

A very important topic in this training initiative was motivating Roma students to participate actively in the school environment. The training initiative included the value of applying transactional analysis in conflict resolution, motivating Roma to actively participate in the educational process, and to develop social and intercultural competences (Figure 5.2.).

Figure 5.2. Training: Transactional analysis for successful inclusion of Roma in education

5.2 Modern teaching methods for successful inclusion

In the first part of this training event, focused on collaborative learning, the main objectives were the following:

- - to understand the importance, benefits, opportunities and challenges of collaborative learning;
- - to understand the role of teachers in cooperative learning;
- - to learn about collaborative learning best practices;
- - to co-create new forms of collaborative learning.

The training was conducted in a group of 35 participants. As part of the training event, theoretical and practical starting points that contribute to the development of collaborative learning were presented, as well as the benefits, opportunities, and challenges faced by teachers in collaborative learning. Selected collaborative learning best practices were chosen and analysed. In the end, new forms of collaborative learning in selected cases and with appropriate input information were co-created (Figure 5.3.).

Figure 5.3. Training: Modern teaching methods for successful inclusion

In the second part of this training event, focused on physical inclusion in school and the Playness pedagogy, the main purpose was to deepen the knowledge and skills of school professionals in the field of movement, in accordance with the doctrine of the Playness pedagogy, according to the model of the Playness compass and with an emphasis on inclusion. The main training objectives were the following:

1. to acquire new knowledge in the field covered by the Playness pedagogical compass;
2. to know the rationale for inclusive educational philosophy and learning, based on play and movement;
3. to adopt the means to develop child alertness;
4. to learn new ideas, tutorials and games that can enhance teachers' lessons and activities.

The following themes were addressed:

- - the importance of movement for children's needs, development and learning;

- the concept and use of the Playness pedagogical compass for inclusion;
- learning / imparting values and pedagogical heartiness and alertness;
- best practice analysis;
- creating learning situations based on the principles of the five-flower Playness methodology (practice).

6. Workshops with students

The six participating schools in Slovenia prepared and implemented workshops for children (see Table 5.1.). Activities involved 3-4 workshops in each class.

An important introduction before starting the working activities with children was the puppet performance, called The Best Roma Musician (Figure 5.4.), a fairy tale from Roma author Rajko Šajnovič informing that each of us has some talent:

> Sometimes it only takes the right mix of circumstances and a little luck, to find your talents. And so it was with our little musician, who travelled with his parents from place to place. They would make and sell dry goods, and collect firewood. But the little musician, who loves to blow whistles and play drumming on old pots, was constantly persuading his father to make him a musical instrument. Unfortunately, Dad, being tired from work, would not listen to his son. When they came to a place where again nothing is selling and selling them people refuse again, the sad musician meets a fairy. This black-haired girl gives him a violin and a trumpet, i.e., instruments for him and for his father. And Mom will now dance and teach others to dance. So the family became famous all over the country, people loved to listen to their music and would invite them to weddings, parties, and so on. Other Roma were also taught to dance and play, and thus pass on the culture from generation to generation.

Figure 5.4. Puppet performance - The Best Roma Musician

The first part of each workshop included a discussion on the different personalities and on the diversity of cultures. The children's main task was to get to know the Roma culture, and to learn about Roma culture and history. Learning about cultural diversity proved to be a very interesting lesson for the children involved, as teachers showed them how to see differences as something that enriches us.

The second part of the workshop was different for each school involved. Different workshops were prepared depending on the participants' age, their background knowledge, and the input of the teachers involved. What is more, individual workshops were adjusted to different school subjects with an effort to make them match the curriculum.

6.1 Competition: 'This is my story'

The competition was organized as an additional best practice for working with children in Slovenia, and as a continuation of the introduction to workshops after the puppet performance, The Best Roma Musician. Participants were asked to reflect on their past experiences and to write a short story or draw a comic book or a drawing describing it. Pupils had to answer several

questions: Did the story of The Best Roma Musician impress you? Why? What did you like the most? Have you ever experienced anything similar? How do you understand discrimination?

Many of the stories collected showed that although we are different, each one is important, and worthy of acceptance and of our friendship. A working group of experts gathered and selected some of the stories; the ones that were the most suitable to become storylines for animated stories to be used in future workshops. What is more, one story was chosen to prepare the puppet performance 'A Good Fairy?'. We staged a puppet play on a product based on the best story from the competition. The students wrote a story entitled 'All Equal, All Special', about a foreign girl who was relocated to Slovenia, where she faces all sorts of insults, but at the end of the story everything goes well and her new friends and classmates change, include her in their everyday activities, and become friends.

6.2 Didactic materials

The main activity of the various workshops was the creation of didactic materials, which connected inter-curricular knowledge with knowledge of Roma culture and traditions, presentation of individual stories, and so on. The detailed descriptions and instructions for implementation of this part of the workshops are presented in detail in the Booklet for teachers, which will enable long-term use of the methods developed.

Here we present just some examples of teaching materials prepared by children for children, incorporated into the regular school curriculum in different subjects:

Musical instruments: Elementary school students made musical instruments. The workshop provided an insight into the wealth of Roma culture through musical tradition (Figure 5.5.).

Figure 5.5. Musical instruments

Key chains: Pupils made key chains with anti-discrimination messages. The workshop helped the association enhance their technical knowledge, and at the same time combat discrimination and prejudice. The workshop was aimed at raising awareness and accepting diversity, especially of other cultures.

Badges: Badges with slogans: empathy, tolerance, we love each other, be inclusive (Figure 5.6.). Badge models were printed using 3D printing technology. The workshop was intended to raise awareness and acceptance.

Figure 5.6. Badges with slogans

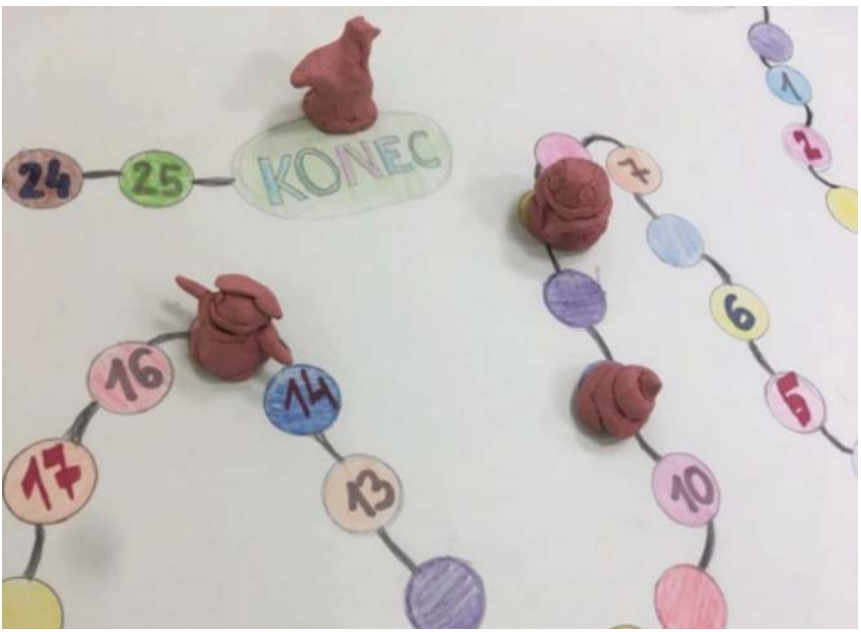
Cards with positive messages: The main message of this workshop was 'WE LOVE EACH OTHER.' This workshop aimed at raising awareness and acceptance of otherness, in particular other cultures (Figure 5.7.).

Figure 5.7. Workshop for children: Cards with positive messages

Colourful bunnies: Pupils learned hand skills by cutting out paper and goods, glue, sew, tie, etc. They also learned how to be respectful in a pleasant way, and collaborative learning skills.

Didactic games: The main task for children was to learn about Roma culture, and to create a didactic game that would teach others about Roma culture and history. Pupils were divided into groups and each group had to investigate from where Roma came, how they moved, and when they came to Slovenia. After gathering all the necessary knowledge, students prepared a game with questions on Roma culture and history (Figure 5.8.).

Figure 5.8. Didactic games



Biographies and pictures of famous Roma

The goal of the workshop was to get to know the names of famous Roma and their life paths, and above all, what they achieved, so that students would learn about their talents and be motivated to advance in education.

Teachers asked if students knew the names of any famous Roma, and if there are Roma scholars, actors, artists or athletes. They then read short biographies of famous Roma. It was immediately apparent that certain celebrities such as athletes, players and musicians were recognized in the pictures. They responded differently to the question if they noticed that they had Roma roots. Some answered yes, others no. Among them was the king of rock and roll Elvis Presley, whom we all know for his famous hairstyle and tracks like 'It's now or never' or 'Hound Dog'. Charlie Chaplin, who was known for his appearances in black and white silent films. He was introduced to other personalities, such as British film and theatre actor Michael Caine, who starred in the movie 'Hannah and her sisters' for which he won an Oscar, and 'The Cider House rules' for which he was awarded the highest honour - the UK Order of the Knight. Pablo Picasso was also mentioned as one of the most famous painters. The students recognized him by pictures like 'Guernica'. The students then split into groups and each group got their own celebrity. Their job was to describe the person. The posters were glued with pictures of their most famous works and briefly described in prints. Each group briefly described the personality at the end of the work, adding what they liked the most in that person or in the work he did. Posters were hung on the school premises at the end of the hour.

Animated stories with strong messages

Students participating in the project produced animated stories with striking messages against discrimination. The purpose of these stories was primarily to break prejudice in society, and, in general, to promote a positive climate so that Roma may also be 'accepted' by mainstream society, while maintaining their culture.

Workshops on creating the video were implemented by all six schools involved. During the workshops, students also used some of the teaching materials prepared in previous project activities. The main technique used for the production of the video was stop-motion. Children would move a chosen object little by little, and pictures of the objects in motion were connected in order to create movement. The final film was posted on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C228TM61FFU

7. Examples of best practices described by teachers

As the project was reaching its end, the teachers involved in the project activities were asked to describe best practices from the activities developed, which seemed to bring out a positive effect on the interaction between students, greater group integrity, and inclusion of all. The workshops described below not only shared a common goal of promoting inclusive education, but also proved to be very interesting and a great fun for all participants. Detailed instructions on implementing those activities are published in the Slovenian project Booklet, which was distributed among local school teachers.

7.1 The tree of differences

In this activity, first- and second-graders learned about differences between people. The main objectives of the workshop were to encourage respect for people who are different in appearance, and to understand that all skin colours are important and the same.

The teacher drew a tree trunk without leaves. Students had to draw and paint the leaves in different shapes and colours. Children then looked closely at the tree and began to talk about what they felt when they saw such a colourful tree: whether it was nicer without leaves and why, or whether it was better to distribute the leaves differently; they were also asked if their leaves were beautiful or ugly, interesting or uninteresting, if they were of different colours and sizes. Most children thought they were beautiful; some pointed to their leaves and explained why they thought they were beautiful or why they thought others were more beautiful. It was a good starting point for the following comparison, on how leaves containing different colours are still leaves and how people can also be of different colours. The teacher explained with pictures how different people are in their complexion, because some are darker or brighter, and also taller or shorter in size, but we are all still people. If people were not different, the world would not be so interesting. It would be like a bare tree that had no leaves. Diversity enriches us in the sense that we learn from one another and respect our fellow human being for their actions and not for the colour of their skin.

It was quite obvious that the children enjoyed the lesson and that were attracted by the creativity in it. It is worth emphasize the ongoing guidance in which it is clear that the children had no trouble following the teaching topic.

7.2 Musical instruments

Second- and fifth-grade pupils participated in the activity. The theme was "Roma music and musical instruments", explaining Roma culture and Roma talents in the field of musical creation. The goal of the workshop was to talk about Roma communities in a very positive light, emphasising their music talents, and raise students' interest in Roma culture in general.

The Roma children participating in the activity also said that at home they noticed that they played different guitars, accordions, double bass and violins, emphasizing that they had learned everything by themselves, and that they never went to music schools. They would always play together, dance in groups, and sing along to the music.

Then it was time for students to start making their own Roma musical instruments. They split into smaller groups, where each group made their own musical instruments. They had various materials available such as yoghurt pots, scissors, balloons and straws. They made earthenware bases, with paper plates, wire and metal tambourine stoppers, and filled yoghurt pots, filled with rice and glued together. The straws were cut exactly for the whistles, the cans and sticks were glued to the drums, and the guitars were cut from the wood, onto which various long strings were wound (Figure 5.9.).

There was a lot of interest in musical instruments and music. Obviously, the musical instruments were then tested and played together.

Figure 5.9. Musical instruments workshop

7.3 Roma language dictionary

This activity was implemented with third and fourth graders. The main goal of the activity was to learn about Roma culture through learning the basics of their language. Another important result was the visibly increased motivation of Roma pupils, who were important participants in the activity as translators.

The materials used for the workshop were basic school articles such as scissors, pens, pencils, crayons, and sheets of paper.

As an introduction, the teacher explained the origins of Roma language and presented some historical facts. Children were divided into small groups and each group received a category of words (clothes, colours, family members, numbers, objects, etc.). Their task was to prepare a picture dictionary with a picture/ drawing on one side and the word written in Roma language on the other side (Figure 5.10.). Students enjoyed the workshop and learned many new words in Roma language.

Figure 5.10. Workshop on Roma language dictionary

7.4 The tracker

The aim of the activity was to encourage pupils to think about their appearance, their identities and their differences. It showed them that we are similar despite our differences, and helped them change their attitudes towards people who are different.

The teacher distributed worksheets for children to draw the contour of their hand and foot. The first step was that each pupil put their left hand and then foot on the sheet of paper and draw its contour, then they measure it.

This moment was followed by questions from the teacher:

- Do we all have the same feet?
- How are they different?
- Do we all have the same hands?
- How are they different?
- How are we different?
- Are there more similarities or differences?
- How are we all alike?

People differ in many characteristics. The most noticeable differences are the outer features, which are immediately noticeable, like height, weight, skin colour, and other. However, some of our features at first glance remain hidden, but we notice them when we get to know a person better. The purpose of the activity was to show that we are all different, but nevertheless we are all important.

8. Meeting students from Italy online

The RISE project also connected elementary schools in different countries. Grade 4 students from GRM elementary school in Novo Mesto and Grade 3 students from Don Orione Elementary School (Bari, Italy) had a special opportunity to talk through Skype and thus get to know their peers from another country. Despite some technical difficulties, they all managed to create the most wonderful atmosphere. All the students were enthusiastic, had prepared an interesting program, and were eager to communicate.

Both classes presented themselves in English and told each other about the rules in their school. Many colourful posters, signs and pictures were shown. Participants had time to introduce themselves, speak about their interests, hobbies, etc.

The questions and answers period towards the end revealed how much they wanted to find out about each other. At the end of the meeting, the students had already discussed opportunities to reunite online in the future. Online meetings can be the beginning of long-lasting friendships and a strong motivation to get to know other cultures. The event showed children the importance of knowing English, as a universal way of communicating and sharing experiences. The virtual meeting was a great experience for both students and teachers.

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CHAPTER 6. AN INCLUSIVE PERSPECTIVE ACROSS NORTHERN PORTUGAL

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1. The situation of Roma people in Portugal

The data referring to the Roma population and their geographical distribution reveal that in Portugal, there are 40,568 individuals who declare themselves to be Roma (Castro, 2013). A recent survey (IRHU, 2017) estimates that about 37,000 Portuguese Roma people live in the national territory, a figure that is confirmed by another national study (Sousa & Moreira, 2016) that also refers to around 37,000 Roma individuals. However, unofficial data estimates that there are around 70.000 Roma individuals in Portugal.[4]

Regarding the geographical distribution of Roma population in Portugal, as it happens with the general population, non-Roma and immigrant population, it is unequal (Casa- Nova, 2018). In terms of absolute numbers, the Roma population is concentrated on the country's coast, where population density is globally higher and where employment opportunities are more available. The three municipalities with the larger number of Roma communities are Lisbon (5,950 individuals) corresponding to 0.27‰; Setúbal (3,686) corresponding to 0.47‰; and Porto (3,304) corresponding to 0.18‰. On the other hand, in relative terms, there is a larger concentration in the interior of the national territory, which means that in terms of percentage, the interior has a comparatively higher number of Roma people. In this regard, we have the

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4. This is also the perception of the Portuguese Roma people, obtained through informal conversations with Roma representatives.

municipality of Beja (2,418 individuals), corresponding to 1.63‰ of the total resident population, Portalegre (1,587), corresponding to 1.4‰, Bragança (1,467), corresponding to 1.1‰. Therefore, these three interior municipalities present a substantially higher relative number of Roma people than the municipalities of the coast of the country.

In 2013, the Portuguese Government approved, as in other European countries, the National Strategy for the Integration of Roma Communities (ENNIC, in Portuguese), through the Council of Ministers Resolution N. 25/2013 of March, 27. The preamble to the document states that, "This is the first national plan for the integration of Roma communities ..." (p. 4, transl.). The European Union proposes that the national strategies of each Member State include four areas: Education, Housing, Employment, and Health. Portugal decided to add a cross-cutting axis "considering that a comprehensive approach to citizenship, justice and security, gender equality, anti-discrimination and social security" is essential for the success of the National Strategy (p. 4, transl.). Within this cross-cutting axis, in priority 2, the establishment of the 'Observatory of Roma Communities' is defined, which is part of the High Commissioner for Migrations (ACM). The axis consists of the following dimensions: Knowledge of the Roma Communities and follow-up of the Strategy; Discrimination; Education for Citizenship; Roma History and Culture; Gender Equality; Justice and Security; Mediation; and Social Security.

However, the stereotypes and prejudices that the majority society still maintains about these communities are an equally important factor for their social and labour segregation. In this context, ENICC argues that it is "necessary to develop mechanisms, or adapt existing ones, according to the cultural characteristics and specificities of this public, in order to ensure effective quality education, completion of compulsory schooling and access to training and lifelong learning" (p. 45, transl.).

In this scope, the following priorities are defined: 18) to improve knowledge of the school situation of Roma students and trainees in school; 19) to ensure access to pre-school education; 20) to increase enrolment rates, ensuring that all Roma children complete compulsory schooling; 21) to promote the continuity of secondary education and encouraging higher education attendance; 22) to prevent early school leaving; (23) to ensure access to lifelong learning; 24) to promote training of educational actors in the diversity of Roma culture, with the participation of elements of these

communities as trainers and privileged interlocutors; and priority 25) to promote the fight against illiteracy.

The Strategy was revised in 2018 (a review that extends the strategy until 2022)[5] and, according to the Council of Ministers Resolution N. 154/2018, ENNICC 2013-2022 "is aligned with other national strategies, such as the National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination 2018-2030 'Portugal+ Equal', in particular in recognition of the specificity of Roma people and their experiences of discrimination, and allows undertaking international commitments, such as the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development" (p. 5451, transl.). It is also mentioned in the document that the Strategy "is based on the guiding principles of interculturalism, non-discrimination, cooperation and participation, territorialisation and equality between women and men" (p. 5451, transl.). Under the principle of territorialisation, local authorities are 'strategic agents' in fighting social and territorial segregation, and the particular importance of Roma communities´ associations in the development of the Strategy is also underlined, as well as the effective involvement of the Roma population in decisions concerning them. Finally, equality between men and women, besides being presented as an autonomous strategic objective, is also assumed in this review as a transversal objective to the entire ENICC planning and execution process.

According to ENICC's Education area, "[t]he difficulties of social integration of Roma communities in Portugal are well known, and the obstacles faced by young Roma in the process of entering in the labour world are evident. This situation is evidently associated with the poor schooling of this population and the high rate of failure and early school leaving among Roma children and young people" (p. 45, transl.). Data provided by the Ministry of Education-DGEEC in 2018[6] identifies a total of 11,018 Roma students in public schools attending compulsory education. Although these figures should be read prudently, in particular because 30% of schools did not respond to the survey and there are certainly Roma children and young people attending school who are not perceived as such[7], data shows that 60% of Roma

5. This review was carried out after an evaluation of the implementation of the Strategy. This revision was the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Citizenship and Equality.

6. In http://www.dgeec.mec.pt/np4/906.html. Part of the analysis on this data is published in the Newsletter of the Observatory for the Roma Communities (July 2018). In https://www.obcig.acm.gov.pt/documents/58622/209362/Newsletter_OBCIG_julho_2018.pdf/c7bf6eff-7006-4d4e-b7f0-26b19e44ab5b

7. These data were collected by the General Direction of Education (DGE in Portuguese) through a survey to

children entering primary school in the academic year 2016/17 had already attended pre-school education.

On the other hand, although the number of young people attending upper secondary school is low (256), it is important to highlight that there are almost as many girls as boys (46% girls to 54% boys). Although the boys do not have the same sociocultural constraints when it comes to finishing compulsory education that girls have, in the data concerning upper secondary education, these constraints are not visible, which means that reality is in the process of positive change.

2. Brief characterization of the schools involved in the project

In Portugal, the RISE project was developed in a school cluster (SC) in the district of Braga, located in a semi-rural area, which covers four neighbourhoods. According to data provided by the SC, the surrounding population presents low or medium low socioeconomic conditions, visible through the large number of beneficiaries of social income and school support from National Social Security, as well as parents' low levels of schooling. This territory has Roma communities that live, mostly, in three settlements without housing conditions and, in one case, without water or electricity.[8]

The SC aggregates three schools that go from pre-school to 3rd cycle of basic education: the Plátano and the Cipreste schools are pre-primary and primary schools; the EB2/3 school is the middle school (2nd and 3rd cycle of basic education) and the SC's headquarters. According to the data given by the school management, in the school year of 2018/2019 there were approximately 181 children (10 classes) in pre-school education; 370 students (19 classes) in the 1st cycle; 194 students (9 classes) in the 2nd cycle and 258 students (13 classes + 1 class of an Integrated Programme of Education and Training - PIEF) in the 3rd cycle. From these, 24 are foreign students, mostly

the school managers. The survey was not conducted directly with the students. It is, therefore, the management's knowledge about the existence of these students, as well as the data related to their enrolment, in which students' surnames are one of the references of their ethno cultural belonging.

8. The majority of the Roma population is sedentarized, but according to the most recent data from the Institute of Housing and Urban Rehabilitation (IHUR), 32% live in tents or dwellings, without decent living conditions. See https://www.portaldahabitacao.pt/opencms/export/sites/ihru/ pt/ihru/docs/relatorio_contas/RA_2017.pdf

from Brazil and Venezuela. There are also 22 students attending adult education and vocational training courses.

One hundred and three teachers compose the teaching staff, and the large majority is in the age group from 50 and 59 years, which corresponds to 65% of the teaching staff. It should be noted that nine teachers are in the age group of 60 to 64 years old and one teacher in the age group of 65 and 69 years old. The SC also has other professionals and social workers.

This school cluster is a TEIP (Educational Territory of Priority Intervention[9].) since the academic year 2012/13. In the scope of the TEIP project, an office to support families and students was created, with three psychologists and two social assistants. Within this TEIP project, several partnerships were also developed, of which we highlight the one with a NGO that develops several projects with the Roma population. One of them is directed towards Roma students and includes activities like after school programs supporting students with their homework, playful activities, and summer camps. There are also activities in one primary school aiming at endorsing social skills and recreational activities during break times.

In the RISE project, all the schools in the SC were involved. With regard to students from the Roma communities, Table 6.1. shows the number of students involved. In the EB 2/3 school, 15 Roma students attend the regular classes of the 2nd and of the 3rd cycle, and 13 are integrated in a vocational training class (PIEF).

Table 6.1. Roma students in the participating schools in the school year of 2018/19

	Plátano	Cipreste	EB2,3
Pre-school	9	9	--
Primary school	16	13	--
Middle school	--	--	28
Total	25	22	28

9. TEIP schools are included in a governamental program that supplies human resources such as psychologist, social workers, and teacher to reinforce the school staff in order to achieve better educational outcomes.

3. Action research in the participating schools

3.1 Mapping the field

In the RISE Project, action research in the participating schools began with semi-structured interviews with the purpose of identifying concepts of multicultural education, but also problems and good practices related to it in the SC. They were conducted with two school managers, eight teachers, four social workers, three school professionals, five Roma parents, and two Presidents for the Parents' Associations (PTA). With the children (three Roma students and three non-Roma students, aged between 6 and 11), collective interviews were carried out in order to enable dialogue among them (see Chapter 3 in this book).

After the transcription of the interviews, content analysis was carried out through the construction of categories *a priori* (resulting from interview scripts) and emerging categories, resulting from the data analysis: school attendance, absenteeism and school dropout; importance of pre-school; difficulties in the transition between primary and secondary school; difficulties in the learning process; problems in communicating and learning; sociocultural and familiar context; tailored learning practices; interpersonal relations; discrimination towards Roma children and families; intercultural education; parents involvement with schools; teacher´s role.

When referring to school attendance, absenteeism and school dropout, the schools are described by the different educational actors as presenting reduced absenteeism and school dropout. However, the data collected on school attendance in the scope of the project, still shows a percentage of 6% absenteeism in the 1st cycle and 10% in the 2nd cycle. This teacher refers to these problems as something that is no longer a major issue:

> The problems that are identified [absenteeism and school dropout] are dealt within the educational project [of the school cluster]. Not only Roma students, we had a lot of school dropouts. We had this kind of cases, because we are a TEIP school and we have to be aware of these numbers, so that was one of the problems. (Ent. 6, coordinator of the 1st cycle of basic education, female[10.])

10. All testimonials are translated from the Portuguese language.

Regarding pre-school attendance, although the number of children attending pre-school has increased in the last years, this is still considered insufficient, especially because their attendance is irregular or they do not attend full-time. In the opinion of the interviewed, an improvement of this aspect would have positive impact on learning, on contact with the academic language, on sociability and on the relations between Roma families and school.

The transition from the first cycle to the second cycle of primary school is also described as difficult. According to the interviews, when students reach the 5th grade they have more subjects and teachers, less follow-up and are faced with a lack of academic skills to understand the subjects.

> Many kids come here, almost cannot read, it's true, we have this notion, some of them spend four years of schooling in the first cycle and some with many difficulties. And when they enter the 5th grade, they are expected to have some skills that don´t really exist. (Ent 6, coordinator of the 1st cycle of primary school, female)

The **difficulties in the learning process** by the Roma students is perceived as a huge constraint. When questioned about the reasons why these students cannot learn as they are supposed to, arguments of different order are invoked, namely immaturity, lack of interest, low cognitive abilities, family and sociocultural context, and scarce or non-existent identification with the school institution. They also consider that the use of specific dialects has repercussions on the socialization process of these children and, eventually, on the learning process.

In addition to the specific needs of Roma children in schools, the interviewees also underline that another key element for the inclusion of children in the school is the construction of positive **relationships with Roma families**. The relationship between teachers and Roma families is described both as being positive, guided by respect and trust, and as unwelcoming, imbued with mistrust and conflict:

> We have here attitudes of opening and awareness [from the teachers to the Roma families], and this has been noted over time, this work of connection with families. We have teachers who can do it very well right now. But, on the other hand, we also have teachers who think that school is school, family is family, almost as if the student entered the school gate and had to be someone different, as if he left part of him out there. (Ent. 1, coordinator of one primary schools, female)

Regarding the **relationship between teachers and students**, in most interviews with teachers, a good relationship with the students is affirmed.

> We don't differentiate the kids, there's no difference. [...]. In terms of relationship, I think it's a natural relationship that is created, whether or not they're Roma. I don't think that makes any difference from one to the other, no, no. I have a Roma boy in the room, it never occurred to me to make a difference, they are all children whom we really like and we want them to be happy there. (Ent.3, coordinator of a primary school)

In the interviews with students, parents, social workers and other professionals (janitors), the discourse varies from positive to negative. The testimonials of two Roma parents with opposite points of view are presented here:

> I don´t have any complaints about the school. There are people, Roma people, who have problems, but I've always been well respected. My daughters too, they've always been well respected, I've never had any conflict with teachers. I don't know with the other children, but my daughters get along very well. I've never had any problems. (Ent.3E, Roma mother)

[What problems does the school present?] For me, racism. (.....) I have my daughters and one told me, "Father, I wanted to go to the toilet and she didn't allow me". (Ent.2Eb, Roma father)

On the other hand, children and teenagers interviewed during the collective interviews agreed that the greatest difficulties faced by students belong to the sphere of **relationships with their peers**. Teasing, slights and even bullying are all situations that threaten the well-being of children and teenagers, as well as their self-esteem, making them feel insecure in relationships with their peers and demotivated in terms of school commitment.

Teachers, social workers and other school professionals (janitors) state that students interact and play with each other in the playground, especially boys when playing football. However, these interactions are marked by some conflicts and stereotypes reproduced from the adults and a certain "fear" of non-Roma students regarding Roma ones.

> The other girls turned to her [her daughter] "ah, the gypsies have lices, the gypsies have lices" and they [the teachers] could also see the situation and scold, but they said nothing. (Ent. 4E, Roma mother)

> A boy just sees me and he is afraid. [...] I just play with him and he starts to run away and says I hit him. Then he said "That gypsy beat me" and I do not like him calling me that name. [...] They are afraid of gypsies. (Ent. 4F, Roma boy, collective interview with Roma students)

An important issue addressed both by teachers and the social worker is the **prejudice and discrimination towards Roma children and families**, from other students and parents. Roma children and families often hide their identity due to difficulties in revealing their ethnic and cultural provenience, as they are afraid of being judged by others. Inclusion was defined as a welcoming attitude and as availability to acknowledge the other, to relate with people, cultures and experiences different than one's own. In the specific case of the Roma population, a welcoming attitude was mostly interpreted as non-discrimination and non-stigmatisation within both the school context and the local area in general, but also in teachers' attitudes and techniques how they relate to their student's differences (especially in the case of Roma students).

> There were two different attitudes on the part of the teachers. There were teachers who recognized [the diversity/the difference] and tried to work with that difference, but there were also attitudes of identifying it "I know that he/she is different, I know that he/she cannot learn as others learn" and naturalising it. And this attitude somehow ended up imposing. So this form of discrimination is perpetuated because this is a form of discrimination, when we consider them (the students] all the same when they are not the same... (Ent.1, coordinator of a primary school, female)

When asked about what **Intercultural Education** was for them, teachers, social workers and parents (Roma and non-Roma) presented several and diverse perspectives. These range from the need to take into account the specificities of Roma students and their culture and make changes in the school curricula and didactic and pedagogical practices, to the development of occasional events to show the 'Roma culture' (dance, music,...) to the school. Some educational actors invoked more positive and inclusive perspectives, based mainly on: recognition of individuality and acceptance of differences; deconstruction of stereotypes through knowledge and social interaction; sharing and appreciating other cultures (habits, traditions, festivities); and diversity seen as enrichment and added value. Only two Roma parents referred to the idea of 'equality' and one teacher mentioned 'equal opportunities'. Other teachers emphasized a non-assimilationist perspective:

> We do not want their culture and way of thinking to die out because it's their culture. Their culture is theirs and ours is ours. We have a different way of looking at things, we do not want them to integrate and completely acculturate, they have their way of thinking. (Ent.3, teacher from primary school)

Some interviewees also stressed some requirements for intercultural education to take place: decent living conditions for the Roma population (housing and employment); an "environment of trust and empathy" in the schools; a consistent and lasting work ("not a festive type such as Roma day") and the involvement of the whole community, not just school. In terms of practices, it was mentioned the curricular adjustments and the conception of materials closer to the preferences of the students; cooperative work between teachers and between schools and other organisations; and promoting the participation of Roma families in the school.

In brief, the results of the interviews lead us to take into consideration the **key role of the teacher as a facilitator and coordinator of the inclusion process**. Teachers are responsible for selecting the method to be used with the class and play a key role in involving and stimulating the students during daily activities. However, teachers often find themselves alone in facing problematic aspects and issues concerning each class (or single students), fully aware that their presence, availability and commitment will probably prove to be insufficient for meeting the needs of single students.

Finally, and regarding the interviewees perspectives on experiences of inclusion and best practices, teachers referred to the importance of **cooperative work**, but emphasized in particular peer work among teachers. However, they also stated that cooperative work among teachers is scarcely developed in their schools. The fact that they are not accustomed to cooperate, their lack of training in these methodologies and excessive amount of work makes this practice hard to implement.

Some teachers and the social worker mention the relevance of **differentiated educational practices** that take into account the specificities of each student and one teacher even states the crucial role of the development of **pedagogical differentiation devices**. They all mention as a good practice for promoting the inclusion of Roma students the educational support given by the school cluster, such as co-teaching practices and pedagogical laboratories.

All the interviewees talk about the importance of the **involvement of Roma parents in school activities** and even in the Parents´ Association.

However, very little has been done to achieve parents´ participation. The promotion of a positive and trustful relationship between school and parents, the intervention with the parents carried out by the Family and Student Support Office and the social workers that are part of this office, the parental skills training developed in one primary school, and the role of one of the parents' association in enhancing the participation of families in school life, are some examples of good practices.

3.2 The training of the teachers and other professionals

After the initial phase of context analysis, a training program for the teachers and other professionals of the SC was organized. It was designed so it would cater for the specific needs identified, namely the need to deconstruct some of the preconceptions on difference and on the Roma communities and their relationship with the school, as well as the need to work on pedagogical proposals that would promote the transformation of teaching and learning practices. The professional development program 'Towards an intercultural education model: the construction of pedagogical differentiation devices' was then designed and submitted for approval of the National Board for the Accreditation of Teacher Training. It was a 50 hours program, with 25 hours of face-to-face work and 25 hours of autonomous work, carried out with 17 teachers and five other professionals (psychologists, social worker, and technical staff). The entire Portuguese team[11.] acted as trainers, implementing the face-to-face sessions and monitoring autonomous work.

The program had the following objectives:

- to identify school and academic factors related to the quality of the learning processes and school success in the regular official curriculum of students from social, economic, and heterogeneous cultural origin;
- to reflect on the influence of teachers´ expectations and practices on students' learning;
- to develop (plan, implement, evaluate) pedagogical differentiation devices;
- to implement collaborative reflection procedures about teaching practice.

11. Besides the authors of this chapter, research fellows Júlia Rodrigues and Laura Ribeiro were also trainers.

Face-to-face training was developed in eight sessions that took place between November 2018 and June 2019. The first three sessions were devoted to the presentation and discussion of key concepts like academic knowledge, democratisation, mass schooling, equal opportunity for school learning, educational inequalities, intercultural education (cultural blindness, cultural bilingualism, hidden curriculum, social and cultural reproduction, diatopic hermeneutics, mono and inter/multicultural teacher, pedagogical differentiation devices) and their relationship with the role of the teacher (as critical researcher) and school work (Casa-Nova, 2002, 2008, 2013, 2018; Cortesão et al., 1995; Kemmis, McTaggart, & Nixon, 2014; Santomé, 1995; Santos, 1997; Stoer, 2008; Stoer & Araújo, 1993; Stoer & Cortesão, 1999; Stoer & Magalhães, 2005; Young, 2007 were some of the works used as reference). The following three sessions were dedicated to assist in the design and monitoring of the pedagogical differentiation devices implemented in the classes of the teachers enrolled in the course. The final session was focused on the presentation and discussion of the pedagogical experiences developed by the participants and to the evaluation of the professional development program.

The pedagogical differentiation devices were developed by four groups of teachers and professionals (see 3.3. below). Each group was supervised by one of the trainers that would assist in the design of the experience (setting objectives, selecting curricular content, designing pedagogical activities and data collection techniques and instruments, schedulling...), but that would also monitor its implementation by observing classes and providing feedback. Quality criteria for the design and evaluation of the pedagogical differentiation devices was discussed with the participants and used to both plan and evaluate their experiences (Table 6.2.).

Table 6.2. Quality criteria for pedagogical differentiation devices

	The pedagogical approach promotes...
Cooperative, reflexive, experiential, and intercultural learning	... participated, cooperative, and negotiated processes among children and between children and their teacher?
	... 'learn by doing' tasks?
	... the integration of the lived experiences and cultural world of children?
	... the acceptance and valorization of difference?
	... the articulation of curricular areas/ school subjects?
	... the integration of diverse interests, needs, rhythms, and styles?
	... children's reflection on learning?

At the end, the groups produced a report of the pedagogical differentiation device implemented and each participant delivered a reflective written record on his/ her personal experience.

3.3 The pedagogical differentiation devices

Within the scope of the professional development initiative, and with a view of implementing intercultural education pedagogical practices, four pedagogical differentiation devices were developed. Through these devices, teachers and students would experience action research in their classrooms, through critical dialogue, negotiated decision-making, collaborative construction of knowledge, and integration of diverse cultural perspectives.

Putting into practice the concept of pedagogical differentiation device was a transformative learning experience for all actors involved. Deciding on what to do, why, when, and who to involve, monitoring, and reflecting on the whole process every step of the way was a valuable professional development challenge for trainers and trainees alike. It was also an act of resistance to homogenization and subordination discourses and practices.

The pedagogical devices developed were called: ‚*Me, You, Us*', ‚*Daily Lives with Equality*', ‚*Me, You and the Others*' and ‚*Houses of the World*'[12]. They

12. The detailed work developed by participating teachers, technical staff, and students is published in the Portuguese RISE booklet (Casa-Nova et al., 2020), available in the Portuguese and English language at: https://www.obcig.acm.gov.pt/-/estudo-nacional-sobre-as-comunidades-cigan-1

involved 263 school actors, distributed as follows: 240 children, 19 teachers, and four technical staff members. Table 6.3. identifies the teachers and other professionals responsible for carrying out the experience.

Table 6.3. Groups within the pedagogical differentiation devices

Group 1 - Me, You, Us (EB2,3 school)	**Group 2** - Daily Life with Equality (Plátano School)	**Group 3** - Me, You and the Others (Cipreste school)	**Group 4** - Houses of the World (Cipreste school)
Isabel Macedo	Susana Fernandes (Social Worker)	Susana Martins	Paula Martins
Graça Fernandes	Rosalinda Maia	Anabela Pereira	Olívia Rodrigues
António Vasconcelos	Teresa Ribeiro	Céu Teixeira	João Ferreira
	Alexandra Rodrigues (Technical staff)	Paula Fernandes	Alexandra Pardal (Psychologist)
		Sofia Teixeira (Psychologist)	

3.3.1 Pedagogical Device: Me, You, Us

The pedagogical differentiation device 'Me, You, Us' was developed in a class of 22 students from 5th grade. This class included three Roma students. It counted with the participation of eight teachers, teaching Portuguese, English, Physical Education, Maths, Technological Education, Citizenship Education, and ICT. It had the following objectives:

- Develop knowledge on oneself and on one's colleagues;
- Develop social skills and minimize the conflicts felt by students in the classroom, by understanding and valuing the Other;
- Improve the sense of cooperation, classroom spirit and solidarity;
- Recognize and value individual, own and other's differences within the group;
- Promote the recognition and appreciation of diversity as an opportunity and source of learning for all.
- Instil respect for cultural diversity, encouraging social interaction and promoting equality and a sense of common belonging to humanity;
- Enhance the use of information and communication technologies in research, processing, production and communication.

The articulation with the curricular content was made by integrating the several subjects in the project developed with students, namely:

- **Portuguese language**: addressing non-literary texts (interview structure and constituting elements; essential information; expression of opinion; inference; interview script; preparing surveys);
- **Maths**: developing techniques for organizing and processing data (relative and absolute frequencies, bar graphs, mean and mode);
- **English language**: teach the topics of *Daily routine, Personal information, Free time activities, Food and drinks* that allowed the development of *reading, speaking, and listening skills;* also to introduce oneself and introduce others; routines and tastes/ preferences;
- **Citizenship Education**: getting to know the other and develop interculturality (deepen the knowledge of oneself and one's culture; to promote greater understanding of the cultural identity of peers);
- **Physical Education**: using students' favourite sports activities/ games (dance, football, etc.) to relate Physical Fitness and Health, and to identify the factors associated with a healthy lifestyle, namely the development of motor skills, body composition, diet, rest, affection and the quality of the environment, interpreting the socio-cultural dimension of sports and physical activity in our days;
- **Technological Education**: preparing game cards - to produce artefacts, objects and technical systems, adapting the material and technical means to the idea or intention expressed; distinguishing the stages of realisation of a project: identification, research, realization and evaluation.
- **ICT**: constructing PowerPoint presentations in order to use the computer as a support tool; to know the potential of different technological applications; to produce creative digital artefacts, make presentations, and share the developed products.

The development of the pedagogical differentiation device started in the Portuguese language classes. In a conversation with the students, the issue of conflicts between them was raised, and the reflection focused on what could be done in order to improve the quality of their interactions. The students concluded that a good way to overcome this issue would be to get to know each other better. In this sense, they suggested carrying out surveys and creating spaces in which everyone could talk about themselves

(their tastes, hobbies, family, and concerns), and they chose the name for the project: *Me, You, Us.*

After some joint reflection, the group decided that it would be motivating to develop activities that converged to a final contest similar to 'Trivial Pursuit', with questions about each member of the class (their tastes, preferences, characteristics, hobbies, family, etc.). Thus, it was decided, in negotiation between teachers and students, to prepare a questionnaire in the Portuguese class to be asked to all colleagues.

Then, in the Citizenship Education class, each student answered the questionnaire in writing.

In the English language subject, the questionnaire was translated and drama activities were prepared and developed within the topic 'Daily routines', in which the students conducted interviews to each other.

In the Physical Education subject, videos were recorded. Each student introduced himself/ herself, mentioning his/her sports habits and what they do in their leisure time, at school and at home.

Again, in the Citizenship Education class, each student was invited to introduce himself/ herself through the video made, so that colleagues could get the most information about each member of the class.

In ICT, each student prepared a PowerPoint presentation, using the video and image tools, in which they highlighted their preferences, their leisure time, among other aspects.

In the Technological Education class, cards were made with questions and corresponding answers about the various members of the class, e.g., 'Q: What is Carlos' favourite food?' A: 'Chicken with rice'.

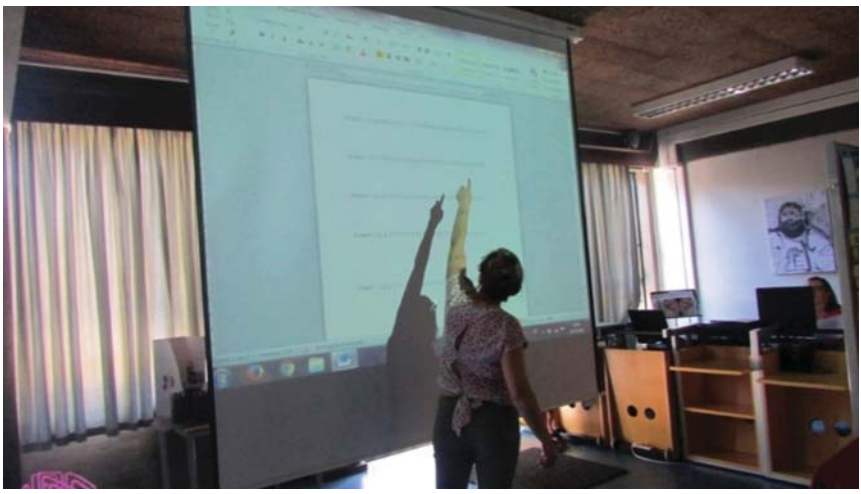
In the Maths subject, under the theme *Data Organization and Processing*, the number of answers was counted, tables with relative and absolute frequencies, and bar graphs were made, and the mean and mode of responses were defined regarding students' answers to the questionnaire.

Then, in the English class, the Human Bingo game was performed: each student received a card (the same for everyone) with features associated to each of their colleagues; they had to find out who such and such feature belonged to. They could only ask quietly, for example 'Is your birthday in September?'. Whoever completed the card first would win (Figure 6.1.).

Figure 6.1. Human Bingo in English Class

Finally, on May 30th 2019, the 'Trivial Pursuit' contest took place in the school library. From the questionnaire carried out in the Portuguese class, a teacher asked questions about a certain student, to which the rest of the class, organized in groups, answered. The group that best knew their classmates would win (Figure 6.2.).

Figure 6.2. 'Trivial Pursuit' contest in the school library



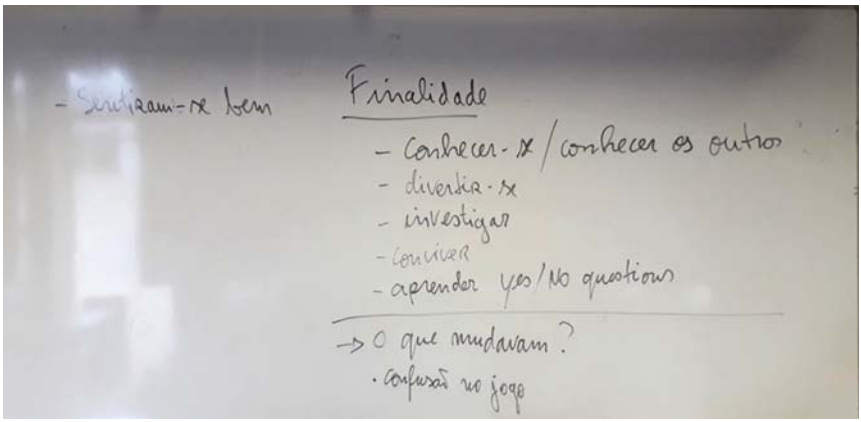
In order to evaluate the experience, informal conversations were held with the students involved, reflective records of students were made, both formal and informal, plus video and photo records. Learning record forms were also used.

These procedures intended to evaluate the following: the degree of interest students had in the activity; the perception of the usefulness of the activity for conducting new learnings in different subjects; the lessons learned; the promotion of group cohesion among classmates; the way students felt throughout the entire process; the improvement of the group's interpersonal and intercultural knowledge; the contribution of each person towards reducing conflicts within the classroom; and proposals for the possible continuation of these activities.

The approach followed promoted cooperative, reflective, experimental and intercultural learning, involving participatory, collaborative and negotiated processes among children, and between them and their teachers. The students developed 'learning by doing' tasks, which integrated their experiences and their cultural world, leading to acceptance and appreciation of differences, integrating their different interests, needs, paces and styles. Horizontal curricular articulation between subjects was achieved, through the involvement of teachers from different subjects, namely Portuguese, English, Physical Education, Technological Education, Citizenship Education, and ICT.

Throughout the process, various moments of reflection and evaluation on activities and learning were promoted. Figure 6.3. illustrates one of those moments when students were invited to reflect on what they had learned in class. It shows a register on the board during the English class, when students were asked about the purpose of the activity (Human Bingo), how they felt during the activity, and what they would change. As an example, when asked about what they had learned, students named both knowledge of the subjects (e.g. "to learn yes/no questions"), as well as the fact that the activity allowed them to "get to know each other better" and even "do research". They were unanimous in considering that "this type of classes is much more interesting".

Figure 6.3. Moment of reflection during the English class



The activities contributed to the development of autonomy, self-knowledge and self-reflection by students. The sharing of experiences and knowledge allowed a better understanding of the other, valuing differences and promoting inclusion. The cooperative and reflective spirit was also stimulated, promoting the recognition and appreciation of diversity as a learning opportunity for all, instilling respect for cultural diversity, encouraging social interaction, fostering equality and a sense of belonging to humanity. The use of information and communication technologies throughout the process was also valued.

3.3.2 Pedagogical Device: Daily Lives with Equality

In the construction of the pedagogical differentiation device entitled 'Daily Lives with Equality', two groups of pre-schoolers were involved, in a total of 29 children, aged between 3 and 5 years. Of these, 4 were Roma children. Two elementary school classes were also involved (3rd and 4th graders), in a total of 23 students, of which six were Roma.

This pedagogical differentiation device aimed to:

- Understand the meaning of gender equality;
- Work with differences without transforming them into inequalities;
- Contribute to the perception of gender stereotypes;
- Deconstruct gender stereotypes;

- Promote egalitarian and inclusive attitudes and behaviours;
- Promote gender equality among children and families.

The main goal of this device, in addition to the above-mentioned objectives, was to understand, in a more concrete way, who performs certain type of tasks (man/ woman; father/ mother), and whether such tasks are associated with traditional gender roles or if gender roles are undergoing changes.

The articulation with the national curricular guidelines for pre-school education was achieved by looking at the different areas and content and selecting those more relevant for the group´s objectives of addressing gender discrimination and intercultural education with these children:

- **Personal and Social Education Area**: developing identity and self-esteem; getting to know and accept their personal features and their social and cultural identity, placing them in relation to those of others; recognising and valuing social and cultural ties; acquiring the ability to make choices, to make decisions and to take responsibility, taking into account their own well-being and that of others; cooperating with others in the learning process; developing respect for the other and for their opinions, in an attitude of sharing and social responsibility; respecting diversity and showing solidarity with others; developing a critical and interventional attitude towards what is happening in the world around them.
- **Expression and Communication Area:** understanding oral messages in different communication situations; using oral language in context, being able to communicate appropriately according to the situation (production and functionality).
- **Artistic Education:** developing expressive and creative skills through experimentation and plastic productions; recognising and mobilising elements of visual communication both in the production and appreciation of their own productions and in the images they would observe; appreciating different manifestations of visual arts from the observation of various expressions of art, namely painting, drawing, sculpture, photography, video, architecture, etc., highlighting their opinion and critical reading.
- **Drama/ Theatre**: using and recreating space and objects, giving them multiple meanings in drama activities, in imaginary situations

and through the recreation of everyday experiences, both individually and with others.

In order to carry out the activities, a schedule and weekly planning of tasks were prepared in order to allow for independent work in each curricular area and for the final joint evaluation. Thus, at a first stage, children were asked to draw the daily lives of both their parents on different days of the week and in different moments of the day. Tuesday (morning/ evening) and Saturday (morning/ lunch/ afternoon/ evening) were defined, in order to get to know their routines during weekdays and during the weekend. This activity aimed at understanding the allocation of tasks in the domestic sphere and the social dynamics in different contexts.

In this continuum, at a second stage, a panel was created with the drawings made by each student, where their teachers recorded the description of those drawings made by the children. The panel exhibiting the drawings (Figure 6.4.) helped analyse and talk - individually and as a group - about what was represented there, as well as to share what they observed at home, reflecting and recalling the behaviours and tasks taken up by the father and by the mother. This connection with the drawings was constant, placing one 'foot' at home and another at school.

Figure 6.4. Children's and their families' daily routines

As they made their drawings, children reported their morning routines and, almost all of them, mirrored the following story: "My mother dresses herself up, drinks some milk, dresses me up and then takes me to school. My father gets dressed and goes to work." For this reason, at first, the children

perceived this allocation of tasks as 'normal' and only when other children, whose families had different dynamics, shared their routines, were they able to understand that behaviours and allocation of domestic tasks is not the same in all homes.

In a third stage, the book 'Candy Pink' [*Rosa Rebuçado in Portuguese*] by Adela Turin was read out. The choice of this story is related to the fact that it helps deconstruct gender stereotypes and helps build ideas and practices of equality and freedom, in order to help change mentalities and build a better world:

Isolated in a garden, Pascaline is the only she elephant in the group unable to get her skin to be candy pink. When her parents give up imposing that aspect on her, she will finally discover the meaning of freedom and open the way of equality for her friends. (Excerpt from Candy Pink)

The reading was divided into three moments: a first reading supported by the illustrations in the book; then, only reading; and, finally, the story was (re)told by children through images. In addition to the reading moments with the pre-school groups, there was also a session shared with the 1st cycle classes dedicated to reading and discussion.

In a fourth stage, several activities were developed for staging the book 'Candy Pink', always with the participation, commitment and motivation of children. At first, they drew and painted the female elephants (Figure 6.5.); then they retold the story to the group through the drawings they made. At a later moment, children gathered information online on elephants, their species, and their origins.

Figure 6.5. Drawings of female elephants

The construction of the theatre, sets and props was developed by the children and their teachers, actively participating in the artistic and aesthetic

aspect of the whole process. When choosing the characters, spaces were set up for children to have the opportunity to share ideas and express which character they would like to play. At this stage there was a need for negotiations, since the main character (Pascaline) was very much desired by all.

On June 21st 2019, the drama based the book was staged at the end-of-school-year party, in which the parents/ guardians and the entire school community participated (Figure 6.6.). They also had the opportunity to appreciate the drawings made by the children.

Figure 6.6. Staging of the drama 'Candy Pink'

In order to evaluate the experience, informal conversations were held with students, along with video and photo recordings. The informal conversations were guided by the objectives defined for the construction of this pedagogical differentiation device.

The experience enabled a reflection on discriminatory gender behaviours, with the consequent deconstruction of stereotypes. Based on the story 'Candy Pink' and all the resulting activities presented in the designing of the experience, the discussion helped promote egalitarian and inclusive behaviours. However, in order to achieve the goals of deconstructing gender stereotypes and promoting gender equality among children and families, one would have to continue with these activities. As it is about a group of children

aged between 3 and 5 years, they need to experience these dynamics, so that they become part of their daily lives and of that of their families. For such promotion to be effective with families, we would have to consider not only a direct intervention with the children, but also joint activities for a greater impact of such intervention, since families only watched the presentation of the final product, either through the drama or through the drawing exhibition.

After the construction of this route, it is considered that these experiences are fundamental to better understand the various contexts, how they are organized, and what are their underlying principles and values. The development of inter/ multicultural education within the School Cluster involves the creation of spaces for dialogue and sharing, where children feel valued in their culture of belonging, sharing it in the relationship with everyone else.

3.3.3 Pedagogical Device: Me, You, and the Others

Six classes were involved in the construction of this pedagogical device (one 1st grade; one 2nd grade; two 3rd grade; two 4th grade), in a total of 137 children, of which 11 were Roma. The participants included two teachers from these classes, a teacher with no assigned class, an English teacher, the Curriculum Enrichment Activities teachers, and the Artistic Expressions and Music teachers, plus a psychologist from the SC, in a total of six teachers and one technical staff member involved.

- The development of this pedagogical differentiation device aimed to:
- Promote integration and unity through difference;
- Present, identify and celebrate different ethnicities and cultures;
- Promote reflection on Roma origins and culture;
- Promote closer ties and greater involvement among the various educational agents (family, guardians, and parents' association);
- Improve the welcoming of students from different socio-cultural backgrounds;
- Promote interdisciplinarity, articulating content areas while exploring various activities;
- Foster autonomy and mutual help among students;
- Promote the construction of an inclusive school.

The articulation with the national curriculum was achieved by integrating the content of the different subject areas:

- **Social and Natural Studies:** displaying attitudes of respect, solidarity, cooperation, responsibility, in the relationships with the closer ones; communicating ideas and knowledge regarding places, regions and events, using iconic and verbal language, noting their diversity; recognizing the multiple belongings of each person and the different groups and communities; recognizing influences from other countries and cultures in different aspects of one's daily life (food, clothing, music, communication, etc.); identifying dates, facts and places meaningful to one's personal history or to that of the people closer to oneself, locating them on maps or plans and on a timeline.
- **Maths:** recognizing and relating to each other the time intervals (day, week, month and year) and identifying the hour as a unit of time measurement; identifying and relating to each other the value of Eurozone coins and banknotes, and using them in different contexts.
- **Portuguese Language:** inferring the topic and summarizing the central ideas of texts associated with different purposes (playful, aesthetic, informative); selecting relevant information according to the listening objectives and recording it by using different techniques; retelling stories and narrating lived and imagined situations; playing different communication roles in simulation and role play games; recreating small texts in different forms of expression (verbal, gestural, bodily, musical, plastic); valuing the cultural diversity of texts (heard or read).
- **English Language**: understanding very simple words and expressions, communicated clearly and slowly (cardinal numbers, colours, and garment items); identifying different sounds and intonations in the English language compared to one's mother tongue; following the sequence of very simple, short known stories, with visual/ audio-visual support; engaging in reading exercises (silent/ aloud) of words accompanied by images to assimilate more frequent combinations of sounds; recognizing elements of one's own culture, such as different aspects of oneself; identifying elementary features of Anglo-Saxon culture.
- **Artistic Expressions**: experimenting various expressive possibilities of materials (charcoal, modelling paste, clay, dry pastels, scenography

paint, brushes, rollers, papers of different shapes and features, among others) and different techniques, adapting their use to different contexts and situations; selecting techniques and materials, adjusting them to the expressive intention of their representations; developing multidisciplinary work projects; appreciating their work and that of their colleagues, using different argumentation criteria; painting using two different materials (gouache and glue, gouache and Chinese ink...); painting scenery, props, constructions; making compositions for communication purposes (using images, words, images and words): cutting and pasting elements; singing own songs or of others, solo and in groups, namely songs with different musical and cultural features, progressively displaying technical and expressive qualities; performing sequences of body movements in different musical contexts; communicating through body movement according to diverse musical proposals; publicly presenting artistic activities in which music is articulated with other knowledge areas; exploring the motor and expressive possibilities of the body in different activities (free or guided movement, creation of characters...); transforming objects (props, animated shapes...), intentionally experimenting with different materials and techniques (using articulated parts; colour, shape and volume variations...) for obtaining different effects; creating characters in different situations and with different purposes.

The process unfolded in three stages. In the first one, the motivation for the theme, and the survey and reflection on the previous knowledge that the group had about the Roma people were worked on. With this objective, the presentation and discussion of the video 'I'm Roma - origin and culture of the Roma people' was carried out. After viewing the video, the students were asked to share some of their experiences and traditions with their colleagues.

Subsequently, in Artistic Expression, Portuguese, and Social and Natural Studies classes, the activity 'A children's glance: being a Roma is...' was developed, in which each student was invited to develop a drawing alluding to the topic (Figure 6.7.).

Figure 6.7. 'A children's glance: being a Roma is…'

In the English class, starting from the video 'I'm Roma - origin and culture of the Roma people', the vocabulary related to Roma clothing was worked on in the activity 'My Roma woman'. The children drew and subtitled each garment item, thus acquiring new vocabulary.

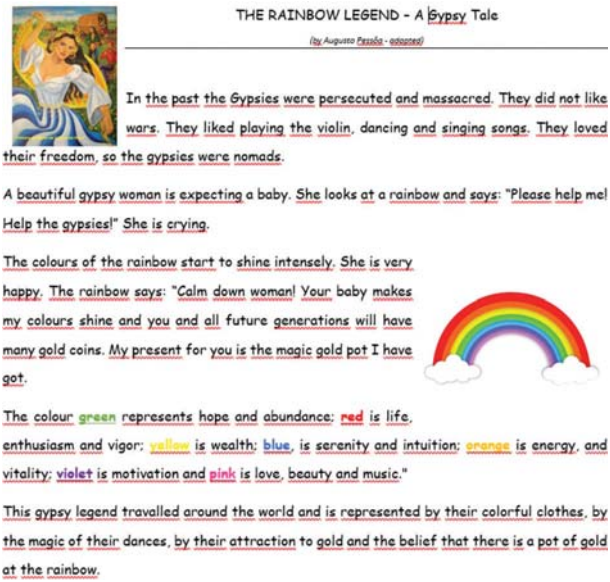
The next stage included the development and implementation of inter-disciplinary activities. At first, in Portuguese and English classes, the Roma tale 'O Arco-Íris' [The Rainbow], adapted by Augusto Pessôa, was read and analysed, in a version adapted to their schooling level. In the Portuguese class, this activity also aimed at exploring grammar: synonyms/ antonyms (1st grade); adjectives/ verbs (2nd grade); vocabulary area/ word families. Several proverbs related to the story were also explored, which provided an opportunity for further exploring this content. All proverbs were then illustrated.

In the Maths subject, students explored the content money, namely in geometry and measurement and in numbers and operations, starting from the pot of gold hidden in the rainbow and the fact that many Roma people dedicate themselves to trade (merchants). To this end, a small fair was held for the purchase and sale of objects brought by children. Problem-solving based on the tale and mental calculation were also worked on.

In the Artistic Expression subject, a 'mini rainbow' was made, using digital printing techniques.

In the English class, the story was translated and adapted to the English language (Figure 6.8.), and the song 'Somewhere over the rainbow' was rehearsed, which enabled the learning of colours, and the association between colours and emotions.

Figure 6.8. Tale adapted to the English language



THE RAINBOW LEGEND – A Gypsy Tale

(by Augusto Pessôa - adapted)

In the past the Gypsies were persecuted and massacred. They did not like wars. They liked playing the violin, dancing and singing songs. They loved their freedom, so the gypsies were nomads.

A beautiful gypsy woman is expecting a baby. She looks at a rainbow and says: "Please help me! Help the gypsies!" She is crying.

The colours of the rainbow start to shine intensely. She is very happy. The rainbow says: "Calm down woman! Your baby makes my colours shine and you and all future generations will have many gold coins. My present for you is the magic gold pot I have got.

The colour green represents hope and abundance; red is life, enthusiasm and vigor; yellow is wealth; blue, is serenity and intuition; orange is energy, and vitality; violet is motivation and pink is love, beauty and music."

This gypsy legend travelled around the world and is represented by their colorful clothes, by the magic of their dances, by their attraction to gold and the belief that there is a pot of gold at the rainbow.

At a later stage, in the Portuguese class, the script was prepared in order to stage the play on the tale, thus addressing the dramatic genre (theatre).

Then, an activity associating the rainbow colours to feelings/ emotions was developed by the psychologist (Figure 6.9.). Emotions were also recorded on coloured fabric ribbons.

Figure 6.9. Illustration of the tale 'The Rainbow'

In the Portuguese and Artistic Expression classes, the children prepared invitations for the play to be staged at the end of the school year, exploring yet another type of text: an invitation.

In the Curriculum Enrichment Activity through Artistic/ Plastic Expression, the rainbow was built with coloured fabric ribbons. Then, a large panel was made with a coloured rainbow made with the impression of the hands of all the children from the school (Figure 6.10.).

Figure 6.10. Rainbow panel

Finally, in the third stage, the presentation and final reflection on the experience developed was carried out. There was an exhibition with the works made by the children and the staging of the play 'The Rainbow', in which the props made in Artistic Expression and with the psychologist were used. This presentation was attended by all the children and teachers of the school, plus a large number of parents and guardians. Drama and Musical Expression stood out significantly.

For the evaluation of the experience, informal conversations were carried out with the children, with video and photo recordings, in accordance with the underlying objectives outlined for the device. Evaluation grids were also used by the children (Figure 6.11.).

Figure 6.11. Example of a group self-assessment proposal (transl.)

	GROUP WORK: RESEARCH AND PRESENTATION OF TALES				
	Group Members:				
Did we do the assignments?					
Did we share ideas?					
Did I help my colleagues?					
Did I accept everyone's ideas?					
Yes always. ☺ Sometimes 😐 Rarely ☹					

Alexandra Geada - Cooperative work: a path towards student autonomy (adapted)

After developing this activity, a first reflection on its impact shows that this way of working with the curriculum led to the awareness of a new concept of school and started a process of changing the existing paradigm. In fact, students experienced significant learning situations, becoming protagonists of their action. A collaborative work environment was developed in the design, planning and execution of the project, which translated into effective articulation and strong commitment among all: children, teachers, and guardians. This activity contributed to consolidating the articulation between the various teachers, and, consequently, to an enriched practice, with student-centred pedagogical differentiation strategies.

The following strengths are worth being highlighted: 1) increased student commitment, which was seen from the initial planning, reformulated over the implementation period; 2) motivation for learning to read and write, in addition to the development of various other literacies, namely social, cultural and communicational; 3) active participation of students, through the group work developed for preparing the script for the theatre play, in the research carried out and presented as a team, in the argumentation, in the learning of various concepts (voting, consensus and election...), in the negotiation about their choices (characters, accessories, wardrobe and props), essential skills for the formation of future active, responsible citizens for a democratic society; 4) reflection among students, among teachers and between the latter and the students, namely on the future will to carry on with the work developed - construction of new pedagogical differentiation devices at the service of the school where actual intercultural education can be developed; 5) creation of bonds between students, promoting their personal valorisation; 6) dissemination of Roma history and culture as a way for developing closer ties and fostering intercultural dialogue; 7) reflection on the ignorance of the history of the Roma people by the Roma children themselves and by non-Roma children; 8) motivation to discover their history and culture as a way to understand and respect their values, their language and their social skills and, consequently, feel more integrated and valued in their differences; 9) cooperation, sharing and reflection among all students, valuing diversity and creativity and building a feeling of belonging by Roma students, both at school and in the community; 10) coming closer to the Roma community and promoting actions that allow the sharing of knowledge, know-how and values in a participatory way and with mutual respect; 10) articulation between the various teachers and technical staff guided by interdisciplinarity, promoting a paradigm shift regarding teaching work (from a 'teaching-learning' to a 'learning-teaching' process), and 11) the involvement and commitment of guardians in the making of props, involving mobilization by families to help with the work.

3.3.4 Pedagogical Device: Houses of the World

This pedagogical differentiation device was built with a class of 25 first grade children, one of them Roma. All subjects and teachers in the class were

involved, including three Curriculum Enrichment Activities teachers and one technical staff member.

This pedagogical differentiation device aimed to:

- Encourage and value intervening, conscious, responsible attitudes in improving personal and social skills;
- Develop autonomous and cooperative learning skills;
- Enhance students' spirit of initiative, and freedom of verbal and creative expression;
- Develop intercultural knowledge.

The dialogue among the different subjects that compose the curriculum of primary school was achieved by selecting the content that would develop competences around the selected theme:

- **Social and Natural Studies**: representing one's home; recognizing different types of houses; identifying the various spaces in the house and their respective roles; describing and representing itineraries.
- **Portuguese Language:** using vocabulary appropriate to the topic and the situation; articulating words correctly; listening to others and waiting for one's turn to speak; providing appropriate answers to questions; writing words and sentences correctly.
- **Maths:** identifying, in objects and drawings, triangles, rectangles, squares, circumferences and circles in different positions, and correctly use the words «side» and «vertex»; representing triangles and, in a grid, rectangles and squares; identifying cubes, rectangular parallelepipeds, cylinders, and spheres.
- **Artistic Education**: exploring technical possibilities of coloured pencils, graphite pencils, charcoal, crayons, felt-tip pens, paint, brushes... using a support on A3 sheets of paper; building toys and props.
- **English Language**: using vocabulary related to the various rooms of the house.

In a first stage, the theme was contextualized with the children, through a PowerPoint presentation on the different types of houses in Portugal and in the world, in order for them to learn about the diversity of existing houses, their relationship with the place to which they belong, and the factors that contribute to how they are.

Then the first challenge was presented: designing their dream home (Figure 6.12.). At this stage, each child drew and presented their work orally to the class. This presentation was recorded for children to be able to visualize

their performance, and become aware of both the strengths and the critical points of their oral narrative.

Figure 6.12. Drawings of dream houses

Then the children continued to further explore the rooms of the house and their functionalities, being called upon to reflect on aspects considered essential to a dwelling.

Subsequently, the children were consulted about the work to be carried out and about jointly programming the various stages of such work. Throughout this stage, there was a great deal of involvement by children, namely by sharing opinions on their performance of the work, while reflecting on what would be more feasible to accomplish by each group: whether the construction of a complete model or just a room of the house. After some

time of discussion and sharing, and after assessing the pros and cons of each proposal, the teacher and the children decided that each group would just make one room of the house. The next step was to set up groups. To this end, a game was held in which each student was given a role with the name of a fruit, and groups were formed according to the assigned fruits.

The next stage was planning the construction of the model and the distribution of tasks among the various groups. Afterwards, the rooms of the house were built, using waste materials, a work that involved the Curricular Enrichment subject of Artistic Expressions and the English subject (Figure 6.13.).

Figure 6.13. Rooms of the house

The final stage was assembling the model of a house, with the different rooms built by the various groups (Figure 6.14.).

Figure 6.14. Model of the house

A video was recorded with the presentation of the final work by the groups, and the work was shown to the community during the Pedagogical Exhibition that took place in the last week of classes.

In order to complete this work, and despite it not being part of the initial planning, the children built an origami of the house, which was used as a motivational tool for the production of a collective text on the origami house.

In order to evaluate the experience, informal conversations were held with the students, accompanied by video and photo recording, in addition to an activity evaluation record (Figure 6.15.).

Figure 6.15. Activity evaluation record (transl.)

	☺ Yes	☹ No	😐 Somewhat
I learned the names of the rooms	20		
I learned the names of solids, figures, lines	12		8
I learned how to communicate my ideas	17		2
I learned to wait for my turn to speak	20		
I learned to work as a team	19		1
I learned to listen to my colleagues' opinions	19		1
I learned to share ideas	15		5
I think the activity was interesting	17	1	2
I liked the materials we used	18	1	1
All group members worked	13	4	3
This type of activity is more interesting	17	1	2

The objectives set out to be achieved with this activity were fulfilled, as the children were always in a situation of learning and cooperation. It was possible to value the individual experiences of each child, transposing them to the construction of the model. One example of this was that the Roma child collaborated with the group in the construction of a room division; however, he wanted to build another house (Figure 6.16.), which better reflected his world, as he did not identify with the house that was being built through the model. Using the same building dynamics as for the main model, he built his own house in which everything would go on in a single room, which portrayed his experience of living in a slum-like dwelling.

This construction enabled a greater degree of awareness among the remaining children to the fact that there are people who live in very precarious housing conditions.

Figure 6.16. Model built by the Roma child

This activity enabled more significant learning and a better organization of knowledge. When building the model, the children learned without realizing they were learning, as they manipulated geometric solids, worked on the concept of flat figures and lines, and addressed the notion of money, for example. The children worked in groups, sharing ideas and cooperating among themselves, so that the final result could be achieved.

3.4 Participants' evaluation of the training

The final group reports and the individual reflections on the experience undertaken reveal mostly positive outcomes. The participants highlight the learning benefits in the implementation of a project approach that promoted active and collaborative methodologies among students and teachers. Children were the actors of the learning process, being involved in the definition and programming of the work to be developed, negotiating processes and outcomes, and being challenged, as well as their teachers, to go beyond their comfort zone and try out innovative approaches that empower children.

> ... we should believe in the students, and take chances in their abilities and potential, as they keep surprising us with the facility with which they solve challenges and put their plans in practice. We have to give them voice and clearly support them in their ideas. (...) As they were first graders, I expected some constraints in the implementation of the planned intervention, because of their lack of autonomy. However, I was amazed with their ability to get organized, to work, as well as by their creativity. Whenever there is a change, something new, it is not easy to leave our comfort area and routines, but it is worth trying when the motive is important

> and when it is about changing the way students evolve. Learning became more meaningful for them, knowledge was better organised, therefore, more accessible. (Primary teacher T, Plátano School, Written reflection[13.])

> In all tasks, students showed interest and active involvement in the several activities, giving suggestions and making decisions on their development (...) In the second lesson, the Maths teacher stated "today they have worked more than they normally do in two weeks" (2nd cycle teacher C, EB 2,3 school, Written reflection)

Learning processes acquired new shapes, times, and organization, as the curriculum was meaningfully appropriated through the integration of most subjects and areas, around projects that provided culturally relevant experiences that made sense for all students, including Roma.

> In the several activities of the experience, the curriculum was structured around students' personal and social questions. The process was participated, as teachers worked from students' data and life experiences. Thus students acquired the school culture without losing their own, integrating the latter in the learning-teaching processes. We managed to fully integrate curricular areas and school subjects. We also managed to "recruit" many teachers to get involved in the different activities, thus making the curriculum more accessible and meaningful, aiming at educational success. (2nd cycle teachers, EB 2,3, Final report)

> Cooperation, sharing, and reflection among all students, valuing diversity and creativity in the construction of a feeling of belonging for Roma students, both in school and in the community [were achieved]. (Primary teacher F, Plátano School, Written reflection)

Teachers' work was transformed, as the theoretical discussions and the development of the pedagogical differentiation devices required the setup of strong collaborative and interdisciplinary pedagogical teams that involved, not just the trainers, participating teachers and technical staff, but also other colleagues. Participants experienced real curriculum articulation and peer work that was enhanced by effective supervision practices, when they carried out the observation of lessons, peer teaching, and sought to coordinate of all the work being developed into a unified whole that would make sense, for them and for the children. This was an emancipatory process that enhanced their professional development, not just by fostering their ability to design culturally relevant pedagogical devices, but also their sociopolitical awareness

13. All testimonials were translated from the Portuguese language.

on the teacher's role as a critical intellectual (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1992) and advocate for their minority students' rights (Gay, 2002).

> ... I had several opportunities to discuss concepts and to reflect on the influence of my expectations and of my practices in the nature of my students' learning. (...) with other two colleagues we had the opportunity to develop pedagogical devices within the framework of an intercultural education in activities that involved other teachers teaching the same class, a fact that I regard as very positive (...) with others I lived several situations that promoted a higher awareness of the structural inequalities that exist in our society and in schools, thus clearly contributing to my own empowerment as a social agent. (2nd cycle teacher F, EB 2,3, Written reflection)

> ...with my colleagues I had the opportunity to develop (to plan, implement and evaluate) pedagogical devices grounded in principles of intercultural education and develop activities that involved other class teachers, which was very positive. (...) together with others, I experienced several situations that promoted an enhanced awareness of structural inequalities that exist in society and in schools, thus deeply contributing to my empowerment as a social agent and bringing to the surface my 'activist' side, as an advocate for Human Rights; in this case, a defender of intercultural education that will facilitate the 'structuring' of a truly inclusive school that will guarantee all students, in particular to Roma students, the right to education and educational success, as well as fighting discrimination (2nd cycle teacher A, EB 2,3, Written reflection)

The principles and methodology of action research worked as a tool for both teacher and learner development in an emancipatory mode, helping practitioners understand in order to transform unjust situations (Kemmis, McTaggart, & Nixon, 2014).

> Action research allowed me a deeper understanding of the teaching and learning processes, as there was reflection on the achieved outcomes as well as on the new resources that were built. Thus the construction of professional knowledge was favoured and the new knowledge served to foster the quality of my students' learning. (2nd cycle teacher H, EB 2,3, Written reflection)

> As we could reflect on our practices, being able to question and organize them, we could constantly learn, develop epistemological surveillance que appears as an alert and questioning signal. This methodology implies the co-construction in the design and intervention with the children, thus promoting change in the organization of the traditional classroom. (Social worker, Written reflection)

Regarding the difficulties and constraints identified by participants, they mostly stress the need for more time to implement the pedagogical differentiation devices and to get together and jointly plan, reflect and evaluate

their teaching practice and the learning outcomes. They also identify the lack of collaborative practices among teachers, a situation that is aggravated by the difficulty in finding a common time slot in their teaching schedules to get together.

3.5. The workshops with children

3.5.1 Workshop background

The RISE project included the development of workshops with children in the participating schools. We defined the following objectives: 1) to discuss with students various topics related to cultural diversity, prejudice, discrimination, racism, respect, and human rights; 2) to build animated stories against prejudice and discrimination, based on those topics; 3) to promote active citizenship based on respect for cultural diversity and human rights. The intention of setting these objectives was to contribute to the future integration of children in the school environment, while also broadening the spectrum of this initiative to include the surrounding society. The path towards such integration focused on getting children to develop a critical and reflective approach to the social relationships woven in the various social contexts in which they move about, namely at school. The protagonists of the workshops were the children themselves, who were the authors of all the work developed. The project team had the role of animating and guiding the work carried out.

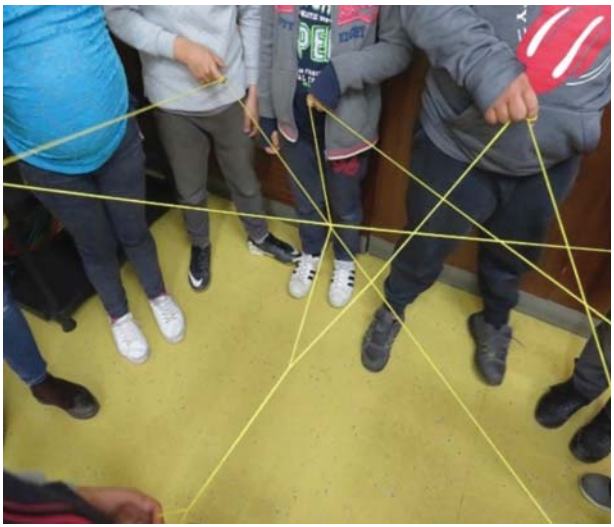
3.5.2 Workshop development

In order to achieve the stated objectives, the team planned a set of eight workshops with students from the two primary schools of the School Cluster (sixteen sessions in total). The workshops were implemented over a three-month period, between April and June 2019, and involved two groups of children: a) 20 children from the Plátano school (10 Roma and 10 non-Roma) from the 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades of basic education; b) 12 children from the Cipreste school (6 Roma and 6 non-Roma), from the 3rd and 4th grades of basic education. The planning and implementation of the workshops also took place in both schools.

The first two sessions were devoted to the presentation of the project and to a joint reflection between the project team and the children on situations, contexts and definition of modes of action in a context of cultural diversity, with a view to building a more democratic, intercultural society, where everyone can enjoy the same citizenship rights. The first session started with an ‚icebreaker' activity where each child introduced himself/herself, as well as the members of the project team, through the ‚ball of thread' pedagogical game (Figure 6.17.). Reading stories, from the book ‚O que vamos contar?' [What are we going to tell?], by Isabel Alçada and Ana Maria Magalhães on cultural diversity was a significant part of the first session, offering the opportunity for reflective and interpretive listening, where children easily identified themselves in the stories or they knew similar protagonists with other faces and names.

Audio-visual media was also used, namely for the presentation of a short video on the stop motion animation technique, from an excerpt of the film: ‚Run Chicken Run', by Nick Park and Peter Lord, followed by a reflection on the technique.

Figura 6.17. Introductory icebreaker activity



Throughout both sessions, the active and interrogative methods were the most used. They were combined with a game promoting reflection on the

concepts worked on and on the challenging experiences that the children live daily, both at school and outside school, thus unveiling different situations of discrimination that children gradually (re)interpreted. In this way, the concepts of discrimination, diversity, respect, prejudice, took on another form and a new reinterpretation of their meanings, expressed through drawings that the children sketched and that illustrated the reflection produced by the group (Figure 6.18.). In the end, children were given a challenge, consisting of a conversation with their family members, at home, about the concepts explored within the group, and then bringing a story to the following session.

Figura 6.18. Children's drawings about the concepts addressed

Sessions three and four were devoted to the creation of a story developed, not only from reflections on the concepts addressed, but also from their own (re)interpretations and that would fit into the children's own symbolic universe, thus including cultural elements originating from their families. The sessions were enlivened essentially by questioning/ reflecting on the different situations reported by the children, who actively created their own group story. The narrative was gradually woven in accordance with the decisions made by the children, where the different grammars of social relationships experienced by children were mobilized and intercrossed, whether within the school context, within the context of family life, and, more broadly, within

society. As the story took shape, its authors mobilized, above all, knowledge from the Portuguese language subject, with the fluidity of words being written from the sound of the spelling and the punctuation coming from the various voices that echoed in the room and reflected the effervescence of contributions from all children.

Sessions five and six represented several challenges for the authors of these two stories. Creating scenarios and characters required mobilizing school knowledge, especially from the subjects of Maths, Artistic Expression and Physical Education, and Social Studies. The scenarios gradually took shape through the metrics of rulers and set squares, and were developed with colourful brushstrokes from the hands of the various authors, thus embellishing the scenic landscape. The measurements, paintings, cutting and pasting, doodles and drawings, translated the narrative being developed, which was reinforced by the reflections on interculturalism (Figure 6.19.).

Figura 6.19. Creating characters and scenarios

In the last two sessions - sessions seven and eight - children gave life to their characters, each one playing their part either by lending their voice to the character, or through the motor ability of putting the character in the scenic game and in the audio-visual recording.

In summary, the activities developed along the eight sessions are briefly outlined in Table 6.4.:

Table 6.4. Workshop sessions program

Workshop Program	
Sessions 1 and 2 Introduction of the group members, and initial approach to the topics to be addressed.	- Each student is introduced to the group through group dynamics. - Presentation of the workshop objectives to the group. Viewing a sample video on graphic animation. - Reading stories on cultural diversity (Magalhães, A. M. & Alçada, I. (2018). **O que vamos contar? [What are we going to tell?]**. Lisbon: Cercica Publisher) - Involving families, requesting children to ask for stories on cultural diversity, prejudice, discrimination, and respect. - Exploring the topics 'cultural diversity', 'prejudice' and 'racism', through animated videos and songs.
Sessions 3 and 4 Writing the story	- Discussion and preparation of a first draft of the story. - Discussion of the first ideas for the story (theme, script, characters, scenery), and writing of the final version.
Sessions 5 and 6 Creating characters and scenarios	- Creation of characters (puppets) and 3D scenarios with various materials.
Sessions 7 and 8 Video recording.	- Video recording. - Audio recording.

3.5.3 The Narratives developed: Two anti-discrimination stories

Sessions three and four were dedicated exclusively to creating a story that would reflect an ideal of interculturalism. The children's enthusiasm grew as the brainstorming gave way to the definition of an idea, agreed by all, and which was enhanced by the details that each would add to the story. Thus, two stories were developed.

One of the stories related to gender equality in children's playing-sporting context, where prejudice and discrimination are solved with the emergence of an adult character, by reference to the symbolic universe of children's perceptions of adults. The ideal of equality crosses the entire story.

Story: Girls Can Also Play Football

Script
Narrator: In the playground the boys play football. Maria sees them, and comes closer.
Maria: Hi, may I also play? It's my favourite sport!
Narrator: But the boys don't seem to approve.
Boy 1: Football is not a game for girls.
Maria: Why do you say that? There are no games just for boys or just for girls.
Boy 3: Of course not. You're absolutely right! You're welcome to my team.
Narrator: Maria was very happy! After all, there were boys who had no prejudice against girls who like football. But the other boys were still not convinced.
Boy 2: Girls don't know how to play football.
Maria: I play better than many guys. I'm a great striker.
Narrator: The children kept arguing, while someone came close. They couldn't believe their eyes... It was Pelé!
Pelé: Hi boys, can I play with you?
Narrator: They were amazed, staring at him. It was really Pelé!
All: Look, it's Pelé!
Narrator: Everyone shouted with one voice.
Boy 3: I can't believe it! Pelé came to our school.
Maria: You are my favourite player! It will be great to play with you.
Boy 2: We already said that you can't play. Girls don't know how to play football.
Pelé: What do you mean? Of course, they know how to play. And as well as boys! Aren't there great women football teams? I know many female football players.
Narrator: The boys started thinking, and had to agree. Of course, girls also know how to play football and, as Maria said, "There are no games just for boys or just for girls". This is called building Gender Equality.

The second story, developed by the other group of children, focused on integrating a child from another nationality into the school environment. As in the previous story, the figure of the adult is central to solving discriminatory behaviours, combating prejudice and discrimination, and mediating new forms of social integration in the school environment.

Story: Friends Without Borders

Script

Narrator: Júnior and his family are from Brazil. Recently they came to live in Portugal, and Júnior went to a school where he doesn›t know anyone. A group of boys saw him sitting on a bench.

Nuno: Look, isn't that Júnior, the Brazilian boy?

Israel: Yes. He's always there, all alone.

Leonor: It must be sad not to have friends at school. Should we go talk to him?

Narrator: But the two boys were not convinced. Why should they do that?

Israel: I won't.

Nuno: Me neither. Let him find other friends.

Leonor: Would you like to spend your days all alone? I don't think so. He must feel sad.

Narrator: The boys reflected, and Israel was convinced.

Israel: You're right! If you're not coming, Leonor and I will go talk to him.

Narrator: Meanwhile, teacher Sara, who was close by, walked up.

Teacher Sara: Hi, have you ever befriended Júnior, and the other kids from other countries?

Everyone: Not yet.

Teacher Sara: So? What are you waiting for? Would you like to be in a new school and have no friends? Come on, go invite Júnior to play.

Nuno: You're right, teacher. Let's try to get to know him better.

Narrator: The three friends approached Júnior.

Leonor: Hi Junior, I'm Leonor and these are Israel and Nuno. Would you like to play with us?

Junior: Hi, yes, of course! I'm very happy. I hadn't made any friends at this school yet.

Israel: Good! And we want you to tell us about your country and the friends you had there.

Narrator: The three friends and Júnior kept talking and playing together. They understood that it doesn't matter if we are from different places, backgrounds, colours or shapes. We are all people and we all like to have friends.

Both stories reflect the dense web of stratified, hierarchical social relationships present in society, to which the school environment is not indifferent. Such social inequality implies a greater responsibility for school actors in promoting a democratic school, in particular by teachers. These are portrayed, in these two stories, such as the central elements of the transition from action reference systems guided by discrimination, to the establishment of new reference systems such as equality - both gender and cultural equality. In the game on diversity of feelings, children from both groups associated sadness and suffering to acts of prejudice and discrimination, and, in contrast, joy and enthusiasm to feelings of equality and integration. This emotional load present in the stories expresses the process of social regulation present in schools, both in the classroom and when playing in the playgrounds, showing the *awareness*, in the sense of Freire (n/d), of a new social regulation of roles

in favour of citizenship and democracy, to the detriment of social selectivity based on gender, nationality, culture, etc.

The identification by children of social groups created as more vulnerable - in one case the female gender and, in another case, students from different nationalities - translates a clear perception already present in these children's universe of the social hierarchy that regulates social functioning, and which students gradually *became aware of*, as they became committed to new ideals of citizenship and democracy[14].

3.5.4 Workshop evaluation

Throughout the sessions, the team monitored the children's satisfaction level through informal conversations and observation, and the children's feedback was always positive. Six months after the end of the sessions, the project team assessed the children's perceptions of the effects the workshops had had on their social relationships. A questionnaire was prepared for this assessment, and informal conversations were also held. However, due to the fact that some of the children have changed schools during the transition from one school year to the next, the assessment only covered 17 (54,4%) of the initial participating children.

The questionnaire had two sections: a quantitative section made up of nine statements for which students had to offer their degree of agreement, through the drawing of faces; and a qualitative second section, where students were asked to make sentences by using the words addressed in the workshops (Figure 6.20.).

14. The two videos made from the stories written by children on cultural diversity, prejudice and gender equality can be viewed in the RISE website:
https://www.projectrise.eu/documentation/stopmotion-video-realized-schools-portugal

Final workshop questionnaire

Place an X on the option of your choosing:

		A lot	More or less	Not much
1	I liked the activities we did.	☺	😐	☹
2	I liked the topics we talked about (e.g., diversity, equality between boys and girls, between children from different countries, between children from different cultures...).	☺	😐	☹
3	I enjoyed participating in the activities with students from other classes.	☺	😐	☹
4	The activities helped me think about my relationship with others.	☺	😐	☹
5	My classmates helped me whenever I needed.	☺	😐	☹
6	I helped my classmates whenever they needed me.	☺	😐	☹
7	I have learned that we are all different, but we all have the same rights.	☺	😐	☹
8	I learned that we should respect others.	☺	😐	☹
9	I would like to do more of these activities.	☺	😐	☹

Choose two of the following words and write a sentence about their meaning to you: Equality | Human Rights | Discrimination | Diversity | Respect | Difference | Friendship

_____

_____

_____

_____

Figure 6.20. Final workshop evaluation questionnaire (transl.)

The evaluation session started by viewing the video made by the children. This was then followed by an informal conversation on the work carried out, listening to children about the concepts and issues addressed during the sessions. Below are some excerpts from these informal conversations, with the two groups of children and the project team:

- Cipreste School

E1 - And what do you think about how we should treat children who are different?
En2 (Interviewed 2) – The same way.
En3 (Interviewed 3) - Equally.
E1 - And did you like the activities we did here?
Several - Yes.
E1 - What more did you learn from these activities?
En4 (Interviewee 4) - That we're all the same.

E3 (Interviewer 3) - Why did you remember this story, of the girls who also like to play football and the boys that don't accept it?
En5 - Because of Armanda. She has already scored seven goals.
[...]
E3 - You now know she's a good player and you let her play with you.
En5 and another – We always did.

- Plátano School:

E1 (Interviewer 1) - Remember at the beginning we were talking about these activities and how we got to this story, what did we do and what did we talk about during the sessions?
En1 (Interviewee 1) - We talked about everyone being equal.
En2 (Interviewed 2) - About people.
E1 - About equality, people, yes. And what else?
En1 - To respect everyone.

E1 - Very good. And the story, why did you remember this story of the Brazilian boy?
En3 - Because of discrimination.
E1 - Because of discriminating some children that come from other countries...
En4 - That we are not friendly, nor do we welcome people.
E1 - Very good. And you remembered that it would be a good story to work on.
En1 – For them to be welcome.

The records made reveal that the children's voices were directed towards a form of social behaviour articulated with respect, equality, and the fight against discrimination and prejudice, providing evidence of a wide awareness of the issue of interculturalism and the importance of dialogue between everyone.

This conversation was followed by a questionnaire, which, as mentioned, was answered by 17 children. The quantitative data is shown in Table 6.5..

Table 6.5. Quantitative results of the final workshop evaluation questionnaire

		A lot	More or less	A little
1	I liked the activities we did.	17	0	0
2	I liked the topics we talked about (e.g., diversity, equality between boys and girls, between children from different countries, between children from different cultures...).	14	2	1
3	I enjoyed participating in the activities with students from other classes.	15	2	0
4	The activities helped me think about my relationship with others.	14	3	0
5	My classmates helped me whenever I needed.	13	4	0
6	I helped my classmates whenever they needed me.	11	5	1
7	I have learned that we are all different, but we all have the same rights.	17	0	0
8	I learned that we should respect others.	17	0	0
9	I would like to do more of these activities.	17	0	0

The children's answers are indicative of a high level of satisfaction with the activities developed (items 1, 3, 9), and a strong awareness of their educational goals and of the learning made (items 4, 7, 8). However, and despite the satisfaction levels being quite positive, social interactions would need to be worked on more (items 5, 6), in the sense of achieving greater mutual help and cooperation between peers.

Regarding the second part of the questionnaire - sentences made by students in accordance with the words suggested - some examples are shown in Table 6.6.:

Table 6.6. Qualitative results of the final workshop evaluation questionnaire

Selected words	Examples of sentences written by students
Equality	"Equality means boys and girls can play whatever game they want."
Human Rights	"I've learned that we have the same human rights and I have respect for people."
Discrimination	"Children cannot discriminate other children because of their differences."

Diversity	"I love the diversity in my school." "Diversity means everyone being different."
Respect	"Respect means we have to respect others equally." "I respect my friends."
Difference	"We're all different, but we can all be friends."
Friendship	"Friendship is when a person makes me happy." "Friendship is when children help each other."

Quantitative and qualitative data converge in a single direction towards a conceptual clarification connected with the values of respect, diversity, equality. This convergence is in line with a reflection and analysis work on various situations related to interculturalism that was carried out during the workshop sessions, which enabled a (re)composition of the cognitive map of each child on the social interactions present at school and in society. A very positive dimension of these data is that children, after a significant period of time (six months), mobilized their 'new' social perceptions on difference and on social hierarchies addressed during the workshops in a natural, safe way, demonstrating cognitive consolidation of these perceptions. The fact that all the work developed gravitated around the children and their social interactions favoured this process of cognitive recomposition, with the children simultaneously taking up the roles of protagonists and authors of the new reconfigurations of social interactions.

In summary, the work developed in the workshops aimed at valuing the children's different cultural backgrounds, seeking, whenever possible, to articulate the knowledge/ know-how/ culture of each child with the official classroom knowledge. Such dialogue was implemented through 'games' and playful activities that mobilized linguistic codes from the school and the family universes, placing them in the same value level. In this way, the workshops contributed to a dialogue between different knowledge backgrounds where both were placed at the same level. Appreciating the 'other's' culture was articulated with the school culture, enabling children to remove cultural boundaries and to practice interculturalism, in an exercise of participation, citizenship and democracy, thus fulfilling the workshop objectives.

3.6 The monitoring group

An action research monitoring group was set up in the SC. It was comprised by one member of the RISE team, one member of the school management, two teachers (one from each primary school), one social worker, one psychologist, two presidents of the Parent and Teachers' Association (PTA), and one Roma mother. The group had two main purposes: monitoring the development of action research in the SC and advise on it and promote the involvement of key actors in the community, disseminating the RISE results, and co-opting other participants.

Three meetings were held: January, May, and November 2019. The meetings started with information by the Rise member regarding the development of the project that was usually followed by suggestions and advice from the participants on how to expand and implement activities that would promote a higher involvement and impact in the community. Examples that were debated included taking Roma students to university and professional school vocational events, co-opting Roma parents to join the PTA and take initiatives in the school activities like fairs and cultural events, expanding teacher training to other teachers, and investing in clear and targeted informative events that would counteract stigma and discrimination against Roma communities.

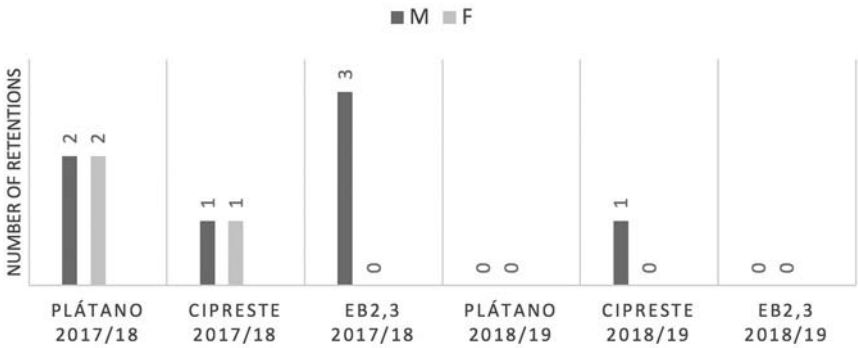
Some important activities were developed but with few critical results which we consider to be related to the need for social actors to dedicate more time, to invest more in the construction of intercultural relations and working together, in partnership. The social worker and the psychologist managed to intensify their efforts with the Roma students and their families to promote their interest in pursuing studies. In the primary schools, the coordinators managed to carry on their work with Roma students and their parents to get children to attend school on a regular basis and actively participate in the informative and cultural activities. However, Roma parents did not join the PTA and still do not have an active role in promoting activities of their interest. Relationships between Roma and non-Roma did not improve much as well. We believe more time would be needed to mediate the interpersonal relationships in order to change discourses and practices in a transformative, democratic way.

3.7. Impact on school attendance, retention and dropout

Before the implementation of the RISE project, the school cluster already had very good results on school attendance, retention, and dropout for Roma students, when compared with national data.[15.] The dropout rates for Roma were zero and continued to be zero.

Notwithstanding the previous good results, the RISE project showed an additional impact on reducing the retention figures, as shown by Graph 6.1.. Though very low in the previous school year (2017/ 18), at the end of the implementation of the project (2018/19) retention became almost inexistent.

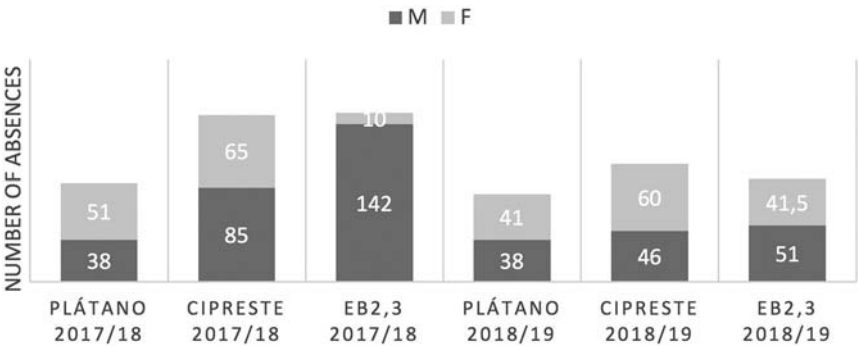
Graph 6.1. Retention figures for Roma students in the participating schools (2017/ 18 and 2018/19)



Regarding the absence of Roma students to classes, Graph 6.2. shows a steep decrease in the overall number of absences (absences are counted in hourly time slots), especially of boys in one of the primary schools (Cipreste) and in the lower secondary school (EB 2,3). Though the overall number decreases in the latter, there is an increase in the absences of girls, which shows the difficulty in making cultural changes in such a short period of time.

15. One of the reasons for this result is related to the fact that the school cluster is a TEIP - Priority Intervention Educational Territory, and has the support of the coordinator for the Portuguese RISE project team as a consultant since 2012.

Graph 6.2. Absence figures for Roma students in the participating schools (2017/ 18 and 2018/19)



Final considerations

The RISE project in Portugal developed around the premise that in order to work with people to change unjust or unsustainable work and lives, one must start from the identification of the problems that affect and interest them, and then engage participants in collective inquiry and decision-making, through committed participation, amplified reciprocity between participants, and dialogic action (Kemmis, McTaggart & Nixon, 2014; Torres & Reyes, 2011). Critical action research aims at transforming the social formation in which practice occurs (discourses, action, relationships), thinking about it differently, acting differently, and relating to one another differently – by constructing other practice architectures that enable and sustain their practice in ways that are more rational, more productive and sustainable, and more just and inclusive (Kemmis, McTaggart & Nixon, 2014, p. 17).

The development of a participatory process aimed at changing pedagogy and learning conditions for Roma students implied going beyond "the technicalities of teaching to a focus on the historical, intellectual, and moral aspects of its role in the wider social arena" (Smyth, 1995, p. 9). It is the teachers' responsibility to create a climate of communication in which children, other professionals and families are heard, and their opinions and ideas are considered and debated, information is shared and a process of reflection between the various actors in enhanced.

In the project, pedagogical differentiation devices were developed, intended to foster the development of action research based on the symphony of voices between children and teachers, and valuing the construction of collective knowledge by taking advantage of the various cultures present in the classroom. They were built through collaborative work, based on the assumption that it is important that teachers develop certain facilitating skills, such as the understanding of different cultural systems (ability to cross borders and to extend the rationality of each person to understand the rationality of the other), being able to interpret cultural symbols, being intercultural mediators (ability to build pedagogical devices), and to build bridges or establish connections across cultures to facilitate the learning-teaching process (ability to practice 'diatopical hermeneutics' – Santos, 1997). In addition, teachers that are also capable of working simultaneously with different cultural systems (ability to be culturally bilingual). In the various activities, the curriculum was structured around students' personal and social issues, and in a process participated by them, as they worked based on the experiences and data provided by themselves. This enabled the acquisition of a school culture, without losing their original culture, while integrating it in the 'learning-teaching' processes (Casa-Nova, 2018). Globally, the proposed objectives were achieved, since students took an active role in the construction of their learning, and teachers took up their role as "transforming intellectuals' (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1992), reducing social differences, valuing each other's individuality, and flattening the social hierarchy.

Involvement around the realization of this concept of pedagogical device created a process of mutual learning for all actors involved in this process. The reflection, the implementation of pedagogical strategies, the collective construction of knowledge, the monitoring of practices, resulted in a process of professional development for teachers, and of resistance against homogenization and subordination practices. Similarly, the joint sharing, debate and reflection, among all participants, on the development of the pedagogical work and the planning and evaluation instruments, constituted a privileged means of professional development and improved practice.

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CHAPTER 7. INTERNAL EVALUATION: COMPARING AND REFLECTING

Francesco Chezzi and Alessio Arces[1.]

Introduction

The Istituto degli Innocenti (IDI) planned a significant internal evaluation path for the RISE Project through both qualitative and quantitative tools.

Over the last decades, evaluation came to be considered one irrevocable backbone in the improvement of public policies in European policy planning, no matter what their scale is. Public and academic interest in social evaluation is also coming from the ever-increasing imbalance between quantitative and qualitative increase of social needs and system response capability. Such imbalance becomes stronger when the subjects to whom the offer of services is addressed are marginalized, which really represents a reason of their low political pressure.

Referring to programs on Roma people inclusion, we can enumerate many projects – sometimes bigger, more often smaller and more specific ones – which have not been met with an equally significant articulation of evaluation paths, apart from some merely 'reporting' ones. In recent years, as mentioned before, an attention to evaluation aspects of both project outcomes and processes grew stronger, and to Roma inclusion projects as well.

One of the main purposes of the RISE Project internal evaluation, which was developed by Istituto degli Innocenti and shared with all the partners, was to strengthen its learning function. It worked as a useful tool, not just for the measurement of project outcomes but also for the evaluation of the aims achieved and for the identification of mistakes as well; mistakes have indeed to be considered starting points – instead of arrival ones - to think about the work done and for brainstorming new ideas and prospects for the future.

1. Istituto degli Innocenti di Firenze, Italy.

The evaluation framework has aimed at moving forward and integrating different aspects at the same time, according to project's goals and peculiarities. First of all, as anticipated, to integrate the purpose of measuring the project outcomes, observing (even though in a very short timeframe) and a promoting reflection aimed at transforming the participating subjects, encouraging a deeper involvement and interaction (especially the teachers').

Not without difficulty, the evaluation path had to partially reconfigure itself *in itinere*, trying more or less successfully to respond to some ongoing needs as they emerged: among others, difficulties due to differences between the regional contexts and to the different timings of the implementation activities in the different countries.

We opted for using both quantitative and qualitative tools. The quantitative ones were used in order to carry on a measurement which could be longitudinal (comparing time zero – project starting point and time one – final point) and horizontal (among different countries). The qualitative ones were designed to promote: a) subjects' dialogue and confrontation and b) the possibility to explore and to interpret the dynamics that would be hard to observe through mere data comparison. The qualitative approach is mostly represented by its special attention to social actors' real life. Through the adoption of qualitative techniques, the actors were called to work on their reflexivity and to focus on daily practices that are not otherwise meant to find room in everyday life (Marradi, 1996; Weiss, 1998).

We tried to investigate particular eventual changes occurred during the project's length for some of the main evaluation focuses. These focuses were: the relation between students and cooperative work; the relation between students and teachers; the arrangement of educative tools addressed to all students in the same class; the relation between teachers and parents; school attendance and dropout; teachers' and students' consent of RISE specific working paths.

A brief summary of the tools we used for the evaluation process follows:

- *Index for inclusion*: it is a widespread instrument created in 2001 and largely used in Europe. This tool identifies some important dimensions for the creation of an inclusive context and aims to measure this aspect through specific indicators (Booth & Ainscow, 2014). The index detects the point of view of the main school actors: teachers

and students in two different times in order to record the effect of the project in the schools. This tool was administered to all the students in the target classes.

- *Satisfaction Survey*: it is a tool created by IDI in collaboration with the partners. It is a survey submitted to the teachers in order to understand what kind of competences they gained through the training and to record their opinion on it. Each country has a specific section regarding the training, a common section concerning the achieved competences and two open questions regarding the strengths and weak points of the project.
- *Attendance Timetable*: in accordance with the aims of the project, monitoring all year the presence of the children at school is a basic condition to promote changes. Furthermore, the success rate is also collected. The data collection regards only the Roma students of the target classes.
- *Focus group*: a typical qualitative instrument to gather information through an apparently informal discussion among a group of people on a specific theme. (Acocella, 2008) In the RISE evaluation, the focus group was used to better understand the situation in the different local contexts and to stimulate the discussion among the teachers in order to reflect on the Roma issue, by analyzing the current situation, the effects of the actions undertaken within RISE, and their expectations for the future.
- *Roma children workshop*: this workshop meant to promote a reflection merely on Roma children - differently from the index for inclusion addressed to all Roma and non-Roma students. Its aim was to deepen their peculiar perception of some of their daily life aspects: elements of discrimination inside and outside the school, as well as activities implemented within the project.

1. Results

We will outline some conclusions related to the final evaluation of the activities, although we are aware of the difference in contexts and project paths in the three countries (as already mentioned in the introduction).

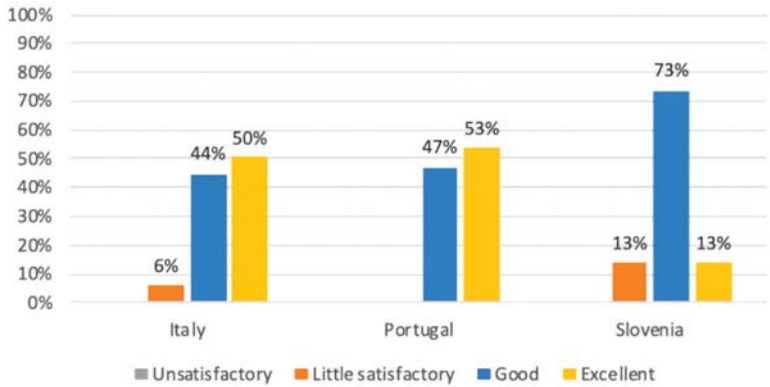
1.1 Teacher satisfaction and perception of usefulness

The project received a high level of appreciation and interest from the teachers' part. This emerges from both the satisfaction survey and the focus groups. The teachers found the project particularly useful for their daily activities, underlining, in particular, the high level of competence of the experts responsible for conducting the training and workshops.

We emphasize in particular the teachers' appreciation for training which successfully mixed theoretical studies and practical applications. This training, grounded on a theoretical framework, helped them develop new teaching techniques and strategies to be used in the classroom. Especially in Portugal and Italy, training on cooperative and inclusive didactic methodologies was appreciated as a fundamental tool to fight situations of exclusion and marginalization of Roma and other pupils. Both Roma and non-Roma students appreciated the methods of working in groups that were regarded as more dynamic than traditional face-to-face lessons. They allowed them to share ideas and compare themselves with other classmates and even with pupils from other classes.

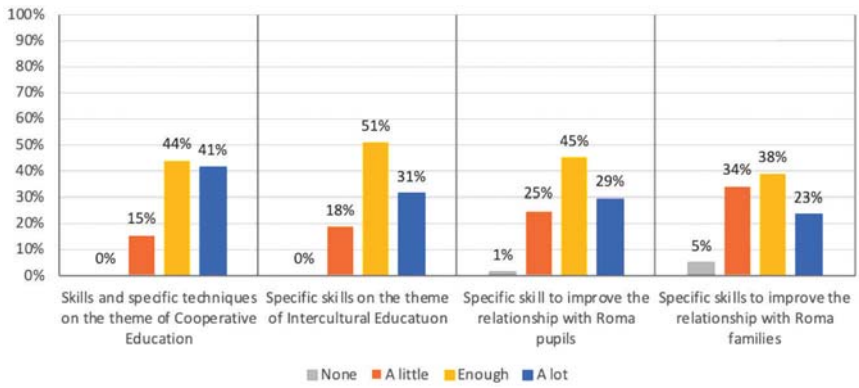
Regarding the results of the satisfaction survey, it was completed by almost 90 teachers. They are mostly female (92%) and teach in primary schools (72%). Almost all the teachers (93%) consider the RISE training satisfactory (*good* or *excellent*). Teachers perceived the framework given by the training as an excellent tool to better understand students' issues. This knowledge allows them to create new answers to students' needs and develop a responsive teaching approach. Even if the general opinion remains positive, the three countries show different levels of satisfaction. Italians and Portuguese were the most satisfied with almost all the teachers reporting a positive evaluation (94% and 100%) and more than 50% considering the training proposal *excellent*. The Slovenian teachers also give a good assessment of the training (86%), but only 13% of them find the training *excellent* (Graph 7.1.).

Graph 7.1. Overall training satisfaction



The satisfaction survey also tried to identify, in particular, which specific skills have improved thanks to the training received (Graph 7.2.). Taking into account the different paths taken by the three countries but also the commonalities, we focus on four topics: cooperative education, intercultural education, improvement of the relationship with Roma pupils, improvement of the relationship with Roma families (although the specific pathways were different in each country).

Graph 7.2. Skills acquired



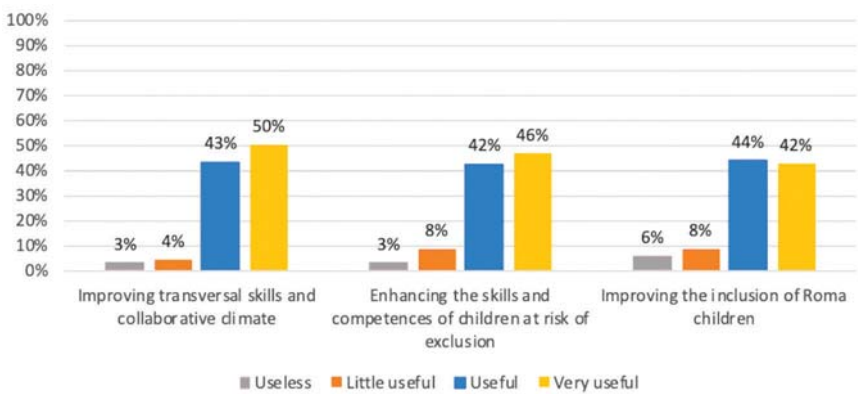
More than 80% of the teachers state they acquired new skills and abilities on educational methods, attesting the value of the training carried out. In particular, *cooperative education* received the best evaluation; indeed,

41% of teachers state they increased their skills significantly (*a lot*). These data express the efficacy of the RISE project in providing new elements to facilitate the creation of a positive class environment and encourage participation (main goal of the project). The Italians and the Portuguese teachers are the most satisfied; almost 90% said they had increased their capacities, while for the Slovenian teachers this percentage dropped to 74%, however remaining at a high level.

The enhancement of specific skills for improving relationships with Roma children and families shows lower values. Seventy-four per cent of teachers understood how to improve their relationship with Roma pupils and 61% with their families. These results reflect the general approach of the training. All three partners focused their paths mainly on inclusive teaching approaches and only partially (or indirectly) on the creation of networks with the Roma community.

The RISE project also organised practical classroom workshops, according to each partner's specific needs. Although the activities carried out varied according to the contexts, the evaluation process examines the opinion of the teachers on some aspects of the school environment. Twenty-one per cent of the teachers did not take part in the workshops, and for this reason, they are not counted in the results below (Graph 7.3).

Graph 7.3. Workshop evaluation



The evaluation considers two different aspects of the inclusion process: one looks at the whole class while the other focuses on a specific target. The

workshops obtain a positive assessment: at least 86% of the teachers recognise them as *useful* or *very useful*. These activities seem especially valuable for improving transversal skills and create a collaborative climate in class (50% *very useful*).

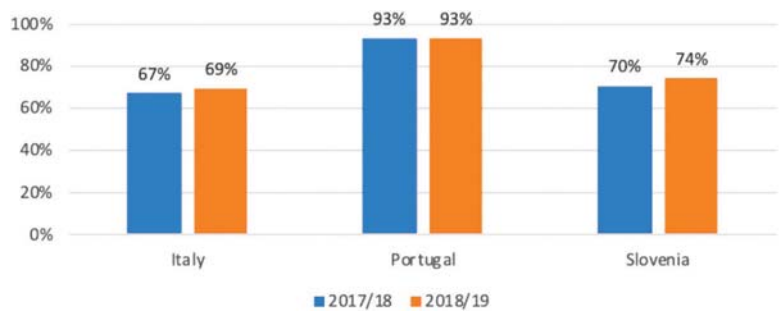
1.2 Attendance and academic sucess

Attendance and academic success are keys indicators to understand the degree of inclusion of Roma children. School attendance is the first step towards a process of inclusion, as it brings families, children, and local community together.

The evaluation proposed by IDI took also into account the attendance and academic success (pass or fail) of Roma children in the classes involved in the project (2018/19), compared with the previous years' data (2017/18). The reading of these data reveals a picture that tends to be positive, even though it relates to a very short period of time (only one school year).

The project's evaluation has collected the attendance of more than 110 children, 51% males and 49% females. The graph 7.4. below draws a first comparison between the school years 2017/18 and 2018/19.

Graph 7.4. Attendance rates



The three countries show different levels of school attendance. Portugal has the highest performance, with almost 93% of attendance during both school years. The previous work in Braga certainly has had a strong impact on school performance, developing a favorable situation. Italy and Slovenia have improved their values by 2% and 4%. Italy shows the lowest attendance rates (69%) compared with the other partners. It is important to underline that in

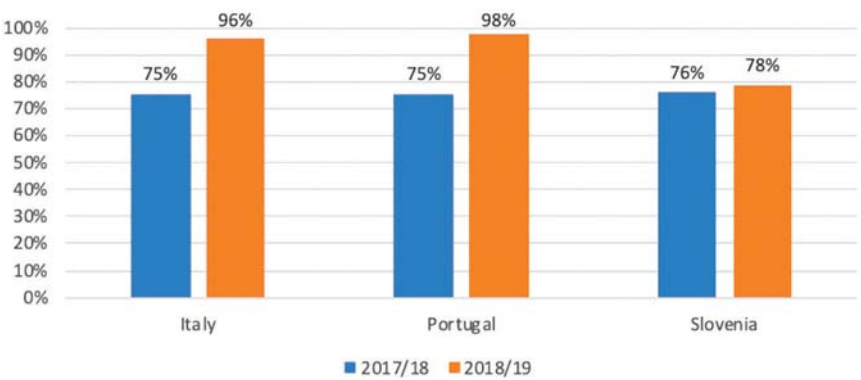
Italy the majority of the children in the project attend secondary schools that usually have lower attendance rates than primary schools. Notwithstanding, the general trend of the attendances is positive and Roma pupils go more often to school, even if the change is still limited.

As regards the gender differences, females' attendance is slightly higher than males' in Italy and Slovenia (Figure 7.1.). Taking into ccount the school grade as well, Italy shows a different trend for primary and secondary schools. Males are more absent from school than females in secondary schools while the trend is the opposite in primary schools.

Graph 7.1. Attendance rate by gender

In addition to the school attendance, the school admissions were also taken into account (Graph 7.5.). Considering all the children involved in the evaluation, the average number of admitted children goes from 75% to 88%. This data confirms the positive effect of the project on school performance, as well as on attendances.

Graph 7.5. Admission rate



The situation looks very different in the three countries; Italy and Portugal show a very high increase in school success while Slovenia shows a smaller improvement. Even if this change relies on different factors, the RISE activities have had an essential role in these results, by helping children, sustaining their work and providing new tools for the teachers. There were no significant trends among the partners regarding gender issues.

1.3 Index for inclusion

The index for inclusion is a resource to support the development of inclusive schools. This tool was used in the final evaluation as insight in order to reflect on schools' needs. Data were provided by each partner's schools at the start (T0) and at the end of the project (T1). The index promotes a reflection on the inclusion levels in the local contexts from the perspective of the school actors.

The index is composed of a series of indicators that try to measure inclusion and consider its multiple aspects. Each questionnaire is created for a specific target: teachers, secondary school's students and primary school's students. The dimensions analysed are the same in each survey, but the indicators are specifically created to be targeted at the different actors. In order to make the school results easier to compare, six synthetic indexes have been developed: relationship with teachers[2.],relationship with students[3.], support to participatory teaching,[4.] work empowerment[5.], context satisfaction[6.], and welcoming school environment.

2. This relationship regards the perception of fairness in the judgment and the ability of teachers to be a positive model for the students. In the teachers' version, it also considers the relationship between colleagues.

3. It is focused on the relationships of mutual help between students, the creation of emotional ties but also the perception of bullying and violent communication in the school.

4. Reference is made both to the use of collaborative teaching methods (cooperative learning, etc.) and the use of exclusionary sanctioning practices.

5. It considers the encouragement of the child to become responsible and to enhance the responsibility of work and knowledge of both students (individuals or groups) and teachers in carrying out the tasks assigned to them.

6. It represents the perception that students and teachers have of the local context, especially about the school. Reference is made to both school policies and satisfaction concerning learning or training (both at the level of teachers and students).

The index was submitted to about 100 teachers and more than 750 students.[7] Even though these numbers represent only a part of the beneficiaries involved in the project's activities, it is possible to analyse the results and reflect on the project's impact. The detected changes are small, but this kind of activities requires more time to be implemented and demands a systemic change in the school organisation.

At the international level, this instrument does not show significant differences between T0 and T1. Substantially, the indicators remain unchanged for teachers and show a slight positive variation for students. Some data at country or school level show more interesting trends, although very limited. For this reason, we will provide the most crucial information regarding the situation in the local contexts.

The indicators for the dimensions of "peer relations" and "work empowerment" improved significantly between T0 and T1, both for teachers and students in Bari (Italy). In Bologna, all the indicators for the teachers remain stable, while students of Besta school record a worse "relationship with teachers"; on the other hand, they show improvements of their "work empowerment".

"Context satisfaction" and "teacher relationship" indicators increase during the project among the Portuguese teachers. For the pupils, the relation, in general, has improved during the project, both with their teachers and with peers.

In Slovenia, we have two different situations in the two cities: Novo Mesto and Crnomelj. In Novo Mesto, the project achieved positive results both for teachers (especially in the "relationship with students" and in the "welcoming school environment") and pupils. On the contrary, Crnomelj shows a slight worse situation at T1 both for teachers (especially in the "relationship between teachers" and in the "support to participatory teaching") and pupils.

Overall, there is a small improvement of the indicators for students between T0 and T1, especially in some countries and cities (Portugal, Bari and Novo Mesto) but due to the limited variation, a radical change in the school world is not perceived.

This tool was created to be used at schools so it could give more interesting insights on this level than international ones. The index for inclusion should become a reflection tool for the school rather than a measurement of

7. The index was submitted to 97 teachers at T0 and 123 at T1; to 555 primary school students at T0 and 522 at T1; to 275 secondary school students at T0 and 255 at T1.

outcomes, but in this project, due to organizational reasons and target size, the tool has unfortunately been used less than needed.

1.4 Qualitative research with teachers and students

The focus groups (FG) were carried out by two researchers of IDI in every country involved in the project, thanks to the support of local operators and researchers.

Overall, 4 FG were promoted, one for each city (Braga, Novo Mesto, Bari and Bologna)[8] during the period from May 30 to July 10, at the end of the second year of the RISE project.

A significant number of teachers have participated in every city[9] – for a total of 34. These teachers had even participated in the training before and, in many cases, they had hosted RISE workshops in their classrooms.

We now introduce very briefly some key aspects that emerged from the focus groups interviews across all countries.

(a) About families and school context

Relationship (of trust) with Roma families

Teachers outline that most of the inclusion and integration skills of Roma students have to be reflected upon in the relationship with the family. This first point emerges as the centre of the debate among the teachers who have participated in the focus groups, and this is a cross-element to the different countries and cities that have participated in the project.

The relationship between teachers and Roma families clearly depends on multiple aspects, some of them even external to the school and related to the complex level of inclusion and integration of the Roma community in the so-called majority society.

There are many differences both among the countries and the cities. Teachers actually highlight how they managed to build a relationship with some families and strengthen it over the years, within a long fact-finding process of exchange and approach. In particular, in Braga (Portugal), it was

8. FG1 Braga; FG2 Novo Mesto; FG3 Bari; FG4 Bologna.

9. 10 in Bari, 9 in Novo Mesto, 10 in Braga, 5 in Bologna.

highlighted how some important results have been reached, related to some specific contexts.

Surely, this improvement does not concern all the families. Nonetheless, in the teachers' opinions, reaching a certain level of knowledge and mutual trust with a family seems to be one of the basic elements for student integration in the class. Without a trustful relationship with teachers, families have difficulties in finding a substantial motivation to support their children during their educational programme. Without the family support, Roma students have difficulties in integrating in the class and in getting a passing grade.

Therefore, working with families is strategic and fundamental for every project for children integration in the educational system.

First school year and pre-school

All countries underlined the importance to start an educational work with Roma children and families during the first year of school, both in primary and in secondary school.

The first school year, which is a basic moment to share the 'rules of behaviour' in class, can mark in a positive or in a negative way the student's performance at school. Therefore, many teachers point out that the most strategic tool is to focus all the efforts in the school and after-school activities and in the relationships with families during the first school year.

Language

Many children have language problems. This happens in many countries, included the ones where there is a historical presence of Roma and not as a result of a recent migration.

Many children are not proficient in the in the language of instruction. As a result, they also face this initial problem in their path towards school inclusion.

Teenage girls

Another topic highlighted crosswise concerns the early dropout of girls because of their family's will, in spite of their skills and their motivations to pursue their studies. Teachers regret when, for example, one among the top girls in class leaves school to get married.

As we know, it is relatively common that pre-teenage girls initially decrease their school attendance and then decide to drop out of school. In some cases, marriage drastically marks the end of schooling.

Recently, this situation is slowly changing and girls seem to be attending higher grades.

Regularity in school attendance

One of the most difficult problem to face when working with Roma students is the insufficient school attendance. This aspect comes to light in particular in Slovenia and Italy, as in Bologna as in Bari, while not as much in Portugal (see 1.2).

Without a regular attendance, working on didactical and relational aspects becomes clearly difficult for teachers. For this reason, teachers underline the importance to strengthen the homework, even if it requires a significant support from social workers.

It seems clear how two different paths – one to strengthen the work with families within the local community and another to promote a didactical inclusion in class – need to be linked and mutually supporting in order to reduce the high rate of school absences.

(b) About the RISE training and workshops

Highly appreciated project as a whole

The RISE project has been globally highly appreciated. There is an overall appreciation both for the planning framework and for the experts who have been involved in the training sessions and in the workshops, as confirmed by the outcomes of the satisfaction survey (see 1.1).

Removing the ‚automatic pilot‘

The training, according to the teachers, has helped to reflect and debate on which didactic strategies could be improved in order to motivate the students in class, in particular the more marginalised children. Using an idiomatic expression, teachers in Portugal have told us how training has helped them to remove the “automatic pilot” during their lesson. They really meant reflecting on the right methodology to involve and thrill every child in the class, without going on with the same pre-packaged lesson for everyone:

"the project has taught us to work without following the textbook step by step and without using the automatic pilot".

Absorbed as they are in many school activities and with a busy agenda, it is common that teachers lose motivation in looking for alternative didactic strategies to stimulate the class. The project has also helped teachers to discuss, facilitating a reflection forum on the educational strategies to propose in their teaching contexts.

Cooperative work and interdisciplinarity

Cooperative work in class, organised according to some clear didactic orientation and reflection, was appreciated by teachers who have confirmed how such a technique could help the children with weaknesses from a didactic point of view and the more marginalized ones in particular – Roma but not only.

Cooperative work is based on the idea of *positive interdependence* as an alternative to *negative interdependence*, the competitive one, where people – and not just students – exclusively act for their own interest. Positive interdependence specifies a condition in which individuals are linked in such a way that there is a positive correlation between the achievement of an individual purpose and the one of others (Lamberti, 2010).

The added value of working through interdisciplinary paths is outlined, as it promotes an interaction and a dialogue among more than one branch of knowledge.

Theory and practice

A transversal aspect appreciated by teachers was the ability to carry out a project that kept theory and practice together. Teachers therefore appreciated the training structure that provided a positive balance of theoretical framework and practical suggestions (also accompanied by classroom supervision).

Workshops capable of motivating students

As already mentioned above, according to the teachers, the element of „motivation" of Roma pupils (but not only Roma) is very important to encourage both their attendance and their participation in classroom activities. The workshops promoted in the project have frequently encouraged Roma pupils' participation and involvement.

Weak points: relationship with families and timing

Teachers identified some weaknesses in the RISE Project across the three countries. Many teachers would have liked to have had a more in-depth study of Roma culture (the one carried out was considered very interesting but they would have liked more insights) and especially more support in the relationship with the Roma families of local communities.

As pointed out above, teachers have many difficulties in their relationship with the Roma parents. For them it would have been interesting to have followed a path that increased their involvement with these families.

In addition, the timing of activities has been a problem for many teachers. For instance, delayed start of activities and therefore overcrowding in a very busy period for teachers such as the second school quarter can be a problem for obtaining results for the project's activities.

Workshop with children

An evaluation/reflection workshop with some Roma children from the classes involved in the project was also promoted in the three countries. The aim was to understand, through a dynamic and playful methodology, the perception of some Roma pupils in order to integrate with the other information obtained, in particular, with the index for inclusion questionnaire addressed to all children of the classes involved. This activity had not been foreseen in the initial evaluation plan, but it was conceived as a further reflection tool in addition to the already pre-arranged set of tools.[10.]

With the Roma children we discussed the RISE workshops and more generally their perception of school. The children showed a strong interest in the workshop activities proposed in the school - not only concerning RISE project. All Roma children felt more involved in the workshop activities than in ordinary school activities. The creative and dynamic aspect of the proposed workshops allowed the children to express themselves more and the work of the experts involved was highly appreciated.

The RISE workshops that directly addressed Roma issues were also appreciated by the children; they often felt proud in front of other children.

10. The path presented several difficulties, partly expected, related to the fact of having very young children express themselves freely (in particular primary school children) without a preparatory work. Other difficulties were related to the linguistic support needed in two countries.

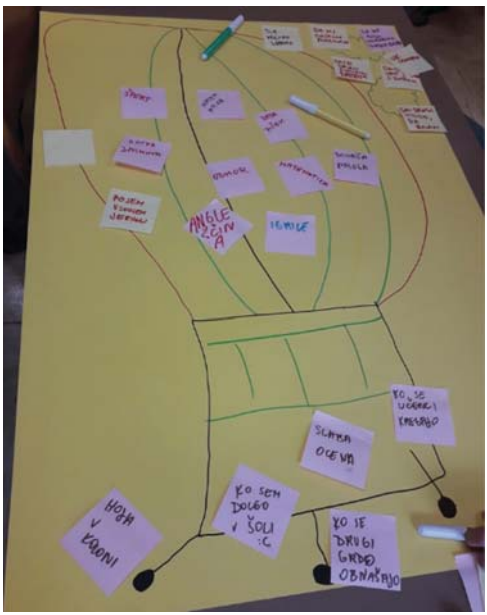


Figure 7.2. Hot air balloon game

However, there were few but significant exceptions: for example, one girl did not like that her classmates learned some words in Romanes. Although this is an exception, it reminds us of the importance of being very careful in promoting activities in the classes that directly address the topic of Roma culture (even if in positive terms), considering the context of widespread discrimination in society.

Despite this critical aspect, on the whole the children showed appreciation and they would like to participate in more workshops in the future.

With the help of the hot air balloon game (Figure 7.2.) children wrote the following items on sticky notes: the things that *they like*, that *they don't like* and those they *would like to add* in the school. After the drawing and the positioning of the sticky notes a short discussion with the children followed.

The most recurrent positive aspects related to what they liked in their school were: „playtime", "playing with classmates", "sports", but also, in many cases, several teachers (mentioned in the sticky notes) and, in some cases, "math".

Among the negative aspects: "taking bad grades", "some children who behave badly", "children who exclude you from games" and "waiting". Discussions showed that some teachers represent "safe houses" for children. This confirms the fundamental role of teachers in protecting and welcoming pupils (particularly the most vulnerable ones). Relationships with other children are described in different ways: with some children they get along well, while with others they do not. Some children say that they are often excluded and mistreated by other children (in these cases the teacher becomes

a reference point). Others, instead, do not show problems in their relationship with other children – both Roma and non-Roma.

Many children represent school as a place of great fatigue both for the time spent in class (for example "waiting", underlining the aspect of lack of dynamism from their point of view) and in relation to studying at home. Bad grades are an element of extreme frustration for children that some of them perceive in an almost resigned, ineluctable way. Not all of them, however. Some (girls in particular) also find the study satisfactory and want to distinguish themselves from the other children who express a completely negative opinion about studying.

Finally, some children appreciate the time of lunch at school, suggesting the importance of having a complete and nutritious meal guaranteed, unlike to what probably happens at home.

2. Conclusion

Overall, the evaluation gave us positive feedback on the results of the RISE project, both concerning the perception of the actors involved and its outcome - although many observations are more appropriate at a national or school level, as detailed in internal reports.

The training course was highly appreciated by the teachers, in particular for the high level of the experts and the ability to integrate a concrete proposal within an important theoretical framework.

According to the teachers, cooperative learning based on the *positive interdependence* can really help Roma children in their school path, promoting their wider integration in the classroom. The workshops, in particular, can motivate the participation of many marginalized pupils by working on skills often not recognized by the school.

Even the higher attendance and more graduations confirm this approach, although with some differences among the various territorial contexts.

It also emerges, however, that the individual teacher cannot act alone. It is important to promote an interdisciplinary approach that involves the whole school as much as possible. And not only the school. In fact, it is important that other social actors in the territory also facilitate the relationship with the Roma families, a central element to promote successful schooling for Roma

children. RISE's activities have therefore given rise to some reflections and positive methodological ideas that require a longer (and broader) involvement.

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WITHIN AND BEYOND THE PROJECT: SYSTEMS OF THOUGHT AND SYSTEMS OF ACTION IN A MOVING SOCIETY

The purpose of this book is to highlight the path developed within the scope of the RISE Project. Implemented in Italy, Slovenia and Portugal, it was born from the theoretical and empirical knowledge accumulated in a given field by some of the researchers who were part of the international team. In the case under analysis, in the field of inequalities originated mostly in the negative perceptions of the mainstream society regarding a specific population: the Roma and, more specifically, in the relationship of the school with this population and vice versa.

These negative perceptions are based on centuries-old thought systems that, in turn, originate systems of action that tend to perpetuate inequalities, discrimination and racism. These systems of thought, systems of durable dispositions, but transformable in the manner of the *habitus* conceptualized by Bourdieu and Passeron (n/d), structure the systems of action. But, unlike Bourdieu and Passeron (idem), who considered that *habitus* was transformable by the agency, without conscience, of social actors, we consider that systems of thought are transformable through the conscious agency of human beings in their relationship with others, with groups and organizations, in a process of reflexivity: reflexivity of human beings about themselves and their social practices. It is this reflexivity of the social actors together that allows for the reflexivity of societies and, consequently, the social transformation towards better societies.

The RISE project sought to build practices based on critical reflexivity; in the ability to think social realities in a divergent way to produce the desired change. But this reflexivity is not born out of emptiness; it is born out of a set of concepts that underly the project, supporting the implemented practices, namely: inter/multicultural education, inter/multicultural teacher, learning-teaching, pedagogical differentiation, cultural bilingualism, cooperative

learning, learning-by-doing, pedagogical supervision, integration, professional learning/ development.

Starting from different socio-historical realities and different contexts in each country, the project reached common results (although with different gradations) in terms of socio-cultural integration, intercultural knowledge, respect for differences, and educational success.

The differences in context also made the teams aware that the process of mutual integration has also gradations and that what can be considered as the zero degree of integration in some countries, is a very important step in others. Reading the book will make the reader realize this. Respect for the sociocultural and historical context goes hand in hand with respect for the local priorities, decisions, and agency.

The continuity of the processes that resulted from this project implies a continuous mental de-structuring and restructuring work, in order to accommodate new pedagogical and relational practices among all educational actors. It implies the construction of a culture of a democratic and humanistic schooling, where educational actors perceive themselves as actual agents of change with a common goal: humanizing discourses and practices that embody a new school reality with a view to full integration and active, critical, emancipatory and humanistic citizenship.

In this whole process it is essential to highlight four dimensions: i) the results achieved will only have an impact beyond the project if the practices continue beyond it; ii) this continuity is dependent both on a complex process of mental disruption in a given cultural universe and on certain professional practices to mentally restructure another form of thought and action; iii) schools are not islands and the changes produced within them will have a greater impact if accompanied by changes in social and educational policies, produced in the same direction as the changes that occur in schools; iv) all social actors involved (teachers, students, social workers, psychologists, parents, families, mediators) and civil society organizations should extend their professional thinking and practices to other social and educational realities, expanding their field of action and thus increasing the possibility to modify the systems of thought and action that negatively condition social transformation.

If the automatisms of thought that become automatisms of action, perpetuate multiple inequalities, the action of these multidisciplinary teams may

transform these systems of thought due to the interaction processes between different social actors in different contexts of public life.

All social commitment and action takes time to produce results. But it is the persistence of this change that makes it happen. Even when it temporarily exceeds the life limits of each actor involved in producing this change.

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