

The Hungarian Educational Integration Program

Szilvia Pallaghy Hegyi
Directorate General for Equal Opportunities
Ministry of Education and Culture, HU

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Social disadvantages and undereducation of Roma in Hungary

- **poor living conditions**
- **residential segregation**
- **the majority of the Romani communities live in the poorest region of the country**
- **unemployment**
- **cultural differences**
- **widespread prejudice and discrimination**
- **undereducation**

Lower level of success of Romani children in the Hungarian educational system

- **Family background, socio-economical status of the family**
 - lack of school equipment,
 - lack of efficient conditions for studying at home,
 - work, frequent absence from school,
- **Educational level of parents**
 - lack of models, support and motivation from parents, differences in language competencies)
- **Horisontal differences in quality among schools**
 - increased selection,
 - exclusion of children of underprivileged families,
 - segregation as a result of discriminatory practices
 - disadvantages springing from regional differences, local circumstances
 - segregation as a result of residential segregation

The Hungarian educational system provides the fewest opportunities for children of parents with lower education and the children of poor families among the surveyed OECD countries (OECD PISA, 2000, 2003, 2006)

- **Selectivity of the school system: The differences in school achievements among schools are more significant than the differences between the achievements of students within the schools.**
- **'Contextual effect': the socio-economical status of the school (the average status of the students) contributes more to the school achievements of the students, than their family background.**
- **In the OECD countries the 36% of differences in reading achievements can be explained by the differences among schools, while this proportion is 71% in Hungary.**

Country	Differences among schools	Differences within schools
Belgium	76,0	50,9
Germany	74,8	50,2
Hungary	71,2	34,8
Austria	68,6	45,7
Poland	67	38,9
Greece	53,8	52,9
Czech Republic	51,9	45,3
Italy	50,9	43,4
Switzerland	48,7	63,7
Portugal	37,5	64, 3
Luxemburg	33,4	74,9
United Kingdom	22,4	82,3
New Zeland	20,1	103,9
Denmark	19,6	85,9
Ireland	17,1	79,2
Spain	15,9	60,9
Norway	12,6	102,4
Finland	10,7	76,5
Sweden	8,7	83,0
Iceland	7,0	85,0

No. 1 Challenge: Segregation

- **Segregation among schools: homogeneous school composition**
 - residential segregation
 - demographic process
 - more advantaged students leaving school
 - discriminatory practices: channelling of disadvantaged children into 'special schools' for the mentally disabled

- **Segregation within the school: homogeneous class composition**
 - discriminatory decisions aiming at segregation of disadvantaged and mainly Romani children into remedial ('catch-up) classes
 - teachers are not trained in differentiating and development pedagogy

The government's commitment in its School Education Program:

- Creation of schools that are organized around children's interests, where each child can receive quality education and training that is in line with their individual needs. More time must be given to the development of the so-called key competencies (i.e., those communication skills and abilities that are essential for better learning) in order to ensure the smooth acquisition of core skills and abilities.

The integration program

Legal and financial background

- The first step taken by the Ministry of Education changed the ministerial decree (11/1994.MKM) in order to create the legal and financial background (39/E: per capita allowance for integrated education) for the program:
- This regulation introduces the concept of preparatory training for the realization of potential and integration. New forms of assistance are aimed at making it possible for children with different social and cultural backgrounds to be taught together and receive the same level of education. The new integration programs has been introduced in the 2003/2004 school year in a concerted manner for children in their first, fifth, and ninth year of education.
- Romani students who have special educational needs and are therefore currently participating in a preparatory training program (usually in separate “catch-up” classes) are eligible to participate in the integration program. Through the integration program, these students will study in the same class with students not participating in the training program.

Who is eligible to participate in the integration program?

The pupils (mainly Romani pupils) who can benefit from this program are those students

- whose parents attended only elementary school and find it difficult to understand the modern requirements of schools;
- whose family is eligible for supplementary family allowance, i.e., they come from an economically disadvantaged environment;
- and who have special needs according to the head of the school.

What are the methods teachers can use in order to implement these integration programs?

- The Ministry of Education is offering institutions a continuously expanding program package and providing guidance through the services of the **National Educational Integration Network**. This package includes integration methods that have proved to be successful in Hungary and abroad, such as the Step-by-Step Program or other alternative methods tailored to personal needs.
- Pursuant to Article 48 of the Public Education Act, the non-minority members of a community where a national minority lives must be taught about the culture of the local minority. The educational program package issued by the Minister of Education intends to provide guidance for the development of such curricula.

The National Educational Integration Network

The development of the National Educational Integration Network was completed in the first half of 2003. This network, with its headquarters in Budapest and regional coordinators in the six most disadvantaged regions of the country, is responsible for providing coordination and a wide range of professional assistance in education for those schools implementing integration programs.

The network has designated forty-five model institutions that have started effective integration programs and committed themselves to disseminate the idea and to share their experiences with other schools. The National Educational Integration Network is helping to improve these model institutions by providing trainings and funding for extra educational or other programming needs from the HUF 300 million fund.

Anti-discrimination provisions

Introduction of anti-discrimination legal provisions in Hungarian law: The Ministry of Education has recently launched a modification process of the Public Education Act. The main elements (pertaining to desegregation) accepted by the Hungarian parliament in the summer of 2003 include the definition and prohibition of discrimination, indirect discrimination, and segregation (§4, §84). The Ministry of Education has also contributed to the draft of the overall anti-discrimination act (Equal Treatment Act), which has entered into force, with adequate sanctioning powers and monitoring bodies, on January 1, 2004.

Program to fight the channeling of Romani children into special schools for the mentally disabled

The Ministry of Education has initiated a comprehensive program that aims to decrease the incidence of misplacement of disadvantaged and especially Romani children in special education for the mentally disabled. This is a compelling issue that must be addressed, for several reasons. Although students who graduate from schools with special curricula receive the same certificate as students in normal schools, students in the special schools rarely continue on to secondary education. Schools for the mentally disabled provide a less demanding curriculum and therefore prevent students from developing the knowledge or skills needed to compete in the labor market. Moreover, the stigma attached to attending these special schools humiliates the children and negatively affects their ability to socialize or integrate into mainstream society.

Competitive grant funding to support ability-development, integrated trainings and pre-school development programmes

12/2007. (III. 14.) and 9/2008. (III. 29.) of the Ministry of Culture and Education introduced new financial mechanisms to replace “integration head quotas” and to promote equal opportunity and the closing-up of the gap between disadvantaged and mainstream children.

This type of funding represented a major transformation of the mechanisms and the system of financing equal opportunity-equity practices as supporting legislation provided mechanisms to apply benchmarks in the provision of funding. Unlike in the case of previous head quotas regulations of the ability-development grant fund required local governments to fulfil requirements on the demarcation of school districts and the preparation of an action plan for equal opportunities in public education if they wanted to apply for this type of funding.

In the evaluation of applications performance in competence-development is also taken into account: schools have to attach their results in a table of indicators of National Competence Assessment with a view to the ratio of children with compound disadvantages in the school.

Further modifications

- Financial support to those disadvantaged families that send their children to kindergarten before the child's 4th birthday
- Local governments must prepare an institutional quality management programme related to the self-evaluation of schools
- Schools must participate in the annual National Competence Assessment that provide external evaluation of schools' teaching performance through students' outputs in mathematics and literacy skills
- The local government of low performing schools must prepare and action plan for school development

Further modifications

- The public education act raises the preparation of an action plan for equal opportunities in public education the condition of participation in any of the national and transnational competitive funding programmes. The overall goal of the program is to reduce the segregation of Roma and disadvantaged children, the reduction of assigning them to the category of “mildly mentally disable”, improving their attendance in kindergarten, to reduce unequal access to education service and the drop outs of these children, the abolishing of educational discrimination.
- § 66. modifies the practice of the free choice of schools by making it mandatory for schools to take children whose residence is within the school district. If there is more than one school in the settlement, school districts are to be drawn in a way that the percentage of children with compound disadvantages is maximum 15% higher than the ratio of children with compound disadvantages in the settlement.

Further modifications

The Ministry of Culture and Education introduced complementary stipend for teachers working with children with compound disadvantages. The complementary stipend was accepted by the Parliament at the end of 2008, and regulated by 138/1992 (X. 8.) government decree.

HRDOP 2.1 measure: Ensuring equal opportunities in education for disadvantaged pupils

- In the National Development Plan's Human Resources Development Operational Programme (HRDOP) (under the priority: Fighting social exclusion by promoting access to the labour market) a measure has been developed to promote equal opportunities in education for disadvantaged pupils.
- The target groups of the measure are the disadvantaged, especially Roma children and youth; and the children and youth with special educational needs.
- In this HRDOP 2.1 measure 30,356,701 EUR (22,767,525 EUR from the European Social Fund and 7,589,176 EUR from the Hungarian central budget) is available between 2004 and 2006 for programmes aiming:
 - to prevent school failure and drop-outs of disadvantaged pupils
 - to promote the educational success and, thereby improve the labour-market prospects and social integration of disadvantaged youth
 - to eliminate segregation in the public education system, and to promote non-discriminatory, inclusive educational practices.

The HRDOP 2.1 measure contains the following programme elements, which will be implemented through a central programme (1st component) and through tendering procedures (2nd component) :

1. *Training of educational professionals involved in the education of disadvantaged, especially Roma pupils, and pupils with special educational needs; development of related curricula and methodology to promote inclusive education*

- Development and introduction of teacher training programmes and modules;
- Development and implementation of in-service teacher training programmes and training programmes for educational experts;
- Development and implementation of training programmes for local decision-makers and non-teacher groups to increase social awareness and positive attitude towards inclusive education;
- Development of the know-how of inclusive education, elaboration of methodological databank and of service programme-packages;
- Developing new ways of preventing early school leaving and promoting the early identification of the risk of dropping out.

2. Supporting the adaptation and implementation of inclusive educational programmes at the level of individual institutions

- Adaptation of teaching methodology, teaching modules and materials;
- Adaptation of extracurricular activities to prevent drop-out and foster the schooling success of disadvantaged children (extracurricular study-groups, talent promotion programmes);
- Adaptation of measurement and evaluation methods;
- Improvement of intercultural communication;
- Setting up of horizontal learning and thematic information networks, workshops and seminars.

The third priority area of the Social Renewal OP for the period 2007-2013

is devoted exclusively to the development of the system of public education with a view to providing access to quality education for all. Measures of this priority are the following:

- 3.1. Supporting the dissemination of competence-based education
- 3.2. Improving the efficiency of public education, innovative solutions and cooperation
- 3.3. Reducing the segregation of Roma students and students at compound disadvantages, the provision of equal opportunities
- 3.4. Supporting inclusive and intercultural education of children with special needs.

Thank you for your attention!