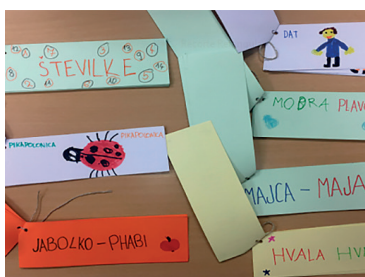
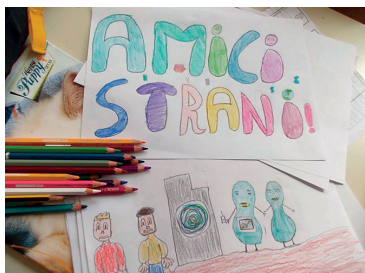


School Education, Minorities and Life Opportunities Roma Inclusive School Experiences



Edited by

Maria José Casa-Nova
Maria Alfredo Moreira
Maria Teresa Tagliaventi

School Education, Minorities and Life Opportunities

Roma Inclusive School
Experiences

Edited by Maria José Casa-Nova
Maria Alfredo Moreira
Maria Teresa Tagliaventi

SCHOOL EDUCATION, MINORITIES AND LIFE OPPORTUNITIES
ROMA INCLUSIVE SCHOOL EXPERIENCES

Edited by Maria José Casa-Nova, Maria Alfredo Moreira and Maria Teresa Tagliaventi

Cover: António Pedro

© EDIÇÕES HÚMUS, 2020

End. postal: Apartado 7081 – 4764-908 Ribeirão, V. N. Famalicão

Tel. 926 375 305

E-mail: humus@humus.com.pt

ISBN 978-989-755-520-6

Printing: Papelmunde, SMG, Lda. – V. N. Famalicão

1st edition: 2020

Legal Deposit: 471531/20

The content of this book represents the views of the authors only and are their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



Universidade do Minho



ALAMEDA PORTUGUESA
UNIVERSIDADE DO MINHO
CENTRO DE INVESTIGAÇÃO E INOVAÇÃO
EM EDUCAÇÃO



DEVELOPMENT
AND EDUCATION
CENTRE NOVO MESTO



RISE
Research Institute for School Experiences



Co-funded by the
Rights, Equality &
Citizenship Programme
of the European Union

INDICE

- 7 **Introduction**
Maria Teresa Tagliaventi
- 17 **Chapter 1. Societies and schools: towards a better humanity?**
Maria José Casa-Nova and Maria Teresa Tagliaventi
- 29 **Chapter 2. Basic concepts for a theoretically sustained practice**
Maria Alfredo Moreira , Maria José Casa-Nova, and Daniela Silva
- 41 **Chapter 3. Methodological approach**
Daniela Silva , Maria Alfredo Moreira and Maria José Casa-Nova
- 53 **Chapter 4. An inclusive perspective across Northern and Southern Italy**
Maria Teresa Tagliaventi, Giovanna Guerzoni, Luca Ferrari, Marco Nenzioni,
and Licia Masoni
- 101 **Chapter 5. An inclusive perspective across Southeast Slovenia**
Agnieszka Natalia Mravinec and Tina Strnad
- 129 **Chapter 6. An inclusive perspective across Northern Portugal**
Maria José Casa-Nova, Maria Alfredo Moreira and Daniela Silva
- 187 **Chapter 7. Internal evaluation: comparing and reflecting**
Francesco Chezzi and Alessio Arces
- 205 **Within and beyond the project: systems of thought and systems of action
in a moving society**
Maria José Casa-Nova and Maria Alfredo Moreira

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)

References

FRA - European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. (2014). *Survey on discrimination and social exclusion of Roma in EU*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the EU.

FRA - European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. (2017). *Fundamental Rights Report 2017*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the EU.