



Education and Culture DG



**Intercultural activities as means towards school
desegregation
Case of “Strategic steps for improving the access to
education of Roma children” project**

**DARE NET- Desegregation and Action for Roma in
Education Network**

INITIAL TRANSNATIONAL MEETING

Bucharest, 25-28 February 2013

About „Strategic steps for improving Roma children's access to education" project

- **Aim:** To diminish the school segregation phenomenon and build on a best practice model for reducing school drop out, as well as to increase the quality of education for Roma children in the selected project schools.
- **Premise:** Cultural diversity contributes to improvement of quality of education, to better intercultural relation within a school/ classroom and has a positive impact upon the personal development of Roma and non-Roma children.
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- **When?** 2009- 2012
- **Who?** Romani CRISS, 3 local Roma NGOs and Ministry of Education
- **Where?** in 90 schools from 20 counties of Romania, selected on the following criteria:
 - Segregated schools and classes in Roma communities living in disadvantaged (sub)urban districts, some close to other ethnic minorities
 - Segregated schools and classes in Roma communities living in disadvantaged parts of small cities/villages in rural regions (Jilava, Ilfov)
 - Residentially segregated schools, namely Roma communities in segregated rural settlements isolated from majority cities/villages (Budureasa, Bihor)
 - Segregated schools and classes in Roma communities affected by interethnic conflicts (such as Hadareni)
 - Roma communities with high risk of school drop out: e.g. early marriages phenomenon (Babadag, Tulcea)

Interculturality

- ▣ Necessity: Involve community and authorities in the desegregation and interculturality process and in children's education, in general
- ▣ Enforced at three levels:
 - ▣ Teachers
 - ▣ Students
 - ▣ Parents

Extremely useful result in the project: development of 1 intercultural education module consisting of 25 lessons for middle school students

Interculturality – Activities done

▣ For teachers:

Training on interculturality (including current legislation in the field and examples, linked to desegregation) + 1 training curricula for teachers in the field of intercultural field and analysis of specific school and community needs in order to develop a tailored plan of activities

Exchanges of experience between teachers who apply interculturality successfully in their school/ classes and other teachers, from other schools

Demonstrative classes for teachers on how intercultural classes should be thought to students, with the help of experts

Interculturality – Activities done

- ▣ **For students (1):**
- ▣ **Implementation of the 25 lessons within the module on intercultural education**
- ▣ **Experiencing interculturality through a series of activities, such as:**
 - Painting, poetry, theatre, skills, doll making, reading workshops (and other types) that imply team work, mutual acceptance, inter-relations.
 - Contests, essays, albums on themes that reflect diversity
 - Sports competitions and thematic trips
 - Documenting the history of the city, community
 - Celebration of all ethnicities
 - Screening of theme movies

Interculturality – Activities done

- ▣ **For students (2):**
- ▣ **“Grandparents’ night”** (grandparents of different ethnicities are invited to tell about their own experience on education)
- ▣ **The story of my friend’s family** – a group of students investigate the history of each of their families and put together family albums, thus get to know each other
- ▣ **Debates** with representatives of minorities, public persons that talk to the students about the importance of cultural diversity, culture and history of minorities they belong to.

Interculturality – Activities done

- ▣ For students (3):
- ▣ **“School of all children”** campaign: VIPs involved in school debates and willing to be spiritual mentors of one school
- ▣ **“Donate a book”** campaign for Roma schools with no libraries, that received support from BCR, Embassies, Radio Romania, Oriflame, IBM – **over 6000 books and 2500 encyclopedias**. The donors went and read with and for the children.

Interculturality – Activities done

- ▣ For parents:
- ▣ Mothers' club – moms meet and discuss children education's related problems more freely
- ▣ Meetings with parents of children enrolled in high rated schools (such as the American School, Italian school) to share experience and learn from each other
- ▣ Sports competitions
- ▣ Traditional cooking competitions
- ▣ Thematic movie screenings followed by debates
- ▣ Counselling and information meetings with the project staff

Implementation of the Order for the 1st and 5th grades in the project schools

- ▣ At the beginning of the school year, members of the project's team, representatives of the Counties School Inspectorates and the school managers identified Roma and non-Roma enrolling for the 1st / 5th grade and assured ethnic balance for all classes:

Tunari School; School Lucretia Suciu - Bihor; Iacobeni School - Sibiu and others

Few of the project results (1)

- ❑ 1 intercultural education module for middle schools with 25 lessons done in accordance with Ministry of Education's Order no. 3774/2008 and Order no. 5098/2009 that stipulate the possibility to teach intercultural education in schools, as an optional class
- ❑ Enforcement of Ministry of Education's Order 1540/ 2007 on banning school segregation of Roma children (including ethnic mixing of segregated classes or forming of non-segregated 1st grade and 5th grade classes)
- ❑ Over 10,000 children and 9,000 parents involved in various activities (intercultural or raising awareness and counselling activities)

Few of the project results (2)

- ▣ 1781 activities developed in schools to prevent early school drop out
- ▣ 110 debates with public persons and representatives of minorities (role models) who spoke to the students about importance of cultural diversity, their own culture and history of the minority they belong to.
- ▣ 500 children who participated in 4-day-long summer intercultural schools and raising self-esteem summer camps.

Few of the project results (3)

- ▣ 134 communities where raising awareness campaigning on education took place constantly and 196 information sessions in schools
- ▣ Training of 150 teachers in the field of school desegregation and interculturality
- ▣ 787 teachers contracted to implement the activities in the selected schools
- ▣ 146,000 school supplies purchased and sent to schools involved in the project to implement the intercultural activities

Lessons learnt

- ❑ Desegregation is a complex process – mixing the Roma and non-Roma children is not enough, intercultural education is absolutely necessary for all actors involved.
- ❑ The type of intercultural activities need to be adapted to the specificity of the school, community and local context
- ❑ This process represents an opportunity to change the school for the benefit of all children
- ❑ Desegregation doesn't target only Roma children – it does bring benefits for all children
- ❑ Desegregation needs the engaged efforts of all students and parents, along with local authorities

Thank you!