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**Idealistic Vision or Reality? Life-long Learning Among the Romany
Ethnic Groups**

by

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I

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ROMANY ETHNIC GROUP IN HUNGARY¹

According to reliable estimates, the Romany population all over the world is roughly 12 million people.

There are 8 million Romany people in Europe, their smaller or larger communities can be found in almost all of the European countries. However, more than two thirds of the overall European Romany community is concentrated in Central and Eastern Europe. The significance of their proportion in these countries varies, but in most countries their proportion exceeds 5% of the overall population. The estimated figures for Europe show that there is a large Romany population in Hungary, with about 400–600 thousand people, which puts Hungary into 4th place among 38 countries, behind Romania, Bulgaria and Spain. General trends of demographic change in Hungary indicate an ageing population as well as a reduction in the total population. The reasons why the population of the country did not fall below 10 million people in the 15 years following the change of regime can be explained by two factors: the migration of hundreds of thousands of Hungarians from the neighbouring countries into the ‘mother’ country, and by the (more active) demographic characteristics of the Romany population. The Institute of Population Studies of the Central Statistical Office has just published an estimate according to which the Romany population in Hungary will exceed 1.5 million by the year 2050.

The distribution of the Hungarian Romany population is far from even; the majority of the Romany population is concentrated in three regions (Northern Hungary, Northern Great Plain, and Southern Transdanubia). There are Romany inhabitants in at least 2000 settlements out of the 3200 in Hungary. The number of city-dwelling Romanies has risen in the past 30 years, nevertheless, about two thirds of the total population still lives in the most deprived settlements, especially small and micro-villages.

Linguistic researchers claim that the ancestors of today’s Romanies arrived in the territory of the modern India before 1000 BC, as part of a migration wave. The early Romany tribes left India around the 9th–10th centuries, fleeing from the attacks of the Turks, and after a long period of migration they reached Hungary

¹ Facts about Hungary. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2004. Based on www.kum.hu

coming from the Balkans in the 14th–15th centuries. The majority of these travellers moved on toward Western Europe, however, most of the Romany groups were forced out of those countries because of their different culture and because they had no expertise in agriculture. Some of the tribes had settled in the Mediterranean territories of Europe, while the majority returned to Central and Eastern Europe.

Some of the travelling Romanies in Hungary found a role in society during the fights against the Turks in the 15–17th centuries. They earned their living by helping in the preparations for war, used their crafts skills for fighting or everyday purposes, worked on fortifications, planting forests or carried out postal services, thereby proving themselves useful for the country.

In the 18th century, which is referred to as the period of ‘enlightened’ absolutism (during the reigns of Maria Theresa and Joseph II), several banning acts and punishments were introduced to help settle down and assimilate these groups into the majority-ruled society. The forced assimilation had proved almost completely successful, as a significant proportion of the Romany population that had preserved their traditions and culture for centuries forgot their native language and integrated into the lower levels of Hungarian society during the 19th and 20th centuries.

During the process of assimilation, following the liberation of the peasantry and the spread of capitalism in Hungary, another wave of Romany migrants arrived in Hungary from the East and the South in the second half of the 19th century. The arrival of the new ethnic groups has brought up several conflicts, and this migration was also to blame for the introduction of a census for the Romany population. According to the 1893 census, there were 280 thousand Romanies living in the territories of the Pre-Trianon Hungary.

The internal structure of the Hungarian Romany population was formed by the beginning of the 20th century and has been maintained ever since.

The first ones to arrive in the country, who have lost their native language and original culture due to their forced assimilation, form the largest group of the Romany population; they are referred to as the “romungro” (Hungarian) Romanies. This group still differentiates themselves from other Romany minorities that arrived in the Carpathian Basin later. The ‘oláh’ Romanies form another level in the Romany society, a group significantly smaller than the first one, who gained their name from where they had come from. They still tend to speak their native Romany language. The third group is the smallest in number, they settled down primarily in the Southern Transdanubian region. These ‘beás’ Romanies are known to speak an archaic dialect of Romanian. Apart from the groups mentioned above, migration of smaller numbers of Romanies into the country was typical until World War II.

According to estimates, the Holocaust has resulted in the loss of tens of thousands of Romanies, however, exact numbers are still not known.

After World War II, the 1971 nation-wide research provided the first reliable data about the living conditions of the Romany population. According to this, there were 320 thousand Romanies living in Hungary in 1971. More than two thirds of the Hungarian Romanies spoke Hungarian as their mother tongue, about a fifth of them spoke the native Romany language, and less than a tenth used Romanian as their native language.

At the time of the survey, more than four fifths of the (physically) able Romany men were in employment; roughly two thirds of the Romany children attended nursery/kindergarten; 50% of the population had primary education; the number of those leaning skills as well as the proportion of Romanies with secondary education were rising; altogether the first generation of educated Romanies was forming.

Even with the positive changes that were taking place at the time, the stereotype of the “work-avoiding and criminal” Romanies as well as the overt and covert prejudices were very much alive in the contemporary society.

The seemingly spectacular yet not very stable results of the so-called socialist era collapsed during the years of the regime change. The construction industry and mining, the industries that had traditionally employed vast numbers of Romanies have declined in a rapid and drastic manner, and the mostly unskilled Romanies were the first to be sent home (mainly from the larger cities) to their small villages, which could not offer job opportunities. As a result of privatisation and other socio-economic processes the majority of the Hungarian Romany families have fallen decades behind on the modernisation ladder that was regarded as their way of emerging and integrating into society. Meanwhile, the majority of the population nurtured stronger and stronger prejudices against the Romanies, as part of the crisis.

Along with the segregation, recession processes that had started with the changes, the political awareness of the Romany population has started to emerge, and their movements started to enjoy political backing.

1 The situation of the Romany ethnic groups in Hungary

The Hungarian Romany group is the largest ethnic minority in Hungary, and the fourth largest in Europe. According to various experts' estimations the number of Romany people is at least half a million. An important trend to observe is that while the non-Romany population is decreasing, the demographic predictions suggest a growth of the Romany ethnic groups within the overall population.

The sociological studies involving Romany groups (*Havas-Márkus*, 1996; *Kemény-Janky*, 2003) make the well-known claim that the Romanies lost out most on the changes involved in moving to a market economy. Due to the gradual closure of the social networks and channels, social mobility came to a temporary halt among the ethnic minority involved in our study at the time of the economic changes (around 1990). This limited mobility could be described as a process of proletarianisation, which was supposed to decrease the level of deprivation due to the potential that lies in stable employment, allowing for material growth as well as changes in lifestyle and habits.

At the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s more than half of the active Romanies in permanent employment lost their jobs. Today's primary labour market hardly offers any opportunities for the uneducated and the unskilled Romanies, and these groups are disadvantaged even when it comes to temporary jobs. Their employment level is roughly half of that of the non-Romany population, their unemployment rates are three to five times higher, and the number of dependants per bread-winner is three times higher compared to the non-Romany population. Therefore, for several families the child benefit and other social benefits constitute the main sources of income to live on, which means half of the Romany households continue to live in long-term poverty. Their chances of employment are made difficult by several factors, such as their low level of skills, the discrimination typical within the labour market, and the fact that several of them live in the most deprived areas of the country, where job opportunities are scarce anyway.

The Romany ethnic groups are severely deprived also in terms of education compared to the non-Romany population. According to data from 1993-94, 80% of the 15-29 year-old Romany men, who are currently not in education, have no more than 8 years of primary education. The educational level of the younger generation shows a slightly better picture, although the gap between their level of education and that of the non-Romany peers is still significant. The proportion of Romany children going on to secondary education (A-levels) or higher education is astonishingly smaller (according to unanimous sources smaller by several orders of magnitude) than the national average.

The last decade saw a dramatic rise in segregated living of Romany and non-Romany people, which makes it similar to the situation of 30 years ago. There are tens of thousands of Romany families who live in segregation, in slums, in settlement-like areas, in houses without modern facilities. The Romany ethnic groups live typically in the less developed regions of the country, in the North-East, Northern Great Plain and Southern Transdanubia areas, and accordingly their proportions among the overall population is highest in these regions. The majority lives in small settlements with less than 1000 residents, with hardly any employment opportunities and worse than average living conditions. They are

over-represented in settlements where the transport infrastructure is poor and the public transport is minimal, which makes commuting to the larger settlements with more job opportunities rather expensive in comparison with the potential salaries and wages. In the regions where the proportion of the Romany population is higher, the small settlements form isolated communities, making the social and economic deprivation more pronounced.

II

LIFE-LONG LEARNING: EUROPEAN PRACTICES OF THE MODEL OF LIFE-LONG LEARNING

1 The model of life-long learning

Everyone researching the field would agree that the road to the integration of the Romanies into the majority society leads through learning. Learning may assist to overcome handicaps with regards to social skills, by allowing them to acquire skills which will enable Romanies to get jobs, and also to overcome obstacles that would allow them to live in harmony in society whilst satisfying their and society's needs.

The process of life-long learning can be broken down into three basic periods. The first one relates to participation in primary education during the years of legally compulsory education; the second period covers the years of engaging in secondary and higher education; while the third one refers to the learning processes which come after having acquired the basic skills, and may last throughout the whole life. Within the last period, two further categories can be distinguished: participation in organised adult education and self-education made possible through numerous channels. This study is going to present the findings of earlier research into the participation of people belonging to Romany minorities in the latter types of education and into the factors influencing their participation. However, as learning processes after education in the school system are significantly influenced by the success/results of participation in primary education, this field cannot be ignored either.

The review of the literature makes it apparent that several studies researching Romany participation in learning processes have been focusing on the first phase of the process, i.e. primary education, with special regards to the reasons of failure and the possibilities of overcoming these since the 1970s. However, there is a lack of research into their participation in life-long learning, in learning processes after finishing school, this area is touched upon only in the general objectives and development programmes without providing a detailed analysis of the situation.

Furthermore, the descriptions of learning processes which are typical of the Romany population are also lacking or are known only to a few professionals: these are automatic processes that take place spontaneously, independent of the intentions of those participating during social interactions. This field is of key importance in understanding the unique characteristics of Romany civilisation, in

recognising their different approaches to learning and understanding and that recognition is necessary for different groups to be able to live in harmony.

Due to the lack of sufficient information, the study is going to discuss learning as a deliberate activity.

As with every cognitive human activity, the learning process can also be grasped as a series of cycles, where four periods can be distinguished:

1. Period of motivation: this is where it gets decided whether or not the person in question is willing to learn and participate in some sort of learning or education process. Identifying the need to learn and the learning objectives are also part of this period. Motivation to learn and the learning objectives are influenced by several factors, which include:

- Obligations determined by the law,
- Values of civilisation, specifically within that the issues of knowledge as a value, learning as a positive activity in life,
- Examples in the family, that may become expectations at the same time,
- Advantages hoped to be achieved through learning, such as:
 - a) Achievement of better employment positions, for example getting employed, keeping a job, pay rise, promotion, etc.
 - b) Solution of problems emerging from one's situation, such as keeping debts in control, keeping healthy, being more independent, coping with laws and regulations, solving conflicts,
 - c) Self-realisation, fulfilling creative ambitions;
- Experience from the previous/earlier learning phase, experience of success in gaining knowledge and utilising the knowledge acquired,
- Examples known of familiar forms of education, other people's learning experience and opinion of the different forms of learning/education
- Learning motivators, such as grants, study leave, concessions for travelling.

A different grouping of motivators for adult learning is explained in the related work by Klára Bajusz (*Bajusz, 2000*).

2) Phase of access: this phase will determine, what sort of learning material is available for the person in question to achieve his or her learning objectives, in what form and at what costs. It cannot be taken for granted that for the learning needs the most appropriate form of learning or education is available for the given person. Availability will be influenced by geographical, financial/material and social factors. Choosing the most appropriate content and form may not be possible due to the lack of the adequate form of education. Even if it is available, further obstacles might be the lack of information, geographical distance; access to means of travel or necessary IT facilities or the unaffordable price of the service. Access to the infrastructure of learning includes access to the courses organised

within the school system or otherwise and their learning material, as well as access to books, journals, internet sites and audio-visual channels that are necessary for self-education. This will also include access to mentoring services, which in the form of personal help at the right time will assist in coping with the vast quantity of information and in personalising the uniform (general) learning material. In the case of the Romany minority, we will also have to account for other factors that arise from their cultural difference and the acceptance of that difference. On the one hand, segregation and denial of inclusion will diminish; on the other hand, the educational institutions and programmes building on the Romany culture will enhance their chances to access “mental” products. Besides the above described factors that can be considered as objective conditions, there is a subjective condition that needs to be mentioned, that of fulfilling the entry conditions. (As we will see, the subjective factor is strongly influenced by the objective ones that will shape the previous learning stages.)

3) *Phase of success*: this will show whether the person in question (the subject) is capable of going all the way along the path started. Is he or she able to achieve the set learning objectives and acquire the knowledge that has become available for him or her, therefore developing their skills in the chosen direction? Can they cope with the difficulties arising, such as not being able to adjust to the learning activity because of the family or other obligations; lack of previous education and knowledge that comes to light during the learning process; accepting and keeping to the necessary time management; lack of continuous enforcement; targeted knowledge getting out-of-date, etc? The use of educational/learning methods which are not appropriate for the basic education and culture of the person will pose a threat to the success of learning.

4) *Phase of utilising the acquired knowledge*: this phase will highlight whether the objectives have been achieved or not. It will show whether the person in question will be able to move forward and satisfy his or her own needs and those of the family's with more security, due to the knowledge and skills gained. However, the question of whether the person will be able to get a job or a better job, have a higher salary, more income, or whether he or she can reduce their expenditure, make their environment more beautiful, will enjoy more attention or love will not only depend on that person, but also the influences of the macro and micro-environments. If there are no job opportunities in the whole region, or the necessary material equipment is not available or there are no partners to utilise them, the acquired knowledge will seem pointless. Utilisation of the knowledge will again impact on motivation, either by motivating them to start or by putting them off from a new learning cycle.

It becomes evident from the above model that life-long learning of Romany groups will be influenced by both subjective and objective factors. This study is

not going to discuss subjective factors, and can only highlight a few of the objective ones, based on the relevant literature. The factors not discussed here could offer new directions for further research (*Table 1*).

Table 1

System of factors influencing the phases of life-long learning and research available

Life-long learning among Romany groups	
Factors already researched	Factors where further research is necessary
MOTIVATION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Obligations, laws and regulations – Experience of participation in previous learning cycles, experience of success in acquiring and then utilising knowledge – Role of learning in achieving better employment positions for Romany groups – Mechanisms motivating to learn, such as grants, study leave, concessions for travelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Values of civilisation, within that knowledge as a value, learning as a positive activity in life – Examples in the family, that may be expectations at the same time – Role of learning in solving problems arising from the living conditions and situation of the Romany minority – Role of learning in self-realisation among the Romany groups – Advantages hoped to achieved by learning – Other people's learning experience and opinion on the different forms of learning/education
ACCESS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Basic education acquired during primary education – Range and quality of accessible learning material – Special educational institutions – Access to information technology and equipment – Segregation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Bridging geographical distances – Access to books, journals, audio-visual techniques – Access to/availability of mentoring
SUCCESS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – State and stability of basic education – Cultural appropriateness of the chosen educational methods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Adjusting learning with the family and other obligations – Continuous external enforcement – Learning material becoming out-of-date
UTILISATION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Changes in employment opportunities accessible for Romany groups – Support programmes to improve the conditions for the Romany population, government initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Changes in the situation of Romany people and their possible connections with learning

Source: Own compilation.

2 Summary of statements arising from the literature review

2.1 On life-long learning

2.1.1 The necessity and concepts of life-long learning

The importance of adult education started to be recognised in the 1970s, when the effectiveness of primary education was beginning to be questioned all over the world. P. H. Coombs described the worldwide crisis of education as well as the crisis of self-confidence of education in his book in 1968. In the developed countries, the growing functional illiteracy was one of the signs of crisis, whereas in the case of the developing world primary education was blamed for the slow changes of the development level.

It has also become apparent that acquiring a good degree would not guarantee that people could work within the same profession till the end of their lives. The functions of families and living communities that used to prepare children for life had changed, which then led to the fact-based knowledge one could obtain in school rapidly becoming old. Primary education can react only very slowly to fulfil the needs for creativity that have long been recognised.

In the 1990s, new signs of the crisis emerged. While time spent in formal education had become longer, getting and holding a job became more and more difficult. At the same time, people started to have more spare time, not only at the end of their so-called active period but also during their whole life. As the world widens, the citizens become more critical of the contradictions of the society they live in. With the emergence of the characteristics of participatory democracy the roles of civil and voluntary organisations are becoming more significant in the democratic societies, identities of individuals and communities are gaining a new meaning, individuals' life histories are becoming more varied and colourful. The introduction of new technologies, changes in the structure of industry and the emergence of new methods in work organisation present challenges to an extent that requires actions and reactions not only from the school system but society as a whole (Kovács, 1997).

Along the criticisms of the school system several new concepts were discussed as early as the 1970s. The notions of permanent education and life-long education have emerged, where the latter comes from an explanation of people as human beings who can realise themselves only through continuous, never ending learning. The concept of life-long learning embraces knowledge acquisition as well as the development of skills at home, at school, in the work place and during social

interactions (life). According to this notion, learning is an integral part of life. The notion of recurrent education divides the period of learning in preparation for a job into shorter periods, which are wedged in between the periods spent working and with recreational activities. The concept of the learning society envisages education of the future to be a mechanism, where the individual has the chance to be creative, while the society is enabled to develop their culture and safeguard their integrity (*Kovács, 1997*).

Informal learning is sometimes regarded as a spontaneous process activated by the impacts of the environment, rather than any deliberate action. Other readings of the notion argue that it can be an intentional, self-controlled and planned activity. There are others who would consider every kind of education that does not provide a certificate (such as the popular university movement) as informal learning. This type of learning will primarily assist in gaining new perspectives necessary to be able to change life styles, and acquiring knowledge and skills useful for everyday life (*Svetlai-Szepes, 2001*).

It has also become obvious that the state would have to play a part in prolonging the period of learning to people's whole lives. According to István Polónyi, the following factors will motivate the state to be involved with and to contribute to the financing of adult education:

- People – or the work force – will adjust more easily to technological changes.
- Democratic institutions can be run more efficiently due to education.
- It will result in a reduction in social expenditure such as unemployment benefits and health care costs.
- Lower crime rates would help to reduce the costs of the policing and prison systems. Increase in public services performed by the public. (Polónyi, without date).

The European Union has also recognised the importance of life-long learning as a way of achieving total employment determined at community level and active citizenship.

According to the “Memorandum on Life-long Learning” issued by the Committee of the European Community in 2000, life-long learning includes all kinds of planned learning activities, be they formal or informal, that are committed to obtaining and developing knowledge, skills and competences. This definition includes all kinds of learning activities which are:

- Planned, therefore the person undertakes the activity with the intention of developing their behaviour, knowledge, cognitive capacity, attitude, values or skills;

- Long term commitments, meaning that they are not ad hoc or happen by chance but are continuous activities for the duration of the learning period, in theory without a time limit;
- Different kinds of learning, be they formal or informal (such as apprenticeship, independent study, training, courses organised at/by the work place, etc.);
- Independent from the source of the funding, i.e. whether the private or the public sector or the individual pays the costs of learning;
- Independent from the type of service (traditional or modern methods such as using new information and communication technologies).

This definition of learning is valid for each and every individual, independent of their age and status in the labour market. Theoretically, it includes all sorts of activities from childhood education to that of retired people.

The knowledge, abilities and skills will embrace not only ones that are necessary and useful for work but also ones that help the development of one's character and participation in society.

The Memorandum determines six recommendations:

- 1) Adult education must provide new basic skills for everyone.
- 2) More investment in adult education is necessary.
- 3) Innovation in learning and teaching is required.
- 4) Evaluation of learning needs to be developed, with special regards to the evaluation of non-formal or informal learning (to go beyond the traditional forms of evaluation such as exams); also, non-formal and informal education must be acknowledged as competencies and must be considered from the point of view of motivation, so that learning becomes more accessible.
- 5) Assistance to learning must be further developed to ensure a more effective analysis of individual needs and to make the appropriate programme offers suitable.
- 6) Learning must be taken nearer people's homes.

2.1.2 European citizens and life-long learning

In 2003, the Eurobarometer undertook a survey with the participation of 18,000 employees from the 15 EU member states and Norway and Iceland, that was prompted by the publication of the European Committee's "How to make life-long learning in Europe a reality" in 2001.

The majority of the European citizens argued that continuous learning is a necessary prerequisite of achieving economic and social goals. It will enable the work force to adjust successfully to the changing needs of the labour market.

Furthermore, continuous learning will also assist individuals to be in charge of their own lives, to be able to live a full and satisfactory life.

Almost all the participants of the survey agreed that reading, writing and counting are among the most important skills, and not only for work. The respondents also acknowledged that to establish the Europe of knowledge, several other skills need to be acquired, such as information and communication skills and foreign languages.

The result of the survey also highlighted that most of the European citizens prefer learning informally, like at home, in their spare time, in a library or nearby educational centres. Only 17% of the respondents claimed to have undertaken additional education in formal educational institutions such as schools or universities. It must be noted that distance learning and study tours abroad (e.g. within the framework of exchange programmes) scored highly when ranking different forms of education/learning. The survey conducted by Eurobarometer shows therefore that from the point of view of learning, the general public prefers the non-official context.

From the results of the survey, the conclusion could be drawn that people with the highest education and most skills are most inclined to life-long learning. While the respondents did not question the personal and social benefits of learning, they pointed out that lack of time, due to work and family commitments, constituted the major obstacle. Even so, or due to this, the tailor-made and flexible forms of education are still attractive. Money was listed as another major obstacle: half of the informants admitted that under no circumstances would they pay for further education. However, it must be noted that the same people were willing to pay for purposes that contributed only to the growth of their personal wealth. Despite this, they felt that as far as courses are concerned that provide skills useful for the jobs they were doing, the costs of their education should not burden only them (*EUROPA Rapid Press Releases*, 2003).

2.1.3 Hungarian understanding and regulations of life-long learning

Education in the school system and participation in statutory education are regulated by the *1993/LXXXIX. Law on public education*. This law determines that every child in the Hungarian Republic is obliged to learn. The child, as soon as he or she reaches the necessary state of development, will have to start statutory education at the earliest in the calendar year when he or she becomes 6, at the latest when he or she becomes 8. Statutory education lasts till the end of the school year when the pupil reaches 18. In the case of children with special educational needs this period may be prolonged until the end of the school year when pupil becomes 20.

Statutory education can take the forms of attending school or becoming a private student, depending on the choice of the parents. If the headmaster of the school, Social Services or the Child Support Agency consider that being a private student is disadvantageous for the pupil; or that the child that started as a private student is not likely to finish his or her education that way, the above authorities must report that to the relevant town clerk either where the child is registered with a permanent address or where the child lives. The town clerk will then make a decision on how the child will need to fulfil his statutory education.

Parents have a duty of care for their children's education (1949 / XX Law, Section 70/J). The parent is responsible for the child participating in education at the necessary level; failing to ensure that, his or her responsibility will be investigated.

Possibilities of learning in adulthood are also involved in the 1997 / CXL Law on the protection of cultural goods, museums and related institutions, on public library services and public education. Part IV. of this law discusses public education. According to this, practicing the right to public education is in the public interest, supporting public educational activities is a common goal and providing the necessary conditions of public education is primarily the duty of the state and the local authorities (Section 73.). Supporting local public educational activities is listed among the obligations of municipal authorities. This kind of support can be manifest in various forms, especially:

- a) Establishing possibilities of forms of education outside the school system, such as self-education and special courses, adult education, popular universities; possibilities of learning that will contribute to a better quality of life and better chances in life,
- b) Discovering the natural, intellectual and arts treasures of the settlement and making them publicly known, preserving and contributing to the local educational and cultural customs,
- c) Making the treasures and values of the universal and national cultures, as well as those of the cultures of ethnic and other minorities widely known, with that assisting in achieving understanding inclusion, and preserving the culture of festivities, celebrations and holidays,
- d) Supporting the activities of knowledge producing, amateur creative and educational groups and communities,
- e) Providing assistance to the networks of the local community, community life and to the representation of their interests,
- f) Helping build and sustaining links between the different cultures,
- g) Providing opportunities for other forms of education. (Section 76)

The 2001 / CI Law on adult education set the following as objectives: ensuring the right to learn as guaranteed by the Constitution for the citizen's whole life;

widening the regulated possibilities of access to adult learning and education to include all members of society; enabling citizens to respond to the challenges of the economic, cultural and technological developments and to be able to join in and be successful in the world of labour; and improving the quality of life through adult learning and education.

The law would consider as adult education the educational activities which are undertaken on a regular basis outside the school system such as general, language or professional courses, as well as the services related to adult education.

A detailed description of the above activities is provided by the recommendations of the Hungarian Popular University Society. According to this document, adult education can be considered in the following system:

- I Basic education, development of basic competencies
 - 1) Development of writing, reading, counting and communication skills for adults without a basic education and disadvantaged adults
 - 2) Development of key skills, character development
 - 3) Development of adults' basic information technology skills
- II Active citizen development
- III Development of general knowledge and competencies
 - 1) Development of knowledge, skills and practice with regards to arts, social sciences and media
 - 2) Education and skills development aimed to develop local, national and historical self-awareness and public moral
 - 3) Family learning programmes
 - 4) 'Second chance' education (educational programmes aimed to acquire secondary school level education)
 - 5) Development of general competencies (development of integral skills such as employment, entrepreneurial, management, communication and learning skills)
- IV Language education and skills development
 - 1) Development of basic foreign language expression and communication skills, functional basic education courses
 - 2) Development of intermediate level foreign language skills
 - 3) Education and development of advanced level foreign language skills
- V Other complimentary activities and (methodological) activities of adult education services
 - 1) Establishment, maintenance and development of adult education networks
 - 2) Development, adaptation and running of (methodological) services related to general adult education, such as:

- Development of the tools necessary to identify the needs of adult education (at personal, company, settlement, community and regional level)
 - Development of the evaluation methods for the various forms of learning
 - Development of learning support and advice
 - Development and use of quality management tools for general adult education
 - Development of electronic learning methods
- VI Educational and further educational activities related to adult education services
- In the areas discussed under 2/a-e above
 - Project management skills development
- (For the explanation of the above activities see Sz. Tóth, 2002.)

2.1.4 Typical motivating factors of life-long learning

Life-long learning requires from the part of the student well-founded basic skills and high levels of motivation.

Research into the motivation of people participating in adult education has identified five key motives: a. widening professional knowledge, b. hope of employment, c. career building, d. acquiring a certificate, e. business. The research also highlighted a significant link between the motivating factors and the students' level of education. The groups motivated by the "I need the certificate" and widening professional knowledge have typically already benefited from primary and secondary (grammar school) education. The intention to build a career is predominantly characteristic of those who have completed higher education. Hope of employment is the main motivating factor for people with only primary education, whereas (starting up or joining a) business motivates primarily people with skilled worker education. Unemployed people are most likely to join adult education to spend spare time usefully and in the hope of employment (Polónyi, without date).

Motivation to learn can be strengthened. As possible tools, the 1999 research by CERI identifies the following: tailoring the learning organisational procedures to the individual needs and abilities; access to computer assisted learning; development of the infrastructure of learning; re-establishing students' self estimation with regards to learning; and employment of teachers and lecturers with high social competencies (Németh, without date).

2.1.5 Institutional bases of adult education

József Mayer claims (without the indication of supporting data) that only a few schools are involved with adult education. The former primary schools for people in employment have ceased or been restructured into institutions that do not provide primary education. The secondary level institutions are based in town and cities, therefore making access difficult for the target groups. In the light of this, he argues that access to schools and learning material are of key importance for the realisation of life-long learning. He criticises the current Hungarian practice that considers the use of conditions, which can only provide a lower level of quality satisfactory for the education of disadvantaged people (Mayer, 2004).

István Polónyi blames national regulations for the low number of primary and secondary schools participating in adult education. Regulations do not provide favourable conditions for these institutions to join the education market on a business basis. At the same time, giving use or function to the schools gradually emptying due to demographic processes constitutes an important motivation for the owners of the schools. These schools would be ideal to turn into adult education schools or other educational places, as the main target groups of adult education can be reached from a municipal level (Polónyi, without date).

According to a survey conducted among public educational institutions in 2001, the professionals are not entirely aware of the notions of adult education, public education and life-long learning, and the relations of these to one another. Due to this, they cannot be expected to be able to motivate people to feel the need for learning and participating in public education. A change in attitude, economic stability and reorganisation of capital would be necessary to make life-long learning part of our everyday lives (Bucsánszky et al. 2002).

However, László Zachár mentions the development and strengthening of a four-aspect educational system outside the school system in the past few years as a major achievement. The four aspects mentioned refer to the following: schools, regional human resources development and education centres, education-related businesses and the “internal” network of employers. This is also argued to prove that educational courses outside the school system can be profitable businesses. Educational institutions run as business ventures are significant (in 1999, their proportion exceeded 50%, educating about 60% of those who had signed up for a course) (Zachár, 2003).

Judit Kerülő draws attention to the inequalities arising from the spatial distribution of adult education institutions. She points out that according to the Ministry of Work Order 2/1997 (22. January) the job centres in the capital and the counties registered 1461 institutions providing professional education outside the school system in the country, at the 31. December 1999. About a quarter of all the institutions providing education outside the school system were based in Buda-

pest, and 68.5% of all the institutions were based in the county towns. Zoltán Györgyi's survey of 1996 on school system-based adult education shows that mostly people from the settlement where the adult education institutions are located attend these. Regarding the fact in 1999 there were adult education institutions in 168 settlements, one can conclude that people living in smaller settlements are marginalised (*Kerülő*, 2000).

2.1.6 Financing adult education

According to István Polónyi's calculations, adding the amounts spent on adult education by all the participants (including the individual's and the employer's spending) and relating it to the GDP will find that the total spending on adult education in Hungary is a bit more than 1% of the GDP. Slightly more than half of the expenditure on adult education comes from participation in the school system-based adult education, and spending on education / training at the work place constitutes more than a third of it. Employers bear more than half the costs of adult education, while the participants pay more than a quarter of it. Nevertheless, the state bears hardly more than 10% of the costs.

State spending on school system-based adult education in relation to the GDP has been reduced significantly since the mid-90s (and is still getting less and less), despite the growing number of students. The amount dedicated to adult education is less than one fiftieth of state education spending altogether (this figure was between 4.9 and 5.2% of the GDP at the end of the 1990s). It could be stated that the state seems to be withdrawing from school system-based adult education (Polónyi, without date).

III

CHARACTERISTICS AND MOTIVATION OF THE ROMANY POPULATION

1 Are the social traps manageable? Analysis of the assessment of life-long learning

The era that we live in can be regarded as the era of the knowledge society. It is everyone's right and obligation to find their place in the area of knowledge and in the modern and traditional relation systems.

Are the chances of getting into this situation given to all social groups? According to our experience, in Hungary there are Romany (and non-Romany) groups that are almost completely excluded from society, who under the current socio-economic conditions do not have access to the measures of modernisation, and therefore these groups are not subject to the obligations either.

Can the shrinking Hungarian society afford to give up helping the Romany population to catch up, especially as they are a demographically very active group of society? In our opinion the answer is no, and as a part of the Romany population expresses their needs to join the modernisation process, it is certainly well worth looking for the tools that will support their efforts to catch up. In establishing the conditions of general development life-long learning may become a useful measure, which can become a tool in assisting the changes of individuals' habits and closing the gap between Romany groups and the rest of society.

Instead of the mobility paths based on traditions, predictable careers and steps, the individual and community strategies preferring the willingness to take more risks became more prominent in Hungary as well in the long decade of transition. This was more typical of groups in more favourable social conditions and living primarily in (larger) urban areas. The recognition of the importance and effective use of the individual's risk taking is less significant in the communities living other than in the capital, especially in rural areas.

The above mentioned disadvantages are more pronounced in the case of Romanies in Hungary, as social marginalisation and the different elements of objective-relative deprivation (such as low income, low level of education, poorly equipped homes, unhealthy or tight living conditions, low employment status, etc.) are more characteristic. Pierre Bourdieu explains this phenomenon when he declares that educational level and acquired skills are the foundations of individual behaviour that builds on prescience and prediction (*Bourdieu, 1978*).

Are the conditions of “prescience” and “prediction” given in the Romany society? In the research geared to analyse the preconditions of life-long learning we attempted to reveal the social and individual factors, that will help the Romany society to dedicate their existence to ‘prescience’ and ‘prediction’ more efficiently.

As “the past is more certain, than the future” (*Morel*, 1996), the significance of social planning in closing the gap must be stressed. According to the French sociologist, the “structural changes of behaviour are determined by the character of the scientific field system. In other words, the change (in behaviour) can only take place when the necessary economic-cultural background to change has been established in the individual” (*Bourdieu*, 1978:349).

From the various studies related to the topic of life-long learning, we have chosen the national survey on the Romany population conducted by István Kemény and his research team in 2003; and the research on the social land programme involving 10 counties, lead by Zsolt Szoboszlai and his colleagues in 1999 and 2002 (the latter followed the spatial division used in the research by Kemény²). As a further base for comparison, to be able to gain and synthesise additional information, we have also included the results from the Romany minority self-government study undertaken in the spring of 2005, as a prominent (institutional) response.

As the questionnaire used in this research included a great number of variables, during the analysis some of the variables were used in combinations (factor and cluster analysis, path model calculations).

The results are presented on a 1–100 scale on several occasions. The values of the 1–100 scale are always referring to the answers that were analysable, where 100 points means that all the respondents gave maximum points, 0 means that every respondent chose the minimum score. Therefore, on the scale of 1–100, a score below 50 indicates a negative opinion (lack of confidence and sympathy, etc.), whereas a score above 50 shows a positive opinion (confidence, sympathy, etc.).

1.1 The sampling procedure

As the representatives of the classical professional methods provide different answers to the question “Who counts as a Romany?” (*Kemény*, 1997, 2000; *Ladányi–Szelényi*, 2002, *Kemény–Janszky*, 2003), there is no national data avail-

² It must be mentioned that the social land programme is a productive-based socio-political support system, where in 2002 almost half the beneficiaries (and presumably even more than that since then) are of Romany origin.

able on the basic population. In light of this, the multi-step random starting point sampling technique was used in our research.

As the first step³, we selected every tenth from the non-county towns (214 altogether). These towns were then divided into two groups, the ones with a population of less than 10,000 people and the ones with more than 10,000 people. This was significant to filter again the county seats and towns that automatically made it into the population in the first step. In the case of the county towns and towns with a population of more than 10,000 we collected a map indicating the wards of the given settlement or the list of streets. The settlements with less than 10,000 residents had to be considered as one unit as there are no wards to speak of in those cases.

In the given settlements, the survey researchers had to gather preliminary information on the density of Romany population in the individual wards. Three categories were used for this purpose:

- 1) Presumably there are no Romany households in the area,
- 2) Presumably there are few Romany households in the area,
- 3) Presumably there are numerous Romany households in the area.

Part of the information was collected from the local authorities of the settlements, some came from the local authorities of minorities in the settlements, and another part was gained from the neighbourhood. As a next step, we randomly selected two of the non-county towns, and then the constituencies of these that were presumably most densely populated by Romanies. This was followed by a similar procedure: we selected another two towns randomly, and after that we selected the constituency with presumably the least Romany population.

In the case of county towns, in every case we selected the ward that had presumably the most Romany households according to the information gained beforehand. In the next step, we selected two wards as well which presumably had only few Romany households.

A systematic sampling procedure was used in the case of villages as well. Villages were sorted into three categories:

- 1) Villages where nobody declared themselves as Romanies were ignored
- 2) Every hundredth village with only a small Romany population was selected for the sample (where less than 100 people declared themselves as Romanies)
- 3) Every tenth village with a significant Romany population (more than 100 people declared themselves as Romanies) was selected for the sample.

³ 'Census 2001-4. Belonging to a Nationality' publication of the National Statistical Office was used as a starting point.

We chose different selection proportions based on the ‘more or less densely populated by Romanies’ categories. We selected less from the areas with presumably fewer Romanies (for example villages with a small Romany population), but at the same time 100% of the listed households made it into the list of respondents. We used a higher selection proportion in the case of areas presumably densely populated by Romanies (such as villages with a significant Romany population); therefore we considered a smaller proportion of the listed households necessary for the sample. In the case of the latter settlements, every tenth address became part of the sample.

The selection process at household level could take place after the selection of the settlement sample. Our researchers collected the lists of households by asking the local authority, schools, kindergartens, health (medical) institutions, civil organisations, local authorities of minorities, social organisations and local people. Similarly to István Kemény’s research of 1971, “we listed people as Romanies who were considered Romanies by the non-Romany population of the area”.

As only addresses and no names were noted during the address collection process, we could hand the whole list over to the people administering the survey and their instructors, which also provided a possibility of a starting rotation. The interviewers conducted the survey in the given area, and having the whole list at their disposal, they could choose a different address instead of the one where they were refused answers to the questions. The substitution used was the address immediately after the one that fell out of the original list. Our surveyors collected 7223 addresses from the given constituencies, and they recorded data successfully in 1000 cases. After complying with the required household scale, the respondent was selected using the ‘Random walking’ table (code) denoted by Laslie Kish, which randomly depicts the size, gender division and demographic characteristics of the given household.

The questionnaire survey of the research was conducted in October 2005. Based on the selection processes (sensitive to spatial distribution) described above, one third of the respondents live in Northern Hungary, while a fifth of them live in the Northern Great Plain area. The Southern Great Plain and Southern Transdanubia regions provide similar proportions of the sample (13–16%). Other regions of the country represent less than 10% of the sample.

1.2 Explanatory variables

Combining the spatial variables allowed us to compare our survey with research conducted earlier.

István Kemény determined the counties that traditionally belong to this area as being Northern Hungary (Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, Nógrád, Heves); Szabolcs-

Szatmár-Bereg, Hajdú-Bihar and Békés counties were regarded as Eastern Hungary; the group of Bács-Kiskun, Csongrád and Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok counties made up the Great Plain area. He listed the capital Budapest and Pest, Fejér and Komárom counties as part of the Budapest industrial area; Baranya, Somogy, Tolna, Veszprém and Zala counties were declared as Southern Transdanubia, while Vas and Győr-Moson-Sopron counties were listed as Western Hungary. In our approach, the areas denoted as Eastern Hungary and the Great Plain were merged into one geographical unit, which we called the Great Plain.

The Central Hungary area is made up of Pest County and the Central Transdanubia region (i.e. the agglomeration of the capital used in the wider sense). We also merged the two Transdanubian regions.⁴

The data on population show a duality, where nearly half the Romany minority groups live in settlements with less than 10,000 people, and every third respondent lives in towns with a population of more than 50,000. Every tenth respondent lives in a settlement with 10–50,000 residents.

The clusters resulting from merging the ‘population of the settlement’ and ‘administrative status’ variables accurately depict the characteristics of the settlement network in Hungary, as well as the local possibilities for the Romany groups. Four distinct groups were used in the analysis⁵.

As far as the categories we used are concerned, the population of the county seats always exceeded 50,000; and there is a clear division between the villages and towns in the category of settlements with less than 10,000 residents. A similar entity is characteristic of the settlements with more than 10,000 residents (especially the settlements with town rank) (*Figure 1*).

Three interesting basic statistical findings emerged from the analysis of the age variable (year of birth). There is nothing new in the statement that we are working with a rather “young” sample,⁶ as the average year of birth is 1966. People born in 1968 divide the sample, as the same number of people were asked with year of birth before and after that year. This trend is supported by the mode as well, as most of the respondents were born in 1970.

There is an interesting link between the age distribution of the Romany sample and the Hungarian society altogether. The differences between the two figures (despite the differences in the methodology used) predict the most significant demographic and socio-political problem of the next decades: growing pace of

⁴ In the case of significant values we will also present the data relating to the 7 regions.

⁵ During the analysis, number of population proved to have more impact on the forming of the groups.

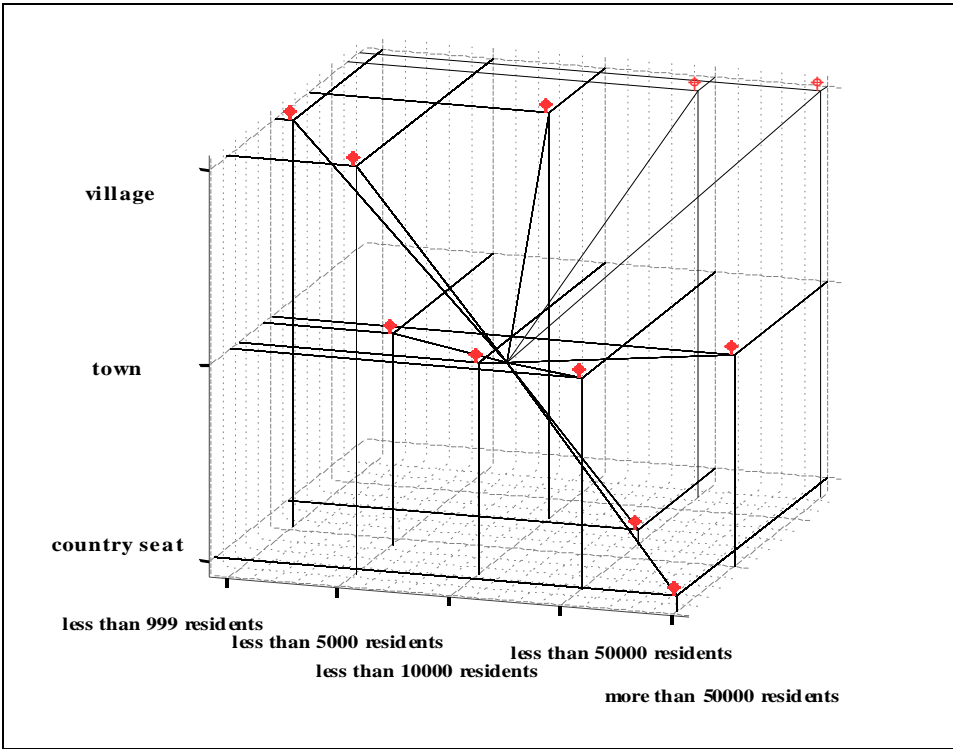
⁶ The demographic distribution of the beneficiaries of the social land programme provides an interesting comparison. According to the data (*Szoboszlai*, 2003) more than 40% are Romanies in the 40 years or younger category.

ageing. However, this process could be balanced at the level of the whole nation by the young and middle-aged core of the Romany population. Therefore, improving equalities of chances of managing life successfully (such as establishing the roots of life-long learning relevant to the topic and public health programmes) is a key common social interest (Figure 2).

Our research has confirmed the previously identified trend. It seems that the process of proclaiming a certain nationality has continued (perhaps as a first sign of wider dispersal of conscious behavioural patterns). Primarily the middle-aged group owned up to a Hungarian and a Hungarian-Romany dual identity, while “older” and “younger” respondents mainly admitted belonging to the Romany minority.

Figure 1

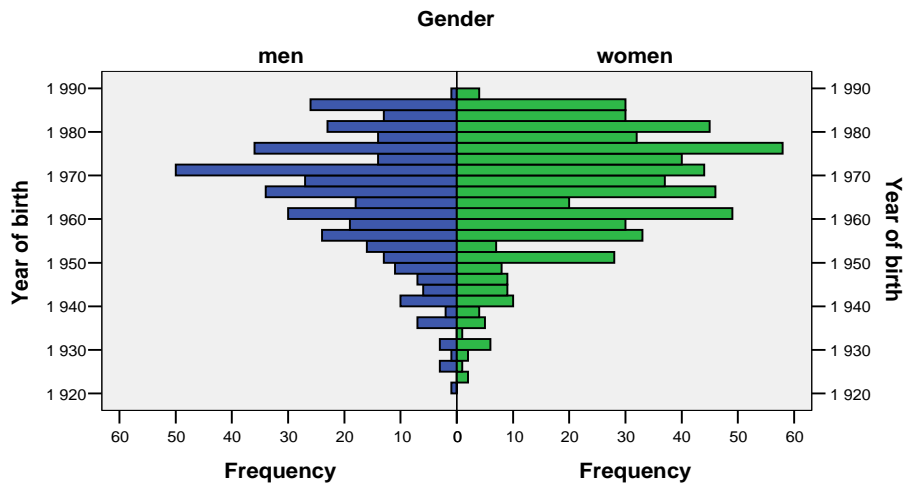
Typical residence of the Romany minority groups in the light of population and status of the settlement (with relation to distance from the centre of the cluster)



Source: Own survey.

Figure 2

*Age distribution of the Romany minority groups in Hungary
(Romany sample – Data on Rural Hungary, 2005)*



Source: Own survey.

Respondents living in the Great Plain area declared themselves mainly as Hungarian Romanies or Romanies. When asked about nationality, choosing Hungarian nationality was more typical of Romany respondents living in the Northern Great Plain, Northern Hungary and Transdanubia regions. In the areas belonging to the agglomeration of the capital, the respondents chose to be Hungarian Romanies and Romanies, while in Transdanubia and Northern Hungary they declared themselves as Romanies.

The relationship between the growing proportion of Romany identity in relation to the educational level in the current research shows that willingness to admit Romany identity is more typical of respondents with full or partial primary education (which contradicts the results of previous research). The respondents with a certified apprenticeship also declared themselves primarily as Romanies closely followed by the declaration of being Hungarian Romanies.⁷ Romanies

⁷ Probably due to the frequent Hungarian–Romany interactions that have been mentioned in previous research as well.

with full secondary (A-level) and higher education also chose the Romany category to describe their national identity.

Declaring Hungarian or Hungarian Romany identity was especially typical among the respondents in a stable employment position (*Table 2*). Although the relationship is not significant, it is typical that declaring Romany identities was more frequent among people who were supporting the Romany communities with their knowledge and skills and who were bidding for educational grants for their children.

Table 2

Proclaiming national identity based on research among Romanies in the last few years (basic distribution), and correlation between employment and nationality in percentages

	Hungarian	Hungarian Romany	Romany	Beás Romany	Other
1993	56.2	18.0	22.0	0.7	2.9
2003	37.8	29.8	26.8	4.5	1.1
2005 (based on the Romany sample of rural Hungary)	11.3	36.6	49.0	2.3	0.8
Maximum of 5 months of employment before becoming unemployed	33.0	28.0	41.0		
6–21 months of employment...	20.0	31.0	28.0		
Two or more years of employment...	47.0	42.0	31.0		

Source: Own survey; Data of G. Havas; I. Kemény and B. Janky. (Havas G. – Kemény I. 1995., Kemény I. – Janky B. 2003.)

The three “major” categories of nationality showed roughly even distribution in the settlements with a population of 50,000 or more. However, in the settlements with less than 10,000 inhabitants a significant ranking of nationalities could be observed: Hungarian Romanies first, then Hungarians and finally Romanies. Related data shows that the married marital status is most typical among those who live in villages and ‘other towns’. There were no significant differences to observe regarding the populations in settlements with town rank, as acceptance of being a Romany was general in settlements both with more and less than 10,000 inhabitants.

Geographical differences can be observed with regards to marital status as well. Married Romanies live primarily in the Great Plain area and Northern Hun-

gary; living together with partner and being single are more typical of Romanies living in the agglomeration of the capital and in the Transdanubia region.

Two thirds of the sample analysed are married; nearly one fifth live with their partners. Two thirds of the middle-aged generation live in marriage; whereas most of the singles belong to the younger generation. Every fourth respondent born after 1975 has a partner. 80% of the widowed belong to the demographic group of people born before 1959.⁸ Every tenth respondent, mainly representing the middle-aged or older generation, has been involved in divorce.

The number of people in the household is usually 4–5, or 3 or less, however, a quarter of the households declare 6 or more people. There are no more than three children in two thirds of the households; there was a child over 14 in every third respondent's households. Every fourth household reported no children, whereas there are four or more children in every fifth household.

Although the survey on the social land programme mentioned earlier (Szoboszlai and colleagues, 2003) indicated that Romany families are much less likely to have no children; the recent study involving Romanies in rural areas revealed that only a tenth of the respondents belonging to the middle-aged or young generations have no children.

1.3 Characteristics of cultural capital

Two thirds of the fathers of the respondents have not finished primary education, and only a third had primary education. Nearly every tenth father completed 9 years or more.

An even bigger proportion of Romany mothers, about three-quarters of them have not finished primary education. One third of them have finished primary education, and 4% have completed more than 9 years of education.

The educational level of the fathers (confirming the results of the land programme survey) is lowest in the Northern Hungary and Great Plain areas. The proportion of fathers with primary education is high in the agglomeration of the capital; however, this area also registers the lowest number of those with 9 years or more of education. Two thirds of the mothers belong to the group that have not finished primary education in the various regions. The proportion of these mothers was slightly higher in the agglomeration of Budapest.

With regards to the number of completed years of education, parents with no or unfinished education and with the maximum of 8 years of education constitute

⁸ In 1992, life expectancy in the whole of the population was 64.6 years for men and 74.7 for women. Romany men lived on average 12.5, women 11.5 years less than that.

a significant difference⁹. Experience shows this is a valid observation for both parents in the Northern Hungary and Great Plain regions (and in the case of mothers in the agglomeration of the capital as well). In the latter mentioned area, fathers change the average, as in their case 1–4 years and 8 years of education constitute the duality.

The past decades' mobility trends in education are reflected in the respondents' achievement in education. Almost half the respondents had completed 8 years, a quarter of them had spent 9 or more years at school. A significant change in the completion of 8 years of primary education can be observed already among the middle-aged generation, but the completion of 9 or more years is most typical of the Romany respondents born after 1975.¹⁰

The proportion of people not having or not finishing education is nearly 30%.¹¹ Analysing declared national identity, we can note that the proportion of those with less than 8 years of education is less among the respondents who declared themselves to be Hungarians or Hungarian Romanies.

Two thirds of the children whose fathers completed 8 years have at least the same level of education, and nearly the same proportion of children achieved this level whose father could not finish primary school for various reasons.

The loss of cultural capital was less prominent among the children of fathers with 9 years or more of education. Intergenerational mobility is demonstrated by the figures that 26% of the children whose fathers completed 8 years, and 33% of the children whose mothers completed the same number of years achieved higher levels of education than their parents.

As far as educational level is concerned, the year 1984 seemed to be of key significance, as the same number of people acquired their highest level of education before and after that year. In the 1990s every fourth, and in the last 5 years every tenth respondent acquired some sort of certificate. 30% each of the respondents in the Great Plain and Transdanubia regions; and 40% each in the agglomeration of the capital and in Northern Hungary indicated that they achieved the highest level of their education in the last 15 years. Besides the important basic skills of the past (reading, counting, writing), knowledge and skills in foreign languages, information technology, healthcare and information in the continuously changing society have become significant during the long decade of changes. Apart from agricultural skills, importance of all the other types of knowledge scored more than 50 points on the 1–100 scale. These generally scored higher

⁹ The observation stands true for county towns as well, whereas in the villages the “undertook no education” category was most significant.

¹⁰ Almost half of the young generation has this kind of education.

¹¹ Most of the people not finishing primary education can be found in the agglomeration of the capital and in towns with a Romany population of less than 10 people.

among the people with higher levels of education and those born after 1975 than among the respondents with 8 years of education or belonging to the older generation.¹²

In today's global-technical world, the importance of being well read (in other words: the competence to understand and use information) scores highest among the Romany respondents¹³. It is obvious though that the high score not only shows an indication of importance and social practice but also hides the exclusion of Romany groups.

Another indicator of exclusion is the net family income level.¹⁴ Analysing the level of average family income and its distribution along the employment career, it can be observed that in the years before and after the change of regime the income level of the group in question was low; roughly a third of the respondents belonged to the less than 50,000 HUF/month family income category. Between 1993 and 1997, the distribution of income indicated a wider range. In this period, a third of the respondents belonged to the less than 60,000 HUF/month family income category.

The average income in the survey today is 82000 HUF, the most often mentioned amount is exactly 100,000 HUF. The number of people with more and less than 75,000 HUF monthly income is the same in the sample.

The income per capita figure offers a clearer picture of the financial background of the Romany population than the family income data. The average is 23,000 HUF per capita. In the case of this indicator, the mode, which is the most frequently occurring income level (20,000 HUF), is the same as the median. To rephrase this, exactly the same number of respondents have more and less than 20,000 HUF (N=822 people).

More than the average income was registered in the case of those respondents who acquired their highest level of education in the past 5 years; live either in towns with more than 10000 or villages with less than 10000 residents, and have at least some sort of qualification. The regions show the spatial inequalities with regards to the conditions the Romanies live in (*Figure 3*).

Going back to some characteristics of education and knowledge, we found that the main objectives of the Romany population surveyed are the acquisition of a driver's licence, a trade or profession and secondary education (A-levels), with a third of all respondents setting these targets (especially those born after 1975, who

¹² In the case of agricultural skills, we gained the opposite results.

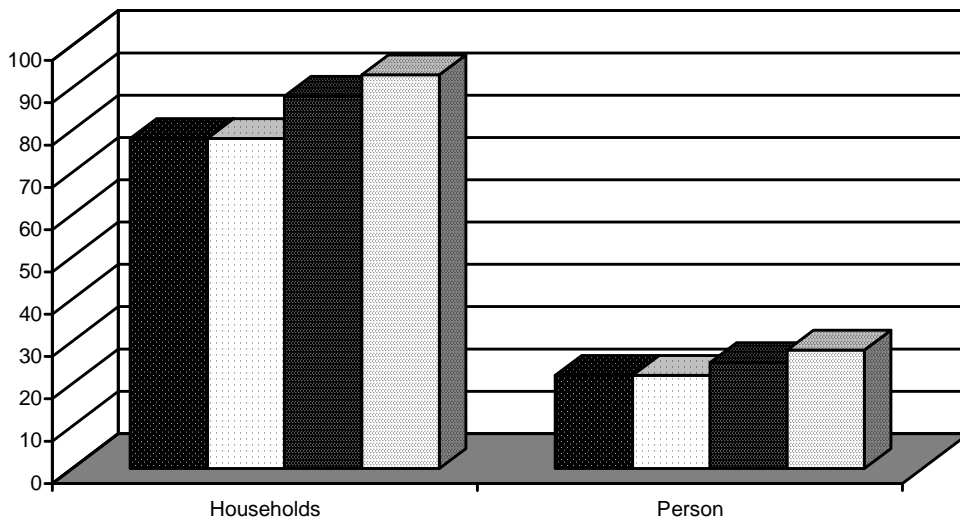
¹³ An average of 73 points on the 1–100 scale.

¹⁴ There are elements besides the money-based income that increase the income level of the families, indicating more wide-spread and productive social politics: for example free meals, child benefit that had to be spent on clothing, potatoes, apples, school meals, food parcels, fruit and vegetables, poultry, clothes, collecting fire wood, mushrooms, harvesting.

are characterised by higher cultural capital). To achieve the above skills the respondents would even be willing to commute. When planning potential educational programmes, one could build on the finding that there are hardly any young (or not so young) Romanies who want to learn traditional Romany trades or professions.

Figure 3

*Average household and per capita income in Romany families
(thousand HUF)*



Source: Own survey.

Every fifth respondent claimed that their children applied for some sort of educational grants. This support mechanism of the education of young Romanies is most known in the Great Plain area. Most of the informants have spent the money gained on what it was for. There are certain measures of assistance that are necessary to acquire the given educational level and realising other educational ambitions. In the current survey we were analysing attendance at after school activities. We found that a third of the Romany children participated in some sort of after school activities in the autumn of 2005 (especially in the eastern region). Judging by the names of the after school activities¹⁵ we can surmise

¹⁵ Choir, ceramics, dance, folk dance, religion, poem reciting, sport, mathematics, majorettes, drawing, first aid, drama, puppet theatre, crafts, German, English, computing, literature, acting, physics, grammar, Lovári (Romany) language.

that Romany children were attending mostly activities with a (folk) artistic profile (drawing, crafts, dance groups).

The majority of the Romany respondents were positive about the future of their children. They were envisaging a possibly long period of orientation and job seeking; but they were positive that the children would find an appropriate job in the end. The informants with secondary or even higher level of education were even more optimistic.

1.3.1 Path models of passing on cultural capital

We believed that it is necessary to assess how the family (the parents) contributes to the educational level of the children (to start on the mobility curve), and how the development of this curve is influenced by other social factors.¹⁶

In our model we examine the impact of the mother's and the father's educational levels; and assuming a patriarchal family model, we also analyse to what extent the father's educational level influenced his decision as to whom he would marry with regards to the woman's educational level.

The proportion of the explained relations is 20% in our sample of Romanies living in rural Hungary. To summarise the results, we found that the father has less influence on the child's educational level than the mother. To be more accurate, the father's influence was stronger among the people born before 1959 and among boys. Among girls, the mother's influence was characterised with a higher proportion and beta coefficient than the average (24%, 0.296; 0.000 sig.). According to the results of the social land programme sample, Romany parents had less influence on their children's educational level and the difference between the mother's and the father's influence was less significant. Among the non-Romany beneficiaries a more pronounced paternal influence was registered then.¹⁷

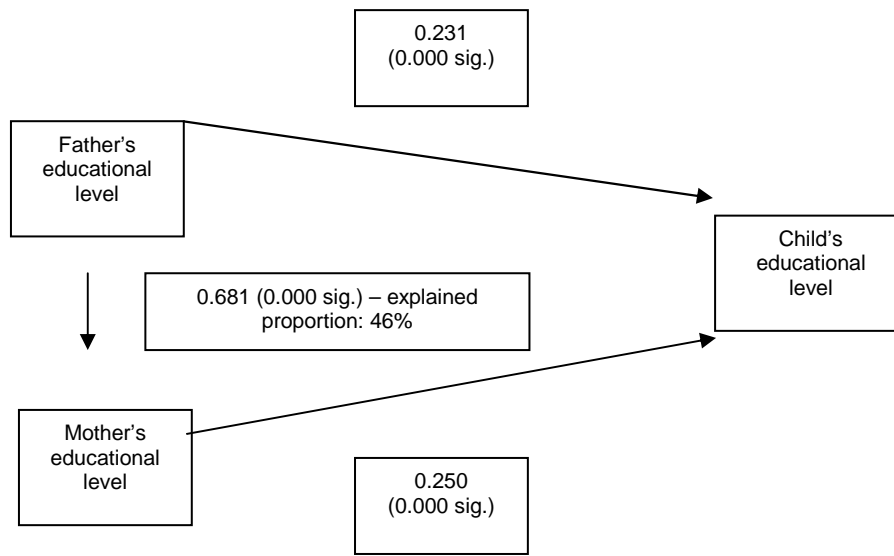
The Romany sample showed that among the family influences, the mother's educational level motivates the child to achieve a higher level of cultural mobility. It seems (*Figure 4*) that the impact of the patriarchal model is diminishing in the

¹⁶ In this chapter, arrows will indicate the direction of the reason and cause relations observed between the variables, while the regressive beta coefficients noted along the arrows will indicate the strength of the relationship. It must also be noted that looking at the links in a general way of thinking, if 20% or more of the relations are explained, that can be regarded as a very good result (*Székelyi-Barna*, 2002:311).

¹⁷ It must be noted that in the social land programme research, the proportion of the explained relation was less than 20% in both cases. Among the Romany beneficiaries the figures were: Mother: 0.175 – 0.000 sig.; Father: 0.179 – 0.000 sig. 10%. Among the non-Romanies: Father: 0.326 – 0.000 sig. 15%.

Figure 4

Path model of school mobility based on the sample of Romanies in rural Hungary



Source: Own survey

Romany population, even though the father's influence was prominent in the earlier generations (especially in Transdanubia and the agglomeration of the capital). In light of this, it makes an interesting observation that the mother's stronger influence on achieving higher levels of education is more pronounced in the classical Transdanubian areas (0.307; 0.000 sig. 21%). In the regions east of Transdanubia, (especially the results from the Northern Hungary region showed this) the father's influence on the child's educational level seemed more important (0.239; 0.000 sig. 18%) (Table 3).

The above data demonstrate that the mother's influence on shaping the "cultural climate" (Blaskó, 1998:61) of the home has become more emphasised among the rural Romany population as well. This influence can be observed in a situation where the mothers are (forced to be) inactive in employment terms, as their exclusion from employment is usually more fundamental than that of Rom-

any men.¹⁸ Therefore the behavioural changes that have started to take place within the family will be “lopsided”. As mothers play a significant role in passing on the most important element of cultural capital, i.e. educational level, they could be the target group that need to be involved in the adaptation of life-long learning among the Romany population (within a complex integration programme).¹⁹

Table 3

Analysis of the path model of school mobility in the various regions

	Beta value		Significance		Explained proportion (R ²)	Influence of the father's educational level on that of the wife*	Explained proportion (R ²)
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother			
Great Plain	0,237	0,242	0,000	0,000	20%	0,677	46%
Northern Hungary	0,267	0,191	0,000	0,003	17%	0,611	37%
Transdanubia	0,176	0,312	0,052	0,001	21%	0,74	55%
Agglomeration of the capital	0,139	0,437	0,264	0,001	30%	0,764	58%

The connection/relation was significant in each case.

Source: Own survey.

¹⁸ The employment level of Romany women has been decreasing due to the dramatic processes of their exclusion from the labour market. While the proportion of women of employment age in employment in the total population was 63.1% in 1994, the same proportion of Romany women was only 17.5% (Havas–Kemény, 1995). The proportion was similar at the time of the survey of 2003. However, the last 10 years have brought changes in the employment level of women, with more opportunities of employment in the capital and less in the villages (these remained the same in towns other than the capital). In 2003, the capital and its agglomeration provided most employment opportunities for women, the proportion of women in employment was 36% here. In the Great Plain and Northern Hungary regions this proportion was between 10–14%, whereas in the eastern parts this figure was only 6% (Kemény–Janky, 2003 quoted in Debrecei, 2004).

¹⁹ At the moment (2005) Romany respondents consider secondary education as the necessary level for their children to be successful. The respondents with a higher level of education suggest that acquiring a degree would ensure establishing a stable future for their children.

1.4 Assessment of life-long learning

The informants from the Transdanubia region and those with a higher level of education find it most important, although the average of the sample also consider the idea of life-long learning as an idea to be supported and further developed (Score of 70 on the 1–100 scale).

The respondents claimed that primarily financial goods, secondarily knowledge and a degree are the most important factors in being successful.

The fact that the question was being thought about is shown in the willingness of two thirds of the respondents to provide their own personal opinion on life-long learning as well. The responses to the open questions organised in seven categories provided us with the following ideas:²⁰

- *Ability to adapt; connection between employment and education* (26%) – we listed here the following types of answers: one needs to adapt to today's world, one needs to learn a lot to be successful, one needs to learn continuously to get a job, learning is important because of the growing demands, it is very important as it is the only way to be successful, ones not learning will not get a job, unemployment makes continuous learning necessary.
- *General – quantitative approach* (5%) – we regarded the following responses as belonging to this group: one needs to learn several professions and trades, one needs to learn a lot to get a job, one needs to learn various things, one needs to be good at a lot of things, and needs to learn a lot to get a good job, one needs to finish various education.
- *General – normative approach* (18%) – the following can be listed here: it is, it would be a good thing but one needs a job as well, the more you learn the better it is, continuous learning is necessary to be successful, the road to social mobility leads through continuous learning, it means getting nearer to a better life, we need to learn so that we develop, a much better and cleverer country, one can learn from everything.
- *Types of responses linked to education* (10%) – typical answers were: it would be good to learn a new and good profession, further education.
- *Answers linked to various stages of life* (14%) – the following responses were put into this category: you can learn even when you are old, learning does not depend on age, you need to keep up with development, one always needs to learn, one needs a chance no learn, no matter what age they are,

²⁰ The closed answers demonstrate clearly that the main problems of the Romany groups revolve around unemployment, low salaries/wages, poverty and subsistence living.

anyone can learn independent from age, if you want a job you need to learn, no matter how old you are, we need to learn as long as we live.

- *General negative approach* (10%) – the following responses were listed here: it is important but not necessary to learn throughout life, further education is not guaranteed, there is no point in life-long learning, it is good and bad at the same time, there is not time for that, it is luxury, it is pointless, not necessary, not worth it.
- *General scepticism – equality approach* (5%) – the following types of answers are grouped here: if somebody gave me the money I would learn throughout my whole life, it is pointless, Romanies are stigmatised, we learn in vain as we are stigmatised, Romanies are stereotyped the same even if we learn as long as we live, we are not successful, because of stigmatisation there is no point in us learning, even if we Romanies learn a life long we still are not as successful as our Hungarian fellows, we could learn but we still would not be successful because we are Romanies, there are still prejudices, whatever we do we always remain Romanies.
- *Others* (2%) – this category lists the answers such as “you learn until you die”.

Important circumstances of the mobility of Romany groups are presented by the information that we gained from the elected local Romany prominent figures. The responses from a recent survey of the Romany minority authorities in Hungary (Szarvák, 2005) suggest that the Romany minority authorities consider education, social care and closing the gap between them and the rest of society as the most important issues of development regarding Romany groups. Besides the above, they also regarded employment, health care and the situation of the youth groups as important. Although on average information society and environmental protection were not listed as important areas, they scored highest among the responses gathered in Transdanubia and Southern Transdanubia.

Other data in the findings regarding modernisation show that the Romany minority authorities supported education mostly in the Central Hungary area. One can therefore assume that the opinion forming Romany leaders of settlements would also make good communication channels for the marketing and realisation of programmes promoting life-long learning.

1.4.1 Supporting factors

In the national sample, the importance of individual autonomy as a reason to achieve higher educational level was especially popular with the young adult and middle-aged respondents (“I wanted to” – average score of 75 on the 1–100 scale). Awareness of growing demand (average of 57 points on the 1–100 scale)

and examples within the family, mother's and father's (average score of 50 on the 1–100 scale) were also typical answers. The latter reasons were prominent in the case of respondents with a higher level of education.

The factors 'communication examples' and chosen profession were less popular. The generation born after 1975 considered the media-factor and friends' example, impact of contemporary groups more important than the other two generations did. The examples seen on television and the influence of friends as well as the awareness of growing demand scored highly in the Transdanubia region and in the agglomeration of the capital.

We used a mathematical procedure, the main component analysis²¹, to summarise the responses to the question. Four distinct characteristics could be determined among the categories (the four components preserved 75% of the data).

The *examples* factor (ranking of variables: my friends' example, because of my teachers, examples seen on television, examples of the family, relatives) as the most important explanatory variable (43%) was supported mostly by respondents born after 1975, declaring Romany identity.

The *living up to individual and family expectations* (order of variables: I wanted to, because of my family) category was the second strongest factor. It was most typical of among the Hungarian Romany, middle-aged or young, more highly educated respondent, and among those living in the eastern region.

The *growing demand* variable remained an independent factor. Especially the respondents who declared themselves Hungarian or Hungarian Romanies, with a certified apprenticeship, living in the Transdanubia region or the agglomeration of the capital preferred this answer.

The '*chosen profession or trade*' was also defined separately in the mathematical-theoretical space. This factor was mostly supported by the informants with a higher level of education; living in the agglomeration of the capital.

The respondents saw the importance of school in the following: good community in the class (average of 67 points on the 1–100 scale); accepting the others, independent opinion forming, perseverance, boosting self confidence, making children like learning and bearing failure (57–51 points on the scale of 1–100). Interestingly, the benefit-approach factor ("we got a job straight after finishing school") seemed less significant in assessing the role of school than the different

²¹ The procedure enables us to select the common component of several variables. A cognitive attitude is emerging from the opinion on a seemingly independent statement, which is behind every answer even if the respondent cannot provide a cognitive answer. The "common feature" may be named after its content. During the analysis, every respondent is given a factor score, which will enable us to characterise the groups of respondents. The ranking within the main components will be shown based on the factor scores of the variables that shape the main components, where the explained variable will also be indicated.

variables relating to personal development. Mostly the informants born before 1959 chose the former variable (of nostalgic nature). The importance of individual opinion forming was stressed primarily by the middle-aged and younger generation. To summarise the related findings, the answers relating to personal development and community shaping were preferred by the respondents who had a higher level of education, lived in settlements with more than 10000 inhabitants, especially in settlements with town rank.

1.4.2 Hindering factors

The results of the social land programme survey highlighted that more than half of the Romanians surveyed indicated hindering factors with regards to learning in 2003. The recent national research produced a similar proportion (55%). Hindering factors were mentioned more often by respondents from the Great Plain area (in the case of the settlements involved in the land programme it was the Transdanubia and Northern Hungary regions) and (middle-aged) people living in villages, proclaiming Hungarian or Hungarian Romany nationality.

Looking at the hindering factors individually two factors are emerging. In the Romany families the hindering factor is usually the lack of money, starting employment at an early age and living in a big family (a lot of siblings). These circumstances were more frequent in the case of the middle-aged and older generations. Spatially the Transdanubia region and the agglomeration of the capital emerge from the rest of the regions, as people living in these areas were more likely to mention the lack of money, starting employment at an early age and living in a big family (a lot of siblings) factors as hindrances to participate in further education. It must be noted the lack of financial capital as a hindering factor was most typical in villages, while people living in towns (county towns) blamed illness most often for not being able to acquire more cultural capital.

The above factors hindered people (similarly to the findings of the survey among the beneficiaries of the land programme, although the proportion in the recent research was 20% higher) in acquiring certified apprenticeship. The above factors hindered 5% of the respondents at an earlier age in achieving primary education, and 9% in acquiring secondary education. The lack of mentioning hindrances of participation in higher education suggests an even more closed nature of mobility channels. Another interesting difference (showing mainly at settlement level); shows that people in villages were more likely to fail achieving vocational education, while finishing secondary school (A-levels) remained a dream for people living in county towns. An almost similar difference seemed to be shaping in the reflection of the generations as well. In the light of this, one could conclude that with regards to mobility, the main aim of the middle-aged Romany

population is the achievement of vocational education, whereas in the case of the younger generation this aim is achieving secondary education (A-levels).

1.5 Attitudes relating to knowledge and skills

Although the general picture shows that the respondents find it important to be a good student (average score of 79 on the 1–100 scale), and to have a job that suits one's ideas (average of 77 points on the 1–100 scale); it seems that there is no positive personal experience behind the views supporting the idea of life-long learning.

In general, the respondents do not think their educational level helped significantly in getting the job they imagined for themselves (average score of 32 points on the 1–100 scale). The tendency shows a more positive picture the higher the educational level the respondents achieved. The score is 62 points among those with certified apprenticeship, and 52 points among the people with secondary or higher level of education, in other words, both groups with higher levels of education supported the idea of level of education influencing the job one might get.

The respondents in general seemed pessimistic with regards to the influence of school on behaviour. They argued that the behavioural patterns typical of the family would not change as a result of experience gained at school (average of 44 points on the 1–100 scale). The results of the research make us wonder about the effectiveness of education on socialisation, as the respondents with higher levels of education gave scores above 50 to the above statement.

The elements of life-long learning relating to character can also be found in the profound forms of knowledge and skills (such as being an electrician, being able to propose a toast at festive occasions, telling jokes, knowing traditional crafts, etc.), which are closer to the Romany society. The respondents when presented with a list of 24 activities, related to the following most often: cooking, pickling, haggling at the market, gardening, cultivating the field, bricklaying, sewing, painting and decorating, dealing with official (bureaucratic) issues, being able to propose toasts, telling amusing stories, shopping for presents and being able to read timetables (average scores of 50–87 on the 1–100 scale). However, the younger respondents (14–18 year-old children) were not familiar with any of the skills, as shown by giving no more than 50 points to them. A change of paradigm between adults and their children is depicted in the children being better at using computers and the Internet and also foreign languages.

Besides globalisation, the growing awareness of the necessity to know modern skills is shown by the figure relating to knowing old Romany traditions: it scored considerably low even among the adult respondents (average of 22 points on the 1–100 scale).

Passing on knowledge and skills from parents to children seems to work less effectively in today's world. In the past, parents and grandparents (81%) passed on knowledge to children almost exclusively. Every fourth or fifth respondent mentioned the role of siblings, workplace and school. The effectiveness of self-education ("learned it from books") and visiting cultural centres was considered fairly low. The spreading of the mostly traditional knowledge and skills surveyed may be assisted by the finding that the respondents help both the macro-environment of the settlement (47%) and the Romany community (50%) with those skills and knowledge.

The respondents with vocational and secondary or higher education considered the traditional and modern skills as useful for the Romany people in their everyday life (average of 60 points on the 1–100 scale).

1.6 Cultural and information-communicational background

In the social relationships of the Romany ethnic group people and personal contacts (such as talking to the neighbours or visiting relatives) are dominant (average scores of 89 and 76 points of the scale of 1–100). The institutionalised network of relationships seemed to have only minor impacts (average scores of 24–36 points on the scale of 1–100). Our respondents seemed willing to leave their homes to go to a ball or other festivity, or maybe to go to the culture centre (or on even rarer occasions going to the library). Our survey of 2005 showed the cultural exclusion of the Romany population (this is similar to the findings of the social land programme survey), although the younger generation or the people with vocational or higher education are more likely to participate in an event that serves community education purposes. It proves difficult to find a path to Romany groups, as the institutions of "high" culture (hardly any of the respondents ever go to the theatre) and often even those of mass culture (cinemas, pop concerts, etc.) appear to be closed for them.

Considering the above, it is worthwhile reminding the reader of a classic political paradigm. Lazarsfeld and his research team analysed the American presidential election campaign of 1940, and they found that the decisions people made during the elections were mostly influenced by the opinion forming people in their microenvironment. In the light of this observation, we consider it important to support the opinion forming Romany personalities during the process of raising awareness of the programmes and the importance of life-long learning. The above hypotheses, borrowed from political sociology, is also proven by the facts that the Romany people emphasise the responsibility of the family and the relatives in spreading the idea of life-long learning; "official" institutions (such as job centres,

Romany minority authority, civil organisations or the state) are mentioned only in second place.

Mobile phones and video or DVD players are the most common communication equipment in the Romany households. More than half of the families possess the above technical equipment. Hardly a tenth of the respondents claimed to have a landline. The use and importance of landlines is diminishing in the Romany households as well, and the proportion of people possessing a mobile phone is growing²². (In 2002, six tenths of the beneficiaries of the social land programme did not have a landline). However, the spread of mobile phones is not as rapid in the Northern Hungary region, the proportion of families possessing mobile phones remained relatively low (similarly to the results in 2002).

A significant development has taken place since 2003 in the spreading of informational equipment. 10% of the Romany respondents claimed to have used a computer, but the use of the Internet is still scarce. While in the spring of 2003 3% of all the rural Romany households had a computer and 1% had Internet at home²³, today 11% of the households are equipped with a computer and 3% have Internet at home.

In the reflection of the above tendencies, it is hardly surprising that the Romany youth would spend almost 3 hours a day in front of the television, 30 minutes watching a video, no more than 20 minutes reading, and 3 minutes on average sitting by the computer. The older generation prefers to watch television, the young ones (especially the ones with a maximum of 8 years of education) would rather watch a DVD or a video. As expected, the respondents with secondary or higher education were more likely to use a computer. People living in medium-sized town were more likely to read books, while people living in the agglomeration of the capital visited video libraries most often as on average they spend more time with watching a video or a DVD.

As far as reading was concerned, the respondents claimed to have read 3 books each on average last year. At the time of the survey hardly 10% of the informants were reading a book. The family libraries contained an average of 22 books²⁴. People living in the Transdanubian area and in towns were regarded as more frequent readers (a finding similar to the ones of the land programme survey).

Respondents of the middle-aged generation, with a higher level of education, living mainly in medium-sized town other than in Northern Hungary, proclaiming Hungarian or Hungarian Romany identity were most likely to have a computer at

²² Two thirds of the people involved in the land programme research three years ago (Szoboszlai and colleagues) did not have a mobile phone.

²³ 3% of the Romany and 9% of the non-Romany beneficiaries of the land programme had a computer at home.

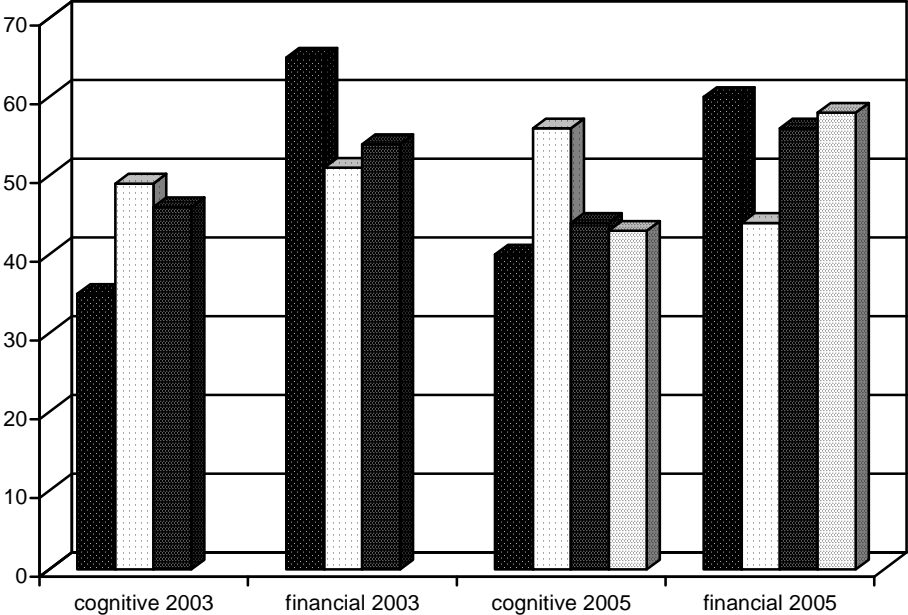
²⁴ This figure is twice as much in the case of respondents with secondary or higher education.

home. The social characteristics of digital segmentation are more prominent as far as the Internet is concerned: respondents with a secondary or higher education, living in urban settlement were more likely to have Internet access.

Those in possession of a computer bought it primarily with the aim of playing games and having fun, although helping their children with school assignments was also mentioned among the reasons. Those who had no computer at home usually blamed the high price for not having bought one. Every fifth respondent showed no interest in computers, whereas every seventh argued that they would not be able to use a computer therefore it was considered pointless to spend money on it. Similar reasons were listed when asked about why they were not using the Internet (*Figure5*).

Figure 5

*Reasons for not having Internet access at home (%)**



* Cognitive variable: summary of the not interested, afraid of technology, cannot use it categories.
 Source: Own survey.

About half of the respondent involved in the research would not be able to enter the new ways of employment as they are not able to use the computer, the almost indispensable equipment of remote working (this figure was as high as two thirds in 2003). About a third of the respondents feel themselves capable of learning to use a computer. Every tenth respondent suggested that they would prefer to work with a computer in a (work) community environment; some of them already used computers on a daily basis. About half the informants (mainly from the Great Plain and Transdanubia regions) believe that there would be demand for remote or distant working type arrangements in their settlement as well.

We would argue that in spite of certain growth trends, the conclusion can be drawn that the social-educational and cultural exclusion of the Romany ethnic groups works also against the spread of information culture (and with that the developing of interest in and the practice of life-long learning). This will also widen the gap (which could be measured in traditional and digital inequalities) between the macro-society and the largest ethnic group in Hungary.²⁵

1.7 Employment issues

Although the problems in relation to employment have been mentioned in every chapter providing empirical analysis with regards to the link between education, knowledge and employment, the question is important enough to discuss it separately from the social point of view (Romany – non-Romany) as well.²⁶

During the time of data collection in 2005, a third of the people involved were in employment. Those without employment were typically on maternity leave (21%), retired early for health reasons (11%) or were unemployed (20%). As a quarter of the spouses/partners were employed in the autumn of 2005, the one income per family households were rather common. Nearly 30% were at home with the child (children), about 10% were unemployed, another 10% were retired for health reasons, the rest were primarily housewives or on sick leave.

Among the problems of employment 8 factors (mainly the categories related to individual risk taking) scored more than 50 points. The respondents were mainly worried about stigmatisation; and about (not) being able to assimilate due to the fear of low levels of knowledge. The job's temporary nature, uncertainty, black

²⁵ According to a research in May 2005 as part of the Hungarian Info-Communicational Report, produced yearly by Bell Research, 18% of all the households (3.9 million), 680 000 homes have Internet access. This is roughly 48% of the 1.4 million households equipped with a PC, which makes the Internet accessible from every second home with a computer. <http://ictreport.hu/cikk.php?c=66>

²⁶ The following chapters on the concepts of hope will provide an analysis of unemployment.

working, health and chances of promotion were also mentioned as important factors. The most frequent problem factor the respondents identified involved knowledge and skills, temporary nature and black working. We believed that the respondents related these problems to those of non-Romany people in a similar social status, therefore the instability and unpredictability of the typical employment sectors need to be highlighted as well.

1.7.1 Mobility paths regarding employment

More than a quarter of the people involved entered the labour market before 1979, and a fifth of them entered in the last decade of socialism. More than a tenth of the respondents started working in the decade after the changes, while about a quarter of the informants received their first official salary (wages) in the first year of the new decade. A tenth of them never had a “proper” job or always lived on temporary jobs.

The summary of the social facts about employment need to be mentioned because besides the family, the environment, the peer group and the school, it is the world of employment that plays a key role in a person’s socialisation. The employment role constitutes an important part of personal identity. It bears special relevance in the case of the (in several aspects) deprived layers of society, as the place of work offers them a continuous space where they can enrich their lives with learning and accepting various innovation strategies (*Szarvák, 2001*).

The mobility paths observed in the four periods (1986–1992, 1993–1997, 1998–2002, 2003–2005) show an interesting pattern. With the help of these we can easily follow how the social-economical changes interrupted the process of mobility of the Romany population.

The number of Romanies in employment was periodically constant in the given roughly 5-year periods. Another characteristic observed indicates that the Romany employees were forced out of the capital and the county towns, and also from other work places that were not based in their settlement of residence; therefore their place of work was more and more typically narrowed down to the settlement where they lived (mainly villages and rural urban areas).

The position of the rural Romany people in the labour market has been restructured in the observed period. The restructuring took place in a few years, which came as a shock first; then it seemed to be a continuous process, which took about ten years. At the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s about a quarter of those in employment worked in the manufacturing industrial sector, while about 10% of the respondents worked in agriculture or the construction industry. The proportion of the people working in the service sector, commerce or public administration is low in the sample. One and a half decades later,

i.e. today, the picture is different (with the employment level still low): every tenth Romany employee can keep or get a job or in the manufacturing industrial and agricultural sectors; and the proportion of people working in the third sector is becoming stable (nearly 15%).

The change in ownership was typical in the case of the work places (companies) of the Romany employees as well. At the beginning of the observed period, two thirds of the workplaces were state-owned, only a quarter of them were in private hands. Between 1993 and 1997 this proportion was roughly half and half; around the turn of the millennium, half of the Romany employees worked for private companies and a fifth of them worked for state-owned companies and institutions. The situation shows yet a different picture today, with more Romanies being employed by municipal institutions and companies run by local authorities.

1.8 Summary

Based on the findings of previous research among the Romany groups in Hungary, in our research into the sociological background of life-long learning among Romanies we made the assumptions that the majority of the respondents had a low level of education; were deprived compared to other layers of society due to their ethnic, family or local situations, in other words because of their cultural backgrounds they were starting from a handicapped position.

We also presumed that most of the Romanies would be left without a job because of their low levels of education, or they would get employed (typically as unskilled or skilled workers) in sectors that have a low status in society. Due to the lack of skills it can be predicted that the choice of the first job would be influenced by necessity, and also that unemployment would be a frequent problem among those surveyed. As a result of this, this layer will be primarily concerned with keeping their jobs, so the chances of promotion do not occur to them at all. For them the main question at stake is ensuring a living.

The process described is referred to as the social or poverty trap as an umbrella term. We were therefore looking for the automatic mechanisms that enable or hinder the achievement of the integration objectives. Among the observed mechanisms, the following can be highlighted: educational level, family size, employment mobility, income levels, social roles, household models, job seeking strategies and the opportunities for adapting knowledge. These are the categories where the Romany ethnic groups had disadvantages during socialisation and their individual lives, and where they were left behind from the social-economic mainstream.

Out of the types of capital identified by Pierre Bourdieu the culturally influenced educational level is the one that plays an important role in the forming of

and tackling of social differences. Education and knowledge may offer the Romany population in rural Hungary the safety that could help them in establishing stability. Higher educational level and higher levels of knowledge and skills are regarded as the automatic social mechanisms that enable us to adopt adaptive and innovative behavioural patterns.

However, the socialisation processes, which have a major influence in the world of employment, work against stability, as according to the findings of our research, Romany employees are most worried about and afraid of being made redundant (again), discrimination and being employed at companies and institutions that are in uncertain situations.

It became apparent that the key categories of change (knowledge, performance and work) are only being (re) born. In our experience, the values and norms that would enable people to join the economic-social modernisation processes of the 21st century are not present in the majority of the sample. The following factors might become the tools to make the above values and norms part of the character: basic education and re-training; enhancing the effectiveness of employment and adult educational programmes; finding the opinion forming people (Romany mothers, ethnic minority authorities, young people with exceptional skills, people with higher levels of education); establishing pedagogical programmes aimed at personal and community development; and a more effective use of the opportunities presented by the information society.

2. Changes in the mental attitude of the long-term unemployed Romanies excluded from the labour market after the change of regime

Within the frames of the research we set out to conduct structured interviews and a national questionnaire survey to reveal the changes in attitude regarding employment among the long-term unemployed Romany groups, with special attention being focussed on to the shaping of the *feeling of hopelessness* (as one of the internal resources reacting to social circumstances). Before discussing the findings of the empirical research, it is worth summarising the major changes in the employment situation of the Romanies in Hungary that have taken place since 1990.

2.1 The shock of the change of regime, masses of Romanies becoming unemployed after 1990

Two major changes took place in the 20th century that had a deep impact on the everyday life, living conditions and employment situation of the Romany people in Hungary. The time spans of the two radical changes were completely different though.

The disintegration of the traditional Romany communities took place in the first half of the last century, as a result of the political processes, which then also led to the marginalisation of traditional Romany crafts among the activities that could ensure a living. However, “this was the result of a slow evolution process, to which the Romanies were more or less able to adapt” (Kertesi, 2005). Compared to this process, masses of Romanies loosing employment after the change of regime came as a shock, as within a very short period of time the majority of the active Romanies became unemployed in Hungary.²⁷ The results of the modernisation processes (especially the ones related to employment and education), that started in the 1960s disappeared in no time. Compared to the almost full employment of the socialist era, in the Hungary of the 21st century, less than 40% of the Romany men (heads of households) aged 20–40, not in education, and about 30% of the same age women have a job (Kertesi, 2005).

²⁷ By 1993, half of the Romanies who had a job before the change of regime became unemployed.

The biggest problem of the Hungarian Romanies without permanent employment lies in the uncertainty of their living, as their income always depends on somebody else.²⁸

Furthermore, the feeling of being dependent on social institutions may also be mentally disturbing, and Romanies are looked down on even in the local community because of the low profile jobs that they may be doing.

The above problems make the Romany families with high numbers of children even more deprived, where having several unemployed adults in the family will almost certainly have a demoralising effect on the children. The long-term unemployment of the head of the family constitutes the biggest danger, as it enhances the risk of the social exclusion of the family on the long run.

The mass unemployment among Romanies and the crisis of the labour market after the change of regime was also detrimental from that point of view that “it started to make the chances impossible even for the Romanies who got furthest in the mobility process” (*Kertesi*, 2005). The Romanies belonging to this layer are the skilled workers who acquired their certificates in vocations that were being run down by the beginning of the 1990s. The children of a once skilled worker will not see a positive perspective in vocational education any more, which will further widen the gap between the educational level of Romany and non-Romany people; that might result in further unemployment.

Another factor that has not been dealt with yet that has influenced the employment of Romanies since the changes is discrimination. This usually does not arise from the prejudices employers would hold personally (although this is the general view), but from the use of employment filters that are based on the ethnic origin of the applicants (*Kertesi*, 2005). At the core of this, employers make the assumption that the chances of finding the right people for a job among the Romanies are much lower. The selection process will then become cheaper as they do not have to apply expensive filtering methods. Obviously, this procedure carries the risk of making major mistakes, but is completely unacceptable in the 21st century.

Another circumstance that makes employment and returning to the world of labour difficult for the Romanies is characterised by the fact that the employment structures have changed dramatically since the mid-1990s,²⁹ which is particularly disadvantageous for the active Romany population with low educational levels.

The characteristics of the real employment situation of the Romany population are difficult to reveal, as “there were no representative surveys on the situation of

²⁸ It can depend on the staff at the local council who are responsible for social aid, or on a business owner or manager also with an unstable background, who employs Romanies illegally, etc.

²⁹ The pace of the economic crisis that the regime change brought along started to slow down then.

the Romany ethnic groups between 1994 and 2003” (*Kertesi, 2005*). The research led by István Kemény in 2003 was the first step forward; the results showed that the situation that was characteristic of the beginning of the 1990s had not changed significantly. The employment level remained very low, also among the younger Romany generations. Unfortunately, the employment level of the 20-30 year-old Romanies has got even lower compared to the figures in the early 1990s. One can draw the conclusion that the changes in employment since the regime change have adversely affected every generation of the Romany ethnic group.

The facts that the jobs the Romanies have are unstable, and that very often they fill in positions that can easily be substituted with somebody else have an impact on their living conditions and well being. In several cases, the economic position of their employers is just as unstable. Another reason for their instability lies in the temporary nature of the state welfare programmes (such as public service, community development projects, etc.), these provide income only for some months of the year. Romanies find it more difficult to be successful in the world of labour as the proportion of people losing their jobs is much higher among them than in society overall³⁰.

In summary, it can be stated that the employment level of Romanies (30%) is much lower than that of the non-Romany population, as nearly twice as many of them are employed than Romanies. The jobs Romanies most often have are three times as unstable as the similar jobs done by non-Romany people.

After having discussed the situation in the macro-environment, it is worth assessing the changes in attitude (as a result of the above mentioned processes) at the personal level, i.e. at the level of the long-term unemployed Romany person.

2.2 Consequences of becoming unemployed

Losing a job comes as a shock for every employee, regardless of gender, educational level or age. In terms of unemployment, these factors will show a different picture in the different cases. However, the fact that someone has lost their job will make them feel they have lost a part of their personality or identity as well (*Kertesi, 2005*). Where does this feeling come from?

Primarily, it arises from the negative consequences that are associated with job loss, such as loss or lower amounts of regular income, poverty and subsistence living (*Székely, 2005*). The feeling of being useless and the uncertainty of the future may be added to the above factors.

³⁰ On average 25–30% of people in employment in a given year will be unemployed a year later (*Kertesi, 2005*).

The work place is not identified only with the source of income, but it also provides the framework for a daily routine, it determines social relationships outside those in the family and it has an impact on the person's objectives as well. Unemployment will erode all these, which may in turn result in the disappearance of the individual's relationship capital.

These processes may lead (especially in the case of long-term unemployment) to the unemployed questioning themselves, which in extreme cases will result in a dramatic change in self-estimation.

As a result of continuous stress, health-related problems might also occur among the long-term unemployed people. This condition will diminish the physical ability to work, which makes returning to work even more difficult.

The worsened mental and physical conditions will inevitably have an impact on the individual's wider environment, especially on the family. In the majority of the cases this will lead to family conflicts, and often to divorces.

How the various individuals can cope with the situation depends primarily on the internal resources they can mobilise. These resources are usually the "contingency elements" that can be mobilised either in the individual or their environment. Coping with long-term (more than a year is the standard definition used by the Hungarian National Statistical Office) unemployment seems a difficult task even if the individual had plenty of resources at the time of being made redundant. However, this is usually not the case, as the prolonged period of unemployment is characteristic mainly among those who are deprived in other aspects anyway. This condition can erode the already scarce resources within a short period of time (Székely, 2005).

2.3 Romanies in long-term unemployment

We did not aim to uncover all aspects of long-term unemployment during the structured interviews conducted for the current research; the questions were mainly focussed on what forms the feeling of hopelessness is apparent in the everyday lives of the respondents. The responses were analysed along the following dimensions:

- In what mental state were the respondents who were long-term unemployed? (desperation-anger-loneliness-hopelessness-acceptance-optimism);
- How their social relationships were changing;
- Changes in their health;
- Resources at their disposal;
- Consequences of long-term unemployment;
- Discrimination in the world of labour;

- Modes of temporary living during unemployment;
- Ideas on how to start again;
- Suggestions to the people responsible for employment policies.

Different individuals will react with different feelings to the facts of becoming unemployed, and there are differences among people in terms of how long it takes them to change from one emotional state to the next (maybe completely different) mood.

The majority of the long-term unemployed respondents were resigned to accept what had happened to them, and were aiming to mobilise their somewhat eroded resources to ensure a living for the family. A common theme of the interviews was the fact that almost all the respondents felt their situation hopeless to some extent, but nobody had given up hope completely.

One of the informants provided an interesting definition of hopelessness: “this is the feeling when the things important for someone cease to exist, and cannot be replaced by anything”. The main sources of the feeling of hopelessness were the following:

- Radical negative change in financial situation,
- Having good professional or trade skills but not being able to find a job,
- Ethnic origin
- Age³¹.

There were significant differences as to when the feeling described above crept upon the respondents. One respondent claimed to have been overcome by the feeling of hopelessness only after several years, while another considered his situation hopeless after only a few weeks of unemployment. The most astonishing answer came from the respondent who had considered his situation hopeless throughout his life due to his ethnic origin. The questions produced some responses with philosophical depth: “hopelessness means nothing and everything to me at the same time”.

As an epilogue to the area, let us quote one of the most interesting answers with a moral: “immaturity of society makes me feel hopeless”.

³¹ The older you are the less chance you have to find a job.

2.3.1 Role of social relationships

Family relations, and in a wider sense relationships with relatives and friends play a significant role in coping with feeling of hopelessness. The interpersonal relationships played a dual role in the case of the respondents. On the one hand, the family and the declining conditions / situation of the family constitute the main source for feeling hopeless, on the other hand they are the key motivators to survive and seek active solutions. Most of the respondents suggested that the existence of the family was their main concern. Another major concern quoted by all the respondents referred to hoping to avoid their children being deprived because of their unemployment. The respondents often felt guilty about having aggressive reactions towards their family as a result of the stress of hopelessness.

Unfortunately, in a lot of the cases the state before unemployment cannot be preserved despite all their efforts, therefore “family life starts to go downhill”. One of the respondents suggested: “soon we’ll only just whinge, like dogs”.

2.3.2 Impacts of long-term unemployment on health

As it has been referred to before, the continuous stress due to long-term unemployment may have negative health impacts. Several of the respondents mentioned problems of this kind, insomnia and nervousness were mentioned most often. Several of the informants suffered from health problems that were not mentioned by name, which we could assume because they referred to access to medicine as a major problem due to their financial situation.

Some of the respondents told us that despite their growing psychological problems they were not taking any tranquillisers, and getting drunk as a way of easing stress was mentioned only by two respondents.

2.3.3 Resources available for survival

Educational level is one of the major factors for getting out of long-term unemployment. About a third of the Romany unemployed people interviewed had vocational education in a trade or profession that is still in demand in the labour market, whereas the majority had only primary education, which is typical of the majority of the Hungarian Romany population. Our respondents with vocational education belong to the group that were mentioned in the introductory chapter in relation to Gábor Kertesi’s research. It is apparent that this group finds it most difficult to cope with long-term unemployment, as they cannot understand why they cannot find a job despite having the necessary qualifications. People with

only primary education take it almost for granted that they “would always only have low-profile jobs”.

People seeking a job can count on help from relatives or friends only in getting temporary jobs; they do not have relationship capital of a similar kind that would enable them to be successful in the legal labour market. They can rely on the parents’ help to ease their financial situation only for a short period of time. Most of the respondents claimed their children provided them with the strength to look for a fresh start.

There are some factors that people with a permanent job and a certain style of living find ridiculous that present obstacles to job seekers due to worsening financial conditions. It was mentioned several times that the respondents did not have the money to post a reply letter, to have their picture taken or to purchase decent clothes that they could wear for an interview, or at an important school, work, etc. occasion. Although it did not get mentioned during the current research, the lack of the necessary CV also constitutes a problem in the process of job seeking.

2.3.4 Consequences of long-term unemployment

The responses of the interviewees typically listed the problems that were already known from previous research, and that we have also discussed in previous chapters. Minor difficulties were characteristic of the first period after becoming unemployed, but later they started to accumulate utility bills (especially in families without any external help). Complete poverty and social exclusion did not occur in any of the interviewed families.

2.3.5 Discrimination

The responses we gained in this area depict the seriousness of the situation. Our interviewees reinforced the fact that constant discrimination is primarily to be blamed for their deprived position in the labour market. The respondents did not only mention their experience of discrimination from the employers’ part when applying for a job, but also their experience with people at job centres and other social institutions who clearly showed a prejudiced attitude. One of the informants described his experience with the local council in the following way: “They were dealing with me as if I had leprosy.” According to another respondent’s opinion: “We find walls everywhere because we are ‘tanned’”.

The respondents very often claimed that when talking to people in offices they had the feeling the people behind the desks showed no signs of human emotions and were doing their job like machines. “Being ignored” resulted in problems in

people's self-estimation as they felt "I am a lesser person than others, I am not good for anything; nobody wants a Romany". The informants suggested the root of the problem is that people keep generalising in relation to Romanies, and anybody can fall a victim of this regardless of their achievements. However, they also claimed that non-Romany unemployed people might be treated the same way in the various institutions of the welfare system.

2.3.6 Ways of ensuring a living used during the period of unemployment

It is a well-known fact that the benefits from the state that a long-term unemployed gets are not sufficient to provide a living for the family, therefore finding additional resources is crucial. As a consequence, finding the money for everyday living puts participating in integration programmes (such as re-training), that would enable them to return to the primary labour market into the background. Another reason that holds people back from participating in such programmes is that the majority do not believe in the efficiency of such methods (yet or any more, or at all). National research measuring efficiency also reinforces the negative experience that the respondents shared with us. The informants who were re-trained said they could not get a job even after the re-training course. They mentioned the motif that was discussed before again that "even those do not get a job who have a trade or a profession, so why bother with re-training".

What remains for these people is jobs in the black economy that they hear about from people in similar situations, and the other typical survival strategies such as searching through litter bins, collecting herbs and medicinal plants, illegal fishing, etc. Another typical solution (especially among those who are way behind with utility payments) is for the extended family or several families to move in with each other particularly in the winter months, so that they can minimise their costs.

2.3.7 Ideas with regards to a fresh start

Although the previous section may suggest that most of the respondents have already given up hope of ever being employed in the primary labour market again, and accepted the life associated with long-term unemployment, some of the interviews suggest that the situation is not as bad as that.

Several informants claimed to have continuously been creating strategies for a fresh start; some of them even want to set up their own businesses. Professionals argue that the work force in Hungary is not mobile enough. Nevertheless, most of our interviewees would be willing to commute to get employed again.

All the respondents claimed that they would like to manage by getting a job.

2.3.8 Policy-type suggestions offered by the respondents

The suggestions that the respondents made prove they have plenty of experience and see the issues clearly. The Romany respondents listed the following suggestions:

- More activities designed for small groups within the programmes and training sessions organised by job centres;
- More human and tailored assistance;
- Offering re-training programmes after which the participants will actually be offered a job;
- Differentiation in the benefits system;
- More support for the employers of Romany workforce;
- More television programmes on the Hungarian Romanies showing the positive examples;
- Offering training in more practical skills on how to search for a job (writing a CV, appearance, behaviour, etc.);
- “More trust in Romany people”

2.4 Results of the questionnaire survey on the “concept of hope”

A questionnaire survey involving 11 questions was designed to assess the different aspects of unemployment, with special regards to the dichotomy of hope and hopelessness.

Slightly less than half of the respondents in the sample (44.3%) have already experienced unemployment. Looking at the categories of settlements it shows that most of these people live in villages. Those who have already been unemployed mainly declared themselves Romanies. Unfortunately most people with the experience of unemployment belong to the most active generation (born between 1960 and 1974).³²

In a similar way to the results of previous research, our survey also shows that people with 8 years or less of primary education are most affected by the problem. Most of the respondents became unemployed at the end of the 1990s and around the turn of the millennium for the first time, although in the villages we came across respondents who lost their job in the middle of the deepest crisis, i.e. between 1990 and 1994.

³² Presumably most of them are also the head of their families.

Most of them fortunately have been made redundant only once in their lives, so repeated job loss (mentioned in the introduction) was less typical within the sample. Respondents from the Southern Transdanubia region indicated the longest period of unemployment (30 months). Analysing the time span of the longest term of unemployment in the reflection of settlement categories, we can conclude that people living in smaller villages are in the most difficult situation. People here were unemployed typically for a period of 7–18 months.

Who the individuals can expect help from in regard to job seeking seems to be significant for finding the way out of unemployment. It was surprising to find that most of the respondents did not have anybody that they hoped would or could support them. The people who said yes to this question named mostly job centres as possible sources of assistance. Family, relatives in a wider sense, friends and acquaintances followed that. Only a few of the responses referred to the local authority. Only a minor number of respondents mentioned newspaper advertisements seeking labour as a form of individual job searching strategy. The picture we gained from the survey presumably does not reflect incredibly bad family relations or a lack of interpersonal relations, but refers to the facts that the environment in both the narrow and the wider sense lacks the resources of relationship capital that would enable them to help people in need.³³

Looking at the question in relation to gender, we can see that men are more likely to expect external help in such situations. The results show that the older the person involved, the less help from family or friends they get, as the potential support network, the peer group and close relatives are likely to be passive themselves. Analysing the issue in relation to age, it becomes apparent that the support system – both job centres and local authorities – target the middle-aged generation, therefore the younger and older ones (obviously for different reasons) are less likely to receive help and become involved in the various programmes.

Another important issue relevant to unemployment is how long people spent in their last job before being made redundant. Most of the respondents worked for two years or more, but slightly more than third of the sample (34.7%) was in employment for only 5 months or less. We attempted to discover regional differences as well, and the findings show that the period of employment before losing a job was significantly shorter in the most deprived areas (Northern Hungary, Northern Great Plain and Southern Transdanubia) than in the more developed areas. Analysing the question from the point of view of settlement size we found that people in villages are in the most disadvantageous situation, just like in other situations of equality.

³³ It can be assumed that most of them live in similar conditions.

An important issue in relation to long-term unemployment is how people attempt to replace the lost income. The data from the survey show that analysing the question along any of the variables (age, region, and settlement size) the dominant answer is always temporary jobs (52%). This is followed by participation in community programmes (14.2%). Participation in re-training was hardly mentioned; part-time jobs and public service were mentioned only in a few cases. Nearly a fifth of the respondents did not indicate any activities at all. Assessing the issue by settlement size, we found that primarily people in villages and smaller towns take on temporary jobs. Participation in community development projects is most typical in similar settlements. People with a declared Romany identity participate in public service more often than their non-Romany peers do. Looking at gender we found that men are more likely to take on temporary jobs during their unemployment than women are.³⁴

The analysis of the interviews and the answers to the previous questions lead us to the conclusion that the long-term unemployed people do not have a positive opinion about re-training programmes. When asked the question whether they got a job after re-training, the majority said no (54.4%); a sixth got a job a few months later; the remaining proportion claimed they got a job within a short period of time. However, the proportion of the latter group is low in relation to the whole of the sample. Another interesting question in relation to re-training is to what extent can such programmes reach the unemployed population in the different settlements. The analysis of the data suggests that the smaller the settlement the less likely these programmes are to reach the jobless people, and chances of employment also diminish as we go down the hierarchy of settlements.

As referred to in the introduction, hopelessness varies from person to person (depending primarily on mental attitude) and how long after losing a job people start to feel their situation completely hopeless, especially with regards to the chances of getting back to primary employment also varies. 71% of the people who have experienced unemployment were familiar with the feeling of complete hopelessness. A third of the respondents were overcome by this feeling technically immediately after being made redundant; 40% of them started to feel hopeless after a few months; and the remaining proportion (nearly 20%) claimed it took a long time before they were overcome by the gloom of hopelessness only after a very long time or not at all. As far as gender is concerned, women are more likely to feel hopeless and they are receiving less support to cope with the problem.³⁵

³⁴ Women withdraw to running the household and looking after the family in such cases.

³⁵ This is probably the result of the fact that in most families it is usually the woman's task to look after the physical and mental wellbeing of the family members, while they receive less attention.

A key issue in coping with the feeling of hopelessness is what sort of resources are available for the unemployed person in question, or whether he or she is left on their own with this mental burden. 40% of the sample provided an answer to this question, and within that 70% said they had to deal with it on their own. Looking at the regional differences, the findings are astonishing: people living in the most developed Central area and in the most deprived Northern Hungary had least help and mental support. The reasons may obviously be different in the two regions; in the first case lack of interest may be typical of larger cities, with higher levels of isolation and weaker social links may provide the answer; in the case of the other region the mass occurrence of people with a similar problem may be in the background.

A third of the respondents mentioned some sort of help in coping with the problem, in about 90% of the cases it was the family or within that a particular family member³⁶ who provided support; in the rest of the cases it was a friend, less often the job centre or staff at the local council that offered help.

In the case of the long-term unemployed people who are in the mental state of hopelessness, especially people who have been without a job for a considerable length of time, the critical issue is whether they will be able to restart at all. Have they got any self-confidence left for the time when they get employed again?

The majority of the respondents (84%) are not afraid of starting regular legal employment again. As far as ethnic identity is concerned, the Romanies are more worried about restarting than the non-Romanies are. Comparing the attitude of the two genders, women seem to be more anxious about the period when they start work again. (The reasons in this case may be similar to the ones discussed in the context of the feeling of hopelessness.) Analysing the difference between the age groups, we found that the middle-aged generation has most doubts, exactly the people who should be the most ambitious in the labour market. The responses of the current research prove Gábor Kertesi's characterisation of this generation as "broken and disorientated".

Finally we arrived at the question that aims to reveal what the Romany and non-Romany respondents consider as the major problems of employment in Hungary. Respondents were presented with 11 options. As there were no significant differences found between the Romany and the non-Romany points of view, the issue is not going to be dealt with in detail along this dimension.

The informants identified the lack of skills of the necessary level and the lack of knowledge as the key problems. Another factor mentioned frequently was dis-

According to some research, this is why various forms of deviance (such as alcoholism) are becoming more widespread among women.

³⁶ In most cases the wife or parent, less often the partner and husband provide support.

crimination, which constitutes an even bigger problem in being successful in the labour market for the Romany people than for their non-Romany peers. The third most often mentioned problem was assimilation, which seems to contradict the responses given to the question whether they were afraid of a new start or not. The same three factors came out as most important in all the regions, although the order varied in the different regions. Further responses referred to the following: difficulties of planning due to the characteristics of the Hungarian labour market, taking on responsibilities again, predominance of the black economy, worsened health, unpredictability of promotion, insufficient effectiveness of re-training programmes, and difficulty in adjusting work and family activities and commitments.

Analysing the issue from the point of view of settlement type, we found that regardless of the size of the settlement, *people were most concerned about discrimination*, therefore this is identified as the key problem for people everywhere in Hungary.

At the same time, the findings showed that with regards to the number of inhabitants, people in small villages were most worried about discrimination. This may be explained by the fact that the majority of Romanies in Hungary live in such villages.

The findings of the current research reinforced the claim arising from previous surveys, that catching up in education and taking actions against discrimination in the labour market may be the key elements towards closing the gap in terms of employment between the deprived population and the rest of society.

IV ROMANY POPULATION IN THE PROCESS OF LIFE-LONG LEARNING

1 Educational level of Romanies

The reasons for Romany groups to get involved in life-long learning could be found in their educational level that is below the national average, and its impact on their employability, self-organisation and integration. According to expert analysis, a small percentage of the Romany population is skilled partially, whereas the majority are not skilled at all, therefore they are not prepared to answer the challenges of the market economy that the change of regime has brought along.

At the time of the 1971 representative survey of Romanies, about three quarter of all the Romanies in their 20s were almost completely illiterate, 20 years later the same proportion of young Romanies had finished primary education. In the three decades before the regime change, Romany children's participation in education had become common practice; however, the 1993 survey conducted by the National Statistical Office found that even though the educational level of the Romany population had risen, the gap between them and the rest of the society had widened. Comparing the educational levels of Romany and non-Romany people, the results show that in 1993 non-Romany men finished slightly more than two years more of education than Romany men did, and the difference was more than three years in the case of non-Romany and Romany women (to the advantage of the non-Romany women). At the same time, there is a significant difference between the educational levels of Romanies in Budapest and in other parts of the country: the figures relevant to the capital are much higher. The figures regarding education are different in the cases of the Romungro, the Beás and the Oláh Romanies as well: the Romungro are the most and the Oláh Romanies are the least educated. A positive tendency can be observed in the younger generations catching up with the rest of the population. According to the figures, the educational levels of the 15–19 year old Romanies were hardly lower than those of the non-Romany young people in the mid- and late 1990s. However, the levels of education of the older generations show significant differences (*Hága*, 2000b) (*Table4*).

Table 4

Educational levels of the Romany population and the total population in the various age groups, %

	Educational level of the Romany population				Educational level of the total population			
	1993				1990			
	0 years	1–8 years	Accomplished secondary education	College/ University	0 years	1–8 years	Accomplished secondary education	College/ University
15–19	1.5	87.5	10.8		0.6	88.7	10.7	
20–24	1.1	81.9	17.1		0.5	70.3	29.2	
25–29	2.5	81.9	15.2		0.5	63.7	26.9	8.9
30–34	3.2	76.4	19.9	0.4	0.5	64.6	26.1	8.9
35–39	6.3	83.5	9.7	0.2	0.4	64.3	26.4	8.8
40–44	8.3	81.1	10.0	0.4	0.5	63.3	27.0	9.2
45–49	12.9	79.0	6.9	0.9	0.7	66.4	23.7	9.1
50–54	24.0	71.9	3.3	0.4	1.2	69.9	21.3	7.6
55–59	41.5	50.8	7.1	0.0	1.5	70.0	20.1	8.5
60–64	46.1	52.1	0.6	0.6	1.7	66.8	22.2	9.3
65–69	31.5	63.8	3.8	0.0	2.2	65.2	23.1	9.5
70–	50.0	47.1	1.8	1.9	7.7	61.4	21.2	9.7
Average	9.4	78.3	11.9	0.3	1.2	67.8	23.9	7.2

Source: Polónyi, 2002.

The explanation of their lower educational level than the rest of the Hungarian population comes from secondary education, as Gábor Havas and István Kemény argue. Only 1–2% of the Romanies over 25 had finished secondary school (Havas–Kemény, 1996) (Table 5).

Table 5

Proportion of Romany and non-Romany people participating in secondary education in 1994, %

Type of school	Total population	Romanies
Specialised school	6,0	9,4
Vocational school	35,5	31,2
Comprehensive	32,0	10,0
Grammar school	24,2	0,6
Total	97,7	51,2

Source: Polónyi, 2002.

The worryingly low levels of education are not matched yet with learning activities that would enable the closing of the gap with the rest of the society. A comparison of active participation in education between 15–19 years old Romany and non-Romany youth suggests that “almost 78% of the inactive non-Romany people (70.1% of the age group) was in education, while only 24.9% of the Romany youth were students. 5.2% of the non-Romany people were at college or university; 55.5% attended a comprehensive or a grammar school; and only 6.2% of them were still at primary school. In comparison to this, 45.4% of the 15–19 years old Romany people were still at primary school; 10% were at specialised schools; 30.8% were in vocational education, 13.5% attended a comprehensive or a grammar school; and only 0.2% were in higher education” (Kemény, 1997).

The problems arising from the low educational level of the Romany population require special attention as according to the predictions; (unless there are major changes) the proportion of the Romany population within the total population will be around 10% by the year 2030 and nearly 15% by the year 2050. Similar figures can be estimated with regards to the proportion of the active population as well. As far as the primary school age generation is concerned, the proportion of Romany pupils will be about 15% by the year 2010 and 20% by the year 2020. The same proportions are predicted for the secondary school generation ten years later (Polónyi, 2002).

2 Unique characteristics originating from the Romany culture

The unique cultural characteristics of the Romany people will influence their motivations to learn, the effective methods of learning as well as the methods of utilising knowledge. Experts in the field have highlighted the following features: own language; dichotomy of the oral and written cultures; dichotomy of vertical and horizontal socialising; lack of time management; need of total autonomy and proximity to the majority society at the same time; and using space to ensure the autonomy of the various groups (*Romano Rácz, 2002*).

A returning question deals with the differentiation of the Romany culture and the culture of poverty. “The reality that we are facing today often depicts the world of poverty and not the Romany culture and customs. The majority society does not reject the Romany culture but the various forms of poverty” (*Farkas, 2002*).

3 Motivation to learn among Romanies

The literature suggests that several of the motivations typical in adult education are apparent in the case of the Romany minority as well however, they exist besides other motivating factors.

A) Traditional motives

Widening professional knowledge and skills

As the professional skills are usually lacking, learning a trade or profession is more typical than widening skills.

In special areas, such as the field of education, the need for continuous professional development is more apparent among the people working with Romanies than among the Romanies themselves. Havas, Kemény and Liskó argue that educating Romanies could be more effective if the people teaching them widened their knowledge in the areas of pedagogy, psychology, language development as well as in social history and Romany art (Havas, Kemény and Liskó, without date).

Katalin Lévai claims that because of the features of the culture, upbringing and abilities of Romany women, it is a realistic opportunity that they could join the labour market in the form of self-employment looking after the family and children and caring for the sick. However, this makes it necessary to train Romany family co-ordinators, family pedagogical mentors, community development assistants and assistant health care workers (*Lévai, 2003*).

Hope of employment

Masses of people becoming unemployed made the link between getting a job and education obvious, though in a drastic manner. The figures of the National Statistical Office prove the relationship between educational level and unemployment, by suggesting that the proportion of unemployed people with a degree is a quarter of the national average; whereas there are four times as many unemployed people who do not even have primary education than the national average.

However, having a degree or accomplished secondary education does not guarantee active employment for Romanians. It is only the Southern Transdanubia region where only a minor proportion of the people with secondary education are unemployed. About 30–50% of the skilled Romanians are unemployed (the figures vary depending on age, settlement type and region, and also on the level of segregation at the settlements where they live) (*Babusik, 2004a*).

Acquiring a certificate and career building

It is difficult to draw the line between the motivating factors “having a certificate” and hope of employment. The certificate-related motif is more characteristic of those people who are already in employment, and it assumes some sort of work experience and knowledge, but the certificate as a proof of those is missing. It is however, not very likely to motivate Romanians, and neither is career building typical of them.

Social mobility

The aspirations of the parents and their plans to participate in further education clearly indicate that a social mobility process, even if at a small-scale, had started among the Romanians in the 1990s. In this process, those children had better chances of social mobility whose parents were also better educated, who did not live in a segregated Romany environment, and who did not attend segregated Romany schools or classes (*Liskó, 2002a*).

Starting a business

The last ten years forced the Romany population to start undertaking traditional or new activities. Szuhay listed the following as most typical among these activities: browsing, fishing and hunting without a licence, collecting medicinal herbs and snails, going through litter bins, agricultural day jobs, trading with horses, making (wooden) wash basins and mud-bricks. All the above activities are exempt from tax and allow great levels of mobility. Some of the Romanians have become independent farmers or entrepreneurs (*Szuhay, 1999*).

According to Romano Rácz, the further growth in the number of businesses would contribute to the strengthening of an active Romany middle class, which then would produce their group of intellectuals in a natural way (*Romano Rácz, 2002*).

Starting up and running a business successfully and educational level are not necessarily related. According to the research by Babusik, the professional educational level of the entrepreneur Romanians is higher, however, “almost a third of them can manage with only primary education” (Babusik, 2004c). The same research indicates that educational level or work experiences hardly impact on the income of the businesses, whereas the connections play a key role in that question.

Almost all of the entrepreneurs involved in the Babusik research were aware of the importance of knowledge and skills. Most of them (54%) acquired some sort of business skills within the family or the environment. Daily practice offered the source of knowledge and skills for 24% of the respondents, while 21% claimed to have acquired them during their studies. Only 5.3% of those who gained their skills from their studies have participated in further education or re-training. Motivation to learn may be weakened among the entrepreneurs by the fact that there is no correlation between the entrepreneurial income and participation in training, or quite the contrary, those who acquired their skills following the traditions of their families have higher income levels (Babusik, 2004c).

B) Specific motives

Successful survival and defence

The Romany identity, according to Sándor Romano Rác, unlike other European national identities supported by national symbols, was formed by the strategic aim guiding each group and individual: the aim of survival under any circumstances. Creating access to natural resources and effective defence mechanisms was a generally valid aim for everyone.

He differentiates between three categories of activities that provide the resources necessary for survival however, he also acknowledges that it is not always possible to draw a line between the various activities.

- 1) The first group includes all the actions that target resources outside the bounds of possession. These mean the classic collecting activities typical of archetypal communities: they collected goods that could be consumed immediately (mushrooms, herbs and medicinal plants, wild fruit and berries, and also small edible animals that they could catch without hunting with rifles); and also collecting natural raw materials for craft activities (basket weaving, matting, doormat, rope, broomstick, brush, etc. making), or collecting waste that could be used by blacksmiths or in other metal works. These are the resources that could be directly utilised.
- 2) We have moved on to the second category of activities, which are inside the bounds of possession, and which play a basic role in building external

relationships as well as in survival. This group involves activities compliant with the laws of the majority society. The so-called traditional Romany activities have developed on this basis. These activities satisfied demands; therefore they could be undertaken over a long period of time, without problems, until mass production forced them out of the market. When assessing the situation in Hungary, one needs to look at seasonal work in agriculture and forestry that are recurring on a regular basis, as these started the process of developing a precience and possession-based attitude.

- 3) The third group involves activities inside the bounds of possession but are not compliant with the laws of the majority society. The following can be listed here: stealing, begging, fortune telling and other practices of witchcraft. These activities are typical among people and groups that for some reason could not find adequate responses and solutions to the new challenges. It must be noted that this type of stealing is regarded as “survival crime” using the technical term of modern criminology. Effectively, it is an advanced version of the collecting lifestyle under changed circumstances (*Romano Rácz, 2002*).

Achieving literacy

According to a 1971 survey, 39% of the 14 or more year-old Romany population, which made 350,000, was illiterate, while among the non-Romany population there were none or hardly any illiterate people. The proportion shows a much more favourable picture in 1993, as the proportion of Romanies with 4 years of education who could not read or write was reduced to 15% (*Polónyi, 2002*).

Illiteracy will not only affect chances of employment, but also managing life in general in all the societies that are built upon literacy. The quality of the environment of formal, institutionalised learning will have a basic influence on attitude towards learning, may even determine it for life. The importance of literacy can be enforced or weakened by the family, local or work environment. These elements, in the words of Katalin Kovács, form key parts of the “hidden curriculum” in the wider sense, which is of utmost importance for life-long learning (*Kovács, 1997*).

“Being on the right track”

The interview with criminologist Szilveszter Póczik revealed that according to a survey conducted in Hungarian prisons “some of the prisoners have understood the importance of learning and they blame themselves for the lost opportunity: ‘God, why haven’t I learnt!’ This will motivate them to try and establish the mobility of their children.” “In a way, they have started on the path of mobility and they are fighting, sweating blood so that their children will not need to commit crimes to survive and manage in life” (*Póczik, 1997*).

Ethnic mission

According to Romano Rácz: “the integration of the Romany population and the consolidation of their situation is only possible with the active participation of a well-prepared own group of intellectuals, building on a wide base. These intellectuals will have to show directions and become the pulling power; they will have to integrate into the activity systems of public administration, justice, education, culture, health service, economy and social politics, and they cannot be left out of the scientific research that aims to reveal the Romany world.” (*Romano Rácz, 2002*).

Getting additional benefits

A modification of the benefit system has largely contributed to the changes in basic education: in the second half of the 1990 the payment of child benefit and other social kind of benefits (different sorts of child support) was linked to the attendance at school in the case of children of statutory education age, which then made the parents financially interested in having their children educated.

In the case of adult education, the study benefit linked to the attendance of courses organised by the job centres works as an effective incentive.

4 Failure at school at its reasons among Romanies

There are no exact data available on the number of people with low levels of education and out-of-date vocation. According to careful estimates, this number is somewhere between 1.5 and 2 million (*Mayer, 2004*). It is worrying though that this mass is constantly getting new members from the group of children who leave school before statutory education formally allows them to. 5–600 children leave primary school every year without finishing it. The situation is made worse by the negative attitude towards learning that they (and also some of those who actually finish primary school) develop because of the failure they had experienced; and also by the fact that the little knowledge they have acquired erodes at a fast rate, which will then become an obstacle for participation in further education or re-training.

According to Babusik, the reasons why Romanies leave school early, without any success, with a complete lack of learning habits and motivations, and why 50 out of 100 Romany children become unemployed, lose hope and become marginalised in their teens (*Hága, 2000a*), can be explained by the following factors:

On the one hand, *the Romany population as a whole is deprived in terms of education*; on the other hand this deprivation comes from several sources. The main reasons are:

- Socialisation of Romany pupils in the family, the differences of cultural patterns of the Romany (otherwise largely layered and non-homogenous society) and the majority population that are distributed by the family;
- Difficulties with the language (especially the not completely Hungarian language-based socialisation and the difficulties of code switching in the case of the ‘beás’ and ‘oláh’ groups);
- The proportion of Romany children attending nursery is low, compulsory attendance after child’s 5th birthday is usually limited to the last half year;
- Social conditions, high unemployment rates and regional distribution of the Romany population (they live primarily in small settlements and regions that suffer from high unemployment);
- Discrimination and practices of segregation (although discrimination and segregation may not be deliberate in the school practice, as a result of them the proportion of Romany children in special needs education is unreasonably high, just like in the special classes for catching up);
- Pedagogical practice (the number of teachers trained to deal with the special educational-pedagogical needs of Romanies is low, there are hardly any programmes or courses of this kind for teachers, the principles and practice of measuring the performance special Romany children is not in place yet, etc.);
- Issues of school structure and organisation (the use of funds available for the education of ethnic and deprived groups produces the opposite effect in some cases, such as creating segregating Romany classes, contra-selection of teachers teaching in such classes, lack of or prejudiced relationships between parents and school, etc.).

As a result of the factors listed above, *the proportion of Romany youth finishing primary education by the end of the statutory education period does not exceed 65%.*

The young Romanies who have finished primary education continue their studies primarily in vocational education, which is irrelevant from the point of view of the labour market.

The proportion of the Romany children participating in further education after attending a comprehensive school (acquiring A-levels) is a sixth compared to the majority population, and the proportion is one fortieth after attending a grammar school (*Babusik, 2003a*).

Some of the above reasons are worth analysing in further detail.

4.1 Nursery attendance

Nursery attendance of deprived children from the age of three is one of the core conditions of a successful career at school. One of the reasons (but not the only one!) why Romany children are not successful at primary school lies in them missing nursery education altogether, or going to nursery only at an older age and only for a short period of time. 11% of the 5-year-old Romany children do not go to nursery even after their 5th birthday (*Magyar, 2003*).

Babusik's research highlighted that "the issue of Romany children going to nursery, with regards to proportion, length of time and age, is not a question of the so-called "Romany culture", but an issue of hard parameters such as 'is there a nursery in their settlement, if there is, what size is it and how close is it to its full capacity, etc.'. To start off with, a fifth of the nursery age Romany population lives in villages with no nurseries. The location of these settlements (inclusion villages, dead end villages, settlements geographically cut off from the nearby settlements) makes us suspect that children will have difficulties to get to the nurseries to the catchment area of which their settlement belongs (*Babusik, 2003b*).

4.2 Family background

The family plays an important role in accomplishing statutory education, in the results achieved at school, in the shaping of learning motivation, in regarding unsuccessfulness as a failure and in choosing a career.

Ilona Liskó demonstrates the changes of the parents' ambitions regarding their children's education apparent since the 1970s. According to her: "Until the 1970s, the parents were not particularly ambitious about their children's education, most of the children spent only a few years at school and got as far as learning to read and write. In the 1970s and 1980s most of the parents complied with their obligations of statutory education of their children, but still only a minority of the children had actually finished primary school. In this period the teachers were "fishing" for the Romany children with varied activity and success levels, but the effectiveness of their education was highly influenced by the fact that the parents did not consider their children's education as important, and did not motivate their children to learn." The shock accompanying the change of regime made it apparent for the Romanies as well that without achieving higher levels of education they have no chance "to stop the process of marginalisation, never mind to come back". "In the teachers' opinion, the lack of motivation to learn constitutes current problem; the parents are now ambitious to send their children to school, but they still do not motivate them to learn as well. Another current issue is their inability

to provide the necessary conditions of successful learning, neither with regards to school equipment nor with regards to support. The differences in raising children and adult patterns that are typical of the subculture of poverty and therefore of most Romany families, will make complying with the expectations at school difficult” (*Liskó, 2002a*).

There is an obvious link between the learning motivation assessed in primary schools, the parents’ educational level and the financial situation of the family. According to the results of a 1998 survey on behaviour, the Romany children whose father never finished primary school or claim to come from poor families, feel more often (33-34%) that their parents only sometimes or never expect them to have good results at school, than those children whose father finished primary school or are living in average financial conditions (12%) (*Gordos, 2000*).

It is hardly surprising then that there is a strong correlation between the children’s failure at school and the characteristic features of the family. The further away from the centre of the settlement the family lives and the more segregated the area is, the more likely the children are to fail at school. The correlation between the educational level of the parents and the children’s failures at school was also significant. The lower the educational level of the parents was, the more likely children were to fail at school (*Liskó, 2002a*).

According to the teachers, the decline in the results at school is not a result of the abilities from the children but of the deprived nature of their families and their socialisation. The following reasons were blamed for lower performance at school:

- Missing or incomplete school equipment due to the poverty of the family;
- Inappropriate conditions for learning at home due to the poverty of the family;
- Distribution of work within the family and family lifestyle that does not leave enough time for learning;
- Parents do not motivate their children enough to learn;
- Children are missing from school more often because of family problems and disorganisation;
- Assimilation problems will impact on their school performance (*Liskó, 2002a*).

The behavioural patterns of the parents will also play an important role in leaving school and in the shaping of the willingness to participate in further education. As the parents and grandparents have similar experience and memories of school, they also missed out of public education, Antónia Hága argues that not finishing school will not cause distress to either for the children or for the parents. In addition, for the youth not strong enough to cope with constant failure at school, following the example of the parents will make leaving school legitimate

(Hága, 2002a). At the same time, parents with higher levels of education have a more definite idea about their children's future, and they are more likely to consider their children's participation in further education more important (Liskó, 2002a).

4.3 Accessibility and equipment level of schools

Three surveys involving Romanies were conducted in 2002. All three of them pointed out that schools with a higher proportion of Romany children, and parts of schools where Romany children are taught operate under worse infrastructural conditions than the conditions provided for the education of non-Romany children (Németh, without date).

4.4 Inappropriately prepared teachers

The results from the surveys conducted since the beginning of the 1990s suggest that the quality of the teacher's work plays a significant role in the shaping of the knowledge and skills levels of children and their progress in school. Therefore, all the institutional changes that (maybe indirectly through the selection of teachers) undermine the quality of pedagogical services provided for the children of a group with a lower social status, will actively contribute to the reproduction of social inequalities (Kertesi-Kézdy, 2004).

According to Havas, Kemény and Liskó, the key to the success at school of Romany children lies in the preparedness of their teachers and their selection of the right pedagogical methods. Schools where mostly Romany children are taught not only fail to employ teachers with high social sensibility, but their teachers usually have lower levels of competence. The failure of education comes very often from the overt or covert prejudices of the teachers. Researchers explain this situation with the fact that most teachers do not like to teach Romany children because it is considered a more demanding task; it is not considered challenging professionally and their efforts are not accompanied by the feeling of success. Nobody wants to fill the vacant positions in schools teaching primarily Romany children, is it almost impossible to find teachers for the shortage subjects, and fluctuation is higher than the average in these institutions. Due to the lack of success, teachers eventually become indifferent, are not willing to participate in continuous professional development, do their task as a routine, they use methods of passing on information directly and hardly ever introduce innovative pedagogical methods, and the enhanced pedagogical demand is not compensated for in their salaries (Havas-Kemény-Liskó, 2001).

The results of Ferenc Babusik's research are based on the responses of 657 teachers from 61 schools, who have an average of 17 years of teaching practice and spent an average of 13 years in the schools involved in the research. Babusik linked the research into the attitude of teachers towards Romany children with the analysis of the question of whether the teachers' participation in Romany studies training courses in the framework of higher education bears any relation to the success of the school (*Babusik, 1999*).

Mária Nagy and her research team pointed out that the number or presence of professionals at schools is not in harmony with the proportion of Romany children attending the school, it is more the location of the school (character and size of the settlement) that will define the professional competencies available. In view of the result of the research, even the teachers are not satisfied with their own skills to educate Romany children and to cope with the problems related to pupils with different abilities (*Nagy, 2002*).

4.5 Segregation, school practices

Discrimination against Romany children in the education system comes from segregation and the inappropriate pedagogical methods used during their education (*Doncsev, 2000*).

According to research by Havasi, the tendency to segregate Romany children at school has become more and more prevalent in the past years. He draws a parallel between this process and "the changes in the situation of the Romany population after the change of regime; the marginalisation of masses of Romanies; the more and more impatient behaviour of the majority society as a reaction to the signs of crisis; the strengthening of the segregating mechanisms in general; which create the most varied forms of discrimination that already exists on an ethnic basis, day by day, in every area of life. These are apparent in the regulation and everyday application of social benefits just like in the labour market, health care, choice of residence, administrative procedures linked to residence or education." (*Havas, 2002*).

Segregation at school is reflected in the distribution of Romany children among the schools on the one hand, and in segregation within the schools on the other.

Segregation among schools is primarily influenced by the fact that the segregation of the places of residence of Romanies has become more prevalent in the past years, partly due to the migration processes and partly because of the deliberate segregation practices of the majority society. The 1994 representative Romany survey already demonstrated that although most of the former Romany camps were phased out, in the beginning of the 1990s 60% of the Romany population lived under strongly segregated circumstances. As a result of this, 30% of the

Romany primary school-age children go to schools in villages with less than 1000 inhabitants, where their proportion exceeds 50%, whereas only 6% of the overall population in Hungary live in such small settlements (*Havas, 2002*).

From another point of view, because of a better reputation and better compliance with the expectations of the non-Romany parents, the schools themselves will select among the applicants. Discrimination starts with the admission interview (*Ligeti-Márton, 2003*).

Thirdly, when choosing the school (not as freely as it is claimed), parents will consider the following constraining factors: proximity of the school, satisfactory living conditions, for the family crucial benefits (food, clothes donations) that ease the lack of proper food and clothing; the above have more influence on choice than the form of education applied at the school. Very often the parents themselves require that their children attend special needs schools even if it is not necessary for other reasons (*Ligeti-Márton, 2003*).

The tradition of *segregating Romany children within Hungarian schools* goes back for decades. At least a third of the Romany pupils (10% of the children in primary schools overall, which equals 32 600 out of 93 000) are taught in classes where the Romany children form the majority. Segregation in most cases is not based solely on ethnic origin; it contains elements of obvious ethnic discrimination as well as of general social selection that is well known from the literature. The latter means that, on the one hand, special classes develop for the children of families with a higher social status, which offer higher quality education and special pedagogical services, which may be open for a few Romany children coming from the most integrated families of highest social positions. On the other hand, it also means that children from poor non-Romany families, with low levels of education and low social status may be put into classes that were established with the aim of segregating Romany children (*Havas, 2002*).

In the schools with a high proportion of Romany children the teachers often complain that they find it really difficult to cope with Romany children especially from Year 6 or 7 onwards, as they start puberty earlier, they become impossible to handle and they disturb teaching with their destructive behaviour. However, the majority of the teachers and schools do not have serious problems with Romany children in general but with the Romany children coming from poor and disorderly families who are hardly able to assimilate (*Liskó, 2002a*).

As the literature review and the various case studies imply, schools will employ several techniques to cope with the “difficult” children, which will eventually strengthen segregation.

“As they are not prepared for these ‘complicated’ pedagogical tasks and do not devote time and effort to try and solve the problems, they will very often pass the problems on (sending the children to a different school, to educational counselling, to the child support agency, etc.). In more serious cases, the majority of

schools simply give up educating the Romany children that “disturb” the peace of the school; they first fail them then declare them as private students, i.e. they push the responsibility of educating problematic children back to the family where they problems arose in the first place.” (Liskó, 2002a).

Failing pupils

According to national statistics, in 1999 2.5% of the children failed and had to repeat a year, while according to the Romany parents nearly a quarter of the surveyed children in Year 6 had already repeated a year at least once during their education. Children in special classes for catching up and in classes and schools with a higher proportion of Romany children are more likely to fail.

Ilona Liskó differentiates between five clearly identifiable types of the school practices failing pupils:

- There are schools that fail students without mercy if they cannot pass the minimum criteria. These schools will have several older children in the Years 5–8, repeating years.
- There are schools that would fail children in the lower years (1-4) in particular, in the upper years they are more inclined to lower the criteria and so not fail Romany children so that they do not end up with problematic older Romany adolescents in the last years.
- There are schools where the practice is to fail large numbers of children at the end of the first semester, but give them a “mercy” pass at the end of the year, to lower the proportion of the older pupils.
- One comes across schools as well that will fail even the weakest pupils in only a few subjects, so that they can take a re-sit, also to avoid having to deal with adolescents in the classes.
- Finally, there are also schools that do not keep failing children, they rather lower the criteria because they do not wish to prolong the time of education for Romany children (Liskó, 2002a).

Moving children

Declaring children as handicapped has become one of the common forms of segregating Romany children. While only 1% of the primary school children are sent to special schools and classes for backward pupils (where the criteria are considerably lower), 9% of the Romany children go to *classes with special curriculum*. Longitudinal data suggest that earlier the number of Romany children in such classes was even higher – although these diminish the children’s chances in most cases (Havas–Kemény–Liskó, 2001). While the last decade saw a decline in student numbers in public education, the number of handicapped children has continuously been increasing. According to research by Sándor Loss, in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County 96% of the special needs pupils are Romany. Today a

fifth of all Romany children in Hungary attend special schools (for the handicapped) (*Magyar, 2003*).

According to an earlier report of the OECD, from 1996, the proportion of handicapped children in Hungary is very high even in international comparison. While in the proportion of the slightly handicapped children among primary school pupils is 2 in 1000 in Turkey, 4 in 1000 in Finland, 9 in 1000 in Italy, it is 35 in 1000 in Hungary (and this number has risen to 53 by 2002). At the same time, an international research proved that two thirds of the children in Year 1 and 2 in four special schools (for the handicapped) could fulfil the criteria of “normal” schools (*Magyar, 2003*).

Antónia Hága argues that the following factors play a role in moving Romany children into special classes:

- The birth weight of Romany children is considerably lower than the European average, and the family environment burdened with difficulties such as provide everyday living, cannot provide the additional therapies for the children;
- The first meeting with the teachers may not be considered successful, presumably because of the difficulties of communication, by either the parents or the children;
- Conserving unsuccessfulness (or failure) will result in upsetting all three parties, which will then have even more negative impact on the working of communication channels;
- The majority children in the so-called normal primary schools have more stable socialisation levels, therefore they integrate into the community of the class much easier;
- Romany parents usually prefer sending their children to schools where they used to go or where siblings or relatives go as well; there is also a pressure on the teachers from the majority that makes them more likely to get rid of weak students so that they do not jeopardise the school performance (*Hága, 2000a*)

As Havas points out: “In practice, these classes (with a few exceptions) will set lower criteria and offer lower pedagogical quality, and this will result in the acceptance of the fact that children in these classes are less able, therefore they need to know less. As a result of this, the gap between them and the other children will not reduce but rather grow continuously during their primary education.” (*Havas, 2002*).

Turning children into private pupils

According to sociological surveys, Romany children are eight times more likely to become exempt from regular school attendance than their non-Romany

peers, therefore 10% of the 14–15 year-old Romany children do not attend school on a regular basis (*Magyar, 2003*).

Parents have to apply to the school to declare their children as private pupils, the headmaster has the authority to grant this status, but the decision is usually made on the recommendation and initiation of the school. During the research by Ilona Liskó, the headmasters explained granting private pupil status with the following reasons. In the case of the non-Romany children the most frequent reason was a health condition (47%). In the case of the Romany children, health reasons accounted for 22%, but other reasons such as behavioural problems, pregnancy, getting married (affecting almost half of the Romany children) and being over-age were more frequent.

Giving over-age students private status was usually explained by three reasons:

- 1) They are not interested in learning any more and they disturb the others during the class.
- 2) They are frequently absent as their help is needed at home, either performing household duties or being breadwinners.
- 3) The third most frequently occurring reason is that 14–16 year-old youth start living together with their partners and some of them even become parents.

Ilona Liskó points out that the reasons used for turning Romany children into private students are the same problems that teachers listed as the problems Romany children encounter with regards to assimilation in school. This technically indicates that schools accept their failure in education after a few years of trying, and move the children into private student status to attempt to gain the education, which they could not cope with in the regular structures of the school system (*Liskó, 2002a*).

This status basically means that children are “lifted out” of the community of the school classes; they attend school for only a few hours a week (for personal tutoring or remedial efforts), and they have to pass exams at the end of the year. A certificate acquired this way will obviously have a lower value. The schools will do everything to get rid of private students, therefore teachers set very low criteria for the exams as well (*Liskó, 2002a*).

Lowering criteria

The education of Romany children could produce positive, statistically measurable results only when as well as segregation the criteria were lower in the case of Romany pupils (*Havas–Kemény–Liskó, 2001*). Instead of teaching and educating Romany children, some schools produce empty certificates proving the accomplishment of primary education by manipulating the criteria (*Liskó, 2002a*).

Setting lower criteria in schools with Romany children or ignoring the real criteria in their cases are both practices motivated by two factors: intentions of getting rid of over-age students and maintaining the quota. A frequent occurrence is, for example, making large proportions of Romany children exempt from learning foreign languages (which may be crucial to improve their chances in the labour market). Most of these children will suffer during the class in the back row, and a majority of them finish school with insufficient knowledge. The smaller the proportion of non-Romany and the larger the proportion of Romany children is, the more likely it is that the criteria set for the children in these classes will be lower, with the schools blaming the lack of abilities and skills, or failed socialisation in the family that the school cannot make up for (*Hága, 2002*). Most Romany children, due to the hidden *segregation through the curriculum* (despite the efforts of the schools to close the gap), leave primary school without having learned to read, write or count, and without understanding most of the phenomena of the natural world that surrounds them (*Havasi–Kemény–Liskó, 2001*).

5 Characteristic features of Romanies in further education

Only a few Romany children applied for admission to comprehensive or grammar school successfully in the 1970s and 1980s. About half of those who were admitted left early. For almost 30 years, the proportion of those who accomplished secondary education (A-levels) was between 1–2% from each year. The situation started to change at the end of the 1980s, or more precisely after 1989. The data from the 1994 Romany survey showed that 3% of the 20–29 year-old Romanies had passed their exams on finishing secondary education (*Liskó, 2002a*). The improvement in figures relating to participation in further education is indicated by the data that, according to Antónia Hága, in 2000 14.3% of the 14–29 year-old generation participated in vocational education or attended specialised schools; 5.1% attended comprehensive or grammar schools; with 0.75% going to university or college (*Hága, 2000a*). The situation according to Polónyi's study shows a different picture: "while 49.8% of the 14–19 year-old youth has a certificate of primary education, 20.8% of the 20–24 year olds acquire a certificate in a trade or profession, 1.2% have grammar school certificates, and 0.3% have degrees (*Polónyi, 2002*).

Ilona Liskó argues that the growing proportion of participation in further education can be explained, even in the case of parents with low levels of education, by the recognition of the link between professional skills and employment opportunities, with the message being reinforced by primary schools; as well as by

the fight for the quota at secondary schools that are ready to set lower admission criteria to achieve that (Liskó, 2002a).

As we saw, participating in vocational education is typical. According to the teachers, Romany children ranked the various popular trades and professions as follows:

- hospitality (chef, waiter/waitress);
- commerce (shop assistant);
- services (hairdresser, car mechanic);
- healthcare (nurse);
- light industry (tailor, shoe uppers maker, timber industry);
- construction industry (bricklayer, carpenter, tiler, painter and decorator);
- engineering industry (welder, mechanic);
- agriculture.

The fact that the popular, “fashionable” professions among non-Romanies at the time (economics, computing, electronics) do not feature in the list drawn up by the Romany children indicates that their deprived situation is also apparent in their choice of careers (Liskó, 2002a).

In relation to the type of school chosen for further education, research undertaken by Ilona Liskó indicated that the order of preference among non-Romany children was comprehensive school, vocational school and grammar school; in the case of Romany children the order was vocational school, comprehensive and specialised school. Despite the fact that the proportion of Romanies in comprehensive schools has risen, the proportion of Romany students in secondary schools offering A-levels was 19% in 1999, the same proportion of non-Romany children was 57%.

It is noteworthy that the figures relating to participation in further education were the lowest in the case of the smallest schools. 22% of the children coming from such schools did not gain admission to secondary schools. The data also indicated that *the less homogenous the Romany environment is in which the children achieve their primary education, the more chances they have to participate in secondary education.*

In the case of schools with a proportion of less than 25% Romany children only 5% of the pupils did not continue their studies, whereas in the case of schools with at least 75% Romanies, 23% of those who finished primary school could not progress to secondary school (Liskó, 2002a).

However, the higher proportion of admission to secondary schools does not necessarily mean that the Romany students will actually finish the studies they have started. Some of the Romany youth applying for education in secondary schools do not start their studies at all, while others leave after 1 or 2 years.

Leaving secondary school early was explained by both family and educational reasons.

The most common “*family*” reasons cited were the following: more than average level of difficulties, lack of support on behalf of the family, becoming adults early and early interest in sexuality (which much more often than in non Romany cases may end in pregnancy), lack of positive examples, negative examples of relatives and acquaintances who “manage” without education, financial reasons.

Teachers listed the following factors as “*educational*” reasons: frustration arising from realising the disadvantages, growing demand added to the disadvantages gathered during primary education, lack of personal care and support, prejudices (Liskó, 2002a).

Even if Romany children finish their education in the chosen schools, they are not guaranteed significantly better chances of employment. According to a study commissioned by the World Bank: “Most of the vocational schools offer education in areas (and this is particularly true in deprived regions with a significant Romany population) for which there has been hardly any demand for years.” (Hegyesiné et al. 2000).

6 Romany participation in adult education and the relevant experience

We can attempt to draw conclusions regarding Romany participation in adult education almost exclusively based on indirect data.

For example, research by László Zachár indicated that it was mainly the young people (70-75% are under 30) and the better educated ones (60–65% had completed at least secondary school) who participated in courses designed to help them getting employment (Zachár, 2003), the latter condition indicated lower proportions of Romany participation.

According to surveys conducted by Babusik, full-time students over 19 were mainly the ones who had completed secondary education and A-levels. 78.7% of the full-time Romany students with A-levels studied in higher education, the rest were taking part mainly in re-training (Babusik, 2004a).

Klára Bajusz investigated the obstacles of participation in adult education perceived by the people most in need, and she highlighted the lack of motivation, the inappropriate offer of courses and the advancing “knowledge for money” attitude as the main difficulties. “As participation in adult education operates on a voluntary basis, usually those target groups are most difficult to reach that are the most in need of making up for the lack of basic knowledge and skills. The last years saw an improvement in education and skills among people in active employment: people who could not acquire skills for various reasons (deprived situation, repro-

duced inequalities, lack of educational institution, lack of abilities to learn, etc.) got excluded from the labour market and became long-term unemployed. These people would need to acquire professional skills first to be able to move forward. However, only 3% of the professions or trades listed in the National Register of Courses can be acquired without completing primary education; and the already deprived groups can gain the knowledge required for the acquisition of certified primary education in fewer and fewer primary schools. The problem is made even worse by the fact that it is the A-levels certificate and a profession or trade building on that, rather than primary education that have become the pre-requisites of preserving competitiveness and being successful in the labour market.” (*Bajusz, 2000*).

Romanies will therefore participate primarily in supported basic courses, or in courses that do not require primary education. In 1999, in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County, for example, the courses offered specially for Romany adults included agricultural worker, bulrush and willow processing, Romany farmer, basket weaver and garden furniture joiner, bricklayer, green grocer, park keeper, broom maker and medicinal herb collector (326 people participated in the above courses) (*Kerülő, 2000*).

7 Government initiatives/programmes to motivate Romany groups to learn

In 2000, Antónia Hága reported on the government initiatives between 1990 and 2000. The most important events that took place in that period included:

- The development of a Romany educational programme in 1992 that emphasised the characteristics of the Romany ethnic culture; devoted special attention to the emancipation of the Romany language and culture (when comparing Romany education with nationality education in general); and suggested establishing Departments of Romany Studies as well as publishing course books in the Romany language.
- The Romany educational programme of 1995 retained almost all of the elements of the 1992 programme, but also organised them and extended the elements that were only partially achieved. As well as this, the objectives and activities of the 1992 programme were extended to almost every area of the educational system. The 1995 programme paid special attention to helping Romany children (in statutory education and the young unemployed) in catching up, to supporting the talented ones and to the intercultural differences in general. It set out to teach knowledge about Romanies in the higher education curriculum, especially in teacher training institutions.

This programme regarded Romanies as a socially deprived ethnic group, and the action points were based on this recognition.

- The 1997 educational action plan of the government was mostly a continuation of the 1995 programme in its way of thinking, mentality and actions, although its logic still left some room for criticism. The National Curriculum was about the “special principles of education of national and ethnic minorities”, and also mentioned intercultural education. The aim of defining this notion in the National Curriculum was to allow the children of minorities and the majority to acquire knowledge together about the culture of the minorities and the knowledge of the minorities, or even a minority language. Another innovation of the National Curriculum allowed the Romany remedial catching up programme to include the teaching of one of the Romany languages according to the criteria of language education (Hága, 2000a).

Actions taken:

- *Ministry of Culture – Ministry of Education:* the Ministry of Culture, as part of their medium-term action plan (Summer of 1997) offered fee support grants that Romany university or college students could apply for: in 1997, 153 students were given 7 322 000 HUF, while in 1998 108 students got 2 900 000 HUF grants.
- The *Public Foundation for National and Ethnic Minorities in Hungary* provided support for 401 secondary school students and 128 in higher education, the total support amounted to 29 million HUF, in 1998 540 secondary school and 103 higher education students were granted more than 37 million HUF support.
- The *Public Foundation for Romanies in Hungary* spent 25 million HUF in 1997 on grants supporting 272 young people in primary and specialised schools; the amount rose to 30 million in the 1998/99 school year. The grants were available for children in primary schools who achieve the highest marks (Czinka Panna grant), and who achieve good results. The grants were also available for young adults who want to continue their interrupted studies to acquire A-levels.
- *Gandhi Public Foundation:* while this foundation was supported by 325 million HUF from the budget in 1997, the amount has gradually been reduced until the present day. In 1998, the amount was 230 million, in 1999 210 million, in 2000 the amount was modified to 200 million HUF. One of the reasons behind the reduction of the amount was that the investment relating to the grammar schools required less and less resources.
- *Normative support:* The educational institutions claimed minority-based normative support for Romany education for 68,312 children in the 1996/97

school year, in the 1997/98 school year the support was claimed for 31,034 students. The spectacular difference between the two years comes from the fact that in the 1997/98 school year the schools had to set up remedial catching up programmes; and had to have these assessed by the local Romany minority authorities or (if these were not present in the region) by the relevant department of the Ministry (*Hága, 2000a*).

A speech by Bálint Magyar provided a summary of the events between 2000 and 2005. The most important event of the period was the passing of the new Education Act. The law was enhanced with elements of anti-discrimination; the notion of the deprived situation was defined and the period of statutory education was extended.

Other aspects that merit mention include:

- *Establishment of the ministerial office for deprived and Romany children.*
- *Normative support for preparing for integration:* this opened the way for several children to acquire the required level of education in the majority society. This provided extra funds to end the practice of segregated classes by providing tailor made support for children lagging behind.
- *Organisation of the National Educational Integration Network:* the integration mechanisms suggested by sociological research are getting realised nation-wide, and modern pedagogical methods are becoming widely used in the education of deprived children. Children cannot be exempt from learning foreign languages because they are taking part in Romany minority education.
- *Introduction of the “alternative school” method:* deprived children are offered extra-school activities that should help improve their success in school.
- *Ministry of Education PHARE grants:* these give a new impetus to innovation in institutions, such as developing Romany Community Centres, making Romany studies courses widely available in the higher educational institutions, developing integrated pedagogical methods and making these accessible (*Magyar, 2003*).

8 Model programmes aimed at improving the educational level of Romanies

In the past few years, educational programmes were piloted in Hungary that had been developed by non-Romany experts with experience in teaching and educating Romany children as well as Romany experts. Children and parent had also

been involved in their work. These are mainly civil initiatives, which enjoyed and still enjoy help from abroad to support them professionally and financially. Another common feature of these initiatives is that children enjoy going to these institutions. The 1999 study commissioned by the World Bank provided a detailed analysis of the model programmes (Hegyesiné et al. 2000).

Kalyi Yag Specialised Nationality School for the Romany

The school in Budapest was founded by the Kalyi Yag Arts Association in 1993. The specialised school is open for students with certified primary education. The main objective of the institution is to provide the 14–25 year-old unskilled youth with a 2-year course that will make them able to attend another educational institution in the future. 59 people took part in the course between 1996 and 1998. Only Romany students attend the school.

Alternative School in Józsefváros

The school was established by the Alternative School in Józsefváros Foundation, which carries its objectives in its name: it aims to enhance the success in school of Romany children in Józsefváros (district VIII. in Budapest) and support them in progressing to further education. The intake is always 48 children, 98% of which are of Romany origin. It must be noted that this cannot be regarded as a traditional educational method therefore the school can claim only a part of the normative support. The Soros Foundation and various Dutch foundations provide significant support.

Chance for Romanies Alternative Foundation School, Szolnok

The Lungo Drom National Romany Association founded the school in 1996. Their primary objective is to provide professional or trade skills for socially deprived Romany or non-Romany youth who left secondary school early, without basic and specialist education. At the beginning the school had 60 students, by the year 2000/2001 (with it turning into a secondary school) the number went up to nearly 400 full-time or part-time students. The local authority of Szolnok took part in the programme by providing a new school building and entering a public education agreement. With the new school building, the old building became available for setting up a college for supporting talented youth. Originally 50, after the expansion 80, students could participate in remedial, catching up and talent supporting programmes as well as ethnicity, character development and self-knowledge programmes.

Ariadne Specialist and Career Planning School

The school was set up in Budapest by the Ariadne Cultural Foundation in 1997. The institution aims to provide assistance for those who are unemployed

due to their lack of their education. Together with the Budapest Job Centre, they educate and help choosing a career 90–110 Romany and non-Romany youth.

Foundation Work School, Edelény

This educational project was developed between 1990 and 1991 by a team of teachers trained to educate special needs students. In the 1996/97 school year 67 slightly or intermediately handicapped children of primary school or nursery school age attended the school, most of whom were Romany.

Gandhi Grammar School and Student Residence, Pécs

The institution is run by the Gandhi Public Foundation. The foundation aims to help the education of open-minded children who are responsive to learning, and are attached to their people and their mother tongue, by establishing and running nurseries, primary and secondary schools. The foundation operated with 965 million HUF between 1997 and 2000. In the 1997/98 school year 180 Romany and non-Romany children attended the school, rising to 218 in the 1998/99 school year.

Primary School, Nyírtelek

This is a primary school offering the 8-year education curriculum, where the majority of the pupils are Romany. The school introduced the Romany programme in 1996. The aim is to help as many children as possible to progress into secondary education. The central element of the programme is the so-called “Nice House”.

Collegium Martineum, Mánfa

The idea to set up this school was born in 1996, in the minds of people at the Roman Catholic Parish of Alsószentmárton, at the St Martin Caritas (Charitable Organisation) and the Pécs Diocese Caritas (Charitable Organisation) and of talented Romany children. The founders of the Collegium aim to educate venture-some citizens; people who are familiar with the practice of democracy in family situations in an atmosphere that motivates them to learn. This institution is also dependent on foreign support.

Education Integrated With Work

József Mayer argues for the need for methods in adult education that involve the mental preparation of children to learning, enhance motivations to learning, are individual-oriented and take the individuals’ learning needs into account. These methods are included in the educational methodology that was jointly developed by the Ministry of Education, the National Employment Fund and the

Integration Development Centre of the National Public Education Institute as the “Education Integrated With Work” programme in 2003. The programme was based on the ‘janitor programme’ of Ózd, and it builds on independent learning while in employment (if the person stops their studies they will lose their job as well). It is supported by 2 hours a week individual mentoring and also by activities in preparation for the exams, run by teachers who will be the examiners. Students will achieve the equivalent of secondary level education at the end of the programme.

The programme launched by the Ministerial Office for the Integration of Deprived and Romany Children; the Secretariat General of Equality of the Ministry of Work and Employment Policy and by the Office of Romany Issues of the Prime Minister’s Office, offered 150 unemployed Romany young people between 18 and 35 the opportunity to acquire A-levels or a profession and also work in public education. The educational institutes (primarily schools and nurseries in the Northern Hungary, Southern Transdanubia, Southern Great Plain and Northern Great Plain regions where the proportion of Romany children exceeded 20%) had to apply for the programme together with the employer. As a result of the programme, pedagogical assistants, youth mentors and children and youth supervisors have been trained. The applicants took part in 2, 3 or 4-year courses depending on the number of years they had finished (8 years of primary school, 9 or 10 years) and on their school performance. So-called mentors assisted the participants in their studies (in the preparation for the A-levels and for the professional exams) in the supported institutions, and they did their placement working as pedagogical assistants or helpers, for which they got paid. The educational institutions were obliged to employ the Romany participants for at least another two years, which the founders of the programme thought would ensure permanent employment.

The Labour Market Fund finances the five years long programme with 640 million HUF, which amount includes the costs of the education and exams of the 150 young people, their salaries (which is 50,000 HUF in the first year, 55,000 in the second and third years and 60,000 HUF per person from 2006) and the additional benefits that public servants are entitled to (www.magyarorszag.hu, 2003).

OECD Romany Computing Project

The project financed by OECD funds aimed to develop the content of education in computing and to improve the personal and material conditions for that in the most deprived regions. The teachers training course at the core of the project focuses on spreading the approach of using modern computing techniques (*Fehér*, 2004).

V

RESULT OF THE GOVERNMENT POLICIES REGARDING ROMANIES

1 Government policies regarding Romanies³⁷

The governments in power after the regime change had to face the issue of minorities that had been pushed to the background for decades, especially the never solved problems of the Romany minority that became even more reinforced by the social-economical changes.

The Antall Government established the Office of National and Ethnic Minorities in 1990, which played a significant part in developing programmes involving Romanies from the mid-1990s. From 1998, an appointed vice-president was in charge of co-ordinating Romany issues within the office.

As a major step in legislation regarding minorities was the passing of the LXXVII/1993 Law on the rights of national and ethnic minorities. The law on minorities is of exceptional importance for the Hungarian Romany population, as this was the first item of legislation that had recognised this population as a minority, as elements of the state, ensuring their individual rights as well as the opportunity for collective self-organisation. The process stresses the importance and impact of the law: the years 1994 and 1995 saw the establishment of 477 local Romany minority authorities and that of the *National Romany Minority Authority* involving 53 people. Romany minority authorities were set up in 764 settlements in 1998, and in 998 settlements in 2000, which meant that every second settlement with a Romany population had a Romany minority authority.

The most pressing issue for the Romanies in the 1990s (and ever since due to the poverty of their situation) was the radical and quick improvement in their social and employment conditions, an issue that was more pressing than the priorities of other minority groups. The social integration of Romany people in Hungary sets tasks not only for the government and local authorities but also for the institutional system of employment and civil organisations as well. An experience learned from joint actions is that integrative initiatives are most successful if they build on the continuous activity of the minorities, based on civic self-organisation.

³⁷ Some of the following review chapters were written based on the publication Facts about Hungary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2004 www.kum.hu

A democratic public life and the growing self-awareness of the Romany population are indicated by the fact that people belonging to the Romany minority are more and more often willing to declare their ethnic origin. The data from the last census reflects the process quite clearly. While in 1990 142,683 people declared themselves Romanies, a decade later in 2001 the figure was 189,984, and it is well known that the official figure is much lower than the actual number of Romanies, estimated to be between *400 and 600 thousands*. The proportion of Romany language users and the attachment to cultural values that was surveyed for the first time in 2001, also suggests a willingness to declare Romany identity. At the time of the first census in the 21st century in Hungary, 50,000 people declared to have a Romany mother tongue (Romany or beás) and 130,000 people claimed to be attached to the traditions and cultural values of the Romany ethnicity.

The *LXXIX/1993 Law on public education* is relevant in influencing the situation and future of the Romany population; the 1996 and 2003 amendments of the law granted the rights for national and local minority authorities to establish and run educational institutions. At the same time they also highlighted suppressing segregation at schools as an objective.

Another important piece of legislation from the Romany point of view is the *LIX/1993 Law on the office in charge of the rights of national and ethnic minorities*, which establishes the institution of the *minority ombudsman*.

2 Government actions

From 1995, concrete government programmes supplemented the establishment of the basic minority legislation and its institutional system. The policies regarding Romanies (regardless of the changing political background of the governments) have always been characterised by the intentions to help social integration and within that tackling social problems, as well as the preserving of Romany identity, language and cultural values.

In 1995, the government accepted a short-term integration programme, defined the need to develop a medium-term programme and established the *Council for Co-ordinating Romany Issues* and the *Public Foundation for the Romanies in Hungary* to support the efforts to create equal opportunities.

The first medium-term package of measures (*1093/1997 government order*) was developed based on the resolutions of the above-mentioned short-term programme, which among other actions considered the tasks of social integration of the Romany minority. This defined the most urgent tasks regarding programmes

aimed at stopping educational segregation, improving the employment situation and managing social crisis.

The 1047/1999 government order basically followed the objectives defined in 1997, but gave priority to the *tasks in relation to education and culture*. The preferences included a qualitative development of the content of primary education and the prevention of children leaving secondary education early. With regards to culture, the preferences related to the development of the institutional system necessary to the development of community life and the training of professionals required to carrying out the developments. In the area of employment, the preferences involved supporting the long-term unemployed and first-time job seekers, the need for public service and community development projects and the need for devising complex regional development programmes to improve living conditions.

The *Interdepartmental Committee of Romany Affairs* was set up in 1999; in the following years the budget of ministries that involved or were dedicated to Romany-related activities grew every year (4.85 billion in 2000, 5.2 billion in 2001, 7.4 billion in 2002).

As a result of the above mentioned ministerial order of 1999, the decision has been made to develop a *long-term social and minority-political strategy* and on developing government programmes on three levels:

- Concrete programmes and projects will feature in the yearly action plan of the individual involved departments,
- The tasks for the 3-4 year period of a government cycle will be determined in the medium-term package of measures,
- The principles and complex objectives for a 20–25 years period will be defined in the long-term strategy.

Another requirement concerns the *further development of the legislation on banning discrimination*, and the need for publicity and transparency, as well as for a complex approach to address the problems.

Three sectoral priorities were named to improve the living conditions of Romany people: education, employment and improvement of the conditions of family welfare. As general priorities, preventing the social-political exclusion of Romany people and encouraging their participation in social-political affairs are mentioned.

The Ministry of Justice, the Office for National and Ethnic Minorities and the National Romany Minority Authority set up together the *Anti-Discrimination Customer Service Network* in 2001, a framework within which 30 offices operate.

The *new medium-term programme*, accepted in March 2004 (1021/2004 government order) defines the necessary government action for the social integration of the Romany population in line with the previous measures and objectives. A

new element of the programme refers to the introduction of follow-up monitoring of the utilisation of financial resources.

A stronger Romany participation in political and public life is indicated by the facts that there are 4 Romany politicians in the Parliament, Romany minority authorities were elected in roughly 1000 settlements in the autumn of 2002, with almost 4000 Romanies working for them. At the latest local elections more than 500 Romany local authority councillors and 4 Romany mayors were elected. The first political secretary of Romany origin has been elected in this period. In the Medgyessy Government, the issues of the social integration of the Romany population and improvement of their social situation and other Romany-political issues of strategic relevance were under the control and co-ordination of the state secretary belonging to the Prime Minister's Office (at the moment part of the Ministry of Youth, Family and Equal Opportunities).

There are also *office holders of Romany origin* working for ministries (the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of National Cultural Heritage employ Romany ministerial officers).

The CXXV/2003 Law on equal treatment and promoting equal opportunities came to force in January 2004, which in compliance with the legislation of the European Union, introduced a system of sanctions to *reduce negative discrimination*.

3 Latest government measures regarding education

It has become apparent even at government level that *education* is a key issue for the integration of the Romany and for ensuring their equal opportunities. 90% of the Romany children finish primary school, and most of those are completing the primary education (85%) progress to secondary education. The proportion of Romanies in secondary education has risen, however, it must be noted that the majority of the Romany youth acquire skills in low-prestige trades and professions that are not in demand in the labour market, and which do not offer job opportunities. Higher education still seems to exclude Romany people, as only 0.3% of them get a degree.

Ministerial and public foundation *grants* support Romany youth in their studies. The number of students who were granted support has risen in the last years, while in 1998 750, in 2001 12 thousand and in 2003 19 thousand young people received grants to help with their studies.

To ensure long-term equal opportunities for the Romany population, departments of Romany Studies were established at several higher educational institutions, or various courses are offered specialising in *Romany Studies*.

The management of Hungarian public education adopted a new approach towards Romany children from the beginning of the 2003/2004 school year. The 1999 modification of the law on public education introduced stricter regulations for putting children into “special needs” schools, while the 2003 modification of the law orders the ending of the practice of segregation with “special needs” schools, and at the same introduces anti-discrimination measures to ensure equal opportunities in schools. The type of education called “catching up education” with a euphemism that produces segregation, may be succeeded by an integrative educational approach, which is aimed to assist the development of abilities; which handles Romany and non-Romany students together; and which is expected to result in integration based on joint and same quality education.

According to the data from the European Committee, with the enlargement of the European Union the number of European citizens in the EU who speak minority languages has risen from 40 million to 46 million. This trend and with the accession of other countries in the near future resulting in an even higher proportion of minorities, indicate more obviously that the integration of the Romany communities (representing the largest proportion among the minorities) cannot be solved within the national borders and based solely on the national efforts. The Romany question raises more and more interest in the European international forums as well. It may be considered as an outcome of this that “The decade of Romany integration” has been launched, on the initiative of the World Bank and the Open Society Institute, with the participation of the governments of several countries. The programme aims to develop educational and training programmes (focussing on the area of life-long learning in adult education) financed by the *Romany Education Fund* which is still to be set up.

The relevant Ministry took several concrete actions to ensure equal opportunities for the deprived and Romany children³⁸ in the year 2003, the starting point of our analysis. These are:

- Establishment and management of the National Educational Integration Network
- Introduction of the integration quota (in order to stop segregation)
- Revision of the handicapped classification, actions taken to phase out “pseudo-handicaps” (“From the back row” programme)
- Modification of the Law on public education (banning segregation and discrimination in schools as well as failing pupils in the years 1-3)
- Supporting research and educational programmes in Romany Studies
- Supporting model programmes and special educational institutions

³⁸ Based on the http://www.hungria.org.br/governmental_actions_concerning_roma_affairs.doc

There was a project fund of 300 000 million HUF available for the 45 selected so-called base schools to run programmes promoting this sort of learning. The main aim of the integration quota is to help end the practice of segregated classes by the 2008/2009 school year. The schools could apply for the normative de-segregation support of 51 000 HUF per student per year for the first time in the 2003/2004 school year, to support children in Year 1 and 5.

The revision of the abilities of slightly handicapped children in the years 1 and 2 has also started. The children the experts declared “pseudo-handicapped” were to be moved to normal schools. In accordance with the evidence of the 2003 survey, the number of children moved back to ordinary schools was 230, compared to the 60-70 children per year in the previous years. Legislation ensured the compulsory admission of deprived children into nurseries and also the provision of free meals. As a new element of the legislation, the *alternative school method* providing opportunities for additional school educational activities has started to operate.

Accredited *courses in Romany Studies* were introduced to the continuous professional development programmes for teachers of Romany children. *Romany culture* modules were also introduced in the lower years of primary school. The ministry has also funded research programmes to assist minority education.

Workshops on Romany culture were financed, whilst young Romanies participating in fee-paying higher education or in preparation courses for university were provided grants. Resources were made available for developments in specialist schools and for extra-school development, for foreign language teaching for Romany children and for supporting talented children.

Calls for research projects supporting minority education and developing linguistic and methodological course material to assist the teaching of the Romany and beás languages were announced.

VI GOVERNMENT'S ATTITUDE AND EFFORTS IN ROMANY AFFAIRS³⁹

1 The positive and negative sides of the efforts towards Romany integration

No one would argue that the Romany integration is a national issue (6–8% of the population is of Romany origin). Their social integration is of key importance in terms of the competitiveness of the country. More than 90% of the ethnic population are dependants; therefore they cannot contribute to the GDP. It is in the national and economical interest as well as a social one to turn the dependants receiving benefits into tax paying citizens. “350,000 of the 600,000 Romanies are active, but only 80–90,000 are in employment. There is no information about the rest. Therefore the task is to pull the rest in to the labour market.” The employment institutions and “their operations do not seem to satisfy people, especially not the ones concerned”.

Romany people suffer from discrimination, “the character of which is roughly known but the symptoms are not always easy to recognise.”

According to some opinions, the question is not decided in practice yet as to whether we should be talking about assimilation or integration. The governmental measures refer to one in some cases and to the other element in others. This implies that even the developers of the programmes are still not clear about this theoretical-methodological and practical question.

Experts argue that “we cannot generalise, we need a layer-specific approach”. “The notion of poverty is not equal to the notion of Romany lifestyle, nor should we allow people to use them as synonyms.” In the opinion of the interviewees the situation has not got much better in the institutions. It is difficult to do anything from outside even through legislation because of the internal, very often hidden segregation within the schools.

“Things have started to change” some suggested. “Romanies are now present in public administration and education.” The government declared the issue as important and are dealing with it on a daily basis: a secretary of state has been appointed and there are Romany ministerial officers and referents dealing with

³⁹ The statements of the following chapters are based on the interviews conducted with the relevant ministerial officers and referents in ministries dealing with Romany affairs

Romany questions. The status of the Romany referent seems to be well known, however: “the people in question have not got enough latitude; they would need a wider sphere of authority.” “The government has done a lot, but not enough” some pointed out with a hint of sarcasm. This year, the “cutting of the budget will impede even more” the realisation of certain of the tasks. Although there are referents in the ministries, they have neither authority nor a budget to work with. They are on their own within the ministries concerned. “The system is badly organised. The Inter-Ministerial Committee of Romany Affairs expects a report from the relevant ministries only once a year.”

The Public Foundation for the Romanies in Hungary programme provides grants for 20 thousand Romany students a year. However, there were no major successes or basic changes in the last 10–15 years, only parts of the resolutions ever seem to be realised. The measures will presumably have more value in the future, so that the next generation will be able to enjoy the results.

A strong opinion suggests that even with the frameworks established so far (beyond the legislative conditions) the *system* can only work if or when the Romany intellectuals of today, the Romany people themselves are in position to be able to pass on their values within the middle class, and if or when the majority society is also able to accept those. “There are no signs of mixed marriages yet”, which could be considered as real signs of social integration. The example of middle-class mixed (Romany and non-Romany) families could act as a motivator for further integration. “The relationships with Romany people may even be considered exotic; however, no long-term relationships or marriages are established.”

“We can talk about integration when Romany people really have equal opportunities” others suggest. Several interviewees emphasised the importance of preserving Romany culture. Integration will only happen, as one of our respondents summarised the various opinions “when both social groups, Romanies and non-Romanies, enjoy the same rights and conditions.”

“Integration is decided at local level, it depends on the leaders of the settlements as well.” If they and the local elite do not support Romany integration within the settlements, there is hardly any chance that the attitude will become widely spread and the practice of integration encouraged to develop.

According to the interviewees, some of the major achievements of the integration process are: the development of the Romany intellectual; the support system that is already in operation; the laws and the shaping of the new institutional system; the government order 1021/2004 that defines the responsibilities; the growing numbers of Romany civil organisations and their operation; the social communication on the subject; and the fact that more and more people from the majority society consider integration important as “they realised this is the problem of the country not of the Romany population.”

The negative side of the process is that only some of the organisations of the public administration system understand the necessity of integration. According to the respondents, several people are not aware of the meaning of social integration. "Some people in the ministries are in the belief that 'integration concerns handicapped people', the 'Decade of the Romany People' programme is only an empty phrase". The "1021/2004 government order needs improving", which defines education, housing, health care and employment as priorities. These are the key areas along which integration needs to be discussed. "It is not enough to declare what needs to be done and how: substantial financial resources need to be mobilised", that would produce results in 10–15 years.

Several of the opinions given list the negatives. When only one in every 100 Romany studies in higher education, "there is no Romany intellect". The Romany organisations "claim to have a national mandate, although in most cases they only have regional authority." The cohesive forces are missing that could move the social processes in the right direction. Several people are now disillusioned about policies regarding Romanies. "Only a few Romanies ask themselves the question whether they want to work in politics concerning Romanies, as what they can see is that the promises usually are not kept."

Positive discrimination also seems to be regarded as nothing more than a slogan. "The way it is communicated suggests that Romanies get priorities, but this is not the case." "Politics, the unsuitable PR activities and the unsuitable experts who do not communicate information properly are mostly to be blamed for that." The general stereotypes society holds also impede progress.

In the opinion of our interviewees, there have not been significant changes in the lives of the Romany groups, their conditions worsen and their situation seems hopeless. "There are no high hopes that anything would change in the near future, apparently not even in the National Development Plan II."

We heard some interesting personal opinions during the interviews and present them here in the following paragraphs.

The Romany minority authorities "have no resources, membership is not a condition of education, and they cannot afford to employ advisors." "Their work depends on the big local authorities, which usually reign over them." "The local authorities act as dictators during the Romany programmes."

"Forms of education developed for the Romanies as ways of catching up: they mean segregation at mass level! Integration cannot work like that!" "Teachers do not acquire qualifications before starting their career; there is no "prejudice-filter". "They participate in only a few courses where they could learn about deprived children."

"There are no group solutions for the problems of the Romanies as these tend to do more harm than good, they need individual support. However, if someone

starts to act charitably in a village, everybody will assume the person wants to become the mayor.”

“A modern-age slavery has developed after the change of regime, we can be grateful that it has happened without blood shed.”

“Ethnic discrimination exists, as it is not the knowledge or experience that is decisive but the ‘goodwill’ of the employer.”

2 Priorities and necessary actions

Some argue that “Everything is interrelated with everything else”, but if it comes to prioritising, “education must come first”. “The lack of education constitutes a major problem. The gap seems to have been widening between the Romany and non-Romany people’s educational level since the regime change”; therefore this has led to the Romanies being more and more excluded from the labour market. This is one of the reasons why life-long learning is so important. Unless they are integrated at least into the education and training systems preparing for employment, “Romanies will get employed even in the best case only in the grey or black economy for the rest of their lives.”

Almost all the opinions agree that making education a priority is the first task; education requires more support than the current practice, so that “children are able to learn even if the parents are unemployed”. Changing the parents’ attitude, providing the opportunity to learn and “enabling children to achieve higher levels of education than their parents” are of key importance. These may be giant steps with regards to inter- and intra-generational mobility.

Among the learning conditions “ensuring the living standards of families is the most important”. The parents’ employment mobility needs to be enhanced; “they need to be trained to be able to react to the supply of the labour force. (“We should not train ‘National Register of Courses’ certified park keepers!”)

Facilitating involvement in education and training is a key issue of life-long learning. The job centres do not consider offering a third qualification to someone already with two trades or professions a challenge. A challenge is to acquire the first qualification. If someone has a negative experience from school, they will find it difficult to start again. Life-long learning is the future but the foundations of this need to be laid in the present. “You can always bring the values out of an individual. It is important that the deprived recognise that they can help themselves.” “The complexity of the issue needs to be seen and shown.” However: “Willingness and strengthening of personal and community motivation must come first”.

Employment comes second in the list of priorities; housing is third (however, “they need to be prepared to live in a flat before they are provided a home, they need to learn what is it like to live in a flat, how to appreciate it with all the related costs and problems”); health care comes next. “Culture follows these on the list.”

Developing new forms of employment and ensuring permeability will also enhance the social integration of Romany people (for example we were asked “how some doing community service or participating in the social land programme can become a qualified worker with a stable living?”).

Those who claim that the system does not help them “will not choose legal employment because of the taxes and contributions”.

“In Hungary, people’s values are considered as an ethnic question.” The Romany community is especially sensitive to that. The majority society forces its values on to the minorities. It is therefore important to fight discrimination, to strengthen social partnerships, to make work places accommodating and to adjust the project funds system. It is also crucial to raise the number of programmes aimed at Romanies but only when and where they are necessary; otherwise they will lead to segregation. “If the management is vigilant”, they know to which point the Romany and non-Romany groups need to be handled separately.

“The plans are impressive”, some of the interviewees comment, “but most of them never get realised due to the lack of funding”.

3 Practice of educational mobility

“This notion does not exist” in the Romany population, as a lot of the respondents suggest. Most of the Romanies do not possess knowledge and skills valuable in the labour market, only ones that are temporary and outdated. The training institutions have different interests to helping a number of people getting employed. It is a “circulation system”; they “expect the re-trained people back”.

“A few years ago there were 38 courses in the National Register of Courses altogether that could be done with only 8 years of primary education. Now the number is even less, one usually needs at least 10 years of education to acquire a qualification.”

The Romanies participating in higher education and the graduates can be mentioned as good examples of educational mobility, “but what is also true is that a lot of today’s intellectuals did not start like that”. Not only has their professional and general knowledge changed due to education, but also their value system and maybe their attachment as well. “Becoming part of the middle class” is more and

more likely to bring with it a change in their identity, with it the need and practice of segregating them from the original group.

4 Dissemination of the practice of life-long learning

“There are basic problems that impede dissemination” – some people argue.

“The old Romany communities were ‘knowledge-based’ communities, but they are not like that today!”

“The Romanies cannot see themselves in today’s Hungarian society. If they cannot perceive that they have also contributed to forming that society, they are not going to feel contented in it. Dissemination cannot be achieved if the target group cannot see their place in society!” “The number of Romanies in the Hungarian society is too high for the country to be able to support so many under-qualified people.”

The Romany community in Hungary is far from homogenous: there are three distinct groups, all of which have their own character, therefore they need to be addressed considering that.”

According to several people “establishing the practice and dissemination (of life-long learning) are possible only if the conditions of primary and further education are changed and they are harmonised. It seems pointless to try and disseminate the practices for involving adults who have negative experience from school.”

Life-long learning “makes sense if the basic conditions are given”. Those involved need to be able to read and write; to store, synthesise and utilise information. Laying the foundations of life-long learning may start in primary school. In the current situation, the suitable measures and methods to educate generations of uneducated adults must be found after the period of statutory education, after the completion (or without the completion) of primary education. “To educate now is much cheaper than providing unemployment or other social benefits to growing social groups for a life.”

The dissemination of good practice is also unrealistic: there is no working practice to speak of. The lack of life-long learning is more pronounced in the case of Romany groups; however, the attitude is far from widespread in the country in general. The educational system is not ready to enable Romanies to get employed in marketable jobs. It is important that the Romanies participate also in education and training as well as social programmes.

The school system must be enabled to help the above processes, either by the already existing popular university movement, or establishing a modern school for workers, fully integrated into this system of popular education, with civil or-

ganisations and businesses made interested in the results. The current structures are unsuitable for these tasks, “the job centres do not respond to the real challenges and they cannot follow the events.” “The system of education does not work properly.”

Teachers training needs reforming as well. Filtering discrimination in schools is an urgent task (for example reducing the prejudices teachers hold; according to statistical data, only every second teacher is suitable to teach Romany children), just as training more Romany teachers is important.

Parental motivation plays an important role. Parents must be made interested, as in most cases there is no positive example that they could pass on to their children. The parents’ motivation must therefore be developed that would result in a positive attitude regarding this issue. In the first period financial help may be the most suitable approach, later on positive examples of successful (better) educated Romanies may become a source of motivation.

With all this, the most important issue is the socialisation of the younger generations, as the lack of this will reproduce unqualified people and their segregation from society.

Making nursery school education compulsory and watching the impacts on socialisation of mixed groups may be effective even at a young age. “Children should not only attend the preparation for school classes”; some people emphasise that it is not enough.

There are already initiatives in the school system: Romany pedagogical assistants could help, and more Romany teachers are necessary, as they would provide a positive example. Segregated education must be stopped (for example Romany children should never be sent home to sleep instead of attending classes).

Organising programmes that make children interested in learning at an early age could be considered as another solution. Learning must be made attractive for them. Children should not be expected to develop a great deal in a short period of time; the system should be more relaxed (less time concerned) and should allow more time for tasks. Deprived children should not be made to compete as they start with a handicap anyway.

Nursery school and the lower years of primary school are the most crucial; everything gets decided there!

Discrimination must be prevented (with the establishment of colleges working in a scholarship system, to support deprived children).

A scholarship system should also be introduced in primary schools; it could work as a motivation both for the children and their parents.

Another important factor is the attitude of the non-Romany classmates and how it can be shaped. Positive attitudes from the peer groups could work as a strong motivating force.

“Integration cannot be possible without training teachers who accept the Romany culture and foster the social integration of the Romany population.” A well prepared Romany or non-Romany teacher can do a lot to help Romany children to cope with the “cultural shock” of school standards.

Learning material that is easier to understand and to communicate needs to be developed, written in a language that everybody can relate to (not the language of “academics”): “simple people need easy-to-understand material which does not use technical terms”. “Even the leading politicians would not read long documents of dozens of pages; they get somebody to write a summary.” The Romany intellectuals also need to communicate better with the less educated majority, “when an educated Romany political leader attends forums, it may not be effective enough because he or she is usually not able to establish the right contact with the Romanies”. Romany people can be motivated by positive examples. “If you finish this course, you can earn as much as this, get as far as that...” “But positive news is no news for the media...”

“The Romany minorities need to be better positioned as well. At the moment, 90% of them believe they are politicians, but they are not, they are members of representations of interest!”

Several of the programmes are aimed not only at Romanies, but for some reason this is not communicated”, some of the interviewees suggested: the press makes it look like that “it was the Romanies who got something again!”

There are some layer-specific needs. “The Ministry of Employment and Work uses 18–20 active measures to help unemployed people back to the labour market (for example, paying their contributions instead of them, supporting their salaries if they get employed, etc.). No matter how well-structured these actions are, they are not enough on their own.” “Complex labour market programmes may offer a better solution. The training courses run by the programmes should last longer.”

It presented a dilemma for the interviewees as to whether “general or target-oriented programmes should take place”. The government view is that there is the need for both. But if there is no proper foundation for a general programme, the target groups may react in a very sensitive manner. Therefore, “the programmes must be worded more carefully”, some respondents suggested, and there is demand for focused projects as well. The Romany groups must be addressed appropriately; “they need to be involved in the joint work”.

Some of the opinions suggest that “offering alternatives may also assist in building a motivational base”. This may be the demonstration of a trade or profession that is not far off from the Romany attitude (stable hand, goldsmith, etc.). “The Romany people are not stupid, but they are not willing to learn because of their traditions and negative socialisation relating to education.” “The different alternatives must be drawn out in personal co-operation with the different people.” However, this is not a routine and simple task.

According to the Romany office holders interviewed, “there should be Romany civil servants working in the de-centralised public administration as well, not only in the central administration.” There is a need for local decision making as well as national ones. The media also must help to raise awareness that Romany people exist. (“For example, Romany children could be shown in nappy adverts.”)

5 Role of digital knowledge and computing skills

The question of digital knowledge has also divided the respondents. Several people argued in connection with computing skills that “lots of things are not right”, although these have or may have a major part to play in the integration of the Romany population.

The digital world appears to be the symbol of the 21st century, so “Romanies cannot be left out of it either”. At the moment there is a vacuum in this area. The willing and interested Romanies should be encouraged to learn computing and entrepreneurial skills and this may result in filling the vacuum. Digital knowledge is important, but “not for the unemployed who cannot even read or write”. E-learning can be realised only among a certain layer of Romanies, for example among young Romanies with A-levels “who have concrete objectives”. Unfortunately, these are in scarce supply.

A more differentiated approach and complex, layered programmes are crucial.

“Digital knowledge is not redemption, but is certainly a positive thing.” Real help and accessible services are needed, not just token gesture programmes.”

“People who have never seen a computer in their lives, who are not aware of the benefits of computing and who very often have not got enough money even for bread, are not going to buy a computer.” A development of the attitudes is also necessary so that “the computer does not appear as a scary object and as a piece of equipment used for exams.” Beyond the ECDL course and basic level computing courses, “there is a need for many more practical applications to be shown and taught”. The “Sulinet” programme (where concessions are offered to families with school children to buy computers) “does not seem worth it” for the majority of Romanies with low incomes.

It is important that the Romanies also acquire useful and useable computing skills. “It would be worth investing in it at national level. The Ministry of Computing and Communication equipped Romany community centres with computers and also established a digital secondary school. The development of the former programme stopped for some reason, it would be worth continuing with that.”

“Romany children are especially attracted to the digital world”, but no progress can be expected while the families do not have computers, the schools are

poorly equipped, and when these children continue to “live in unstimulating settlements in depressed areas”.

Developing a digital culture is necessary from the point of view of both the work place and learning. “For the people who cannot even pay the utility bills, computers and the Internet are out of the question.”

Romany families must get support to be able to buy computers. It is important that this kind of support reaches the rural areas as well, “as families are larger and poorer in those areas”.

“The Ministry of Computing and Communication had already taken actions (digital college, organising related courses) but these stopped presumably due to lack of funding.”

“The best programme initiated by the Ministry of Computing and Communication” was the establishment of the Digital Secondary School in Miskolc (www.digitaliskozezpiskola.hu). In the first year, members of Romany civil organisations and Romany minority authorities could apply. The school offers A-levels and a qualification in computing. The students study and receive their tasks through the Internet, a major advantage of this is that no travelling is necessary. The programme has been running for 3 years, as a part-time course but has not been accredited yet. It is now accessible for anyone. The establishing of a digital college and making the course available for everybody are also among the plans. Another aim is to develop the programme into a nation-wide network with several centres.

6 Co-operations beyond ministries

Inter-Ministerial Committee of Romany Affairs

The predecessor of the committee was set up in 1995; the current organisation was formed in 1999.

Deputy political secretaries represent the ministries involved. However, “participation is usually only at referent or head of department level. This may not necessarily be a problem though, as the political secretaries may not see the issues in the depth required.” The Committee operates along the lines of the 1021/2004 government order; the various ministries determine its tasks.

The Committee works as a new way of monitoring the developments as well, through which (in theory) the ministries receive feedback on their programmes. “No continuous and actual work is done as the ministries report once a year on the activities undertaken that year.”

The main objective of the Romany Programme Support Network is to enable people even in the worst situation to apply for project funds.

Decade of the Romany Integration Programme (www.romadecade.org)

The programme was designed to run between 2005 and 2015 with the participation of 9 governments of 8 countries (9 because of Serbia and Montenegro). The initiative started in 2003, with a conference hosted in Budapest entitled “Romanies in the enlarging Europe. Challenges of the Future.” The rationale of the programme is to promote the co-operation of the countries in the region involved in Romany integration (5–6 million Romanies are affected altogether), and as a political resolution they agreed to undertake joint research and devise action plans in four key areas (education, health care, employment and housing).

The programme aims to speed up the process of improving the social and economic situation of the Romany population, and also to contribute to the positive attitude forming processes of public opinion.

Forum of the European Romanies and Gypsies

The Forum works alongside the Council of Europe. The first plenary meeting was held in December 2005. It is an international civil organisation, not an inter-governmental one, working as an umbrella organisation. The Romany civil organisations from every country delegate members to the Forum, consisting of 75 people. It enters a special agreement with the Council of Europe. At the Forum, the representatives of the civil organisations can make suggestions and recommendations in areas relevant to Romany issues.

Széchenyi Entrepreneurial Programme (Romany Projects)

Several millions of forints (HUF) were spent on supporting Romany small and medium-size enterprises in the framework of the programme last year. 400 new jobs were established, capital of 2 billion HUF was mobilised, and 220 project bids were submitted.

Romany Enterprise Support and Innovation Centre

The planned location of the centre is in Mátészalka. István Zsukk (Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County) is in charge of writing the feasibility study for that development.

The building would spread over the net area of 2000 m². The support includes the attractive rents, as the enterprises are charged only a third of the market price. The amount of the rent would be raised every year, and after 5 years new businesses would be provided with the opportunity to move into the centre.

The centre would organise training events, provide support, help developing business plans, and provide accountants, solicitors, and conference rooms for the Romany entrepreneurs and those who employ Romanies.

VII RECOMMENDATIONS

1 Highlights from the recommendations determined in the literature on life-long learning among Romanies

There is hardly any doubt that the situation of the Romanies can be improved only with extremely hard efforts – and even with them it is going to be incredibly difficult to break out of the vicious circle that the lack of education, low prestige jobs and unemployment create (Polónyi, 2002).

- Three important elements of the *educational and political methods* must be highlighted. These are: a defined anti-discrimination policy, ensuring the rights of minorities in education, support systems to ease the differences in opportunities caused by the unfavourable social and economic position originating mostly in Romany identity (Radó, 1997).
- A *radical change of attitude in the area of education* is necessary. At the moment, the prejudices of the whole of the society are apparent among the teachers, headmasters and school managers, educational politicians as well; furthermore, even some of the experts are unable to escape the trap of comfort prejudices. Due to the activities of the latter group, the existing stereotype of the “criminal Romanies” has been accompanied by the stereotype of the “impoverished, deprived” Romanies, in other words the stereotype of Romanies being of lower rank. This is enforced by the media, even by the so-called Romany media. In a situation like this it can hardly be expected that the basic needs of children get any attention. In most cases the teachers do not even attempt to understand what the Romany pupils and students think of themselves, of others, and of the world in general, and what sort of expectations they may have. They are told off for not being able to fit in to the tried and tested pattern and then get segregated when they try to (Romano Rácz, 2002).
- Programmes aimed at helping deprived regions to catch up would result in: improvements in the employment situation, easing of social tensions and forcing back prejudices, as well as strengthening the initiatives of cultural self-organisation (Romano Rácz, 2002). Péter Farkas also draws attention to the fact that improving the success levels of Romany children at school is only possible with the help of complex programmes, which set out to de-

velop the pedagogical methods, as well as to assist in the parents' education and employment and also attempting to improve living conditions.

- Education of *people starting with disadvantages in the labour market and/or learning* (people with low educational level, the handicapped, Romany people, etc.) must be provided with extra support. A basic condition of their success in education and of their participation in labour force training is the discovery of suitable and continuous motivation. Pre-requisites of this kind of motivation are the establishment of an interest in a career and the development of the abilities to learn. The education of the deprived groups (according to the experience in Hungary) can be ensured and developed by complex programmes, which include remedial catching up courses offered before starting vocational or specialised education, multi-stage modular professional education as well as work experience and job seeking training (Zachár, 2003).
- The *organisational and institutional conditions of life-long learning* for deprived youth and adults need improving. The main objective is to provide more support for the learning programmes from the point of view of the labour market to make them more attractive to the deprived layers and improve “access” to labour market training opportunities. To achieve this objective, the enforcement of the schools and basic educational institutions for adults and the establishment of the so-called “*second chance*” schools are essential tasks. A consortium of institutions that deal with the training and education of deprived children and adults (such as schools, regional job centres, training enterprises and civil organisations) could logically establish this type of institution (Zachár, 2003).
- Making the completion of primary school, the acquisition of a first qualification and in the long run the acquisition of secondary education general practice should be considered a key task. This needs to be supported by incentives both to the institutions and to the individuals, in a more organised manner. The training of the active but deprived youth and older adults for the labour market should be considered a special task. To realise this, various complex, highly funded programmes are necessary (Zachár, 2003).

The initiative to offer the Romany minority modular specialist courses linked to employment that comply with certain criteria is based on the value system, the expectations and the learning culture of the majority society. The criteria can be seen to be the following:

- *Complexity*: the general characteristics that the employers appreciate (such as persistence, regularity, reliability and precision) need to be developed, the external factors helping with job seeking and making assimilation at

work easier need to be ensured (ways of dressing, behaviour, cleanliness), and primary school and marketable qualifications need to be provided.

- *Principle of gradience*: the programme consists of 3–6 months modules, which link two to three objectives, for example: farmers training + household work and gardening + developing reading, counting and communication skills; agriculture or hospitality of crafts + accomplishing primary education + raising health awareness, etc.
- *Family orientated approach*: regarding the fact that very often both parents are unemployed, their education and employment needs supporting.
- *Distinguished objectives*: it must be taken into account that the traditional female role in the Romany community cannot be altered. In the education of young women, who may be themselves raising several children, general education must be ensured; the level of general knowledge must be developed and it should offer preparation for raising children. The Romany families must also become partners of the schools so that they are able to take care of the children and help them with their studies. Besides the above, another aim is to pass on knowledge and skills that are useful in the labour market (considering demand). The education of men can also have different objectives, in the light of their existing qualification, age, health conditions and personal ideas.
- *Suitable income* (worthy of human existence): education integrated into work can only be viable and effective if it provides the participants an income that covers the costs of living. If the subsistence level reaches 35-40 thousand HUF per person per month, then 180–200 thousand HUF are necessary to provide a living for a family of five.
- *Improving housing conditions, reducing costs*: if the unfavourable housing conditions that are typical today do not improve, Romany children are not likely to be successful at school. In a run down and overcrowded home parents will not be able to relax either, therefore the re-training programme is in danger as well. Suggestion: training men in trades in the construction industry and agriculture; or in the areas of community development projects: home improvement, gardening, and animal breeding.
- *Managing conflicts, with an integrated and regional approach*: the majority will only accept the generous support based on needs provided to the Romanies without conflict, if their living conditions change at the same time. Support for the Romany minority cannot stand on its own; it must be part of complex small regional programmes that will improve infrastructure as well as the living conditions and employment opportunities of the majority as well. (Complex projects where the beneficiaries are the majority population as well as the Romanies may provide room for co-operation between the two groups.) The Romany educational and employment programmes may

be considered as up market employment programmes for the majority as well (*Farkas, 2002*).

A group of intellectuals feeling responsible for the education of Romanies, civil organisations and experts in Romany education presented a complete resolution plan in 2001. This plan emphasised the importance of handling separately ethnic and nationality education and social, catching up training and stressed the dangers of mingling the two areas. It also suggested the development of a measurable and fundable structure that will provide opportunity also for the Romany youth to acquire new marketable skills. It is strongly argued that “The tasks of nationality education must solely consider the preservation of the national culture and language, and the establishment of the cultured coexistence of different nationalities”, therefore the practices that reinforce segregation must be separated from it. “Social problems which impede being successful at school at a mass level, must be addressed by social, socio-cultural and socio-pedagogical measures. The nationality-related methods are not designed to do that.” The plan also suggests an urgent revision of the methods for tackling the problems and establishing communication and co-operation among all the parties involved (*Ambrus et al. 2001*).

2 Further suggestions

It is well known, and was also confirmed by our research supported by the NFI, that further more systematic Romany and Romany – non-Romany comparative research is necessary to enable the establishment and development of educational and training effectiveness. Despite the shallow simple accounts of public opinion, we do not have sufficient synthesised real knowledge in this area. Therefore the effectiveness of governmental and other resources used is much lower than it could be.

- Education is a significant mobility channel in the open societies. It plays a crucial role in the integration of social groups that are lagging behind and in enhancing the effectiveness of equality policies. For these reasons we find it important to assess the impacts of the integrated, multi-cultural education on the aspirations of Romany (and non-Romany) groups that are left behind as well as the impacts on the notion of social integration of their environment.
- As the relationships between the different sorts of capital are determined by social-regional inequalities, it is important to examine how the traditional social-regional inequality mechanisms get diluted and what sorts of break-out points they offer among the participants of integrated education.

- Since the ‘long’ decade of change, the cultural capital (a notion of Pierre Bourdieu) has influenced the aspirations of wide layers of society in Hungary, a notion which includes the individual’s educational level, qualifications and general knowledge as well. As a major part of the cultural capital comes from the family, it plays an important role in passing on privileged social situations, as the different familial subcultures will prepare children for the school career differently. Max Weber puts the same idea forward when he observed that the school certificates serve to monopolise chances in life.
- This is another reason why the educational initiatives that target these issues also inform the lagging-behind groups about the essence of the hidden curriculum; making the acceptance of the norm systems, of the patterns of behaviour at school and of rules possible. In summary we can say that beyond the language used, the more or less frequent contact with the “high culture” taught and required in schools (such as the number of books, visiting cultural institutions, extra classes, topics of conversation within the close family, etc.) will have a significant impact on the children’s performance at school and later in life.
- The nation-wide social land programme that has been running successfully for more than a decade is an excellent socio-political method with its educational and socialisation related functions. The further development of the programme is also necessary from the point of view that it may reduce social marginalisation and poverty; it may establish the opportunity of long-term active social support among the groups left behind. A group of experts and politicians working under the guidance of a political officer in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development could focus on widening the land use programme. A government order is expected in the spring of 2006, which is expected to determine the most important issues.
- The courses in Romany Studies (aiming to change attitudes, based on research results) organised for experts and officials (from teachers to public officers) who are in daily contact with Romany people may assist the social integration of the deprived Romany youth.

The Romany referents of the main offices are typically working in the human political areas of the relevant ministries. The position of the jobs and the tasks within the ministries indicates that the human political nature of the tasks related to Romany integration have been recognised within government.

- According to experience gained from the interviews that were conducted for this research, the establishment of the actual and continuous co-ordinating functions of the Inter-Ministerial Committee of Romany Affairs seems necessary. This would ensure a more focused use of the resources that are often dissipated.

- Dealing with Romany affairs (a task at ministerial level at the moment) must be a compulsory task with central funding at regional and local level as well.
- The further co-ordination of the operation of the relevant ministries is a necessary task.

Alongside social discrimination that does not seem to reduce, the danger of segregation and lagging behind is already significant and is getting more so. There is also a lack of information to be observed among the long-term unemployed about their possibilities. Even the experts do not always recognise the problems causing the disadvantages and discrimination in their context. At the same time, the public opinion of the experts is not coherent either when considering the main directions of actions.

- It would be worth devoting time and suitable resources to develop action plans to help the Romany groups with catching up. These action plans should be based on comprehensive research, accepted by a consensus of the involved experts, politicians and representatives of the interest groups. The realisation of the plan must be based on the concentration of resources.
- Long-term thinking is or would be crucial. The 2–3 year programmes based on the complex and integrated development concept and operative programmes to integrate Romanies into society should be sped up, with the help of significant EU funding. The complexity of the problems makes complex handling and management necessary. Establishing stable resources and EU-compatible monitoring are also important.
- It would be important to set up a National Crisis Management Service (with centres at small regional or other levels in the areas affected), with the involvement of experts who are familiar with the situation, the process and methods of deprivation management.
- The institutionalisation of ‘training the trainers’ style of courses cannot wait any longer.
- The institutions of adult education (secondary schools and more significantly higher education institutions) are located in towns and cities. The need for life-long learning and personal motivation may prove insufficient and disappear in the Romany families that live in very poor conditions, because of the costs of travelling and accommodation, as well as the costs of education and the course materials. Therefore, to realise even the first steps of life-long learning, physical and/or virtual accessibility of schools (distance learning, Internet-based courses) must be established. Providing access to course materials is also important (establishing the foundations of IT education).

- Demonstrating the practice of positive ‘Romany-related’ initiatives at local and regional level and supporting the spreading of these practices could also contribute to the effectiveness of the integration.

Several earlier and current research studies indicate that a number of factors contribute to the persistence of long-term unemployment. These include personal characteristics, the wider economic environment, the regional characteristics, interest, etc. Therefore, tackling the problem of unemployment (being without a job) must use a complex approach. The programmes devoted to address unemployment must be in line with the reforms aiming to improve the educational level of the Hungarian Romanies and of the poorest layers in society; as this is the only way to achieve results in the attempt to close the gap between the most deprived groups and the majority society. The reduction of discrimination in the labour market can only be achieved if more rigorous monitoring and sanctions against the employers are introduced that deter everyone from using discriminative methods.

- An important element may be the development of courses for the players that influence the labour market from the employer’s side, which make the financial managers, entrepreneurs, regional development experts, and teachers, etc. more ‘humane’.
- The tax and contribution concessions and loans available for unemployed people who choose self-employment must be more differentiated, taking the (small) regional differences in the socio-economic development level more into account.
- The passive support and benefit systems must be revised and new incentives should be built into these that will motivate the active long-term unemployed people to return to the legal labour market.
- In case the number of jobs in the primary labour market is very low in the settlement and the small region, it would be sensible to offer employment in community development projects rather than forcing them to do community service, which is considered low-prestige and degraded in general public opinion. It is however crucial from the integration’s point of view that Romany and non-Romany unemployed undertake such tasks together; and there are no jobs that are ‘reserved’ for the Romanies only.
- The long-term unemployed should be motivated to participate in character development and other courses with a much more effective support system, as the benefits they receive nowadays are hardly enough to provide a living for the family. As a result of this, at the moment most of them would choose jobs in the black (or grey) economy that ensures an income in the short term, even though it creates deprived conditions in the long run, rather than education.

- It is important that the expert approach tackling long-term unemployment differently in each case, both at a personal level and in case of groups in different conditions. We can often hear unemployed people complain that regardless of their education, age and other characteristic features they are offered the same advice and opportunities from the experts at job centres, which makes them feel this provision of support is just an automatic service with little efficiency.
- The skilled unemployed who have sufficient motivation must be provided with mediator-type help to support their job seeking efforts. The job centres have shown a lot of improvements in this area in the last months of 2005.
- The people with low motivation and limited (or for some reason restricted) human resources must be provided both character development courses and vocational education.
- There is a need for continuous employment programmes and other courses that improve the chances of the unemployed that live in severely deprived conditions and are pushed to the periphery of the labour market.
- Tackling long-term unemployment must focus on the development of the individuals' ability to adapt as well as on the improvement of the environmental conditions.
- To stop providing assistance becoming an automatic mechanism, mental regeneration programmes must be organised for the professionals working in the areas of employment and social care.
- Several studies point out the anomalies involved with community service, therefore rethinking what sort of strategic objectives this should serve is necessary; and its operational and financial conceptions must be reformed as well.
- The recent study also revealed that the long-term unemployed living at different levels of the settlement hierarchy often face different problems. It also confirmed the fact that the residents of small villages are in the most deprived position from the employment perspective for a combination of reasons; difficulty of access, lack of information, etc. Therefore we suggest the establishment of a 'mobile employment information service' based on the examples of mobile libraries, post offices and similar initiatives. The service could visit the people concerned, so that the residents of inclusion settlements who have difficulties travelling due to financial reasons (or for lack of motivation) could also be given another chance.
- The Ministry of Youth, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities employs people from the target group to provide a preliminary opinion on the initiatives during the preparation process of laws and regulations, which en-

ables the legislation to be drawn up to reflect on the real issues facing the groups. A similar initiative could also work in the case of the ministry concerned, which would also serve the aim of providing opportunities for the long-term unemployed.

- In the case of the complex programmes that were often mentioned as our suggestions, the most deprived groups should enjoy positive discrimination. The resources necessary for this objective need to be ensured by involving national and international sources at every step, but at a faster pace than that demonstrated by the current practice.
- This makes the enforcement of the non-profit institution system that is responsible for the delivery of these programmes necessary, both by providing more substantial financial support and by providing continuous professional development courses for the staff within these institutions.
- Strengthening employment partnerships is another important task, where the active involvement of local authorities and small regional partnerships would be of most importance in terms of tackling the problem effectively.
- The government and the ministries must improve the relationship and flow of communication between the various elements of the institutional system.
- Furthermore, there is the need for a legislation method concerning the laws themselves as well as looking at the support system that would be effective in reducing the regional differences.

The need to preserve the Romany cultural heritage (traditions and attitudes) and to speed up the integration process by paying attention to many of the traditions, unique cultural features and language use were presented as hypothetical suggestions during the research.

- New ways of passing on Romany traditions must be established (such as pedagogical programmes, regional folklore museums, local history collections, crafts workshops, etc.). The effectiveness of the family's role (of parents and grandparents) in that is diminishing.
- The public educational programmes at local level should be more attractive for and recipient of Romany groups. This may result in the widening of the social relationship network of Romanies (which is limited mostly to relatives and neighbours at the moment); and it also may reduce the cultural gap between the Romany and non-Romany groups.
- Character and community development programmes need to be given more emphasis in the pedagogical programmes of schools. Growing self-confidence, the ability to express oneself, the experience of inclusion and the community were all factors that were listed as motivators in the acquisition of higher educational levels.

- The data of the path model analysis reveals that the role of Romany mothers (as a family influence) in the growth of the children's cultural capital is becoming more important. However, the low proportion of Romany women in employment will negatively impact on the development of a positive cultural climate. Because of the above reasons, complex character development and employment programmes need to be put in place that will support the described socialisation trends from both the employment and the education perspectives.
- The opinion formers in the community play a significant role in the dissemination of the theory of life-long learning among Romany groups. Therefore we must reach the people or groups who participate actively in the life and work of the community. The current research suggests that the role of the Romany minority authorities is becoming more significant.
- New ways of gathering information and new info-communicational technologies are also spreading among Romany groups. Our research indicates that the reasons for not using these are more often cognitive. Therefore it would be appropriate to offer more training programmes aimed at reducing the digital gap between Romanies and non-Romanies, i.e. disseminating computing skills based on Internet access at community level (libraries, community centres, e-Hungary Internet access points, etc.).

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