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Early school education among Romani children.

According to the opinion common among psychologists and pedagogists early school education is such a period in the child's life, during which it learns rules that are in the society and also receives abilities essential for building relations between human. The researches carried in the whole world show, that period of life till the age of seven has a great impact on the future place and role, which a child will have in the society system. Besides the bringing up and education mistakes and neglections, which are done at this period of child's developme, will be more difficult to correct in the subsequent years.

Kindergardens and schools of all kind are the space of meeting children's coming from various nationalities, of a various economic situation and the model of relations between it's members. Early school period and primary school elementary education are an excellent conditions to familiarise children with a large diversity, which is present in the society, with which it will encounter for the rest of his future life.

Though big changes for better at this field, Roma of Poland are still unwilling towards sending children to kindergardens being affraid of children's safety. They are convinced, that Romani bringing up, which they give them is exactly the one and the best what their children need. One of the reasons for their fears is conviction of the risk their children being deprived of Romani cultural, social and language identity.

In the tradition of Polish Roma there is a total lack of will of sending children to kindergardens. The copies of archival documents possessed by the Polish Roma Union from years 1890 – 1987, purchased from many state archives in Poland prove this. One the reasons for this is a lack pressure and the instruments of persuasion towards Romani parents. In the result of frequent lack of education among parents and associated with it lack of feeling necessity of learning children cannot expect any support from their side in terms of help in learning or the supervision on their school attending. Lack of early education in case of Romani children means a rapid and a difficult to accept change of so far lifestyle.

Those fears are absolutely unjustified, because in the vast majority of schools attended by Romani children there are employed assistants of Romani education, who play a role of some kind of bridge between parents, teachers and schools' executives. Besides in many schools work integration day – rooms, where Romani and Polish children and children of other nationalities learn common life in the society by common games, plays, trips and private lessons.

During last 2 years in Poland there were issued first primers for Romani children in the world. They were written in languages of 2 largest groups of Roma in Poland: Polska Roma and Bergitka Roma. Their author is Romani poet, sculpturer and an activist at the state

and international level – Karol Parno Gierliński. These book give Romani children essential informations about sorrounding world, with an emphasis on the country of their residence Republic of Poland, but with taking into account culture and customs specifics of Romani people.

In 2008 the Foundation for Social Integration “Prom” issued didactic primer for children of 4 to 8. The book has a title “Romowie – Roma – Romanes” and describes Romani history and in its content has many pictures showing described events.

The next book, who is the first book of its kind in Poland is the book for children “I write, read and draw”. Its publisher is Polish Roma Union based in Szczecinek. This association is also on the trial of preparing “A small Roma encyclopedia”, which will be a written in an easy way collection of most important informations on history, culture, civilsation, biology, geography, technique, sport and other issues. The 2 – languaged encyclopedia will be issued in this year.

Another problem in the field of education is the fact of inappropriate using educational funds destined for Romani children by communes and towns authorities. Polish Roma Union is often an addressee of information about such kind of abuselements. Local administration very unwillingly answers the questions of using those funds. Lack of engagement of unit, who had received funds was the reason why Polish Roma Union started carefully check how were used those funds. In order to do it Polish Roma Union sent letters to all those units with the question about the ways spending those money. The received answers were often not satisfying. The verification of data delivered by Romani education assistants showed the education unit had been giving false informatio. In fact in the large number of schools nothing had been done.

The association receives also signals about cases of persecution of Romani children by teachers because of their using Romani language in the conversation between themselves. Such actions are totally forbidden by the act on national and ethnical minorities of 2005 and the European Framework Convention on Protection National and Ethnical Minorities, which gives their member freedom of using their mother’s language.

As we can see Romani children is a great problem. Anyway this problem is to be solved not only by organisations, associations or subjects working for Roma. Romani children’s parents have a great responsibilty too. The organisations like ours can only create conditions proper for school obligation implementation, can deliver educational materials designed particularly for Romani children. They cannot supervise the way and efficiency of school attendance implementation. This task belongs to parents and it is quite normal.

The encourage in the elements of Romani culture in kindergardens, like activity of Romani musical and dancing bands could lead to the increase of number of children attending kindergardens. The whole process of small Roma education should take place in the common schools and kindergardens attending by children of various nationalities. Common classes, where children would learn diversity present in the society could be an excellent instrument of integration, a subject of common learning and playing, as well as the basis for building mutual Polish and Romani relations, where the hermetics and isolation dissappear.

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