



# Roma people and education in the Czech Republic

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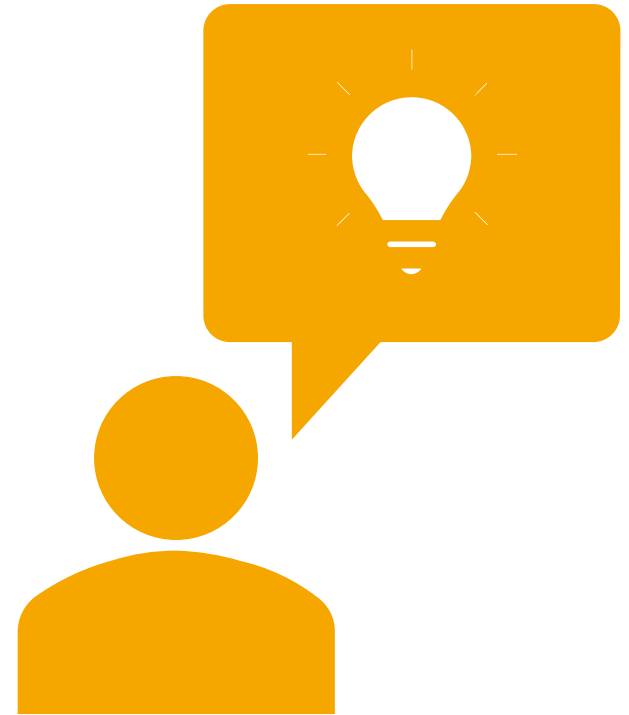
# My connection to the topic


- Thesis about discrimination of Roma high-schoolers in the Czech Republic
- Collecting data with Roma high-schoolers for a research project – educational computer game for schools about discrimination of young Roma people
- Volunteering at **NERO kolektiv** – leisure activities for (mostly but not necessarily) Roma children from segregated areas in Brno

## Brainstorming activity

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What are the **challenges/obstacles** faced by Roma people in the Czech society?





# Historical context

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# State-controlled assimilation during the communist era



- Ban on **roaming (nomadism)**
- Depreciation of Romani **language** and **culture**
- Destruction of Roma **values** - **demoralization**
- Liquidation of Roma **settlements** in Slovakia → new isolated areas in bigger Czech cities
- Not perceived as an ethnic group but as a „socio-pathological population group“



Source: <https://www.romanovodori.cz/etno/romove-pod-vlivem-komunismu/>

## Positive aspects:

- Eliminating illiteracy and increasing the qualifications of Roma
- Providing previously unavailable health and social care to Roma
- Equal rights by law

After the „velvet revolution“ (1989)



**Společenství Romů na Moravě**  
Romano jekhetaniben pre Morava



## 1998 - Roma Secondary School of Social Work in Kolín

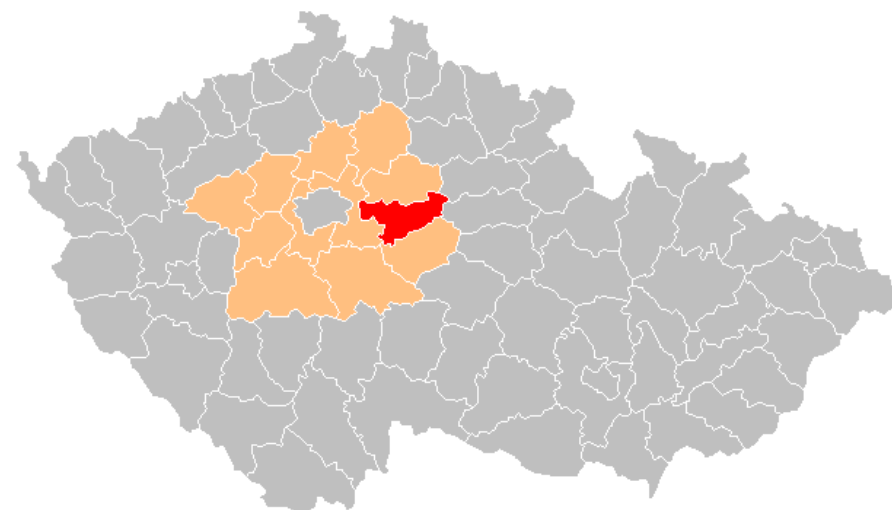
„Its goal was, and still is, primarily to improve the living conditions of Roma in the Czech Republic, mainly through culture and education. Thus, in September 1998, teaching began in Kolín. The main objective was to at least partially address the unsatisfactory level of education among Roma in the Czech Republic. Future graduates are being prepared to work as social workers within their own communities, in public administration, or in social institutions.“ (Tišer, 2007)

## V Kolíně byla otevřena Romská střední škola sociální

9. října 1998



- V září byla v Kolíně otevřena nová škola pod názvem Romská střední škola sociální. Do prvního ročníku je zapsáno dvačtyřicet studentů, budoucích sociálních právníků či poradců pro etnické menšiny, kteří nyní přes týden bydlí společně na internátě.







Roma people as  
a homogeneous  
ethnic group?

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# Different names for Roma people in Europe

## How Roma people call themselves

- Sintí 
- Manush 
- Kale 
- Romanichal 

## Names for Roma people created by the majority

- Gypsies (English) - from the words Egypcians, Egypcions, Egypsies
- Gitanos (Spanish) - from the words Egiptianos, Egitanos
- Cigán, Cikán, Cikány, Zigeneur, Zingar, Tsigan - from the Greek word Atsigános

*„And once, our teacher told us that he had a Roma girl in his class who said that it was better to be called Cigán, that we Roma don't like being called Roma. I wanted to speak up and say that it's not true, that even if that girl doesn't like it, it's not like that for others, for others it's an insult to say Cigán. In my opinion, no one has the right to say Cigán, we can call ourselves Cigáni among each other.“*

- Linda, 17

# Roma people in the Czech Republic

- **Slovak Roma** - 75-85 %
- **Wallachian Roma** - 10 %
  - in Romani: *vlachike Roma/vlašika Rom*, in Czech *Olašští Romové*)
- **Other Roma people** - 10-15 %
  - **Hungarian Roma**
  - **Remaining original Czech Roma**
  - **Sintí (German)**

# Social structure of Roma people in Czechia

**Czech Govt report: Half of Romani population are middle class, half in social exclusion**



ČTK ČTK

07 June 2017

4 minute read

[Čtěte česky](#) 

# Excluded living areas

- Film ***The House with No Exit*** (2024)

***Dům bez východu***

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g4q6GP8\\_xQU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g4q6GP8_xQU)

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/nerokolektiv/photos>









# Discussion

**What kind of discrimination do Roma children face at schools? Which obstacles do they face? How does it influence their educational process and their future aspirations?**

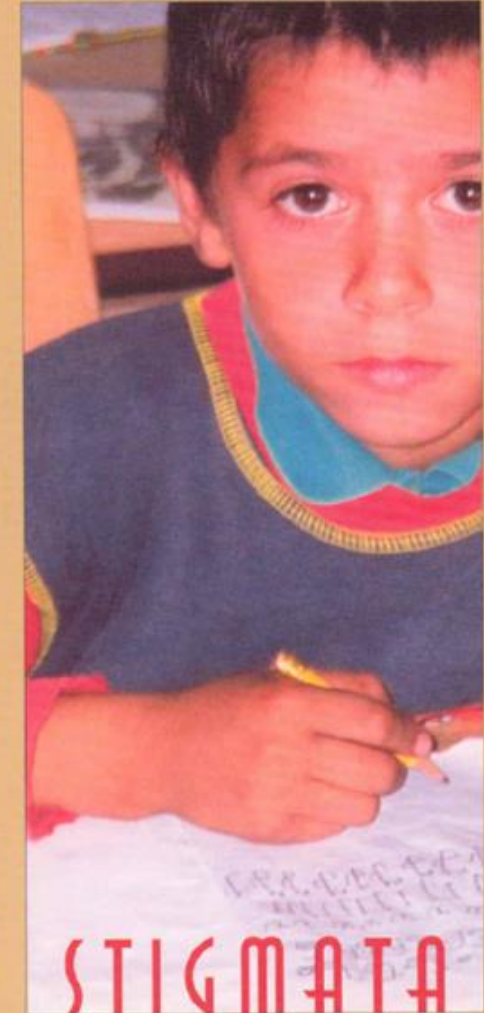


Child from an excluded area at elementary school

High school Roma student from middle class



# Segregation at schools



Segregated Schooling of Roma  
in Central and Eastern Europe



April 23, 2015

## Czech Republic: Systematic discrimination against Romani children in schools

Picture: Amnesty International.

Romani children face daily discrimination and segregation in schools due to the Czech government's longstanding failure to address deeply engrained prejudice within the education system, said Amnesty International in a new report launched today.

“

By failing to properly address this issue for years the Czech government is not only breaching European Union and human rights law but is restricting the life chances of tens of thousands of Czech citizens. Let's call this what it is: racism, pure and simple.

**Salil Shetty, Secretary General, Amnesty International.**

## European Commission warns Czechia: End the discrimination of Romani children in the schools



ROME



Gwendolyn Albert


03 October 2024

4 minute read

Čtěte česky 

*„We were mixed together; it wasn't sorted so that one class would be Roma and the other Gadge. It was still at a good level back then, and even the teachers were always nice. If there was ever a problem, we resolved it. Of course, in the class, I spent more time with the Roma because I understood them better, and we got along more easily. (...) But now my brother and sister go to that school, and the school is really awful... They sort students based on whether you're Roma or Gadge, or even based on behavior. For example, my brother is in a class where there are only Roma students, but then there's a class one level lower where there are exclusively Gadge. The teachers act differently now too, compared to when I was there; they pick on certain people... (...) On the outside, it seems like a good school, but when you get to know it more deeply, it's completely different, and it makes me sad because when I attended that school, it was still okay. We even went to tournaments back then, and sometimes we even won, but now they don't go anywhere outside the school because they just say, 'Oh, they don't need that.'“*

- Linda, 17



## KAŠPAROVÁ, Irena a Adéla SOURALOVÁ, 2014. „From Local to Gypsy School“: Homogenization of School Class and Changing Role of Teachers.

- *„The negative reputation is thus shaped at the intersection of three factors: the exclusionary potential of **the place of residence, the economic status of families, and ethnicity.**“*
  - Stigmatization of the locality and „Roma schools“
    - Labeling and prestige
  - Parents' ideas about the school they send their child to
    - Parents from the majority x Roma parents
  - Upbringing/socialization x education – values in conflict
- P. Bourdieu (1998) – symbolic capital
- Cultural capital – reproduction of inequalities at schools
  - Inherited cultural capital creates a privilege (x intellectual abilities)

# Gendalos: „ stories of good practice“

- <https://www.gendalos.cz/pribehy-studentu/>





Sources:

- <https://www.eduin.cz/clanky/prace-se-spravedlnosti-je-pro-me-jednou-z-nejvetsich-vyzev-ve-vzdelavani-rika-janette-motlova/>
- <https://www.megaknihy.cz/fejtony-rozhovory/4351029-ciganka.html>

# Summary and what can be done

„Our education system has not yet sufficiently taken into account the Roma pupil and his specificities.” (Horváthová, 2002: s. 57)

- Desegregation and integration
- Education of pedagogy workers (+ their individual approach)
- Roma teaching assistants, Roma counselors
- Roma representation in textbooks
  - SPIELHAUS, Riem a Simona SZAKÁCS-BEHLING, c2020. The representation of Roma in European textbooks [online]. Council of Europe [cit. 2024-12-11]. Dostupné z: <https://repository.gei.de/server/api/core/bitstreams/ba4f051f-eafa-4b73-98d6-eab3957d17c6/content>



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