



Peterborough EAL
Hub

'celebrating diversity'



Queen Katharine
Academy

COMPAS
CHARITY



ENGAGING ROMA IN EDUCATION

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RATIONALE & AIMS OF CPD

- To gain a more in-depth insight into the background and experiences of Eastern-European Roma communities
- To facilitate educational engagement among Roma students and their families
- To promote inclusion and equity for Roma students
- To raise the aspirations of Roma students



QKA CONTEXT

- 53.3% EAL – although estimated to be higher
- Mainly first generation, newly-arrived migrants (NAM)
- 43 languages spoken
- 9% declared Gypsy-Roma (20% suspected)
- Most Roma students are originally from Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Romania



WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'ROMA'?

- 10-12 million Roma living in Europe – Europe's largest ethnic group
- Roma originated in northern regions of India and migrated through Asia and into Europe around 1500 years ago
- Roma do not have a nation state but are citizens of the countries they settled in, and/or born in
- Many Roma communities speak Romanes, as well as the languages of the countries in which they live. Linguistically, Romanes has many similarities to Punjabi



WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'ROMA'?

- Roma and Travellers are often wrongly conflated as one homogenous ethnic group - **Travellers** are a nomadic group of people originally from Ireland and Scotland
- Roma should also not be viewed as a homogenous group of people. In reality, European Roma populations are made up of various subgroups
- The word 'Gypsy' was mistakenly adopted in the mid-16th Century by Europeans as it was believed that Roma came from Egypt due to their features. Some Roma people proudly use this term to describe their identity, but it can be highly offensive



MARGINALISATION, AND PERSECUTION OF ROMA COMMUNITIES

- Roma have a history of being enslaved, most notably in Romania where Roma slavery was only abolished in 1856.
- Estimated over 500,000 Roma were murdered by the Nazis during the Holocaust
- Forced sterilisation of Romani women was commonplace across Communist Europe and cases continued after the fall of Communism
- According to the European Rights Centre (2016), the last case of forced sterilisation of a Romani woman in the Czech Republic was in 2007



MARGINALISATION, AND PERSECUTION OF ROMA COMMUNITIES

- Roma face widespread marginalisation and institutionalised discrimination across Europe
- Many Roma are denied equal access to education, housing, health care and employment
- As a result, Roma experience high levels of illiteracy, low educational attainment, poor health and substandard living conditions



QKA STAFF VISIT TO NITRA, SLOVAKIA

- Romani students educated in different schools to non-Roma
- According to teaching professionals, non-Romani students start to move out of schools if attended by Romani students
- High standard of education and high aspirations for non-Roma
- QKA partnership with Romani Studies Institute at the University of Nitra



QKA STAFF VISIT TO PREŠOV, SLOVAKIA

- Evidence of sub-standard living conditions and extreme poverty in Roma settlements
- Families had no or little income due to lack of employment opportunities for Roma
- Segregated schools and poor quality of education for Romani students
- A vicious circle of poverty, marginalisation and a lack of aspirations



QKA STAFF VISIT TO THE CZECH REPUBLIC

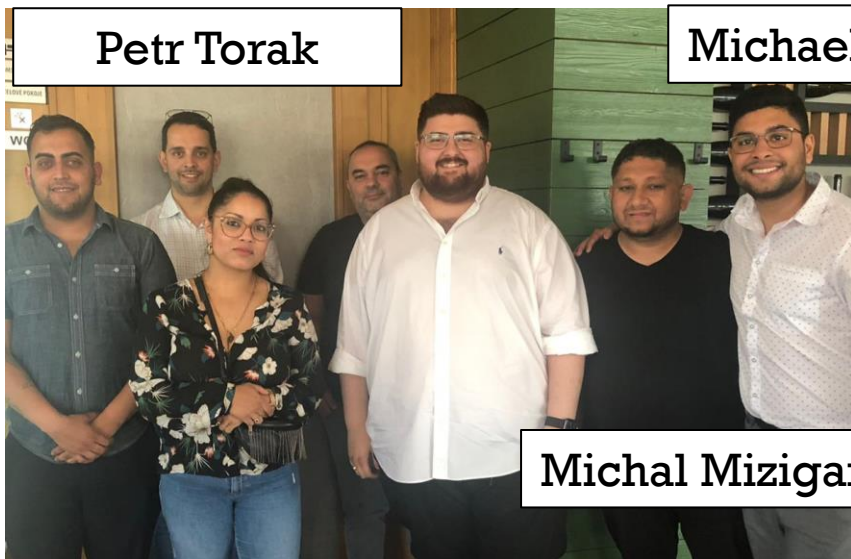
- Although Roma are now educated in mainstream 'inclusive schools' (as per the 2016 amendment to the Czech Education Act) disproportionately high numbers of Romani children are diagnosed with 'mild mental disabilities'
- Children with 'mild mental disabilities are educated in separate classes or areas of the school
- Roma parents are often unaware of their rights and are coerced into giving consent to their child being tested at educational psychological centres
- Educators have very low expectations of Roma students and very few Roma students progress to Secondary School (from age 15 onwards)



INSPIRATIONAL ROMA ACTIVISTS

Petr Torak

Michael Mitras



Michal Mizigar

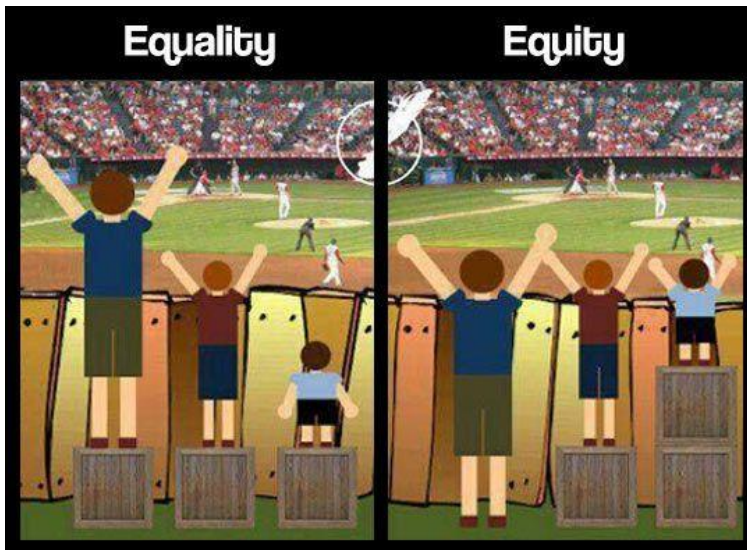
Marko Strbak



Magdalena Karvayova



EDUCATIONAL EQUITY OF ROMA COMMUNITIES



Equity is Equality

-Equality is giving everyone a shoe but Equity is giving everyone a shoe that fits. -



RAISING ASPIRATIONS

In 2018, QKA joined together with COMPAS Charity to run the first ever mentor scheme for Roma students in Peterborough: **ROGA Mentor Scheme**.

The scheme aims to inspire young Roma people to pursue their dreams and to raise their aspirations for the future. It also aims to encourage students to continue with further education.





STUDENT LEADERSHIP

In 2019, QKA launched its Roma student leadership scheme, 'Roma Leaders'.

Roma Leaders are actively involved in many areas of school and community life. This includes open evenings, Year 7 induction days, mentoring at local primary schools and delivering speeches at conferences. Roma Leaders also play a key role in organising our annual International Roma Day celebrations.



PROMOTING ROMA HISTORY AND CULTURE



STRATEGIES FOR EDUCATORS

- Promote and celebrate Roma identity
- Understand that discriminatory practices towards Roma communities, e.g. low employment opportunities, often result in lacking aspirations among Roma students
- Understand the impact of historic and present-day discrimination
- Understand that it can take time to build up trust with Roma students and families
- Adapt teaching to support EAL needs but also consider gaps in education
- Understand the impact of social deprivation



STRATEGIES FOR EDUCATORS

- Be aware that Roma families may lack an understanding of UK norms, laws, rights and responsibilities
- Be aware of how local charities, e.g. Compas, can support Roma students and families
- Educate staff and students on Roma history and the correct use of language
- Understand that Roma students may want to hide weaknesses
- Understand that students may display bad behaviour in an attempt to cover educational gaps

