



TEACHING MATERIAL

Education des enfants roms en Europe Education of Roma children in Europe



Link to the English website: <http://www.coe.int/education/roma>

Link to the French website: <http://www.coe.int/education/roms>

1) Pedagogical fact sheets in the field of Roma history and culture

The factsheets target teachers, pupils, decision makers, experts working with or about Roma and all people interested in Roma history. Although based on the best scientific expertise available, the factsheets do not aim to be an overall scientific and critical description of Roma history; this opus still has to be written by the appropriate authors. The factsheets aim to provide basic information on Roma history for a wider audience, which can be used in all teaching contexts.

2) Teaching kit for children at preschool level

As for all children of any ethnic origin, Roma have considerably better chances of succeeding at school if they receive pre-school education (nursery school or kindergarten). It is particularly important for Roma children, who often have problems in adapting to school and do not speak the majority language. Failure to speak the majority language is frequently identified as one of the prime factors in failure at school for Roma; the learning of that language should therefore start at pre-school level and continue at primary school.

The Council of Europe has developed a preschool teaching kit, an education programme designed to prepare children for entry into school, (as many Roma, Sinti, Traveller children do not attend nursery school for different reasons). The teaching kit helps facilitate an intellectual, emotional and social development within Roma communities by building up an educational tool for children between the ages of 5 and 7. This educational aid helps children develop the basic skills needed to start primary school, learn how to study, educate parents about the necessity of knowledge, improve children's analytical and reasoning skills, and encourage their imagination. The teaching kit is available as a CD-Rom with fact sheets for the individual activities and a methodological handbook for the tutor and/or mediator.

This tool was to be aimed at children who, for different reasons, had not attended nursery school and were not ready, in terms of either learning or maturity, for the first year of primary school. It was also to be aimed at children who had fallen behind somewhat, particularly as a result of absences or various family problems.

The kit:

- Is an effective training tool that is both manageable and easy to use
- Offers fun scientific, literary and artistic activities
- Gives children an opportunity to acquire a cluster of basic skills needed in order to start primary school (a skills record – filled out by the mediator – is given to the teacher)
- Can be used either independently or with a parent and/or mediator
- Gives parents an opportunity to learn alongside their children
- Prevents medium- and long-term segregation: teachers will no longer need to bring Roma children who have not attended school before the age of six up to the required standard when they start school and the use of the kit should change parents' view of learning and motivate them to enrol their children at school.

3) Roma on the screen

Pedagogical sheets on the cinema: films made by Roma or about Roma

"Roma on screen: how to teach Roma history and culture through cinema" is the pedagogical outcome of the "Fortnight of Roma cinema" organised in the framework of the project "Education of Roma children in Europe" in 2006.

The publication is a work of "cultural history". Its aim is to investigate the ways and means by which European film-makers have evoked or portrayed the life of the Roma people and embodied it in fictional characters. The goal is to encourage a collective analysis, conducted by the pupils under their teachers' supervision, of a whole array of images viewed on large or small screens in order to deconstruct the processes of representation, question the bases on which they are founded and compare them as far as possible with the reality. This type of approach will help pupils have a critical interpretation of films or television programmes.

4) Testimony of survivor in classroom

The testimony of survivors is one of the most suitable educational means to the personal involvement of students who are facing a human being, a protagonist of the dark years. However, the approach requires a preliminary reflection of teachers and especially good preparation. Many mistakes must be avoided. These teaching sheets have been designed to provide the teachers with a thorough study of this methodology – i.e. risks incurred by the witness and the students - and with concrete approaches for its implementation in classroom - preparation, communicative interaction, analysis of the testimony.