

THE ROLE OF THE ROMANI LANGUAGE IN THE EDUCATIONAL INCLUSION OF ROMA



A pedagogical guide

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COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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The role of the Romani language in
the educational inclusion of Roma-A
pedagogical guide

French edition:

*Le rôle de la langue romani dans
l'inclusion scolaire des Roms - Guide
pédagogique*

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Cover design and layout: Kurtuluş
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Inner photos: 10 participating
schools in the Romani-Plurilingual
Policy Experimentation

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Acknowledgements

Participating schools and co-ordinators:

Greece

- 4th Experimental Primary School, Amaliada - *Petros Kokkosis* and *Klytaimnistra Tsikrou*
- 12th Primary School, Komotini - *Dimitra Kesoudidou*
- 10th Primary School of Nea Ionia, Volos - *Anastasios Goukos* and *Dr Konstantinos Charatsis*

Slovak Republic

- Ľudmila Podjavorinská Primary School, Košice - *Michaela Cingelová*
- Vilka Šuleka Primary School, Hlohovec-Šulekovo - *Zuzana Kabaštová*
- Vyškovce nad Iplom Primary School - *Mgr Szabina Szabó Balázs*

Slovenia

- France Prešeren Črenšovci Basic School - *Stanka Zver*
- Leskovec pri Krškem Basic School - *Daniela Janušić*
- Janko Padežnik Basic School, Maribor - *Koraljka Čeh*
- Frana Metelka Basic School, Škocjan - *Anica Tramte*

Members of the Council of Europe:

- *Sarah Breslin*
- *Ahmet Murat Kılıç*
- *Marta Medlinska*
- *Corinne Colin*
- *Arzu-Burcu Tuner*
- *Korneliya Koleva*

National co-ordinators and their ministry colleagues:

- *Theodora Asteri* and *Maria Gelastopoulou* (Greece)
- *Silvia Ďurková* and *Dóra Belán* (Slovak Republic)
- *Bronka Straus*, *Natalija Komljanc*, *Marta Novak* and *Susanne Volčanšek* (Slovenia)

Foreword

As the Head of the Council of Europe's Education Department, I am proud to introduce *The Role of the Romani Language in the Educational Inclusion of Roma – A Pedagogical Guide*. This publication complements the policy guidelines on *The role of the Romani language in the educational inclusion of Roma children and young people: plurilingual education in action* and represents a significant step forward in translating our shared vision of inclusive, plurilingual and intercultural education into the real, everyday practices of schools and classrooms across Europe.



Education is not merely a means of imparting knowledge, but a foundation for social inclusion, personal development, and the realisation of human rights. For Roma children and young people, quality education remains the gateway to full participation in democratic culture. The pedagogical approaches demonstrated in this guide, informed by the Romani-Plurilingual Policy Experimentation (RPPE) across Greece, Slovenia, and the Slovak Republic, offer concrete strategies for schools seeking to bridge persistent gaps between policy and classroom realities.

In the context of the Education Department's Strategy 2024–2030 “Learners First”, which prioritises equity, diversity, and learner empowerment, this guide is a practical embodiment of our commitment to plurilingual and intercultural education. It presents not only the guiding principles of inclusive practice – flexibility, learner-centredness, and the development of integrated plurilingual repertoires – but also describes, through case studies and richly illustrated examples, how valuing linguistic and cultural diversity can enhance motivation, engagement, and social cohesion. These classroom-tested activities show that inclusion benefits all learners – Roma and non-Roma alike – and that every language has an equal right to a place in the life of a school.

Teachers and school leaders will find clear guidance here on how to develop whole-school language policies, celebrate linguistic diversity, build bridges between home languages and the language of schooling, and foster autonomy and agency among students. The use of student logbooks, bilingual projects, multilingual dictionaries and creative arts demonstrates that high-impact change does not require extensive resources; what is most needed is openness, respect and pedagogical imagination.

The Council of Europe upholds the principle that every child's home language is central to their identity and cognitive development. To ask learners to leave their home languages outside the school gate is not only impractical, but contrary to

the spirit of inclusion and mutual understanding which defines our strategy and our mission. The real-life examples in this guide demonstrate that when schools embrace the plurilingual approach, ALL learners – irrespective of their linguistic background – gain from enhanced language awareness, intercultural exchange, and a stronger sense of belonging.

I warmly invite all educators, school leaders, and stakeholders to draw inspiration from this guide and join us in building educational environments in which every child is recognised, included, and empowered.



Villano Qiriazhi

Head of the Education Department
Council of Europe

Preface

This guide is intended for use in schools with Roma and other minority-language students. It is informed by the Council of Europe's Romani-Plurilingual Policy Experimentation (RPPE), 2022-2025, which explored possible roles for Romani language and culture in the educational inclusion of Roma children. Three countries and 10 schools participated in the project: Greece (three schools), the Slovak Republic (three schools), and Slovenia (four schools). A detailed account of the origins, aims, methods, management and results of the project can be found in *The Romani-Plurilingual Policy Experimentation: Academic Co-ordinator's Final Report*, published in tandem with this guide.

The guide begins by listing the participating countries and schools, explaining the purpose of the RPPE and outlining the version of the Council of Europe's plurilingual approach to education that it sought to implement. It then provides examples of the activities participating schools adopted at institutional level and in the classroom. And it concludes with three case studies, one from each participating country, that provide a more extended account of the impact of the plurilingual approach on individual schools and their students.

The examples used in the guide come from a variety of sources: my regular online meetings with the RPPE team in each school; my in-person visits to the schools; the reports that schools submitted to the Council of Europe at regular intervals; issues 2-4 of the RPPE newsletter, which I edited in 2024 and 2025; the presentations that schools made at the RPPE's concluding conference, held in Bratislava, 3-4 June 2025.

It is important to acknowledge that the choice of examples is my own. Others with access to the same rich collection of material would no doubt have made a different selection. I am nevertheless confident that the guide provides an accurate and balanced reflection of the different ways in which the RPPE's aims were pursued and fulfilled.

I take this opportunity to thank:

- ▶ the Council of Europe's Education Committee for approving the project;
- ▶ the members of the Council of Europe secretariat who provided administrative support: Sarah Breslin, Ahmet Murat Kılıç, Marta Medlinska, Corinne Colin, Arzu-Burcu Tuner and Korneliya Koleva;
- ▶ the national co-ordinators and their ministry colleagues who helped to provide the RPPE with a coherent structure: Theodora Asteri and Maria Gelastopoulou (Greece); Silvia Ďurková and Dóra Belán (Slovak Republic); Bronka Straus, Natalija Komljanc, Marta Novak and Susanne Volčanšek (Slovenia);

- ▶ the participating schools, their principals and teachers for their whole-hearted commitment to the RPPE and the pedagogical excellence of their contributions;
- ▶ the many students on whose work I draw – those I met during school visits were invariably welcoming and always happy to demonstrate their plurilingual skills.

David Little

Academic Co-ordinator, RPPE

October 2025

1. Introduction

1.1. Where did the guide come from?

This guide introduces an approach to the educational inclusion of Roma children and young people that assigns a central role to the Romani language. It is based on the guiding principles, activities and achievements of the Council of Europe's Romani-Plurilingual Policy Experimentation (RPPE), 2022-2025.

10 schools in three Council of Europe member states participated in the RPPE:¹

Greece

4th Primary School, Amaliada
12th Primary School, Komotini
10th Primary School, Nea Ionia, Volos

Slovakia

Ľudmila Podjavorinská Primary School, Košice
Vilka Šuleka Primary School, Hlohovec Šulekovo
Vyškovce nad Iplom Primary School

Slovenia

France Prešeren Basic School, Črenšovci
Janko Padežnik Basic School, Maribor
Leskovec pri Krškem Basic School
Frana Matelka Basic School, Škocjan

The schools fell into three broad categories:

- ▶ those that catered exclusively or almost exclusively for Roma students living in settlements (Amaliada, Komotini, Volos, Košice);
- ▶ those with a minority of Roma students who were living in settlements and mostly spoke a variety of Romani at home (Vyškovce nad Iplom, Črenšovci, Leskovec, Škocjan);
- ▶ those with a minority of Roma students who did not live in settlements and in many cases did not speak Romani (Hlohovec Šulekovo, Maribor).

1. For brief profiles of the schools, including the names of participating teachers, see Appendix 1.

1.2. Five guiding principles

The RPPE was designed to test the policy guidelines developed by a group of Council of Europe experts in 2018-2019.² The guidelines proposed that the educational inclusion of Roma children and young people should be shaped by five principles:

- 1 The educational inclusion of Roma children is a fundamental human right.
- 2 The educational inclusion of Roma children should also benefit non-Roma students.
- 3 The highly variable linguistic profiles of Roma communities mean that there can be no single approach to the inclusion of Roma children: flexibility is essential.
- 4 Flexibility is more likely to be achieved when the primary focus is on learners and learning rather than on teachers and teaching.
- 5 Flexibility is also more likely to be achieved when language education focuses on the development of plurilingual repertoires.

Principle one may seem self-evident, but it is important to stress that the right to education is satisfactorily fulfilled only if the education provided equips recipients to participate fully in democratic culture. To this end, as Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)13 of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers points out, quality education:

- ▶ develops each pupil's and student's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;
- ▶ promotes democracy, respect for human rights and social justice in a learning environment which recognises everyone's learning and social needs;
- ▶ enables pupils and students to develop appropriate competences, self-confidence and critical thinking to help them become responsible citizens and improve their employability;
- ▶ passes on universal and local cultural values to pupils and students while equipping them also to make their own decisions.

These requirements underpin the remaining four principles; they are especially relevant to the RPPE's interpretation of Principle four, which prioritises learners and learning over teachers and teaching.

2. The members of the expert group were: David Little (co-ordinator of the ECML's QualiRom Training & Consultancy), Dieter Halwachs (member of the Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages), Ján Hero (vice chair of the Council of Europe's Ad hoc Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues), Helena Sadílková (head of the Romani Studies Seminar, Charles University Prague), Diana Sima (educational advisor and teacher of Romani), Zuzana Bodnárová (Romani Project, University of Graz). A revised version of the guidelines is available here [www.coe.int/en/web/language-policy/romani].

Principle two reflects the Council of Europe's view that integration (or inclusion) is a two-way process that benefits majority as well as minority communities and thus promotes social cohesion.³ National curricula provide for study of the language and history of their country; if they are truly inclusive, they also provide for study of the language, history and culture of minorities, and do so in ways that benefit members of the majority as well as the minority community. The mainstream schools that participated in the RPPE discovered multiple ways of meeting this requirement within the framework of their existing curricula.

Principle three rests on two considerations. First, with regard to Romani, Roma communities fall into three broad categories: (i) those that have lost the Romani variety spoken by earlier generations; (ii) those in which older members of the community still use Romani on a daily basis, whereas younger members hear and understand Romani but choose not to use it in their daily lives; and (iii) those that have retained a variety of Romani as their domestic and community language. Second, whatever their relation to Romani, Roma children fall into three broad categories as regards the language of schooling: (i) those for whom the language of schooling presents few difficulties – they face the same challenges as their peers when it comes to the development of literacy and academic language proficiency; (ii) those who speak a non-standard variety of the dominant language and thus need help to become proficient in the language of schooling; and (iii) those who lack proficiency in the language of schooling, either because they speak Romani at home or because they are recent immigrants. The linguistic profiles of Roma children varied across the ten schools participating in the RPPE and sometimes also within a single school.

Principles four and five associate the policy guidelines with two defining features of the Council of Europe's work in language education, learner-centredness and the goal of plurilingualism. These features provided the RPPE with its pedagogical foundations and thus need to be discussed separately.

1.3. Plurilingualism and plurilingual education

In the Council of Europe's usage, "multilingualism" refers to the presence of two or more languages in a society or community, whereas "plurilingualism" denotes an individual's ability to communicate in two or more languages. The concept of plurilingualism, however, is much more than a useful way of distinguishing between individuals and communities. As the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) explains, the languages in a plurilingual repertoire form an integrated whole:

... the plurilingual approach emphasises the fact that as an individual person's experience of language in its cultural contexts expands, from the lan-

3. See, for example, the [White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, *Living Together as Equals in Dignity*](#), Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2008, [available at go.coe.int/RRSdx](https://go.coe.int/RRSdx), accessed 30 April 2026.

guage of the home to that of society at large and then to the languages of other peoples ..., he or she does not keep these languages and cultures in strictly separated mental compartments, but rather builds up a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact.⁴

As an individual's plurilingual repertoire expands, in other words, new languages take root in the soil provided by the languages that are already present; and because languages "interrelate and interact", the repertoire as a whole is greater than the sum of its parts. As the CEFR goes on to explain, the nature of plurilingual growth requires us to modify the aim of language education:

It is no longer seen as simply to achieve "mastery" of one or two, or even three languages, each taken in isolation, with the "ideal native speaker" as the ultimate model. Instead, the aim is to develop a linguistic repertory in which all linguistic abilities have a place. This implies, of course, that the languages offered in educational institutions should be diversified and students given the opportunity to develop a plurilingual competence.⁵

The Council of Europe's understanding of the nature of plurilingualism carries two further implications that are at least as important as curricular diversification. First, if it is to be maximally effective, language teaching must find ways of enabling learners to make use of the languages they already know when they are learning a new language; and second, when educating members of linguistic minorities, we must ensure that their home languages are allowed to play a central role in their educational experience. These issues are foundational to Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)1, on the importance of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture, which was approved by the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers in February 2022. They were also foundational to the aims of the RPPE and its implementation.

1.4. The cognitive, social and educational importance of learners' home languages

The language that children grow up with at home plays a central role in their cognitive and social development. It is the means by which they interact with the family and community into which they have been born and by which they come to understand the environment in which they live. It is also the medium through which they acquire and refine what the English educational researcher Douglas Barnes called "action knowledge", "that view of the world on which our actions are based".⁶ Ac-

4. *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 4, available at go.coe.int/xx75x, accessed 30 April 2026.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

6. D. Barnes, *From Communication to Curriculum*, Penguin, 1976, p. 81.

cording to Barnes, the goal of schooling is to enable learners to incorporate “school knowledge” (curriculum content and the concepts on which it is based) into their action knowledge. When learners’ home language is a variety of the language of schooling, this process entails the acquisition of literacy and gradual mastery of academic language, which varies from subject to subject in its lexicon and genres.

These are major cognitive challenges, but they are as nothing compared with the challenges faced by children whose home language is not a variety of the language of schooling, especially if their pre-school life has been lived in a community that is culturally apart from the mainstream. This is the situation of Roma children who grow up in settlements and whose home language is one of the many varieties of Romani; it is also the situation of large numbers of children from immigrant families; and it is one of the greatest challenges facing education systems in Council of Europe member states.

Some schools forbid all use of home languages on the school premises if those languages are not part of the curriculum. They defend this practice by arguing that the first task of minority-language learners is to master the language of schooling, and their home language can only obstruct that process. But nothing could be further from the truth. To expect children from Roma or immigrant families to leave their home language at the school gate is cruel, misguided and doomed to failure. Cruel because to exclude the home language is to exclude the child; misguided because her home language is the child’s primary cognitive tool and thus an essential support for learning; and doomed to failure because the child’s home language is always present in the unending stream of her consciousness. By bringing home languages into the classroom, we give full recognition to the children who speak them. But more than this, as the RPPE set out to show, if we encourage the use of home languages, we also make it possible for minority-language students to bring their action knowledge into fruitful interaction with school knowledge.

With these considerations in mind, the aims and methods of the RPPE were informed by the version of the plurilingual approach developed by Scoil Bhríde (Cailíní) [St Brigid’s School for Girls], a primary school in Blanchardstown, one of Dublin’s western suburbs.⁷ In 2014/2015, the school had 320 students, 80% of whom had a home language other than English (or Irish). Most of the 80% had little or no English when they started school, and between them they had 51 home languages, almost all of them unknown to their teachers (the exceptions were European languages taught in Irish schools and universities). Accepting that each student’s home language is central to her identity and necessarily her primary cognitive tool, the principal and her colleagues responded to this extreme linguistic diversity by encouraging immigrant pupils to use their home languages for whatever purposes seemed to them appropriate, inside as well as outside the classroom. This strategy was astonishingly successful. In the ebb and flow of classroom talk, pupils

7. For a detailed study, see D. Little & D. Kirwan, *Engaging with Linguistic Diversity: A Study of Educational Inclusion in an Irish Primary School*, Bloomsbury Academic, 2019.

for whom English was an additional language were routinely invited to translate key terms and concepts into their home languages; lexical and grammatical similarities and contrasts were explored; and Irish pupils as well as their immigrant peers developed unusually high levels of language awareness. Because languages and language learning were so highly valued, Irish (the obligatory second language of the curriculum) benefited significantly. Immigrant pupils, moreover, developed age-appropriate literacy in their home languages largely autonomously, by voluntarily writing homework tasks in those languages as well as in English and Irish. Using their home languages for this purpose supported a dimension of their plurilingual development that would otherwise have been neglected.

Inspired by the Council of Europe's concept of plurilingualism and the inclusive implications of the plurilingual approach, the RPPE set out to explore possible roles for the Romani language in the educational inclusion of Roma children. The [handbook](#)⁸ that was written to guide participating schools and teachers drew extensively on the example of Scoil Bhride (Cailíní). In the first year of RPPE implementation, the academic co-ordinator provided participating schools with discussion papers that suggested ways of converting the principle of learner-centredness into daily classroom practice (see **➔Appendix 2, on learner logbooks and learner-created learning materials**). He also encouraged schools to reflect on the principles that underpin the approach to classroom research known as Exploratory Practice, on the ground that they too are concerned with student involvement and empowerment (**➔Appendix 3**).

1.5. Including Romani in the daily life of schools and classrooms

The case for including Romani in the educational experience of Roma children and, when they are attending mainstream schools, their non-Roma peers, rests on three considerations. First, as we have already argued, the language of the home is central to the child's identity and self-awareness, the medium of his or her consciousness, and thus an essential cognitive tool; it is the soil in which proficiency in the language of schooling and curriculum languages must grow. Second, while it may not be feasible to offer Romani-medium schooling, the education of Roma children should raise their awareness of their home language as the medium of their cultural heritage. And third, recognising that Romani has the same value to its speakers as any other language is a matter of equality of respect and a precondition for effective inclusion and social cohesion.

The terms "home language" and "heritage language" are sometimes used interchangeably. Here, however, it is useful to distinguish between them. Romani is a student's home language when it is her first language and the dominant medium

8. rm.coe.int/rppe-handbook-en/1680b1ca1f

of communication in the family and the local Roma community; it is a student's heritage language when it is no longer in daily use in the family and community⁹ though it remains an important part of their history and cultural inheritance. Some of the students who participated in the RPPE were in transition between these two situations: they didn't themselves use Romani but had some receptive knowledge of the language because it was still in daily use by older members of their community. In all participating schools there were at least a few Roma students for whom Romani was their home language.

Romani differs in one important respect from the home languages of Scoil Bhride's immigrant students: its use and its associated cultures are predominantly oral. When a written standard has been established, as for example in the Slovak Republic, it is the work of committees, not the result of centuries-long cultural, social and political evolution. Yet from the first, education depends on written language, and if Romani is to be included in the educational experience of Roma students and their non-Roma peers, it must be given written form.

For the most part, the teachers who participated in the RPPE were not proficient in Romani, though they inevitably learnt many words and phrases simply by including the language in their lessons. The education systems of the Slovak Republic and Slovenia provide schools with Roma assistants, who could usually help teachers with translations into Romani and an appropriate orthography. In the Greek system, by contrast, there are no Roma assistants, so teachers depended on books, the internet, and whatever help they could get from Roma NGOs and members of the Roma communities of which their students were members. In all participating schools, of course, Roma students themselves were essential informants.

1.6. How this guide is organised

The academic co-ordinator's final report on the RPPE draws the following conclusions:

- ▶ The inclusion of Romani and Roma culture in the everyday life of schools and classrooms impacts positively on the motivation and engagement of Roma pupils. In mainstream schools, it also arouses the interest of non-Roma students and helps to foster social cohesion. When Roma children are not proficient in Romani, the inclusion of the language and its culture in their educational experience helps to reconnect them with their heritage.
- ▶ In Roma-only schools where students speak a variety of Romani at home, the language provides an essential bridge into the language of schooling. By including written forms of the language, schools and classrooms ac-

9. The educational inclusion of Romani children: a policy experimentation - Handbook for participating schools and teachers, Council of Europe, 2018 available at go.coe.int/3pmT7, accessed 30 April 2026.

knowledge that Romani is a language like any other; this message is reinforced when other home languages are also present and included in the same way as Romani.

- When schools engage in bi- and multilingual projects that require translation between the language of schooling, curriculum languages, Romani and other home languages, they provide all students with an experience of plurilingualism and interculturality whose cognitive, cultural and social value cannot be overestimated.

This guide describes some of the things that participating schools and teachers did to achieve these results, following the principles set out in this chapter. Chapter 2 offers advice on the development of a whole-school plurilingual policy and describes ways of implementing the policy at institutional level. Chapter 3 focuses on ways in which Romani (and other home languages) can be included in the daily life of the classroom and the educational experience of all students. There is inevitably overlap between these two chapters: some whole-school activities may inspire classroom activities, while some activities that start in a particular classroom may extend first to other classrooms and then to the school as a whole. Some of the activities described are appropriate to all three school types represented in the RPPE; others must be adapted to suit the needs of the school in question. Chapter 4 presents three case studies that illustrate the transformative impact of the RPPE's plurilingual approach in three specific contexts; each participating country is represented by one case study.

2. Plurilingual policy and practice at whole-school level

Although this chapter is concerned with plurilingual policy and practice in schools, much of what it contains can be applied to kindergartens that include children from Roma and other minority communities.

2.1. Adopting a plurilingual approach: some necessary preliminaries

2.1.1. A school language policy

Successful implementation of a plurilingual approach to the inclusion of Roma and other minority-language students depends on a whole-school policy that has been developed by the principal and teaching staff and is clearly understood by students and their parents. It is a good idea to enshrine the policy in a written document that includes:

- ▶ a mission statement that recognises the central role played by language in education, accords equal status to all languages present in the school, and emphasises the importance of helping students to develop integrated plurilingual repertoires
- ▶ a statement of guiding pedagogical principles, for example:
 - *Teaching and learning are grounded in language use that is spontaneous and authentic:* spontaneous in the sense that it arises naturally from the minute-to-minute activities of the classroom; authentic in the sense that it takes account of students' concerns both in the immediate context of learning and in their lives more generally. An integrated plurilingual repertoire helps to shape and define the individual's identity, so teaching and learning are also organised in ways that engage learners' existing identities in the fullest possible way.
 - *Teaching and learning draw on all the linguistic resources available to learners:* their proficiency in other languages and their explicit and intuitive knowledge of linguistic structures and the conventions of language use.
 - *Teaching and learning acknowledge that languages are discrete entities:* although a plurilingual repertoire makes it possible to switch between languages in order to facilitate communication, teaching and learning

respect the fact that languages are separable in the mind¹⁰ and separate from one another in many contexts of use. The goal of a plurilingual approach to language education is to enable learners to achieve the highest possible level of literate proficiency in each of the languages in their repertoire.

- *Teaching aims to help learners to develop (language) learning skills that they can use in later life. These include skills of self-management and the ability to reflect on the process of language learning and evaluate its outcomes.* Plurilingual repertoires are necessarily provisional: at any time in life, a change in our circumstances may require us to learn a new language; it may also mean that we have less reason to use one or more of the languages in our repertoire.

- ▶ a commitment to regular review and (if necessary) revision.

The elaboration of a school language policy document offers the teaching staff an unrivalled opportunity to develop a shared understanding of the plurilingual approach and the demands it makes. As a statement of this understanding, moreover, a language policy document provides an important point of reference for school inspections.

2.1.2. *Implementing a plurilingual approach*

When developing the school's language policy it is necessary to take a number of practical decisions. For example, will the school implement its version of the plurilingual approach in all grades at once, or will it do so gradually, perhaps starting with the first two or three grades and adding further grades each year? The answer to these questions may depend on the size of the school. But whatever the school decides, its language policy should be in evidence throughout the school from the time it is adopted.

It is also necessary to consider how the school's plurilingual policy can best be implemented with due regard to the official curriculum. It is usually a legal requirement that the national language is the language of instruction; but as we argued in Chapter 1, it makes sense to include Romani and other home languages in lessons when this supports the development of students' proficiency in the language of instruction and helps them to understand curriculum content. In other words, there should be room for Romani and other home languages in every lesson.

In schools that educate non-Roma and Roma students together, it is also necessary to consider how best to achieve the mutual benefit referred to in Principle 2 of the policy guidelines (see ➔ **p.2 above**). It should be possible to include the history and culture associated with Romani and other home languages in many areas of the

10. See, for example, D. Singleton, "A critical reaction from second language research", in V. Cook & Li Wei (eds), *The Cambridge Handbook of Linguistic Multi-competence*, Cambridge University Press, 2016, pp. 502–520.

curriculum.

In the three countries that participated in the RPPE, schools provide optional activities in the afternoon. These can be organised to bring students from different grades together; they can also include classes in Romani and workshops on content that is not included in the official curriculum, for example aspects of Roma culture and history dealt with on their own terms.

2.1.3. Co-ordination

Each school that participated in the RPPE had a project co-ordinator who was responsible for compiling action plans, collecting reports from participating teachers, and submitting these to the academic co-ordinator and the Council of Europe secretariat. Any school that wishes to develop its own version of the plurilingual approach will similarly need a person responsible for co-ordination: managing the development of the school's language policy document, agreeing with colleagues on a programme of school events and classroom activities appropriate to the policy's implementation, organising regular meetings at which experience can be shared and progress monitored, and managing documentation.

It is also advisable to have one teacher who accepts responsibility for pooling teachers' expanding knowledge of Romani, co-ordinating the acquisition of written materials in Romani, and liaising with local NGOs.

2.1.4. Documentation

If the school's language policy document is to be kept under regular review, implementation of the policy must be carefully documented so that the review can be informed by evidence. Schools participating in the RPPE faced a similar challenge, being required to submit an action plan for each year of the project and at the end of the year to report on the activities undertaken at whole-school and classroom levels. They were encouraged to follow the example of Exploratory Practice, an approach to classroom research that is based on the following six principles:

- 1 Put "quality of life first"
- 2 Work primarily to understand the life of the classroom
- 3 Involve everybody
- 4 Work to bring people together
- 5 Work also for mutual development
- 6 Make the work a continuous enterprise¹¹

11. Dick Allwright, *Developing principles for practitioner research: The case of exploratory practice*, *Modern Language Journal* 89.3 (2005), pp. 353–366.

Exploratory Practice is also based on the belief that learners are:

- ▶ unique individuals who learn and develop best in their own idiosyncratic ways;
- ▶ social beings who learn and develop best in a mutually supportive environment;
- ▶ capable of taking learning seriously;
- ▶ capable of independent decision-making;
- ▶ capable of developing as practitioners of learning¹².

Appendix 3 elaborates on these principles and explains how they can be explored in a teacher workshop.

2.1.5. A well-stocked school library

Reading plays a central role in children's language development, so schools should provide them with a rich array of age-appropriate books (fiction and non-fiction) in the language of schooling but also if possible in Romani and other home languages. Roma NGOs may be able to help the school to source reading materials in the variety of Romani spoken by its students.

2.2. Making the school visibly inclusive

The schools that participated in the RPPE made their openness to linguistic and cultural diversity visible in a variety of ways. Multilingual signs, posters and other displays were to be seen throughout the school. In Vilka Šuleka Primary School, Hlohovec-Šulekovo, for example, corridors and staircases displayed a wide range of everyday words in four languages: Slovak, Romani, English and German (Figure 2.1), and in Leskovec pri Krškem Basic School corridors displayed positive words in various languages (Figure 2.2). Frana Metelka Basic School, Škocjan introduced a Romani corner where Roma and non-Roma students could hang out – the students



Figure 2.1. Multilingual corridor display
© Vilka Šuleka Primary School, Hlohovec Šulekovo

in Leskovec pri Krškem Basic School corridors displayed positive words in various languages (Figure 2.2). Frana Metelka Basic School, Škocjan introduced a Romani corner where Roma and non-Roma students could hang out – the students

12. Dick Allwright and Judith Hanks, *The Developing Language Learner: an Introduction to Exploratory Practice*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, pp. 5–6.



Figure 2.2. Multilingual display

© Leskovec pri Krškem Basic School

themselves made the bench on which they sat. The corner had a small collection of books that students could read, and each week it played host to the Word of the Week (Figure 2.3; see also ↗ 3.2.3 below).



Figure 2.3. Word of the week

© Frana Matelka Basic School, Škocjan

2.3. Celebrating linguistic and cultural diversity

The school should confirm its commitment to plurilingualism and interculturality by observing relevant international days of commemoration.

2.3.1. *International Roma Day (8 April)*



International Roma Day (8 April) is likely to be celebrated differently, depending on whether the school caters exclusively for Roma or educates non-Roma and Roma together. In schools of the former type, International Roma Day can be treated as a special day for the whole school. In art classes, for example, students can decorate t-shirts (Figure 2.4) while listening to Roma music, and parents and the wider community can be invited to exhibitions and performances of Romani poetry, song and dance. In mainstream schools, Roma NGOs or culture groups can be invited to visit the school and present an aspect of Roma history or culture.

Figure 2.4. T-shirt decorated on International Roma Day

© Ľudmila Podjavorinská Primary School, Košice

2.3.2. *International Romani Language Day (5 November)*

International Romani Language Day (5 November) offers similar opportunities for celebration. For example, Ľudmila Podjavorinská Primary School, Košice (Roma students only) brought grades 1 and 2 together for a special lesson designed to raise students' awareness of Romani and its links with Slovak and to focus on understanding written forms of the two languages. The teachers prepared two versions of a bilingual worksheet, an easier one for younger students and a more difficult one for older students. The topic of the worksheet was family and professions, but the students also worked on colours and parts of the body. They enjoyed this activity, translating and reading texts with understanding, and were especially excited when they could teach their teacher a new word in Romani or translate a Romani sentence into Slovak (Figures 2.5, 2.6).

Janko Padežnik Basic School, Maribor hosted "Young Romani Artists", an event that brought Roma children together with their mentors. Organised in co-operation with the Roma association Romano Pralipe, the event showcased classroom activities that nurture Roma students' cultural traditions. The music, songs and recitations performed at "Young Romani Artists" showed how well Roma students know their roots. The event included presentations by students from other schools in

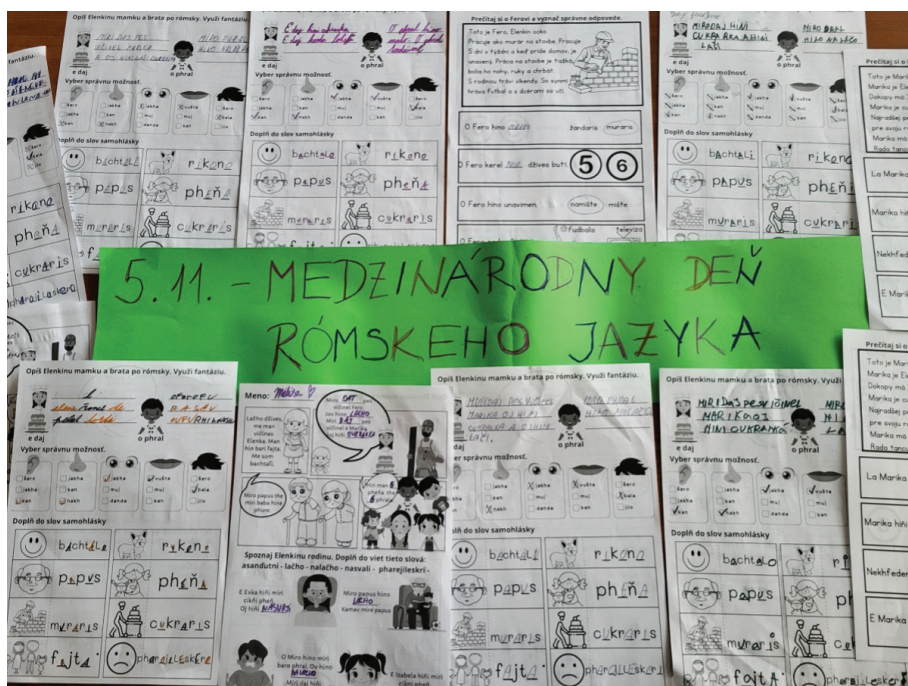


Figure 2.5. Celebrating International Romani Language Day

© Ľudmila Podjavorinská Primary School, Košice



Figure 2.4. Celebrating International Romani Language Day

© Ľudmila Podjavorinská Primary School, Košice

Maribor and a musical performance by Nina Braseur, who sang one of her own compositions and the Slovenian and Roma anthems. In his address, Jožek Horvat Muc, President of the Union of Roma of Slovenia and the European Romani Federation, said that he was particularly proud of the Romani language and pleased that it could be heard at this event.

2.3.3. European Day of Languages (26 September)

The RPPE schools were especially inventive in their celebration of the European Day of Languages. In Vilka Šuleka Primary School, Hlohovec-Šulekovo, for example, grades 5 to 9 each chose one of five languages: Spanish, Portuguese, Hungarian, Ukrainian and Romani. Students decorated their classroom in the colours of the flags associated with their chosen language and prepared presentations, questionnaires, quizzes and other activities (*Figure 2.7*). In the school kitchen students baked a traditional Hungarian cake, and two mothers brought traditional Spanish cakes – churros and almond cake – from home. Throughout the day students visited one another's classrooms and engaged in the activities that their fellow students had prepared for them.

In a similar vein, France Prešeren Basic School, Črenšovci celebrated the European Day of Languages by organising a multilingual day (*Figure 2.8*). Teachers and students from secondary schools in the locality were invited to join them, together with Roma teachers and the school's own language teachers. In the course of the



Figure 2.7. Celebrating European Day of Languages

© Vilka Šuleka Primary School, Hlohovec Šulekovo



Figure 2.8. Celebrating European Day of Languages

© France Prešeren Basic School, Črenšovci

day, students engaged with French, Russian, Hungarian, Spanish, Italian, Latin, Romani, Slovenian sign language, German, English and Croatian. They greatly enjoyed trying to communicate in languages that were new to them and found Slovenian sign language and Russian with its Cyrillic alphabet especially interesting. The older students were fascinated by Latin, which they had not encountered before.

The European Day of Languages can also be celebrated by organising a multilingual and multicultural fair of the kind that the academic co-ordinator experienced when he visited Janko Padežnik Basic School, Maribor in May 2025. The school has a notably diverse student population, and there were stalls for French, Ukrainian and Russian, Albanian (from Kosovo*), Chinese, Spanish (from Colombia), Slovenian, Croatian, Romani, Georgian, Dari and Turkish, Bosnian, Serbian, Macedonian. Each stall was manned by one or more students who offered ethnic sweets and snacks and explained the significance of the books, pictures and cultural items on display. The students performed with great self-confidence, several of them in more than one language. The fair was attended by all the students in school.

2.3.4. Other celebrations

The reciprocal nature of inclusion means that in mainstream schools, non-Roma students should participate in the celebration of International Roma Day and International Romani language day; it also means that Roma students should participate fully in national celebrations, including the Romani language as much as possible.

On International Mother Language Day (21 February), for example, students at 4th Experimental Primary School, Amaliada used YouTube to learn greetings in various languages and GoogleTranslate to create multilingual versions of simple phrases, making a collage of what they had learnt (*Figure 2.9*). Vilka Šuleka Primary School,

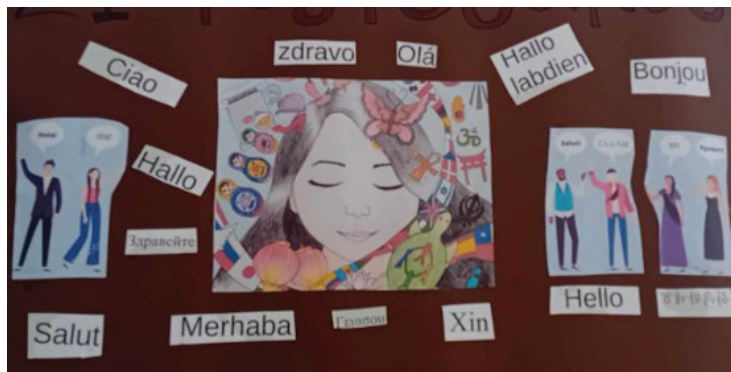


Figure 2.9. Collage of multilingual greetings

© 4th Primary School, Amaliada

* All references to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.



Figure 2.10. Decorating the Advent Wreath
© Vilka Šuleka Primary School, Hlohovec Šulekovo

Hlohovec-Šulekovo included Romani, English and German in posters that students made for a wide range of celebrations: Pumpkin Day, Carnival, lighting the Christmas tree, erecting the maypole, decorating Easter and Advent wreaths (Figure 2.10). At harvest time the school mounted an exhibition of fruit and vegetables and things the students had made from natural materials.

In Greece, 17 November is the day of commemoration for the Athens

Polytechnic uprising against the junta of 1967-1974. At 10th Primary School of Nea Ionia, Volos students were asked to engage with complex concepts like *freedom*, *exile*, *fascism*, *junta*. Initially, there was little interest, but when they started trying to explore the meanings of these words in Romani, their attitude changed; they translated the students' slogans into Romani and made bilingual signs. What really excited them – as well as the audience that attended the celebration – was the translation of the poem "Shut up, do not speak" by the Turkish writer Aziz Nesin and its recitation in Romani and Greek.

2.4. Extracurricular activities

In the countries that participated in the RPPE, schools follow the official curriculum in the morning and offer optional classes on extracurricular topics in the afternoon.

2.4.1. Romani language classes



Figure 2.11. A Romani lesson
© France Prešeren Basic School, Črenšovci

In the 2023/2024 school year, at France Prešeren Basic School, Črenšovci, Samira Horvat taught Romani to ten students from grades 1 to 4 for two hours a week (Figure 2.11). This helped the students to consolidate curriculum learning in their home language. They enjoyed speaking Romani in these lessons and were happy to have a teacher who could use their home language

with them. They often said: "Teacher, speak Romani. When will we have the Romani language again?"

2.4.2. Dance

Samira Horvat also teaches Roma dance in the school's extended programme (Figure 2.12). In 2023/2024 the dance group, which performs at many school and other events, included one non-Roma student, showing that cultural inclusion can be reciprocal. The second of the three case studies presented in Chapter 4 shows how a multilingual/multicultural dance group supported the personal development of its members.



Figure 2.12. A Roma dance lesson
© France Prešeren Basic School, Črenšovci

2.4.3. Roma history and culture

At Vilka Šuleka Primary School, Hlohovec-Šulekovo, Zuzana Kabaštová organised an afternoon workshop on Roma culture and history using information derived from publications by Professor René Lužica's. The workshop was taken by Roma and non-Roma students and provoked lively discussion. After the workshop students completed an anonymous questionnaire designed to elicit their views on features of Romani culture: large families, early marriage, the distinctive roles of men and women, and the different upbringing of boys and girls.

2.5. School trips

2.5.1. Museums, galleries and exhibitions

In schools that have mostly Roma students, it is important to introduce them to non-Roma culture by arranging visits to museums, galleries and exhibitions. Increasingly, it is possible to do this without leaving the school. For example, 4th Experimental Primary School, Amaliada, which has mostly Roma students, arranged an online tour of the Nerada Floating Museum, anchored at Flisvos Marina.

2.5.2. Romani theatre

Theatre Romathan is a theatre of the Roma national minority in Košice. Ľudmila Podjavorinská Primary School arranged for a group of students to attend the theatre's production of *When the Globe Giggles*, a play about a small urban neighbourhood in which a symbolic struggle takes place for the preservation of life on the planet. Dirt and Disorder settle in the neighbourhood, and their goal is to take over

the whole earth so that it can never be lived on again. Dirt and Disorder encourage other citizens to throw away their garbage without caring about the environment. People are unfriendly and hurt one another, but in the end love and friendship win the day. During the performance, the actors alternated between Slovak and Romani, and their words were accompanied by live Roma music. The play encouraged students to be proud of the Romani language as an important part of the Slovak Republic's linguistic and cultural heritage.

2.6. Reaching out to the community

Any project that sets out to promote the educational inclusion of Roma must foster positive relations between the school and the local Roma community. The RPPE schools approached this challenge in various ways. Ľudmila Podjavorinská Primary School, Košice for example, arranged for parents to read fairy tales in Romani to students, while in Leskovec pri Krškem Basic School and France Prešeren Basic School, Črenšovci teachers volunteered to visit the settlement to help students with their homework and show parents how they too could help.

The school in Črenšovci had especially close relations with the Roma community. This was reflected in the “book houses” that the school set up in Črenšovci, Trnje, Žižki and the Kamenci Roma settlement (*Figure 2.13*). The “book houses” contain books donated by students and their parents. Anyone can borrow the books, returning them to the “book house” when they have read them. All Roma children attending the school and kindergarten were present at the handing over of the “book house” to the settlement; some parents were also present.



Figure 2.13. Book house in a Roma settlement

© France Prešeren Basic School, Črenšovci

3. Plurilingual approaches in the classroom

Chapter 2 began by recommending that schools intending to adopt a plurilingual approach to the inclusion of Roma and other minority-language students should start by drawing up a language policy for the school as a whole. The chapter then used examples from the RPPE to illustrate some of the measures and activities that help schools to create a linguistically and culturally inclusive environment. In such an environment Romani and other home languages have a place in the daily life not only of the school as a social microcosm but of classrooms as learning communities. This chapter draws on RPPE activities to illustrate ways of bringing Romani and immigrants' home languages into interaction with the language of schooling and curriculum languages. All of the activities described began in a single classroom; some of them spread to other classrooms, other grades, even to the whole school.

As we noted in Chapter 1, the schools that participated in the RPPE fell into three broad categories: schools catering exclusively or almost exclusively for Roma students who were living in settlements; mainstream schools with a minority of Roma students who were living in settlements; and mainstream schools with a minority of Roma students who were not living in settlements. Most of the schools in the second and third categories also had students from immigrant families. The challenge facing schools in the first category was to educate a broadly homogeneous student cohort in a language that was largely absent from their pre-school experience; whereas the challenge facing schools in the second and third categories was to educate a linguistically diverse student cohort in ways that allowed all students to benefit from the diversity. For that reason, the chapter is divided into two main sections, the first focusing on Roma schools (some of which also included immigrant students) and the second on mainstream schools.

It is important to conclude these introductory remarks by returning to one of the key features of the Council of Europe's plurilingual approach: the creation of linguistic repertoires in which languages "interrelate and interact". The point requiring emphasis is that the plurilingual approach benefits all languages in the learner's repertoire. By including their home languages in their educational experience, we help students to relate curriculum content to what they already know; but we also help them to transfer the concepts embodied in curriculum content to their home languages, thus expanding their knowledge of and proficiency in those languages. By exposing Roma and other minority-language students to cultural and communicative experiences that would not otherwise be available to them, school extends the range of what they can do and think about in their home languages.

3.1. Roma schools

3.1.1. *Romani as a bridge to the language of schooling*

When children are first enrolled in a Roma school, they may well have little or no knowledge of the language of schooling: their life to date has been lived through a variety of Romani. One of the school's first tasks is thus to find ways of drawing students into the language of schooling. The plurilingual approach uses Romani to do this. Consider the following description of a grade 1 lesson (6-year-old students) at Ľudmila Podjavorinská Primary School, Košice.

Using a fairy tale to draw grade 1 learners into the language of schooling

For the first 20 minutes of the lesson, the Roma assistant, Silvia Medňanská, told the students a fairy tale in Romani about Marikla, a traditional Roma bread, that comes to life like the Gingerbread Man in other traditions. The students were familiar with the story, which included a song that they sang with the assistant and recurrent phrases that they chanted with her. Silvia gave a mesmerising performance, and the eighteen students in the class were fully engaged; as their body language betrayed, some of them found it difficult not to join in.

In the second part of the lesson the class teacher, Stanislava Dotková, used the interactive whiteboard to give the students a multiple-choice quiz on the story in Slovak. The questions recapitulated the story in very simple language. Students took turns to come to the whiteboard and answer a question, which meant that they had to speak a few words of Slovak to the rest of the class. When necessary, Silvia Medňanská provided clarifications in Romani. All correct answers were applauded by the rest of the class.

In the third part of the lesson, students worked individually, colouring copies of the monochrome graphic of Marikla that had been displayed on the whiteboard while Silvia was telling the story. This encouraged them to think about the story as they worked, silently recycling its elements in Romani and Slovak.

Using a fairy tale with grade 5 learners to explore ethical issues

A grade 5 lesson (11-year-old students) at the same school, taught by Lucia Forgáčová, illustrates the effectiveness of the same bilingual approach with older students. The previous day the class had read Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale "The Snail and the Rose Tree" in Slovak. The teacher began this lesson by eliciting a reconstruction of the story. She then encouraged the students to identify characteristic features of fairy tales: they begin "Once upon a time ..."; they have a happy ending; snails and rosebushes can talk to each other; and so on. After this introduc-

tion Lucia distributed a handout (also displayed on the whiteboard), which began with a summary of the story in Slovak. A student read the summary aloud, then the class worked through five tasks:

1. The students were asked to then continue with small letters write a dialogue between a snail and a rosebush in Slovak and Romani. When the students had done this, one of them read the dialogue she had written in Romani and another read what she had written in Slovak.
2. A word wall in Slovak referred to the contrasting characteristics of the snail and the rosebush. The students used different colours to indicate which words belonged to the snail and which to the rosebush.
3. The students then considered five drawings of a snail, each with the jumbled letters of one of the words in the wall. As the students resolved the jumbled words, Lucia's supporting commentary contrasted the selfishness of the snail with the kindness of the rosebush. Again students read their solutions aloud.
4. The students were presented with five true/false sentences that similarly focused on moral/ethical judgement.
5. The students responded to an open question about the fairy tale in either Romani or Slovak.

At the end of the lesson Lucia asked the students for an evaluation: thumbs up or down. All thumbs went up.

3.1.2. *Written forms of Romani*

The two lessons described so far include written forms of Romani – in many cases single words, sometimes phrases. In the grade 1 lesson Romani provided a way into Slovak; in the grade 5 lesson students were taught through Slovak, but Romani was in focus throughout the lesson and they had the option of writing a short text in Romani at the end. To ensure that students are able to do this, it is necessary to include Romani in lessons across the curriculum and in all grades. A typical example is again provided by Ľudmila Podjavorinská Primary School, Košice.

Developing students' vocabulary in Romani and the language of schooling

This lesson (grade 2; 7-year-old students) was taught by Michaela Cingel'ová, who is not herself a Roma but is learning Romani; she had a Romani-speaking assistant.

Michaela began the lesson by asking students to identify animals on picture cards and name them in Slovak and Romani. Individual students were called up to write the names of animals on the whiteboard, the focus being on the spelling of animal names in both languages. Michaela got the students to count the number of letters in each word as a way of helping them to memorise the spelling.

Then she revised the words mentioned in the first part of the lesson, and the students wrote more individual words in their logbooks (discussed further in section 3.1.3 below).

Michaela introduced the next part of the lesson by reminding the students that they had already learnt the Slovak and Romani words for parts of the body and professions. She placed a set of cards containing words for professions on one of the tables, the students gathered round, and they had to identify different professions by pointing to the appropriate words in Slovak and Romani.

Finally, the students were told to take out their logbooks and on the next clean page write today's date in Slovak, which Michaela wrote on the whiteboard for them to copy. They then had to draw a picture of their favourite animal, and below it copy and complete the Romani sentence “Me rado _____” (“I like _____”).

Language awareness workshops

4th Primary School, Amaliada organised language awareness workshops as a way of preserving and reinforcing Romani, fostering students’ linguistic and cultural self-esteem, encouraging intercultural dialogue, and developing students’ proficiency in Greek, Romani and English. One workshop focused on everyday communication in English and Romani. In one of their English lessons grade 5 students discussed and wrote about “A typical day in my life”. When they had finished writing their text in English, they were encouraged to explain in Romani what they had written. Some of them went on to write a parallel text in Romani (Figure 3.1), which they shared with other classes. English and Romani texts were displayed side by side on the classroom wall.

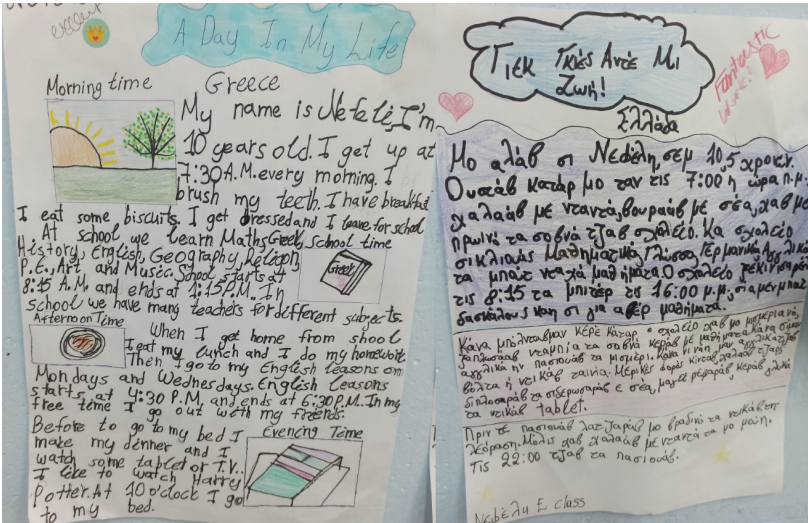


Figure 3.1. “A day in my life” – texts in English and Romani
© 4th Primary School, Amaliada

The same students were involved in another workshop, “Talking about the environment”, which focused on the development of oral and writing skills. They learnt about ways of protecting the planet by reducing, reusing and recycling waste. They also answered a short questionnaire about caring for the environment, collected relevant Romani words, and wrote about protecting the planet in English and Romani. The students were then asked to collect clean litter, which they used to create a classroom display (Figure 3.2).



Figure 3.2. Classroom display of clean litter
© 4th Primary School, Amaliada



Figure 3.3. Poster on personal hygiene
© 4th Primary School, Amaliada

Strengthening the educational use of Romani

4th Primary School, Amaliada also undertook activities that aimed to strengthen the use of Romani as a medium of communication in educational contexts. To this end, they organised a project in health education in Romani to develop students’ ability to discuss health issues in Romani as well as Greek and thus enable them to express their needs at home as well as at school. The project dealt with first aid via role play and personal hygiene and smoking via posters (Figure 3.3).

3.1.3. Making learning personal

The activities we have described so far in this chapter use Romani as a bridge into the language of schooling and deliver curriculum content in ways designed to develop students' proficiency in Romani as well as the language of schooling. In this way, students can connect school knowledge and the concepts on which it rests with their action knowledge (first developed in Romani), which gradually expands to accommodate school knowledge. This process is greatly enhanced by using tools and activities that help students to personalise their learning.

Student logbooks

The concept of the learner logbook was introduced to RPPE schools in the first year of the project (see ➔ **Appendix 2**). Logbooks are used to document learning as it happens in a way that is individual to each student. They were adopted by Ľudmila Podjavorinská Primary School, Košice, where Michaela Cingelová's grade 3 students wrote in their logbooks at the end of the school day (Figure 3.4). To begin with, the students wrote the same three sentences in Slovak and Romani. Then they wrote the same two sentences, for example *Ráno sme jedli* in Slovak and *Tosara amen chajam* in Romani ("we ate in the morning"), or *Čítali sme o jeseni* in Slovak and *Amen genahas*

pal o jesos in Romani ("we read about autumn") and students wrote their own third sentence – what they were looking forward to or something they had done or experienced on the day in question. Michaela sometimes wrote feedback in the diaries in Slovak and Romani, for example Slovak *Veľmi dobré* and Romani *Mištes* ("really good"). Logbooks are also used to learn about emotions. Students write a sentence in Slovak, for example *Som šťastný*, and the equivalent in Romani, *Me bachtalo* ('I am happy'), and draw a picture of themselves when they are happy." (For the use of logbooks in 10th Primary School of Nea Ionia, Volos, see ➔ **4.3** below.)

Word games

Word games provide another way of involving students in the interactive learning and use of Romani and the language of schooling. 12th Primary School, Komotini,

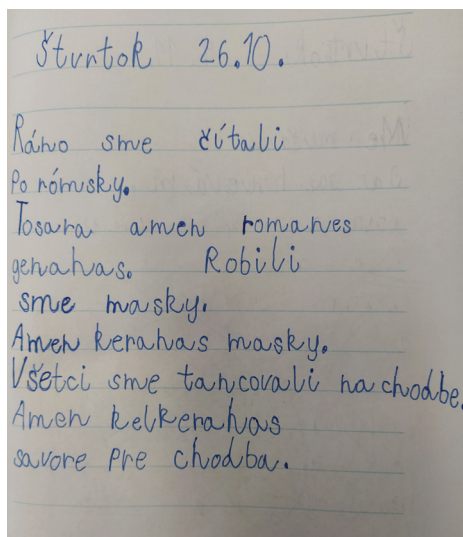


Figure 3.4. Learner logbook, grade 3
© Ľudmila Podjavorinská Primary School, Košice

for example, devoted one session each week to free use of Romani. Students use a popular word game to explore ways of using their home language in a school setting. The game involves finding words that start with the same letter and belong to a particular category. First, students decide on a list of categories, for example “town” and “animal”, and each of them writes the categories on a sheet of paper. A letter of the alphabet is then chosen at random, and students have an agreed amount of time to write all the words they can think of that begin with that letter in each of the chosen categories. When time is up, players exchange sheets and score one another’s efforts. Words that are written by only one student are worth two points, and words shared by two or more students score one point. The player with the highest total is, of course, the winner. Students became so involved in the game that they forgot that it was also a learning activity that was helping to develop their spoken and written Romani.

Collaborative writing

12th Primary School, Komotini used the same Romani session for collaborative writing projects. For example, in grades 5 and 6, students drew on their own and their families’ knowledge and I. Alexiou’s dictionary of Romani to create an illustrated story of a school visit to the bazaar (*Figure 3.5*). Because the story focused on their everyday world, where the main language is Turkish, the students were strongly motivated to participate and enjoyed speaking Romani and collaborating with one another.

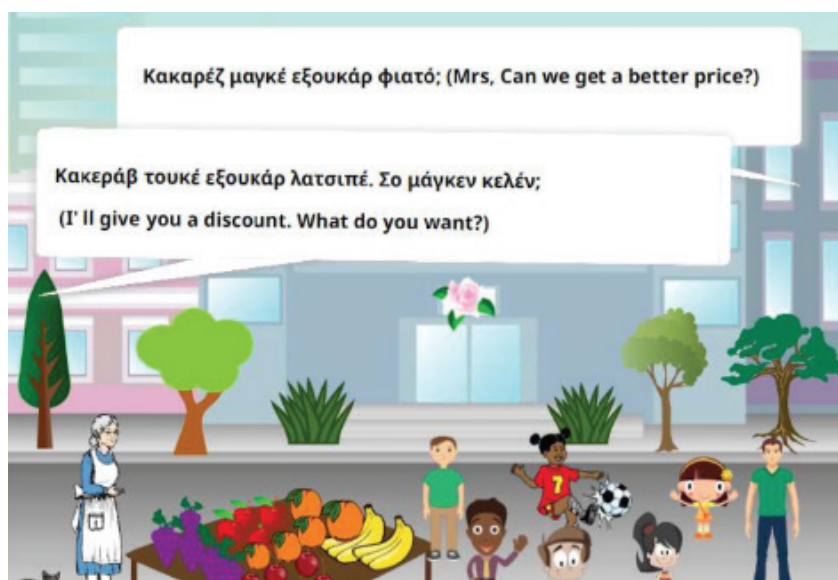


Figure 3.5. A school visit to the bazaar

© 12th Primary School, Komotini

Students at 12th Primary School also wrote a short bilingual poem summarising their aspirations (Figure 3.6).

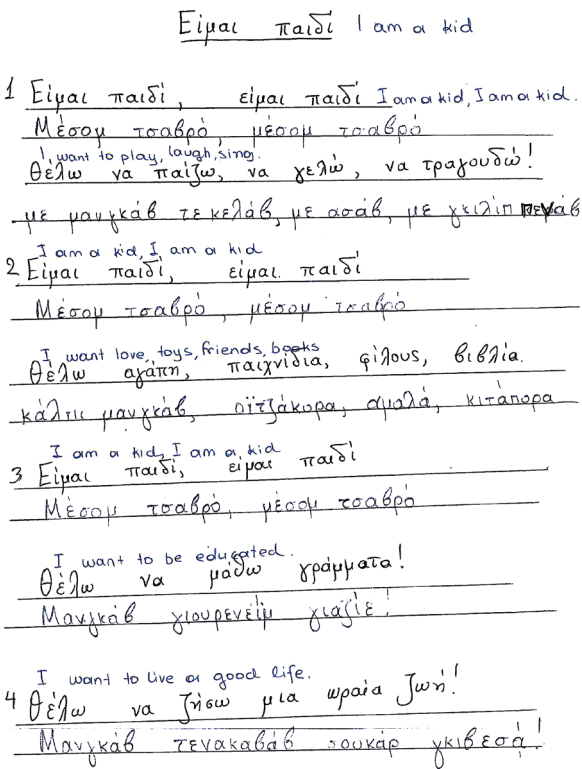


Figure 3.6. Bilingual poem summarising students' aspirations
© 12th Primary School, Komotini

Bi- and trilingual glossaries

Finally, especially in the early stages of learning the language of schooling, learners may find it motivating to compile a bi- or trilingual glossary of frequently used words. For an example, see ➔ **Figure 4.16** in section 4.3 below.

3.2. Mainstream schools

Mainstream schools with Roma students may also have students from immigrant families whose home language is not a variety of the language of schooling. The plurilingual approach requires that all home languages play a central role in the educational experience not only of the students who speak them but of their peers from the majority community. Language-minority students gain access to the language of schooling partly thanks to the inclusion of their home languages in the

daily life of the classroom, while students from the majority community experience other languages and cultures at first hand. This reciprocity should greatly enhance social cohesion in the school and potentially in the wider community.

When they commit themselves to a plurilingual approach, schools usually find that with minimal adjustment, well-established practices support the implementation of the approach. For example, for more than two decades, peer tutoring has played a major role in students' learning experience at Janko Padežnik Basic School, Maribor. This is supported by the provision of many small study spaces that students can use as and when they want to. The school has found that this system easily lends itself to pair work in which (say) a Slovenian student helps a Roma student with his Slovenian, while the Roma student helps the Slovenian student with (say) his maths. Similarly, Fran Matelka Basic School, Škocjan has a well-established buddy system in which older students help their younger peers, and this too lends itself to the provision of language support.

In grade 6 sports lessons at France Prešeren Basic School, Črenšovci students learned the basics of volleyball, working in two groups on the lower and upper rebound (*Figure 3.7*). Roma students led one of the groups, providing explanations in Romani as well as Slovenian. This helped to increase their self-confidence and motivation, encouraged them to feel proud of their language, and exposed non-Roma students to Romani.



Figure 3.7. Volleyball instructions in Slovenian and Romani

© France Prešeren Basic School, Črenšovci

3.2.1. *Introducing very young students to plurilingualism*

Multilingual greetings

The practice of beginning the school day with greetings can be used to introduce very young students to the plurilingualism in their midst. At Leskovec pri Krškem Basic School, Tamara Vardič and Martina Arh established the practice of exchanging greetings in multiple languages in their grade 1 class. When the class first assembled each morning, teachers and students gathered in a circle and the teachers greeted the students in Slovenian: “Dobro jutro”. They then recalled oth-

er greetings in Slovenian (“dober dan” [good day], “dober večer” [good evening]) before moving on to greetings in other languages: Romani, Albanian and Croatian, the mother tongues of some of the students. All students learned how to use these greetings.

Fairy tales in Romani and the language of schooling

We have seen how Romani fairy tales can be used in Roma schools to draw students into the language of schooling. In mainstream schools they can teach students about linguistic inclusion. One of the RPPE goals for grade 2 students (7 years old) at Leskovec pri Krškem Basic School was to read a book, *Mango for Grandpa*, in Romani. First, all grade 2 classes came together (Figures 3.8), Šarenka (one of the Roma assistants) read the story aloud in Romani, and Simona Škvarč (one of the class teachers) read a Slovenian translation. Then the students returned to their classrooms.



Figure 3.8. Leskovec grade 2 students listen to a story in Romani and Slovenian
© Leskovec pri Krškem Basic School

Simona asked her class what they were thinking and feeling while Šarenka was reading the story. They said that it was difficult to understand the story because they did not know Romani. One student, however, said that she understood some words because they sounded like Slovenian, for example the words for mango and orange and the names of the characters in the story. Then Simona said: “Imagine that your family is moving to another country. How would you feel? What would you do?” There was general agreement that it would be difficult to communicate, because students in foreign schools would not understand Slovenian. The students also agreed that it is hard to be a foreign student in a school where you don’t understand the language. Then Simona asked: “Do we have any students in our class who have another language besides Slovenian?” The students immediately named classmates who were Roma or came from another country. Simona reported: “We told those students that they are brave and strong and we are very proud of them for trying to learn Slovenian and understand us. We made a mind map of the students’ thoughts on the activity (Figure 3.9).” Simona added: “This activity gave Slovenian students a perspective on how foreign students feel when they come to our schools. They began to understand why foreign students cannot always communicate with them and why they have a hard time coming to school and sometimes cry.”

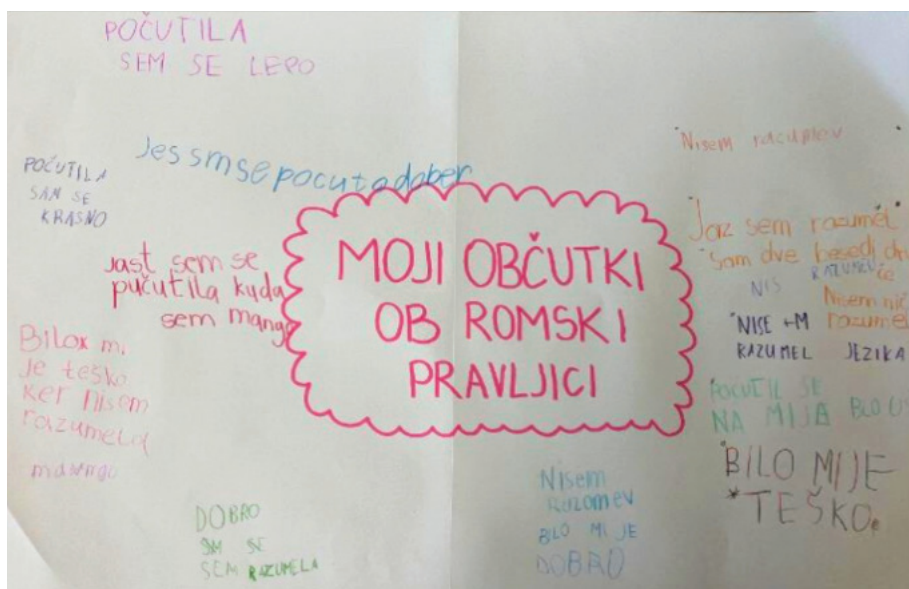


Figure 3.9. Mind map of grade 2 students' thoughts on the difficulties facing students who don't speak Slovenian

© Leskovec pri Krškem Basic School

"We're Going on a Bear Hunt"

Alma Novak, a teacher in the extended programme at France Prešeren Basic School, Črenšovci introduced her students to Slovenian and Romani versions of Michael Rosen's story *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* (Figure 3.10). When they had listened to the story, the students acted it out and in doing so learned a few words of Romani. During breaks they described with enthusiasm how they "went to the bear". The two Roma students in the class were very proud that their classmates had learnt some Romani and were keen to teach other students.



Figure 3.10. "We're Going on a Bear Hunt"

© France Prešeren Basic School, Črenšovci

Including written forms of Romani

Also at France Prešeren Basic School, Stanka Zver used the following questions to teach her grade 1 students what life was like in the past:

- ▶ What were houses like in the old days?
- ▶ What everyday items were used in ancient times?
- ▶ What kind of clothes did people wear?
- ▶ Which dishes were typical for our region?
- ▶ What toys did children have?
- ▶ What games did they play?

The students made little books in which they drew pictures (*Figure 3.11*). With the help of the classroom assistant, they also learned the Romani words for houses, household objects, clothes, dishes, toys and games. The students then used their pictures to talk about what life was like in the past; the one Roma student in the class did this in Romani. Stanka reported: "All the students found learning about the past very interesting, and they learned many new things. They were also impressed by the fact that they could express themselves in a new language, Romani. They said that they thought such lessons were excellent and that they would like to learn many more new things in the future."

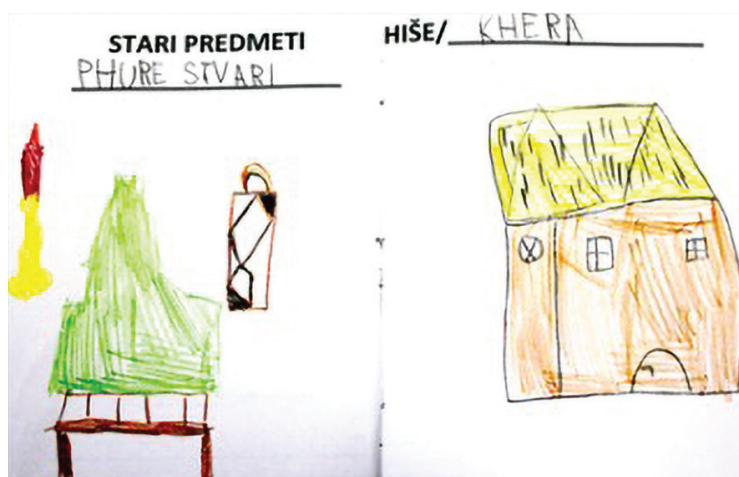


Figure 3.11. Objects and houses from the past

© France Prešeren Basic School, Črenšovci

Themed colouring books

At Frana Metelka Basic School, Škocjan, Tina Gorenjc used themed colouring books to teach her grade 2 students the Romani words for classroom objects (*Figure 3.12*). Four of the 17 students were Roma. Tina herself led the work on Romani with help

from the Roma students, who are fluent in the language. When they encountered difficulties the Roma assistant, Mitja Novak, came to their rescue. Tina reported as follows:

“Before we started this activity, we talked about the most important words we need when we start school. We agreed that everyone has to know different greetings and ‘magic’ polite words like *please*, *thank you*, *you’re welcome*, etc. But we quickly discovered that it is also essential to know the words for

school supplies and the things we use most often in the classroom. We agreed that this is very important if we are to be successful in the new school environment. We began by finding the appropriate words in English – we were quite good at that. Then we did the same with Romani. The students already knew some words as we have them written on different items in the classroom and they see them every day. Other words were completely new and unknown to the students, and they had to guess their meaning. This was good fun and the students were learning through play.

“We decided that the best way of learning new Roma words for school supplies and objects in the classroom would be by making colouring books, something the students love to do. They divided into groups of three or four and tried to make their own colouring books (Figure 3.13). The only instruction I gave them was that



Figure 3.12. Students work on themed colouring books

© Frana Matelka Basic School, Škocjan

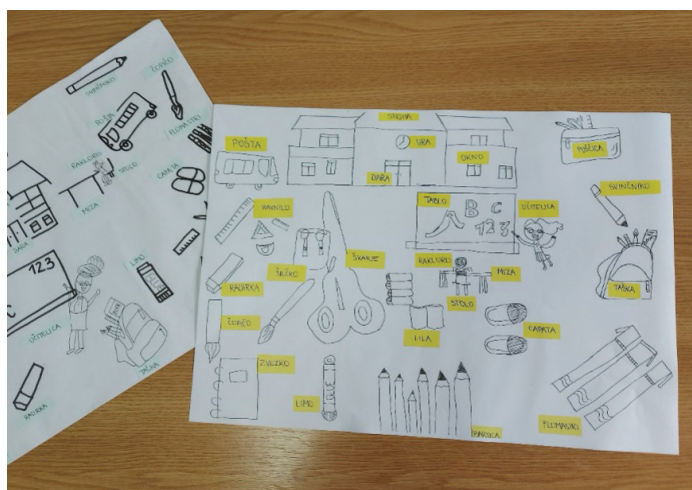


Figure 3.13. Themed colouring books in progress

© Frana Matelka Basic School, Škocjan

they should use their imagination and draw as many school supplies and classroom objects as they could think of. Then they tried to find the right Romani word for a particular drawing in their colouring book. I helped by writing the words they needed on pieces of paper, and the students glued them on the appropriate item. When we had found all the Romani words, I copied the books and the students coloured them. This was the part they enjoyed most.

“The students put a great deal of effort into this project, so we came up with the idea of using colouring books as teaching materials. We laminated each colouring book and prepared cards with the Romani words for the items in each of them. Matching words to pictures proved to be an easy and effective way of learning new words. It was also a great learning experience for Romani students as they could test themselves in reading and spelling in their own language.

“The students have already suggested other topics we could explore using colouring books – as they said, there are so many different words that are important for Roma students in their daily life inside and outside school.”

3.2.2. *Developing plurilingual writing skills*

“Little Red Riding Hood”

The last two activities we have described make use of the written forms of Romani words, but they do not involve the production of continuous text in the language. Translation is one way of creating text that lies beyond the productive capacity of Roma students. At France Prešeren Basic School, Črenšovci, Stanka Zver led a project to produce a trilingual version of “Little Red Riding Hood”, which was included in the grade 1 curriculum (Figure 3.14). She translated a Slovenian version of the story into English and the Roma assistant, Tajda Kokaš, translated it into Romani. Grade 1 students provided the illustrations (Figure 3.15). The project took a whole year to complete, at the end of which the school had a valuable multilingual resource that



Figure 3.14. “Little Red Riding Hood”
© France Prešeren Basic School, Črenšovci

Ko je Rdeča kapica prišla v hosto, je srečala volka. Ker ni vedela, kakšna zver je to, se ga ni bala.

Kada i Louli gučmica auli andu vejš, dikhja le ruf. Kauj na žanlahi sou nevarno hilo, lestar na daralahi.

When Little Red Riding Hood came to the woods, she met a wolf. Not knowing what kind of beast it was, she was not afraid of it.



Figure 3.15. Little Red Riding Hood meets the wolf

© France Prešeren Basic School, Črenšovci

it could use with future generations of students. In a parallel activity, students chose a fairy tale in their mother tongue, translated it into Slovenian with the teacher's help and presented it to their classmates using *kamishibai*, a Japanese storytelling technique based on a succession of illustrations (see also ↪ 3.2.3 below).

3.2.3. Bi- and multilingual glossaries

When multilingual signs, labels and posters are displayed on classroom walls and in school corridors, bi- and multilingual glossaries are an obvious way of consolidating the learning they imply. Two RPPE projects of this kind are especially worthy of note.

Romani expressions for use in the classroom

Nejc Plankar, a grade 4 teacher at Leskovec pri Krškem Basic School, reported as follows on the making of a Slovenian/Romani glossary: "As a teacher I try to involve my students in activities that motivate them, make them feel they are doing something good for themselves and others, and help them to feel important. This is easy with some students, but with others I have to wait for a special moment when something clicks in my mind and I think: 'This is it.' The idea of making a Slovenian/Romani glossary came to me in a split second when I was talking to my Roma students about their language. 'How do you say sit down or be quiet in Romani?'; I asked them. Then I suggested they should make me a little dictionary with some everyday expressions I can use in our classroom. It was on my desk the next morning. The girls who made it were so excited when I read the expressions out loud, mispronouncing some of the words. They were laughing and that made me feel that I was doing something good. Later they even gave me a test to grade my knowledge of Romani. We had fun and were learning and at the same time improving the atmosphere in the classroom as everyone was included. We then decided to make a simple bilingual glossary of important everyday expressions

that teachers and students from grades 1 to 5 could use in their classrooms. Maybe it would benefit the teacher, Roma students and everyone else. We started collecting expressions for introducing yourself, asking about feelings, classroom language, animals, weather, numbers, colours, school things, etc. The project was overseen by our Roma assistant, Sonja Valenčič, so we could double-check the spellings. When we were happy with our work, we printed it out and distributed it to every classroom (Figure 3.16). Now our simple little classroom glossary is used when talking to Roma students to make them feel accepted and encourage them to participate. The girls who shared in the making of the glossary were proud of their involvement and felt important as their names are on the cover next to the teacher's."

OTROCI	VOZILA	OBLAČILA
OTROCI - ČHAVORA OTROK - ČHAVO DEČEK - RAKLORO DEKLICA - RAKLJORI	AVTO - LETRIKA KOLO - KOLO MOTOR - MATORO VLAK - VLAKO LETALO - RAPLANO LADJA - LADJA AVTOBUS - POŠTA	MAJICA - MAJA HLAČE - HELEVA KRILO - KIKLJA JAKNA - THALIK NOGAVICE - ČARAPE PULOVER - PULOVERI ČEVLJI - ŠOLINE COPATI - CAPATE KAJ IMAŠ OBLEČENO? - ŠO HINJAŠ URADO/-I? OBLEČEN/-A SEM ... - ME HINJU URADO/-I OBLECI SE - URAV PE OBUJ SE - PUĐEN PE
DELI TELESA	PRIBOR	ŠOLSKÉ POTREBŠČINE
ROKA - VA NOGA - PRO GLAVA - ŠERO UHO - KAN OKO - JAK NOS - NAK USTA - VOŠTA	ŽLICA - ROJ VILICA - VILICE NOŽ - ČURIK POSODA - PIRI PONEV - TAVA	SVINČNIK - SVINČNIKO KEMIČNI SVINČNIK - KLAJBUŠI RADIRKA - RADIRKA ZVEZEK - ZVESKO LIST - LIL PERESNICA - PUŠČICA TORBA - TAŠKA
GIBANJE	VREME	POKLICI
TEČEMO - PRAŠTAMO TECI - PRAŠT HODIMO - PHIRAMO HODIM - PHIRU GOR - UPRE DOL - TELE TELOVADI - TELOVADIN	SONCE - KHAM DEŽ - BRŠIN SNEG - JIV VROČE - TATO MRZLO - ŠIL	UČITELJ - UČITELNO POLICIST/-KA - ŠEŠO/ŠEŠNI ZDRAVNIK - DOKTORI TRGOVEC - TRGOVCO GASILEC - GASILCO VOZNIK - VOZNIKO FRIZER - FRIZERI
ŽIVALI	HRANA IN PIJAČA	
PES - DŽUKEL ZAJEC - ŠOŠO KOKOŠ - KHANJI KRAVA - GURUMNI METULJ - MATULJI PTICA - ČIRIKLI PUJS - BALO	KRUH - MARO SALAMA - GOJ JABOLKO - PHABI MESO - MAŠ VODA - PANI MLEKO - THUT KROMPIR - HULJI	

Figure 3.15. Slovenian–Romani glossary for classroom use

© Leskovec pri Krškem Basic School

A whole-school dictionary project

Frana Metelka Elementary School, Škocjan already had a Slovenian–Romani dictionary project when the school joined the RPPE. The dictionary was compiled by students who were taking two optional subjects, school journalism with Irena Pleterška and Roma culture with Jan Cerle. Roma students worked on translations while non-Roma students edited the computer files.

When the school joined the RPPE, the dictionary project was expanded to include other languages spoken by students – English, German, Russian and Bosnian.

Pictures were also added to the word definitions to make them easier to understand, especially for younger students (Figure 3.17). In parallel, Tina Gorenjc created thematic picture dictionaries with her grade 2 students (see the account of Tina's themed colouring books, ↗3.2.1 above).

CAPATA	ČEVELJ	SHOE	ein Schuh	CIPELE	botinok	
COKLIJA	NATIKAČI	FLIP-FLOPS	Flip-Flops	NATIKAČI	shlepki	
CUGO	VLAK	TRAIN	Zug	VLAK	trenirovat'sya	
CVEKO	ŽEBELJ	NAIL	kalt	ČAVAO	Gvozd'	
CUKRI	BONBONI	CANDY	Süßigkeiten	BOMBON	konfety	
ČAR	TRAVA	GRASS	Gras	TRAVA	trava	
ČARAPA	NOGAVICA	SOCK	Socke	ČARAPA	nosok	
ČAVORO	OTROK	CHILD	ein Kind	DIJETE	rebenok	

Figure 3.17. Page from dictionary in six languages
 © Frana Matelka Basic School, Škocjan

The dictionary is published in the cloud, so teachers can use it in their work; they can also add new words via an electronic document to which they all have access. In this way the dictionary is maintained as a living document.

The dictionary project is responsible for the Word of the Week (see ↗2.2 above). Students choose a word, which is then published in the Romani corner in five languages: Romani, English, Slovenian, Russian and Bosnian.

Although the project has faced the challenge of Roma students' frequent absence from school, it has had a positive impact on students generally, promoting co-operation, mutual support, cultural exchange and the development of their language and digital skills. The fact that Roma and non-Roma students worked together helped to break down prejudices and foster better relations between students from different cultural backgrounds. Some students said that the project made them feel more included and valued, while others said that it helped them to understand and respect different cultures and languages. Overall, the dictionary project has contributed to the creation of a more inclusive and understanding school.

3.2.4. Activities that include Romani, other home languages and curriculum languages

Kamishibai

Of the 25 students in Nejc Plankar's grade 4 class at Leskovec pri Krškem Basic School, four had a home language other than Slovenian: Romani, Serbian, Bosnian and Macedonian. In Slovenian lessons, the class talked about mother tongues, nations and their languages, foreign languages, and the five home languages present in the class. They also talked about the equal value of all languages, the right to use one's own language, and the importance of being proud of one's mother tongue. Students agreed that it is good to know many languages. Nejc Plankar invited a Roma assistant to introduce the class to *kamishibai* (storytelling based on a set of picture cards that are displayed in a miniature theatre) in Romani (Figure 3.18). The one Roma student in the class helped to narrate and translate the fairy tale that the Roma assistant presented and was proud when his classmates tried to communicate in his language. None of the other students understood Romani, and this helped them to appreciate how students feel who come from other countries and don't know Slovenian. This lesson helped Nejc's students to be aware of the need to be tolerant and non-judgmental towards the unknown.



Figure 3.18. Example of a kamishibai board
© Leskovec pri Krškem Basic School

Including Romani and other home languages in cross-curricular modules

In David Vrbancič's grade 5 class at Janko Padežnik Basic School, Maribor, 16 of the students speak Slovenian at home, three speak Romani, one speaks Albanian, one speaks Bosnian and one speaks Serbian. David taught a cross-curricular unit, "History on Stage", and his students used their home languages to write and act plays about the life of people in a particular historical period. Despite the difficulty and breadth of the historical content, the students were strongly motivated, worked with great enthusiasm and remembered what they learnt; they were keen to learn about the different languages and cultures present in the class.

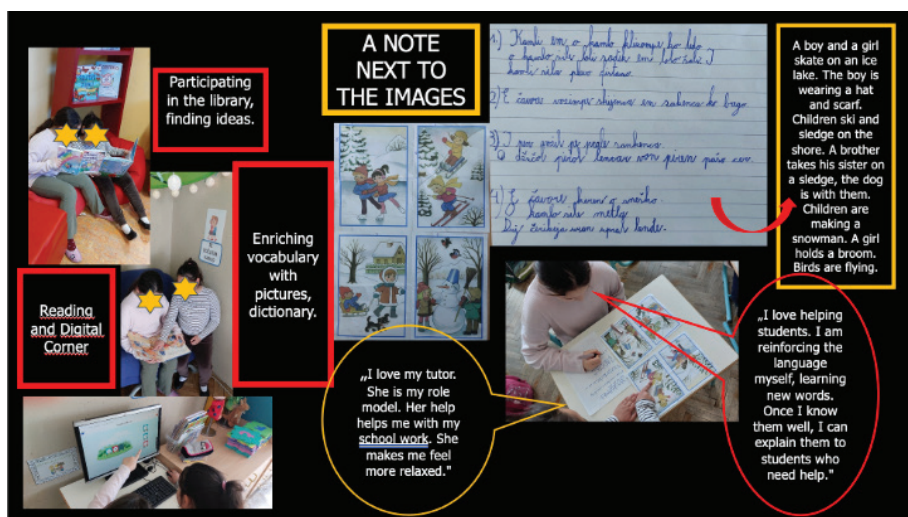


Figure 3.19. Cross-curricular module: overview of student collaboration

© Janko Padežnik Basic School, Maribor

At the same school, Petra Lebar Kac, a grade 5 teacher, reported as follows: “In a cross-curricular unit combining Slovenian and visual arts, students wrote a short story and turned it into a picture book. They could write the text in either Slovenian or their mother tongue, in which case they translated it into Slovenian with the help of a classmate (Figures 3.19, 3.20). Roma and minority-language students were very motivated to write the story in their mother tongue. They also showed great interest in other second language texts and were eager to learn new expressions in those languages. They were proud of their mother tongue and were happy to present it to their classmates as well as to younger students to whom they read their stories in different languages.”



Figure 3.20. Students work on a cross-curricular module

© Janko Padežnik Basic School, Maribor

Multilingual lessons

At Vilka Šuleka Primary School, Hlohovec Šulekovo, Romani was included in grade 2 English lessons (*Zuzana Kráľová; Figure 3.21*) and grade 7 German lessons (*Zuzana Kabašťová; Figure 3.22*). The language was introduced gradually from the beginning of the school year; students learnt Romani words alongside new vocabulary in English or German, Roma students helping with the Romani language and its vocabulary. In the English lessons, custom-made memory games were used to learn colours and an outline of the human body was labelled to teach vocabulary for parts of the body. In the German lessons, students used worksheets to create simple sentences in Romani to describe themselves and their family members. The inclusion of Romani introduced students to the language and reminded them that they have classmates who don't speak Slovak at home. By drawing on Roma students' knowledge of the language, moreover, teachers gave them expert status, which enhanced their self-esteem.



Figure 3.21. Romani included in grade 2 English lesson
© Vilka Šuleka Primary School, Hlohovec Šulekovo



Figure 3.22. Romani included in grade 7 German lesson
© Vilka Šuleka Primary School, Hlohovec Šulekovo

In 2025 Zuzana Ľabašťová, who is learning Romani from her Roma students, taught a multilingual lesson to her grade 8 students. There were nine students in the class, three girls and six boys; one boy was a Roma and one boy and one girl each had one Roma parent. Students worked backwards and forwards between Slovak, English, German and Romani using a Romani worksheet devised by the teacher.

Zuzana introduced the lesson by holding up pictures of animals, and the students called out the German, English and Romani words for the different animals. Next she called three students to the board, one for each language. She dictated a series of animal-related sentences in Slovak:

- My cat is black and white.

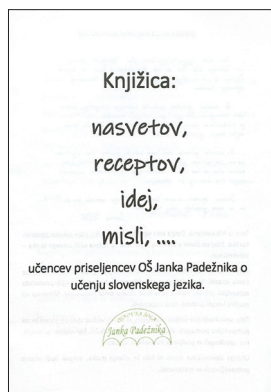
- ▶ Our horse is grey.
- ▶ We have two cats.
- ▶ Is it a mouse?
- ▶ Do you like hedgehogs?
- ▶ Is that a cock or a hen?

The students wrote Romani, English and German translations on the board. Sebastian, the Roma student, remained at the board throughout this activity; the other students took turns sentence by sentence.

For the next activity the students formed three groups, one for each language. Their task was to write a dialogue of at least six turns on an animal-related topic. The Romani group comprised Sebastian and two other boys who contributed actively to the task. Each group read its dialogue aloud. Sebastian translated the German dialogue into Romani; then he read the Romani dialogue aloud and the other groups volunteered translations.

After this the groups were given three minutes in which to write one sentence on any topic to do with animals. Sentences were then read aloud and translated into Slovak.

Finally, the teacher gave out Slovak and Romani versions of the opening verses of the Book of Genesis. When selected students had read aloud excerpts from both texts, the teacher gave them the task of finding the Romani equivalents of a number of Slovak words; Sebastian confirmed their answers.



How to learn the language of schooling

As we have already seen, Janko Padežnik Basic School, Maribor has a long tradition of peer-tutoring. In her role as mentor, Ksenija Popošek (pedagogical adviser) helped students from Roma and immigrant backgrounds to compile a booklet for other newcomer students; Maša Šipek and Petra Lebar Kac provided editorial support (*Figure 3.23*). Each contribution to the booklet comprised a brief account of how the author came to be in Slovenia and how they had gone about learning Slovenian as language of schooling. Here are English translations of two contributions:

Figure 3.23. Students' advice on how to learn the language of schooling

© Janko Padežnik Basic School, Maribor

Kira, 12 years old, from Ukraine

This year, my parents decided that I needed socialisation and live communication. So they came to a common opinion to move to Slovenia. Despite the fact that the languages are similar, it is difficult to learn. For me, there are many different ways to learn a language. The first one for me is to study the translation of words and write them down in notes. It's easy and convenient, but the translation is not always accurate. You can watch different movies and channels in Slovenian, but this method will be more beneficial when you already know some basics and vocabulary. You can find video tutorials on YouTube, which is quite convenient. Among all these options, I think the best way would be to move to the country and join the society, because we immediately perceive the language by ear and have more practice.

My recipe:

- ▶ Read books in Slovenian
- ▶ Watch Slovenian films, news, cartoons
- ▶ Talk to your classmates
- ▶ Do your homework
- ▶ Eat Slovenian food

Hedera, 12 years old, Roma born in Slovenia

I have always been learning Slovenian as I was born in Slovenia. I learnt a few Slovenian words before kindergarten, but most of them in kindergarten and school. My teachers, kindergarten teachers and family helped me learn Slovenian.

The most difficult letters for me to pronounce in Slovenian were r, g, z, š and ž. The teachers helped me to pronounce these letters correctly with different exercises. I stopped having problems with these letters in fourth grade. Now I have the most problems with Slovenian spelling. I try to reduce these problems by reading books.

I work with Slovenian every day at school and at home. I use Slovenian at school both as a book language and as a spoken language.

4. Three case studies

Chapter 1 set out the essentials of the Council of Europe's plurilingual approach adapted to support the educational inclusion of Roma and other minority-language students; and Chapters 2 and 3 have described actions and activities RPPE schools have used to frame and implement the approach. Readers of the guide who wish to develop their own version of the approach will decide for themselves which of those actions and activities can most easily be adapted to the needs of their context; and they may well devise actions and activities of their own. But in doing so they are likely to ask themselves what kind of impact the approach will have on their school and students. In anticipation of such questions, this chapter offers three brief case studies. The first explains how implementation of the RPPE in the smallest of the participating schools, Vyškovce nad Ipľom Primary School in the Slovak Republic, contributed to a larger effort of social inclusion in the local community. The second shows how at Leskovec pri Krškem Basic School in Slovenia the RPPE inspired a group of Roma and immigrant students to form their own dance group, which became a vehicle for significant personal growth and a means of integration in the school community. And the third describes some of the principal activities and achievements of 10th Primary School of Nea Ionia, Volos, Greece, which decided to include Romani in every aspect of school life.

4.1. Vyškovce nad Ipľom Primary School, Slovak Republic¹³

4.1.1. *School and community*

Vyškovce nad Ipľom is a village situated in the south of the Slovak Republic, 300 metres from the border with Hungary. It has a population of approximately 700, about 120 of whom are Roma. Some residents work locally, some in nearby towns, and some over the border in Hungary; other residents are long-term unemployed.

The Hungarian-speaking minority in the Slovak Republic is entitled to Hungarian-medium education, and originally Vyškovce's Primary School taught only through Hungarian. But in 2020 it opened a Slovak stream, which includes Roma children. Students in the Hungarian stream learn Slovak, but students in the Slovak stream do not learn Hungarian, except informally from their peers. The school caters only for the first four primary grades, which are taught together in two classrooms, one for each stream. Most children in the Slovak stream have a home

13. This section is based on the academic co-ordinator's three visits to Vyškovce nad Ipľom and the reports submitted by the principal of the school, Szabina Szabó Balázs.

language other than Slovak. In 2024/2025, seven of the school's 25 students were Roma; between them the students had four home languages: Hungarian (15 students), Slovak (1), Romani (6), Czech (3).

The mayor of Vyškovce nad Ipľom, Ágnes Antal Nyustin, wanted the school to join the RPPE because the project's promotion of educational inclusion coincided with the promotion of social inclusion and social cohesion in the community at large. The relation between the school and the village's new community centre was especially significant in this regard. When the school joined the RPPE in 2023, the purpose-built community centre was nearing completion; by the end of the project in 2025 it was fully operational and providing essential support for Roma children attending the school. Each morning they are collected from their homes and brought to the community centre. If they have inadequate washing facilities at home, they can shower and change into clean clothes at the centre before they go to school; while they are at school, the clothes they arrived in are laundered in readiness for the next day. Children are also given a breakfast snack in the centre. To begin with, the food was prepared by adults, but now the children help, and there are plans to involve their parents in due course.

4.1.2. Implementing a plurilingual approach

Vyškovce nad Ipľom Primary School places particular emphasis on the arts, including music, and physical education. The arts support the development of concentration and motor skills, foster teamwork, and encourage self-expression and creativity. Physical education also supports the development of concentration as well as perseverance and anger management and satisfies students' need for movement. Both kinds of activity depend on collaboration, which breaks down barriers between students and promotes social cohesion. These considerations explain the prominence of collaborative project work in the school's RPPE implementation, which was greatly facilitated by the fact that the classroom assistant, Jozef Riedly, had taken a course in Romani and was able to source appropriate published materials.

"Little Red Riding Hood"

One of the first RPPE projects undertaken in the Slovak class was a puppet version of "Little Red Riding Hood". The teachers chose this story because they thought the students would know it already; in fact, however, it was new to more than half of them. So the teachers began by reading the story aloud and asking the students to summarise it in their own words and make a list of the characters. Most students in the class were Roma, so Romani was included as actively as possible – the students were asked to name the characters in Romani as well as Slovak. The teachers decided to dramatise the story in both languages, so the students read the story again in the language of their choice. They then discussed which characters

would speak in which language. It was agreed that the wolf would speak Romani, while Little Red Riding Hood and the other characters would speak Slovak, and the connecting narrative would be in Slovak. At first, a Roma student took the part of the Romani-speaking wolf; then non-Roma students tried speaking the wolf's lines even though they had little or no Romani. They responded very positively to this challenge and quickly mastered the Romani role.

This bilingual version of "Little Red Riding Hood" corresponded to the linguistic situation of the classroom, and having the characters speak Romani as well as Slovak fostered respect for both languages and the students who spoke them. When the final casting had been decided on, the students began to rehearse the play (Figure 4.1). That was when the teachers discovered that the use of puppets broke down barriers, especially for students with learning and language difficulties. For example, a student with a strongly introverted personality began to speak and smile during rehearsals, then opened up and became more involved in lessons, which impacted positively on his learning.



Figure 4.1. "Little Red Riding Hood"
© Vyškovce nad Ipľom Primary School

The Slovak and Hungarian classes combined to perform another multilingual puppet play when the RPPE's academic co-ordinator visited the school in March 2025. In Slovak, Hungarian, Romani and English the play told the following story. In a meadow surrounded by a big forest there was a small house. One day a rabbit came to the house, knocked on the door and asked: "Who lives here?" There was no reply, so the rabbit moved in. The rabbit was joined first by a cockerel, then by a duck and a goose, then in turn by a cat, a dog, a fox, a horse and a bear. The animals spoke in different languages, and each new arrival was greeted by a song sung by all the students. The house was now so overcrowded that it collapsed, and the animals had to move out. When they had recovered from their shock, they came back to see the ruined house and reintroduced themselves in English, Slovak, Hungarian and Romani.

Celebrating Carnival and Halloween

To prepare for Carnival, students made masks with Hungarian, Slovak and Roma motifs. First, typical motifs of Hungarian, Slovak and Roma folk costumes were mixed up on the board and students had to identify which was which. Then they considered which colours were dominant in each costume and how intricately the costume was decorated. The colours were listed in all the languages used in the school: Slovak, Hungarian, Romani, Czech and English. Blank carnival masks were

then distributed to the students, who decorated them using motifs from Hungarian, Slovak or Roma costumes (*Figure 4.2*). Finally, the masks were presented and students reported on the cultural motifs they had used. They also listed the colours used in the language of the culture concerned. This activity helped students to recognise and accept one another's cultural heritage and to discover similarities and differences between their own and other cultures.



Figure 4.2. Carnival masks painted by pupils

© Vyškovce nad Ipľom Primary School

Halloween was celebrated by dressing up and carving pumpkins. The students cooked American pancakes and decorated them according to their own ideas. Remembering local traditions, the school also visited the local cemetery and lit candles in memory of deceased loved ones.

Cooking traditional dishes

On three occasions the teachers and students prepared Roma and national dishes in order to find out what is the same and what is different in the food typical of different cultures. Building on the knowledge gained from previous activities carried out as part of the RPPE, each cookery session was preceded by a shopping trip (*Figure 4.3*). Food was labelled and prices were given in different languages and the amount to be paid was calculated in Hungarian, Slovak and Romani. When students entered and left the grocery, they exchanged greetings in their respective mother tongues, which was appreciated by the shop staff. This was a way of communicating to the outside world that in this school, all students are equal, regardless of their background, family or financial situation. After the shopping trip the food was cooked; instructions were communicated in several languages (*Figure 4.4*). When the food was ready, the table was set and the food eaten. As this activity was carried out in the Slovak class, the students brought samples of their food to the Hungarian class.



Figure 4.3. Shopping for eggs
© Vyškovce nad Ipľom Primary School



Figure 4.4. Preparing to cook
© Vyškovce nad Ipľom Primary School

Music

As noted above, music plays a key role in the life of the school and has been central to the school's RPPE implementation. When the academic co-ordinator visited Vyškovce in April 2024, the two classes came together to give a brief musical performance. A group comprising five recorders, one drum and six singers performed the theme of Beethoven's "Ode to joy", after which all the students sang the same piece accompanied by a single recorder. Then the whole school sang a song in Slovak and the principal, Szabina Szabó Balázs, asked students to answer questions that would explain the song to the Hungarian speakers. Next the students rehearsed the Slovak, Hungarian, Czech, English and Romani words for the colours of five pairs of bells: blue, green, red, yellow, orange. Five students used the bells to play the tune of a song that the class then sang (*Figure 4.5*). Five more students joined the band with pairs of coloured plastic tubes that sounded different notes (*Figure 4.6*). All the students without an instrument then sang the song which the principal accompanied on the zither. These are examples of just a few of the musical activities that bring the languages of the school together.



Figure 4.5. Playing the bells
© Vyškovce nad Ipľom Primary School



Figure 4.6. More music making
© Vyškovce nad Ipľom Primary School

At the end of the project, Szabina Szabó Balázs reported that participation in the RPPE had helped to strengthen co-operation between the school, families and the community. It had also impacted positively on attendance and student motivation, increasing mutual respect between Roma and non-Roma students, whose communication skills and language awareness had been greatly enhanced. In general, the classroom environment had become more inclusive, and students had acquired new competences: empathy, creativity and teamwork. Before joining the RPPE the school had made efforts to overcome the language barriers that impeded student integration; after joining the project these efforts became more systematic and purposeful. Students were given opportunities to express their opinions in classroom discussions and project work, and they were encouraged to take an active part in decision-making and reflection. Their reaction to RPPE was mostly positive. The school plans to maintain RPPE-inspired activities and to continue its co-operation with the community and local NGOs.

4.2. “All for all”, Leskovec pri Krškem Basic School, Slovenia¹⁴

4.2.1. The school

Leskovec pri Krškem Primary School (Figure 4.7) is located in south-east Slovenia, surrounded by hills, vineyards and apple orchards – the school’s logo is a circle representing the sun and an apple as a symbol of friendliness and understanding (Figure 4.8). The school has more than 700 students; about 12% of them are Roma and 6% immigrants, mostly from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania and Kosovo*. There are also a few students from North Macedonia, China and Republic of Moldova.



Figure 4.7. Leskovec pri Krškem Basic School
© Leskovec pri Krškem Basic School



Figure 4.8. The school logo
© Leskovec pri Krškem Basic School

14. This section is based on the video presentation of “All for all” prepared by Nejc Plankar and Daniela Janušić for the RPPE’s concluding conference held in Bratislava, 3–4 July 2025.

* All references to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

The school hoped that the RPPE's approach – encouraging the use of home languages in the classroom – would lead to the more effective inclusion of Roma and other minority-language students. Roma often feel uncomfortable at school, and this impacts negatively on their attendance and their academic progress. To counteract this, the school encouraged Roma and other minority-language students to present their customs and culture without shame and to participate with confidence in extra-curricular activities. More generally, it used the RPPE to make students more aware of the richness of multiculturalism and multilingualism.

4.2.2. "All for all"

As part of the school's RPPE implementation, Sonja Valenčič, one of the school's Roma assistants, organised workshops for students whose home language was not Slovenian. At first, girls from grades 5 to 9 (10 to 14 years old) got to know one another by making friendship bracelets together. Then they moved on to making decorations for the school and started writing positive and encouraging words – *friendly, proud, success* – in their various home languages, learning from one another as they exchanged words and their meanings. This resulted in a display of positive words in various home languages on the walls of the school (Figure 4.9). The girls began to share traditions from their cultures and the fairy tales their grandmothers told them. They became so close that they socialised outside school and started celebrating birthdays together.



Figure 4.9. Display of positive words

© Leskovec pri Krškem Basic School

They then had the idea of forming a dance group that they called "All for all", learning dances from one another's cultures. Their first performance was for the grade 1 students as part of their welcome to the school community. They also visited the Romani radio station (Figure 4.10) where they learned about the history of the Roma people, gave their first interview and sang three songs in Albanian. With all the activities they participated in, the girls gained in confidence and began to participate in other school activities such as the school dance. They contributed to the

decoration and the setting up of tables and had the courage to dance and sing in front of their peers. They subsequently performed traditional and modern dances at an event for Roma children organised by the Romani Union Association. With each performance they became more confident (Figures 4.11, 4.12, 4.13).

Here are some of the things members of the group said about their participation in “All for all” (translated from Slovenian):

Rumesja (Albanian): *“I didn’t expect the group to grow so much or reach this level. I liked that we worked well together. We never said, ‘I don’t want to do this.’ We were always willing to try everything. We never gave up. Yes, it was good.”*

Klara (Roma): *“We even went to perform at another school in the Prekmurje region. They welcomed us warmly. I really enjoyed singing. I felt good because I had positive friends around me, and I’m proud of that.”*

Elda (Albanian): *“Yes, I’ll admit it, Nika and Klara choreographed some really beautiful dances. Each of us came in with our own idea for a dance. Sure, we argued a lot – that’s normal. But it helped me to spend time with them. They also listened to our music and then told us something new about it. When we came to school in the morning, they would say things like, ‘Oh, I saw this in Albanian...’ It felt good to hear something new about your own country, something that others have discovered.”*

Anija (Roma): *“I’m happy I joined this group, that I can dance now.”*

Julija (Roma): *“This project helped me express myself through things I enjoy, like dance. It also helped me with my self-confidence. I used to feel shy and afraid to dance in front of others, but when I first went on stage*



Figure 4.10. Visiting the Romani radio station

© Leskovec pri Krškem Basic School



Figure 4.11. “All for all”

© Leskovec pri Krškem Basic School



Figure 4.12. Ready to perform

© Leskovec pri Krškem Basic School



Figure 4.13. In performance

© Leskovec pri Krškem Basic School

and danced, it was like falling in love for the first time, and that's it. This project really helped me discover a different version of myself. When I perform, I put my usual self aside and bring out that other Julija, the one who's not afraid. So yes, this project really helped me a lot. I'm not embarrassed to express myself in my own language in front of others because I believe we should learn as many new languages as possible and not be prejudiced – whether it's about Albanian, Romani or Slovenian. Every language has something good in it ... it's beautiful when we learn more languages."

It is important to note that the students expressed these views in Slovenian, which for them was a second or third language. Being members of the "All for all" dance group clearly made an important contribution to their personal development; the maturity and self-knowledge expressed by Julija is especially impressive. The girls first came together because they were outsiders with home languages other than Slovenian; they got to know one another and became a cohesive group as a result of linguistic and cultural exchange; and that exchange gave them a confidence and self-belief that they were able to express in song and dance. In microcosm they show what can be achieved when minority-language students' home languages and cultures play a central role in their educational experience: the autonomy and holistic personal development envisaged by the Council of Europe's Education Strategy *Learners First*¹⁵.

4.3. 10th Primary School of Nea Ionia, Volos, Greece¹⁶

4.3.1. *The school and its language policy*

Situated in south-east Thessaly, Volos is one of the largest cities and most important ports in Greece. 10th Primary School of Nea Ionia traditionally serves two Roma settlements, children from which comprise the great majority of its registered students, ranging in number between 330 and 263 in the three years of RPPE implementation. The most widely used home languages in the settlements are Vlach and Balkan varieties of Romani. For the past decade the school has had 15 classes and has provided for reception, integration and preparatory groups. The teaching staff comprises 23 class teachers, four foreign language teachers, two psychologists/social workers, one teacher for special education, and four other teachers, for ICT, music and art. The school has benefited from partnerships with the Roma Centre of Aliveri, the University of Thessaly and the local church.

Previously, 10th Primary School had followed a Greek-only policy; when it joined the RPPE it decided to include Romani in all whole-school and classroom activities,

15. Education for Today's and Tomorrow's Democratic Societies, available at go.coe.int/LKZw5, accessed 30 April 2026.

16. This section draws on the various reports that the school submitted to the Council of Europe, the school's presentation of its RPPE implementation at an online meeting between the academic co-ordinator and the three participating Greek schools in May 2025, the academic co-ordinator's report on his visit to the school in May 2024, and the handbook that the school has compiled (in Greek) for the benefit of other Greek schools with Roma students.

following many of the suggestions in the RPPE handbook. Unlike the schools in Amaliada and Komotini, 10th Primary School retained most of its teachers after the 2023 election, though the retirement of the principal at the end of the school year 2022/2023 meant that his successor was responsible for the second and third years of implementation. The value of this continuity is impossible to over-estimate. The inclusion of Romani in all aspects of school life has led to a marked improvement in socialisation and attendance, and pupils have begun to bring their parents to events at the school.

4.3.2. Aspects of the school's RPPE implementation

The size of the school and the thoroughgoing nature of its RPPE implementation meant that there was a constant movement back and forth between classroom learning and whole-school and extracurricular activities. Those described in what follows have been selected for their combination of variety, interdependence and overall coherence.

Student diaries

As noted in section 3.1.3, in the first year of RPPE implementation the academic co-ordinator introduced the idea of learner logbooks (or diaries), which have three defining characteristics: (i) they provide a cumulative record (or “log”) of individual learning; (ii) under the teacher’s guidance students maintain their own logbooks and have some control over what they write in them; and (iii) the use of logbooks includes regular self-evaluation, which is an essential part of reflective learning (see ➔ **Appendix 2**).

10th Primary School used learner diaries as a way of engaging students in their learning and encouraging them to participate actively and collaboratively in class. The teacher’s diary recorded the methods used, the children’s impressions, their interest in language, their enthusiasm for the activities, the challenges they faced, and their thoughts on the thematic units taught. The teachers responsible for this part of the school’s RPPE implementation were Apostolia Vaitisi and Eleni Stathaki.

Each student’s diary reflected his or her personal preferences. The pages were numbered, the beginning of each month was marked by a month page decorated in whatever way the students chose, and there was a margin on each page for teacher feedback. Grade 1 students, who were just learning to write, made a drawing of their favourite activity each week and added a caption, which they copied from the board. The diaries were plurilingual: entries were made in Romani, Greek and English – the inclusion of Romani proved especially motivating for students. The significance of the weekly diary increased as students came to understand that all the languages they know – Greek, Romani and English – are included in the learning process (*Figure 4.14*).

The diary project boosted students’ self-esteem and increased their engagement in classroom activities and school events. Using current topics and international



Figure 4.14. Pages from student diary

© 10th Primary School, Nea Ionia, Volos

days, the project explored the students' lifestyle, traditions, interests, music, places of residence, and history. The integration of experiential, interdisciplinary, and multilingual approaches helped students to feel included and valued, enriched the educational process with elements of culture and personal expression, and enabled teachers to better understand their students' interests and adjust their teaching methods accordingly. Overall, the introduction of student diaries highlighted the importance of language and cultural identity in education, promoting multiculturalism and linguistic awareness as an integral part of daily learning.

Bilingual albums

In the school year 2024/2025 the Integration Class, which caters for children with learning difficulties, included students from grade 2 to grade 5 (7 to 11 years old). Their teacher, Maria Baruti, helped them to compile bilingual albums. This project had three goals. The first was linguistic: to support the development of students' oral and written skills in Greek and their basic literacy skills in Romani, using multimodal material to help them understand and process basic concepts, words and phrases. The second goal was cultural: to encourage respect for Romani as a key component of their cultural identity and to develop cross-cultural and cross-linguistic awareness by making comparisons between Romani and Greek. And the third goal was socio-affective: to encourage students' active participation in group work, to help them develop a positive self-image, and to strengthen trust between teacher and students.

To launch the project, the children watched a video that explained what an album is and how it is created. Then they selected and wrote down in Greek and Romani the questions to be included in their own album. Next, the questions were arranged in a specific order, and on the final page students drew a box in which to write their name. They designed and illustrated the cover and each page of the album depending on its theme. Then they wrote their answers to the questions and translated them into Romani (Figure 4.15).

The school's trilingual dictionary

Roma and non-Roma students from all grades contributed to a dictionary of commonly used Romani words with their Greek and English equivalents. Words related to everyday life, school, family and nature were collected from discussions, group work, word games, and students' personal stories. Drawings and photos were used to provide visual support. The dictionary was printed (Figure 4.16) and is now used in class as a tool for raising awareness of linguistic diversity and supporting language learning. The teachers responsible for this project were Efthalia Skamagkouli, Apostolia Vaitsi and Zoe Kouskourida.

Reading Roma stories in Romani and Greek

This activity was designed to encourage students' love of reading, introduce them to the work of Greek and foreign writers, and enhance their intercultural awareness and respect for Romani language, culture and identity. Students in grade 1 were introduced to various forms of family life and the relationships between family members; they learned that when there is love in a family all obstacles can be overcome.



Figure 4.15. Page from bilingual album
© 10th Primary School, Nea Ionia, Volos

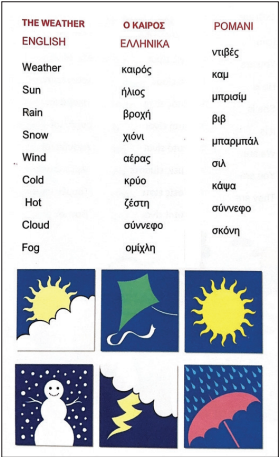


Figure 4.16. Page from trilingual dictionary
© 10th Primary School, Nea Ionia, Volos

Students in grades 2 and 3 read books from six countries on topics related to emotions, the environment, etc., and students in grades 5 and 6 read books by a local author. The teachers involved were Apostolia Vaitsi, Eleni Chatzi, Stavroula Diamantopoulou, Stamati-na Koutsouti, Eleni Rigouli, Eleni Stathaki.



Figure 4.17. Book corner
© 10th Primary School, Nea Ionia, Volos

The school supported this activity by creating a book corner (Figure 4.17), for which it received an award.

Negotiating the rules of the classroom

As a way of developing teamwork, encouraging autonomy, promoting positive behaviour and supporting plurilingualism, grade 4 classes undertook a 10-week project to negotiate the rules of the classroom in Greek, Romani and English (teachers: Zoe Ioannidou, Eleni Rigouli, Eleni Stathaki, Vasiliki Stathakopoulou, Sofia Xenou). When they had formulated the rules, the students created a “behaviour contract” in collage form, which they all signed; made origami constructions with the rules to further enhance teamwork; turned the rules into a song to make them easier to remember; and made “praise cards” to encourage adherence to the rules.

From book to stage

Of all the activities undertaken by 10th Primary School, turning stories into trilingual plays was perhaps the most ambitious. Two children’s stories were given this treatment: *The Naughty Kid*, an award-winning children’s book that explores the themes of identity, rejection, friendship and inclusion, and *The Little Tailor of Words*. The teachers responsible for the first of these productions were Efterpi Sotopoulou, Sofia Xenou, Zoe Ioannidou and Apostolos Charisis, and the teachers responsible for the second were Eleni Rigouli, Eleni Chatzi, Eleni Stathaki, Evagelia Georgoula and Michaela Milioka.

When students had read each book, they engaged in activities designed to promote deeper comprehension. For example, questions on the texts were answered in Greek and Romani; alternative titles were proposed and discussed; and parts of the book were turned into dialogue with connecting narrative in Romani and English. The books were then translated into Romani and a drama script was created in Greek, Romani and English. Trilingual invitations, posters and programmes were produced, and the students’ parents and students from other schools were invited to the performances.

When the academic co-ordinator visited the school in May 2024, students from grades 2 and 3 performed *The Little Tailor of Words*. The programme introduced the story as follows:

“Once upon a time, in a small town, there lived a special tailor. This little tailor used words to sew his clothes. He chose his words very carefully for each one of his customers specifically. The years went by, the town grew larger, and its people became hasty and forgot their kind-hearted tailor. They started buying ready-made clothes in large department stores. But there came a winter so cold that their new clothes could not keep them warm in any way. That’s when they remembered their tailor...”

The students spoke, sang and danced with great confidence and fluency; some of them had substantial speaking parts. One of the songs they sang was in English (Figures 4.18, 4.19).



Figure 4.18. The Little Tailor of Words
© 10th Primary School, Nea Ionia, Volos



Figure 4.19. The Little Tailor's shop
© 10th Primary School, Nea Ionia, Volos

After the play the students and their parents formed three groups. Each group was given a large sheet of card, the same ten pictures from the original story book, and Greek and Romani labels appropriate to each picture. They had to match labels and pictures and stick them on the card. Next, each group was given a different piece of clothing (a sweater, a t-shirt and a pair of jeans) and blank slips of paper. The group with the sweater had to write “warm” words in Greek and Romani and attach them to the sweater; the group with the t-shirt had to write “cool” words; and the group with the jeans had to write both “warm” and “cool” words. Finally, the three groups came together to create “the blanket of love” using red and yellow heart-shaped pieces of paper (Figure 4.20). The red hearts had Greek words written on them and the yellow hearts had Romani words. The students and their parents had to match Greek and Romani hearts, glue them together, and pin them to the blanket.



Figure 4.20. The blanket of love
© 10th Primary School, Nea Ionia, Volos

It is important to note that performing plays in Romani as well as Greek means that they are easier for parents to understand when they have little Greek.

The bilingual school newspaper

The school's extracurricular programme includes a bilingual newspaper club, which meets every Monday after school under the guidance of Efterpi Sotopoulou and Efthimia Thomakou; the club is open to students in grades 5 and 6 (11 and 12 years old). Six issues were published in the three years of RPPE implementation, and the newspaper won a national award for school newspapers (Figure 4.21). The award-winning issue described a visit to the Aristotelio Community Centre, where the student journalists got answers to questions about space; reported on an investigation into neighbourhood problems that required them to distribute information leaflets on issues of concern to their settlement; and included articles on bees, dental hygiene and Pablo Picasso, book reviews, haiku in Greek, English and Romani (see below), and crosswords and riddles.

At the beginning of each production cycle, students choose the topics they will write about and form groups to research the topics on the internet and draft articles in Greek. Their texts are then read, corrected and expanded by the whole team, after which the Greek texts are translated into Romani. This generates discussion of grammatical features of Romani using the categories students have



Figure 4.20. Bilingual school newspaper
© 10th Primary School, Nea Ionia, Volos

learned in their English and German lessons. As there is no written standard of their variety of Romani, they use whatever models are available to them and the Greek alphabet and its associated phonology; effectively, they create their own written standard. This is a substantial linguistic undertaking which has a positive impact on their proficiency in Greek. Equally important, it helps them to develop a critical awareness of Romani and greatly extends their expressive range in the language.

The students made a video in which they explained how they produce the newspaper and what it means to them. They all spoke with confidence and self-assurance, thanks at least in part to the high degree of autonomy that characterises their work. Here is an English translation of what they said in Greek:

Chrysoula: *"Good morning and welcome to our school, the 10th Primary School of Nea Ionia, Volos."*

Alexandros T.: *"We are the editorial team of the school and we are students of the fifth and sixth grades."*

Nikoleta: *"Our newspaper started circulating last year and continues this year."*

Alexandros R.: *"Our meetings take place in the library. Come and let us show you. ... This is where we gather once a week, discuss and choose the topics we will deal with."*

Valantis: *"Our newspaper is not an ordinary newspaper. It is bilingual, it is written in Greek and Romani."*

Fanouris: *"At our school, most of the students are from the Roma community and at home we speak the Romani language."*

Nikoleta: *"Because we wanted to share the news of our school with all the residents of the area, we decided to write in both languages."*

Working as journalists:

Alexandros T.: *"In the newspaper I liked that I took part in the interviews because I learned new things."*

Fanouris: *"I did translations for the newspaper and read the newspaper to my family and friends."*

Stavroula: *"It was really nice working with my classmates for the newspaper."*

Alexandros R.: *"I like being at the newspaper because it teaches me teamwork."*

Pangiotis: *"I got involved in translating into Romani and thought it was very creative and helped my classmates get to know my language."*

Agapi: *"It's a special experience to work for the school newspaper."*

Petros Jason: *"I did some research for the articles. I wrote them and I liked it very much because we showed the world our school news."*

Irene: *"I liked distributing the newspapers and the world found out about us."*

Writing haiku in Greek, English and Romani

Zoi Ioannidou designed a language awareness project in which students in grades 3 and 4 (8 and 9 years old) wrote haiku (three-line poems with 5–7–5 syllables) in Greek, English and Romani. Following the principles of peer tutoring, the students were encouraged to support one another across linguistic and cultural boundaries. The project aimed to foster students' appreciation of linguistic diversity, strengthen their language awareness in Greek, English, and Romani, boost their creativity and capacity to express emotion through poetry, and enhance collaboration and inclusion.

The project began with an introduction to the haiku form and an exploration of examples in Greek. Students then worked in small mixed-ability groups, each of which included native Romani speakers and students with better English language skills. Together, they created haiku in all three languages, drawing inspiration from nature, daily life, and emotions (Figure 4.22). Word cards and visual aids were used to support vocabulary building, especially in English and Romani.



Figure 4.22. Haiku in Greek, English and Romani
© 10th Primary School, Nea Ionia, Volos

Peer tutoring was introduced by encouraging students to act as “language mentors” to one another, helping with translation, syllable counting and brainstorming. The strict structure of haiku encouraged a focus on phonology and morphology as students experimented with words, syllables, adjectives and images, enlarging their vocabulary and learning to express complex emotions in simple language. Romani-speaking children took pride in teaching their language to their peers, which strengthened their role in the learning community.

The haiku project showed the students that their home language was valued and respected, which increased their self-esteem and readiness to participate. Peer tutoring fostered strong bonds between students of different language backgrounds and helped build mutual respect. Students developed skills in reading, writing and speaking in three languages, adding to their vocabulary and phonological awareness. The project contributed to the development of a more inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment.

Peer tutoring and learning to become active citizens

Over two months, students in grades 3 and 4 (8 and 9 years old) were introduced to peer tutoring in a project on active citizenship and the importance of community participation (teachers: Efterpi Sotopoulou, Apostolos Charisis, Konstantinos Charatsis). The aim was to enable them to identify their rights and responsibilities as citizens and to develop their critical thinking and collaboration skills. By teaching their peers they practised communication and leadership skills.

The project was implemented in four phases:

- 1 Introduction to the concept of an active citizen (one lesson)
- 2 Creation of peer tutoring groups (one lesson)
- 3 Peer tutoring (one or two lessons)
- 4 Reflection and conclusion (one lesson)

The students realised that diversity is a strength because each member of their team contributed something unique. Roma students understood that their experiences are valuable and that they can actively participate in discussions about social engagement; non-Roma students learned to see the world from a different perspective and to better understand their classmates. The students learned that an active citizen is someone who helps and supports others regardless of their background.

This is what three students said at the end of the project (translated from Greek):

Marina, who worked on children’s rights: *“I learned that we all have rights, but also responsibilities. Many times, I felt like I didn’t have a voice, but through this project I realised that I can speak up and be heard.”*

Nikos, who was in the group discussing rules and laws: *“It’s great that we can create rules that help everyone. In our class council we students make decisions together, and I really like that because it shows that we all have a say.”*

Rafaela, speaking about her experience of peer tutoring: *"I didn't know I could be a 'teacher', but when I explained to others what it means to help people around you, I felt proud. I want us to keep doing activities like this."*

The class council came up with the idea of organising a small community action, such as a clean-up campaign or a meeting to talk about children's rights. Most important, all the students felt that their opinions mattered and that they could become active citizens in their everyday lives.

4.4. Conclusion

In his final report, the principal of 10th Primary School, Konstantinos Charatsis, said that the RPPE had inspired the school to devise activities that increased student engagement and encouraged collaboration. Students came to understand that they have a right to use their own language at school, and this enabled many of them to express themselves more freely and to develop enhanced self-esteem.

The other participating schools in Greece, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia experienced similarly positive outcomes. Everyone involved in the RPPE hopes that other schools faced with the challenge of including Roma, minority-language and immigrant students will be inspired to follow the examples provided in this guide and develop their own version of the plurilingual approach.

Appendix 1

Schools and teachers who participated in the RPPE

Greece

4th Experimental Primary School, Amaliada

Principal

2022/2023 : Petros Kokkosis

2023/2024 and 2024/2025 : Dimitrios Mpantounas

RPPE co-ordinator

2022/2023 : Petros Kokkosis

2023/2024 and 2024/2025 : Klytaimnistra Tsikrou

Participating teachers

2022/2023 : Anastasia Bilali, Magdalini Klapa, Maria Vgenopoulou

2023/2024 : Dimitrios Mpantounas, Eleni Dafermou, Maria-Giota Delga, Nikoleta Kapari, Panteleimon Pandis, Varvara Spanou, Klytaimnistra Tsikrou

2024/2025 : Dimitrios Mpantounas, Dimitra Dervou, Theodoros Vendras, Dimitra Kouloura, Klytaimnistra Tsikrou, Eleni Katsoula, Nikoleta Petropoulou, Nikolia Papa-georgiou, Konstantinos Ziagos, Irini Koutroubi, Evangelos Tsakalis, Panteleimon Pandis, Angeliki, Antigoni Bourou, Fotini Moula

Classroom assistants

2023/2024 : Andreas Iliopoulos

2024/2025 : Demetra Kouloura

Total number of students

2022/2023 : 109

2023/2024 : 110

2024/2025 : 100

Number of Roma students

2022/2023 : 104

2023/2024 : 105

2024/2025 : 98

All students attending the school participated in the RPPE in all three years of implementation.

12th Primary School, Komotini

Principal and RPPE co-ordinator

Dimitra Kesoudidou

Participating teachers

2022/2023 : Dimitra Kesoudidou, Dimitrios Lourmpakis, Vasiliki Avramopoulou, Anastasia Deligiannidou, Ionna Vasilakopoulou, Despoina Kourtidou, Mixalis Pasxos, Aggeliki Stamou

2023/2024 : Dimitra Kesoudidou, Dimitrios Lourmpakis, Vasiliki Avramopoulou, Despoina Kourtidou, Mixalis Pasxos, Sinan Giakoup, Zoi Polkou, Emine Ismail

2024/2025 : Dimitra Kesoudidou, Dimitrios Lourmpakis, Vasiliki Avramopoulou, Gkionoul Tompa, Zisis Stergiopoulos, Iliana Gkaintatzi, Anastasia Kyrdiou, Eleutheria Tsapkinaki

Total number of students

2022/2023 : 182

2023/2024 : 195

2024/2025 : 206

Number of Roma students

2022/2023 : 182

2023/2024 : 195

2024/2025 : 206

All students attending the school participated in all three years of RPPE implementation.

10th Primary School of Nea Ionia, Volos

Principal and RPPE co-ordinator

2022/2023 : Anastasios Goukos

2023/2024 and 2024/2025 : Dr Konstantinos Charatsis

Participating teachers

2022/2023 : Anastasios Goukos, Ioannis Makantasis, Eleni Rigouli, Eleni Chatzi, Evangelos Stamoulis, Stergios Champeris, Triantafillia Valassa, Stavrina Lambadari, Vasiliki Stathakopoulou, Eleni Stathaki, Stavroula Diamantopoulou, Efthimia Thomakou, Eleni Stambouli, Apostolos Charisis, Efterpi Sotopoulou, Stamatina Koutsoutsouti, Apostolia Vaitsi, Efthalia Skamagouli, Zoe Papaioannou, Andromachi Sereiti, Evaggelia Georgoula, Maria Baruti, Michaila Milioka, Konstantinos Charatsis

2023/2024 : Konstantinos Charatsis, Michaila Milioka, Stamatina Koutsoutsooti, Apostolia Vaitsi, Stavroula Diamantopoulou, Eleni Rigouli, Eleni Chatzi, Triantafillia Valassa, Vasiliki Stathakopoulou, Eleni Stathaki, Efterpi Sotopoulou, Stergios Champeris, Efthimia Thomakou, Eleni Stambouli, Apostolos Charisis, Varvara Gkrinia, Efthalkia Skamagouli, Zoe Ioannidou, Andromachi Sereti, Evaggelia Georgoula, Maria Baruti

2024/2025 : Konstantinos Charatsis, Michaila Milioka, Efthimia Thomakou, Fani Gkoutzeri, Varvara Gkrinia, Stamatina Koutsoutsooti, Apostolia Vaitsi, Eleni Chatzi, Eleni Rigouli, Eleni Stathaki, Vasiliki Stathakopoulou, Triantafillia Valassa, Stavroula Diamantopoulou, Efterpi Sotopoulou, Eleni Stambouli, Apostolos Charisis, Zoe Ioannidou, Christodoulou Anastasia, Andromachi Sereti, Maria Baruti, Xenou Sophia, Zoe Kuskourida, Serleti Kalliopi

Number of students

2022/2023 : 330

2023/2024 : 303

2024/2025 : 263

Number of Roma students

2022/2023 : 262

2023/2024 : 283

2024/2025 : 251

Number of students participating in the RPPE

2022/2023 : 208

2023/2024 : 258

2024/2025 : 223

Home languages other than Greek and Romani present in school

2022/2023 : Albanian, Serbian, Afrikaans

2023/2024 : Albanian, Serbian

2024/2025 : Albanian, Serbian, Afrikaans

Slovak Republic

L'udmila Podjavorinská Primary School, Košice

Principal

Milan Dulina

RPPE co-ordinator

Michaela Cingel'ová

Participating teachers

2022/2023 : Stanka Dotková, Edita Fabian Hilgartová, Lucia Rešovská, Michaela Cingelová, Nikola Juskaninová, Martina Gáborová, Andrea Adamondyová, Valéria Kissová, Lucia Forgáčová, Kvetoslava Korpášová, Renáta Habčáková, Martina Begeniová

2023/2024 : Stanka Dotková, Edita Fabian Hilgartová, Veronika Mihoková, Silvia Valenčíková, Lucia Rešovská, Martina Zátorská, Michaela Cingelová, Simona Jonášová, Nikola Juskaninová, Martina Gáborová, Andrea Adamondyová

2024/2025 : Martina Zátorská, Katarína Sekeľová, Kamila Kovaľová, Edita Fabian Hilgartová, Veronika Mihoková, Lucia Rešovská, Michaela Cingelová, Andrea Adamondyová

Classroom assistant

2022/2023, 2023/2024, 2024/2025 : Silvia Medňanská

Total number of students (all of them Roma)

2022/2023 : 802

2023/2024 : 826

2024/2025 : 931

Number of classes participating in RPPE

2022/2023 : 12

2023/2024 : 11 (174 students)

2024/2025 : 9 (159 students)

Vilka Šuleka Primary School, Hlohovec-Šulekovo

Principal

Alena Jurdová

RPPE co-ordinator

Zuzana Kabašťová

Participating teachers

2022/2023 : Zuzana Kabašťová, Mária Detková, Edita Szórádová

2023/2024 : Zuzana Kabašťová, Mária Detková, Zuzana Kráľová

2024/2025 : Zuzana Kabašťová, Mária Detková

Total number of students

2022/2023 : 178
2023/2024 : 185
2024/2025 : 182

Number of Roma students (and numbers of Romani speakers)

2022/2023 : 67 (11)
2023/2024 : 62 (9)
2024/2025 : 59 (9)

Number of students who participated in the RPPE

2022/2023 : 54 (4 classes)
2023/2024 : 59 (4 classes)
2024/2025 : 62 (4 classes)

Home languages in the school in addition to Slovak and Romani (with number of speakers)

2022/2023 : Czech (2), Russian (1), Ukrainian (2)
2023/2024 : Russian (1), Ukrainian (2)
2024/2025 : Czech (1), Russian (1), Ukrainian (2)

Vyškovce nad Iplom Primary School

Principal and RPPE co-ordinator

Mgr. Szabina Szabó Balázs

Participating teachers

2023/2024 : Szabina Szabó Balázs, Szilvia Zsolnay, Julianna Deák Csáky, Zoltán Mezei, Anna Molnár
2024/2025 : Szabina Szabó Balázs, Andrea Borková, Erzsébet Kiss

Classroom assistants

2023/2024 and 2024/2025 : Jozef Riedly

Total number of students

2023/2024 : 23
2024/2025 : 25

Number of Roma students

2023/2024 : 6

2024/2025 : 7

Home languages present in the school (with numbers of speakers)

2023/2024 : Hungarian (13), Slovak (1), Romani (6), Czech (3)

2024/2025 : Hungarian (15), Slovak (1), Romani (6), Czech (3)

Slovenia

France Prešeren Črenšovci Basic School

Principal

Mag. Stanko Čerpnjak

RPPE co-ordinator

Stanka Zver

Participating teachers and assistants (school and kindergarten)

2022/2023, 2023/2024, 2024/2025 : Stanka Zver, Metka Husar Černjavič, Petra Smej, Samira Horvat, Mitja Gomboc, Tajda Kokaš, Adriana Horvat, Andreja Podgorelec, Alma Novak

Number of students

2022/2023 : school 202, kindergarten 111

2023/2024 : school 204, kindergarten 104

2024/2025 : school 201, kindergarten 113

Number of Roma students

2022/2023 : school 25, kindergarten 16

2023/2024 : school 23, kindergarten 17

2024/2025 : school 32, kindergarten 15

Home languages other than Slovenian and Romani present in the school (with student numbers)

2022/2023 : Ukrainian (4)

2023/2024 : Lebanese (1)

2024/2025 : Lebanese (1)

All students in the school (13 classes) and associated kindergarten (2 classes) participated in the RPPE.

Leskovec pri Krškem Basic School

Principal

Jožica Repše

RPPE co-ordinator

Daniela Janušić

Participating teachers

2022/2023 : Daniela Stamatović, Tamara Vardić, Maja Menič Stopar, Eva Kink Žerjav, Simona Škvarč, Nejc Plankar, Mateja Lisec, Sonja Valenčič, Zina Džamastagić

2023/2024 : Tamara Vardić, Maja Menič Stopar, Eva Kink Žerjav, Simona Škvarč, Nejc Plankar, Mateja Lisec, Sonja Valenčič, Zina Džamastagić

2024/2025 : Tamara Vardić, Maja Menič Stopar, Eva Kink Žerjav, Simona Škvarč, Nejc Plankar, Mateja Lisec, Sonja Valenčič, Zina Džamastagić

Participating pre-school teachers

2022/2023, 2023/2024, 2024/2025 : Špela Fekonja Cikač, Melita Levak, Martina Arh, Tina Macur, Mirjana Marinčič

Total number of students

2022/2023 : 719

2023/2024 : 726

2024/2025 : 727

Number of Roma students

2022/2023 : 101

2023/2024 : 96

2024/2025 : 96

Home languages in the school in addition to Slovak and Romani (with number of speakers)

2022/2023 : Albanian (32), Greek (1), Macedonian (2), Chinese (2), Bosnian (9), Moldovan (1)

2023/2024 : Albanian (31), Greek (2), Macedonian (5), Chinese (2), Bosnian (10)

2024/2025 : Albanian (34), Greek (2), Macedonians (5), Chinese (2), Bosnian (5), Serbian (1)

Grades/classes that participated in the RPPE

2022/2023 : grades 1-5, 23 classes, 431 students

2023/2024 : grades 1-5, 22 classes, 433 students

2024/2025 : grades 1-5, 23 classes, 450 students; also the dancing group "All for all" (10 girls)

Janko Padežnik Basic School, Maribor

Principal

Mag. Sonja Filipič

RPPE co-ordinator

Koraljka Čeh

Participating teachers

2022/2023 : Janja Modrijančič, David Vrbančič, Nina Malajner, Nevenka Pušnik, Petra Damiš Lavrenčič, Urša Krajšek, Tamara Škafar Vogrin, Giovannino Raffanelli, Mateja Mohora

2023/2024 : Janja Modrijančič, David Vrbančič, Nina Malajner, Nevenka Pušnik, Petra Damiš Lavrenčič, Urša Krajšek, Tamara Škafar Vogrin, Mateja Mohora, Petra Lebar Kac

2024/2025 : Nina Frangež, David Vrbančič, Nina Malajner, Nevenka Pušnik, Petra Damiš Lavrenčič, Urša Krajšek, Tamara Škafar Vogrin, Petra Lebar Kac

Classroom assistants

2022/2023, 2023/2024, 2024/2025 : Ksenija Popošek, Mojca Rojc, Andreja Simič, Lana Matjašič Filipič, Aleksandra Kunstelj, Dejan Peklar, Jasmina Mazreku

Total number of students

2022/2023 : 475

2023/2024 : 506

2024/2025 : 516

Number of Roma students

2022/2023 : 54

2023/2024 : 64

2024/2025 : 58

Home languages present in the school in addition to Slovenian and Romani

2022/2023 : Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian, Albanian, Ukrainian, Russian, French (97 students)

2023/2024 : Serbian, Croatian, Ukrainian, Farsi, Russian, Albanian, Bosnian, French (104 students)

2024/2025 : Serbian, Croatian, Ukrainian, Farsi, Russian, Spanish, Turkish, Bosnian, Albanian, French (114 students)

Grades/classes that participated in the RPPE

2022/2023 : grades 1-9 (189 students)

2023/2024 : grades 1-9 (190 students)

2024/2025 : grades 1-9 (250 students)

Frana Metelka Basic School, Škocjan

Principal

Janja Lesjak

RPPE co-ordinator

Anica Tramte

Participating teachers

2022/2023, 2023/2024, 2024/2025 : Jan Cerle, Urška Rudman, Irena Pleterski, Katja Ploj, Katja Žibert, Nuška Košak, Tina Gorenjc, Vesna Kukavica

Total number of students (main and branch schools)

2022/2023 : 392

2023/2024 : 388

2024/2025 : 382

Number of Roma students

2022/2023 : 67

2023/2024 : 71

2024/2025 : 69

Home languages present in the school in addition to Slovenian and Romani (with numbers of speakers)

2022/2023 : Bosnian (2), Russian (11)

2023/2024 : Bosnian (2), Russian (12)

2024/2025 : Bosnian (2), Russian (2)

Grades/classes that participated in the RPPE (with numbers of students)

2022/2023 : 1b (16), 2b (19), 3a (19), students participating in the project "Diversity enriches us" (6), students from grades 7-9 (6) – total: 66 students

2023/2024 : 119 students were directly involved in the RPPE; all students at the main school were indirectly involved

2024/2025 : 127 students were directly involved, of whom 26 were Roma; all students at the main school were indirectly involved

Appendix 2

Learner logbooks and learning materials produced by the students themselves

Learner logbooks

Learner logbooks have three defining characteristics: (i) they are used in every lesson and provide a cumulative record (or “log”) of individual learning; (ii) under the teacher’s guidance students maintain their own logbooks and have some control over what they write in them; and (iii) the use of logbooks includes regular self-evaluation, which is an essential part of reflective learning.

Logbooks should be maintained according to strict rules that are clearly communicated to the students, for example:

- ▶ Pages should be numbered.
- ▶ There should be a margin on every page so that there is space for the teacher’s feedback.
- ▶ Each lesson should begin on a new page with the date.
- ▶ Each month should begin with a “month page” that the students decorate in whatever way seems appropriate to them.

Lessons should be recorded in a predictable way, for example:

- ▶ At the beginning of each lesson students write the date at the top of a new page.
- ▶ Students copy the structure of the lesson from the whiteboard.
- ▶ As the lesson progresses, students write new words in their logbooks; if they work in pairs or groups, they note who they worked with and what they did together.
- ▶ Logbooks can also contain short texts that students write on their own or in collaboration with one or more other students.
- ▶ At the end of each lesson, students evaluate the lesson and their own participation. At least to begin with, this should be done very simply, for example by drawing a face with an appropriate expression or using a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 = “poor” and 5 = “excellent”.

Logbooks help to make learning visible to students and their teacher.

In the context of the RPPE and other plurilingual approaches, logbooks can be written in two or more languages: the language of schooling, Romani, another home language, curriculum languages (English, German, etc.).

Teachers review logbooks regularly, not to correct them but to provide feedback and positive comments.

Before introducing logbooks, it is necessary to decide whether students will be allowed to take them home and if not, how they will be stored.

The teacher should also keep her own logbook that follows the same structure as the student's logbook. She uses it to maintain her own record of lessons – who worked with whom, who was eager to contribute, who seemed withdrawn, etc. This is very useful when she reviews and comments on individual logbooks.

Learning materials produced by the students themselves

One way of engaging students' interest and getting them to invest in the educational process is to have them produce their own learning materials, for example word cards, dominoes and picture lotto.

Word cards

In the early stages of learning the language of schooling or a foreign language, students can make word cards, small pieces of paper or card with a target language word on one side and a drawing or an equivalent word in a language they know on the other. Each student creates a set of about twenty word cards, choosing words he or she particularly wants to learn; in this way word cards reflect students' interests and (part of) their identity. The word cards are placed in an envelope bearing the name of the student who made them and kept in a box available to the rest of the class. Students can play with another student's word cards as a solo activity. Alternatively, two or more students can choose an envelope from the box; one of them holds up each card in turn so that the other student(s) can see the picture or translation on the back; calling out the correct target language word wins the card. Beginners can be taught the target language phrases they need to play games of this kind. After playing with word cards, students should write in their logbook target language words that are new to them.

Picture dominoes

After word cards students can make and play with picture dominoes. Each domino should have a drawing or picture on one half and on the other half, a word or phrase in the target language that corresponds to the picture on another domino; students who are no longer beginners can write longer texts. Like word cards, each set of dominoes is kept in an envelope bearing the name of the student who made it and the envelopes are kept in a box that is available to the rest of the class.

Picture lotto

After dominoes students can make picture lotto. To make a game of picture lotto for four players you need four pieces of A4 card and 24 small pictures cut from magazines, catalogues, etc. A ruler and pencil are used to divide each card into 12 squares. Six pictures are stuck on the squares in the upper half of each card, and a description of each picture is written in the target language in the corresponding

square in the lower half of the card, as in the figure below. The cards are then cut in half and the four lotto boards with pictures are put on one side. The half cards with texts are cut up to make a pack of 24 lotto cards.

Picture 1	Picture 2	Picture 3
Picture 4	Picture 5	Picture 6
Text 1	Text 2	Text 3
Text 4	Text 5	Text 6

Writing a text “About myself”

Writing a text “About myself” is a good way of giving students a personal stake in learning to write in a new language. The teacher provides the class with a “text frame” in the target language, equivalent to “My name is I am ... years old. My mum’s name is ... and my dad’s name is I have ... brothers/sisters My hobbies are” etc. In the language of schooling, students call out the words and phrases they need to fill the text frame. The teacher writes the target language equivalents on the board and the students copy them into their logbooks. They can then write the text “About myself” in class or for homework. Using this text as a model, students progress to activities like “picture + text”: they find a picture of someone they are interested in, stick it in their logbook and write a short text about the person in question following the structure of “About myself”.

Two minutes’ talk

“Two minutes’ talk” is designed to develop students’ capacity to use the target language spontaneously to express meanings that are unique to them. At the begin-

ning of a lesson – at all proficiency levels – learners spend a few minutes talking in pairs about things of interest to them. In their logbooks they record what they talked about and with whom, as well as new words they learned. When the activity is first introduced, students can create a simple scale from zero to two minutes, perhaps divided into 12 10-second segments, and mark on it how long they manage to talk for.

“Language exchange”

A teacher of English at 4th Primary School, Amaliada adopted a “language exchange” approach to teaching English: what she taught her Roma students in English they taught her in Romani. She reported that her students found this approach very motivating.

Supporting literacy development in the language of schooling

This suggestion comes from Déirdre Kirwan, formerly principal of Scoil Bhríde (Cailíni), Blanchardstown, a girls’ primary school with a linguistically diverse student cohort (320 students, more than 50 home languages).¹⁷ The approach she describes worked well with older children who came to the school with no proficiency in English.

- ▶ The first time the student utters a word or phrase in the language of schooling, the teacher writes down exactly what he or she has said in the student’s logbook. The teacher then points to each of the written words and reads them aloud, making clear that the words have come from the student herself. The teacher’s expressions of delight should encourage the student to believe that writing words/phrases is a skill she herself can master and give her the confidence to attempt more.
- ▶ What the student contributes in the language of schooling at playtime and in group work can be supported by peers who are willing to help her to write new words/phrases in her logbook. In the early stages, a small drawing can accompany what she writes as a reminder of its meaning. The student can also tell her teacher, classmates and parents how she would say what she has written in her own language.
- ▶ Students can be encouraged to re-use recently acquired phrases/sentences by writing them with new content that they themselves choose. Experience suggests that when students decide what they want to write about they are excited to add as many new words as possible, for example: “I like [varieties of fruit, vegetables, other food, etc.]”

17. See the description of the school and its approach in section 1.4, p. 5 above.

Appendix 3

An introduction to Exploratory Practice as an approach to documenting teaching and learning

When a school adopts a language policy that commits it to implementing a plurilingual approach, it is necessary to document the implementation so that the policy can be reviewed on a regular basis and updated as necessary. It is easy enough to record school events that celebrate plurilingualism in the ways described in chapter two, but it is more challenging to document what happens in individual classrooms. The approach to classroom research known as Exploratory Practice offers a solution. This appendix provides some basic information about Exploratory Practice and related issues (in black), comments by David Little (in blue), and some questions for schools to consider and discuss (in green).

Exploratory Practice: Allwright's five principles and two suggestions

(Dick Allwright, Developing principles for practitioner research: The case of exploratory practice, Modern Language Journal 89.3 (2005), pp. 353-366)

Principle one – Put “quality of life” first:

- ▶ The key question to answer is: How does a plurilingual approach impact on the quality of life – for teachers as well as learners – in the school as a whole and in individual classrooms?
- ▶ Because they are linguistically and culturally inclusive, plurilingual approaches promote social cohesion, so the first criterion we apply should focus on the interactive dynamic of the classroom.

Questions for discussion:

- By what other criteria do you as teachers judge the quality of life in your school and its classrooms?
- By what criteria are students likely to judge the quality of life in the school/classroom? How can you find out what they think?

Principle two – Work primarily to understand the life of the classroom:

- ▶ This principle implies that documentation is more than record-keeping. It should be organised in ways that help us to understand and interpret the various activities undertaken in classrooms.
- ▶ Bearing in mind that the plurilingual approach assigns a key role to the

learner's voice (see ➔ [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2022\)1](#)¹⁸, on the importance of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture), understanding the life of the classroom is a task that teachers and students should undertake collaboratively.

- ▶ Exploratory Practice explores “quality of life” in the classroom by seeking answers to questions that puzzle us.

Questions for discussion:

- What questions are likely to puzzle teachers in your context?
- How do we find out what puzzles our students?

Principle three – Involve everybody

Principle four – Work to bring people together

Principle five – Work also for mutual development

- ▶ These three principles reflect the fact – already implied by Principles one and two – that the activities of schools and classrooms are social: our understanding of those activities should be arrived at collaboratively as well as individually.

Questions for discussion:

- In practical terms, how can you “involve everybody”, “bring people together” and “work for mutual development”?

Principle six – Make the work a continuous enterprise:

- ▶ Exploratory Practice never ends, our understanding is never complete; that is why Exploratory Practice needs to be fully embedded in our approach to teaching and learning.

Suggestion one – Minimise the extra effort of all sorts for all concerned:

- ▶ When we do it properly, Exploratory Practice doesn't mean doing extra work, though it may mean working in different ways.

Suggestion two – Integrate the “work for understanding” into the existing working life of the classroom:

- ▶ If we work according to the principles of Exploratory Practice, we use the day-to-day teaching and learning activities of the classroom to ask and answer the questions that puzzle us.

18. Available at go.coe.int/epcfk, accessed 30 April 2026.

- ▶ Our success can be measured by the extent to which teaching/learning and the reflective enquiry of Exploratory Practice are inseparable.

Questions for discussion:

- Again in practical terms, how can you combine teaching/learning with reporting and vice versa? (David Little offers his own answer to this question below, in the section *Making Exploratory Practice work*)

Exploratory Practice: five propositions about learners

(Dick Allwright and Judith Hanks, *The Developing Language Learner: An Introduction to Exploratory Practice*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, pp. 5-6)

Exploratory Practice adopts a view of the learner that is captured in the following five propositions. Note that they coincide with the view of learners as “individuals and social agents” that is fundamental to ➔ [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2022\)1](#)¹⁹:

1. “Learners are unique individuals who learn and develop best in their own idiosyncratic ways.”

- ▶ We easily overlook the fact that each of us is his/her own universe: we alone have access to the never-ending stream of our consciousness.
- ▶ Our dominant language is central to our consciousness, the automatic medium of our discursive thinking, and one of our principal cognitive tools. That is why plurilingual and intercultural education makes explicit use of the language(s) that learners bring with them.

Questions for discussion:

- Does your curriculum explicitly take account of these considerations? If yes, how? If no, how can you nevertheless include them in your teaching?

2. “Learners are social beings who learn and develop best in a mutually supportive environment.”

- ▶ Children acquire the language of the home by interacting with parents, brothers and sisters, and other family members.
- ▶ Talk is the means by which children organise their play and their interactions with their peers; they develop the capacity to organise in this sense at a very early age.
- ▶ Talk is the means by which individuals situate themselves in relation to others and develop a sense of identity.

19. Available at go.coe.int/epcfk, accessed 30 April 2026

- ▶ Whenever we engage in reflective talk we also engage in evaluation: we can never talk about anything reflectively without implying some kind of judgement.

Questions for discussion:

- How does talk function in your classroom? When and under what circumstances do your students speak?
- Do your students work in pairs or small groups? If yes, how do they develop the interactional skills that are a precondition for successful collaboration? Do you encourage Romani and other minority-language students to use their home language in pair and group work?
- Do your students give oral presentations to the rest of the class? If yes, what is the communicative purpose of their presentations?

3. “Learners are capable of taking learning seriously.”

- ▶ For this to be true, learners must be invested in the learning process; in other words, learners take their learning seriously when they are motivated to learn.
- ▶ Learners are more likely to invest themselves in the learning process – to be motivated to learn – if they are invited to make choices and take decisions.²⁰

Questions for discussion:

- If your students lack motivation, why do you think this is?
- To what extent do you invite your students to make choices and take decisions?

4. “Learners are capable of independent decision-making.”

- ▶ See my comments on proposition two above.
- ▶ A major function of education is to develop learners’ decision-making capacity, teaching them how to evaluate evidence, plan a course of action, foresee the consequences of their actions, and evaluate outcomes.
- ▶ Developing learners’ capacity for independent decision making is fundamental to education for democratic citizenship and thus one of the Council of Europe’s key educational goals.

20. If you are not already familiar with it, look at the [Motivation Manifesto](#) published by the ECML to celebrate the European Day of Languages in 2025.

Questions for discussion:

- How do you develop your students' decision-making capacity?

5. "Learners are capable of developing as practitioners of learning."

- ▶ Another major function of education – and a central concern of the Council of Europe – is to develop learners' capacity for lifelong learning.
- ▶ The capacity for lifelong learning presupposes the ability to identify a learning need, select a learning goal, find an appropriate course or devise a programme of self-instruction, and follow the course or programme to its conclusion.

Questions for discussion:

- To what extent does your approach to teaching contribute to the development of your students' lifelong learning skills?

Making Exploratory Practice work

In practical terms, how do we "integrate the 'work for understanding' into the existing working life of the classroom" (Allwright's Suggestion two, above)?

- ▶ Published accounts of Exploratory Practice often seem to imply that normal teaching and learning have been suspended to allow time for the teacher and her learners to explore the puzzle they have identified.
- ▶ We avoid this problem by adopting two fundamental procedures:
- ▶ We assign a central role to the individual and collaborative documentation of learning: learners use "logbooks" (see ➔ **Appendix 2**) to document their learning lesson by lesson; teachers use "posters" to document the learning of the class as a whole.
- ▶ We use five questions to frame all teaching and learning: What are we doing? Why are we doing it? How are we doing it? With what results? What should we do next?
- ▶ These two procedures will ensure that puzzles present themselves as we go along and that we always have within reach the "evidence" with which to begin exploring them.²¹

21. For a detailed theoretical explanation and practical description of this approach to language teaching and learning, see D. Little, L. Dam & L. Legenhausen, *Language Learner Autonomy: Theory, Practice and Research*, Multilingual Matters, 2017.

Questions for discussion:

- Do you already use logbooks and posters – or something similar – to document learning in your classroom?1. If yes, how do you use them?2. If no, how do you document your students' learning?

This publication is a pedagogical guide designed for schools working with Roma and other minority-language students. It draws on the Council of Europe's Romani-Plurilingual Policy Experimentation (RPPE) (2022–2025), which informed how Romani language and culture can support the educational inclusion of Roma children.

The RPPE was implemented in ten schools across three countries: Greece, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia, and informed by a plurilingual approach to education promoted by the Council of Europe. The pedagogical guide outlines the aims and methods of the RPPE and illustrates how participating schools applied the plurilingual approach at institutional and classroom levels through various activities. The guide presents three case studies showing its impact on students and schools.

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