## EY2010 Journalist Award SLOVAKIA

## Winner print/online

Pavel Sibyla, Pavol Kubík

Article title: "Rómovia idú do školy" ("Roma boarding schools. Roma Head to School")

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**Pavel Sibyla (1978)**, is a graduate in history at Trnava university. He is working for TREND business weekly magazine, writes about economy, social affairs and education. He is also an author of two fiction books.

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# Rómovia idú do školy



Námietky o porušovaní ľudských práv pri výstavbe můrov oddeľujúcich rómske chatrče od domov "bielych" sa dajú odbiť výzvami, nech si tam tí salónni intelektuáli skúsia chvíľu požiť a až potom mudrujú. Postaviť múr medzi Rómov a ostatných môže byť niekedy naozaj len zúfalou – a vari aj legitimnou – snahou chrániť si majetok a úrodu na skromných poličkach. Majoritnému obyvateľstvu možno nateraz pomôžu. No nijako neriešia situáciu ich susedských komunit, z ktorých časť je v takom hlbokom úpadku, že jej členovia cestu von sami nájsť nedokážu.

# Segregovaná integrácia

Snaha vychovávať Rómov pod dozorom štátu môže prehĺbiť ich spoločenskú izoláciu

iekdajší ekonóm Svetovej ban-ky Anton Maconön a jeho man-žeka Ludmíla váni v lete vypra-covaš štúšu, v ktorej vypočita-i straty z negar tilopácia Rômo-na pracovnom trhu. Výsledok: Slovensko takto stráca pať peroent HDP Tořen. Odhadí tiež prisme a nepriame náklady v prípade, ak-sa nepodař zvýlt zvdelanost fromskych de-tív v roku 2030 doslahnu 11 percent HDP. Hod ekonomický aspekt zatiár ov erejností ner azonuje, vnimanie rómskej problematiky sa aj tak zintervívíjuje; s pribolajúční sprá-varní o konfliktoch medzi majoritou a Rôma-

mi. Politici sú v stehu. Okrem okamžitého záujmu (úpletky pred volebnými miestnoste-mi) dumajú aj o. "vystěmových niestnoste-mi) dumajú aj o. "vystěmových niestnach". Politici uvadu jimana vo doch orniváních. Klaskou je úprava demotivujúceho systému sodánych dávok. A čonza populárnějších sodou sa stáva myšlenka, ktorá je svojim spôsobom podob-mínu u o 30 kráva malájích Britov vtaj treba umiestníť za múry – internátných škôl.

ZOBERME IM
Odpoveď na otázku, či internátne školy áno
slebo nie, nemusí byť fažká. Inšpirovať sa
možno austrálskym Národným domo ospravedinenia, počas ktorého si občania každý
rok prípomínají nepráveati pskahané na
deľoch pôvodného obyvateľstva v in-

temátnych školách. V Kanade sa zasa za krávdy na pôvodnom obyvatelstve v otkowných internálnych školách ospravedlnála a) piece Benadick objectnedomých internálnych školách ospravedlnála a) piece Benadick objectných školách sa bář netřeba. Veď nie je internát ako internát. Problém je žbo lov v intrilednia vidala vlaostí kosláční i opoziční poslanci, nie všetot hovocía a tom istem. Najzákadnejší rozdel je v tom. či mojú dos do kýchto škôl chocáť so suhlasom zakoval kolacuje. že internály mnjad doslana zákoval v úszcuje. že internály maj doslana zákoval v úszcuje. že internály sa pre nechotu roddoví náho zapíha nebudů. Ak by sa súhlas nevýžadoval, kritika ludskoprávných aktivitot by sa sú bomotní o modranoch odrezaných od reálného žívota odbit nedála.

Špeciálne základné školy

NEJEDNOTNÉ KDH
Ešte radikálnejšú rétoriku použí podpred-seda KDH Daniel Lipitic. Za zriadovanie in-ternátov sa vlaní príhováral spolu s výzvami, aby majetky vláčínováho obyvatelstva pred-larimínatkou ľudí z osád othrália ormádu.



#### PROTI DECÁKOM

2000 - 2006 | 2004 - 2010 | 2011 - 2015 | 2016 - 2020 | 2021 - 2025 | 2026 - 2020

romany a chycular myglenicker mentalyni, rai-naz sa to povatule za znak mentalinel, a nie A. Misronôm vo sociej študii odnaduje, že v špecišimych školakch je umiestnených približne 10 200 rómisych deš, žo je polovi-av všetých žlakov týcho štúl. To znamená, že približne kažás čarne delat je hlásené sko-mentálne zaostále. Odborné záčkodnenie, prečo je výšký mentaline zaostálosti o příšto-porcent vyšší u drežnových deš ako u potem-lov majorhaviho obyvatelatva, neoristále. Ja-zaoberal Európský valí pe ludekle přesa, oz-hodol by also v prípade Česka, na ktoré po-dalo žašebu šté romských deti. Nasedná kra-jina podla súdu porušla záškaz diskriminície a deformubrala právo na vzdelenie kým že ich neoprávnene poslate do osobitnej školy.

#### AJ ZLÝ NÁPAD STOJÍ GROŠ

#### Iné riešenia

Časť problémov by sa vyrietila odstráneném ziej dlagnostiky

Na kvalitné vzdelanie pre Rô-mov podá ekondma Anto-na Marcinôma ne ši potrebné miliónje eur. "Ak by sa žepši-lo dagnostá vozine film skych det, juka: ako polovica nákla-dov na Speciárne školy by osta-la školstvu a mohla by byť pou-zlá na žeješné kvalify zákla-ných škol," píše v štúdi, kto-rá odpordňa odstrání et ericků selektímosť školstva a zviesť bilingováne programy pre róm-bilingováne programy pre rómbilingválne programy pre róm-ske deti. Ušetrené peniaze by sa dali využíť okrem posilnenia kapacit základných škôl aj na

valo, že rómský študent opustí strední školu po dvoch rokoch s válnou života na sociálných dvókrach, řodobeně so vicenemieř R. Caplovič je za posumute dochážky si jestemen do pred-socisleho veku I. Radičová zdokradne, že ho jeste socisleho veku I. Radičová zdokradne, že ho jeste socisleho veku I. Radičová zdokradne, že ho jeste socisleho veku I. Radičová zdokradne, že ho valo ne no-tradných nást ropu. V preklade pozobrava diskriminácia., "Ofišč, ka pozithne diskriminácia, pozitnej požisleho pozitnej od sisteminácia. Romová si za bezne pozitnej diskriminácia Romová speješne napada na otsavnom sočie Sti.

Popri rozumnejšej regulácii by práve terénna práca v os:

## Translation

## TOPIC: Roma boarding schools. Roma Head to School

Protests over human rights violations in the construction of walls separating Roma shacks from 'white' homes can be brushed off with the challenge, 'let the ivory-tower intellectuals try living there for a while, then think about it'. Building walls between Roma and others really can sometimes be a desperate – perhaps even legitimate – attempt to protect property and crops on humble fields. For the majority population, it might help. For the moment. But it in no way does it resolve the situation of their neighbouring communities, some of which are in such deep decline that members cannot find a way out alone.

## Segregated integration: Efforts to nurture Roma under state supervision may deepen their social isolation

Last summer, former World Bank economist Anton Marcinčin and his wife L'udmila conducted a study which calculated the losses due to Roma non-participation in the labour market. The result: Slovakia is losing 5% of GDP annually. They also estimated

the direct and indirect costs of a failure to increase education among Roma children: in 2030, the losses will reach 11% of GDP.

Though the economic aspect has not yet stirred the public, perception of Roma troubles is nevertheless growing more intense, with rising reports of clashes between Roma and the majority. Politicians are on alert. Beyond the immediate concern (bribes outside polling places), they are also pondering 'systematic solutions'. Politicians are mainly thinking on two levels. The classic notion is modifying a demotivating system of welfare payments. But an idea is gaining popularity which resembles the Ostrovany wall in its method: perhaps young Roma should be put behind the walls of boarding schools.

## Let's get them together

A yes or no answer to the boarding school question needn't be difficult. Inspiration might come from Australia's National Sorry Day each year, during which citizens recall the injustices committed against Aboriginal children at boarding schools. In Canada, both the government and Pope Benedict XVI have apologised again for wrongs to the indigenous population at boarding schools. Of course, one needn't fear speaking about boarding schools.

Indeed, there's no boarding school like a boarding school. The problem is that although many coalition and opposition MPs see solutions there, they're not all talking about the same thing. The most fundamental divide is over whether children would attend such schools with or without their parents' consent. This dilemma also indicates that boarding schools are far from a cure-all to the problems of segregated communities. If consent is required, one can expect that boarding schools would not be easy to fill due to parental unwillingness. If consent is not required, it would no longer be possible to shrug off criticism from human rights activists with the *bons mots* of smart guys cut off from real life.

One of the most vocal supporters of boarding schools as a remedy is the Slovak National Party and its vice-chair, Anna Belousovová. 'Let's set up the boarding schools and get the children together. The children won't be a business, but the government will start bringing them up under normal conditions,' she said last October in a political discussion on public television. The accent on "getting them together' suggested that she wasn't speaking of voluntary schools.

In reality, the nationalists' co-chair didn't have any special boarding schools in mind, but ordinary children's homes. 'We're not asking for anything other than the rigorous enforcement of existing law,' she told TREND - meaning that courts should rule more often that neglected children be taken from their families.

Rýchle A rapid implementation of this idea would see a need for an army of social workers who would take children out of the most derelict shanties and submit proposals to place them at institutions. At the beginning of last year, Belousovová stated that if social workers went through the Roma settlements they'd find that 90% of the children should be taken from their parents.

## The Disunited Christian Democratic Movement (KDH)

Even more radical rhetoric has been employed by KDH vice-chairman Daniel Lipsič. Last year, he advocated the establishment of boarding schools and called for the majority population's property to be protected against the criminality of people from the settlements by the army.

Official pronouncements from KDH spokespeople on such institutions are more

moderate. 'We haven't concluded the discussion yet. In my mind, a proper boarding school model could be tried out and worked into a pilot project," Christian Democrat cochair Jana Žitňanská opines She emphasises that such schools would have to be built all the way up from the second form and that children's participation would have to depend on parental consent.

Economist Anton Marcinčin, third co-chair for the Christian Democrats, has a more explicit position. He says that experts call it counterproductive due to experiences from countries that applied the same solution to similar situations: "Vedie to len k zosilneniu pô- vodného problému a segregácie." Z ľudí, ktorí v súčasnosti majú moc internáty pre Rómov zaviesť, má najväčšie slovo vicepremiér Dušan Čaplovič zo Smeru-SD. Ktorý je zároveň jedným z najhlasnejších podporovateľov internátneho vzdelávania Rómov na Slovensku. "It leads only to an exacerbation of the problem and to segregation. But, he claims, it mustn't be a forced shifting of schools. And, unlike Žitňanská, he proposes that children attend starting with the first form. 'From the pedagogical perspective, children learn their first habits as well as discipline, responsibility and perseverance during primary education,' he said, advocating boarding schools for young children in the magazine *Romano nevo l'il*.

## Anti-children

Raising children in institutions under state supervision has a traditionally bad reputation. Miroslava Hapalová, director of the Slovak branch of Člověk v tísni, points out that even the law on social and legal protection of children prefers other solutions. It states that priority should be given to measures to ensure children are raised in their natural family surroundings or in a substitute family environment. 'Arranging for institutional care' is designated as the extreme solution.

Marek Roháček, director of the Návrat civic association – which is dedicated to issues in child adoption as well as fieldwork among families in crisis – explains why. 'From the perspective of a child's development, there are periods when the child existentially needs a relationship figure, a maternal figure. If bonding and attachment to a single person don't occur at an early age, that's fatal,' he warns.

He says that it is not always beneficial to take children from families even in cases when their basic physical needs are not met. Taking a child from a Roma settlement simply because they are cold or hungry can't be done without other, similarly bad consequences. 'A child's psychological needs are also fundamental and are as important as food and drink. This endangers life,' he says, recalling the conclusions of developmental psychology studies.

To Roháček, an effort motivated by compassion to take children out of squalid shacks might be a failure of vision. The standard of living is unacceptable to the majority population, but on a closer look it can be seen that family bonds are functioning in problematic settlements despite the poverty and squalor. And, to the same degree, so is care for children. Návrat's director says that cases in which a social worker in Bratislava would immediately remove children would wind up entirely differently if a psychologist familiar with conditions in the Prešov region had made the recommendation.

The catastrophic consequences of placing children in institutions are also documented by an ever more intensive effort to ensure that all children from children's homes reach professional families, foster care or adoption. However, alongside this tendency appears a suspicion that the management of some children's homes are creating obstructions to moving children into family environments. Fewer children under management means less subsidies.

Unsound financial motivations are one of the reasons some Roma children lose hope for

a better life. For example, higher standards for pupils in special primary schools versus regular schools also contribute. Misdiagnosis is also a factor in the improper labelling of children. If a young child speaks only Romani and lacks hygienic habits, this is sometimes viewed as a sign of mental rather than social underdevelopment. Anton Marcinčin estimates in his study that there are around 10,200 Roma children placed in special schools, half of their student population in total. This means that nearly one in eight children are being declared mentally underdeveloped. A professional justification as to why the occurrence of mental underdevelopment among Roma children is 500% higher than that among those of the majority population does not exist. It is appropriate to consider whether the European Court for Human Rights, if it were to address the matter, would rule as in the case of the Czech Republic, where 18 Roma families filed a complaint. There, the Court found that the state violated the ban on discrimination and derogated from the children's right to education in sending them to special schools illegitimately.

## Bad ideas cost, too

The determination with which Čaplovič is pushing the idea of boarding schools creates the impression that the government will move from talk to action despite the pedagogical and human rights questions. Za rovnosť vo vzdelávaní, a coalition of non-profit organisations, worked up a cost estimate for the operation of boarding schools for Roma based on available data. For the 30,000 pupils coming from socially-disadvantaged environments, annual expenses would reach €207.5 million.

This silent number (which does not include up- front costs for implementation of the system) gains testimonial value when compared to other sums. Nearly the same amount, €200 million, has been earmarked by the government to address the problems of marginalized Roma communities – though for a period of seven years. The education budget for 2010, from which boarding schools would likely be funded, represents €2.35 billion. The 'solution' advocated by the Deputy Prime Minister would slice off 9% of that. The state clearly does not have the money for boarding schools for all Roma children living in unfit social conditions. Additionally, municipalities with greater numbers of Roma residents are already wrestling with financial shortfalls. In particular, classes in many schools in eastern Slovakia are overfilled, and teaching in shifts is not infrequent. Roháček also speaks to the financial inadvisability of setting up boarding schools, saying that fieldwork to help families from the settlements is ten times less expensive for the state than placing children in institutions.

## When that doesn't work

The eight-year private Zefyrin J. Mall Gymnasium in Kremnica also has ethnically mixed classes and is often mentioned as a model for new boarding schools. But this school, too – though the majority of its pupils are Roma children – is the same as every other high school in Slovakia in terms of its dormitory. Pupils live in the dormitories because their homes are too far away for daily commuting.

The difference lies in the history of the school and the approach of its founders. 'We began in 1992 with a model centre for pre-school care with the goal of eliminating unpreparedness among Roma children in pre-school age,' says school founder Jana Tomová. Two years later, a primary arts school, a primary school with recreation centre open until 5pm and the eight-year gymnasium (which arose as a replacement for the defunct Gándi Gymnasium in Lučenec) were added.

What Tomová calls the 'all-day educational system' is an attempt to simulate the family environment and involve parents as well as children in the educational process, not exclude them from it. 'We're not educating the adult Roma any more. The objective is that they at least understand that education is important for their children,' says gymnasium director Ján Hero, who is also Roma. They expect that parents at least help in bringing the children to the school and keep in mind that they must provide basic care for their offspring by law, not at teachers' requests. The Kremnica model runs largely on the enthusiasm of the school's founders and the willingness to stimulate interest in education among Roma people. And there lies another reason why state-established boarding schools can't work: enthusiasm can't be contrived.

## Other solutions

Economist Anton Marcinčin says quality education for Roma doesn't require millions of euros. 'If diagnosis of Roma children was improved, more than half the costs for special schools would remain in education and could be used to improve the quality of primary schools,' he writes in his study, which recommends the abolition of ethnic selectivity in education and the introduction of bilingual programmes for Roma children. Besides strengthening the capacity of primary schools, the money saved might be used also for more substantial support of the Roma assistant teachers project. Still, its future is unclear, since the exception to minimum required education for assistants expires this year. Iveta Radičová of SDKÚ-DS says that extending mandatory school attendance to age 18 must also be considered, so that Roma students do not leave high school after two years with a vision of living on public assistance. Like Deputy Prime Minister Čaplovič, she is also in favour of pushing mandatory attendance into pre-school age as well. Radičová emphasizes that the option for parents to educate their children at home should be maintained. The alternative is to strengthen motivational tools – positive discrimination, in other words. 'The question of positive discrimination is, I suppose, a misunderstood concept which is routinely used abroad, though also to a certain degree in Slovakia, too, though under different names,' claims Marcinčin. At the same time, it was his party which years ago successfully brought the idea of positive discrimination for Roma to the Slovak Constitutional Court.

Some politicians warn that there is no sense in looking for effective solutions without solid statistical data. The problem is that at the Labour Office, for example, the collection of data on the ethnicity of the unemployed has been taboo since 1999. Data collection, though, should not have to collide with the problems with the antidiscrimination agenda when considering support for specific field projects organised by the third sector or churches.

Alongside more sensible regulation regulations, fieldwork in the settlements organised by enthusiasts might be the engine of aid.

On the other hand, centuries of experience with failure slam ambitions to quickly take measures to resolve things to the ground. 'When I read through the programme Maria Teresa submitted, we might have copied it. It contains the same solutions, including boarding schools and school attendance.' Radičová said.

## Winner AV

Alexandra Dovalová and Sergej Danilov

Report title: "Kontrola a poslanecký prieskum budú na školách v revúckom okrese, kvôli prípadu rómskych učiteliek Samkových" ("The case of Roma teachers - sisters Samková - in Revúca district")

Published in: ORF, 02/02/2010

**Sergej Danilov (1980)**, graduate in journalism, works for Radio Expres. Sergej is focusing on topics connected with discrimination issues, especially rasist extremism, football hooliganism. He also writes his own blog <u>Danilov.blog.sme.sk</u>.

**Alexandra Dovalová (1977)**, graduate from Business Faculty on University of Economy in Bratislava. In Radio Expres, where she works as a reporter since 2005 she is concentrating on the topics from economical and social field, including issues of poverty and anti-discrimination legislation.

<u>Summary: "Kontrola a poslanecký prieskum budú na školách v revúckom okrese, kvôli prípadu rómskych učiteliek Samkových" ("The case of Roma teachers - sisters Samková - in Revúca district")</u>

The article speaks of the ongoing struggle of two Roma sisters who can't find a job although they both have university education in the field of pedagogy, meaning they could be hired as assistants to Roma pupils or teachers. Although the story of the sisters Viera and Andrea Samková is getting media attention, their applications are being turned down. Such attitude undermines their effort to prove the importance of education to other Roma, they say.

Viera Samková: "Even unqualified shop assistants were preferred to my sister. Recently I've learned that new Roma assistants were hired in this school year."

But her application was still turned down.

Several inquiries will be held to better understand the whole situation. Education Ministry State Secretary Ján Vančo: "We will focus on finding out if more people submitted their CVs at that time and if the school finally hired someone not meeting the criteria."

Labour Ministry State Secretary Lucia Nicholsonová (SaS) promises to send controlling bodies to Jelšava Special School (schooling Roma children predominately). "The Labour Inspectorate will get involved too," she says. Being a positive example, the State Secretary has contracted Viera as a consultant.

Miroslav Beblavý, MP, (SDKÚ) initiated an enquiry by the Members of the Parliament. He says: "We aim to find out if the system works or fails. If it fails, we will come up with new proposals."

## The national winners were selected by a national jury which consisted of:

- Katarína Touquet Jaremova, EC Representation
- Pavol Jablonicky, NIB, project manager on Social Development Fund
- Sandra Tordová, Journalist, EY2010 National ambassador
- Janette Maziniová, Journalist, EY2010 National ambassador