

# Research about the education of Roma children in Malin

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In order of Casa Perla

**Marije van Ommen-Beverdam**  
**Eefje Mans**

Maatschappelijk Werk en Dienstverlening DTO  
Mei 2009



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## 1. Introduction

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Casa Perla means 'house of pearls'. Casa Perla believes that every person is a unique creation of God's love. People need each other to see the beauty of these 'pearls'. That is why people have the right to integrate and to participate in society. Casa Perla wants to achieve this.

The Roma community in Codlea lives in the Malin district. About 14.000 Roma live there. The Malin district is literally on the outskirts of the community. The living conditions are poor, there is no running water and no sewerage system. Several houses do not have electricity. Even though the families have financial and material needs, because of unemployment and other social problems, there has been a development towards a better future. Casa Perla has, in the cooperation with the local schools, achieved that more Roma children go to school. They have involved parents in the education of their children and now parents understand the necessity of schooling.

There is a high unemployment rate among Roma. Several Roma people in Malin are looking for a job and are trying to earn some money by selling old steel or working at a farm. This is difficult. Too many Roma people still live in poverty and suffer from various forms of discrimination. They need help and support to break the circle of marginalization.

For several years the Roma have been marginalized in Codlea. The Romanians have prejudices against them, which result in the fact that the Roma have still not been sufficiently integrated. For example, the Romanians think that the Roma are lazy people and that they are only getting more and more children. The Romanians also think that the Roma do not take responsibility for their lives. The truth is that the Roma are in a difficult position, they are deprived, discriminated against and do not have many chances for a better life.

### Vision of Casa Perla

Casa Perla wants to improve the situation of the Roma who do not have many chances. They want to achieve a structural improvement from within the Roma community. This vision is based on the Christian beliefs of Casa Perla.

Only when Roma are intrinsically motivated, they can change their way of life and/or their environment. Casa Perla will help them by giving them a new perspective and by making them aware of their own strengths. This will give the Roma the motivation to act and to break the circle of marginalization. Therefore Casa Perla does not give financial or material help to the Roma.

### Objectives of Casa Perla:

- To improve the general, ethical and moral situation of the Roma through education and cultivation, without destroying the positive and beautiful aspects of the Roma-culture.
- To tell the people of Malin about the Bible, the word of God, that can be trusted.
- Encourage and motivate the Roma to dream about a better future and help them to make this dream come true.
- To develop a relationship between the Roma and Romanians based on mutual regard, respect and love.
- To carry out their vision in the Malin district and in the Romanian society (schools, churches and institutions).

## 2. The problem

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Current literature makes clear that the Roma in former Eastern bloc countries have not always had the same opportunities as other people (Svensson (Ed.), 2007). Their social and educational opportunities have not been the same, as well as their opportunities relating to work. As a result of the interviews with employees of Casa Perla we know that this is also the fact in the Malin district. The employees of Casa Perla told us that the Roma in Malin have been marginalised and that they are still being marginalised at this moment.

Approximately half of the Roma in Malin from age 18 till 60 have not been to school or have not finished their elementary school; this is based on research by Casa Perla<sup>1</sup>. Among other things none or little education makes it hard to find a job. Because of this, they do not have a lot of financial means. This is one of the reasons that the opportunities of the Roma are not the same as the opportunities of the Romanians. Employees of Casa Perla have mentioned this in the interviews.

Casa Perla wants to offer the Roma the same opportunities as the Romanians people. Casa Perla sees education as a start of the integration process. When Roma children graduate from elementary schools their opportunities to find a job will increase. When they go to school they will get into contact with the Romanians. This can be the beginning of breaking the cycle of marginalisation. That is why education plays an important role in making sure that the Roma will get the same opportunities as the Romanians.

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<sup>1</sup> See attachment 1

### 3. Research design

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#### 3.1 Definition of the problem

Research, done by Casa Perla, shows<sup>2</sup> that at the moment 50 percent of the children in Malin are not going to school. Furthermore the employees of Casa Perla and the director of general school two mentioned that many children drop out before they complete elementary school. Casa Perla believes this is a problem, because the opportunities of the Roma will grow when they complete elementary school. Education is crucial to development and in overcoming poverty. A child with a poor school experience will always find it more difficult to integrate with others and succeed in life. Casa Perla wants to support the education of the children in order to start the integration of the Roma in the Romanian society.

#### 3.2 Research question

In this article we want to answer the following question:

*What can Casa Perla do to achieve that more Roma children in the Malin district in Codlea will complete their elementary school?*

Elementary school means that children finish primary education (1st – 4th grade) and lower secondary education (5th till 8th grade). Children can go to the first class when they are seven. Normally they finish school at the age of 14.

Casa Perla does not give financial or material support to the Roma. So we will not really investigate the financial and material problems of the Roma. Our research focuses on the things that Casa Perla might be able to change in order to stimulate and improve the education of the Roma.

##### 3.2.1 Additional questions

In order to be able to answer our research question we want to answer the following questions:

1. What kind of foundation is Casa Perla?
2. Which factors cause Roma children not to complete their elementary school?

We want to look at the factors that have to do with the situation at home, the situation at school, the culture of the Roma and the Romanian society.

3. What can be done to enhance the number of Roma children that complete elementary school?

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<sup>2</sup> See attachment 2

### 3.3 Aim

The aim of this research is to support Casa Perla to develop a method that will enhance the number of Roma children that complete elementary school.

### 3.4 Method

First, we studied nine articles and one book about the Roma and about their education. Subsequently we interviewed twenty-seven people. To make sure the results of our research are valid, we have interviewed several people from different backgrounds. People tend to give socially desired answers and/or withhold unpleasant information. By having interviews with the employees of Casa Perla as well as with the directors and teachers of the schools, the people from Malin and other organizations, we increased the reliability of our research.

Furthermore, we used our own observations at the homework support program to check the results of the interviews. To minimize the observer effect we attended the homework support program several times before we started the observations. This way the children and the tutor got used to our presence and the influence of our presence was minimalised.

### 3.5 Data collection

We started with studying the literature. We searched for articles by using Omega. We searched for articles from 1995 until now that had to do with the Roma and education in Europe. We selected eight articles. We also got an article from one of the employees of Casa Perla about the Roma in Eastern Europe. We also studied a book about the Roma in Romania between 1990 and 2005. We have read all the literature and labelled the information. We used nine labels<sup>3</sup>. This way we organized the information.

#### *Interviews with Casa Perla*

Subsequently we have made subjects<sup>4</sup> by using the information we got from the literature. We used these subjects to make questions for a interview. To be able to give an answer to the additional second question we have interviewed seven employees of Casa Perla. These interviews were half structured and the employees were invited to share their personal opinion about the subjects. Furthermore, we interviewed two members of the board of Casa Perla. They live in Malin. We asked them about the role of Casa Perla in Malin. We have asked open questions and gave the interviewees time to talk about the subjects. After the first interview we have adjusted the subjects. After finishing all the interviews we have labelled the information by using the subjects<sup>5</sup>. We made a report of the information we got from the interviews.

We also have interviewed the former and current director of Casa Perla to get an answer on the additional first question.

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<sup>3</sup> See attachment 3

<sup>4</sup> See attachment 4

<sup>5</sup> See attachment 5

### *Interviews at schools*

We spoke to the headmasters of the three elementary schools in Codlea (called school one, school two and school three). We asked them about the problems they have with the Roma and how they resolve these problems. We also asked five elementary school teachers, a school mediator and a teacher of the kindergarten at these schools about the problems they have with the Roma. These interviews were half structured and the interviewees were invited to share their personal opinion about the subjects. We used the same subjects for the interviews at the schools and in Malin. However, we also used extra subjects<sup>6</sup>. Afterwards we labelled the information and made a report about it.

### *Interviews in Malin*

We interviewed five Roma adults from Malin about the education of their children. Three of the families send their children to school. At two of the families the children dropped out of school. We used the same subjects for the interviews as the interviews with the employees of Casa Perla and the schools.

### *Observations at the homework support program*

During our research project we have been to the homework support program to observe how Casa Perla interacts with the Roma children. We observed what the children have to learn, how they learn and at the level of the children. We did this ten times. During ten observations we made notes. We used these notes to make a report.

### *Interviews with charity foundations like Casa Perla*

We have interviewed three directors of charity foundations like Casa Perla. We told them about the results of our literature review, previous interviews and observations and asked them if they recognised the results and conclusions. Furthermore we asked them if they were dealing with the same problems. We also asked them about their solutions to these problems.

After that we analysed the data of the interviews and we presented the results to Casa Perla. We talked about the results with the employees of Casa Perla and we asked their opinion about the possible solutions for the problem. One week later we analysed the possible solutions. We, together with the employees of Casa Perla, concluded which solutions are the best and have the most priority. We used these solutions to develop a method to solve the problem. In this method we describe the activities, including how to carry out these activities, what they need for these activities and what they have to keep in mind).



## 4. Literature review

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We used the literature to research the following topics: the history of the Roma, the current situation of the Roma, the history of the education of the Roma, the current education of the Roma, the difficulties with the education of the Roma, possible solutions and the importance of education for the Roma. In this literature review we will describe the results.

### *History of the Roma*

Because the literature deals with Roma and education, there is not much information about the history of the Roma. Other articles should be read to know more about this subject, but we believe we have enough information for our research.

Although it is not easy to find out where the Roma came from, it is believed that they originally came from north-western India (Posavec & Hrvatic; 2000, Etxeberria, 2002). There is evidence that they were already in Europe as early as the fourteenth century. Most of the Roma have been prosecuted since this century (Kyughukov, 2000). The Roma have been slaves for a long time. The situation in Romania was not different from the rest of Europe (Svensson (Ed.), 2007). In the Second World War there were deportations to Transnistrië. During the time of the communists the existence of the Roma was denied. After the fall of communism several pogroms against the Roma have taken place throughout Romania (Meester, 2006).

K. Pasavec and N. Hrvatic (2000) mention: *“throughout the past, the Roma have been generally perceived with distrust and repulsion and have been subject to different types of discrimination and violence. This is primarily due to the consistently derogatory attitude of the surrounding population, and is less a reflection of the Roma resistance, their traditional way of life or their mentality. However, a contributing factor is certainly that the Roma themselves have reinforced these prejudices by avoiding contact with the rest of the population.”*

In 1996 a psycho-sociological study (Neculau et al., 1996) reveals that Romanians still have stereotypes of the Roma in Romania. These stereotypes were often closely connected to racist and discriminatory attitudes towards the Roma people in general. (Cozma et al., 2000)

This leads to the conclusion that the Roma, also in Romania, have been discriminated in the past.

### *Current situation of the Roma*

This history of discrimination against Roma still affects the Roma communities. As Svensson (Ed.) (2007) mentions: *“The historic discrimination of Roma globally and in the region means that these communities today start at a marked disadvantage compared to other members of society. Prejudiced attitudes are deeply rooted and have affected both the perception of Roma and Roma traditions”*. But the situation changed the last two decades. There has been a movement away from viewing Roma as a disadvantaged social category, towards recognising them as an ethnic minority and a distinct cultural group.

Meesters (2006) agrees that the situation of the Roma has improved. She says: *“In 2004 and 2005 I got the impression that the Roma were no longer looked upon as the source of all the problems in Romania, there is more compassion. A growing number of Romanian people are even trying to help them.”*



In contrary Járóka (2007) mentions: *“The Roma community of Europe continues to face discrimination in a number of areas, notably education, employment, healthcare and housing”*. Liégeois (2007) agrees that it is important to recognize that the general circumstances of the Roma communities have not improved. He says *“we are witnessing a resurgence of attitudes and behaviours driven by rejection, violence and racism.”* He also mentions that the Roma are seen as an obstacle to the process of accession to the European Union and that because of that they are once more stigmatized and made responsible for a situation from which they suffer.

Because of the different opinions it is not clear if the situation of the Roma has changed, even if it has changed, marginalization and discrimination of the Roma still exists (Svensson (Ed.), 2007). It could be that different writers are looking at different groups of Roma. Approximately 10% of the people in Romania are Roma (Cozma et al., 2000). These Roma are divided into different groups, the Roma are not a single, homogenous population (Svensson (Ed.), 2007). According to Meester (2006) there are three groups of the Roma in Romania. There is a group of the Roma who lead the same live as the Romanian people. Another group has distinguished themselves from the Romanian people; this group has its own culture and habits. Then there is a third group who sees themselves as Roma, but they do not have their own culture. Most of those Roma are very poor.

#### *The history of the education of Roma*

During the communist era there was a philosophy of equality. Because of this all pupils received similar education. Individual differences were seen as deficits or defects. Segregated institutions were created to deal with ‘difficult’ pupils. The Roma were seen as difficult and consequently were excluded from the mainstream education (Igarashi, 2005). At the end of the communist era (1985-1989) research revealed that 30% - 40% of the Roma children attended school on a regular basis. 50% of the Roma children had never been to school. Only a few children were going to secondary school. Over all, 50% of the adults were illiterate; in some areas even 80% to 100% was illiterate (Cozma et al., 2000).

The literature thus mentions that there has been a lack of education of the Roma children in the past. As Svensson (Ed.) (2007) has written: *“Roma people have not had the same opportunities for education as other members of their home societies.”*

#### *Current education of the Roma*

Around 2000 50% of the Roma children in Romania went to primary education. Only 7% of them also went to lower secondary education and 4,5% graduated from high school. 59% of all woman and 44% of all men were still illiterate (Cozma et al., 2000). Other articles are also mentioning the high failure rate and low school attendance rate among the Roma children (Salinas, 2007; Etxeberria, 2002; Posavec & Hrvatic, 2000; Járóka, 2007; Liégeois, 2007). Svensson (Ed.) (2007) mentions that 87% of the Roma children who enter the primary education are not able to complete it.

When Roma children go to school it is not uncommon to separate them from the non-Roma children. This happens by placing the Roma children at the back of the classroom or by sending them to special classes of schools for retarded or physically challenged children (Járóka, 2007; Liégeois, 2007). This separation can cause a ghetto environment (Kyughukov, 2000) and the level of these classes and schools is lower than the national educational level. This exclusion in primary education will inevitably lead to exclusion in secondary and higher education (Svensson (Ed.), 2007). It can be concluded that there still is a lack of education of Roma children at this moment.

### *Difficulties concerning the education of Roma*

Various causes are mentioned when looking at the high failure rate and low school attendance of Roma children. These causes have to do with different aspects of the life of the Roma, like economic, social and educational aspects.

Only four articles briefly mention the financial aspect. They say that the economic situation of the Roma families plays a role in the lack of education, because families are not able to offer the financial support that is needed for their children to lead a full and normal school life (Kyughukov, 2000; Cozma et al., 2000).

The social and educational aspects are mentioned more often. One of the things mentioned is that children have had disadvantages since their births, comparing to children from other cultures. When Roma children reach the age to go to school, the effects of these disadvantages are more visible. They are not always sufficiently prepared for school (Svensson (Ed.), 2007).

Another thing frequently mentioned is the prejudices that non-Roma have against the Roma (Cozma et al., 2000). Teachers, pupils and parents have prejudices against them. In general non-Roma have a very negative attitude towards the Roma which results in rejection on educational level (Cozma et al., 2000; Posavec & Hrvatic, 2000; Svensson (Ed.), 2007). Cozma et al. (2000) have done a case-study. The result of this case-study was that most Romanian children did not want Roma children as their friends. (Although most Roma children did want Romanian children as their friends.) H. Kyuchukov (2000) even mentions that it is common that non-Roma pupils refrain from communicating with the Roma children because they are 'dirty'. Sometimes teachers also think about the Roma children this way. So many children still encounter regular verbal and physical harassment from the non-Roma pupils and teachers (Járóka, 2007). It is also not uncommon that non-Roma do not want to accept the Roma children in their class.

The fact that Roma children are seen as difficult and problematic (and are therefore separated) is partly because of the cultural differences between non-Roma and Roma. Their way of upbringing is different. The traditional upbringing of Roma children can be characterized by words as: transmitted orally, community-based, collective, practical, experiential and learning by doing (Kyughukov, 2000; Etxeberria, 2002). This way of learning is not reflected in the classrooms (Etxeberria, 2002; Svensson (Ed.), 2007). This makes school boring for Roma children and makes it difficult for the teachers to motivate them and to hold their attention (Igarashi, 2005).

The teachers do not have enough knowledge of the Roma culture to teach the Roma children. They notice that the children are not meeting their expectations (Kyughukov, 2000), but they do not look at the cultural differences to be able to understand this. The teachers are not aware of the needs of Roma children (Etxeberria, 2002). Two articles mention that there is a lack of appropriate training for teachers about the Roma culture (Etxeberria, 2002; Salinas, 2007). So teachers are not educated to teach the Roma children.

Three other things are mentioned in the literature. First of all: many Roma parents are not educated themselves (Járóka, 2007). Second the Roma families probably do not attribute the same value to school failure as non-Roma families do (Salinas, 2007). However Svensson (Ed.) (2007) disagrees and has written "*that most Roma consider education important for their children, but that they face significant obstacles caused by poverty and discrimination.*"

Third, there is a lack of communication between teachers and parents of the Roma children (Igarashi, 2005; Etxeberria, 2002).

We can conclude that several factors are contributing to the lack of education of the Roma children. In the articles the following factors are mentioned: financial problems; disadvantages in the early childhood of Roma children; the prejudice and negative attitude of Non-Roma (parents, teachers and pupils) towards Roma; the cultural differences in the upbringing of non-Roma and the Roma; insufficient knowledge of teachers about the need of the Roma; Roma parents are not educated themselves; the way the parents of the Roma children look at education and the lack of communication between schools and parents.

### *Solutions*

Many different solutions are given to solve the lack of education of the Roma. A few articles mention the segregation of non-Roma in special schools or special classes. They mention that this may be for the benefit of the culture of the Roma, but that it can also cause isolation of these children and further stigmatization by non-Roma (Cozma et al., 2000). According to Cozma et al. (2000) *“The creation of special schools for the Roma does not seem to be a good idea, since it connotes discrimination, and pints to an inability to adapt and to integrate.”* J. P. Liégeois (2007) writes that *“all partners should agree to avoid or eradicate specialized structures that run the risk of bearing discriminatory marks or of creating marginal spaces.”* Furthermore, as we mentioned before, these special schools can cause a considerably drop of the educational quality (Etxeberria, 2002; Svensson (Ed.), 2007).

Segregation of the Roma children is not seen as a good solution. In contrary most of the articles are positive about the idea of education of the Roma children in regular classes (Cozma et al., 2000; Kyughukov, 2000; Járóka, 2007). This will only work when things are going to change at schools. One thing is that school should be more interesting for Roma children (Kyughukov, 2000). This can be done by adopting more interactive methods of education and by including the Roma culture in the lessons (Etxeberria, 2002; Posavec & Hrvatic, 2000; Svensson (Ed.), 2007). This way education will be more intercultural. It will also help teachers and Romanian pupils to become more familiar with the culture of the Roma. This may help in changing their attitude towards the Roma (Kyughukov, 2000). Although this seems to be a good idea, some things have to be noticed. First of all, there is no effective training for teachers to teach them about the Roma culture. This should be developed (Járóka, 2007). Another issue is whether the Roma really want inclusion of their culture in the lessons. Research by Igarashi (2005) shows that Roma parents as well as Roma children do not really want education concerning their own culture. Some even refused to learn about their own heritage.

Although it is not clear if multicultural education would be for the benefit of the Roma children, it is clear that important changes are necessary in the educational system. The attitude of both the Roma as well as the non-Roma should change. For example the attitude of the teachers has to change, so they will be more open to the Roma children and their customs (Etxeberria, 2002). The non-Roma pupils should also be more open to the Roma pupils. On the other hand, Etxeberria (2002) writes that *“Roma need to overcome a passive sense of victimization”*. They should once again be able to fight for themselves instead of just relying on the help of others.

Svensson (Ed.) (2007) also mentions that pre-school is important. This will help children to prepare for school. *“Those children who attend some kind of kindergarten or nursery have an advantage over those who do not, when starting primary education.”*

Learning barriers can be overcome if good quality pre-schools are available. So it is important that Roma children are going to a pre-school. Parents should be motivated to send their children to these pre-schools (Svensson (Ed.), 2007; Igarashi, 2005).

These changes mentioned above should not be just in the educational system, they are also needed in the socio-economic status of the Roma in general (Posavec & Hrvatic, 2000). That is why educational programmes and social programmes should go hand in hand. If we want to change the attitude towards the Roma children at school, the general attitude towards the Roma will have to change (Kyughukov, 2000). The supporting of the self-organisation of the Roma will also be important (Posavec & Hrvatic, 2000).

According to the articles there are three additional solutions. First of all, the contact between teachers and Roma parents should improve. Teachers and Roma parents should work together to move towards a more effective integration of the Roma (Etzeberria, 2002). The parents and the whole Roma community should be involved in the education of their children (Kyughukov, 2000; Járóka, 2007).

Another solution mentioned is to have special teacher assistants in class who will help the Roma children (Kyughukov, 2000). Igarashi (2005) writes about the Roma Teacher Assistant (RTA) in a school in the Czech Republic that: *“RTA’s helped (Roma) pupils with literacy and numeracy during the first stage”*.

Finally some articles write about special education projects for the Roma children besides their regular education. Two options are mentioned: special education for drop-outs (Kyughukov, 2000) and special summer schools for the Roma children (Posavec & Hrvatic, 2000).

We can conclude that the Roma children should be able to follow regular education. Therefore it is important that children go to pre-school. Two other important issues are that the Roma should overcome their passive sense of victimization and that the attitudes of the non-Roma (teachers, pupils and parents) towards the Roma must change. This should be the case in the educational system, but also in the whole society. It is also important that schools and the Roma communities work together. Other options to solve the lack of education of the Roma children are to hire special teacher assistants for the Roma children and to organise special educational projects for them.

#### *Why education is important for the Roma*

Roma education is the starting point for solving the ‘Roma-problem’. So it is important that the education of Roma children will improve. Integrating in the educational system will help them to integrate in the society as a whole (Cozma et al., 2000; Járóka, 2007). The committee of Ministers on the education of the Roma in Europe states that: *“The disadvantaged position of Roma/Gypsies in European societies cannot be overcome unless equality of opportunity in the field of education is guaranteed for Roma/Gypsy children.”* So the future of the Roma communities depends in great measure on the kinds of schooling given to their children (Liégeois, 2007). As Svensson (Ed.) (2007) mentions: *“Inclusion starts with children.”*

## 5. Results

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### 5.1 Results of the interviews with directors of Casa Perla

In order to be able to answer our first additional question we had an interview with former director Lida Brugmans and current director Paula Zisu.

#### *History of Casa Perla*

Five years ago Casa Perla was founded by Lida Brugmans, a Dutch woman. She saw that the Roma in Malin were socially disadvantaged in the field of education, employment and housing, and she wanted to do something about it. She wanted to strive for righteousness and equality for the Roma in Codlea.

Six years before the foundation of Casa Perla, Lida Brugmans started building relationships with the people of Malin, by visiting them. After a while she started meetings for women. They did not have a meeting-room, so they went from house to house. Some of the women took their children with them. The children disturbed the meetings. That is why Lida Brugmans started a club for children. The children's club was organised at the house of a woman who also came to the program for the women. There they could play and have fun. She also started an evangelization program during the summer holiday and other bigger programs in a church at Malin. Lida Brugmans worked together with volunteers.

They found out that the children could not read or write. Consequently the children were not able to sing the songs they had written down for them. Because the children could not read they started a literacy program for the children. They started a pilot during the summer to investigate if the program would work and if the children would want to come and if they would enjoy it. The summer literacy program was successful so after the summer they continued the literacy program on a weekly basis. They also started a program for the teenagers.

By then Lida Brugmans, together with volunteers, was responsible for three programs: the children program, the teenager program and the literacy program. She wanted to offer the Roma in Malin a better quality. This could be done by having weekly programs. So Lida was looking for solutions to improve the Roma support programs.

At about this time Lida met Marian. Marian is a Dutch woman. She had been a teacher. She was willing to come to Romania to help Lida. They began looking for a house in the Malin district. They bought a house in 2002. They rebuild this house together with the Roma in Malin. In 2003 they started to carry out the programs at this house. During this year they also made preparations to become an official Romanian foundation. In 2004 Casa Perla became an official Romanian foundation.

In 2003 Marian started the kindergarten of Casa Perla. They noticed that most Roma children in Malin were not prepared for school. They did not know how to hold a pencil and how to behave in class. This was a problem, because school expects children to be prepared for school. Consequently when children are not prepared for school, they fall behind in class. To prevent this Casa Perla started the kindergarten.



In 2004 they started to support the Roma children from the first class with their homework. At that time the literacy program was still at Casa Perla. They tried to make one of the elementary schools responsible for the literacy program. After a while they succeeded. This way they were able to support more children with their homework at Casa Perla.

In 2007 the policy of Casa Perla changed because the organisation was handed over to the Romanians. More employees were hired then.

### *Objectives and vision*

In the introduction (chapter one) of this article we described the objectives and vision of Casa Perla. Lida wanted the Roma to integrate into the Romanian society. They should have the same rights and chances as the Romanians. There should be mutual respect. According to Lida the programs of Casa Perla have weakened the prejudices against Roma. This is especially the case for the teenagers who helped at the children's summer program. They have fewer preoccupations now. Another achievement is that more Roma parents are sending their children to school.

Lida's goal has always been to make the Romanians responsible for the foundation. So in January 2009 Lida went back to the Netherlands and Romanian Casa Perla was handed over to Romanians. Since then the Romanians only gets financial support from the Dutch charity foundation of Casa Perla.

### *Finances*

When the Romanian foundation Casa Perla started in 2004, a Dutch charity foundation was started to give financial support to the Romanian foundation. This had not been necessary before, but when Casa Perla became a real Romanian foundation they needed more money. The Dutch foundation gave financial support to all the programs of Casa Perla, except for the kindergarten. The kindergarten got financial support from a Dutch foundation called Ezra. The goal of Lida and the Dutch foundation of Casa Perla have always been to make the Romanian foundation independent of financial support from the Netherlands. This goal still exists, but because of the financial crisis the Dutch foundation is still supporting the Romanian foundation. At this moment they do not only give financial support. The chairman of the Dutch foundation also gives advices to the employees of Casa Perla.

Lida, in name of the Romanian Casa Perla, has written a letter to the NCDO, a Dutch foundation, in which she asked them for money in order to become financial independent. The NCDO gave money to hire an employee for half a year. Consequently Casa Perla was able to hire a fulltime employee to work at the homework support program.

### *Contact with other foundations*

From the start Casa Perla has had contact with the school inspection of Brasov and with the schools in Codlea. They also had contact with churches in Codlea, in order to stimulate the integration and to decline the prejudices against Roma. Furthermore they cooperated with the local authority. The local authority does not give financial support, but they help Casa Perla by giving material support, for example wood. Casa Perla also has contact with the police. This way the police will notice that Roma are not always fighting and making trouble.

Beside these organisations Casa Perla has contact with foundations like Casa Perla. One of them is FAST in Sacele. FAST works with the Roma in Sacele. They also work together with Provita, an anti-abortion organization.

Together they get into contact with teenagers from Malin. Furthermore Casa Perla is a member of a network of organizations. When needed they help and support each other.

### *The handing over Casa Perla*

In 2007 Lida decided to hand over the foundation to the Romanians. This happened in 2008. At that moment Lida was the leader of some projects. There was also a social worker to arrange the accreditation of Casa Perla. Casa Perla needs this accreditation to get money from the EU. Because the social worker suddenly quitted, Lida decided to develop a new policy. She hired a director and a project coordinator. She handed the foundation over to the new director. The director is responsible for the foundation together with the board that has been founded. In January 2009 Lida went back to the Netherlands. At this moment she supports the Dutch foundation of Casa Perla by raising financial support.

Paula told us that after the handing over of Casa Perla it was difficult to find volunteers. The volunteers liked Lida, but when she left it was no longer interesting enough to work for Casa Perla. It was also hard to find certified employees and this is why they searched for good employees without a diploma. Paula also did some research to find out how they can get money from the government for certified employees. She found out that there is a law that enables Casa Perla to get funding to hire a specialized employee for two years.

It was hard to finance the work in Romania, because the office in Malin has no accreditation. They found another location and tried to get an accreditation for that, but some of the papers needed were not available. Consequently both locations of Casa Perla do still not have the accreditation.

### *The role of Casa Perla in Malin*

Lida told us that she hopes that Casa Perla is a sign of hope for a better future for the people in Malin. Paula said that Casa Perla makes the people of Malin see that they can improve their future, they can make a difference.

### *Programs of Casa Perla*

Casa Perla has the following programs<sup>7</sup>:

- Homework support program – children from the 1st till the 5th grade can come to Casa Perla twice a week to get homework support.
- Kindergarten – This is a special kindergarten for Roma children from Malin. The kindergarten has moved from Casa Perla to school two. In 2010 the school will be responsible for the kindergarten.
- Children program – These programs focus on evangelization. During the summer they organize a week of activities for the children. At Christmas and at Easter there is also a special program for the children.
- Program for teenagers – There is a program for girls and a program for boys. The girls have meetings once a month. They talk about different topics. The boys play soccer three to four times a year.
- Program for women – The women meet at Casa Perla once a fortnight. They have topics they talk about. At this moment, for example, the topic is: ‘You are precious’.
- Counselling – People can come to the office of Casa Perla to talk about their problems regarding all aspects of life.
- Job program – Casa Perla helps adults who are unemployed to find a job.

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<sup>7</sup> See attachment 8 for an organization chart of Casa Perla



### *Typical Casa Perla*

Paula told us that the kindergarten and the counselling make Casa Perla special. Most of the other organizations focus on the homework support program and try to give the people a better live. Like FAST, they build new houses for poor families. Besides this, Lida told us that Casa Perla gives the people of the Malin district possibilities to develop themselves. Furthermore they offer acceptance and a place where you can be yourself

## 5.2 Results of the interviews with employees of Casa Perla

In this part of the article we will give an outline of the information we got from the interviews with the employees of Casa Perla. The interviews were based on four subjects: the history of Malin, the situation of the Roma, the relationship between Roma and Romanians and Roma and school.

### *History of Roma in Malin*

The employees we interviewed did not know much about the history of Malin. The husband of one of the employees who lives in Malin told us that the Roma first lived at the other side of Codlea (Codlea North). His grandfather and grandmother lived there in a special district. The mayor wanted them to move to another place because Codlea North is at the entranceway of the city and he did not want other people to see their unsightly houses. He gave them an area where they could stay at the other side of the city. Nobody would notice or see them here. This area is now known as the Malin district.

### *Current situation of the Roma*

Most interviewees said that the situation of the Roma has changed in time. One employee told us: “A few years ago the people were violent against ‘other’ people, you couldn’t walk through Malin on your own. Now the Roma people are less violent. Another change is that the Roma people want to have a better life. They are aware of the importance of school and hygiene. They are willing to adapt to society”. Someone else said: “some people are still poor and have bad conditions, but there are always possibilities to change if you want to”.

Many of the Roma are still very poor. They do not have gas, electricity or water. When someone of their family is working the living conditions are a bit better. When they are unemployed, they cannot pay their bills. This will lead to even more problems. It is a vicious circle; most Roma cannot escape from it. It is not easy to find and keep a job in Romania. When you are employed it is not sure for how long, this is also a problem for Romanian employees.

The interviewees also said that the circle of marginalization still exists. The Romanians have a lot of prejudices towards the Roma and think that they are the cause of a lot of problems. The Roma do not make an attempt to show the people that this is not necessarily true. They keep the prejudices alive by acting upon them.

We also asked the people about the social structure of the Malin district. The interviewees have different opinions about this. One person told us that there are two leaders. They are responsible for what is going on in this district. Someone else told us that there are two leaders in this district, the church leaders. There is also a woman who works at the local government; she also is an authority in this district. Other people said they do not know if there is a leader in the Malin district. Someone in Malin told us that there is no leader, just a person you can go to when you have a problem.

### *Culture of the Roma*

Roma people have children at a very young age. At the age of fourteen or fifteen they get their first child. After this they quit school or work, because they become fulltime mothers. This makes it difficult for them to go back to school.

There are also some typical Roma traditions. They celebrate the holidays and weddings exhaustively.

One of the interviewees said: “I do not experience much of the Roma culture. They live together, but I think that this is because they are anxious about the Romanian society. The Romanians have prejudices which are difficult to deal with for the Roma. It is savor for them in the Malin district”.

### *Strengths of the Roma*

We have asked the interviewees about the strengths of the Roma and one of them answered: “they do have the same strengths as other people. Only you cannot see their strengths because of the marginalization. When people say to you that you’re not good enough, you do not appreciate yourself and you do not show them your strengths”. Another interviewee told us that the Roma always tell you the truth, except when it has negative consequences for them. The Roma live on a daily basis and continue to go on with their lives without trying to improve their living conditions.

### *Weaknesses of the Roma*

Roma have their weaknesses. The interviewees told us that most of the time the Roma do not stand up for their rights. This is reflected in the number of children that go to school. More children would probably go to school if their parents would stand up for them. Roma parents need to overcome their passive attitude. They should stand up for their children instead of just relying on the help of others.

Another problem mentioned is that Roma parents do not have enough authority over their children. The children are free to do the things that they want and their parents do not seem to care.

The way they look at the future is also seen as a weakness. An interviewee said: “they do not look at the future at all. They live for today, they do not think about tomorrow, they focus on the present only”.  
Society

According to an interviewee the society of Codlea is also a problem. The Romanians have pushed the Roma to the edge of society. Moreover Romanians have prejudices against Roma and it is difficult to break this circle of marginalization.

### *Living conditions*

The biggest problem is that there are poor living conditions in the Malin district. Almost all the interviewees mentioned this problem. It is difficult for Roma to wash themselves and to keep the district clean. This confirms the prejudices the Romanians have against the Roma.

### *Relation between Roma and Romanians*

One of the interviewees explained that the Roma and Romanians live separated from each other. The Roma are separating themselves from the Romanian society. The Romanians have a lot of prejudices against the Roma and think very negatively about them, some prejudices are that Roma people steal and they are dirty. However, there are Roma who try to integrate into the Romanian society.

We talked to a woman who lives in Malin and she said: “the people outside Malin always talk negatively to me about Malin. When I tell the people that I live in Malin they are stunned”. She thinks this makes clear what they are thinking.

All of the interviewees told us that the Romanians still have prejudices against the Roma, but the Roma also keep these prejudices alive. One of the interviewees gave an example of the prejudices against Roma. *“I found a job for a woman who lives in Malin. The woman went to the manager for a job interview but the manager did not want her CV, only her phone number. He said he would call her but he never did”*. Another interviewee told us a similar story.

### *Government and European Union*

The interviewees told us that there is more attention for Roma from the government than a few years ago. This is partly caused by the entry to the European Union. A Phare-project<sup>8</sup> financially supported a project of Casa Perla (second chance), but it is difficult to get the money at the right place.

The government wants to do something about the problems of the Roma, but this has to be done at a low-budget basis.

One of the interviewees told us that there is not a lot of involvement and support from the government. The government says they want to change the situation of the Roma, but the interviewee did not see this change. If the government wants Roma to integrate, they have to give the Roma some support. In order to be able to integrate their economic and living conditions have to improve to the level of the Romanian.

### *Education in the past*

The interviewees did not know much about the history of the education of Roma. They told us that not all the Roma children in Malin have had the same opportunities to go to school. In a lot of cases the parents do not have enough money, clothes and/or food to send their children to school.

### *Current education of the Roma*

We asked the interviewees about the school system in Romania. Compulsory education begins with the first grade of primary education, where pupils can be enrolled if they turn 7 during the respective calendar year. Compulsory education runs from 7 to 15 years. It is co-ordinated and controlled by the Ministry of National Education. From the age of five children can go to a kindergarten. At kindergarten children are prepared for primary education. Children go to the primary education when they are seven. After they have completed the 8th grade they can go to a high school or a professional school (vocational college) to learn a profession. After high school they can go to university. Children are allowed to work at the age of sixteen, but because of their low educational level it is difficult for them to find a job.

241 children from Malin are between the age of seven and fourteen and should follow elementary school. 123 of them are going to school. This means that 51% of the Roma children between seven and fourteen go to school. From the 121 teenagers that could follow upper secondary education, 9 teenagers (7,4%) are attending school. 7 teenagers are attending the professional school in Codlea and 2 teenagers are attending the ‘Simion Nehedinti Highschool’.

According to the interviewees there have been lots of changes in Malin. The number of children that attends school has increased. Some children drop out, but not as many as before.

<sup>8</sup> The EU ‘Phare’ programme – Pologne, Hongrie Assistance à la Reconstruction Economique – was set up in July 1989 to support the transition of Poland and Hungary to democracy and to market economies.

We do not have information about the number of Roma children from Malin who drop out of school.

Most interviewees told us that there are still separated classes for Roma and Romanian children at the schools in Codlea. They believe that this is not a good solution. It is important that Roma children attend mixed classes. This will stimulate the integration of Roma children.

### *Factors*

Different factors are causing the high dropout rates among Roma children. One of those factors is that Roma children cannot keep up with the level at school. This has negative consequences for their self-esteem. Consequently these children and their parents will no longer see the benefit of going to school.

The interviewees mentioned that kindergarten is important for the educational level of the children. At kindergarten they are prepared for primary education. For example, they will learn how to hold a pencil and how to behave in class. Roma children who went to kindergarten will not easily dropout. They know what is expected from them and their educational level is like the rest of the class.

Another factor is that often Roma children do not get enough support from their teachers. One of the interviewees said: *“they do not encourage and help them. The pressure is very high and when Roma children do not get support they do not manage it and drop out of school”*. An interviewee told us that there are two kinds of teachers. There are teachers who ask too much from their pupils. Other teachers want to help Roma children by letting them pass the grade without having the right educational level. This way some Roma children pass a grade without having the right educational level. Their teachers believe that Roma children cannot reach the required level.

The interviewees also told us about the contact between Roma parents and school. When a child does not come to school the teacher will call his or her parents or visit the parents. Some schools have a mediator who visits the parents when their children are not attending school. The interviewees did not know if this is a common situation. An interviewee said: *“there is not much contact between Roma parents and school and when there is contact, it is not always good”*. Parents hardly ever visit the school, probably because they are ashamed of their low educational level. When Roma children are discriminated, parents will come to school and start an argument with the teacher. So parents only come when there are problems. Parents will not come if their child passes the grades. Casa Perla tries to improve and increase the contact between parents and school.

The low educational level of Roma parents makes it hard for them to support their children with homework. Furthermore, Roma children do not always have a quiet place at home to do their homework.

Although parents do not always see the benefit of education, the attitude of the parents towards education is changing. Many parents start to realise that school is important. Nevertheless it is still very easy for them to keep their children at home instead of sending them to school.

One of the interviewees mentioned: *“Some of the parents encourage their children, but only with words. In my opinion that is not enough. Their parents should try to help them when they have problems, when they struggle with problems in class and when they do not understand something. They should make more efforts to help their children, they should not only tell them to go to school. I think that is not enough.”*

Finally, some Romanian children have prejudices against the Roma. These are based on what they learn from their parents. When they are taught at home that Roma are bad, dirty and lazy people, they will act upon that. However not all Romanian children act in the same way; there are friendships between Roma and Romanian children. Two interviewees mentioned that sometimes teachers also have prejudices against Roma, but they will not always show these prejudices.

#### *Casa Perla and the education of Roma children in Malin*

Casa Perla started a kindergarten for Roma children in Malin. The members of the board told us that this had a huge effect on the education of Roma children in Malin. Children are going to the kindergarten and get prepared for primary education. In 2008 the kindergarten moved to elementary school two (before that it was situated in Malin). Both members of the board think that it would have been better when the kindergarten had stayed in Malin, because it is easier for the parents to send their children to a kindergarten in Malin.

Casa Perla saw the educational need of the Roma in Malin. Therefore they started a homework support program. As mentioned earlier parents do not always know how to support their children with homework and they cannot offer their children a quiet place to do their homework. At the homework support program Casa Perla helps the children with their homework. A member of the board said: “They give the children a lot of homework. Parents do not always know how they can help their children. Casa Perla helps the children very well.” Casa Perla also makes the parents understand the importance of education. This way parents get motivated to send their children to school. One employee of Casa Perla stays in contact with the schools in Codlea. She visits the teachers at these schools once per three months. She asks them how the Roma children are doing, if there are any problems and if they attend school every day.

There has been a change in Malin. Casa Perla has contributed to this change. A member of the board told us that Casa Perla has a huge influence in Malin because they treat Roma as equals of Romanians. Casa Perla takes care of the Roma. The interviewees also believe that Casa Perla contributed to the change in the education of the Roma. Education has become more important and this influences the drop-out rate of Roma children. Some people are not educated themselves, but they want to give their children a better future. They do this by sending them to school. Children are more often send to school and to the homework support program. Furthermore the employees of Casa Perla can talk with parents about their responsibility towards their children regarding education. These are important changes. Parents see the results of their children at school. This motivates them as well. Furthermore the homework support given to the Roma children by Casa Perla is a relief for Roma parents.

At the moment Casa Perla is facing a problem at the homework support program. They do not have enough volunteers to help all the children. If there were more volunteers, Casa Perla could achieve their goals regarding the homework support program. At the moment there is only one employee working at the homework support program. This way it is difficult to help all the children. Sometimes other employees will also help at the homework support program, but it would be better if there are more volunteers. An interviewee mentioned that only a few students from university are willing to work with Roma children. Students have prejudices against the Roma.

### *Why education is important for the Roma*

All interviewees agreed that education is the starting point to improve the integration of the Roma into the Romanian society. Integrating in the educational system will help them to integrate in the society as a whole. When Roma children and their parents start to interact with Romanians, their feeling of being one with them will become stronger. The Roma will be accepted and they will achieve the same level as Romanians.



### 5.3 Results of the interviews at schools

In this part of the article we will describe the results of the interviews at schools.

#### *Situation of Roma at schools*

Most children from Malin go to school one. This school is closest to Malin. A teacher of school one mentioned that one of the teachers has a lot of children from Malin in her class. She teaches the 6th grade and 18 of the 20 children in her class are from Malin. A teacher from school three has 16 children in her class, 3 of these children are from Malin.

The teacher of school two told us there has been a change in the mentality of the Roma parents. The parents have a new understanding of education, their future and what they need. Nevertheless there are still Roma children who do not attend school.

The director of school one said: “some children come to school every day, but there are also some children that do not come”. A teacher from school two also mentioned that there are children who do not attend school. These children have to help their parents at home. The teacher said this is not a problem in her class, but it is in other classes. The school mediator of school two also told us that young children have to help at home. It is hard for them to both go to school and help their parents. The school mediator also said that children who come to school have more knowledge. The director of school two said that children come to school till the fourth grade. After that many of them drop out of school. She said children are seen as adults from the age of twelve. Parents want them to help at home or to go to work. The school mediator told us the same. Children have to search for wood and/or old metal together with their parents. This way they will earn a little money. The children believe that this is better than going to school and earning nothing. That is why they are not interested to come to school anymore. The director of school one and a teacher of school three mentioned that there are also children who complete lower secondary education.

We also asked about the attitude of Roma children at schools. At school one and three they told us that there are some problems. A teacher of school three said: “the problem is that they are not properly raised and that is why they speak rude to their teachers and to their schoolmates”. The director of school one said: “the Roma are not so serious and are making problems and having arguments with other pupils”. At both schools they told us there are also Roma children who come to school and who do not cause problems.

#### *Difference between Roma and Romanian children at schools*

According to the interviewees there is no difference between Roma and Romanian children. The director of school two said there is only a difference between normal and poor children. Roma are not the only ones who are poor. There are also Romanians who are very poor.

We have asked the interviewees about the level of the Roma children. The teachers of school one and three said that there are Roma children among the best of the class. In school three they told us that this class is not the good class. The level of this class is in the middle. The director of school one said: “the Roma children do not have the same knowledge as Romanian children. Most of the time you have to work individually with them and that is hard. They are not raised the same as Romanians and they do what they see in their family”.

### *Factors which play a role in dropping out of school*

The interviewees mentioned some factors why Roma children do not always complete primary education. Almost all interviewees told us that Roma parents say they do not have enough money send their children to school. They cannot buy clothes, shoes, pencils and notebooks for their children.

The director of school two said they gave clothes to the parents, but even then the children did not attend school. She said: *“it is their mentality. Today they are positive about going to school, but the next day they do not want to come”*.

Another factor mentioned by a teacher of school one is the poor living conditions of Roma families. They live in houses with only one room. This room is not quiet enough for the children to do their homework.

The school mediator mentioned some problems regarding the school system. She said: *“a few years ago a teacher wasn't nice to the children. The children did not like it and refused to come to school”*. The director of school three mentioned that the school program is too difficult. All children are having difficulties with this. They have to learn a lot. The director told us: *“All the children are having this problem. The program is too extensive and the children are not enough supervised”*.

### *The parents of Roma children*

The interviewees mentioned that parents influence the education of their children. The director of school two said: *“the parents do not support their children. They cannot help them with their homework and they yell at them”*. She believes the problem is caused by the mentality of the parents. She said: *“on the one hand the parents from Malin really seem to love their children. When you say something negative about their children they really want to kill you. But on the other hand it seems they do not really love their children, because they do not communicate with them and do not dress them”*. The school mediator also mentioned that parents do not believe school to be important for their children. Parents tell their children they will not become a doctor or a teacher and therefore it is not necessary for them to attend school.

The director of school two said they have meetings with parents. At these meetings they tell parents what their children learn at school and why it is important to send their children to school. Besides that there are meetings where parents can do activities together with their children. There are not many parents that come to these meetings. But the director noticed a difference in the number of children that go to school, thanks to these meetings.

As written before one of the interviewees is a school mediator. She mediates between school and parents of children from Malin. She talks with parents when their child does not attend school. She tells them about the importance of sending their child to school.

### *Kindergarten*

At School two is a kindergarten for Roma children. Here Roma children are being prepared for the first grade. We have interviewed the teacher of the kindergarten. She told us: *“The Roma children do not have the same level as the Romanian children when they go to the first grade. They have a lot of life experience, but they do not know how to behave in class. They yell at each other and are having arguments with other children. It is difficult to work with them. They can count but they do not know the difference between the numbers and do not know the colours. They do not even know how to hold a pencil.”*

She said that the children learn a lot at the kindergarten. Nevertheless not all children from Malin go to kindergarten. At the moment fifty children from Malin could go to the kindergarten, unfortunately only twelve children are attending kindergarten. Sometimes there are only eight children. Some children only come once a week. These children will stay behind. It is difficult to get them at the same level as the other children. The teacher of the kindergarten said that some children do not come because their parents do not have enough money for clothes and shoes or their parents do not wash the clothes.

Normally kindergarten starts in the morning. But the kindergarten for the Roma children starts at one o'clock. The director of school two said that they start later because in Malin most families do not like to wake-up early. The children come to school by bus, so they do not have to walk.

The director of school two sees a difference between children who did and who did not go to kindergarten. Children who did not go to the kindergarten do not know how to write their name, how to hold a pencil and how to behave in class. This is not a problem when they have been to kindergarten. A teacher of school three also mentioned this.

### *Second chance*

At school two they have a special program for children and adults who did not complete their elementary school. It started five years ago for the Roma, but now Romanians are also allowed to join the program. Currently twenty-five people attend the second chance program. This program is more flexible and practical than regular education. People have to sign a contract in order to join the program.

## 5.4 Results of the interviews in Malin

In this part of the article we write about the families in Malin we have interviewed and their education. Furthermore we describe how the work of Casa Perla influences these families.

### *Description of the Roma families*

First we will give a short description of these families.

*Family one:* We had a short interview with the mother of this family. She has a daughter who dropped out of school. Her daughter has been to school until the third grade. She has been to school one.

*Family two:* We interviewed the mother of this family. She has five children (ten, nine, four, three years, and four months old). The two oldest went to school. We do not know to which school they went. At the moment of the interview they had skipped school for several weeks.

*Family three:* We interviewed the mother of this family and some of her daughters. This mother has seven children, six girls and one boy. The two oldest daughters have moved out. The others live at home. Three daughters attended school till the eighth grade, one attended till the seventh grade. The two youngest daughters are still going to school. They all went/go to school one. The son is just a couple of months old.

*Family four:* We interviewed the father of this family. One of his children, a daughter, lives at home. The other children have moved out. His daughter goes to the second grade at school one.

Family five: We interviewed the father and the mother of this family. They have two children, a nine year old son, who goes to the second grade at school three, and a five year old daughter. She is not going to school yet.

### *Reasons for going or not going to school*

The mother of family one told us her daughter has been hit by a teacher. That is why her daughter dropped out of school. Her mother does not want to have anything to do with school, the topic is closed. The mother of family two told us her children no longer go to school because they have no shoes and no bags. Later on we found out that the children have to help her at home, for example with gathering wood. The father of this family is often drunk and then leaves home. The mother has a child of four months old that she has to take care of. That is why her children have to help at home. She thinks it is really sad that her children are not able to go to school. Her daughter agreed with this.

At the other families the parents told us that it is really important for their children to go to school. Without school their children do not have a future. At family three they said that it was, and sometimes it still is, hard to send their children to school. They did not have, and still do not have, enough food and clothes. This is not a problem for family four. They have only one daughter at home. They buy school materials from the money they get from the government. At Family five they have enough money, because they run a shop.

We asked the families, whose children go to school, if they know the difference between them and the families whose children do not go to school. They all answered that they differ in possibilities. Other parents cannot afford to send their children to school because they do not have shoes, clothes and/or food.

### *Problems at school*

We asked family three, four and five if they have problems regarding school. They gave different answers. At family three they told us that in the past the children went to school without food. They did not have enough money. This has been solved by the sponsors Lida found for them. The mother also told us about her youngest daughter. Her daughter has a finger that cannot bend. This makes it difficult for her to write. The teacher at school does not help her with this, because they cannot give money to the teacher. At family four the father told us that there are no problems. At family five they have problems with mathematics; this is too difficult for their child. The parents are not able to help because they do not have enough knowledge. Besides that they do not have much time to help their child.

### *The role of Casa Perla*

Family five mentioned that it is good that their child gets help at Casa Perla. Loredana helps the children and has time for them. At family three they said their father has been a great support. He was handicapped and did not have a job. He had time to help the children with their homework. He died a couple of years ago. Their youngest child is now going to the homework support program. The mother of this family told us that it is difficult for Casa Perla to contribute to the education of Roma children. She said: "You can teach the children whatever you want, but if the parents are not supporting this, it will not have any effect" At family four the father told us that Casa Perla contributed to a better future for their child. At family one the mother told us that she no longer wants to have anything to do with Casa Perla. One day, when her daughter went to the homework support program, they declined her because it was too busy. The girl told us that it was not her turn that day, but that there is another girl at the same grade who is always allowed to come, even if it is not her turn.

### *Contact with school*

We also asked the families about their contact with school. Three families, whose children go to school, told us they have contact with school. The mothers of two families bring their children to school and talk to the teacher. Family three was visited by the teachers. The parents of two families go to meetings for parents, organised by school. One mother told us that she talks to the teachers and other parents at these meetings. At family two, one of the families whose children do not go to school, the mother told us she has very good contact with the teacher. The teacher told her that her children can come to school again whenever it is possible.

## 5.5 Results of the observations at the homework support program

We will describe the results of the observations we made at the homework support program.

Usually between ten and twenty children attended the homework support program. The age varied between seven and thirteen years. During most observations there was one adult to help the children with their homework. This is Loredana, she is an employee of Casa Perla and it is her job to support the children at the homework support program. The number of children that is present at the homework support program will probably depend on several factors. The weather might be one of them. We noticed that when it was snowing there were less children present.

Loredana told us some children who come to the homework support program do not go to school. When children do not have homework, Loredana will give them some exercises, for example sums to solve or words they have to write down. When they have finished their (home)work, they are allowed to play and have fun.

We observed that the children are running to Loredana when they see her. They give her a hug and talk to her. During the homework support program Loredana pays attention to the children. She is busy helping the children with their homework. The children are asking for her attention by calling her. Sometimes three children are shouting 'Lore, Lore'. They all try to get Loredana's attention. However it is not possible for Loredana to help all the children at the same time. Consequently Loredana sometimes gives away the answer to a question because she does not have the time to really help them. When children are not getting Loredana's support, they will do other things instead of doing their homework.

Another thing we noticed is that children are easily distracted. It is difficult for them to focus on their homework. They are focussing on other things. Sometimes they will do other activities instead of doing their homework. Some children often walk away from their desk. Sometimes three or four children are standing at one desk. The children can play with the toys when they have finished their homework. Other children will look at them and play with them, even if they have not finished their homework yet.

We helped the children with their mathematics. Many of them had difficulties with calculating. They had to use their fingers or an abacus to count up or subtract. They also had problems with multiplying numbers. When they had to multiply numbers, they used their fingers, an abacus or a piece of paper. We will explain this by giving two examples.

We helped two girls who were ten and eleven years old. They had to do sums like ' $A : 4 = 3 \text{ rest } 2$ '. They had difficulties finding out how much three times four is. They had to multiply on their fingers. They also had to calculate ' $125 \times 5$ '. They did not know how to do this.

We also helped a boy and a girl who are in the second grade. They had to subtract numbers like ' $936 - 752$ '. The boy counted up instead of subtracting. He counted up very well; he always mentioned the right answer. But he did not know how to subtract; he just mentioned some numbers, hoping that one of them was right. The girl did not seem to know how she had to do the sums. But when we wrote the numbers underneath each other, she could solve the sums with only a little help. She needed an abacus for subtracting the numbers (for example  $6 - 2$ ,  $13 - 5$ ,  $9 - 1$  and  $8 - 7$ ). She did not give the right answers without an abacus.

We observed that children are expecting you to give away the right answers. They did not start doing their mathematics by themselves. In some cases they went to Loredana to ask the answer to a sum if we did not want to give the right answer straight away.



## 5.6 Results of the interviews with foundations like Casa Perla

In this part of the article we will outline what has been said by the directors of the three foundations similar to Casa Perla. We will first give a short description of the foundations: their aim, their target group and what they are doing. Then we will summarize the information we got from them.

*Stupini Homework Club* – The aim of Stupini Homework Club is to help the children from Stupini (a suburb of Brasov) to pass their final exam, so they will have good qualifications to get a job in the future. The target group is the children from the neighborhood Stupini in Brasov. They have a location where the children can come to get homework support.

*FAST* - The mission of FAST is to support the underprivileged of Brasov County in their fight against poverty and discrimination by offering educational and social assistance to vulnerable children and families. The target group is defined as the Roma who live near Sacele, a place near Brasov. They have two different projects, a building project (they build new houses for really poor families) and an educational project. At the educational project children attending first grade can come to the centre of FAST. There they teach them how to read, write and count. They also have facilities at school; because of this they can help more children attending the first grade. Their program offers several activities; however they can only realize the program when they have enough volunteers.

*Atelier Sacele* – The aim of Atelier Sacele is to support underprivileged people, especially children and woman, and help them integrate in the Romanian society. The target group is defined as all the poor families in Sacele. They have an accommodation where the children can come after school. They help them with reading, writing and counting and they can play there. They also have some computers for them. During the last two months of the summer holidays they offer a special summer program for Roma children. It is a comprehensive program that includes (educational) games and fieldtrips.

### *Financial problems*

One of the causes Roma children drop out of school is financial problems. The three organizations agreed school dropouts are caused by this problem, however only Atelier Sacele tries to do something about it. The children who come to their summer program will get pencils, papers, notebooks and so on for the next school year. The director of FAST told us that giving the children material will not work, because they will probably sell it. So they, and Stupini Homework Club too, do not really give financial support, but they provide food aid for Roma children. They give the children a meal when they attend the homework club. This way the children are not hungry when they are learning. Of course, this also motivates Roma children to attend the program.

### *Motivating the children*

So Stupini Homework Club and FAST give the children some food to motivate for them to attend their support program. The director of Atelier Sacele agrees that giving the children food indeed motivates them to come. However Atelier Sacele is not able to offer food because they have insufficient funding. They try to motivate the children by giving them soap, detergent and shampoo at the end of the week. Furthermore they motivate the children to come by only allowing them to attend the summer program when they have regularly visited the program throughout the year.

Moreover they can play computer games at the centre, which is something they really like to do. Besides that, they give them a small present when their marks at school get higher. The director of the Stupini Homework Club told us: *"I tell them my life story and make them understand that education is crucial to development and overcoming poverty. It makes clear that when they drop out of school they will lack basic employment skills and cannot compete in the labour market. I present them their choices and consequences for the future. This will motivate them to complete elementary school."*

#### *Number of children*

At Stupini Homework Club they told us that they are not really trying to motivate children to come to the program, because they have enough children to help. They cannot help more children because it would undermine the quality of the program. She said: *"It is better to have less children and good quality, than having more children and poor quality. We are pleased with the number of children we have at the moment and with the motivation of the children."* At FAST they have the same opinion. The director said: *"You always have to take the recourses into account. How much can you afford to do? If you do too much, you will end up not doing a very good job. So we decided to focus on supporting the children in the first grade. I think it works very well."* He also mentioned that they always look at the positive side of things. They are supporting the children who go to school and they spend their efforts on them. These children will really change and this will also be seen by the teachers. the director of Atelier Sacele agrees, she told us: *"We have tried to help the children with their homework. But the problem with helping them with their homework was that they couldn't read. We got to a point that we had volunteers helping the children with their homework, not every day but two days a week. At first we thought this was fine. The problem was that doing their homework took much longer than the hour offered by the homework support program. Consequently the children couldn't finish their homework. We came to the point that the volunteers were doing the children's homework."* She told us that this way the children were not really helped. That is why they no longer help the children with their homework, but focus on teaching them how to read, write and count. Additionally they offer the children the possibility to play and have fun.

#### *Negative attitude of teachers*

The results of our research show that some teachers have a negative attitude towards Roma children. We asked every organization about their contacts with school and about what they are doing to improve the attitudes of the teachers. At Stupini Homework Club they did not have a lot of contact with the school. They were not allowed to go to school and meet with the teachers. At the question why they cannot have contact with the teachers, she answered: *"I think one of the reasons is that some of the teachers hit the children, which is illegal and they shouldn't do that. One social worker went to the school and found out that teachers hit children. I think the education inspectorate tries to protect the teachers."* The director of FAST also mentioned that teachers have a very negative attitude towards the Roma children and that it is difficult to do something about it. However teachers might see the change in Roma children. Like she said: *"The kids improved, and in time they will prove they know. Moreover some of the teachers said that they can see the difference in some of the kids."* At Atelier Sacele they want to achieve the same. They told us: *"We hope that in time they will look and see that we have success with these children."* Their contact with school is good; they try to understand the teachers, although most of them have a very negative attitude towards the Roma children. They are not interested in the difficulties these children have to deal with. So they go to school and tell the teachers about the difficulties of these children. At FAST they also have a good relation with the teachers. Although some of the teachers are negative towards the Roma, there are also a lot of teachers that are positive.

At FAST they work with the teachers who want to cooperate. The director said: *"We work with the good ones"*. They hope that in time others will follow the example of these teachers. The director thinks that it is very important to have a good relationship with the teachers. He told us: *"I think you should be careful with accusing the teachers of having a negative attitude, because the teacher should be your friend. If you make them your enemies, you will fight alone."* So they try to encourage the teachers by giving them support. They also invite them to attend the children program and to build a relationship with FAST. The director told us that this can be difficult and you have to think about every step you take, but if the teachers are supporting you, you will have a great team. Like the directors of the other organizations he told us that when you help the children, their results will improve and the teachers will notice it and they will like it.

### *Negative attitude of the Romanian society*

The teachers are not the only ones who have a negative attitude towards the Roma. As the director of FAST mentioned: *"It's the general attitude in Romania. It's a mindset people have against the Roma."* They do not want to solve this problem in a direct way, but they want to achieve this in 10 to 20 years. The Roma children who have had sufficient education will prove society that they are like everyone else. *"We cannot change the way society thinks about the Roma. We work with the children and they have to initiate the change. They have to prove to the world that they can do it, that they are good citizens of Romania and that they are reliable people and that they can achieve good results, good quality."* So education will help them to integrate into the Romanian society. As the director told us: *"They will integrate naturally if you increase their level of education."* Those Roma children will be role models for the society. Besides that, he told us it is important that the Roma children go to a bigger town once in a while. This can be difficult for them, because they lack the confidence to do this. But if they go, they will learn that it is okay to stay in a big town.

### *The parents*

We discovered that some of the problems involve the parents of the Roma children. The Roma parents are not able to help their children with their homework, since they are not educated themselves. Furthermore they do not think education is important and they do not stimulate their children to go to school. All the organizations have contact with the parents. At Atelier Sacele the director told us: *"We visit the families and talk to the parents. We try to encourage them to send their children to school. We also tell them that they have good children, because a bad child does not really exist. A child can behave badly, but we do not believe children are born bad by nature. We try to stress out the good things the child does, towards the end of the conversation we tell them what could be improved, but in a positive way."* At Stupini Homework Club they are visiting the parents when their child wants to attend the program. The parents have to sign a contract for one year in which they agree to send their children to the program. The director told us about his experience with this contract: *"It should help, but not many parents respect the contract. So in the end, you can only help people who want support you cannot help someone who does not want your help"*. At FAST they told us that they do not try to motivate the parents.

The director told us: *"We don't do anything in this area. It's necessary of course, but I don't see what I can do. Even if we gave shoes and educational material, it wouldn't change, it's an attitude. It's the situation at home. When they have a hard life, it's survival for them, for the parents. The parents think about how to survive, not about education. They only focus on today. They think let's stay in bed longer because when you get up it's cold."*

### *Contact between parents and teachers*

At Atelier Sacele we also talked about the contact between parents and teachers. They told us that parents do not go to school because they are badly treated. She told us how Atelier Sacele deals with this problem: “We join the teachers when they visit the parents. We explain the problems of the children and the family to the teacher. This way we make the teacher aware of the situation of the Roma family.”

### *Kindergarten*

Another problem is that children are not prepared for school. That is why kindergarten is so important. This is something all three foundations have stressed out. Still none of them is handling this problem. At Stupini Homework Club they would like to start a kindergarten in the neighborhood, but they do not have the facilities at this moment. At Atelier Sacele they want to sue the Romanian state for stealing 16 years of preparing for education from the Roma village. They hope the state will have to pay money, so that they can use it to build several kindergartens. At FAST they work with the first grade children. The goal is to get the level of the Roma children up to the level of the Romanian children before they go to the second grade.

### *Roma's do not stand up for themselves*

Another factor we discovered is that Roma do not fight for themselves. At Atelier Sacele they told us that this is logical, because the Roma have no education and consequently they do not know how to fight for themselves. Moreover they do not have a leader. At Stupini Homework Club they agree that the Roma adults do not fight for themselves. However the director told us that it is not true for the children. The children are still too young to fight for themselves; however their attitude can still be influenced. So we try to learn them how to stand up for themselves.

## 5.7 Results of the meeting with the employees of Casa Perla

In this part of the article we will outline the results of the meeting with the employees of Casa Perla.

### *Financial problems*

Although the employees do not directly deal with the financial problems, they try to help the people who have financial problems. They have an employment project to facilitate job placement for the people from Malin. Casa Perla has a partnership with some companies to achieve their (re)entry into the workforce.

They also mentioned that schools support the disadvantaged families by giving their children school material and by giving them a scholarship. Marian said that it is difficult for the Roma to get support from school, because they have to fill in all kind of documents. She also wonders if the financial support from school is enough. Moreover the Roma do not always realize that the school material is meant for a whole school year. When they cannot find their notebooks, they think they can just take another one.

However, according to Adi the financial problem is not the main problem. Others agreed with him. Adi said that it is not really about having enough money or not, it is a matter of motivation. If you really want to attend school, you will do everything you can to go to school. But if it is not that important to you, you will not do your utmost to create the possibility to go to school.

Karin mentioned that it is important to have good materials, like clothes and shoes. But Loredana said that giving them clothes and shoes is not a good solution. When the clothes are dirty, they ask for other clothes instead of washing them. That is why the problem cannot be solved by giving them clothes or shoes.

### *Negative attitude and prejudices of Romanian against Roma*

We talked about the fact that some teachers have a negative attitude towards Roma children. Loredana tries to talk with these teachers. She told us that the teachers had offered to help her with the homework support program, but that she had refused this offer at that time. However, she now realised it would be good if the teachers came to the homework support program. If they come they can help her and they can see how Casa Perla helps the children. Adi said that Loredana tries to talk with the teachers about the Roma children. She tries to motivate them and to show them the benefits of accepting the Roma children at school.

According to Adi mixed programs organized by Casa Perla can be a solution to the negative attitude and prejudices of Romanian against Roma. In these programs Roma children can show their talent and their value. At the moment Casa Perla arranges these kinds of activities together with school two. They do not have such activities with the other schools. They said it would be good to create these activities at the other schools in Codlea as well.

Paula said that Casa Perla can show the teachers the results of the Roma children and they can organise meetings with the Romanian parents and teachers.

Furthermore we talked about the partnership with school two. This school wants to stand up for the Roma children.

They do not treat the Roma children different from the Romanian children. We spoke about inviting the directors of all schools for a meeting. During this meeting the director of school two could inform the other directors about her experiences with Roma children. Maybe that will change the opinion of the other directors.

Paula said that the government has the same prejudices against the Roma. She talked with the director of FAST, an organization that also works with Roma, and they want to arrange some meetings to tell the Romanian about the Roma. This way they want to change their opinions.

Casa Perla has good contact with the school inspector and the director of school number two. In school number two the director wants to change the negative attitude of the teachers towards Roma by giving them training. Paula said that they cannot do this alone; they need others to help them.

Karin said that it is hard to change the opinion of the Romanian. She said that Casa Perla has to pray for the solution. If the Romanian people start to believe in God and Jesus, their attitude towards the Roma can be changed.

### *Level at school*

Some Roma children have difficulties with keeping up with the level at school. Loredana said that at school one they have a special class for children who cannot keep up with the level of the group. They have special books for these children and the children get an easier program than the rest of the children.

The employees told us that Casa Perla tries to help the children to keep up with the level at school. That is why they have the homework support program. We talked about the fact that not all the children who come to Casa Perla are keeping up with the level at school. They all agreed that Loredana cannot help all the children by herself, therefore it is important to have volunteers at the homework support program to help the children with their homework. Loredana needs this help. If there were more volunteers, these volunteers could help the children that need special attention. There would be more time and possibilities to help the children with reading, writing and counting. They could also do special mathematics or Romanian courses for the children who come to the homework support program. Through these interventions less children will stay behind at school.

### *Parents*

We talked about the fact that many parents are illiterate themselves. This makes it difficult for them to see the value of education for their children. Adi said that Casa Perla could organise meetings with the parents and tell them why education is important for their children. During these meetings Casa Perla can get to know these parents and can try to build a relationship with them. Casa Perla can also arrange one on one counseling for parents and try to make them aware of the importance of school. It is hard to get into contact with the parents and that is why it is also important to talk to the parents when you meet them on the street. Marian said that Casa Perla could also ask the support of parents who see the importance of education. For example, during a meeting these parents can tell the other parents why it is important for their children to complete elementary education. They are one of them and they are in the same situation.

### *Prepared for school*

Casa Perla started the kindergarten to prepare the Roma children for school. Now the kindergarten is at school two. The children have to go there by bus.



They do not attend kindergarten on a regular basis. That is why they are not always well prepared for primary school. Karin said that it is important to stimulate the children to go to the kindergarten. But not only the children should be stimulated, it is also important to stimulate the parents to send their children to the kindergarten.

Karin said that Marian can go to the houses of the children to pick them up before the bus is leaving. Adi disagreed with her. When the kindergarten was in Malin, they did this. Adi believes this is not a good solution because it makes them dependent on Casa Perla. She thinks parents should be made responsible for sending their children to school. Parents need to see the benefit of the kindergarten themselves.

When the kindergarten was in Malin more children came to the kindergarten. At the moment less children go to the kindergarten. Despite this, all employees agree that it is better to have the kindergarten at school, because of the integration with the Romanian children. Parents need to learn to be responsible and to send their children to kindergarten.

#### *Teachers are not aware of the needs of Roma children*

Loredana said that there are teachers who are aware of the needs of Roma children, but not all of them are aware of this. Karin said it is important to invite the teachers to visit the parents in Malin. This way Casa Perla can show them the situation of the children. Teachers will know where they live, how they live and where the children do their homework.

Loredana said that she met one of the teachers in Malin this week. Loredana was surprised to see her in Malin and asked her what brought her there. The teacher said that she had to do some visits. All the teachers of school one are obligated to visit the Roma children at home twice a year. Loredana said that not all teachers visit Malin. Some teachers are afraid to go to Malin. Maybe if someone of Casa Perla would go with them, they will dare to visit the children in Malin. Loredana also said that the teacher she met in Malin could be an example for the other teachers. She can talk with other teachers about her experience in Malin.

Adi said that it is important to build a relationship with the teachers. Casa Perla has to invite the teachers to come to Casa Perla. They can show them what Casa Perla is doing for the children. This way the teachers get used to Malin and after that they can be asked to visit the children with an employee of Casa Perla. Casa Perla can show them that the children of Malin are the same as Romanian children.

#### *Roma do not stand up for themselves*

Adi said that Casa Perla wants to make clear to the people they are there for them and that Casa Perla supports them, but that they will not do everything for them. They have to understand that they have to do things by themselves. Adi said: "We can fight for them and show them that they have rights to fight for, maybe the next time they will do it by themselves. We can also stand next to them while they are facing the problems." Adi said that Casa Perla can teach them what their rights are and how they can stand up for themselves during meetings with the Romanian.

Karin said that Roma do not stand up for themselves because of their lack of self-esteem. Consequently they do not stand up for their rights. They do not believe they are worth it. This can be solved by God. If you believe in God and his unconditional love, you will have the courage to stand up for yourself.



When the Roma know that God loves them unconditionally and that He will always be there for them, they will have the courage to stand up for themselves.

#### *Lack of contact between parents and teachers*

Loredana said that it is true that parents do not have a lot of contact with teachers. She told us she found out there was a meeting at a school and she wanted to go there with some parents from Malin, but she did not go. She said that going to these meetings together with the parents may be a solution for the lack of contact between teachers and parents. However, she first has to motivate the parents to come with her. During the meeting she can mediate between the parents and the teachers. The teachers know Loredana and they trust her. This is also true for the parents of Malin. Loredana said that some teachers are afraid of the parents of Malin because they always come to cause problems. When Loredana comes with the parents she can mediate between them and the teachers.

But Loredana also said that before she can go to school with the parents she has to explain to the parents why it is important to go to these meetings. At the moment many of them only go to school when there are problems. The parents first have to understand why it is important to go to these meetings. They have to understand that the teacher also wants the best for their children.

#### *Lack of good homework environment*

Loredana said that a solution to the lack of a good homework environment at home is the homework support program of Casa Perla. Casa Perla can offer them a quiet place and a table to do their homework. Loredana said she can motivate the children by visiting them at home. She has visited some children in the past. After these visits the number of children who came to Casa Perla increased. But when she stopped visiting the children, they stopped coming.

Adi and Loredana also said that the people do not know very well how to deal with money. They buy things they do not need and at the end of the month they do not have money to buy food. Casa Perla considers starting a course where the Roma can learn how to deal with money. They intend to invite some people of Malin who know very well how to deal with money and let them teach the others how to deal with money.

## 6. Analysis of the results

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### 6.1 Factors that influence completing elementary school

We have looked at the factors which cause Roma children not to complete their elementary school. We have done this by studying literature, having several interviews and by carrying out observations during the homework support program. We discovered that there are various factors involved. In this part of our research we will analyse these factors<sup>9</sup>.

#### *The Roma do not have money and materials for school*

The factor 'financial problems' is mentioned in the literature and also during all the interviews. Because of the financial problems of the Roma in Malin the children do not have the possibility to go to school, because they do not have clothes, shoes and schoolbags.

#### *Roma children cannot keep up with the level at school*

The Roma children are not prepared for primary education. This is mentioned in the literature and during the interviews at the schools. The Roma children do not learn the behaviour and skills that are important to learn before you go to school.

The interviews and observations show that Roma children cannot keep up with the level at school. However, this is not mentioned in literature. The interviews we have done in Malin and the observations at the homework support program show that the children have problems with mathematics. During the interviews with employees of Casa Perla and at schools it became clear that not only mathematics is a problem, but the general level of education is too high for the Roma children. It is mentioned that this is also a problem for many Romanian children.

#### *Romanians have a negative attitude against the Roma*

The literature and the interviews made clear that the Romanians still have prejudices and a negative attitude against the Roma. In the literature they describe the negative attitude of the teachers, pupils and parents of the pupils. People of Casa Perla confirmed the prejudices of teachers and pupils against the Roma. At school and in the Malin district they only mentioned the negative attitude of teachers.

#### *The teachers are not aware of the needs of Roma children*

The literature shows there is a cultural difference between Roma and Romanians. The teachers are not always aware of these differences. It can make school boring for the Roma children and that makes it difficult to motivate them. The results of the interviews and the observations did not make this clear. The interviewees did not notice the cultural differences. During the interviews with employees of Casa Perla it was mentioned that the teachers are less supporting towards the Roma children. This was also mentioned in one of the interviews in Malin.

#### *Roma do not stand up for themselves*

Another cultural aspect is that the Roma do not stand up for themselves. This is mentioned in the literature as well as during the interviews with the employees of Casa Perla and during the interviews at the schools. In the past the Roma were supported by different organizations. Because of this, they have not learned to stand up for themselves. They have a passive attitude.

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<sup>9</sup>See attachment 9 and 10

### *There is a lack of communication between parents and teachers*

Furthermore the lack of communication between parents and teachers is mentioned in literature. This is confirmed by the interviews with the employees of Casa Perla. One of the interviewees said that sometimes there is contact between parents and school, but the contact is not always positive. According to the school there are some meetings with parents, but not many Roma parents are coming to these meetings. The interviewees in Malin contradicted this by telling us that there are good contacts between parents and teachers.

### *Parents cannot help their children regarding school*

In all the interviews it is mentioned that the parents are not always able to help their children with their homework, because the parents do not have enough knowledge. In the literature and the interviews with employees of Casa Perla it is mentioned that several parents are illiterate or have a low level of education. According to the people in Malin the parents do not have enough time to help their children with their homework. Moreover the results of the interviews show that the living conditions make it difficult for parents to support their children with their homework. They cannot always offer their children a quiet place to do their homework.

### *Roma parents do not see the importance of school*

According to literature Roma parents pay less value to school than Romanian parents. This is confirmed by Employees of Casa Perla and teachers at schools. At Malin four of the five Roma parents told us that education is important for the future of their children. However they also told us that parents do not always stimulate and support their children to go to school. At schools they also mentioned this problem.

### *Parents do not have enough authority over their children*

The employees of Casa Perla mentioned two additional factors concerning the parents of Roma children. Parents do not have enough authority over their children and they let their children stay at home easily. This is not confirmed by literature, other interviews or observations. However at the homework support program we observed that the weather has an influence on school attendance.

### *Children have to help their parents at home*

The results of the interviews at Malin and at schools show that some children have to help their parents at home. Consequently they cannot go to school. Children have to help their parents with gathering wood or collecting old metal. When they collect old metal and sell this, they earn some money. For the children this is much more interesting than going to school.

## 6.2 Measures to enhance completing elementary school

We have studied possible measures to increase the number of children that complete elementary school. We have used the results of the second question to research possible options. We have combined the results of our literature review, interviews and observations in order to be able to describe what can be done to enhance the number of Roma children that complete elementary school.

### *Giving direct or indirect financial support*

A family in Malin mentioned that they receive help from sponsors. Thanks to this financial support they are able to send their children to school. At Atelier Sacele they give poor children pencils, papers, notebooks and so on, at the end of the summer holiday. Consequently the children have all the material they need to go to school. At Fast they do not think this will help, because the children or parents will probably sell the materials. So they do not handle this problem, although they and the Stupini Homework Club do give the children a meal when they join the program. This way the children are not hungry when they are doing their homework.

Casa Perla is already dealing with this problem by helping the people of Malin with finding a job. Besides that Casa Perla thinks the financial problems are not the main problem. It is the motivation to send their children to school that is missing in some of the people of Malin. If they were motivated, they would put in a lot of effort in sending them to school.

### *Motivating the children*

All foundations have a program to support the education of the children. The foundations use different ways to motivate the children to attend their program. At FAST and Stupini Homework Club they give the children a meal. At Stupini Homework Club the director presents the children the effect of education on their future and they give the children a present when their marks improve. At Atelier Sacele they try to give the children some soap, detergent and shampoo at the end of each week. Besides that the children can only come to the summer program if they have regularly attended their program during the school year. Furthermore the availability of computers motivates the children to come to Atelier Sacele.

### *Focussing on quality instead of quantity*

Stupini Homework Club and FAST believe that it may not be necessary to motivate children to come to their program since they cannot help more children. FAST cannot help more children because it would undermine the quality of the program. According to the director of FAST you should always bear in mind the available resources. Furthermore he believes it is important to stimulate positive actions, so they help children who go to school and they spend their efforts on them. At atelier Sacele they found out that they could not really help the children with homework because the children could not read, therefore they focus on teaching them how to read, write and count.

Casa Perla also tries to support the children with their homework by a homework supporting program. Loredana helps the children with their homework, but she can not help all the children by herself. Therefore it is important to have more volunteers to help the children and to give some children special attention. When there are more volunteers, they can give special courses and help the children how to write and read. It is impossible for Loredana to do this on her own.

Furthermore Loredana told us that when she visits the children and asks them to come to Casa Perla, they will come. However when she does not ask them, they will stay at home. So it would be good if someone would visit the children before the start of the homework support program. However this is only possible when there are enough volunteers.

#### *Motivating the parents to send their children to school*

According to literature parents should be motivated to send their children to school. Furthermore the whole community should be involved in the education of the children. At Atelier Sacele they visit the parents to encourage them to send their children to school. They tell the parents that they have a good child. They emphasize the positive side of the child. At Stupini Homework Club the parents have to sign a contract in which they promise to send their children to the program, but this does not really work. So they think it is important to focus your efforts on those who want support.

The employees of Casa Perla said that it is hard to motivate the parents. They do not see the importance of sending their children to school. However it is crucial to make them realise this is important for the future of their children. Casa Perla tries to achieve this by telling them how crucial it is to complete elementary education. This can be done during meetings, one by one counselling or encounters on the streets. Furthermore they can involve the motivated parents of Malin. They are one of them and they live under the same circumstances. These parents could be asked to help Casa Perla motivate the other parents.

#### *Prepare the Roma for elementary school*

According to literature it is very important for Roma children to go to a pre-school to get prepared for school. That is why both Stupini Homework Club and Atelier Sacele would like to start a kindergarten in the neighbourhood of the Roma. FAST also thinks that kindergarten is important, but they focus on the first class and help those children to get at the same level as the Romanian children when they finish the first class.

Casa Perla also thinks that it is important to send the children to the kindergarten. Not all the children go to a kindergarten and Casa Perla believes that parents do not realise how important kindergarten is for their children. The solution to this problem is to make them responsible and motivated to send their children to the kindergarten.

#### *Have special courses and summer program for Roma children*

According to literature schools should be more interested in the Roma children. For example, by including the Roma culture into the programs or adopting interactive methods. Furthermore it is useful to have a Roma assistant for helping the Roma children. Moreover some special education projects, like a summer program and special education for drop-outs, can be helpful.

Casa Perla has a summer program and they gave an English course. They want to give Romanian and mathematic courses, but they do not have enough volunteers to help them.

#### *Changing the negative attitude of teachers against Roma pupils*

In order to be able to enhance the number of Roma children that complete elementary school, there should be a change in the attitude of teachers. The literature mentioned that they should be more open for Roma children. This could be done by making them familiar with the Roma culture, for example by organising training. At atelier Sacele they try to make the teachers aware of the needs of the Roma by telling them about the difficult situation of the children.

At the same time they try to understand the teachers. FAST supports the teachers. They do this by asking them what they need and they help them get these things. They also invite the teachers to their centre. They think it is important to work together with the teachers, especially with the good ones. You should be careful with accusing the teachers, for example accusing them of a negative attitude towards the Roma, because you cannot afford to have them as your enemies. At Atelier Sacele they did accuse the teachers and now they are no longer allowed to come to school. So it is important to think carefully about what you want to do and to look at the consequences of your actions.

Casa Perla has a partnership with school two. In school two the teachers fight for the Roma children and want them to become good students. They support them when they need help. A solution to the negative attitude of teachers is to invite all the directors and talk about their opinion of Roma children. In this meeting the director of school two can tell them about her experience. Casa Perla can also invite the teachers to come to Malin and show them what they do at the homework supporting program.

Another solution for this problem, mentioned by the employees of Casa Perla, is to do activities with more schools. Now they are only doing activities with school two and not with the other schools. By doing activities with the other schools the negative attitude will change into a positive attitude.

#### *Changing the negative attitude of the Romanian society against Roma*

According to literature it is important to focus on both educational and social projects to help the Roma integrate. At FAST they visit a big town with the children, this way the children will learn that they do not need to be afraid in a big town. However their goal is that, in time, the children will prove themselves towards the society. They try to create role models for the Romanian society, so the society will see that not all the Roma are bad, lazy and so on.

Casa Perla thinks that it would help to have meetings with Romanian people of Codlea. In cooperation with FAST they can try to change the attitude of the Romanian towards the Roma, by telling them about their experience. They also have to cooperate with the schools and the government. Another solution of Casa Perla is to pray that the Romanian get to know God and ask Him to change their attitude.

#### *Stimulate contact between Roma parents and teachers*

The contact between parents and teachers should be stimulated because parents and teachers should work together according the literature. Some parents in Malin mentioned that it would be useful if parents would go to the meetings for parents at school. At Atelier Sacele they said that it is difficult for the parents to go to the teachers. That is why they try to take the teacher to the parents. They also inform the teachers about the difficult situation of the parents.

Casa Perla thinks it would be useful to let Loredana go to meetings at school together with the parents. The parents and teachers trust Loredana and she can mediate between them. But first the parents have to know why it is important to go to these meetings, because normally they only come when there are problems. During a meeting with the parents Casa Perla can tell them why it is important to attend these meetings and inform them that the teachers want what is best for their children.

#### *Stimulate Roma to stand up for themselves*

The Roma need to overcome their passive sense of victimization. According to literature this can be done by supporting the self-organization of the Roma. At Atelier Sacele they told us that Roma do not fight for themselves, because they do not know how to do it.

That is why they need a leader (this is a way of self-organization). Stupini Homework Club believes it is important to stimulate the children to stand up for themselves, because they do not have a passive attitude yet.

Casa Perla thinks that by having meetings and giving them information you can teach the Roma what their rights are and how they can fight for these rights. Another solution is to stand next to them when they are facing problem and to fight with them. One of the employees said that Casa Perla also has to pray for the Roma. When the people from Malin get to know God and Jesus, they will know there is something worth fighting for.



## 7. Conclusion

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In this part of our article we will give an answer to our research question: What can Casa Perla do to achieve that more Roma children in the Malin district in Codlea will complete their elementary school?

There are several actions Casa Perla can take to achieve that more Roma children from Malin will complete their elementary school. Some of these actions will have a direct influence on the number of children that complete elementary school. Other actions will have an indirect influence. Over time, maybe ten or twenty years, those actions will have results. We will now mention the actions Casa Perla can do to achieve that more children from Malin will complete elementary education.

### *Enhance the quality of the homework support program*

At the moment Casa Perla tries to involve as many children as possible in the homework support program. They focus on the quantity. However it would be better if they focussed on the quality. To achieve this they need to focus on the children who come to the homework support program, instead of focusing on the children who stay away. It is important to ensure that the children who come to the program benefit from it. With the help of Casa Perla they should be able to keep up with the level at school. In order to be able to achieve this Casa Perla needs more volunteers to support the children. When there are more volunteers they can set up special lessons for the children, like a Romanian or a mathematics lessons. This way the children could improve their Romanian and mathematics skills. Another possibility is to organise a summer program for the children where they can practice Romanian and mathematics.

### *Motivating the parents to send their children to kindergarten and elementary school*

Our research shows that parents are an important factor in not completing school. That is why it is necessary to motivate the parents to send their children to the kindergarten and the elementary school. This can be done in several ways. Casa Perla can give one by one counselling to parents. They can speak about the value of education. It is not necessary to do this in a formal way, but it can also be done by talking with the parents on the street. Another option is to arrange meetings with the parents at Casa Perla. During these meetings parents from Malin, who see the importance of education, could tell the other parents about the value and consequences of education.

### *Improve the contact between Roma parents and teachers*

Parents from Malin and teachers do not always have good contact with each other. It would be useful to improve the contact between Roma parents and teachers. Casa Perla tries to achieve this by arranging a meeting for the parents. During this meeting they can talk about their attitude towards teachers and why it is important to have contact with the teacher when there are no problems. When parents see the relevance of contact with teachers, then someone from Casa Perla can join them to the meetings for parents at school. This person from Casa Perla can mediate between the parents and the teachers. Another possibility is to visit the parents with the teachers. However some of the teachers are afraid of Malin, it would be good to first invite them to Casa Perla.

### *Cooperation between Casa Perla and teachers*

Another outcome of our research is that some teachers have a negative attitude towards Roma pupils. The attitude of the teacher influences the motivation of the child to go to school. That is why it is important that teachers know about the children of Malin, their situation and their special needs. This can be done by giving the teachers training about the Roma children. Casa Perla can also invite the teachers to come to Casa Perla.

This way the teachers can see how Casa Perla helps the children from Malin. They can create a relationship with the teachers and cooperate with them. Together they can help the Roma children to complete their elementary school. Another action Casa Perla can take is inviting the directors of all the school in Codlea to talk about their opinion of the Roma pupils. The director of school two, who has a positive attitude towards the Roma, can tell the other directors about her experiences.

#### *Influence the negative attitude of the Romanian society against the Roma*

Not only teachers sometimes have a negative attitude against the Roma. The Romanian society in general has a negative attitude against the Roma, as shown in our research. Casa Perla can arrange meetings with Romanian people to influence their attitude towards the Roma. People from Malin can be involved in these meetings. Then the Romanian can see the good side of the Roma. In these meetings Casa Perla can cooperate with the schools. Over time, thanks to the support of Casa Perla, Roma children will be able to prove that they are good citizens of the Romanian society.

#### *Help the Roma to stand up for themselves*

It is hard for the Roma to stand up for themselves. They do not know their rights and they do not know how to stand up for these rights. Casa Perla can help them by telling them about their rights. This can be done by organising meetings and by educating the children about their rights. They can also support Roma people if they have to stand up for their rights.

#### *Importance of involving God and Jesus*

Casa Perla is a Christian organisation. They believe that they cannot do actions without the help of God. That is why they believe it is important to involve God in everything they do. This can be done by praying. Furthermore they can tell other people about their faith in God and Jesus.

## 8. Recommendations

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The solutions mentioned in the conclusion are all important, but we think that there are three solutions that have priority. We believe that that Casa Perla should first focus on the quality of the homework support program, the Roma parents and the teachers of the schools in Codlea.

### *Improve the quality of the homework support program by getting more volunteers*

To improve the quality of the homework support program it is important for Casa Perla to recruit volunteers. When they have more volunteers they can improve the quality of the homework support program by giving special courses like Romanian and mathematics. The volunteers can also support the children individually.

### *Motivate the parents by having meetings*

We believe that it is also important for Casa Perla to motivate the parents to send their children to school and to have contact with teachers themselves. Employees of Casa Perla can talk about this with parents on the streets. They can also arrange meetings with the parents to stress out the importance of education. During these meetings Casa Perla can also motivate the parents to go to the meetings at school. One of the employees of Casa Perla can come with them to these meetings to mediate.

### *Improve the relationship with the teachers by inviting them to Casa Perla*

We also believe that Casa Perla should try to improve their relationship with the teachers. This can be done by inviting them to Casa Perla. When the relationship between the teachers and Casa Perla improves the relation between teachers and Roma parents could also be improved over time.

## 9. Methodological discussion

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Several questions worth exploring came to our mind during our research. These questions were about the way Casa Perla works. In this part of the article we will give our opinion regarding the methodology Casa Perla uses. Furthermore we will discuss which methodologies they could use in the future in order to achieve their goals.

Casa Perla is an organization which has, besides the director, one educated employee. Consequently it is difficult to use methodologies, because the employees are not familiar with working with methodologies. Nevertheless we think that there are several methodologies and principles that would be appropriate for Casa Perla. Casa Perla will surely benefit from these methodologies and principles if they put those into practice. It will be easier for them to achieve their goals, because the methodology and principles will help them to take small and clear steps to achieve their goals.

We will describe the methodologies and principles that we believe are suitable for Casa Perla. First we will describe several methodologies Casa Perla could use: motivational strategies, empowerment and RET. Subsequently we will describe a four basic principles Casa Perla can use to make sure that these methodologies will really work. First we will describe the ideas of psycho-social support. Than we will explain the importance of clear objectives, defining different stages of support and improving the contact with other experts.

### *Motivational strategies*

Casa Perla wants to stimulate the intrinsic motivation of the Roma. Only when the Roma are intrinsically motivated, they will change their way of life and/or their environment. They try to achieve this by organising activities. They visit the Roma to tell them about their activities. This way they try to motivate the Roma to come to their activities. The employees have various ways to motivate the Roma to come. One employee visits the Roma and just tells them about the activity. Another employee asks the Roma what they have planned to do on the day of the activity. If they do not give a clear answer to this question she tells them that they can come to Casa Perla, because they have no other activities. She tries to motivate the people by making it impossible to say no to her. This way more people are joining the activities. Nevertheless it is hard for them to motivate people to come to the activities. The Roma are not really motivated to attend the activities. Casa Perla can use motivational strategies to motivate the Roma to come to their activities. When the Roma attend the activities they can try to change their attitude and to get them intrinsically motivated. They can do this by using the methodologies of Empowerment and RET. We will tell you more about this later. First we will tell about the motivational strategies Casa Perla can use to make sure the Roma will come to their activities.

### *Possible motivational strategies*

To motivate the Roma to come to the activities of Casa Perla the employees can use the following strategies and strategies (Empower, n.d.).

#### General strategies:

- Express empathy
- Non-moralistic attitude
- Avoid discussions

- Really listening to the person (active)
- Not immediately searching for a solution
- Strengthening their self-esteem
- Using their resistance
- Causing cognitive disturbance
- Understanding the balance between cognition, feelings and behavior.

#### Non directive strategies:

- Asking open questions
- Reflective listening
- Giving structured summaries

#### Directive strategies:

- Provocation
- Selective enhancement
- Information and conviction

We believe that Casa Perla could use several of the above mentioned strategies. Really listening to what the person tells you, expressing your empathy and having a non-moralistic attitude are strategies that we already observed at Casa Perla. When the employees consciously use these strategies the Roma could be motivated to join the activities of Casa Perla. At the moment strategies like using their resistance and causing cognitive disturbance will not work for Casa Perla, because the employees are not familiar with these strategies, since they have no social education. They will need training to learn how to use these strategies. In conclusion, Casa Perla can use motivational strategies. When they consciously use these strategies they will be able to motivate the Roma to come to the activities. When the Roma attend the activities of Casa Perla the employees can try to increase their intrinsic motivation by using Empowerment and/or RET.

#### *Empowerment*

During our research we have done observations at the homework support program of Casa Perla. We noticed there were about fifteen children and only one employee. That is why not all the children get support and help with their homework. This undermines the quality of the homework support program. Loredana does not have enough time to really help all the children. Instead she gives away the right answers to the questions. This way the children do not learn how they can solve the questions themselves. It would be good if there were more volunteers to support the children. If there are more volunteers they can really support the children with their homework. This way the children will learn to answer the questions themselves. This will have two positive effects. First, they will learn more and their level at school will improve. Second, they will learn that they have the qualities to do their homework themselves. This will have a positive effect on their self-confidence. This is part of the methodology called Empowerment. This methodology is suitable for Casa Perla, because it focuses on an intrinsic change in people. This happens by letting people discover their own qualities and learning them how they can use those qualities.

#### *Using the RET (Relational Emotive Therapy)*

The RET is also a methodology that can help the Roma to increase their self-esteem by changing their thoughts. We noticed that a lot of Roma have negative thoughts about themselves. They do not believe that they can do anything good and that they are precious. If Casa Perla can change these thoughts, then the lives of the Roma will change.

They can change these thoughts by using the RET, but in order to be able to do this they need some RET knowledge and skills. The employees of Casa Perla need a training to use this methodology. At the moment they can already apply some parts of this methodology. There are some principles of the RET that are useful for them. For example they can arrange some activities where the Roma can talk about the eleven irrational conceptions that are described in the book 'Niets moet, alles mag', written by K. Roest (1999). One of these irrational conceptions is that you cannot influence your own life; a lot of Roma believe this. Consequently they have a passive attitude and they wait for somebody to stand up for them. They do not believe that they can change their lives. Casa Perla can use RET to convince them that they can change their lives.

Besides the above mentioned methodologies there are four principles that we believe are suitable for Casa Perla and which would help them to support the Roma. We will now give a short description of these principles. These principles are: using the ideas of the psychosocial support, noticing importance of clear objectives, defining different stages of support and having contact with experts.

#### *Using the ideas of the psychosocial support*

First of all they can use some ideas of the solution directed approach. There are three ideas that could help Casa Perla to improve their results, these are (Vries, 2008):

- If something is intact, do not repair it.
- If something works, use it more often.
- If something does not work, replace it with something else.

If Casa Perla notices some activities or actions are useless, it is better to bring these activities to an end. And if they notice some activities are very useful, they should continue and increase these activities. If they keep this in mind they will be able to improve the result of their activities. For example at the homework support program the children who have finished their homework are allowed to play. When the employees notice that this does not work, because these children disturb the other children. they should think about another reward for the children.

Another useful idea is the cycle of basic activities (Vries, 2008). It begins with thinking about what you want, then you think about what you are doing, what you noticed, what your experiences are and finally about what you think. An employee can follow this cycle while he is doing an activity or after the activity. This will help the employees to know their own observations, thoughts and actions. This can help them to improve the activities of Casa Perla.

#### *The importance of clear objectives*

It is important for Casa Perla to have clear objectives. At the moment they do not really have clear objectives. The activities which Casa Perla offers are prepared by their employees, but the goals are not always clear. If we, in the Netherlands, would have an activity with clients it would be carefully planned and the objectives would be clear. We believe this approach would not work for Casa Perla, because most of the employees are not educated and they follow their hearts, they just do what they believe is best. But still it is important that they do think about what they want to achieve with the activities and how they want to accomplish this. When they do not have clear objectives, it will be hard for them to achieve their long term goals, which is to integrate the Roma people into the Romanian society. At the moment Casa Perla is taking a lot of different little steps, but the connection with the long term goal is not clear. Casa Perla needs to make clear objectives for all their programs and activities to be sure that they will achieve their long term goal.

### *Defining different stages of support*

Casa Perla could use the different stages which are normally used within the process of social work, that is (Snellen, 1997): intake, analysis of the problem, goal formulation, strategy definition, implementation by means of specific intervention, ending and evaluation.

Casa Perla does not have to follow these stages strictly, but it will be helpful to keep in mind all the different stages and to evaluate them if some stages need to be looked at more carefully. For example, during our research we investigated why Roma children drop out of primary school. This stage is called the analysis of the problem. It would be good to involve the parents in this part of the process. It would give the parents and the children insight in the problem.

### *Contact with experts*

It would be good if Casa Perla stayed into contact with experts, so they can exchange information and knowledge. An interviewee from another organisation told us it is very important to maintain good contact with the teachers. We believe this is also important for Casa Perla. They can improve the quality of the homework support program by improving their contact with the schools and teachers. When the contact improves, the experiences from the homework support program can be passed on to the teachers. Furthermore teachers can give the employees of Casa Perla advice about how they can keep order. Loredana does not have a special education for educating children. The teachers could give her tips and suggestions for homework support and for how to keep order. This way the quality of the homework support program could be enhanced.

### *Conclusion*

We can conclude that there are some methodologies that could help Casa Perla to improve the support they give to the Roma and to achieve their goals. First of all they can use motivational strategies to make sure that the Roma will attend the activities of Casa Perla. Furthermore they can use Empowerment and RET to enhance the intrinsic motivation of the Roma to change their own lives. Besides that there are some principles that would help Casa Perla to improve their activities. They need to look at what is really helpful and what is not. They also need to become aware of their own observations, thoughts and actions. Besides that they need to have clear objectives. They can also make use of the different stages that are used within the process of social work. Finally, they can improve the contact with experts, for example teachers, to gain more knowledge. If Casa Perla puts the mentioned methodologies and principles into practice they will be able improve their support of the Roma.



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## Attachments

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## Attachment 1 – Information about the Roma in Malin

This information has been collected by Casa Perla during a research they have done in the summer of 2008. Approximately 60% of all people in Malin district have participated in this research.

### *Education of the Roma in Malin*

In Romania people have completed their elementary school when they have finished the lower secondary education. This means they have completed school till the 8th grade.

Age	Number of people	Without education	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5_7 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	Vocational college	11 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>
0-3	86												
4-6	59												
7-12	97	38	15	13	12	11	5						
13-17	77	15	4	5	3	7	34	6	3			1	
18-24	95	17	3	4	7	12	20	17	2	4	2	3	4
25-50	241	21	2	13	11	17	53	67	12	20	12	2	13
51-60	33	3			1	5	12	10		1	1		
>60	22	6		1		11	2						1
<b>Total</b>	<b>710</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>18</b>

Age	Pupils/ students	Scholar- ship	Qualified	House- wife	Work contract	Wage earner	Retired	Social help	With computer	Chronic diseases
0-3										1
4-6										1
7-12	53	52							16	6
13-17	35	35							30	3
18-24	5	1	10	53	13	13		6	24	4
25-50			48	146	52	58	10	39	19	13
51-60			7	13	5	5	9	13		4
>60			5	4			13	1		4
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>36</b>

## Attachment 2 – Data of the education of the Roma children in Malin in 2009

The following data has been collected by Casa Perla.

### *Education system*

Age	School
5-7	Kindergarten
7-10	Primary education: 1 <sup>st</sup> – 4 <sup>th</sup> grade
11-14	Lower secondary education: 5 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup>
14-18	Upper secondary education or vocational college
18-22	University (after upper secondary education)

### *Education of the children in Malin*

Kind of education	Number of children that can follow education	Number of children that follow education
Kindergarten	75	25
Elementary school (primary and lower secondary education)	241	123
Upper secondary education or vocational college	121	2 go to a high school 7 go to a vocational college
Second Change program		37
All education	472	194

### *Number of Roma children on the schools in Codlea*

Kindergartens	Number of children in this kindergarten
Kindergarten at Elementary school two	21
Other kindergartens	4

School	Number of children in this school
Elementary school one	79
Elementary school two	25
Elementary school three	19
Second Change at elementary school two	37
School of Arts and trades (vocational college)	7
Simion Mehedinti Highschool (upper secondary education)	2

*Number of Roma children on the schools in Codlea*

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Number of children in this kindergarten</b>
1 <sup>st</sup>	17
2 <sup>nd</sup>	25
3 <sup>rd</sup>	11
4 <sup>th</sup>	13
<b>Total number of children</b>	<b>66</b>

### **Attachment 3 – Labels used to study and analyse literature**

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The following labels have been used to study and analyse the literature:

1. History of the Roma
2. Current situation of the Roma
3. History of the education of the Roma
4. Current situation of the education of the Roma (at moment of research)
5. Problems concerning the education of the Roma
6. Solutions
7. Positive sides of the solutions
8. Negative sides of the solutions
9. The importance of education for the Roma



#### **Attachment 4 – Topics of the interviews with employees of Casa Perla**

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Topics of the interviews with employees of Casa Perla:

- History of Malin
- Situation of the Roma
- Relation between Roma and Romanians
- History of the education of the Roma
- Current education of the Roma
  - School in general
  - Roma and school
  - Role of Casa Perla

## Attachment 5 – Topics of the interviews with employees of Casa Perla

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Topics of the interviews with employees of Casa Perla:

### *History of Malin*

History of Malin

Change in time of Malin

### *Current situation of the Roma*

Situation of the Roma

Structure of the Malin district

Culture of the Roma in Malin

Strengths of the Roma

Weaknesses of the Roma

Important problems of the Roma

### *Relation between Roma and Romanians*

Differences Roma and Romanians

Similarities Roma and Romanians

Attitude of the Romanians towards Roma

Inequality between Roma and Romanians

EU

Government of Romania

Local government

### *History of the education of the Roma*

Education of the Roma in the past

Changes in education of the Roma

Effect the changes

### *Current education of the Roma – school in general*

School system

Teaching

Elementary school

Drop out

### *Current education of the Roma – Roma and school*

School attendance of Roma children

Matching Roma culture and school

Contact parents and school

Opinion on education of the parents

Special classes for Roma

Kindergarten

Finish school and follow higher education

Financial problems of the Roma

Importance of Roma culture in education

Regularity of school attendance of the Roma children  
Reasons for not going to school of the Roma children  
Training of teachers  
Attitude of teachers towards the Roma  
Attitude of Romaine children towards the Roma

*Current education of the Roma – Role of Casa Perla*

Contact C.P and school  
Beginning of the homework support program  
Goals of the homework support program  
Achieve of goals of the homework support program  
Obstacles of the homework support program  
Education of start of integration  
Rules at the homework support program  
Stimulation to go to the homework support program  
Solutions for integration

## **Attachment 6 – Topics of the interviews at schools**

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Situation of Roma in schools

Difference Roma children and Romanian children on schools

Factors which play a part in not going to school

The parents of the Roma children

Kindergarten

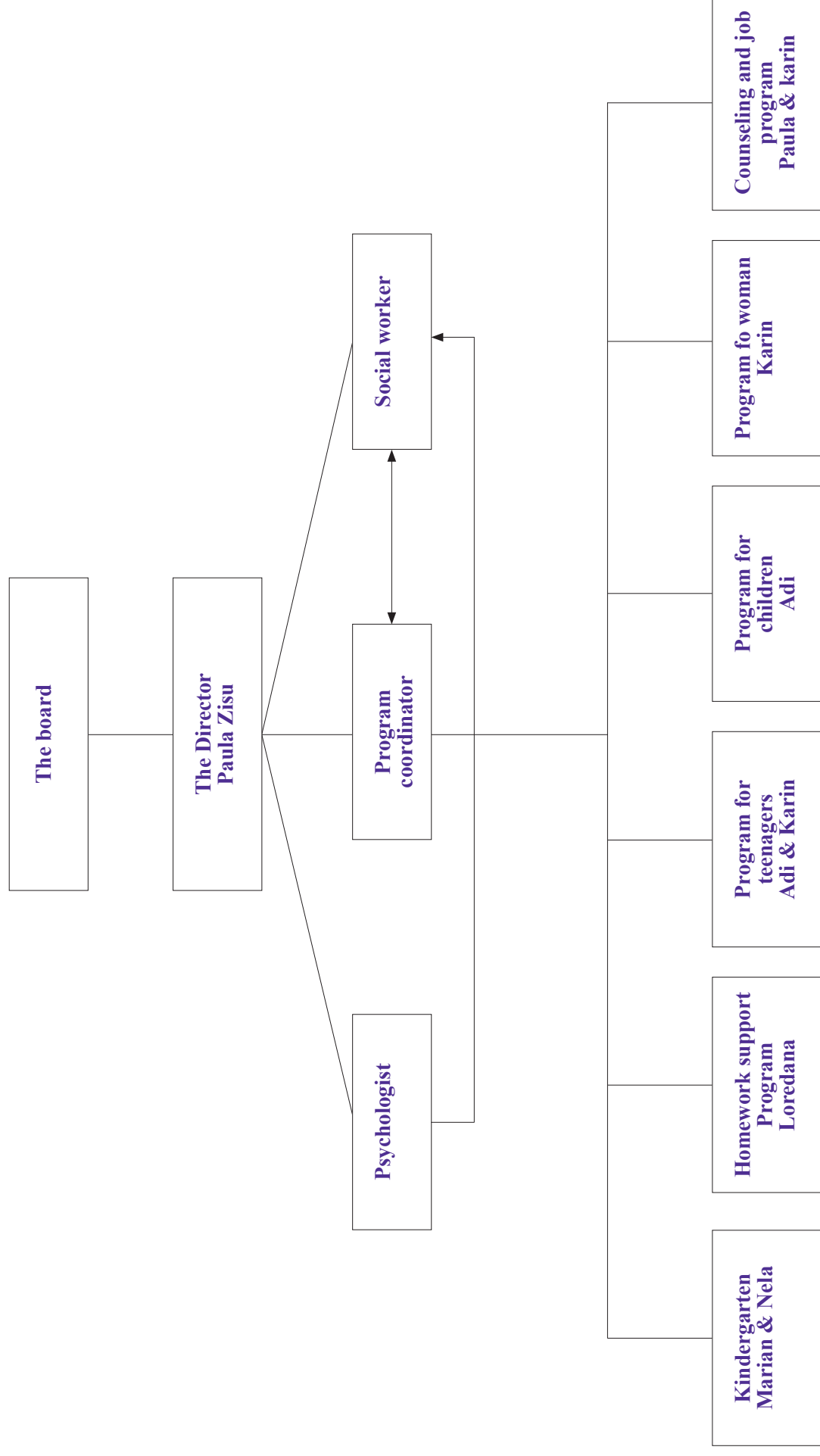
Second chance

## **Attachment 7 – Topics of the interviews at Malin**

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Family situation  
Reasons for not going to school  
Problems at school  
Solutions for the problems at school  
Contact with school  
Opinion about school  
Contribution of Casa Perla  
The homework support program

## Attachment 8 – Organization chart of Casa Perla



## Attachment 9 – Factors that influence not completing elementary school

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### *From the theory:*

- Financial problems;
- disadvantage in the early childhood of Roma children – they are not sufficiently prepared for school;
- prejudices and negative attitude of non-Roma (parents, teachers and pupils) towards Roma;
- cultural difference in the education – makes school boring for Roma pupils and makes it hard for teacher to motivate the Roma children and hold their attention;
- teachers are not aware of the needs of Roma children;
- Lack of communication between teachers and Roma parents;
- Parents are not educated;
- Roma Parents attribute less value to school;
- Roma do not stand up for themselves – they rely on others.

### *From the interviews with employees of Casa Perla*

- Financial problems;
- Roma children cannot keep up with the level at school (this influences the self-esteem of the children);
- Prejudices that some Romanians pupils have against Roma pupils;
- Prejudices of some teachers towards Roma pupils;
- Roma often do not get enough support from their teachers;
- Lack of contact between parents and school;
- Parents did not follow good education;
- Parents cannot help their children with their homework;
- Parents do not have enough authority over their children;
- Parents let their children stay at home very easily;
- Parents do not see the benefit of school;
- There is no quiet place for the children to do their homework;
- Roma hardly ever stand up for themselves.

### *From the interviews at schools*

- financial problems;
- The level of the educational program is too high for the Roma children (also for Romanian pupils);
- Roma children do not have the same level as the Romanian children when they start elementary school;
- In class Roma children do not have the same knowledge level as Romanian children;
- Negative attitude of the teachers;
- Roma children have to help their parents – They have to earn their own money, because of this it is not relevant for them to go to school;
- Roma parents do not support their children;
- Roma parents cannot help the children with their homework because they do not have enough knowledge about the subjects;
- Roma parents do not realize that education is important for the future of their children;
- The attitude of the Roma parents towards school is not stable;
- The Roma social and living conditions are poor and have a negative influence on making homework.



*From the interviews at Malin*

- Financial problems;
- Mathematics is too difficult;
- Negative attitude of a teacher;
- Children have to help at home;
- The parents cannot help their children with their homework because they do not have enough knowledge about the subjects;
- Roma parents have limited time to help their children with their homework;
- Roma parents are not always supporting their children.

*From the observations at the homework support program*

- The weather keeps children from going to school;
- Children have difficulties with Mathematics.

## **Attachment 10 – Factors that influence not completing elementary school – result**

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The analyses of our research data made clear that the following factors play a role in not completing elementary school. These factors have been mentioned in at least 4 of the results of the researches.

- Financial problems
- Not being able to keep up with the level of education
- Prejudices and negative attitudes of non-Roma against Roma (mainly the teachers, but also pupils and their parents)
- Parents cannot help their children with their homework, because their educational level is too low.
- Some Parents did not follow education.

The analyses of our research data made clear that some factors are less frequently mentioned. Our conclusion is that they seem to play a role in not completing elementary school. The factors are: These factor have been mentioned between the 2 and 4 times in the results of our researches.

- Roma children are not always prepared for school
- Teachers are not aware of the needs of Roma children
- The Roma do not stand up for themselves
- Lack of contact between parents and teachers
- Lack of good conditions for Roma children to do their homework
- Roma parents attribute less value to school than non-Roma parents
- Roma parents do not support their children in going to school
- Roma children have to help their parents at home

There are factors that are only mentioned once in the results of our research. Our conclusion is that further research is needed to investigate the role of these factors. These factors are:

- Difference in culture of Roma and non-Roma
- Roma parents do not have enough time to support their children
- Weather conditions influence school attendance
- Roma parents do not have enough authority over their children
- Roma parents let their children stay at home very easily