

Educational Policies that Address Social Inequality

Thematic study Indigenous Minorities

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Introduction

This thematic report deals with policies that address the educational disadvantages experienced by indigenous minorities in Europe. The thematic report is divided into several sections. The first section focuses on the identification of indigenous minorities in European countries and educational disadvantage. In the second section, the thematic report analyses the strategies, factors and effects of educational disadvantages in relation to indigenous minorities. The report is written with an awareness of the different legal and practical issues in defining indigenous minorities, and potential policy implications in certain national contexts. The thematic report focuses on three types of indigenous minority groups:

- a) minorities with a local connection to countries adjacent to the country of contemporary permanent stay,
- b) minorities with a distinct non-national territory and
- c) transnational minorities.

In each case, educational disadvantages that members of the group might be exposed to are included. Not all minorities that were identified might be described as educationally disadvantaged. A particular concern of this report is to identify minority groups and their disadvantages, and to analyse policies that have been created and implemented to address these disadvantages. In other words, the report views indigenous minorities from the perspectives of the (non-)recognition of indigenous minorities, of the educational disadvantages they face, and of the strategies applied to address these educational disadvantages. One of the key aims of the report is to draw conclusions and formulate recommendations for educational practice.

SECTION 1: What ‘indigenous minorities’ and ‘educational disadvantage’ mean

The identification of indigenous minorities is not a straightforward issue. The biggest difficulty arises from the fact that some countries do not officially recognise any indigenous minority groups. Another problem has its roots in the fact that theoretical as well as empirical materials focusing on indigenous people is scarce.

The term indigenous has no universal, standard or fixed definition, and can be used about any ethnic group who inhabit the geographic region with which they have the earliest historical connection. Other related terms for indigenous people include aborigines, native people, first people, Fourth World, original inhabitants in a region, first nations and autochthonous¹. The term indigenous may often be used in preference to these or other terms, as a neutral replacement when these terms may have taken on negative or pejorative connotations by their prior association and use.

Indigenous people is the preferred term used by the United Nations and its subsidiary organisations. However, several widely accepted definitions have been put forward by prominent and internationally recognised organisations, such as the United Nations, the International Labour Organisation and the World Bank.

An “indigene” is literally someone that is native to or originating from a given place. Therefore, when indigenous is used purely as an adjective, an *indigenous people* is a group or culture regarded as “coming from” a given place. In this broad sense almost any person or group is indigenous to some location or other.

¹ This term derives from Greek, and means "sprung from the earth".

As a contemporary cultural description, however, the term *indigenous people* has a much narrower common meaning. This report uses more restrictive criteria in order to identify indigenous groups for the purposes of this report. The identification of people as indigenous under these terms can in practice be further refined by examining the nature and status of their interactions with other communities. These other, external communities or nation-states are those having some degree of association, claim or control over the same territory inhabited (or formerly inhabited) by the indigenous group.

In this relationship the status of the indigenous people can in most instances be characterised as marginalised, isolated and/or as forming a minority, when compared to other groups from whom they are distinct, or from the nation-state as a whole. They have limited participation and influence over external policies concerning their territorial, environmental and societal governance.

This situation can persist even where the indigenous population outnumbers that of the other inhabitants of the region or state; the defining notion here is one of separation from decision and regulatory processes and having the ability to manage aspects of their community and lands (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Definitions_and_identity_of_indigenous_peoples, accessed February 2009).

There are different definitions of indigenous people, some of which are provided by the United Nations, International Labour Organisation, by the World Bank.

This paper draws on the definition given by the World Bank, which describes indigenous people as people that can be identified in particular geographical areas by the presence in varying degrees of the following characteristics:

- a) close attachment to ancestral territories and to the natural resources in these areas;
- b) self-identification and identification by others as members of a distinct cultural group;
- c) an indigenous language, often different from the national language;
- d) presence of customary social and political institutions; and
- e) primarily subsistence-oriented production.”

(World Bank, operational directive 4.20, 1991)

Based on this description it might be implied that a contemporary working definition of indigenous people draws on criteria which would seek to include cultural groups (and their descendants) who have an historical continuity or association with a given region, or parts of a region, and who formerly or currently inhabit the region either:

- before its subsequent colonisation or annexation; or
- alongside other cultural groups during the formation of a nation-state; or
- independently or largely isolated from the influence of the claimed governance by a nation-state.

Generally indigenous minorities:

- have maintained at least partially their distinct characteristics (which may include linguistic and/or cultural and/or social organisational elements), and in doing so remain differentiated in some degree from the surrounding populations and dominant culture of the country,
- have self-identified themselves as a group, and
- have normally been recognised as a group by other groups.

The difficulty mentioned earlier, is that the non-recognition of indigenous minorities, means that in order to identify indigenous groups it is necessary to use a combination of four view points. Therefore, in this thematic report the indigenous minorities are identified and categorised by a combination of the following four criteria: 1) official national view, 2) the perspective of the

report's authors 3) EPASI national team's data, 4) that the group in question has been resident in the state for more than 100 years. Apart from these criteria it is also important in the context of this reports aims for the indigenous minority group to experience educational disadvantage (except where we have found an example of good practice addressing the "educationally undisadvantaged").

What really must be pointed out is that identifying indigenous minorities is really quite a difficult issue. Firstly, this is due to the non-recognition and impossible identification of the indigenous minorities in some countries. For example, in the Czech Republic the Roma people (that theoretically might be viewed as an indigenous minority) are viewed as an ethnic, socio-economic and linguistic minority, not as an indigenous one. Another example comes from The Netherlands where a Frisian minority (the indigeneous population during the Middle Ages situated from the coast of South of The Netherlands to Jutland) is viewed a linguistic minority (450,000 people) rather than an indigenous one. Since 2000 the Frisians located in the province 'Friesland' have received special status as bilingual community from the government in The Hague (Plasseraud 2005, [Cederberg and Lingärde 2008](#)). Similarly the Roma in Spain are considered to be an ethnic rather than an indigenous minority ([Dooly and Vallejo 2008](#)). In addition to those minorities that cannot be included in the indigenous ones, there are some countries in the EPASI project where there is no debate about indigenous minorities. Those countries are; Luxembourg ([Tozzi and Etienne 2008](#)) and France ([Etienne and Gendron 2008](#)).

As far as Luxembourg is concerned, indigenous minorities are not acknowledged, because of the general difficulty *"to talk of specific minorities as regards Luxembourg, a fortiori "ethnics", as this group isn't acknowledged in the law of Luxembourg"*². The second main reason lies in the fact that the 2002 law on personal data protection prohibits any reference to data which would have been relevant for this report, except to nationality. Despite this statement there is a kind of potential candidate for the category indigenous minority: the Gypsies arriving in the nineties with asylum-seekers ([Tozzi and Etienne 2008](#)). However, these people *"seem to be quite well integrated in Luxembourg's society; they do not want to be 'identified' and do not want to be labelled as Gypsies or Travellers"* ([Tozzi and Etienne *ibid.*:8](#)). Finally, the third reason relates to the increase in the number of people coming from the African continent and defining groups of pupils according to the children and their parents' place of birth: *"native pupils (ie pupils whose parents and themselves were born in the country of origin), pupils from the first generation (ie those who were born in the country of origin but not their parents) and the non-native pupils (ie those who were born abroad)"* ([Tozzi and Etienne *ibid.*:8](#)). The main challenge faced by education in Luxembourg lies in an adequate schooling of the high number of immigrant children whose linguistic origin is more and more heterogeneous³ ([Tozzi and Etienne *ibid.*](#)).

As far as the existence or rather identification of indigenous minorities in countries covered by the EPASI project is concerned, this report refers to three subtypes of indigenous minority groups:

- a) minorities with a local connection to countries adjacent to the country of their contemporary permanent stay,
- b) minorities with a distinct non-national territory and
- c) transnational minorities.

² United Nations, Final Observations from Human Right Committee: Luxembourg, 28/12/92

[http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/CCPR.C.79.Add.11.Fr?Opendocument](http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/CCPR.C.79.Add.11.Fr?Opendocument) In *Luxembourg Country Report*: 8-9

³ The reforms seem inevitable as for observers, foreign children remain the most underprivileged group: that is what the 2006 EC report shows "Analysis of Progress: Towards the Lisbon Objectives in Education and Training" taking EFT data as a basis. For Luxembourg, "the rate of 'school droppers' is 8.9 percent among the foreign residents". In the Grand Duchy, contrary to other EU countries, the majority of 'early school leavers' are non-native." ([Tozzi and Etienne *ibid.*:10](#))

However, this thematic report discusses only those identified indigenous minorities that are educationally disadvantaged. Therefore the subtype a) includes the Muslim Minority (including groups of Turkish origin, Pomacs and Roma) and non-Muslim Roma in Greece⁴. The subtype b) indigenous minorities with a distinct non-national territory in EPASI countries has been identified in Belgium: the Roma and Mamouch (around 1,000 people situated in the triangle Antwerp, Brussels and Ghent since 15th century; [Lambrechts and Geurts 2008](#)), in the Netherlands: the Roma and Sinti (around 4,500 people, Frisians are viewed as a linguistic minority; [Geurts and Lambrechts 2008](#)), in Sweden: the Sami ([Hartsmar 2008](#)), and in Spain: the Tamazight (Berber) people ([Dooly and Vallejo 2008](#)). Within the EPASI countries there are several transnational minorities with “no home country” that should be included: Travellers in Ireland ([Moreau et al. 2008](#)) and in the UK and the Roma people in most countries, for example the UK ([Leathwood et al. 2008](#)). To a certain extent the transnational minorities subtype of indigenous people might be identified in Slovakia, and in the Czech Republic ([Vrabцова et al. 2008a; 2008b](#)). But due to the lack of official recognition, these groups may not be recognised as indigenous.

Finally, the discrepancy between the definition of indigenous minorities and their recognition must be pointed out. These issues together with the fact that many countries do not acknowledge/use the term “indigenous” appear to be significant in itself. Based on this the “indigenous people” are doubly disadvantaged, not only as a minority but because in some countries they are simply not recognised.

SECTION 2: Strategies within the indigenous-oriented projects that address the disadvantages

One of the aims of the present report is to analyse the strategies and the trends across the fourteen countries studied in the EPASI project in relation to the education of indigenous minorities. The thematic report focuses further on strategies addressing indigenous groups in countries covered and identified by the EPASI project. The strategies are specified and discussed partly on the ground of projects collected and analysed by EPASI project teams, partly on the ground of information provided in the EPASI national reports. For more details regarding EPASI projects targeting indigenous people, see Appendix 1. Appendix 1 summarises briefly all indigenous minority-oriented educational projects that are covered within the EPASI database.

The subsection 2.1 presents and discusses the national context of the strategies in relation to the educational disadvantages of each of the three subtypes of indigenous minorities.

2.1 National context of the strategies addressing disadvantaged indigenous minorities

This subsection gives an overview of the strategies addressing educational disadvantages faced by indigenous minorities or rather their identified subtypes. Firstly, there are the educationally disadvantaged indigenous minorities with a local connection to countries adjacent to the country of their contemporary permanent stay; which includes the Muslim minority (including groups of Turkish origin, Pomac and Roma) and non-Muslim Roma in Greece. Secondly, there are the indigenous minorities with a distinct non-national territory in countries that have been identified in Belgium: Mamouch people, in Netherlands: the Sinti and Frisians (linguistic), in Sweden: the Sami,

⁴ The issue of the Muslim Minority in Western Thrace is very complex. Their status while being designated as a religious minority nevertheless includes elements of ethnic, linguistic and also indigenous since they have always lived in that geographic area. Their disadvantage is related mostly to their first language and their socioeconomic status ([Spinthourakis et al. 2008](#)).

and in Spain: the Tamazight (Berber) people. Thirdly and finally, this subsection points out to the transnational minorities.

The Muslim minority in **Greece** is located in Thrace and is a combination of people of Turkish origin, Pomacs, Roma ([Spinthourakis et al. 2008](#)). Providing teaching/learning support for them to learn Greek as a second language is a priority. Greek as a second language seems to be the first priority of the area since these groups tend to be linguistically disadvantaged. Consequently the linguistic disadvantage may develop into school failure and illiteracy. Therefore, the system of measures taken to minimise school failure and increase literacy is integration (linguistic, social, etc.). What helps further is:

- cooperation and mediation between the school system and parents,
 - research about Muslim identities (understanding their values and perspectives)
 - production of multicultural educational materials, including their evaluation,
 - guidance concerning their educational rights,
 - innovating school curricula and teacher's education and competences, including
 - sensitisation of teachers in issues of multicultural education,
- support provided to families to increase their children's efficiency (See Project Summaries GR102: [Multicultural Educational Support of student groups of elementary and secondary education in Western Thrace](#), GR103: [Educating Roma Students 1st phase](#), GR104: [Integration of Roma Students to school environment 2nd phase](#), GR105: [Integration of Roma Students to school environment 3rd phase](#)).

The Muslim minority is disadvantaged because while educational programmes are dual language, emphasis in fact is given to Turkish. Before the introduction of positive discrimination, no minority students went into higher education. The positive discrimination started in 1995. Since 1995 a five percent quota has been instituted to ensure their access to higher education. Non-Muslim Roma, while not officially designated as a minority, do experience educational disadvantage as they are culturally and linguistically different from the mainstream. School attendance may not be regular, and these pupils come to school without the same Greek language experience as the rest of the society; their mother tongue is not utilised; and differing cultural traditions can result in high levels of early school leaving of first girls and then boys ([Spinthourakis et al. 2008](#)).

The German indigenous minority living in **Denmark** live in the region of Soenderjylland/Nordschleswig in Denmark close to the German border and they use a Danish dialect in everyday life and German language in school and official life⁵. Despite the fact that this group is not disadvantaged educationally this report finds it of a key importance so that this group was mentioned - as an example of a subtype of an indigenous minority not facing educational disadvantage ([Cederberg and Lingarde 2008](#)).

In **Belgium** there is a small group of Roma and Mamouch pupils; Roma people however represent rather the transnational indigenous minority.

“The most urgent problem for the indigenous pupils in Belgium is regular school attendance. Although one of the five equal opportunities indicators which determine levels of additional educational support to primary and early secondary schools relate to the parent, the child of a barge skipper, fairground worker, circus artist, circus manager or a caravan dweller, or a pupil who has been home schooled are not eligible for additional support. The number of

⁵ “The group comprises 4-6 percent of the population of the region of Soenderjylland / Nordschleswig, or between 10,000 and 15,000 persons in all. About 1,400 children go to the German-speaking independent schools, which receive financial support from the Danish state through the Deutscher Schul- und Sprachverein für Nordschleswig. The schools are exempted from the rule that Danish is the main language at school. This long-established arrangement, unlike many other aspects of language and ethnicity in Denmark, is not a matter of political controversy today” (Pedersen 1998; Rosenberg in [Cederberg and Lingarde 2008](#):15-16).

home-schooled pupils has increased among children from traveller and Roma background” ([Lambrechts and Geurts 2008](#)) (see project summaries: [BE2](#), [BE6](#), [BE7](#), [BE8](#), [BE11](#), [BE16](#), [BE18](#), [BE20](#), [BE21](#), [BE249](#)).

As for Roma, Sinti and Frisians (Roma are being viewed as a transnational minority and Frisians rather as a linguistic minority)⁶ present in some parts of the Netherlands, the most urgent problem for those pupils is regular school attendance too, especially for girls. Some special projects for this group have been organised with little success. The Frisians do not seem to be any educationally disadvantaged in any serious way, except for the mentioned regular school attendance ([Geurts and Lambrechts 2008](#)). The Roma people suit the category “transnational minorities” (see project summaries NL79: [Roma youth literacy Veldhoven](#), NL85: [Roma Project](#)).

In **Sweden** there are the Sami, who are a disadvantaged indigenous group with a distinct non-national territory (see project summaries SE121: [In service training for teachers in national minority languages](#), SE123: [Swedish-Finnish in pre-school](#), SE124: [Sami](#)) as a disadvantaged subtype b, despite the effort of the the national Swedish indigenous minority policy. This policy was created by ratification of the European Minority language Convention which should acknowledge the Swedish indigenous minorities and their languages and give the necessary support and room for minorities with another culture, religion or another mother tongue. However, due to the national indigenous people becoming minorities in countries where they had been living long before the Nordic countries were established, their incorporation resulted in both positive and negative effects (respecting traditional cultures within wider society, increased access to education and social services, foregoing their culture, religion and their own language). The ongoing position of the disadvantaged indigenous people in Sweden, including structural discrimination is shown in a recently published report by the Ombudsman against Ethnic Discrimination: *Diskriminering av nationella minoriteter inom utbildningsväsendet* (2008:2). The report shows Sweden not living up to the expectations set in the two European Council conventions – the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Minority language Convention, ratified by Sweden in 2000⁷ ([Hartsmar 2008](#)).

To be more specific let us mention the measures and policies aimed at supporting indigenous minorities in Sweden, such as:

- respecting the Sami’s experiences and knowledge,
- respecting the Sami’s right to use their mother tongue in contact with authorities and courts etc.,
- providing pre-school education and geriatric care in the minority language within the traditional settlement areas,
- protecting and strengthening the culture and history within the fields of education and cultural areas,
- developing higher education and research focusing on increased status for the cultural characteristics of the indigenous minorities (see project summaries [SE121](#), [SE123](#), [SE124](#), [SE127](#), [SE133](#), [SE134](#)).

In **Spain** perhaps the only minority in addition to the transnational Roma people (see project summaries ES207: [Plan for Roma community pupils](#), ES208: [School attendance promoters](#), ES211:

⁶ The earliest records of indigenous Frisians inhabiting their land come from 700 BC (up to at least the fifth century their tribal lands included the entire North Sea coast of Holland). Today both Dutch and Frisian languages are used in the community. Of 640,000 (according to Gorter (2008) 450,000) Frisians almost three quarters are able to speak the language fluently. There are also indigenous organisations to protect the Frisian culture, language and land. (*Netherlands Country Report*). Nowadays the Frisian community has their own radio and TV station: <http://www1.omroepfryslan.nl/>.

⁷ Referring to: Dir 2004:54 *Makt, integration och strukturell diskriminering*, (Power, Integration and Structural Discrimination).

[Learning to produce intercultural goods with mass media](#)) that might be viewed as an indigenous one are the Tamazight (Berber) people (see project summary ES209: [Maternal language instruction](#)). However, at the same time it must be mentioned that this group may also be classified as a linguistic minority group too. There are, however, no statistics on linguistic demography, although the use of Tamazight does seem to have diminished among the second and third generations. Tamazight has no legal status locally or nationally and Spanish is the only official and administrative language. There have been no attempts to teach or use Tamazight within the official education system. A pilot scheme to teach adult Tamazight speakers to read and write in Spanish was recently established. The Spanish Government does not appear to have taken any measures at all to teach the culture and history of the Berbers. We have no information on teacher training, and the Spanish Government has not created any inspectorate or controlling body in relation to the teaching of Tamazight. It seems that the oral tradition of Tamazight is guaranteed to the extent that the majority of parents use it to talk to their children. The very high percentage of marriages between Berbers reinforces this state of affairs. With regard to the vitality of the language, most Tamazight speakers believe that their language will decline in future as a medium of communication within society. They also consider that young people have less knowledge of Tamazight than their parents' generation ([Dooly and Vallejo 2008](#)) (see project summary ES209: [Maternal language instruction](#)).

Tamazight is in a fraught situation⁸. The absence of an institutional and official presence, of the means of social reproduction of the language (education, mass media) and the lack of a solid network of local cultural associations that could use Tamazight and bolster its position within the community mean that its survival is in jeopardy. In addition, mention must be made of the language's total lack of prestige in the business world. The presence of a large number of Berbers in the areas close to the town has done nothing to improve the situation, because the Berbers are in a precarious situation wherever they live (no schools, no mass media, no official recognition of their language, etc.). The only factor in favour of Tamazight is the fact that families are still passing on the language to their children ([Dooly and Vallejo 2008](#)) (see project summary ES209: [Maternal language instruction](#)).

Within the countries covered by the EPASI project, there are several transnational minorities with “no home country” that should be mentioned: in particularly Travellers and Roma people in Ireland and the UK ([Moreau et al. 2008](#); [Leathwood et al. 2008](#)), as well as in most countries. The dominant extent of this category of transnational minorities is reflected in the wide range of projects targeting this subtype of indigenous people in countries covered by EPASI project (see project summaries [BE2](#), [BE6](#), [BE7](#), [BE8](#), [BE11](#), [BE16](#), [BE18](#), [BE20](#), [BE21](#), [BE249](#), [IE29](#), [IE30](#), [IE31](#), [IE32](#), [IE42](#), [UK54](#), [UK57](#), [NL79](#), [NL85](#), [SE127](#), [SE133](#), [SE134](#), [ES207](#), [ES208](#), [ES209](#), [ES211](#)). To a certain extent this subtype of indigenous people might be identified in Slovakia, and partially even in the Czech Republic (though there are not officially recognised; [Vrabcova 2008a](#); [2008b](#)).

As for the Traveller community in **Ireland** it might be identified as the main indigenous minority there. According to the 2002 census (first census that included ‘Traveller’ as a census category) there are 24,000 Travellers living in the country. This community belongs to those historically overlooked groups that have been on the increase in political debates etc. across time. According to Drudy and Lynch (In *Ireland Country report*) Travellers used to be viewed as the category ‘special educational needs’, as ‘deviant’. However, recently they they have started to represent a ‘distinct culture’ and it has been argued that they should be schooled in mainstream institutions. Despite these significantly positive shifts, there are still quite many schools and training centres where only

⁸ One of the main reason why the situation is quite complicated is because Ceuta and Melilla are territories of Spanish protectorate geographically located in Northern Africa. Further, people arriving from these ‘Spanish territories’ are treated like non-EU citizens and must go through very rigorous immigration control.

Travellers can enroll. In addition to this, despite the positive trends Travellers face many difficulties in relation to access to education and participation in education (particularly the higher education). Their educational disadvantage is related to low school attendance, low retention rates and school under-performance, as well as to rare involvement of Travellers in educational policy-making. Despite a number of measures (grant aid to schools with Travellers enrolled, Visiting Teacher Service for Travellers, inclusion of Travellers representatives on the Advisory Committee on Traveller Education, development of guidelines on Traveller education by the DES at primary and post primary levels, etc.), this group in Ireland continues to face major educational disadvantages. ([Moreau et al. 2008](#)) (see project summaries IE29: [Pre-schools for Travellers](#), IE30: [Resource teachers for Travellers](#), IE31: [Visiting teacher service for Traveller education](#), IE32: [Capitation grants](#), IE42: [Parent and Travellers education project](#)).

Inequalities of indigenous minorities in **the UK** relate to the subtype of transnational minorities, namely to the Roma people and the Roma/Gypsy people (according to the 2003 pupil census for England and Wales: almost 6,000 Gypsy/Roma pupils, 4,000 Irish Traveller pupils). The roots of the Roma groups' educational disadvantage appear to lie in the fact that educational provision has largely been based on an assumption of a settled life. Educational disadvantage might be illustrated with low school attainment. Where results are available for those attending school, both Gypsy and Traveller groups have extremely low attainment (for example, compare the achievement of level 2⁹ or above in Reading at the age of eight: 28 percent of Travellers of Irish Heritage, 42 percent of Gypsy/Roma pupils, 84 percent of all pupils). In an attempt to summarise the current situation in Roma education provision in the UK, it must be pointed out that:

“Roma education provision has been largely left to Local Authorities where there is either a strong political will to provide this, or where numbers have been such as to necessitate this: there is a statutory duty to provide such education, but there often appear to be attempts to minimise this” ([Leathwood et al. 2008](#):6-7). (See project summaries UK54: [Traveller education service](#), UK57: [Scottish Traveller education service](#).)

Indigenous minorities appear to be difficult to identify both in the Czech Republic and in Slovakia. Though having consulted experts on demography, it has been difficult to find a truly relevant group ([Vrabцова et al. 2008a](#); [2008b](#)). In these countries the Roma people are viewed as an ethnic minority, not as an indigenous minority. The first rather uncertain references to the Roma people in the area of the Czech lands come from only the 13th and 14th centuries. Occurrence of the Roma people in the area of the Czech Republic is granted in 1417 (Nečas and Miklušáková 2002).

As for the Slovak Republic, from a certain point of view the term indigenous people might include the Roma people. However, the Roma people are usually referred to as persons with socio-economic and linguistic inequalities. Apart from this there are some cases of Roma people being viewed as autochthonous people as is from a report by the Centre for the Research of Ethnicity and Culture (CVEK 2008). CVEK focuses some analyses concerning attitudes of primary school pupils toward the autochthonous and new minorities and related issues of their integration in Slovakia:

“According to several analyses conducted in Slovakia, education system is still relatively ethnocentric. Integration of autochthonous as well as of the so-called new minorities is so far failing due a non-effective school system. School curricula do not reflect cultural diversity of Slovakia; school-texts are practically devoid of information on national and new minorities. This clearly influences both the chances of integration of other ethnic groups and the processes of majority population attitude formation. Integration into a society is not possible without acceptance of minorities by the majority. Multicultural education incorporating issues of cultural diversity into the educational system might be an effective tool for the integration of these minorities” (CVEK 2008, In [Vrabцова et al. 2008b](#):8).

⁹ “Level 2 refers to a nationally expected level of achievement for 7 year olds” ([Leathwood et al. 2008](#):7).

2.2 Strategies used in addressing disadvantages of the indigenous in education in the context of EPASI project analysis

Our analytical approach

As was mentioned above, drawing on the analysis of the EPASI projects, this report focuses on five areas concerning the strategies used in the fourteen countries in addressing disadvantages of indigenous minorities in education. The analysis criteria are:

- a.** what priority is given to the indigenous minorities in relation to what subtype of the indigenous minorities is targeted,
- b.** what are the major topics the projects focus on,
- c.** what indigenous-oriented strategies are used for the duration of projects,
- d.** what indigenous-oriented strategies are used at different policy levels, with a focus on the type of funder,
- e.** what indigenous-oriented strategies are used for different age groups and levels of education.

Comments on these subjects follow below.

a. What priority is given to the indigenous minorities in relation to what subtype of the indigenous minorities is targeted?

The vast majority of the projects about indigenous minorities (26 projects from the 34 projects, for more see Appendix 1 and 2), cover transnational minorities. Transnational minorities appear to be a real priority issue in the field of indigenous minorities. This trend is apparent in most countries from the national country reports, but also from the data collected from agencies devoted to minorities in Europe.

b. What are the major topics the projects focus on?

The key topics that projects and strategies seem to aim at include mainly the following ones:

- teacher training in dealing with parents from underprivileged children in a respectful way,
- respect for explicit and implicit diversity into school and class life,
- self-organisation of pupils, parents and other people within the indigenous minorities,
- democratisation of all levels of education,
- integration of indigenous students,
- lowering school failure and illiteracy,
- mediation between the school system and the parents,
- recognising this community in the curriculum as a step towards achieving an educational system that promotes quality and integration,
- cooperation between partners of education and social care,
- creating a material support.

What the list of topics shows is not only the key topics but also the similarities between the topics as such. Additionally each of the topics represents a set of issues that must be solved if the strategy is to address the topic fully. From these issues at least some should be pointed out, in particular:

- aspects of classroom and school context (including school bullying),
- school policy including issues of school career of children from vulnerable and underprivileged families,
- opportunities to enter and to succeed in higher education,
- late entry in education, partial participation in pre-school education,
- extension of the pre-school service,
- language deficiency and under-achievement generally,
- absentism and early school leaving,
- school equality within the community,
- difficulties in following post-compulsory studies,

- possibilities to strengthen the social network,
- labour market access,
- lack of economic resources,
- social marginalisation.

c. What indigenous-oriented strategies are used for the duration of projects?

Which strategies and projects are used in terms of duration of projects? Projects which are one-year long, and thus short-term strategies, prevail. In the EPASI database there are seven projects with a one-year duration. The rest of the projects fall into the category of mid-term strategies; in the database there are six projects that lasted for three years and five projects lasting for six or more years. There is a need for better and more systemically coordinated longer-lasting projects.

d. What indigenous-oriented strategies are used at different policy levels, with a focus on the type of funder?

The duration of the projects depends on the source of the funding. Seven of the projects identified in EPASI are funded nationally (centrally) and seven projects are funded by mixed sources. Projects funded nationally (centrally) which have been identified within the EPASI project are mainly based in Ireland (three projects), England (two projects) and Belgium (one project). In the category of projects funded from mixed sources there appear to be four projects from Greece, two projects from Belgium and one project from Ireland. Systemically coordinated long-lasting projects and strategies in the field of indigenous people in Europe are still quite rare.

e. What indigenous-oriented strategies are used for different age groups and levels of education?

The majority of projects focus on primary and secondary education. Four projects focus on adults, teachers, parents and their education. Other EPASI projects cover one or several of the following types or levels of education: pre-primary education, primary education, secondary education, tertiary education.

One of our main difficulties was to choose and describe “good” and “bad practices”. In many of the projects included in the EPASI database there is little information on the evaluation and outcomes of these projects, often because of a lack of evaluation, sometimes because projects are not complete. Indeed, some indigenous minorities do not appear to be educationally disadvantaged. In that case, an example of good practice might lie in the German speaking minority in Denmark. The statement of the absence of disadvantage is supported mainly by current practices based on the so-called Bonn-Copenhagen a point declaration of 1955 which declares in both languages how every majority group intends to treat the minority on their national territory¹⁰ (Kodron 1999). As Kodron (1999) continues:

“A person can decide to be German (or on the other hand Danish) and have the benefits of minority rights such as a special separate school system in which German is the language of instruction and Danish the second language (the same applies to the Danish minority in northern Germany in the state of Schleswig- Holstein)” (Kodron 1999:7).

Despite the fact that this individual declaration of belonging to the minority has proved to be very good, at the same time, it may cause some problems. The German minorities are actively participating in all parts of public life and there is so much of discussion and co-operation between the majority and the minority going on, that some people are speaking of a growing culture of the

¹⁰ Both sides base their declaration on par. 14 of the European Human Rights Convention and guarantee personal freedom, equality before the law, freedom of opinion and religion, freedom of assembly and association, the right of free choice of profession or job, respect for the inviolability of the home, freedom to found political parties, and equal access to all public posts in the sense that there will be no discrimination between people with minority background and other nationals of that state. The right to participate in all democratic elections, the right to go to court if a right seems to be violated by a public service and the general right to be treated like other national subjects (Kodron 1999).

Danish-German border sides influenced by the Danish and the German part well combined together (Kodron 1999).

The German speaking minority in Denmark and their equal position within the state endorses Kodron's explanation of the importance of minority – majority and minority – state relation, self-definition of the state as well as of history. Using Kodron's words:

“A minority can demand certain rights concerning their language, culture and religion, but the majority, or in reality, the state in which they live can accept certain demands or reject them. You always have to look at both sides, the State (or Nation) in which the minority is living and the minority itself. Whether a state can accept the demands of a minority or not is often directly depending on the self-definition of the state concerned, but also on historical experiences” (Kodron 1999:7).

Both German speaking minority in Denmark and Kodron's words prove that well functioning relations between the state and indigenous minorities, though a specific subtype, are possible.

2.3 Educational disadvantage of indigenous minorities covered by the EPASI project

This subsection focuses on educational disadvantages of the transnational subtype of indigenous people (Roma, Irish travellers, in particular). This focus comes from the 2005 Annual Report of the FRA/EUMC according to which Roma and Travellers emerge as the group most vulnerable to racism, discrimination in employment, housing as well as educational disadvantage in all EU member states. The key data might be drawn from the 2008 annual report *Roma and Travellers in Public Education* (FRA/EUMC, 2008). The following draws on the FRA/EUMC 2008 Annual report (for more country-by-country specific information see the 2008 FRA/EUMC report). The focus is on:

- performance and attainment,
- enrollment and attendance,
- segregation.

These inequalities arise from the operation of a variety of discriminatory mechanisms of exclusion and segregation as a result of a wide array of interrelated factors and despite efforts of national governments as well as of the Community (FRA/EUMC 2008). As far as discrimination is concerned, it must be viewed as one of the main cause of inequalities, including of educational inequalities with a strong impact on school performance. For example, according to the 2006 PISA study focusing on educational performance, the early stratification of students into separate institutions or educational programmes has a particularly negative impact on the performance of socioeconomically or linguistically disadvantaged students.

Having reliable information appears to be a necessary condition for improving the situation of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in education. What the aggregate data on the educational performance and attainment of Roma and Traveller pupils and survey results indicate generally is their lower academic achievement. What PISA 2006 shows is “a significant positive association between schools who monitor and evaluate achievement and make achievement data public, and students having better test performance” (FRA/EUMC Annual report 2008:11).

However, in most Member States there are insufficient or no monitoring and evaluation systems in place. In 2007, the implementation of a number of programmes for improving the education of Roma children has continued. At the same time, discriminatory policies and practices against Roma remained at a very high level in the EU. Roma, Sinti and Travellers are still faced with unfit

education systems that cause segregation and unequal opportunities (*FRA/EUMC Annual report 2008*).

Based on these findings, some recommendations for educational policies in Europe follow. Firstly, with the purpose of reducing the educational inequalities it is recommended that the EU member States to consider adopting more integrated school systems. A second recommendation is that the segregated forms of education should either be abolished or reduced to short-term preparatory classes. It is important to take on board the judgement of the European Court of Human Rights against the practice of segregating children from indigenous minorities into special schools (*FRA/EUMC Annual Report 2008*).

In terms of the attendance and enrollment of Roma people and Traveller pupils as the main representatives of transnational indigenous minorities, these rates are poor especially in comparison with those of the general population. Roma and Traveller pupils tend to leave education early without the qualifications that would enable them to compete successfully in the labour market. Their dropout rates are consistently high. These pupils consequently tend to attain lower educational credentials. In most countries, transition to secondary education is reported to be particularly low, and even in countries where more Roma and Traveller pupils seem to continue their studies in secondary education to some extent (such as the Netherlands, England and Wales), they regularly choose vocational rather than general secondary education, while drop-out rates are very high. The FRA/EUMC 2008 annual report says that participation in higher education is practically non-existent in all countries, however the EPASI national country reports as well as their project analysis cannot agree with this statement. There are lower rates of indigenous people at higher education, but on the other hand, in contrast to the FRA and some other rather generalized findings, the national reports show that the ‘non-existence of people studying at high education is an issue of the past – it is impossible to use these absolute statements’. Some projects aim to support the Roma people in accessing and attaining higher (secondary and tertiary) education (CZ183 [Summer School of Gender Studies for Roma University Female Students](#), SK188 [Project EQUAL Improved Approach to Education – Remedy for Labour Market Discrimination](#), for more see the project database). Even the FRA annual report reports on positive developments for some countries regarding enrollment, as a result of specific educational policies targeting these groups and successful initiatives. However there is still limited reliable data regarding the impact of such policies that evidently need to be monitored more effectively. Another persistent, common and serious problem is the absenteeism (*FRA/EUMC Annual Report 2008*).

Fortunately, no Member State of the European Union has an explicit segregation policy (*FRA/EUMC Annual Report 2008*). However, it must be admitted that segregation still occurs either as a result of non-implementation of national anti-segregation policies by local authorities and schools, or as an indirect effect of educational policies and practices limiting equal access to education to pupils from transnational indigenous minorities. In many countries, including post-communist countries, there is an over-representation of Roma pupils in special education (often due to a wrongful assignment and diagnostic approach). In post-communist countries, this phenomenon is a legacy of the past, rather than a consequence of contemporary educational policies. What is important to be aware of is that the assessment procedures for placing pupils in special schools have gradually been reviewed even in the post-communist countries where only recently, two decades ago, the assimilation policy stopped. The procedures for the placement of Roma and Traveller pupils in such schools need to be monitored systematically with the direct involvement of parents. However, the monitoring and systemic evaluation of the policies and projects appears to be a problem in most European countries as suggests the projects covered by EPASI.

SECTION 3: Conclusions and recommendations

3.1 Conclusions

Through this thematic report, apart from the fact that there is no definition or acknowledgement of “indigenous minorities” in some countries (for example, Czech Republic, France, Malta, Slovakia), it is observable that across countries the main issues of inequality addresses by schools are those linked to language, socio-economic issues and ethnicity. Terminological difficulties, non-unified conceptual views as well as the fact that in many countries indigenous people are not recognised or given a specific status cause theoretical as well as policy-related difficulties.

Difficulties arise also from the lack of official statistical data on enrollment, drop-out rates, school attainment and transition to secondary, vocational and higher education regarding indigenous minorities, in particularly Roma and Travellers, due to the lack of ethnically differentiated data. In addition, educational statistics are not always comparable between countries due to the different methodologies and categories used in the data collection and given the different educational systems. Detailed data on the academic attainment and progress of Roma and Traveller pupils is generally not available. Roma and Travellers may also be under-recorded especially since their group affiliation is usually established through ethnic or linguistic self-identification, which many Roma and Travellers prefer to avoid (FRA/EUMC 2008).

3.2 Recommendations

Strategies, to be effective, should be contextual and systemic. However, this is not simple as many factors must be taken into account such as the heterogeneity of the school population, its multilingualism or plurilingualism, issues related to school failure, etc.

3.2.1 EU education policy-makers

In general it might be said that EU, policymakers should:

- bring more public awareness to the indigenous minorities in Europe,
- provide systemic support and necessary sources to realise indigenous oriented theoretical and empirical research across Europe,
- incorporate the theme in European political debates, national education policy, including European school curriculum,
- support and realise systemic evaluation of policies, projects and strategies addressing the indigenous people in European countries,
- develop an information network of data concerning indigenous minorities in Europe.

3.2.2 National and regional education policy-makers

National and regional policy-makers should strive to:

- bring more public awareness to the indigenous minorities in the country,
- provide systemic support and necessary sources to realise indigenous oriented theoretical and empirical research (establish national research platform focusing on the indigenous minorities),
- incorporate the theme in national political debates as well as national education policy, including the national school curriculum,
- support and realise systemic evaluation of national and regional short-term and long-term projects and strategies addressing the indigenous people in the country or region,
- support the implementation of the national curriculum respecting the theme of the indigenous also by raising teachers’ awareness of the theme as well as by developing appropriate teaching skills.

3.2.3 *Local administration (heads of schools, local education authorities, etc.)*

Local administration should:

- ensure there is sufficient investment in money, time and effort,
- participate in the systemic evaluation,
- guarantee greater dissemination of good practices,
- use as well as provide data for extending the network of data concerning the indigenous minorities across Europe,
- invest in space, resources and teacher support,
- encourage multidisciplinary work teams, both inside and outside the school context.

3.2.4 *Institutions (NGOs, schools, municipalities, teacher training institutions, universities etc.)*

Generally speaking, these institutions should:

- systemically follow steps of the EU, national, regional and local administration policy on indigenous people,
- participate in the systemic evaluation,
- participate in and get prepared for greater dissemination of good practices
- respect data provided in the network of data concerning the indigenous minorities across Europe,
- provide data for extending the network of data concerning the indigenous minorities across Europe,
- be interested and take active participation in indigenous people oriented projects and strategies,
- integrate and distribute positive attitudes in the training courses for all teachers, NGO workers, public, parents etc.
- apply multidisciplinary approaches integrating different attitudes and knowledge about dealing with diversity and the indigenous minorities in Europe.

To conclude, effective changes, strategies and recommendations in relation to the indigenous minorities in Europe are and should be viewed as feasible. In case of mutual cooperation between the State (Nation) in which the minority is living and the minority itself as well as a result of a two-way good will for undersatnding there might come the times when any discussions and policy steps on educational disadvantages of indigenous minorities might be viewed as of no use.

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**Appendix 1:
Indigenous Minorities-oriented Educational Projects and Policies in the EPASI study**

Country	Projects Project number in the database: Projecttitle
Belgium Flanders	2. The Hinge 6. The elementary school challenged 7. The world on your plate 8. ‘Diverse lecturers, diverse students’ 11. GOK -Equal Educational Opportunities in education - preschoolers – parents 16. KOOS - Preschoolers and parents at school 18. Proefpas 20. To count and to matter in higher education 21. Time-outproject Kortrijk (TOK) 249. V.O.E.M vzw (Association for development and emancipation of Muslims)
Cyprus	
Czech Republic	
Denmark	
France	
Greece	102. Multicultural Educational Support of student groups of elementary and secondary education in Western Thrace 103. Educating Roma Student 1st phase 104. Integration of Roma Students to school environment 2nd phase 105. Integration of Roma Students to school environment 3rd phase
Ireland	29. Pre-schools for Travellers 30. Resource Teachers for Travellers 31. Visiting Teacher Service for Traveller Education 32. Capitation grants 42. Parents and Traveller Education Project
Luxembourg	
Malta	
Netherlands	79. Roma youth literacy Veldhoven 85. Roma-project
Slovakia	
Spain	207. Plan for Roma community pupils 208. School attendance promoters 209. "Maternal language instruction for Tamazight (Berber) children in Catalonia" 211. "Learning to produce intercultural goods with mass media (ICT)"
Sweden	121. In service training for teachers in national minority languages 123. Swedish-Finnish in pre-school 124. Sami 127. "The teacher lift" 133. Meänkieli 134. Romani chib
United Kingdom	54. Traveller Education Services (TES) 57. Scottish Traveller Education Programme (STEP)

Appendix 2

Country	Project ¹¹	Link
Belgium (Flanders)	The Hinge	2
	The elementary school challenged	6
	The world on your plate	7
	‘Diverse lecturers, diverse students’	8
	GOK -Equal Educational Opportunities in education - preschoolers – parents	11
	KOOS - Preschoolers and parents at school	16
	Proefpas	18
	To count and to matter in higher education	20
	Time-outproject Kortrijk (TOK)	21
	V.O.E.M vzw (Association for development and emancipation of Muslims)	249
	Denmark	Development project for intensified rehabilitation for children with congenital or acquired brain damage
Model test concerning the transition from kindergarten to school for children with brain damage		155
Integration of training in the child's daily activities at home by education and tutoring of parents		156
The inclusive day-care – Pedagogical curricula in an inclusion perspective		157
Holistic view on the life of children and youth		147
Including education context		148
Greece	Multicultural Educational Support of student groups of elementary and secondary education in Western Thrace	102
	Educating Roma Student 1st phase	103
	Integration of Roma Students to school environment 2nd phase	104
	Integration of Roma Students to school environment 3rd phase	105
	Pre-schools for Travellers	29
Ireland	Resource Teachers for Travellers	30
	Visiting Teacher Service for Traveller Education	31
	Capitation grants	32
	Parents and Traveller Education Project	42
Netherlands	Roma youth literacy Veldhoven	79
	Roma-project	85
Spain	Plan for Roma community pupils	207
	School attendance promoters	208
	"Maternal language instruction for Tamazight (Berber) children in Catalonia"	209
Sweden	"Learning to produce intercultural goods with mass media (ICT)"	211
	In service training for teachers in national minority languages	121
	Swedish-Finnish in pre-school	123
	Sami	124
	"The teacher lift"	127
	Meänkieli	133
United Kingdom	Romani chib	134
	Traveller Education Services (TES)	54
	Scottish Traveller Education Programme (STEP)	57

¹¹ For readability we used (if possible) the English translations of the projects in this table. Projects can be comprehensive and can concern other themes as well.