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## NEWSLETTER

### *Promoting the Integration of Roma in and through Education*

#### **The Montessori-Hallgarten Method for Schooling and Integration of Roma Children**

##### Headlines:

- The Montessori-Hallgarten Method for Schooling and Integration Of Roma Children
- Final Conference of My Beautiful School project in Vilnius, Lithuania

The final main output of the MBS project is the Methodological Manual—The Montessori-Hallgarten Method for Schooling and Integration of Roma Children.

The Manual is intended to be a guideline to transfer the Montessori-Hallgarten method, trying to exploit its

application also in other contexts.

The Manual is addressed to counsellors, public and private service providers active in the field of social inclusion, trainers, teachers, decision makers and all those interested in the support to the education and inclusion of Roma communities into society.



#### **Final Conference of My Beautiful School project in Vilnius, Lithuania**

On the June 13, 2013 the final conference of the project My Beautiful School—a place where it is possible to be happy was held in Vilnius.

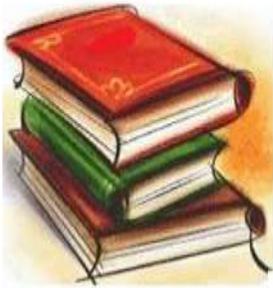
The conference was organized with great care by one of project partners, The Public Institution Roma

Community Centre from Vilnius and aimed at presenting the overview results of the project carried out in Lithuania, Romania and Italy and draw attention on the schooling of Roma children in Europe.

The event benefited from the kind

participation of the Vice minister of Culture, specialist from the Department of Non-formal Education and Educational Support of the Ministry of Education and Science, other experts in education, as well as other educators and representatives of similar projects.

## The Montessori-Hallgarten Method for Schooling and Integration of Roma Children



The Manual was born from the need of both teachers and school staff of a specific support for systematic schooling of Roma children all over Europe.

According to the EU the Roma, Sinti and Travellers are about 10-12 million and their many linguistic and cultural features divide them into strongly heterogeneous groups which make the use of a single approach to satisfy all different needs difficult. The Roma are a group (or groups) still under strong discrimination and social exclusion, the majority of whose members live in conditions of extreme poverty.

For this reason, a set of strategies has been devised in order to tackle all issues concerning the geographical, economic, social, cultural and legal in which these groups live. In 2009, at Cordoba, 10 *Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion* were approved. The goal is to offer the institutions of the European Union and the Member States a

set of guidelines for policies for the inclusion of the Roma people.

In 2009, the interaction between the European Commission and the Member States led to another important European initiative: the creation of the *European Platform for Roma Inclusion*.

The European Commission has therefore noted that the socio-economic conditions of the Romani communities in Europe are significantly worse than the rest of the European population. The Roma community is composed mainly of young members: 37.5% are under 15 compared with an average of 15.7% of the overall population of the EU. Only 42% of Roma children complete primary school compared to a European average of 97.5%. In the case of secondary education, the attendance is estimated only at 10%. According to the Commission "Member States should ensure that all Roma children, sedentary or not, have access to quality education and not be subject to discrimination or segregation."

## The Montessori-Hallgarten Method for Schooling and Integration of Roma Children

Driven by the belief that what you know better you will understand better, the authors of the Manual have dedicated one chapter to the history, culture, language, religion and symbols of the Roma.

What follows is a short introduction of this chapter.

Most of the facts related to the history of Roma are disputable and unclear. One of the few certain facts related to the origin and settlement of Roma in Europe is their Indian origin. This hypothesis was defined on the basis of linguistics, by means of parallels between the Roma language Romani and the ancient Indian holy language Sanskrit.

For a long time it was thought that Roma come from Egypt. Moreover, the Roma themselves claimed to be descendants of Christians expelled from Egypt. Remnant of this notion is how Roma were called in many languages– for example the popular word Gypsy in English language is derived from Egypt.

Even today some Roma groups relate themselves with Egypt – for example the so-called Egyptians in Macedonia and Kosovo .

The first world Roma congress of the Romani Union organization was held in London April 8, 1971. This was when a flag, anthem and the world's day of Roma were accepted. The Roma anthem is the popular song “Gelem, gelem” (I have wandered, I have wandered), written by the Serbian Žarko Jovanović. The Roma flag is a red wheel with 16 spokes on blue and green background. The 16-spoke wheel in ancient India was called *Chakra* and it is present on the Roma flag to remind of the Indian origin of the Roma and the long road they travelled from India to Europe. The blue and green stripes symbolize the sky and grass, as well as the free nomad life of the Roma in the past.



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### **Centro Studi e Formazione Villa Montesca**

CSFVM is a non-profit consortium founded in 2001 in Villa Montesca, Città di Castello, Italy, which develops innovative educational initiatives and offers a broad spectrum of multi-disciplinary research expertise and training activities.



### **Association for Education and Sustainable Development**

AESD is an educational centre based in Calarasi, Romania. Its main activities are the implementation of courses of formal or informal lifelong education, building an organized system of consulting, information and training with a lifelong duration.



### **The Public Institution Roma Community Centre**

The RCC is a non-governmental public benefit organisation based in Vilnius, Lithuania. Its mission is to contribute to better living standards for the most vulnerable and marginalized members of society and for a better future for their children.



[www.aesd.ro/mbs](http://www.aesd.ro/mbs)

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