Reducing Prejudice through Multicultural Education in Albania

Alketa Bulku[1*]

[1]*Department of Pedagogy and Psychology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Tirana University, Albania.*

Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analyzed and interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

Original Research Article

ABSTRACT

In Albania, the Roma people face very difficult living conditions and frequent discrimination situations especially as related to their access to schools. The legal framework in effect guarantees the right to education regardless of race, even though this community faces various barriers and problems in enjoying this de facto right.

There are a large number of cases when the Roma children drop out of school before the age of consent. Prejudice can be performed in a silent manner or verbally. It can lead to discrimination. Multicultural discrimination goes through a wide variety of activities and beliefs related to encouraging and performing democratic values, such as: social justice, equality, tolerance, prejudice reduction and diversity evaluation. This education system can produce the necessary knowledge to fight against social injustice.

This is a qualitative study based on the research question: How could school improve its role in providing a more encouraging and positive environment to certain groups of students that suffer from social prejudice, inequality and discrimination?

The research techniques are: Theoretical analysis of the phenomena, monitoring, interviews, and focus groups from some schools in Tirana. The study provides direct opinions of teachers, parents

_____

Corresponding author: E-mail: ketiturku@yahoo.com;

and directors on the impact that prejudice in the school environment has on education.
The study provides data proving that prejudice reduction through multicultural education is followed by an increase of school attendance from children belonging to the Roma community.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 An Overall View of the Life of the Roma Community

According to different evaluation reports the Roma population in Albania varies from 80.000 – 120.000. They are settled mainly in the outskirts of cities. The Roma have their own identity and they preserve their own language. The level of unemployment and illiteracy of this community is about four times higher compared to the majority of the population [1]. Social exclusion is one of the main causes of their poverty. Due to the lack of an origin country, the Roma are referred to as an ethno-linguistic minority. According to the government those rights which derive from the Framework Convention on National Minorities are applicable to the Roma also.

Albania lacks accurate data on the level of education of the Roma population and especially of their children. There are fragmentary but often contradictory data on the Roma population, which derive from administrative sources, from different surveys or predictions based on official evaluation or non-governmental societies.

The Roma and the traveler communities make up the largest minority group in Europe. Among the member countries of the European Council there is an increase of discrimination and other abuses of the human rights for the Roma and the traveler communities. There is no European government to assume a completely successful result in the protection of their human rights, which influenced the compilation of an inclusive report on the Roma and traveler communities in Europe [2].

The Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005 – 2015, which is the most complete initiative for the improvement of the Roma life, is mainly focused on the Roma children education as one of the ways to successful social inclusion.

Over 90% of the Roma children do not have a study place at home. About 70% of them admit that their parents are not able to help them with their studies. About 90% of children admit that they do not follow any additional private classes in subjects they have difficulties in. The quality of the education received by the Roma is obviously lower than that of other non-Roma children.

The causes of irregular school attendance or dropping out are: the Roma being involved at work or helping their parents who work. Poverty and living conditions have a direct impact on their opportunity to study. Their parents, generally uneducated people, are not able to help them with their lessons, give instructions or share personal experience. It is very difficult for them to afford a living which makes a barrier to a higher education level. Often, they are obliged to look for a job and are cannot envisage full attendance at school [3].

The Roma do not understand Albanian language. According to the CESS after year 2011, some large Roma communities speak mainly Romani at home and when speaking to each other. Therefore, once they enroll at school, the first grade is in Albanian language, the language of the curriculum which turns into a major handicap for them. In this case, language becomes one of the main factors influencing poor performance at school and dropouts.

The call of keeping teenage girls safe corresponds to the same age of the end of elementary school when they drop out of school and do not go back again [4].

Low parental support at school; lack of scholar basic supplies. The percentage of the Roma community categorized as very poor is higher as compared to the majority of the population. Around 68% of this community lives in extreme poverty and their family income is less than half of the income of the population in the urban areas. As a result of lack of income, the Roma parents have difficulties in affording their children education [5].

1.1.1 Poverty barriers include the dimensions of difficulties, malnutrition, living conditions, and immigration as well

The Roma confront to direct or indirect barriers when trying to access public services, as a result

of the eligibility criteria which they fail to meet, lack of information, failure to understand administrative procedures or continuous stigmatization and discrimination from the rest of the population. The enduring exclusion has had its impact on the living conditions of the Roma and Egyptian people, as referring to the discriminating attitudes manifested by the rest of the population and to their relationship with the state institutions.

In the XIII century, according to the byzantine chronicles the Roma are described as "magicians" who are devil inspired and pretend to predict the future [6]. A similar superstition has tracked the Roma population during the subsequent centuries until nowadays.

Studies show that the poverty rate between the Roma communities is twice higher as compared to the rest of the population, while the level of unemployment is three times higher than the average [7].

39% of the Roma and 21% of the Egyptian living quarters are not supplied with drinking water [8]. The average age of death of the Roma is at least 10 years younger as than the rest of the population and the infant mortality rate is higher [9].

On average, the Roma and the Egyptians attend 5-6 years of study, compared to the national average of 10 years [10].

The Roma and Egyptian children have low rates of school enrollment, literacy and school completion as compared to the national average. Around 40,3% of the Roma and 12,7% of the Egyptians are illiterate, while the national average is just 1,6%.

According to UNICEF, 33,9% of the Roma population is under the age of 14 therefore, they have to attend school [11].

Even though, there many children who have never enrolled at school and the dropout rate is high. A large number of Roma students drop out of compulsory education not only as a result of discriminating attitudes, lack of support or bullying, but as result of the need to support their parents in the income generating activities [12].

In the majority of the studies about this community, poor financial conditions represent the cause to these low education rates. The economic influence on the education system has also led to low results of the Roma at school [13]. Also, the low rates of preschool system attendance by the Roma children makes them unprepared to attend the school environment. According to the Ministry of Sports and Education, 42% of the Roma children from the age of 3 to 6 attend preschool education, compared to nearly 50% of children all over the country.

1.2 Prejudice and Discrimination, Their Impact on Education

The typical definition of prejudice is that given by psychologist Gordon Allport, who says "prejudice is a dislike based on wrong and inflexible generalizations; you can feel and express that; it can be addressed to a group or to one individual from that group". Gordon Allport, a remarkable professor at the Harvard University, in 1954, describes prejudice at "The Nature of Prejudice" [14], as some hostile attitude against one person from a certain group, just because he/she belongs to that group and because he/she is supposed to own the same unpleasant qualities that characterizes that group. In ethnic prejudice, it is unconsciously assumed the connection between certain treats of certain activities and moral and ethnicity. This expression can easily turn into the reason of any discriminating activities. Generally speaking, often intolerance and prejudice are considered to be the base or the turning point of other "*specific*" behaviors, like racism and xenophobia.

The notion ethnic prejudice is lately developed by describing the antipathy based on the cultural supremacy claim of one group towards the other. For example, in the European context, this is expressed in the anti-Turkism, anti-Polonism or anti-Russian. Given that usually the cultural/religious treats (either real or not) of a group are attacked, there can be some similarities between the later definition of racism as "*cultural racism*" [15]. Discrimination includes any types of distinction, exclusion, limitation or preference by deliberately denying or declining equal rights and protection, and denying the base principal of equality and insult against the human dignity. Depending from the reason of a certain treatment, we can speak of "*racial, national, color, gender, religious, social orientation based discrimination etc.*"

- *Actions* classified as discriminating such as, distinction, exclusion, limitation or preference

- *Causes* of discrimination such as, race, color, national/ethnic origin, gender, age, physical integrity etc.

In Europe, the Roma discrimination (as according to some calculations, there are about 8 million Roma people in total living all over the European countries) represents one of the most serious and secret problems of the human rights in Europe. As nomads throughout most of their history, the Roma have been obliged to assimilate in some countries, in some places they are not allowed to use their own language and parents have been prevented from custody. Today, the Roma still experience prejudice in many areas of their life, including employment, shelter, and education in their approach to justice or other health related services [16].

Even in Albania, the Roma confront very difficult living conditions and frequent discrimination situations, especially when referring to their access to education. The rate of enrolment in the preschool system is still lower compared to the rest of the population [17].

Although the legal framework in effect guarantees the right to education regardless of race, this community faces various barriers and problems in enjoying this de facto right. This has constantly been highlighted by the Albanian institutions (The Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination or the ombudsman) and by the international institutions as well. There are a large number of cases when the Roma children drop out of school before the age of consent, which makes them more exposed to become trafficking victims [18]. Having effective rights in education is not guaranteed to all children belonging to minorities or other vulnerable groups, the majority of which do not have access to education in their own language [19]. There are more frequent cases of punishment towards the Roma kids than towards the other students; the Roma students are subject to racial offence; the Roma and Egyptian children are usually sitting at the end of the classroom. The bad living conditions and the poor infrastructure make them even more isolate from the rest of the population and prevent them from education [20].

Long distance dwellings from schools, lack of free transport in the case when their houses are more than 2 km far from their schools, early marriage stereotype for the girls, poverty in the family are some of the problems faced by the Roma children. There are institutional obstacles also which have their impact on the education of the Roma and Egyptian children. This includes lack of capacity, education quality, and long distance from school and discrimination elements [21].

The economic, social and cultural right comity has presented its issue of concern related to the lack of measures taken on the effective addressing of the highest rates of elementary school dropouts for girls as compared to boys which has an uneven impact on the Roma children. They are likely to wear bright colors, their families are poor and illiterate, live close to the community and their houses cannot meet the basic living conditions, study less than the majority, get married in an early age, have low education expectations, can be easily noticed because of their skin color, like a certain types of music such as "Tallava", they feel embarrassed because of their Roma community affiliation and they are not that clean as the majority. The Roma youngster admit they do know these prejudices which in most of the cases turn to be the expectations of the rest of the population [22].

It is highlighted that teachers and students share the same perception as referring to the discriminating attitudes presented in the school environment. So, 55% of teachers and 46% of students believe that they rarely notice discriminating attitudes in this environment. 16% of teachers and 29% of students believe that they often notice this kind of attitude, while 24% of teachers and 25% of students have not been noticing discriminating attitudes at all [23].

Prejudice is experienced in an early age; prejudice reduction usually includes exploring old restraining beliefs. The negative knowledge becomes stronger as a result of the child's perception of inequality [24]. Prejudice from little children serves as a strong example of the strong social power. Children experiencing prejudice at school, sometimes leave school as they also exclude it from their inclusive identity [25], (As a result, there comes school avoidance and identifying oneself with harmful duties and parameters. Usually this leads to school failure. The dropout rates for the Roma children from 10 up to 16 years old goes up to 30% for boys and 44.6% for girls [26]. Such discriminating attitudes and beliefs put the social justice principles in danger, in a democratic society, by not exposing the marginalized groups against the same opportunities such as the majority [27].

Social identity is part of the self-concept of a person originating from the membership in groups important to him/her [28]. Researches show that people are motivated to have a positive social identity and that their self-esteem is higher and they feel more secure and accepted when they connect to a social group [29]. On the contrary, when people feel left apart, refused or ignored, they feel more affected and they back away from interactions [30].

1.3 Discrimination in the School Environment

Teachers and students share the same opinion when they admit that discriminating behavior is more typical in the relationship among students (this is what 60% of teachers and 68% of students believe). After that, come teachers, including the directors of educational institutions (this is what 20% of teachers and 21% of students believe). Parents come third in line, (this is what 14% of teachers and 10% of students believe). While 1% of students believe that even their psychologists are potentially discriminating [31]. Generally it seems like teachers recognize their tasks (52% of them positively answered to this question), while the rate of teachers who do not recognize their tasks remains considerable (41% responded negatively while 7% avoided the question).

It is clear that the legal demands have not been implemented, especially if we refer to the awareness of the community on the phenomenon of discrimination and how to protect against it. 40% of teachers believe no action has been taken, while 44% do not answer at all. Only 16% give a positive answer, but they do not mention the type of activities performed.

According to Article 3 of Law No. 10221 "Discrimination" is every distinction, exclusion or preference because of any cause mentioned in article 1 if this law, that has a purpose or consequence the hindering or making impossible the exercise, in the same manner as with others, of the fundamental rights and freedoms as known by the Constitution of the Republic of Albania, with international acts ratified by the Republic of Albania as well as with the laws in force. "Direct Discrimination" is that form of discrimination that occurs when a person or group of persons is treated in less favorable manner than another person or another group of persons in a situation that is the same or similar based on any cause mentioned in article 1 of this

law. Students who belong to the groups mentioned in article 1 of this law, might be disadvantaged because of social or economic reasons or because of inherited discrimination. Regardless of the legal part, real life proves that discrimination of different categories does exist.

"Blatant and direct prejudice occurs when the majority group considers the minority group as abstract or anonymous. Prejudice is manifested through certain behaviors which the majority pretend that they are defending the social status of the natives. Avoidance is manifested very quietly from individuals against the minority. The natives ignore the existence of out groups and they try to avoid contact with them because being in the same environment causes negative emotions [32]. Subtle prejudice is that type of prejudice mainly focused on the traditional values of the culture of the dominant groups. It can be recognized from its three components being manifested such as: protecting the emotional values, exaggerating cultural differences and denying experiencing good emotional reactions against the out group members. Ambivalent prejudice tends to present in dominant populations, but it does not exclude the possibility to affect minority groups. This type of prejudice basically means accepting the idea of racial superiority" [33].

Positive reactions provide educational institutions with the opportunity to treat this type of disadvantage. Reacting positively has to adapt to the situation, so it comes to an end whenever the goal is achieved and there are equal opportunities offered.

In the report of the Evaluation of Needs, education barriers and potentials, discrimination and stigmatization (caused by poverty) are identified to be key influence on school avoidance [34]. Prejudice remains a dominant factor preventing and discouraging the Roma youngsters going to school.

According to Banks, one of the dimensions of multicultural education is prejudice reduction. The aim of prejudice reduction is to help students develop more positive, inclusive and democratic attitudes towards students and people of different races or with other differences. Schools are likely to have their impact on social change as referring to prejudice reduction and transformations towards social activity. They can built the necessary knowledge to fight against social inequality by offering the ideal environment and

democratic model. According to the multicultural model, prejudice will be reduced if people are prepared to accept changes in actions and culture.

Prejudging attitudes and faiths destroy the social rights principles in a democracy. Prejudice at school is highly concerning given that schools should teach students how to negotiate and how to make differences.

In order to encourage the prejudice reduction, first of all we have to understand the nature and development of the prejudging attitudes and beliefs. Prejudice occurs when negative attitudes manifested towards a social group are extended towards one person based on his affiliation to a certain group [35]. There might be several group categories on which the negative attitude is based, such as, race, social class, gender, religion, age, sexuality, qualifications and ethnicity. Educators are in the unique conditions to improve intergroup relations, inside and outside school due to two arguments that public school offers: common aims and differences [36]. Students can have perspectives about their classmates once they try to express their disagreement and to achieve their collaborative scope by any means. So, in other words, students might become aware for the few perspectives related to social conditions or of their best actions towards their community [37]. Multicultural education helps students to have a positive point of view on these perspectives by bringing social pressure to an end [38].

2. METHODOLOGY

This research is based on the qualitative methodological approach and particularly on the critical analysis of the speech in order to explore the qualitative information collected from document analysis and in depth analysis. This study is focused on presenting and building social understanding, concepts or phenomenon related to the inclusion of Roma children in education. This is achieved by exploiting the theoretical basis of the selected methodological approach.

Document analysis is a method of research widely used in social science. Due to research methods, the document will be referred to as "written records about the people and phenomena generated through the process of living".

Qualitative research was selected to study the phenomena in depth and in complexity of the influencing factors. In this article, it is provided an inclusive theoretical tabloid on prejudice and prejudice reduction within the classrooms. The techniques used in the qualitative research are:

➢ Documentation research
➢ Interview with the director
➢ Focus groups with parents – 20 parents from the age of 25 – 30, 6 men and 14 women, whose children go to elementary school
➢ Focus groups with teachers – 13 women teachers from one school, 6 of whom with less than 5 years of experience; 3 with 5 to 10 years of experience and 4 of them with more than 10 years of experience.
➢ Interviews with non-Roma students – 20 non Roma children fom the age of 10 – 12, 10 boys and 10 girls
➢ Interviews with Roma students-20 Roma students from the age of 10 – 12, 10 boys and 10 girls
All the participants of the study were likely to attend the interviews, despite one parent who was not able to attend due to personal obligations.

The school director was notified in advance.

3. CASES OF PREJUDICE AND INDIRECT DISCRIMINATION

School prejudice in particular is concerning as school has to teach students how to negotiate and how to make differences.

The experiences declared in the *Needs Assessment Study* in which discrimination and stigmatization caused by poverty are identified to be the main obstacles to hinder or discourage children from going to school [39].

From the focus groups or site visits, we can notice the early presence of prejudice at schools. It is performed by the majority towards the Roma, and at the same time by teachers towards students. Prejudice can be expressed verbally or not, and it can advance to discrimination. Young people and children fall victims of exclusion. ~In many situations parents do not want their children to sit in the same desk with the Roma children so often the Roma are sitting in the back desks. The Roma parents complain about teachers looking after their children less than after the others and they are likely to evaluate

them negatively. Schools that are not attended by the children of the majority, or where the dominant attendee is the out group has led to segregation of the Roma in the outskirts schools. Consistent segregation was noticed in a school in Korça where the majority students belong to the Roma community. A large number of Roma children go to such schools, given that they are close to the Roma community setting, but the majority is enrolled in other schools, far from them so as to avoid contact with them. Even though children have to be resident of the same quarter where the school is this is not a concern for the majority group children, but for the Roma yes. This is a good excuse for schools for rejecting their request to enroll. Sometimes they even assume that classrooms are overcrowded.

Apparently this is just about following the rules, but in fact discrimination stays behind the curtain. The outskirt schools have the lowest rate of prejudice and discrimination between the communities as they live in the same living areas close to each other, are neighbors and have almost the same socio-economic status.

This explains that prejudice is complex, it is not about the skin color but other factors related to the socio economic condition of children of this community. Multicultural education has to undergo a wide range of activities and beliefs in order to encourage and execute democratic values such as, social justice, equality, tolerance, prejudice reduction, and diversity appreciation by offering the ideal democratic model and at the same time building the necessary knowledge to fight against social injustice.

Prejudging attitudes and faiths destroy the social justice principal in democracy. Some experts believe that low education is more expanded between the poor populations. Then, they conclude that with all the racial excitement between the "*high class higher education*", poverty, which is related to low education, develops the possibility for racial behaviors. However, in this type of racism in which the struggle to survive is the main cause, it is considered as a particular behavior and not a racial ideology [40].

There have been attempts to include information about the Roma community within the Albanian curriculum, but the information represent as stereotype or it is included in subjects such as Social Education or Citizenship and it is expected to be considered as ethical although there are

many cases from real life when stigmatization and discrimination are notable, for example: "Gëzim is frequently absent from school, but he plays the accordion and wins the competition. Or, if in a problematic situation: how would you involve a Roma student within the group etc., while positive models from the Roma community should be included more often, successful people and the value of education in them, how did they become successful through study and education."

Despite the curriculum, teachers can reduce intergroup prejudice by favoring environments that influence a positive intergroup contact, like national and ethnic symbols such as flags, songs, hymn etc. The first researches from Allport created the basics of the theory of the intergroup contact. In 1979 Allport declared: "Prejudice (if it is not deeply established in the person's psychic) can be reduced by creating equal social status and relations between the majority group and the outgroup, by putting common objectives and goals. The positive effect develops if this initiative is institutionally supported (through law, social activity, and cultural standards) with the condition that a common interest between groups will be perceived" [41].

In one of the schools of the outskirt of Tirana, around 60% of the students enrolled in the first grade, belong to the Roma community. There you can notice the difference between both parties. Roma parents require from the teacher to sit their child in the same desk with a child belonging to the majority part, so that he/she can learn something from him/her. Another Roma parent insists that her daughter has to attend this other classroom as there are less Roma "street" children there.

"I do not have anything against the Roma" – says a parent from the other group, "but I know that they are not educated, so who will their son learn from. That's why I want my child to sit with someone who learns."

"I have been teaching many Roma students who have achieved great results", a teacher says, "We do not depend on their ethnicity to set our expectations. I try by any means to make sure they are not absent at school, as they fall behind with school then. For each student I prepare a frame according to their social and economic conditions so I adapt my demands to that. I know those who cannot do their homework at home, so

I do not ask them to do any exercises at home, or west ay together after the lesson in the classroom and I help them finish them in the classroom. Some Roma parents are still friends of mine, as I have treated their children equal to others and I know this is true for some of my friends also.

I have been working in this school for 22 years, and from year to year the Roma children attendance has been increasing. In the beginning there were a lot of officers and doctors' children studying here as they used to live close to this area, but now they don't come here anymore. This area has started to be populated by tenants who come from distant rural areas."

"A friend of mine who works in a school in the center of the city says, "You are heroines, there is only one Roma student in my classroom and I cannot manage him. He is absent whenever he wants to and then his parents keep complaining." "In fact, I do not blame her. She does not have information about them; she doesn't know anything about their psychology and keeps on prejudging him by blaming his parents also."

Another teacher working with a big number of Roma students says, "We are used with them. From our experience, we know about their mentality and their troubles also. It would have been good to learn about the community and their history and values at school. With the passing of time, you learn to love them the same as the others, and often you help them more than the others as you know it is only you who they can rely on, and there is nobody in their homes to help them."

The director says, "Old and experienced teachers keep on visiting their students at home. When they cannot find them, they look for them in their working place and try to convince them to go back to school. They do not get tired of their work. The same working method is transferred to new teachers as well, as when they first come to the working place, they have no information and they are not ready to face the whole situation. Of course not all of them do accept this. Some do not. "I am paid to teach lessons and not to start to know the community", say some of them, who blame the children and their families for failing to achieve good results."

The school director says that there are teachers who have quit at their earliest opportunities as they were unable to work there. While some

other teachers have been working for 27 years and have retired there as well, even if they used to live far from the school.

4. REDUCING PREJUDICE THROUGH MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

"Multicultural Education is believed to help students understand how the attitudes do and faiths of social groups influence ethnic identity. Multicultural education has its successful impact on each of these components in the process of prejudice reduction" [42].

Firstly, the knowledge component of prejudice includes negative thoughts or beliefs of students about a person or a group.

Secondly, the emotional component of prejudice includes the negative feelings of students towards a certain person.

Thirdly, the process of building up knowledge at the same time represents the process of rebuilding wrong knowledge. Students would re-experience the building up of knowledge if they would learn the same thing from different perspectives which reflect the social inequality between groups. Banks wrote: "Discovering and articulating the incompatibility between the democratic ideals of a society and its practices, the transforming knowledge becomes a potential source of change". [43] official version of a situation, determines the status of a situation as "true", "normal", or "natural". The official version of knowledge is usually included in the school curriculum and the critical examination is an important dimension of multicultural education that will help destroy prejudice and build up an evaluation frame from different points of view. Usually scholar and media programs provide students with neutral cultural knowledge [44]. Neutralism avoids the critical point of view of a student towards a certain phenomenon. In this case, students are not encouraged to ask about the source of information and its quality. This kind of prejudice becomes stronger, wider, legitimated and it is spread throughout the society.

A qualitative pedagogy would have to include all conditions given by Allport in the school policy and in the way how the curriculum and the educational process are performed. The positive work climate encourages democratic attitudes that help all students minimize their prejudice and encourages a sense of equality between

them [45]. Unfortunately, the school environment does not offer social equality due to the existence of intergroup prejudice. Studies from Cohen and Roper found out that differences between different groups can lead to prejudice. The learning process is not supported if students are deprived from social interacting due to their low status [46].

Differences in their status result in an unequal learning environment. If the social status is based on cultural differences, then a homogenous environment is produced and intergroup prejudice becomes stronger. Fortunately, by applying the four conditions of Allport, schools will continue to have a potential influence on multicultural education and prejudice reduction. The intergroup contact is a mechanism which helps reduce prejudice because it encourages positive intergroup attitude, standard similarity, common goals and equal social status.

Prejudice reduction in multicultural education aims at producing a learning environment in which the social prejudice and different evaluations for different social groups do not exist. Moreover, teachers can help students destroy their prejudices. In one of the texts of literature it was written: I feel so lucky to have a friend like Fatbardha. She is a nice Roma girl… my family lives next to this street where many Roma families live. There are a lot of parents who advice their children not to associate with them….Just in this paragraph, there are many issues of concern about the points of view and the message conveyed by the text. Do parents who prohibit their children to stay with the Roma still exist? People from which community live in the same street as the girl? Do all the Roma girls have black or green eyes? But the aim of this is to achieve the positive example, even though this is struggling. Since then, we are best friends, not only did she save me from the dog, but also I can learn a lot from her.

Direct contact and psychological research shows that being likely to consider outgroups as friendly groups, can reduce prejudice. Psychologists believe that producing friendly situations in social environments, such as school, institutions, and the media etc. can lead to intergroup friendship. A possible intergroup friendship can offer reciprocal trust, lower anxiety, makes it easier to get information about the outgroup and increases its empathy. A wider contact mechanism means awareness of the friendship between groups.

This thought would recover the psychological distance among groups and it would rebuild attitudes between the parties. Prejudice reduction as part of multicultural education reduces the level of dropouts [47].

"During the community celebrations days, the organized fairs promote community values." Exchanging cultural experiences has shown that especially students have turned to promoters of the interesting activities and they have been anxiously involved", so do the teachers say.

"We have turned it into a tradition the celebration of Herdelez (the Roma celebration), we organize common fairs, celebrate, sing our hymn etc., but I don't believe just one day is enough."

The majority of children are not able to recognize their friends' ethnicity, but with the passing of time they begin to avoid certain people as they learn that they are "different". In the most favorable of the cases of intergroup contact in a multicultural curriculum, students are able to build positive emotional contacts with their mates and set values to these relations (van Dick et al., 2004). Prejudice is often developed in an early age, and the prejudice reduction often includes analysis of past unmanaged beliefs. Building negative knowledge was developed by the children's perception of this inequality (Spencer, 1985). Prejudice in young children serves as strong example of the widespread social power. Soon, children start to learn about the "answers" that society gives to questions related to cultural preference, from a wide range of resources. They resemble the society prejudice in an informing process which imitates the values of society in those cases when children are involved. So we say that the Roma community is represented by "tallava" music, so why not with other music types. Children are used to listening to these songs since an early age; usually the consent of this kind of prejudice in colored children will not influence their self-respect.

Spencer and Markstrom-Adams [48] wrote: prejudging attitudes and beliefs related to the society have been adopted by all those who are part of the society, despite to their profits or suffering because of attitudes and beliefs.

Often we take others stories or sayings for granted and we don't rely on our own experiences, so we build up barriers for others and for us.

Teachers turned up to be part of a creative work, and their basic supplies were different but the request was equal to a request of education training with social justice. They felt discriminated and not appreciated when they had to compare the result of their work with that of the other group who had plenty of basic supplies. After some critical discussion the aim was to put teachers in the same situation as students with different economic conditions, as very often teachers expect the same from students with different backgrounds.

"I am a young teacher and I lack a lot of skills which I aim at gaining with the passing of time, but through this training I could learn that the teacher has to know how to become a leader in the daily classroom demand and take into consideration many factors prior taking any measures that will make children feel "different".

School and teachers soon will have to start educating children by trying to develop a wider understanding and respect for each change in culture. They try to learn from their environment and just a few try to show them what is right or wrong. If school and teachers lead children towards the right way, it will be easier for them to understand the importance of culturalism which will prevent them from becoming racists and victims of racism by developing the prejudice reduction since an early age. During some training sessions, it was requested to see some teachers based on certain characteristics which made them feel discriminated.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Multicultural Education Could Reduce Prejudice

The aim of reducing prejudice is to help students develop positive, inclusive and democratic attitudes towards students and other people from different races and other changes. Schools have the power to turn into an effective factor in reducing prejudice and transforming for social activity. This study aims at bringing into light the barriers against the education of the Roma and improving the self consciousness of every individual involved within the process prejudice reduction.

By offering the model of the ideal democratic environment, they can build the necessary knowledge to fight against social injustice.

According to the multicultural model, prejudice will be reduced if people accept changes in behavior and culture.

From the collected data analyses from this research it was concluded that:

In spite of the type of prejudice; blatant or direct; avoidance, ethnic prejudice, subtle or ambivalent it is noticed that it affects the identity and self-assessment of the group members. As a result, when people feel excluded, refused or ignored, they are hurt and probably they will back away from interaction.

When students experience prejudice at school, sometimes they dropout as they remove school from their inclusive identity. This leads to school failure. Inequality in their status provides inequality in their learning environment. If the social status is based in cultural differences, then a homogenous environment is produced and intergroup prejudice becomes stronger.

Positive examples were found during the research. Exercising the principles of multicultural education such as, highlighting the individual and group values, increasing self-assessment and reciprocal belief from talented teachers has produced qualitative students. Providing a positive and supporting environment has made possible the creation of positive emotional relations between mates by setting values to these relations.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

REFERENCES

1. UNDP. Social vulnerability of the Roma in Albania. Tiranë: UNDP; 2006.
2. UNDP. Të dhëna nga studimi social-ekomomik për vlerësimin e nevojave të komuniteteve rome dhe egjiptiane në Shqipëri. Raporti i PNUD-it; 2011.
3. Ministria e Mirëqenies Sociale dhe Rinisë. Plani Kombëtar i Veprimit për Integrimin e Romëve dhe Egjiptianëve në Republikën e Shqipërisë, 2016-2020. Tiranë: MMSR; 2015.
4. Fondacioni Shoqëria e Hapur për Shqipërinë. Gjithëpërfshirja në arsim një përmbledhje punimesh kërkimore. Tirane:

Programi i Fellowshipit të Gjithëpërfshirjes në Arsim; 2013.

5. CESS, Centre for Economic and Social Studies. Mapping Roma children in Albania; 2011.

6. Soulis CG. The gypsies in the Byzantine Empire and the Balkans in the late middle ages 15. Dumbarton Oaks Papers. 1961;142-165.

7. Fondacioni i Sekretariatit të Dekadës së Përfshirjes Rome. Raporti i monitorimit nga shoqëria civile për zbatimin e strategjisë kombëtare të integrimit të komunitetit rom dhe të planit të veprimit të dekadës rome në vitin 2012 në Shqipëri. Tirane: FSDR; 2013.
Available:http://www.issuelab.org/click/download2/civil_society_monitoring_report_on_the_implementation_of_the_national_roma_integration_strategy_and_decade_action_plan_in_2012_in_albania

8. UNDP. Të dhëna nga studimi social-ekomomik për vlerësimin e nevojave të komuniteteve rome dhe egjiptiane në Shqipëri. Raporti i PNUD-it; 2011.

9. Komisioni për mbrojtjen nga diskriminimi. Diskriminimi ne Arsim në këndvështrimin e komisionerit për mbrojtjen nga diskriminimi. Tiranë: RSH, Komisioni për mbrojtjen nga diskriminimi; 2014.

10. INSTAT. Statistikat për romët dhe egjiptianët, Anketa social-ekonomike me romët dhe egjiptianët. Tirane: INSTAT; 2011.

11. UNICEF dhe Qendra e Studimeve Ekonomike dhe Shoqërore. Hartëzimi i fëmijëve romë në Shqipëri; 2011.
Available:http://www.sidalbania.org/Mapping_roma_children_english_may_5_2012.doc

12. OSFA. Studim per punen e femijeve. Tirane: OSFA; 2012.

13. Tamo A, Karaj T. Dhuna kundër fëmijëve në Shqipëri". Tirane: Qëndra e zhvillimeve humane, UNICEF Shqipëri; 2006.

14. Allport G. The nature of prejudice (25th anniversary ed). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company; 1979.

15. European Youth Centre. All different – All equal. Education pack. Ideas, resources, methods and activities for informal Intercultural education with young people and adults. 1995;25.

16. European Youth Centre. All different – All equal. Education pack. Ideas, resources, methods and activities for informal intercultural education with young people and adults. 1995;32.

17. Ministria e Integrimit Eruopian. Progres raporti per Shqiperine. Tirane: MIE; 2011.

18. ERCI. Raporti ERCI, per Shqiperine. Tirane: ERCI; 2010.

19. CERD. Raporti i CERD. Tirane: CERD; 2011.

20. OKB. Studim për vlerësimin e nevojave të komuniteteve rome dhe egjiptiane në Shqipëri. Tirane: OKB; 2012.

21. Sinani G, Taho B. Country assessment Albania, Roma Education; 2011.
Available:http://www.romaeducationfund.hu/

22. Fondacioni Shoqëria e Hapur për Shqipërinë. Gjithëpërfshirja në arsim një përmbledhje punimesh kërkimore. Tirane: Programi i Fellowshipit të Gjithëpërfshirjes në Arsim; 2013.

23. Komisioni për mbrojtjen nga diskriminimi. Diskriminimi ne Arsim në këndvështrimin e komisionerit për mbrojtjen nga diskriminimi. Tiranë: RSH, Komisioni për mbrojtjen nga diskriminimi; 2014.

24. Spencer MB. Cultural cognition and social cognition as identity correlates of Black children's personal-social development. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers. In Spencer MB, Brookins GK, Allen WR, (Eds.), Beginnings: The Social and Affective Development of Black Children; 1985.

25. Spencer MB. Personal and group identity of black children: An alternative synthesis. Genetic Psychology Monographs; 1982.

26. Census. Profili i romeve dhe egjyptianeve. Tirane: INSTAT; 2011.

27. Dovidio JF, Gaertner SL. Aversive racism. In Zanna MP, (Ed.), Advances in Experimental Social Psychology. 2004;36: 1-51.

28. Tajfel H, Turner JC. The social identity theory of inter-group behavior. In Worchel S, Austin LW, (eds). Psychology of Intergroup Relations; 1986.

29. Hogg MA, Abrams D, (n.d.). Social motivation, self-esteem and social identity. In Abrams D, Hogg MA, (Eds.). Social identity theory: Constructive and critical advances Springer - Verlag. 1990;28-47.

30. Williams KD, Ostracism. The power of silence. New York; 2001.

31. Census. Profili i romeve dhe egjyptianeve. Tirane: INSTAT. 2011;35.

32. Petigrew TF, Meertens RW. Subtle and blatant prejudice in Western Europe.

European Journal of Social Psychology. 1995;25:57-75.

33. Katz I, Haas RG. Racial ambivalence and American value conflict: Correlational and priming studies of dual cognitive structures. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology. 1998;55:7893-7905.

34. Census Komisioni Europian. Raport mbi shëndetin e komunitetit rom: Gjendja shëndetësore e popullsisë rome dhe monitorimi i të dhënave të mbledhura në shtetet anëtare të Bashkimit Evropian. Tirane: Komisioni Europian; 2014. Available:http://ec.europa.eu/health/social determinants/docs/2014_roma

35. Stephan WG, Stephan CW. Improving intergroup relations. Thousand Oaks, CA; 2001.

36. Parker WC. Teaching democracy: Unity and diversity in public life; 2003.

37. Camicia SP. Deliberating immigration policy: Locating instructional materials within global and multicultural perspectives. Theory and Research in Social Education. 2007;35(1):96-111.

38. Kumashiro KK. "Posts" perspectives on anti-oppressive education in social studies, English, mathematics, and science classrooms. Educational Researcher. 2003;30(3):3-12.

39. CENSUS; 2011.

40. European Youth Centre. All different – All equal. Education pack. Ideas, resources, methods and activities for informal Intercultural education with young people and adults. 1995;42.

41. Allport G. The nature of prejudice (25th anniversary ed.). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company. 1979;281.

42. Banks JA. An introduction to multicultural education (2nd ed.). Boston MA: Allyn and Bacon; 1999.

43. Banks JA. An introduction to multicultural education (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon; 2002.

44. Cortés CE. The children are watching: How the media teach about diversity. New York: Teachers College Press; 2000.

45. Banks J. Transforming the mainstream curriculum. Educational Leadership. 1994; 51(8):4-8.

46. Cohen EG, Lotan RA. Producing equal-status interaction in the heterogeneous classroom. American Educational Research Journal. 1995;32(1):99-120.

47. Spencer MB. Children's cultural values and parental child rearing strategies. Developmental Review. 1983;3:351-370.

48. Stephan WG. Intergroup relations. In Lindzey G, Aronson E, (Eds). The handbook of social psychology. Special Fields and Applications. 1985;2:599-658.