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Teaching about the genocide of the Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust: chances and challenges in Europe today

Karen Polak*

International Department, Anne Frank House, Amsterdam, Netherlands

This article presents several projects, initiated during the first decade of the twenty-first century, that aim to make the history of the genocide of the Roma more known within the educational field. Some general challenges we face in teaching about the history of a group that is both the largest minority in Europe and, according to the European Commission, the most marginalized one, are discussed. We especially highlight the Council of Europe’s initiative entitled ‘Fact Sheets on Roma History,’ the work of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance and the development of two educational websites, both launched in 2012.

Keywords: Roma; Roma genocide

Sunken in face
extinguished eyes
cold lips
silence
a torn heart
without breath
without words
no tears.

Poem by Italian Rom
Santino Spinelli

Introduction

Twenty years after the decision was made to erect a memorial in Berlin for the Sinti and Roma murdered by the National Socialists, the inauguration finally took place in October 2012. The text of the poem above is inscribed in the ridge that encircles the pond that has in the centre, a stone on which a fresh flower is placed daily. The monument by artist Dani Karavan stands in the park directly adjacent to the German parliament building. Panels present information on the persecution and mass murder of this minority under the National Socialist regime of terror. The long-awaited inauguration ceremony, which included German Prime Minister Angela Merkel and Sinti and Roma leaders from across Europe, is of enormous significance for their communities. This moment in 2012 might be seen as a milestone in the long struggle for full recognition of a history that was acknowledged

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by the German government as far back as 1982, but only now occupies a visible and tangible space in the landscape of remembrance. This important and symbolic political recognition can only be fulfilled by a comprehensive effort to educate Europe’s future citizens about this history.

Education about the Roma, their history, and the genocide
There are many Roma NGOs that are engaged in educational projects pertaining to Roma history and culture in the educational field, but most are small in scope, taking place within just a few schools. The projects described in this article are international and multilingual projects that I have, in most cases, been involved with in some way. I will give a few examples of other projects, taking place on a smaller scale, as an illustration of the diversity of projects that have been developed and are being taken into schools. To get the available educational projects into the educational mainstream is one of the challenges that the NGOs face. For this task, teacher training institutes need to recognize the importance of confronting stereotypes and including Roma history and culture in the curriculum and school book authors need to be challenged to give space to these themes.

In the international seminars and conferences that I have attended in the last six years, some aspects of teaching about the genocide of the Roma have been brought forward repeatedly. The general topics I present here are a summary of some of the main points that I took from these opportunities to meet with Roma NGOs, academics working on the history of the Roma, museum staff, and other educators.

The lack of an awareness of the relation between the history of persecution and the mass murder perpetrated on this minority and the continual stereotyping and exclusion in post-war Europe is a crucial point to address. It offers the opportunity to make clear why it is so important to include the history of the persecution of Roma minorities in the general historical narrative of the Holocaust. At the same time, it shows the necessity of speaking out against the discrimination and violation of the human rights of Roma today. The relationship between the past and present and the very threatening situation that Roma face today generally remains neglected in the educational field. In teacher training, making a link between the present situation of the Roma and the history of discrimination and persecution should be addressed as part of a general training dealing with the prejudices that are deeply ingrained in our societies.

As the article in this publication by Michelle Kelso on Romania so clearly indicates, having relevant teaching tools will not suffice to get the topic of the Roma genocide into mainstream teaching practice. Nor will legislation be an adequate instrument, though it will of course be meaningful to have the history of Roma mentioned in curricula and it is essential that it is given space in history textbooks. The history and contemporary situation in Romania is very different from other countries in Europe but the influence of negative attitudes to Roma on the willingness to teach about their history, as described by Michelle Kelso, has been voiced by colleagues working in the field of Holocaust education across Europe at the expert meetings and seminars that I have helped organize.

Culture, history, and stereotypes
During meetings in which teaching materials were prepared or presented, many discussions have focused on the question of how to inadvertently avoid introducing, or
reinforcing stereotypes and prejudices on Roma when discussing their situation in history and the contemporary society. Some projects focus specifically on challenging stereotypes, such as the German ‘Handbook for Methods on the Theme of Antigypsyism.’ Other projects take a positive approach in teaching young people about the culture and history of the Romani people, such as the Long Roads Roma Heritage Teaching Toolkit, which contains activities around five themes: History, Slavery, Holocaust, Traditions, and the Anthem. The International Gypsy Festival, a Dutch organization based in Tilburg, offers an educational program to schools in which the students are actively involved in discovering Roma culture in creating their own ‘Gypsy Festival’ in school. Roma and Sinti artists from several disciplines engage with the students, sharing their personal stories and their art forms. These are just a few of many examples of the existing educational projects that give a wider and positive perspective on Roma culture.

Several organizations have organized visits to memorial sites with Roma participants from different generations. These visits are part of the culture of remembrance that has become more important in Roma communities in the last two decades; these visits are also important educationally. I experienced how, during an exchange program of Dutch and Polish teachers in 2012, the meeting with Edward Paczkowski, a Polish Roma survivor, at the Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau, was one of the most memorable events of an intensive exchange week. After hearing the testimony of Edward about his own life and his brothers, who was murdered in Auschwitz, we visited the exhibition on the genocide of the Roma in one of the former barracks of Auschwitz I. Such a visit and a meeting with a Roma survivor are not easily organized but they have an impact that makes a real difference to teachers.

During the seminars I have attended devoted to education about the genocide of the Roma, the importance of Roma and non-Roma educators meeting and discussing the complexity of dealing with the history of a persecuted minority was apparent. It offers all the participants chances for new insights and gives room to jointly develop educational concepts. One example of an important aspect to include in any educational project is an approach in which the resilience of Roma culture is emphasized; teaching about the genocide of the Roma should include different forms of resistance by Roma and not focus solely on Roma as victims. It is important that Roma and Sinti educators are supported in sharing their own methods and insights in presenting history and confronting prejudices.

Historical narratives

Establishing the Roma genocide as a generally recognized part of European history and the history curriculum in European countries faces the difficulty that a general consensus on historical narratives is often lacking. An increasing amount of new historical research has been published and the educational projects discussed below seek to establish a narrative that does justice to the most important aspects of the history of persecution and the places where the genocide took place.

However, educators first have to find a way to explain terms that they and their students are often not familiar with. Per language, the use of terms is very different. Some organizations in the UK (and elsewhere) adhere to the term ‘gypsy,’ but mostly internationally, the term ‘Roma’ is used. In the German speaking language, ‘Sinti and Roma’ are used as a pair. The Sinti are the oldest Romani people living in Germany and Austria, and have successfully managed to have their self-
definition accepted as the official and most generally used term. The pejorative ‘zigeuner’ is mostly only used in a historical context, in reference to the documents or organizations that were using this term. Although not used in official texts, it is still part of everyday language, with most people probably not aware of the negative connotation it carries. In the rest of Europe, ‘Roma,’ as a term to describe the different groups that all speak Romani languages and have a common history of migration to Europe some 2000 years ago (Lovari, Kalderasch, Kale, to just mention a few), is the most generally shared term.

Although the term used to describe the mass murder of the Roma and Sinti in Europe during the Nazi period are often disputed, there seems to be a growing acceptance that depending on the type of institution and the place in Europe, different terms are going to be prevalent. Some Roma organizations use the term ‘Roma Holocaust,’ while others advocate for the use ‘Porjamos,’ literally meaning ‘devouring,’ a term specifically coined to describe the extermination of the Romani peoples by Nazi Germany. Another Romani word, ‘Samudaripen’ (the ‘murder of all’ or collective murder) is not only used in Romania, but also by the Council of Europe. Holocaust museums that often define the word ‘Holocaust’ as the genocide of the Jews of Europe tend to refer to the ‘genocide of the Roma.’ Another recurring point of contention is the lack of consensus on the numbers of Romani victims. Not much is known about the pre-war population figures for Roma and Sinti and although the numbers of deaths are known quite precisely for some countries, such as Germany, the Netherlands, and Austria, for other regions of Europe, very little research has been done. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum states that ‘scholarly estimates of deaths in the Sinti and Roma genocide range from 220,000 to 500,000.’ The figure of half a million is also given on the monument in Berlin.

The establishment of accepted ‘lieux de memoires’ of the Roma genocide (the places and moments that represent a collective cultural memory) is part of the continual struggle for recognition of their suffering by Roma communities. Poland is the first country, in 2011, that established a national day of remembrance of the Roma genocide on 2 August. On the night of 2 August 1944, all the remaining Roma and Sinti in the so-called ‘Zigeunerlager’ in Auschwitz-Birkenau were sent to their death. Roma organizations have been organizing commemorations in Auschwitz on 2 August since the early 1990s. It is a date also commemorated in other places where the Roma were murdered. The acknowledgment of the significance of this date by the Polish parliament is symbolic for the need of non-Roma and Roma organizations to work together in commemoration and education.

**International cooperation**

Several international organizations have taken initiatives to make the history of the genocide of the Roma during the Nazi era more widely known and valuable projects are available or underway. In the mid-2000s, the Council of Europe, in cooperation with many experts from Roma organizations, universities, and memorial institutions, launched a major initiative. The ‘Fact Sheets on Roma History’ were published in print in 2008 in English and French. These are now available on the Internet in seven languages, including Romani. The 22 fact sheets cover seven periods of history, from the arrival of Roma from India to Europe and three eras of migration. The site: www.romagenocide.org is hosted by the Council of Europe in cooperation with the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.
(ODIHR/OSCE), which is also collecting historical information and resources per country. The ‘Fact Sheets on Roma History’ contain valuable information for the general public and teachers but are not ‘ready to use’ teaching materials.

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) that started with 10 member countries in 2000 (then the ‘Task Force on International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Research, Remembrance’) had 30 member countries in 2012. The experts that are assigned to the national delegations, that meet twice a year, work at memorial sites, in museums, universities, and educational institutes. In 2006, the need to address the lack of knowledge on the history of the genocide of the Roma led to the formation of an ad hoc working group. A first two-day meeting was held at the Museum of Romani Culture the following year, bringing together people from the IHRA, from other intergovernmental organizations (OSCE/ODHIR and Council of Europe), and representatives from Roma organizations. In the following years, several events were organized to raise awareness about the genocide of the Roma, and to engage more institutions in education on this topic. The working group became permanently established within the IHRA and it presented a statement that was accepted by the full plenary meeting in 2009, under the Norwegian chairmanship of the IHRA. The then 27 members endorsed the statement ‘concerning Hate Crimes and Discrimination targeting Roma in Europe.’ It speaks of the persecution and genocide under Nazi rule, noting that the Roma still suffer from the repercussions of the destruction of their communities. It also points to the serious deterioration in the same year (2009) in several European countries where hate crimes have led to deaths and the Roma are confronted with discrimination on an alarming scale:

There is an urgent need for governments and civil society to respond to the prejudices, discrimination and violence that Roma experience and that threaten democratic society, and to support initiatives that work toward combating these developments. (...) It is essential that educational institutions take on the responsibility to include teaching about the Roma genocide within the framework of Holocaust education. In most countries the majority of the teachers are not equipped and materials are not available to teach this history. Focusing on the Roma genocide would give historical insight into the danger of not responding to hate and discrimination. Teachers are often not able to respond adequately to anti-Roma sentiments that they meet within their schools.

In 2010, the then Israeli chair of the IHRA reiterated the sense of urgency felt by many members: ‘As the Chair of an organization dedicated to the remembrance of the Holocaust and the victims of genocide during the Second World War, I am deeply troubled to see the Roma subjected to racial prejudice, hate crimes, expulsions, and even in some cases murder.’

The IHRA ‘working group on the genocide of the Roma’ was convinced that to encourage the teaching of this history, it would be necessary to develop teaching materials that can be used in the classroom. Starting in 2008, a group of people from 13 countries met to develop case studies and to identify central topics about the fate of the European Roma and Sinti populations in the decades before, during and after the Holocaust. These central topics were transformed into individual case sheets that can be downloaded from the Internet for use in the classroom. The project was not only supported by major institutions such as the Memorial de la Shoah in Paris and the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, but also by important Roma and Sinti organizations such as the Museum of Romani Culture in Brno and the Centre Intercultural Education.
for Documentation of the German Sinti and Roma in Heidelberg. The Austrian Ministry of Education has given important support along with the IHRA, and the project leader, Gerhard Baumgartner from the Vienna-based NGO ‘Kanzlei – Internationaler Verein für Wissenschaft und Kultur’ also worked with the Institute of Sociology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Austrian NGO erinnern.at and independent researchers. More details on these teaching materials will be discussed further on.

A quite remarkable project, the ‘Requiem for Auschwitz’, brought together many Roma organizations and managed to secure support from international bodies across Europe. Zoni Weisz, a Dutch Sinto survivor, who spoke as the representative of the Sinti and Roma community at the inauguration of the memorial in Berlin, was one of the initiators of the ‘Requiem for Auschwitz.’ Roger Moreno Rathgeb, a Sinto of Swiss birth, composed his requiem for all the victims of Auschwitz, but the events organized alongside the performances in seven cities focused specifically on the genocide of the Roma. The Sinti and Roma Philharmonic Orchestra from Frankfurt first played the Requiem in Amsterdam on 3 May 2012 and it was broadcast on national TV the following day, the Dutch day of remembrance for the victims of World War II.15

The project was exceptional because it not only managed large-scale Requiem performances across Europe, but also had several public events and projects with an international outreach. One project is the digital exhibition ‘The Forgotten Genocide of the Roma and Sinti,’ that was developed by the Dutch 4 and 5 May Committee. This project that was developed with many of the same experts also working on the teaching materials mentioned above, is discussed at more length further along. In several cities, film festivals were held and in the first week of May 2012, the conference ‘The Roma between Past and Present; Reflections upon Genocide, Recognition and the Resurgence of Extremism and Anti-gypsyism’ was also held in Amsterdam.16

**Exclusion and persecution: comparing historical periods**

During the conference ‘The Roma between Past and Present,’ the Austrian historian Gerhard Baumgartner made a clear case for comparing the pre-war situation in Europe to the situation faced by Roma communities today. In his contribution, ‘The process of exclusion and persecution of Roma and Sinti in the 1930s and 1940s’ he shows how the economic crisis in the 1930s, combined with stereotypical perceptions of the ‘Gypsies’ that were part of the collective memory of Europe and with the pseudo-science of eugenics, created a dangerous approach to what was called ‘the Gypsy problem.’ The Roma were pushed out of their jobs by unemployed non-Roma returning to their villages from the cities that were hard hit by the recession. Unemployed Roma subsequently were perceived as a burden to the villages’ welfare systems. From 1936 onwards, when the Roma male work force was put to work in concentration camps, the remaining women and children were totally destitute and even more of a burden to inadequate social welfare systems.

Systematic registration had already started in 1912 when the first identity cards with photos and fingerprints were issued in France to register all migrants (gens de voyage). Registration was an essential step in the marginalization of all so-called ‘Gypsies’ (settled and travelling). The precursor to the international criminal police organization ‘Interpol’ was set up in 1923 in Vienna and was specifically intended
to coordinate police cooperation in relation to the so-called ‘Gypsy question.’ This was the first of many institutions that ultimately made the genocide possible. Baumgartner sees a dangerous parallel in Eastern European countries today, where the economic crisis, inadequate social welfare systems, and social discrimination are used by racist political partners to blame Roma for societal problems and racist attacks on isolated communities are becoming more and more frequent.

Baumgartner also addresses the question of whether there was a point in time when the dangerous sequence of events could have been prevented and gives an example that shows that citizens can make the necessary difference. When in 1943 the police came to Kleinpetersdorf, a small village in Burgenland (Eastern Austria), they found two Roma families due to be deported to Auschwitz. One was the family of the village blacksmith; the other was the family of his brother-in-law, an agricultural laborer. The mayor intervened, insisting that the village needed the blacksmith, so he and his family were able to stay and were not troubled again, but all the members of the other family were killed in Auschwitz. The mayor himself did not suffer any repercussions from the side of the Nazi authorities. This is an example that illustrates how an individual decision could influence a deportation order, but also the essential role that the support or implicit approval of the local population had in the process of deportations.

Huub van Baar (University of Amsterdam) chaired the conference, and looked back to September 2010, when European Commissioner Viviane Reding made a reference to World War II regarding the expulsion of Bulgarian and Romanian EU citizens with a Romani background from France. Critics blamed her for making what they considered an impossible comparison between the current situation and Nazi deportations. Many critics said that by making the comparison with World War II, she had made a fair debate impossible. Others, however, posed questions that were also central to the conference: first, what exactly are we comparing when we suggest such a comparison? Secondly, what is or should be the aim of such a comparison? And thirdly, what are the key elements and social phenomena that could legitimize such a comparison between then and now?

Van Baar feels we need to clarify whether we are comparing historical periods, certain countries or locations, certain attitudes and phenomena, or are we comparing socioeconomic or political systems or circumstances, including forms of crisis? Or are we, for instance, comparing possible conditions for escalation? Comparisons should only be drawn if they can help us understand the historical processes of inclusion and exclusion and can also help to focus on the difficult post-war process of achieving more adequate recognition and compensation for what happened during World War II. In an answer to the third question on the social phenomena that might be analyzed in a comparison, Van Baar refers to institutional racism, to segregation and ghettoization, to the issue of dehumanization, the framing of the Roma as a public health/order/security issue and importantly, also to extreme forms of citizen or mob violence, and racism.17

Understanding the diverse experiences of Roma and Sinti children in the genocide: the stories of Settela, Zoni, Amalie, Krystyna, Karl, and Elina

The website ‘The Forgotten Genocide of the Roma and Sinti’ brings us the life stories of six Roma and Sinti children during the years of Nazi persecution.18 It aims to give an introduction to the general public on the genocide of the Roma. The pre-
sentation of history through the fate of individuals is a way to ensure that the abstract becomes personal and in this way helps audiences understand more fully the impact of historical processes. This section reviews the experiences of the six children and what can be learned from their stories.

Settela Steinbach, the nine-year-old girl who was caught on film as the deportation train was about to leave the Dutch transit camp Westerbork on 19 May 1944 is the only one of the six children featured in this project who perished. In this respect, the website is not representative because the chances of survival of children in particular were very small. Zoni Weisz survived in hiding in the Netherlands; his parents and siblings were on the same train to Auschwitz as Settela, and they did not return. In 1943, twelve-year-old Karl Stojka, son of a respected family of horse dealers, was arrested in the classroom of his school in Vienna and deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau with his family. He survived three concentration camps and a so-called ‘death march.’ As one of the few Austrian Roma survivors, he became an active and well-known advocate for the recognition of the Roma genocide in Austria and abroad.

Some Polish Roma escaped the fate of being murdered in extermination camps such as Auschwitz-Birkenau and Treblinka, as the story of Krystyna Gil illustrates. Krystyna was only four when she was rescued. She was the only person to escape the massacre of 93 Roma from Szczurowa. More than 180 places have been identified in Poland, where the Roma were executed in large groups. In Germany, Amalie Schaich-Reinhardt was placed in a Catholic children’s home with her younger brothers and sisters after her parents were arrested by the Nazis. She was nine years old and during her time in the home, she, along with the 40 other children living there was used as a test subject for pseudoscientific racial research by Eva Justin. Justin was the closest assistant to the director of the National Socialist ‘Research Institute of Racial Hygiene.’ In her doctorate thesis, she set out to ‘prove’ that the children in the home were mentally deficient because they belonged to an ‘inferior’ race. Part of the film that Justin made of the tests she conducted on the children is also on the website. Amalie was one of four children to survive the concentration camps to which she was subsequently deported. Her story is important both in showing the way in which ‘racial science’ was part of the Nazi ideology, and in discussing the complicity of certain high-ranking officials in the Catholic church. After the war, it became clear that despite an appeal by the local bishop to the cardinal to resist the deportation of the children and many cries for help by family members, the leadership of the church refused to intervene.

Elina Holomková was born to a family of Czech Roma in the village of Svatobořice in southern Moravia. Elina had many family members in the village and the Holomeks were very well integrated. For example, Elina’s uncle, Tomáš Holomek was one of Czechoslovakia’s first Roma students. He later became a lawyer and championed the interests of Roma. Between March and October 1943, 5500 Czech Roma were taken to Auschwitz. Nearly 90% of all those deported did not survive the camp; only 600 returned. Most members of the extended Holomek family were murdered. Elina, her parents, and brothers were fortunate. They enjoyed the protection of the mayor of their village who took many risks and helped them escape deportation. After 1989, Elina worked to establish the Museum for Romani Culture in Brno, the first museum in Europe focusing on the history and culture of the Roma.
The portraits of the six children on this website include music, film footage, photos, and documents. Their experiences cover a wide range of topics and they are from different parts of Europe. The website is now in English, German, Dutch, and Czech and will also be made available in Romani and Polish. The aim is to add other stories, for example, from Hungary and Croatia, and to expand the number of languages. It is compellingly presented as a digital exhibition and has won awards (two silver Lovie awards) for the way in which it allows one to explore people’s lives before, during, and after the war. As a teaching tool, it can only be used in classrooms with Internet access, or for homework assignments. Many of the experts involved in researching the content for this website also worked on the teaching materials ‘The Fate of European Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust.’

Teaching materials on ‘The Fate of Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust’

The case studies collected on the website www.romasintigenocide.eu aim to represent undisputed ‘lieux de memoire,’ the places and moments of history that represent a collective cultural memory. These ‘places’ (lieux) form an indispensable basis for the creation of a Europe-wide awareness regarding the history of this genocide. By presenting documents with short texts and assignments, the project aims to give teachers, the tools to easily develop a lesson or series of lessons that can focus on a historical period or theme, on a regional approach or on a personal approach.

The first level of the case sheets presents core topics on the history of the European genocide of the Roma and Sinti, such as:

- the origins of social prejudices;
- the role of racial theory;
- special ‘Gypsy Camps’;
- the ‘Gypsy Camp’ at Auschwitz-Birkenau;
- concentration and extermination camps, such as Ravensbrück, Buchenwald, Jasenovac, Chelmno, and others;
- the ‘Einsatzgruppen’ massacres in Russia and the Ukraine;
- the deportations to Transnistria; and
- well-known victims, such as Settela Steinbach, Johann Trollmann, and Karl and Ceija Stojka.

On a second more detailed level, a number of worksheets present the regional and national differences of Roma and Sinti communities affected by persecution, depicting different periods: the situation before the war, discrimination and persecution in the 1920s and early 1930s, the situation under Nazi rule, the genocide, and the situation of the survivors. Further background levels provide detailed information for each country, containing a short historical overview, listing major events and actors, presenting crucial historical documents, and providing a bibliography as well as an attached scientific background article for further reading.

The pyramid structure of the worksheets enables the user to gain a general overview of the central topics at a Europe-wide level or to go into further and further detail in areas of special interest. New research results and source materials can easily be incorporated into the existing templates. The Austrian NGO erinnern.at hosts
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Participating organizations</th>
<th>Year project was launched</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fact Sheets on Roma History</td>
<td><a href="http://www.romagenocide.org">www.romagenocide.org</a> <a href="http://www.romafacts.uni-graz.at">www.romafacts.uni-graz.at</a></td>
<td>22 Facts sheets, each several pages long, covering seven periods of history from the arrival of Roma in Europe to today.</td>
<td>Council of Europe OSCE/ODIHR University of Graz (Austria) Specialists from many countries and organizations</td>
<td>2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching Materials ‘The Fate of European Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust’ Digital exhibition ‘The Forgotten Genocide’</td>
<td><a href="http://www.romasintigenocide.eu">www.romasintigenocide.eu</a> <a href="http://www.romasinti.eu">www.romasinti.eu</a></td>
<td>Around 100 documents with brief explanatory texts and assignments Life stories of six Roma and Sinti children (photos, film, text)</td>
<td>Experts from 13 countries. Coordination by Gerhard Baumgartner (Vienna) and Erinnern. at Dutch National Committee 4th and 5th May. In cooperation with</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• University of Applied Sciences Graz (Austria) • Museum of Romani Culture Brno (Czech Republic) • Documentation and Cultural Centre of the German Sinti and Roma • Anne Frank House (the Netherlands) • National Socialist Documentation Centre of the City of Cologne (Germany)</td>
<td>2012</td>
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<th>Content</th>
<th>Participating organizations</th>
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| Requiem for Auschwitz    | www.requiemforauschwitz.eu        | Series of activities accompanying the performance of the Requiem of Auschwitz in seven cities between May 2012 and January 2013 | • Stichting Alfa/International Gipsy Festival (the Netherlands)  
• Roma People Association (Poland)  
• Romedia Foundation (Hungary)  
• Slovo 21 (Czech Republic)  
• Philharmonischer Verein der Sinti und Roma (Germany)  
• National Centre for Roma Culture – Romano Kher (Romania) | 2012                                                                                                                                              |
the website on its distance learning platform in German and English, while the Memorial de la Shoah will host the French version.

The materials were first presented to a group of multipliers (teacher trainers, educators from memorial sites of NGOs invested in teacher training) at a seminar in Eisenstadt in November 2012. This implementation project, supported by the IHRA and the Austrian Ministry of Education, will collect advice on how such teaching material can best be brought into mainstream education. The advice will be given on the base of one year’s experience in presenting the materials in workshops in a variety of settings. The group will reconvene in the autumn of 2013 to discuss the results and the kind of teacher training and guidance that should be considered for the future.19

Together, Loranda Miletic and I were able to present the materials during parallel workshops at the annual teacher training seminar on the Holocaust, held in

Table 2. Key Documentaries.

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<tr>
<th>Title</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The Other Genocide. The Persecution of Sinti and Roma in Europe 1920–1946</strong></td>
<td>Film follows the lives of five Roma from France, Germany, Croatia, Slovenia, and Austria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A People Uncounted</strong></td>
<td>The film focuses on the culturally rich lives of people from 11 countries. But it also shows the difficult lives of Roma across Europe, and demonstrates how their present state has been shaped by the tragedies of the past. Holocaust survivors, historians, activists, and musicians give insight into Romani life through poetry, music, and first-hand accounts. As ethnic intolerance grows across Europe, the legacy of racism and genocide is portrayed. Ceija Stojka, an inspiring painter and sister of Karl Stojka, is still vividly alive in this documentary; she died in January 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Blue Hole in the Sky</strong></td>
<td>The film is based on interviews with 14 Dutch Sinti and Roma of the generation that survived the war and their children, the second post-war generation. The documentary conveys how the small community of Sinti and Roma in the Netherlands was traumatized and neglected after the war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Broken Silence</strong></td>
<td>This film, made in 2012 follows the tracks of the Roma radio reporter Orhan Galjus, born in Kosovo, on his journey through Germany and Poland to try to discover why Sinti and Roma have kept silent for so long about the genocide that is still so much part of their lives</td>
</tr>
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b*A People Uncounted*, 2011, Canadian director Aaron Yeger and producers Marc Swenker and Tom Rasky.
c*A Blue Hole in the Sky*, 2007, director Bob Entrop, SOL Films, the Netherlands.
Zagreb in January 2013. Croatian teachers worked with two personal stories represented in the materials, the Austrian Auschwitz survivor and artist Karl Stojka and the German Max Bamberger, about whom little more is known than that he was killed in a massacre in a village just outside of Zagreb.\(^\text{20}\) The topic was new to the teachers, but they were certainly interested in looking into ways in which they could incorporate this history into their lessons. As civic education is a new subject being introduced in schools in Croatia this year, this was also discussed as a relevant way to address stereotypes and prejudices, the role they played in the past and the role they play in society today.

One challenge is to introduce more teachers to the personal experiences of Roma, past and present. Several recent documentaries can contribute significantly in teacher training seminars. In Table 1, I summarize four examples of projects mentioned in this article that are available in several languages. In Table 2, I briefly describe several key documentary films about this period in history.

The projects and initiatives discussed here are still just a first step. They can play a role in creating a network of educators that are ready to contribute to making the history of the persecution and genocide of the Roma more widely known and are a first step in creating tools to make it possible for teachers to include this topic in their lesson plans. I am an advocate for a continuous international exchange, making it possible to share good practices in methodology, content, and strategies of inclusion. A significant awareness of the meaning of the history of this genocide will not be achieved until teacher training institutes include the history of Roma in their curriculum.

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Notes

1. The poem ‘Auschwitz’ by the Italian Roma poet is carved on the ridge of the pond in German, English, and Romanes.
3. The Anne Frank House was a partner in three projects (Requiem for Auschwitz/International Conference, the digital exhibition ‘The Forgotten genocide’ and ‘Teaching materials on the Fate of the Roma during the Holocaust’. I co-organized and chaired several meetings linked to these projects and advised mostly on pedagogical issues.
4. The website www.romagenocide.org aims to provide an overview of the many projects taking place across Europe.
5. Methodenhandbuch zum Thema Antiziganismus, see www.kaubstrasse.de (not in English).
6. For more information: www.thebha.org.uk/longroads.
7. See: www.gypsyfestival.nl.
8. The program ‘Holocaust Education in European Perspective’ was organized by the Anne Frank House and the State Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau 2010–2013. The meeting with the Roma survivor was organized by Johanna Talewicz from the The Roma People Association in Poland. Edward Paczkowski’s testimony is available on DVD.

9. In French ‘Tsigane’ and in Spain ‘Gitans’ are the terms used by Roma organizations.

10. There is an interesting parallel to the discussion among historians and educators on the use of the terms Holocaust, Shoah, or Churban for the genocide of the Jews of Europe. See for an interesting review of the debate on the role of memorialization of the genocide of the Roma: Huub van Baar. The European Roma. Chapter 8, The European Memory Problem Revisited: Romani Memory beyond Amnesia, 2011.

11. Fact sheets on Roma history, see: www.romagenocide.org or www.romafacts.uni-graz.at/ available in Albanian, English, French, German, Romani, Serbian, and Swedish.

12. At the time it was still the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Research and Remembrance (ITF). The name was changed in 2013. Throughout this, article I will refer to the new name: IHRA.

13. From the start of this group, I have been involved in getting the genocide of the Roma acknowledged as an important topic within the IHRA and have received the full support for this from the head of the Dutch delegation.

14. Both statements can be found in full on the IHRA website: www.holocausttaskforce.org/ communications.

15. For information on the performances in Amsterdam, Tilburg, Prague, Budapest, Frankfurt am Main, Cracow, and Berlin and on the whole project see: www.requiemforauschwitz.eu.

16. The conference was organized within a series of events that were part of the ‘Requiem for Auschwitz’ project, in cooperation with the Netherlands Institute of War Documentation (NIOD), the Anne Frank House, and the Dutch Committee for the 4th and 5th May.

17. For a full report of the conference ‘The Roma between Past and Present; Reflections upon Genocide, Recognition and the Resurgence of Extremism and Anti-gypsyism’: www.requiemforauschwitz.eu/conference The webpages of Huub van Baar at the University of Amsterdam offer an extensive overview of Roma organizations.

18. The website was developed in cooperation with experts from the University of Applied Sciences Graz (Austria), the Museum of Romani Culture Brno (Czech Republic), the Documentation and Cultural Centre of the German Sinti and Roma, the Anne Frank House (the Netherlands) and the National Socialist Documentation Centre of the City of Cologne (Germany). It is part of the larger ‘Requiem for Auschwitz’ project.


20. The workshops were held at a conference organized by the Croatian Education and Teacher Training Agency: Teaching about the Holocaust and the Prevention of Crimes against Humanity, Zagreb 27 – 30 January 2013. Loranda Miletić is an inspector of history education and a member of the Croatian delegation to the IHRA.

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