

## ERGO NETWORK

### *Research Thematic Focus on Education 2025*

### Reflections from Sweden

#### General Context

Sweden adopted a long-term national strategy for Roma inclusion (2012–2032), with the ambition that a Roma child born in 2012 will have the same opportunities as a non-Roma child by 2032. However, the strategy has not been updated in line with the EU Roma Strategic Framework (2020–2030). As a result, education-related measures remain vague, with insufficient focus on combating antigypsyism in schools.

#### Access and Participation

- **Compulsory school:** Most Roma children are enrolled in compulsory school. However, disparities emerge at later stages. Around one third leave education with only basic schooling, and about 30% do not continue to upper secondary or vocational education.
- **Higher education:** Roma youth remain severely underrepresented at both secondary and tertiary levels.
- **Socio-economic segregation:** Many Roma children live in disadvantaged neighbourhoods with predominately first and second generation immigrants, where schools are under-resourced (not in numbers or materially in comparison to other schools, but in regards to more challenging circumstances) and therefore less able to provide adequate targeted support.

#### Antigypsyism in Education

- Roma pupils experience **discrimination, bullying, and low expectations** from teachers and peers. Many hide their Roma identity in school to avoid harassment, which weakens their educational engagement.
- Antigypsyism is recognised in the national strategy only as a general issue, without binding measures for schools.
- There is a lack of systematic monitoring and reporting of ethnic-based inequalities, since Sweden does not collect disaggregated education data by ethnicity.

#### Language, Culture, and History

- **Romani chib education:** Although Roma children have a legal right to mother tongue education, only about 25% of those entitled participate. Numbers are declining due to lack of qualified teachers, local economic priorities, lack of information to parents, and fear of stigmatisation if being open with your Roma identity.
- **Curriculum content:** The Roma Holocaust, slavery, and antigypsyism are poorly covered in the school curricula. Most teachers lack training on Roma history and minority rights.
- **Representation:** Roma are almost absent among teaching staff, at all levels of education.

### **Positive Practices**

- **Roma mediators/bridge-builders:** Some municipalities employ Roma mediators to strengthen school attendance, facilitate parent–school dialogue, and build trust. These practices show positive impact, but remain project-based, fragmented, and without adequate national funding or coordination apart from Roma bridge-builder training programs commissioned and financed by the government.
- **Resources on antigypsyism:** Comissioned by the government, The Living History Forum has developed new educational materials and teacher trainings on antigypsyism.
- **Civil society initiatives:** Awareness-raising campaigns on antigypsyism as well as family support initiatives, led by Roma organisations and supported by public bodies, exist but remain short-term and insufficiently mainstreamed.

### **Key Challenges**

- Lack of ethnic data prevents effective monitoring.
- Reliance on short-term projects undermines sustainability.
- Schools often treat Roma children’s challenges as purely socio-economic, avoiding the structural issue of antigypsyism.
- Insufficient state action to ensure equal access to education and cultural rights.

### **Recommendations**

- Adopt **specific national goals and indicators** on Roma children’s education, aligned with the EU Roma Strategic Framework.
- Ensure **sustainable funding and institutionalisation** of Roma mediators across municipalities.
- Guarantee full **access to mother tongue education in Romani chib**, including recruitment and training of teachers.
- Integrate **Roma history, culture, and antigypsyism** into school curricula and teacher training, with mandatory modules.
- Establish **structured dialogue with Roma civil society and youth** on educational policies and reforms.
- Introduce measures to improve **Roma representation among teachers and education staff**.