Dr. Péter Ruzsonyi

Special Educational Needs of Minority Offenders

as Intercultural Challenge

In my paper I will deal with a very sensitive topic. My colleagues and friends have warned me against this subject. In spite of this notice I'm sure that you will understand my sincere intention. My firm persuasion, that there is no room for preconceptions in the field of education or pedagogy.

In Hungary when we use the word: "minority" everybody can be sure, that the real meaning of the expression is gipsy. At first sight this situation looks meaningless and sad. Why don't we use the real name of this particular minority?

The answer is extremely simple. In Hungary – legally – we don't have any gipsy. They are Hungarian citizens, because they don't have other nationality than Hungarian. For this reason in Hungary it is absolutely illegal to count them or register them as gipsies. On the one hand this is correct (we must not forget the tragedy of race-hatred or apartheid). But on the other hand this situation prevents the more fortunate majority from helping the biggest minority group.

I think that we have to make difference among different points of view. I consider as an essential human right that everybody has to be equal before law. But we don't have equal life-chances. And we must never forget it. Our obligation and responsibility to offer help to people who have some necessities. I think it is right in general but it is fundamental in prisons.

We have learned it from every day practice that gipsy inmates' reactions are frequently different from other offenders' reactions. My hypothesis was, that in the background of gypsies' different attitude and behaviour we can find some very special needs, which comes from the historical and cultural background of this minority group.

The hypotheses of our research

1) The gypsy inmates have a typical socio-cultural background.
2) The present knowledge about gypsy inmates is not sufficient for working out a special treatment/resocialisation programme which is based on the need-system.
3) The more accurate knowledge of gypsy inmates' need-system and the offering of appropriate programmes to satisfy them will increase the gypsies' intention for cooperation with the prison staff.

The most important aim of our survey was the identification of these needs.

At the beginning of our survey, the biggest theoretical problem was: how can we find and identify the essential needs of any minority group, which legally doesn't exist?

The solution was not too difficult. Every human being has the right to identify him- or herself as a member of any kind of group. I have started my research from this starting-point.

In the course of this research I cooperated with a university group. It is very important because I wanted to eliminate any kind of influence would have come from prison staff. Officers didn't participate at this stage.

The scene of our research were two prisons in Budapest. One for remands and the other for sentenced inmates. The second one is a medium and maximum security prison.

University researchers collected the prisoners-volunteers who intended to participate in the research. Every candidate got a written information-sheet in which we guaranteed full anonymity. At the beginning we wanted to know the participants' self-identification. Our next step followed from the aim of our research. We selected all of the inmates who identified themselves as gipsy and continued the survey with them.

The participants of the research:

		Frequency (heads)	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Budapest Maximum and Medium Security Prison	93	49,2	49,2
	Metropolitan Remand House	96	50,8	50,8
	Total	189	100,0	100,0

The basic statistical data about the inmates

Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Per cent
Valid	18-25	49	25,9	27,7
	26-40	98	51,9	55,4
	40-50	28	14,8	15,8
	50 +	2	1,1	1,1
	Total	177	93,7	100,0
Missing	No answer	12	6,3	
Total		189	100,0	

More than the half of the inmates is of the most active age.

For how many times are you imprisoned?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	First time	61	32,3	33,3
	2-3	79	41,8	43,2
	4-6	26	13,8	14,2
	More than 6	17	9,0	9,3
	Total	183	96,8	100,0
Missing	No answer	6	3,2	
Total		189	100,0	

How many years did you spend in prison?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Less than 3	62	32,8	36,0
	3-5	38	20,1	22,1
	6-10	38	20,1	22,1
	More than 10	34	18,0	19,8
	Total	172	91,0	100,0
Missing	No answer	17	9,0	
Total		189	100,0	

The 2/3 of the inmates isn't first offenders and they have a very long prison practice.

Our questionnaire contains altogether 83 questions. Further on I will concentrate on a few which go around the needs of gipsy inmates.

I have to emphasize that gypsies form a minority group in the society but not in prisons. The estimated rate of gypsy inmates among prisoners is between 50 - 80 %. (The lowest rate is among adult male inmates, then male juveniles, further adult females and the highest rate is among female juveniles.)

Furthermore a national survey indicates that 75% of gypsy inmates are recidivist.

With full knowledge of these facts I think that it is absolutely needless to emphasize how important it is working out a new criminal-pedagogical approach of this matter.

The starting-point of our survey came from the pedagogical principles of the formation of cooperation. One of the main scientific findings of theoretical pedagogy is in the interests of this purpose, that education has two basic devices: rewarding and punishment. But education is not a universal-type activity on the practical side. I think it is very important to emphasize that a particular reward produces different effects on different people (for example an opportunity to be alone in a cell – is not a real bonus for

everyone). The situation with punishment is the same (for example to prohibit an inmate to smoke in the cell is not a punishment for a non-smoker).

I think we have to set out from needs. But how can we identify needs? It seems reasonable to systematize them on different levels.

– General human needs (see the Maslow-system)
– Group-level needs (based upon common cultural, economical and social background and/or the present life-situation)
– Individual needs

In what follows I concentrate on the survey of needs, mainly the second category (group-level needs). The reason for this is that in case of the first category (general human needs) we accept the statements of the pedagogy and for the third group (individual needs) the classification of inmates has already elaborated experience. Furthermore the Hungarian correctional services haven't examined yet the middle level system: the group-level needs.

The identification of those needs is the first, but very important step. When we know the special group (in this case the gypsies) typical needs, we have to find the best way to satisfy them.

Before I give you information about my research on the special pedagogical needs of gipsy inmates I would like to explain my theory on behaviour forming of inmates. I hope that the following pedagogical approach will support the significance of needs.

In this part of my lecture I try to give a summary on the different parts of the personality from the point of view of criminal pedagogy. The following figure illustrates my conception. In brackets you can see the three main phenomena (stimulative - regulating; cognitive - social competence; organizer - executive) which determine the human being's behaviour and activity.

The pedagogical system of the establishing of constructive life-style

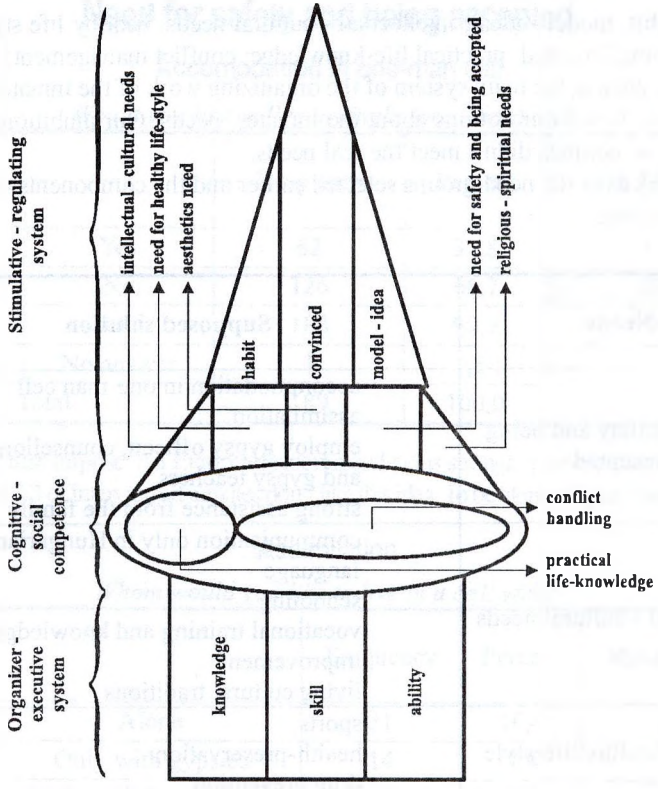
(The basis of this pedagogical personality-perception is the system elaborated by the Hungarian professor Bábosik. To this structure were inserted the feature-groups figuring in the Maslow-hierarchy of needs: be safe, be loved, belong to someone, be accepted, as well as the feature-group created by me, named cognitive-social competence.)

The organizer-executive components of the personality are: knowledge, skill and ability. This phenomenon doesn't determine the social basic-direction of the individual activity, but the particulars of the execution. The whole development of the organizer-executive phenomenon is essential in the interests of the stimulative- regulating part will be able to function. This level is the primary condition of the person's self-control.

The stimulative-regulating components of the personality are: conviction, habit, model – ideal, intellectual - cultural needs, need for healthy life-style, aesthetics need and need for safety and being accepted.

This phenomenon is responsible for the moral quality of the individual's activity and behaviour. (One group of the specialized scientific literature says that the stimulative-regulating phenomenon is the same as character.)

The cognitive - social competence is one of the three main personality-phenomena. It means an appropriate personal and social preparedness for putting forth of human



functions. The function of the cognitive - social competence generates the forming of human fundamentals, or rather the social-identity. Cognitive - social competence contains conflict handling (intrapersonal, interpersonal, social) and practical life-knowledge.

The moral quality of it: this phenomenon has some moral disposition but its fulfilment can materialize only in the course of self- improvement and community-improvement activity.

The location of the Cognitive - social competence is between the Stimulative- regulating components and the Organizer-executive components of the personality, but it partially overlaps the border on fields. This type of overlapping results in a peculiar interaction. The Organizer-executive components don't have any moral disposition, however the Cognitive - social competence "colours" the components of the Organizer-executive components.

In the course of the correctional education we have to create the primary importance of the coordinated improvement of the cognitive and social abilities.

I focus on those components of these phenomena whose formation seems possible during the imprisonment. (In the figure we coloured or underlined these components.

They are: habit; model - ideal; intellectual - cultural needs; healthy life style; need for safety and being accepted; practical life-knowledge; conflict management; knowledge.)

Up to the present the main system of the organizing work of the inmates' prison life and conditions based our notions about the inmates' needs. Our ambitions were well-meaning but sometimes didn't meet the real needs.

Let us look over the need-groups selected earlier and the components of cognitive - social competence.

Needs	Supposed solution
need for safety and being accepted	accommodation in one man cell assimilation employ gypsy officers, counsellors and gypsy teachers strong assistance from the family
intellectual - cultural needs	communication only in Hungarian language schooling vocational training and knowledge-improvement living cultural traditions
need for healthy life-style	sports health-preservation drug prevention
conflict handling/management	role playing cooperation anger-management living traditions about the elderly
practical life-knowledge	housework applying for a job

One of the most important questions is: what kind of circumstances and conditions are important for creating and/or satisfying these needs and how can we produce them?

Compare our supposed solutions with the conceptions and desires of gypsy inmates.

Need for safety and being accepted

Accomodation in one-man cell

Would you like to live in single (one -man) cell?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	62	32,8	33,0
	No	126	66,7	67,0
	Total	188	99,5	100,0
Missing	No answer	1	,5	
Total		189	100,0	

It was our first surprise. All European recommendations strongly propose the using of single cell system, but 2/3 of interviewed inmates don't like this idea. To be alone is a punishment for them.

Assimilation

Whom would you like to live in a cell with?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Alone	31	16,4	16,8
	Only with gypsies	14	7,4	7,6
	Only with Hungarians	7	3,7	3,8
	Mixed	132	69,8	71,7
	Total	184	97,4	100,0
Missing	No answer	5	2,6	
Total		189	100,0	

Would you like to be in a group which consists of gypsies only?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	39	20,6	21,3
	No	144	76,2	78,7
	Total	183	96,8	100,0
Missing	No answer	6	3,2	
Total		189	100,0	

What do you think of your daughter intending to marry a Hungarian man?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Allow	172	91,0	92,5
	Forbid	12	6,3	6,5
	Disown	2	1,1	1,1
	Total	186	98,4	100,0
Missing	No answer	3	1,6	
Total		189	100,0	

Would you admit any Hungarians to your gypsy orchestra?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	149	78,8	81,4
	No	34	18,0	18,6
	Total	183	96,8	100,0
Missing	No answer	6	3,2	
Total		189	100,0	

All of the answers indicate a strong assimilation endeavour.

Employ gypsy officers, social worker/counsellors and gypsy teachers

Would you accept better an order from a gypsy officer?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	58	30,7	33,0
	No	118	62,4	67,0
	Total	176	93,1	100,0
Missing	No answer	13	6,9	
Total		189	100,0	

Would you accept better an advice from a gypsy social worker / counsellor / advisor?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	78	41,3	44,8
	No	96	50,8	55,2
	Total	174	92,1	100,0
Missing	No answer	15	7,9	
Total		189	100,0	

Would you like to have a gypsy teacher?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	80	42,3	46,2
	No	93	49,2	53,8
	Total	173	91,5	100,0
Missing	No answer	16	8,5	
Total		189	100,0	

These answers don't support our will. Originally we thought that gypsy colleagues will be able to co-operate them on a better way.

Strong assistance from the family

Frequent occurrence of relationship between inmates and relatives (%)

Correspondence	92
Parcel	77
Visit	85
Telephone	82
Relatives are waiting for the inmate	88

These details indicate strong connection among family members.

Intellectual - cultural needs

Communication only in Hungarian language

One of the main problems is that the majority looks on gypsies as homogeneous group; they don't take the internal structure of gypsies into consideration. Our analysis indicates that three main gypsy groups are in Hungary.

Which one is your gypsy group?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Hungarian (Ungro)	106	56,1	59,6
	"Oláh"	44	23,3	24,7
	"Beás"	12	6,3	6,7
	Other group	3	1,6	1,7
	I don't know	13	6,9	7,3
	Total	178	94,2	100,0
Missing	No answer	11	5,8	
Total		189	100,0	

The main groups have a very strong hierarchy and every group has its own gypsy language. It means that members of different groups can use different languages and they don't understand each other. Levels of the knowledge of own gypsy languages are different. (Luckily in practice they have a very special common language: gypsy words mix with Hungarian words and grammar.)

Do you speak any gypsy language?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	57	30,2	30,3
	No	131	69,3	69,7
	Total	188	99,5	100,0
Missing	No answer	1	,5	
Total		189	100,0	

Which gypsy language do you speak?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Neither	131	69,3	69,7
	"Lovári"	46	24,3	24,5
	"Beás"	11	5,8	5,9
	Total	188	99,5	100,0
Missing	No answer	1	,5	
Total		189	100,0	

In spite of the fact that gypsies have a strong internal structure in this research we have concentrated only to the co-operational level between gypsies and the majority. From this reason we didn't classify the answers in accordance with the different gypsy groups.

Making interviews and filling in questioners weren't too difficult, because all of asked inmates were able to speak and write in Hungarian language. Sometimes the level of the writing skill caused problems but in this case we offered our help.

We have experienced that the development of communicational skills are essential, and the interests of the successful co-operation with the majority the Hungarian language has priority.

Schooling

Do you participate in any type of education?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	24	12,7	13,2
	No	158	83,6	86,8
	Total	182	96,3	100,0
Missing	No answer	7	3,7	
Total		189	100,0	

The low rate of NO answers emphasizes the importance of education and schooling. (We have to keep in mind that the half of the interviewed inmates are remands and they are not able to join any education.)

Were you student at special school?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	No	152	80,4	81,7
	Yes	34	18,0	18,3
	Total	186	98,4	100,0
Missing	No answer	3	1,6	
Total		189	100,0	

The high rate of special school students indicates the importance that corrections need a varied educational system (we have already it).

Vocational training

Do you have any trade?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	No	114	60,3	63,7
	Yes	65	34,4	36,3
	Total	179	94,7	100,0
Missing	No answer	10	5,3	
Total		189	100,0	

The low rate of NO answers emphasizes the importance of vocational training.

Knowledge-improvement

School qualification

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	None	3	1,6	1,6
	Completed 4 classes of primary school	19	10,1	10,3
	Completed 6 classes of primary school	24	12,7	13,0
	Completed primary school	79	41,8	42,7
	Commenced vocational school	7	3,7	3,8
	Completed vocational school	32	16,9	17,3
	Commenced secondary school	5	2,6	2,7
	Certificate of final examination in secondary school	14	7,4	7,6
	University / college	2	1,1	1,1
	Total	185	97,9	100,0
Missing	No answer	4	2,1	
Total		189	100,0	

The 1/4 of inmates doesn't have completed primary school qualification.

Living cultural traditions

Would you allow to keep cats in cells ?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	115	60,8	62,5
	No	69	36,5	37,5
	Total	184	97,4	100,0
Missing	No answer	5	2,6	
Total		189	100,0	

Traditionally gypsies don't like cats because they are impure. This tradition doesn't exist any more.

Would you like to use bath if your cell has any?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Regularly	177	93,7	94,7
	Exclusively there is no other possibility	3	1,6	1,6
	Never	7	3,7	3,7
	Total	187	98,9	100,0
Missing	No answer	2	1,1	
Total		189	100,0	

Traditionally gypsies don't use stagnant water for washing because the dirty water is mixed up with clean water and it is impure. This tradition doesn't exist either.

Is it dangerous if a dog licks his owner's face?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	91	48,1	49,7
	No	92	48,7	50,3
	Total	183	96,8	100,0
Missing	No answer	6	3,2	
Total		189	100,0	

Traditionally gypsies are afraid of the licking of any animals because it is impure. This tradition partially exists.

Is it an offence to steal eggs from Hungarian farmers?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	105	55,6	56,8
	No	80	42,3	43,2
	Total	185	97,9	100,0
Missing	No answer	4	2,1	
Total		189	100,0	

Traditionally gypsies didn't like chickens because they are impure. Therefore they didn't raise chicken near by their permanent residence. It follows from this that they didn't have any eggs and they stole from the people in the neighbourhood. It was absolutely normal thing. This tradition partially exists.

Where would you place toilets?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Inside the cell but separated	138	73,0	74,2
	In the corridor	38	20,1	20,4
	In the backyard	10	5,3	5,4
	Total	186	98,4	100,0
Missing	No answer	3	1,6	
Total		189	100,0	

To place toilet near by their permanent residence was traditionally strictly forbidden. This tradition doesn't exist at all.

Would you mind if your son marries a non-virgin girl?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	32	16,9	17,4
	No	152	80,4	82,6
	Total	184	97,4	100,0
Missing	No answer	5	2,6	
Total		189	100,0	

Traditionally a gypsy girl's biggest worth was her own virginity. This tradition doesn't exist any more either.

Sometimes we have thought that gypsy inmates know and follow the ancient gypsy traditions. Our research demonstrated that these traditions only partially exist and determine their habit and behaviour.

Would you like to learn about gy psy's history, customs and tradition?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	149	78,8	81,9
	No	33	17,5	18,1
	Total	182	96,3	100,0
Missing	No answer	7	3,7	
Total		189	100,0	

The gypsies are not acquainted with the most of own traditions but they would like to learn about it.

Would you like to study any gypsy language?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Already knows	50	26,5	26,6
	Yes	100	52,9	53,2
	No	38	20,1	20,2
	Total	188	99,5	100,0
Missing	No answer	1	,5	
Total		189	100,0	

We think that the existing need of learning own language serves as a basis for the revival of ancient traditions.

Need for healthy life-style

During the interviews we put questions about the judgement of importance of sport, health preservation, drug and alcohol prevention in the inmates' life and they unanimously claimed this kind of activity.

Conflict handling/management

During the interviews we got same opinion about the importance of role playing and cooperation and the opinion of the inmates was identical with the previous need-category.

Anger-management

Would you punish fight among gypsies?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	116	61,4	63,4
	No	67	35,4	36,6
	Total	183	96,8	100,0
Missing	No answer	6	3,2	
Total		189	100,0	

More than 1/3 of gypsy inmates reckon that fighting is an acceptable way of conflict-handling among them.

Type of crimes

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Only crimes committed against property	61	32,3	33,2
	Only violent crimes	26	13,8	14,1
	Mixed	97	51,3	52,7
	Total	184	97,4	100,0
Missing	No answer	5	2,6	
Total		189	100,0	

Altogether 67 % of the gypsy inmates committed crime connected with violent and/or aggressive acts. It strongly indicates the necessity of anger-management.

Living traditions about the elderly

Is it a crime to go to prison in place of an elder family member?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	78	41,3	41,7
	No	109	57,7	58,3
	Total	187	98,9	100,0
Missing	No answer	2	1,1	
Total		189	100,0	

To go to prison in place of an elder family member for a young gypsy man was traditionally absolutely normal thing. This tradition partially exists.

Can you imagine to hit any old gypsy man?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	46	24,3	24,6
	No	141	74,6	75,4
	Total	187	98,9	100,0
Missing	No answer	2	1,1	
Total		189	100,0	

Traditionally to hit any old gypsy man was one of the biggest crimes. This tradition still exists.

Practical life-knowledge

The bigger part of the inmates' opinion was that the housework isn't worthy of the gypsy man. The inmates agree about the importance of the knowledge of applying for jobs.

Summary

Comparing our supposed solutions with the result of our survey we have to admit that sometimes they don't coincide. For the sake of the inmates' effective resocialisation we have to reconsider the way of forming (gypsy) inmates' circumstances of life and activity.

I hope that in this paper I was able to introduce one of the main components of the direction and moral quality of everyone's behaviour. This is the need system.

Needs	Supposed solution	Result of the survey
need for safety and being accepted	- accommodation in one-man cell	NO
	- assimilation	PARTIALLY
	- employ gypsy officers and counsellors	NO
	- employ gypsy teachers	PARTIALLY
	- strong assistance from the family	YES
intellectual - cultural needs	- communication only in Hungarian language	NO – but at present the Hungarian language has a priority
	- schooling	YES
	- vocational training and knowledge-improvement	YES
	- living cultural traditions	PARTIALLY
need for healthy life-style	- sports	YES
	- health- preservation	YES
	- drug and alcohol prevention	YES
conflict handling/management	- role playing	YES
	- cooperation	YES
	- anger-management	YES
	- living traditions about the elderly	PARTIALLY
practical life-knowledge	- housework	NO
	- applying for a job	YES

We haven't finished the analysis of the achievements of our research. We know that our foregoing conclusions aren't panacea. Nevertheless we trust that we were able to promote to find a few elements of gypsy inmates' successful resocialisation.

As a supplement for my paper I would like to show four posters which demonstrate the effort of the Hungarian government to have gypsies accepted.