

Elisabeth Lakatos: Community: when we go to meet others

Translated from the Hungarian by Eszter Tarsoly

Elisabeth Lakatos is one of the long-term Roma contributors of our participatory research projects in Tiszavasvári. She speaks Romani and Hungarian. She lives in a street on the edge of the Roma neighbourhood, often referred to as the “Hungarian row”, which has both Roma and non-Roma families. She has four young daughters, all in primary or secondary school. Her fifth daughter was born while we were working on the linguistic citizenship project. All her children and her husband are bilingual. She has participated in writing a Romani storybook, translating and authoring texts in local Romani, and in writing the volume summarising the outcome of our translanguaging project (Heltai, J. and Tarsoly, E. (eds.). 2023. Translanguaging for Equal Opportunities. Speaking Romani at School. Berlin: De Gruyter.)

Wherever we go, we dress appropriately, but on the other hand, in front of a large audience we feel a little uneasy, especially when we don't know anyone. But when we see that others are accommodating towards us, we feel more confident and find our own ways and our own self. But when we go somewhere, we dress well, but on the other hand, there are always problems with our pronunciation of Hungarian. And it also happens sometimes that we are mocked behind our back, that we don't say *eggyet* [edyet] but *ecset* [echet]. That causes trouble. They make fun of us. But there are Roma people who have a rich vocabulary and they can engage the Hungarians with their talk.

It is well worth having a rich vocabulary because they can make a living with it.