

Melinda Rostás Makula: In the health centre's waiting room

Translated from the Hungarian by Sára Szakál

Melinda is one of the long-term Roma contributors of our participatory research projects in Tiszavasvári. She lives in the central part of the Roma neighbourhood with her husband, young daughter, and some of her daughters-in-law, and grandchildren. Melinda and her husband work as janitor and caretaker, respectively, in the Magiszter Primary School where Roma children from the bilingual Roma neighbourhood study. Melinda participated in writing a Romani storybook, translating and authoring texts in local Romani, and in the preparatory workshops for 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.) She has been a member of Duj Džséné – Two Together's editorial team from the outset.

A woman went to the local health centre to see the doctor. While she was in the waiting room, she noticed that an elderly lady needed help with the registration. The woman stood up with the best of intentions and asked the elderly lady if she could help her. But the elderly lady became upset and refused the woman's help. She started yelling in front of everyone that she didn't want to be helped by a Gypsy, and who did she think she was coming up to her, asking for her Health Insurance Card. A middle-aged man, also in the waiting room, stood up and told the elderly lady that the woman just wanted to help her because she saw that she couldn't register herself. The woman felt hurt by this incident but it made her think. She was looked down upon because she was a Gypsy. But I think she would have been able to help the elderly lady just as much as a Hungarian would have. The woman felt very humiliated, even though she only wanted to do good. This woman was me, Melinda.