

**Izabella Ábri: Work and perseverance in the face of difficulties\_**

Translated from the Hungarian by Hayley Anderson

*The interviewer is one of the long-term local contributors of our participatory research projects in Tiszavasvári. 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 households. She has two young children in primary school and works in the nursery attached to the Roma neighbourhood. She passed her baccalaureate examinations recently and works as a pedagogical assistant providing mother-tongue care for especially young children who start nursery with Romani as their first language. She has participated in writing a Romani storybook and 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 Dzséne – Two Together’s editorial team from the outset. She interviewed one of her Roma neighbours for the first issue of our periodical.*

This interview was conducted with my mother. As I describe in the interview, she has worked in many places. For me, she is an exemplary woman, because she has taken on all kinds of work to provide for us. She was the breadwinner. Despite the difficulties she never gave up. I am proud of my mother, because we learned a lot from her, and we had a decent upbringing.

I(zabella): “Tell us about your livelihood.”

“I worked in an orchard in Tiszadob for a very long time, about 14 years. My two older daughters looked after my younger daughters. I had to find a job because the children’s father worked in Szilvasvárad, so he came home only once a month. From the family allowance we couldn’t really make ends meet, so both my son and I had to find a job. I also worked in a meat processing factory at the conveyor belt. I took every job I could get, because in the meantime the children’s father changed, and he didn’t help so much

financially. The winter was very hard for us, because we couldn't make ends meet, so I had to go to the forest to collect wood."

I: "I remember all this, I used to go with you!"

"I had an operation, which was very hard for us, because we were left without an income. It was very difficult. So, my sons helped me for a month to make ends meet. As soon as I recovered, I went straight to work. I went to pick fruit, where I got paid weekly."

I: "In which jobs were you paid better?"

"I was better paid in the meat-processing plant, and it was a monthly salary. But I needed to work very hard, and I had to work nights there."

I: "What was your role at work?"

"Picking and sorting apples, bucketing (collecting fallen, damaged apples; explained in oral communication by the author). I was in grading products at the meat plant, and filling up crates."

I: "How were you treated at work?"

"We had a mixed work environment (Roma and Hungarians), but they always treated me well, because I adapted to them. True, there were a few disagreements about work, but it was not too bad. I am 60 years old and I am still working today. Currently, I'm in the government-sponsored public work programme. But what can I do, I like working, and, God willing, if my health permits, I will continue to work."

I: "What is it that you could not live without?"

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“For me, my family is the most important thing. I’m the only one they can count on, and that’s why I’ve taken on every job opportunity. To support them.”