

A Roma woman's desire for a home. Izabella Ábri's interview with Sabrina

Translated from the Hungarian by Amaryllis Sasvari

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", but it 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 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 interviewed one of her Roma neighbours for the first issue of our periodical.

What was your childhood like?

I had a perfect childhood; I received parental care and was grateful to God for everything that my parents could give me. My dad was very strict with us, and I owe a lot to him. Unfortunately, I couldn't finish school because I got pregnant.

What was it like, living in the Roma neighbourhood?

When I was ten, my parents, brothers, and sisters, we moved to the Roma neighbourhood. We used to live in Béke Street [one of the streets outside the Roma neighbourhood].

And why did you move to the Roma neighbourhood?

Because they were building homes with a subsidised housing scheme, so we were moved close to other Roma.

Did you like living in Béke út?

I love living there, and I have fond memories of it.

What was it like for you to move in with your mother-in-law from your mother's house?

It was hard to leave my family because I received so much love at home.

What did you most long for when you lived in the Roma neighbourhood?

First of all, I wanted to be able to finish school. But I don't regret not doing it because God has blessed me with a beautiful family; my children are the most precious things in my life. I would have also loved to have a house of my own because my mother-in-law's home was very crowded. But I trusted God, that he would give it to me. I prayed a lot that we would have a separate house. God heard me, and we managed to move away from the Gypsy neighbourhood. My husband, my six children, and I moved to Madách Street. There are Gypsies living on Madách Street, too, but we feel much better than we did when we lived in there.

How do you get on with your neighbours?

We get along very well, with no problems, and they don't have any issues with us.

What do you think Hungarians think about Roma?

It depends on the people and how they look at the Roma.

How did you feel moving into your new house?

It was a wonderful feeling to have a house of our own, and I had been waiting for this for so long! We are even happier now.