Providing a home for the Roma’s

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Research document for ExploreLab
# Table of contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The communist era - integration policy</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post communist era</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking for identity</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research question</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design question</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hétes settlement</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research means</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentors</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Who are the Roma’s</strong></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The field trip</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Roma’s of today</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences in mentality?</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nomads?</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion about the culture of Roma’s</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home for Roma’s - Case studies</strong></td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspects of a home - study of four case studies</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case studies</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typology</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ownership</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social practices</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion on the case studies</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home for Roma’s - The explorative research</strong></td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspects of a home - results based on the trip</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems with settlements</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building models - Workshop</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roma neighbour vs. “Hungarian” neighbour</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The amount of floors in a dwelling</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decorations &amp; furniture</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interior spaces</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions on the explorative research</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Potentials &amp; Ideas</strong></td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General concept of a project</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement step by step</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bio briquette</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livestock</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Sons of the market!”</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions of the ideas &amp; potentials</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conclusion</strong></td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bibliography</strong></td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION
Problem

In Hungary a growing sociological issue is present: the segregation of the Roma’s. Even though the earliest records of their appearance in the country date from the XVth century, they are still regarded as outsiders among many Hungarians. According to a study in 2001 around 39 % of the Hungarian population was considered as racist; meaning they would prefer not to have Roma’s in their neighbourhood and they support excluding them out of the society. Another 28 % formed the group which was against racism but still admits having a certain antipathy against them. Only 33 % of the Hungarians sympathize with the Roma’s and rejects all forms of discrimination. (Székelyi, Örkény, & Csepeli, 2001)

There are different theories about their origins but according to the linguistic comparison studies they are originally from the Western part of North-India; Punjab. (A.D.I., 2007, p. 9)

According to the census of 2011 the number of the Hungarian population was 9 937 628 and the number of inhabitants with a Roma origin was 315 583. (Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, 2013)

However this number is probably much higher as many Roma’s would not tell the truth about their ethnical background due to fear for discrimination. Another study in 2007 estimated their number around 800 000. (A.D.I., 2007, p. 17)

It is a complicated question who should be considered as Roma. The opinion of researchers varies on this topic; according to László Szegő Roma’s are those who speak the Roma language. On the other hand László Kemény belied this theory by claiming that the mother tongue of the majority of the Roma’s is Hungarian. According to him Roma’s are those who are considered Roma by the non-Roma’s. Generally their appearance reveals their identity; such as the darker skin colour, black hair and certain facial characteristics. However in several cases it’s complicated to tell their ethnical background as there have been mixed marriages and many of the Roma’s has been totally assimilated in the rest of the society and had broken connection with their own culture. (A.D.I., 2007, p. 17)

During the communist era the main goal of the government was to completely assimilate the Roma’s in the Hungarian society. Instead of being considered as a folk with own culture it was declared that they must fully be integrated; their traditions did not get any attention and practising them in any institutional form was prohibited. In 1961 still 40 % of the Roma’s did not have a permanent address. They were forced to find permanent work and to be registered at an official address.

As most of the Roma’s were not educated and lived from manual labour they could only afford living in gypsy camps, in temporary cabins built by themselves instead of permanent houses. The government considered this lifestyle dangerous and offered housing for the inhabitants of these camps. On the other hand only those who were “good comrades” in the eyes of the government could benefit from good quality social housing. Many of the Roma’s did not fit in this category and they were all moved to so called low comfort dwellings which were still lacking essential facilities. Furthermore these houses were in each other’s neighbourhood; the segregation was not reduced.

The communist era – integration policy

Illustration 1 - Roma children in their neighbourhood

Illustration 2 - Moving from own settlements to low quality social housing
After the change of regime many Hungarians lost their job; a big percentage of Roma’s among them who are often called as the main sufferers of the change of regime in 1989. These days Roma’s are legally allowed to practise their traditions and live according to their culture.

By analysing their actual living circumstances certain characteristics are visible. They were given apartments or houses which were according to the general idea of the Hungarian communist party. By then the state of the houses could be sustained as the Roma dwellers were constantly controlled and they all had permanent work. This way they were able to keep the original, but already poor state of the dwellings. However by losing their job it was impossible for them to sustain their homes and the dwellings started degrading as they were incapable to pay for the bills, rent etc. In certain cases they were forced to leave their home and multiple families moved in together. The empty homes are being demolished for their materials, this way providing income for the unemployed. On the other hand this phenomenon is responsible for the worsening living circumstances and a negative image of the city. These segregated areas become places where outsiders prefer not to enter and at the same time they may provide a negative impression for the whole town they are located in.

It is clear that the situation at the moment is not ideal. The Roma’s wish for a more equal treatment, better living circumstances and more acceptance. The non-Roma’s fear for the neighbourhoods with neglected houses and high percentage of criminality. What type of neighbourhood and dwelling could change this image to the better; how could a dwelling be sustained? How could the Roma’s of now find their place and home in the city by keeping their identity and still not harm the majority of the society?

The general opinion of the Hungarians about the educated Roma’s, who live among the majority of the population, has been and is still positive. On the other hand as soon as their number is growing and they start forming communities with their large families, behaving according to “the Roma lifestyle” the phenomenon of otherness appears and discrimination starts to grow. As Zuzsa Vida mentions: “les experiences positives sont complètement vides des « choses tsiganes » et les expériences négatives sont pleines de « choses tsiganes. ” (Vida, 2008, p. 213)

The reason for this discriminative behaviour from the non-Roma’s side is an extremely complex issue. A certain vicious circle is present and in many cases it is claimed that the lack of work is the main problem. On the other hand this phenomenon is responsible for the worsening living circumstances and a negative image of the city. These segregated areas become places where outsiders prefer not to enter and at the same time they may provide a negative impression for the whole town they are located in.
Looking for an identity

As a result of the assimilation of the Roma’s in the Hungarian society many of them partly lost track with their culture; as an example their majority do not speak the Roma language anymore. Still many families maintained the Roma traditions and there are also people who are studying the Roma’s History to find their roots. There is a certain will for having an own identity and to live according to it. In my opinion in a democracy this will should be supported and not suppressed, even if it requires a lifestyle such as living from seasonal work like mushroom picking, agriculture, metal collection or having own businesses which are typical jobs among the Roma’s. (Fürjes, 2010) At the same time those who would like to live a more “civilian way of life”, to study or to work on a permanent contract base; the possibility should be given to them.

Research question

The above mentioned issues inspired me to formulate my research question; **What do the inhabitants of the Roma settlements want for a home?** Home in this question is referring to the dwelling itself and its neighbourhood, the dwelling cluster and the whole settlement. My research goal is thus to find out in what kind of living environment Roma’s prefer to live.

By providing a home for people with a different cultural background it’s of extreme importance to understand the traditions and ways of living of the group for who we are designing. This is why it had a great importance to study these issues by different means. On the one hand historical background is presented based on scientific literature. Next to this study an explorative research on the field, by asking people with Roma origin gave me the opportunities to hear their opinion and to see their living environment with my eyes. The information gathered helped me to answer the following questions:

- On the scale of the neighbourhood
  - How much time do they spend inside and outside the house?
  - How do they prefer to organize their neighbourhood?

- On the scale of the dwelling
  - What are those features in their homes which are different from the houses of the non-Roma’s?
  - What kind of floor plan could fit by their way of living?
  - How do they use the space in their rooms?

In this thesis the answers to all these questions will be given and in the conclusion further elaborated.

Next to research about the wishes about living also a research to different rehabilitation projects will be presented. From the point of view of NGO’s and activists neighbourhoods has been revitalized with the aim of changing them to the better. In this thesis these projects will be presented and evaluated; to see which have more potentials and what elements are problematic and it is better to avoid them.

The research will be used as a base for the design assignment. By learning about the spatial wishes of the Roma’s and their social practices, conclusions can be deduced and they can be used as guidelines for the design task. In the conclusion of this thesis it will be further elaborated how this knowledge about the wishes of this community and about the existing rehabilitation projects could lead to possible solutions for my design task and which principles I am going to follow during my design process.
Design question

The design brief for the project will be a new Roma settlement on an urban level and the design of a new dwelling type on an architectural level. The main aspect for the urban design is which way the new area could be an organic part of the city. Next to living the area should get a function which would generate income for its dwellers and would bring benefit to the city. The main aspects of the dwelling design are that it should be affordable to build and the maintenance costs should be brought to a minimum. However, the location and the quality of the dwellings should be designed in a way that it would offer the possibility for its dwellers for accessing education and work.

In Ózd there are 16 Roma settlements, except for Bolyok they are to be seen on the map:
1. Hétes and neighbourhood
2. Sajóvárkony
3. Kovács-Hagyó Gy. street towards Dobó street
4. Kovács-Hagyó Gy. street towards Berkenye street
5. Órs Váza street
6. Bánzakklás
7. Tábla „neighbourhood”
8. Velence settlement
9. Petőfi Sándor street
10. Ivanová/ street segregation
11. Zrínyi Miklós street
12. Somsály
13. Alina street
14. Boroszló
15. Kiserdősa settlement and its neighbourhood

The location I chose for this project is in the Hungarian county Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén where the biggest percentage of Roma’s live. Ózd is the second biggest city in this area and it has a high percentage of unemployment and poverty. My goal is to design an urban and architectural intervention for the Roma’s in Ózd that would improve their living conditions and their acceptance in the Hungarian society by providing them the way of living that fits by their traditions. My design question is thus: What kind of neighbourhood and dwelling would fit the Roma’s living in a post industrial city of the 21st century? This means that I would like to make a design which fits by the wishes of the Roma’s of today and of the future. On the other hand the opinion of the non-Roma’s should also be taken into account: to reduce the conflict both sides should be respected. To have a successful design the community of the settlement needs to be strengthened. This is why one of the main goals of the design is to use design tools for creating a neighbourhood with a strong community.
The location of my project is the Hétes settlement; which is shown by the white shape on the map. According to my analysis this is the place which has at the same time the biggest problems but also it offers the greatest potentials. The main problem regarding architecture is the lack of space within the dwellings. According to my calculations based on the study of the floor plans and information about estimation of the population of the neighbourhood approximately 400-500 people live in dwellings of an area in total of 2000 m² which means that the occupied dwelling stock per person is around 5 m² per person. This amount is extremely low compared to the average of Hungary. In 2005 the average occupied dwelling stock per person per m² was 31.2 m² in Hungary. That amount is 6 times more than the average on Hétes settlement. (Dol & Haffner 2010) Not only regarding size but also regarding amenities the dwelling blocks are lacking bathrooms, toilets, the running water is turned off.

On the other hand one of the main potentials of the area is that the settlement is literally next to the terrain of the old factory which is at the moment a new development area. In the end of 2014 the construction has started; buildings are going to be renovated which will function as museums, a digitization centre, hotel and a skansen. This means that it can be estimated that this development will attract tourists and will offer employment possibilities. The Hétes settlement for its nearby position can form an essential part of the project as neighbouring area. Hétes settlement is located in the valley, surrounded by mountains. The “blue tourist road” is reachable; the settlement could function as a stop from tourists between the factory and the forests of the mountains.
Research means

My research is partly based on scientific literature. Different case studies on urban and architectural level, at locations where this kind of attempts has been done, have been analysed. Existing research on the topic has been studied. Next to this literature study experts have been interviewed. More specifically the Roma culture has been studied and the reasons for this social conflict have been explained. An essential part was an explorative research: a field trip to Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county and to its surroundings to document the living conditions of the Roma’s in the area and to interview about their wishes and opinion regarding the topic in a way that they can react to certain dwelling solutions. This information has provided me critical view on the topic. For arranging the interviews and meeting the right people, I have to thank the help of Kriszta Bódis, a Hungarian writer, documentary writer, psychologist who has been busy for more than ten years with improving these settlements. She has been collecting funds, worked together with architects, organized camps for the neighbourhood. She has the needed connections and the inhabitants of Ózd treat her with respect which could provide a useful help for my studies.

Planning

The project has started by doing literature research. The research material is divided in three different categories: “case studies”, “Roma culture” and “home and culture”.

There will be four different case studies presented: Roma camps, built by the inhabitants, a top-down project in Kosice where Roma’s moved to flats, blocks of houses with small enclosed gardens in Ózd and a territory of parcelled loose farm structure with a new community house in Lyukóvölgy, Miskolc.

The category „home and culture“ is used as a scientific background for the research, it functions as a theory base for the project. This knowledge was used as a tool to help which aspects need to be analysed. It gave a guideline for the field trip which was the next step in the planning.

The Roma camps can teach us about the traditional way of living of their inhabitants. The Top-down dwellings can be useful examples to see the weaknesses and strengths of the projects lead by higher parties. The dwellings in Ózd are relevant for the design project as they deal with the existing situation. The fourth case is a settlement where already a community house has been built and also the inhabitants have more free space to settle according to their wishes. Knowledge about the Roma culture and art is essential to understand their background and way of thinking. Next to the negative stereotypes I aimed to discover the strength of this community and how it could be possible to use those potentials to reduce discrimination.

Illustration 8 - Planning

(own ill.)
WHO ARE THE ROMA'S?
The field trip

My experiences in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county could not have been more controversial. I went there with my idea about the “Roma’s” as an outsider. My information was mainly based on literature and on the information which comes from the media: a group of people with a completely different culture who has a different idea about ownership, use of space and lifestyle, that their difference would be based on their cultural background.

Partly my assumptions were true but still my image about them has completely changed during my trip. Videos with criminal and negative images are all around the internet about the settlements. However what I saw was poor areas, with shy, hopeless and many times mentally broken people who either gave up any chance of a better future or who were still hoping and saw a small chance in everything that happened. In a few cases this hope they saw in me. A good example is a mason in his forties who, when hearing I was studying architecture - his first question was if I had any work for him to offer.

My task was made difficult because of my role as a “Hungarian”. The problem is that I am not the first one “studying” their misery, they experience constantly people passing by, taking pictures of them and in the future they appear in newspapers with negative comments. Even though my intentions were completely different, I could not escape this role in the beginning, especially when I was walking around without being introduced. However I was lucky enough to work together with great associations who made my work easier and more useful.

During my field trip I visited three different municipalities. First I went to the county seat, Miskolc, where I visited “Lyúkövölgy”, the biggest settlement of Hungary. Lyúkövölgy is a suburban neighbourhood of Miskolc, with 3500 inhabitants. It used to have a loose farm structure but during the communist era the area has been divided and rented for labourers. However with the change of regime the heavy industry collapsed. Nowadays the old dwellers who still have their plot, do not visit anymore and most of the new dwellers are Roma’s. Their only chance was to move to Lyúkövölgy as they were not able to pay common fees at their old dwellings and the price of a plot in this area is extremely low (less than 3000 euro’s for a plot with a weekend house). In Lyúkövölgy I had the help of “Máltai szeretetszolgálat”, an association of social workers who has been busying improving the life of the inhabitants of the settlement. Through their contacts it was possible for me to get in touch and to talk to dwellers from the houses in the area.

The main part of my field trip took place in Ózd, the location of my design. So that I had the chance to use different research techniques, next to interviews and observations I even had the opportunity to play a modeling game with inhabitants from different settlements. My work was supported by Van Helyed Stúdió, an association in the city which helps talented children with a difficult financial background to be able to follow proper education and this way they might have the chance to go to university. I talked to parents and children from the settlements, social workers and teachers from the studio.

The last location I visited was in Szakácsi, a village 45 km’s from Miskolc. There I interviewed a Dutch woman, Elisabeth van Aerde who has already been busy in the village for 10 years with an economic plan to attract tourists into the area. This way the inhabitants (mainly Roma’s) of the village have the possibility to work. She moved to the village herself and shared her experiences with me, to see Hungarian Roma’s with the eyes of a foreigner.

All in all the field trip has been a real eye opener and in all parts of the thesis regarding the different topics there will be a reflection of my experiences and information gathered.
The Roma’s of today

“Gypsies cannot be understood in isolation from the wider society of which they have always formed a part. We need to take into account the changing attitudes and policies towards the Gypsies in the Austro-Hungarian empire, in Communist Europe and in post Communist Hungary to comprehend their present condition” (Stewart, 1976, p. 49)

As Michael Stewart mentions in his book, “the time of the gypsies” even though Roma’s are to be found at different places of the world, still it is not possible to just consider them as a group separate from all the different societies. It is necessary to mention that according to the latest studies they all originate from India and they experience similar exclusion in the different countries. It would not be considerate to look for and talk about an average Roma community, still it can be mentioned that most of the Gypsies are settled down in Eastern-Europe. It is necessary to mention that even though according to the latest studies they all originate from India and they experience similar exclusion in the different countries, it would not be considerate to look for and talk about an average Roma community.

As my field trip took place in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county, and my location is also in this region my main focus lies on the Roma’s of Hungary, which are the Roma’s living in this area. It is important to know that Romungra’s are the Roma’s of the group which already live in Hungary since the XVth century. Around that time they settled down in this country. This is why their culture can not be seen independent of the Hungarian one. Their typical food for example is also related to the Hungarian cuisine but then not be seen independently of the Hungarian one. Their typical way of life was nomadic, this identity is hardly compared to the Carpathian basin as the Hungarian homeland. Differences in mentality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past weighs on living</th>
<th>Past unimportant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Familial accumulation</td>
<td>Brotherly sharing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thrift</td>
<td>Spendthrift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td>Circulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy through avoidance of exchange</td>
<td>Autonomy through avoidance of labour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mundane activity</td>
<td>Dealing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>Brothery sharing</td>
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<td>Past weights on living</td>
<td>Past unimportant</td>
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According to András Bíró smekeria is not determined according to ethnical background but it is more sociocultural. “Someone who really wants to find a solution for the problem originating from the Gypsy question, that person has to know about smekeria. He has to count with it…” (Debreczeni, 2014, p.253)
Nomads?

Even though in Western Europe Roma’s are still found being nomadic, in Eastern Europe where their majority lives, less than 1% travels. Partly the reasons for this division are also to be found in the XVth century. In Western Europe the feudal society soon realized the difference between their own lifestyle and the one from Roma’s. In most Western European countries they were being pursued around as outlaws, renegades, brigands, and illegals. However at that time in Hungary they formed an organic part of the society, using their skills with iron they complemented the peasant quality of life of the society. For this skill a mobile lifestyle was suitable as they were travelling around the country, selling their handmade products. However the industrial revolution their profession became unwanted as there was a mass production in factories of the goods they were producing. Being nomadic became a disadvantage, because contrary to the peasants they did not attend school, did not learn to write and were not allowed to be a part of the mobility oriented society. (Debreczeni, 2014, p.27-35)

Finally all the Roma’s were forcefully settled in Hungary by the Communist regimes which were ruling in most of the Eastern European countries. This wayCommunist governments were able to eliminate the Roma’s. The very strict filing is that even though the party succeeded to have them settle down, it was not clear whether their identity had been taken away from them; this process did not find a place in the underworld as illegals. However at that time in Hungary they formed an organic part of the society, using their skills with iron they complemented the peasant quality of life of the society. For this skill a mobile lifestyle was suitable as they were travelling around the country, selling their handmade products. However the industrial revolution their profession became unwanted as there was a mass production in factories of the goods they were producing. Being nomadic became a disadvantage, because contrary to the peasants they did not attend school, did not learn to write and were not allowed to be a part of the mobility oriented society. (Debreczeni, 2014, p.27-35)

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Gypsies take objects, representations and practices—in Hungary, identity had been taken away from them; this process did not find a place in the underworld as illegals. However at that time in Hungary they formed an organic part of the society, using their skills with iron they complemented the peasant quality of life of the society. For this skill a mobile lifestyle was suitable as they were travelling around the country, selling their handmade products. However the industrial revolution their profession became unwanted as there was a mass production in factories of the goods they were producing. Being nomadic became a disadvantage, because contrary to the peasants they did not attend school, did not learn to write and were not allowed to be a part of the mobility oriented society. (Debreczeni, 2014, p.27-35)

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An interesting issue is how the Roma’s feel about their past of being nomadic. Would they go again if it was possible? According to the study that Michael Stewart did in Harangos, one of the villages of Southern Hungary, his Roma’s group had a very positive and poor lifestyle and they see it as “a past which should have been erased”. (Debreczeni, 1998, p.33)

On the other hand this aspect I also wanted to discover during my trip to the Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county. I was curious how the intentions I was planning to ask this question directly to the inhabitants of the settlements. However the idea I soon discovered was not possible. At the studio I co-operated with it was soon that this whole “Roma” problem I should not mention it and I should not refer to them as Roma’s. This was a very typical case when I asked these direct questions about the feeling for being nomadic was from those who were open to talk about their own was not in the end a place at all; rather, it was the al-
Aspects of a home - study of four case studies

“What finally decides the form of a dwelling, and moulds the spaces and their relationships is the vision that people have for an ideal life.” (Rapoport, 1969, p. 47) Rapoport is convinced that a house is mainly formed by sociocultural factors and that those have a stronger influence on its form than the physical forces which are changing its shape as well.

To understand these sociocultural factors in the case of dwellings of Roma’s, four case studies - a self built Roma settlement, the Lunik IX apartments, the Hétes settlement and an area in Lyukóvölgy - has been studied. A self built Roma settlement shows us how Roma’s used to and in certain cases still live when they had the chance to build their own neighbourhood. The Lunik IX apartments is a case study, originally designed for the middle class but Roma’s were moved there as they were forced to leave their original habitat. In many cases more families had to share one dwelling and this led to serious issues regarding ownership. Hétes settlement is a former worker’s quarter of dwelling blocks where the employees of the factory used to live. Nowadays it is only lived by Roma’s between very poor living circumstances. The area in Lyukóvölgy a parcelled loose farm structure outside the city of Miskolc in Hungary. There is enough free space available for the dwellers to organize their living environment the way they prefer to live. However the area is extremely segregated and the living circumstances are primitive.

These different cases show us how the different models have their positive and negative sides. To understand them next to mentioning the different dwelling typologies, ownership issues and the ethnical background of the neighbourhood the spatial characteristics of certain social practices - hanging clothes, toiletries, cooking, receiving guests, children’s play, livestock - are going to be analysed.
Case studies

Self built Roma settlements

Top-down design: Lunik IX apartments, Kosice, Slovakia

Hétes settlement, Ózd, Hungary

Lyukóvölgy, Miskolc, Hungary

Illustration 14 - Own settlement (Williams & Schambion, 2009)

Illustration 15 - Lunik IX apartments (Pravypostor, 2013)

Illustration 16 - Hétes settlement (own ill.)

Illustration 17 - Lyukóvölgy (own ill.)
Typology

Self-built shelters around a court

Apartment block

Two floor blocks of houses with small enclosed gardens

One floor parcelled loose farm structure with new community house, clear patterns of family organizations around a court
Ownership

Own shelter for families

More families share one dwelling

Building blocks of 6 dwellings, more families in one dwelling, in many cases a different family lives on the attic

Clusters of own family dwellings

Illustration 22 (own ill.)

Illustration 23 (own ill.)

Illustration 24 (own ill.)

Illustration 25 (own ill.)
Social practises

Hanging clothes

Outside between the shelters

On the balconies

Inside the dwelling, in the rooms, many times in the small storage room where the stairs to the attic also are located

At the in-between space between the dwellings
Social practises

Toiletries

Toilet outside the dwellings, no water in dwellings

Inside the dwellings, more families share one bathroom

Outside the dwellings there are blocks of toilets, no bathrooms inside, common water tap on site

Certain dwellings have bathrooms inside, the others use outside toilets and common water tap, community house also has common toilets

Illustration 30 (own ill.)

Illustration 31 (own ill.)

Illustration 32 (own ill.)

Illustration 33 (own ill.)
Social practices

Cooking

During summer outside between the shelters, during winter inside.

During winter cooking takes place inside the dwellings. During summer both there and between the dwellings.
Social practises

Receiving guests

During summer outside between the shelters, during winter inside

Winter

During winter inside the dwellings, during summer outside under a self built tent

Summer

Illustration 38 (own ill.)

Illustration 39 (own ill.)

Illustration 40 (own ill.)

Illustration 41 (own ill.)

During winter inside the dwellings. During summer both there and between the dwellings.
Social practices

Children's play

Outside, in-between the dwellings

On street level, on the corridors of the flats

On the playground built by NGO's

On the territory of the community centre built by NGO's
Social practises
Livestock
Outside, in-between the dwellings
No available space for livestock
Most dwellers do not keep livestock because of trust and money issues according to them
Next to the dwellings, in small build sheds.

Illustration 46 (own ill.)
Illustration 47 (own ill.)
Illustration 48 (own ill.)
Illustration 49 (own ill.)
Conclusion of the case studies

By analysing the different projects, the importance of different spaces in Roma settlements becomes obvious. The main potentials and problems are to be seen based on the different dwellings and neighbourhoods. As the main goal of the thesis is to answer which social practises have to change. Because these cases - if they exist - take place outside the dwellings and are not defined. Obviously these attempts led to enormous conflicts with the non-Roma Hungarians. In most of the case studies cooking and receiving guests take place in the same room; a reason for this is the strong connection between the two social practises. Because these spaces have a different character and it is not clear which group of people share it and where the borders are. They do not serve for communication, but because of existential problems it is not possible. However to own these facilities; to have an own bathroom.

Regarding social practises it can be concluded that most of them take place in shared spaces. As an example toillessness in the most cases - if they exist - take place outside the dwellings and are shared with other families. Only in Lükövölgy it can be seen that families with slightly better living circumstances can afford to own a bathroom. However this shows that there is an gap for privacy but because of existential problems it is not possible. To improve their living circumstances my goal is to make it possible for them to own these facilities; to have an own bathroom. Cooking has a high importance in the Roma culture; such as for non-Roma Hungarians. In most of the case studies cooking and receiving guests take place in the same room; a reason for this is also the strong connection between the two social practises. Because these spaces are the dark corridors inside the buildings and the neighbourhoods. As the main goal of the thesis is to answer which social practises have to change. Because these cases - if they exist - take place outside the dwellings and are not defined.

On the scale of the dwelling

Talking about the territory of one family the first issue is the question of ownership. Even though in the case of these dwellings often more families tend to share one dwelling; after this study and my experience on the field showed me that the ideal situation is when only two generations - parents and children - share one household. Andrea Racles mentions in her research that she had experienced that inside climate these spaces are going to get a special attention. In the case of Lunik IX apartments the balconies with a roof above them seem to be the best option; outside spaces, still protected from weather circumstances. Also in the case of Hétes settlement an inhabitant told me that when the guests arrive, they would set up a tent in front of their house and celebrate there. Finally in the bathtub and holding pig slaughters in the corridors of flats, obviously these attempts led to enormous conflicts with the neighbours coming from a different background. On the scale of a whole settlement it can be concluded that the interventions provided by NGO’s are highly needed. Because this problem social practises such as livestock become meaningful character. Even though there are stories of Roma’s keeping pigs outside spaces are not well defined and they stay unused. This issue is to be observed by Hétes settlement, where as well the same task and the dwellers start neglecting them. The same problem of people share it and where the borders are, they do not serve for communication, 2014).

On the scale of the neighbourhood

Looking at the different aspects of the case studies it becomes clear how the shared outside spaces in-between dwellings have a high importance for the Roma’s. In their own built settlements must social practises take place in that area. The reason for this is partly the lack of space inside the dwellings, but more importantly the fact of “being outside” is often associated with freedom and spaciousness which according to my communications with Roma’s is essential. The lack of this outside space and the ownership issues lead to most of the problems regarding the high-rise buildings. The only shared spaces are the dark corridors inside the buildings and the non defined large space on the ground floor, the original location of the traditional social practices have to change. Because these spaces have a different character and it is not clear which group of people share it and where the borders are. They do not serve for communication. However this shows that there is an gap for privacy but because of existential problems it is not possible. However to own these facilities; to have an own bathroom.

In the case of dwellings the relationship between inside and outside world needs to be emphasized. In the most case studies social practises such as hanging clothes take place outside. Forty the reason for this is the limited space inside however it is also a logical choice as usually clothes dry faster in the outside air. Of course an exception is when it is raining or snowing. However in the case of Lunik IX apartments the balconies with a roof above them seem to be the best option; outside spaces, still protected from weather circumstances. Also in the case of Hétes settlement an inhabitant told me that when the guests arrive, they would set up a tent in front of their house and celebrate there.

In my design these spaces are going to get a special attention. Next to providing space for these practises they can be used as a climatological buffer. Protecting the inside climate these spaces can function as an additional insulation layer. The focus of my study was defined beforehand. The next chapter on the other hand will introduce all those information which was purely based on my field trip and the focus points were influenced, changed and most of them were mostly defined during my trip.
HOME FOR ROMA'S
RESULTS OF THE EXPLORATIVE RESEARCH
Problems with the settlements

The main problem about the settlements I can define after my trip is that their inhabitants get stigmatized by their address. More interviewees complained about the fact that they felt where they come from they get a negative reaction from their surroundings. The settlements act as ghetto’s and outsiders do not dare to enter them. Not only people from the majority society but other Roma’s think the same way. When I was planning to enter them, another Roma woman joined me for my trip. She was not familiar in the city and her first reaction was: “What if they kill us? I don’t know what kind of folks they are!”

(Natasa, personal communication, 2014)

These critics do not even only come from outside, but inside the settlements there is no trust. All the inhabitants I asked complain about feeling insecure about their belongings. Anna néni, a woman from Kiserdőalja in Ózd complains about the “newcomers”. She is talking about the past as something nice, when neighbours were still be trusted. However after the change of regime when the factory closed the price of the plots started to decline and people - mainly Roma’s - who could not afford their current dwellings, moved to the settlements. This is why the base of the community is very weak. Other problem is that most of the dwellers do not have permanent income, in their case we can talk about a “survival economy”. As János Horváth mentions first people have to have their basic needs fulfilled and then they are able to think about what good is for the community. At a place where the question is surviving it is pointless to talk about what they can do for their surroundings.

Another problem in the case of many settlements is the one of access. Lyukóvölgy in Miskolc and also more settlements in Ózd are very badly connected to public services. The only way to go to school is by public transportation which costs money and they also do not go often. Kriszta Bódis told me about two girls who had to be at school every day 1,5 hour in advance because that was the only bus in the morning. Such a problem leads to children not going to school, adults having even less chances to make it to the work place. When I asked different dwellers if they ever enter the city centre, their answer was no. The only place they go to is the shop in the neighbourhood, to collect water, collect different metals etc. They do not attend the different cultural programs of the city partly because of financial background and according to Kriszta Bódis at those places it is already known for generations that Roma’s are not welcome.

Another problem of living at places separated from the society is that they grow independently from the rest of the city. The authorities lose control about them which leads to the acceptance of criminality. On the one hand authorities are less strict on the inhabitants - stealing electricity is known as something usual without any punishment. As a negative consequence the dwellers would need help from the authorities they are not taken seriously. Anna néni told me how “Magyar Gárda”, a racist Hungarian group entered her settlement and threatened the Roma’s about coming back the next day and killing them all. When Anna néni called the police to ask help, their reaction was simply: “Solve your own problems!”

(Anna néni, personal communication, 2014)

Aspects of a home - Results based on the trip

The case study analysis is being followed by the results from the study trip to Miskolc and Ózd. The aspects which I found essential to study were partly formulated beforehand and the others were formed during my stay at the settlements, as they were characteristics I have not thought about before visiting their living environment.

Regarding the settlements many problems are not a consequence of architecture or urban planning still I believe that those can have a strong influence on them. This is why next to architectural characteristics in this chapter the problems of the settlements will be explained.

To understand the wishes of Roma’s regarding their home a modelling workshop was organized in Ózd which will be further explained in this chapter. Next to this workshop talking to the inhabitants and visiting their homes helped me to gain knowledge.

Before the study trip I already decided to concentrate on the topics: decoration & furniture, ethnic background of the neighbourhoods and the amount of floors in a dwelling. Next to this research is the study of the spatial characteristics of the inside spaces. These aspects are going to be further elaborated and explained and conclusions will be made about my interpretations of the wishes for a dwelling for Roma’s.

Illustration 51 - Home at Hétes settlement (own ill.)
Building models - Workshop

One of the nicest experiences of the field trip was the modelling workshop in Ózd at the Van Helyed Stúdió. I got the chance to give a 1.5 hour workshop to the children and even a few parents were invited to build models for me. The task was to build a model of their dwelling they live in. I gave everybody a piece of cardboard of the same size which served as the base for garden and dwelling. Next to this they got the same size of cardboard to use for walls of the dwellings. To get to know the functions of the rooms they were provided a piece of paper with different pictures of different social practices, furniture and animals.

The outcomes were very different of each other. Still in most cases they took the task seriously and tried to make something similar to the dwelling they live in. In a few cases they were thinking further and built a model which already contained changes from the original dwelling.

When I asked them the question what they wanted to change they told in many cases: an extra room, a wish for an own private space is common. A nice vegetable garden is also something which they wished for in more cases.

The cases which left the biggest impression were those where I could clearly see how the family adapted the dwelling to its needs. One was a model of a small girl, Sugi, which you can see on the next page. Her family moved in a typical worker’s dwelling approximately 25 years ago. The house originally had a design made specifically for factory workers. However when the family moved in, they made several changes to create a space where they could feel more at home. The model made by Sugi showed the current home. Comparing it to the scheme of the original dwellings and by listening to the stories of the mother gave me a clear view on all the transformations which had been done. They took out all the doors of the dwelling, this way providing larger spaces. Still they did not take out the walls, instead they decided to build arches. This way the rooms still had a clear border but they were strongly connected.

The mother emphasized how the entrance hall has a large importance for her, because when you arrive at the dwelling you need enough space to take off and to hang your clothes. She criticized the fact that the boiler was placed in the hall as well which caused an even smaller space. According to her the original schemes had not provided enough space and the coats even had to be hanged in the storage. To gain more space in the entrance hall they made the bathroom and the storage smaller.

Another problem she mentioned about the hall is the type of paint used in this space which makes the wall rough. According to her this is also problematic in an inside space, it provides a less homey atmosphere. Finally she emphasizes the importance of sheds; she mentioned that during the future renovation they are planning to demolish them; that would create issues with storing the wood.

(Woman in Ózd, personal communication, 2014)
The second interesting case was a small girl who made the biggest model of all. Kriszta Bódis - the director of the studio - told me: “You know the strangest is that the model from Dzeni is so big however she has the least space from all the children.” (Bódis, personal communication, 2014)

They live in this small dwelling with approximately 10 people.

During my trip when I had the chance to visit the dwelling it was extremely crowded still it had a warm atmosphere. This house is located at the location of my design: Hétes settlement; the poorest settlement of Ózd. A few years ago together with Kriszta Bódis and NGO’s the dwelling has been renovated. The facades got redecorated with green paint and mosaic. This house is the only one with this type of decoration. It is inspiring to see how the family put its stamp on this typical worker’s home.

Illustration 59 - Inside the dwelling of Dzeni

Illustration 57 - Model of Dzeni

Illustration 58 - The dwelling of Dzeni

Roma neighbour vs. “Hungarian” neighbour

A relevant question I wanted to get answer to during my field trip was how Roma’s feel about their neighbours in general. Would they like to be around other Roma’s? How do they feel about people from the majority society? If after talking to more of them my conclusion was two sided. When I asked about the relationship to the neighbours, many times I got answers like: I had Hungarian neighbours, I lived between Hungarians! There is a Hungarian, I have good contact with them. Or when I asked who they would invite to their parties, they would answer: “Roma’s, Hungarians, there is no difference here!” Without me even asking the question they already emphasized the fact that they also have Hungarian contacts as it would make them better. I felt a strong desire to be accepted as they were different than the other Roma’s.

On the other hand they prefer being around family and the kin as it gives them a “strong base” on which they can count. Especially in their vulnerable position such a help is needed.

“At the Gypsy Row it has always been the case that the one who was able to bring himself to a higher level had the chance to leave. So, if he had the desire to leave the settlement, or to have a better life then this desire generated that he would move into the village to buy a farmhouse and to start to live a „post-peasant” lifestyle, I believe that is the process.” (J. Horváth, personal communication, 2014)

Another aspect is how they feel about having more floors for a family house. In that case I heard in more cases that they preferred to have an extra floor for the bedrooms. An extra floor meant more space which was a common desire among them.

By designing a dwelling type the amount of floors should also be considered. Firstly I was interested what their idea was about living in flats. As a conclusion I can tell that all the people I asked were very negative about it. They all mentioned how much healthier it is for a child to play outside, how it was important for them.

Illustration 60 - Single family house of Attila –own (L)
Decorations & furniture

Different sources mention the love of colours among Roma’s. In the study of Racles she mentions that the Gypsy colour is yellow. (Racles, 2013, p. 21) Stewart describes the use of flowers as symbols of life. The walls of the house are usually fully painted with flowers, also the clean room was hung with vivid plastic flowers. However when there was a death in the family, and the body would be put in the clean room, the walls would be washed out in a way that the dead person would not recognise the house anymore. (Stewart, 1998, p. 21)

The most striking fact for me was that even though looking from the outside houses in many cases were in a terrible condition, the insides were overdecorated. Colourful walls, many furniture, pictures and paintings were present in all the houses, regardless the financial situation from the dwellers. In one of the poorest homes there were so many furniture that they did not even fit the room properly. I was surprised to see that a chair with a vase on it and a table we placed on the bed during the day as living and sleeping happeneded in the same place, during the day the bed served more as a carpet.

Very typical element in every room was the long cupboard in the room and the TV or more TV’s. The TV and the mobile phone has an essential part in the life of a Roma family. It is their connection to the World, this is their way of belonging. It is very typical that many Roma children at the studio were named by soaps from series. Almost all the children had names which are not used by the majority society and they clearly have South-American origins, which series were very fashionable about 10-15 years ago.

Illustration 61 - Inside the dwelling of Dzeni (own ill.)
Illustration 62 - Inside a dwelling in Hétes (own ill.)
Illustration 63 - Warm spaces (own ill.)
Illustration 64 - Replace between two spaces (own ill.)
Illustration 65 - Arch opening (own ill.)

Interior spaces

When I was talking to the woman during the modelling workshop who explained me how she changed her dwelling to her wishes, the first thing she mentioned was: “our first step was to take out all the doors and build open arches instead” (Woman in Ózd, personal communication, 2014). This created a certain openness, different functions such as the hall, the kitchen opening to each other were responsible for a more spacious atmosphere. Next to this idea openings between rooms also were used for placing the stove in-between the rooms, that this way both rooms could be heated.

The same solution I saw in Lyukóvölgy in the house of Attila. A small arch between the kitchen and the bedroom was responsible for providing heat for both rooms. A large arch between the hall and the kitchen led to a spacious character, this way also the hallway becoming one of the warm spaces. The living room was only used during the summer and during winter it was not heated.
Conclusions on the explorative research

Next to the large amount of information which I did not have the possibility to obtain from scientific research and it was only possible to get out of visiting the neighbourhood; the most important for me was to perceive the spaces myself and to have real contact with the inhabitants. Those are the people I am planning to design for, and to really grasp their aims it was extremely important to talk about design solutions with them.

After doing the workshop and having talked to the inhabitants it helped me realize how the wishes of the different dwellers did not match with the dwellings they lived in. This fact is not only relevant for Roma’s, but in the case of social dwellings, designing for a bigger mass often neglects the wishes of the individuals. In those cases the dwellers, if they have the chance to do it, make decisions to change their living space. The question is if these changes are responsible or not, sometimes they may lead to dramatic situations. If the wall they take out was supposed to be load-bearing, the consequences might be crucial. This is the reason that in my design it will be essential to take into account that I am neither a Roma nor a future dweller of the dwellings. I am aiming to create a system but with certain openness that the individuals from a different culture than mine might have the possibility to truly feel at home.

On the neighbourhood scale

As it already showed from the case studies, the field trip proved me further that a multiple storey dwelling would probably lead to a lot of problems. The lack of direct relationship to the outside world is a serious issue according to all the Roma’s I have talked to during my trip.

Regarding ethnicity the best solution would be to bring non-Roma Hungarians in the neighbourhood to reduce the feeling of a ghetto. Although it must be considered that because of the serious gap in lifestyle there would be numerous conflicts which need to be taken into account. It must be said that this gap mainly exists because of differences in welfare and only to lesser extent it is a result of cultural differences.

On the scale of the dwelling

A unique part of visiting the dwellings was the possibility to enter them. This way I had the chance to truly experience the atmosphere of the place the Roma’s preferred to live in. Seeing the over decorated rooms, their taste was obviously different from mine from what I would choose to build. This is why I am convinced to leave the design of the interior open to make it possible for the dwellers to have their own touch on it. However, regarding the boundaries of the room I am willing to make a design which provides spaciousness and classifies cold and hot rooms to reduce the heating costs to a minimum. In the next chapter already existing projects will be presented which show us potentials and possibilities how Roma settlements can be improved.
POTENTIALS & IDEAS
General concept of a project

In this chapter the focus lies on the possible solutions of improving Roma settlements. First a general introduction on the psychological background of the notion of help will take place. It will be explained which are those steps which must be taken to achieve any sort of results, it is necessary to look at the solution as a process and not as a problem which can be solved by one intervention. The possible role of urban architectural tools in this process will be further explained. After this the general strengths of people with a Roma background will be presented and possible integrations of those qualities in urban planning will be explained. Moreover certain existing projects improving Roma settlements, successful or not are analyzed. This chapter will end with a conclusion and recommendations based on the gained knowledge.

Improvement step by step

By providing someone a new home it is necessary to consider on which conditions the choice needs to be done about who should be helped. Helping one person and not the other can lead to numerous issues and in many cases it could cause more harm than good. When a white man goes to a settlement and says: Ok, you are the poorest, then I have to help you... Then he says: This is surprising that it does not work out the way he wanted. "It is definitely a problem of different fields; politics, social engineering, education, housing. I do believe that urbanism and architecture can also be used as tools in improving the situation. Based on my research I decided to focus on certain elements which can be improved by design tools. By the analysis of the different reference projects the treatment of these focus points will be studied."

On the scale of the dwelling

The fact that Roma settlements act as ghetto's is the source of most of the problems. This is why the urban plan should be done in such a way that a connection would be created between the city and the settlement: it should become its integral, organic part. As it was mentioned earlier, one of the main issues regarding the Roma population is the lack of proper education. This is why in the design accessibility to education should be considered. The issue which is strongly connected to the foregoing problem is unemployment. This is why income generation should form a crucial part of the project.

On the scale of the city

At the moment most inhabitants of the settlements are not able to sustain their dwellings. This is why these costs should be brought to a minimum. Because of the lack of space children do not have the possibility to have a private zone where they can study. This space however should be provided. One of the most necessary conditions for people to wash themselves should be available. Clean protects people from many prejudices which are based on appearances. Next to this another issue is that people should have a possibility to have a private zone where they can be alone. Because of the lack of space children do not have the possibility to have a private zone where they can study. This space however should be provided. One of the most necessary conditions for people to wash themselves should be available. Clean protects people from many prejudices which are based on appearances.

Illustration 67 - Preventing providing a „gift” (own ill.)

According to my studies and field trip the main problem of the Roma's from the settlements is that they are not able to follow proper education and they do not get access to the job market. It is definitely a problem of different fields: politics, social engineering, education, housing. I do believe that urbanism and architecture can also be used as tools in improving the situation. Based on my research I decided to focus on certain elements which can be improved by design tools. By the analysis of the different reference projects the treatment of these focus points will be studied."

On the neighbourhood scale

In this chapter the focus lies on the possible solutions of improving Roma settlements. First a general introduction on the psychological background of the notion of help will take place. It will be explained which are those steps which must be taken to achieve any sort of results, it is necessary to look at the solution as a process and not as a problem which can be solved by one intervention. The possible role of urban architectural tools in this process will be further explained. After this the general strengths of people with a Roma background will be presented and possible integrations of those qualities in urban planning will be explained. Moreover certain existing projects improving Roma settlements, successful or not are analyzed. This chapter will end with a conclusion and recommendations based on the gained knowledge.
Workshops

As one of the main reasons of the conflict between Roma’s and non-Roma’s is unemployment, it is an essential part of the project to analyse the reasons of and the potentials related to this topic. Firstly I was curious if there were any special potentials which were typical for this group. If they had any preferences. I asked around in more families if there is any kind of job they would prefer and the answer was: ANYTHING there is. Different stories were told how difficult it is to enter the job market due to discrimination. On the other hand of course not having a degree is another essential problem.

Because of the negative common idea about Roma’s, they in many cases also believe that they are not good in anything. Once I was walking around in Hétes settlement with a Roma social worker from the studio in Ózd, having a discussion about the potentials of the Roma’s. A random Roma teenager just joined our conversation and told us: “The problem is that we are not good at anything!” Then the man I was having the discussion told: “No, it is not true! We are good at music for example!” (A. Horváth, personal communication, 2014)

There could definitely still be possibilities for these adults in manual work, music, handicrafts, organizations. At the moment in Hungary the aid system has changed and for getting support it is needed to do public works or to follow certain workshops which teach different topics. However in many cases these workshops are not useful as the skills are not needed at the location. (Bódis, personal communication, 2014)

On the other hand if the workshops would concentrate on skills which would improve the life of the settlements, providing places for these workshops could teach them to sustain themselves. Such workshops could be: making bio briquettes, techniques for agriculture, handicraft. Providing space for these workshops is going to be part of my design brief.

Illustration 68 - Bio brickett (Igazgyöny Alapítvány, 2013)

Bio brickett

Bio brickett is a new solution for fuel, with a high efficiency. It is developed by Legacy Foundation. The components of bio brickett are different types of organic waste. Anybody can learn its production. It can be easily manufactured by a hand press at home or outdoors on the fields. Because of the availability of organic waste it is mainly produced during summer. It needs a storage space until the winter. In different villages the technique has been explained and bio brickett storages have been built for the communities. (Igazgyöny Alapítvány, 2013)

(Igazgyöny Alapítvány, 2013)

Illustration 68 - Bio brickett (Igazgyöny Alapítvány, 2013)

Livestock

It could be said that Gypsies travel and that is the reason why they like to keep horses as a symbol for movement and freedom. On the other hand Hungarian Roma’s have been settled down for 40-50 years and still horses seem to have a great importance for them. It is even said that once a Gypsy bought a horse it will be their most important possession. There is a story about Cora, a Rom who bought a horse and because he could not be without his Rx, he had to rebuild the side of his house to have space for the horse behind his bedroom. However more gypsies kept animals and dealt with them, they could never take the position of a horse. For example if a horse of a family died, it was a tragedy for the family, on the other hand by the loss of a pig or a cow no one bothered. (Stewart, 1198, p. 143)

In Lyukóvölgy more families had pigs or chickens, but they are either loose walking around either they were in a very small place, behind garbage where I could not imagine that an animal would be. Also according to a study in a Hungarian village, Bag, when children were interviewed about their wishes for the new community home, they all mentioned pigs as an essential part of the new building. (BagÁgas Kötházcsú Egyesület, 2013)

However in the city of Ózd this was not the case. When I asked around what kind of animals they keep, they mostly had dogs but no livestock. When I asked if they wanted to keep them, the answer was often that it would be good, but it is difficult, expensive and problematic. Still by improving the trust in a neighbourhood could lead to the possibility of keeping livestock again. In green cities which are not too urbanized such as Ózd space is provided for this activity.

Illustration 70 - BAGázs home (BagÁgas Kötházcsú Egyesület, 2013)
Obviously by talking of a community sustaining itself, one of the main issues is food. There have been more initiatives with success where a whole community started to farm and it caused strong development. The question is how Roma’s relate to agriculture, if it has any possibilities to integrate it in a design for a settlement. To get an answer to this question a project in the South of Hungary was chosen for further analysis.

A project based on agriculture - Cserdi

Cserdi is a village in Baranya county, located in the South of Hungary. Its population is approximately 400 and the inhabitants are mostly Roma’s. In 2006 the number of criminal acts per year was 600. However that year a new mayor, László Bogdán, has been elected and this number started decreasing to such extent that in 2013 it was only 15. (Bogdán, 2014)

László Bogdán is a very charismatic Roma man, who succeeded to improve an extremely poor Roma village to a safe environment. His main concept was to change Cserdi into village of bio agriculture. He bought 50 hectare of land for pastures 10 hectare is used for the production of potatoes and onions. Half hectare of foil tents has been built to produce different vegetables. With foil tents and fields the village is now able to sustain itself, they even sell their products at the market of the nearby city, Pécs. (Bogdán, 2014)

On the scale of the dwelling

In 104 dwellings bathrooms has been built. There is also a social program of renovating the facades which provide better insulation for the dwellings. However creating space for studying was not part of the program. (Debreczeni, 2014, p. 236-241)

It is to be seen that the Cserdi project covers most of the focus points I mentioned earlier, this intervention can be called successful and more of the elements will be used as a reference to my project.

Illustration 72 - Cserdi (Kóbi, 2013)

Illustration 71 - Roma’s selling goods in the underground (Igazgyöny Alapítvány, 2013)
A project based on art - Bódvalenke

One of my interviewees was a Roma painter and he took part in a famous rehabilitation project of a Hungarian village; Bódvalenke, where 95% of the inhabitants have a Roma origin and are unemployed. The highest education level was 8 years of primary school and there was no chance of finding a job. There were no public institutions in the village, only one shop. The project is called Freclo village, and the idea was to invite Roma painters from Hungary and neighbouring countries, that the site can be a touristic spectacle instead of a poor Roma segregated village. This way the tourists could have a better image about Roma art has mainly gained expressions.

Art

This prejudicial condition persists, in the past and present. It is this context that we want to endow with critical thoughts, appealing to the possibility of art as an agent of political change and social justice” (Hlavajova, 2013, p. 7) Roma art has mainly gained attention recently, specially since 2007, when the first Roma Pavilion has been realized at the Venice Biennale. Since then more and more art institutions have realized its richness of artistic expressions. (Pásztor, 2015, p. 29)

On the neighbourhood scale

Such as in the case of Cserdi, this project also tends to integrate area to a bigger location in the Roma settlement occupies the whole place. The project affects tourists however other functions are missing and that is why the success is questionable. Income generation could be part of the projects if there were long term services which could provide jobs for the inhabitants. However because of the lack of these positions income generation has mainly failed. Education is also questionable in this case of the project.

On the scale of the dwelling

In 17,5% of the dwellings bathrooms has been realized and certain renovations has been done to improve the quality of the dwellings. It is a very marginal number. Study space are still lacking as well.

This attempt is an interesting solution on a neighbourhood level, however most aspects are still lacking and that is why the success of the project is questionable.

However the main problem of the project is that tourist infrastructure has not been created, for this reason tourists do not have any activities to do in the area except for visiting the art works. There are no facilities for accommodation or recreation in the village. This means that we can not talk about creating real work places on a permanent base. The woman who organized this program tried to collect funds for providing space for other functions but the projects failed. To create a project which works on a long term, and to create circumstances which are to be maintained job possibilities are necessary to integrate in the process. Especially in this case where we talk about a highly segregated village. (Pásztor, 2015)

Tourism

Another perspective to look at Roma settlements is to not to investigate the potentials the Roma’s have to offer but rather look at the location of the settlement. In several cases even though the Roma settlements are located in a remote area, the scenery is fascinating and tranquil. In the Western world such places are a hidden treasure and people get the chance to find peace of mind.

A project based on tourism - Szakácsi

One of the rehabilitation projects I visited during my stay in Hungary is a village, Szakácsi, just like Bódvalenke and Cserdi it is almost only inhabited by Roma’s, the life was hopeless, except for seasonal work in agriculture, there were no chance to find a job. However Elisabeth van Aerde saw potential in the beauty of the nature in the area and developed an economic plan. Her idea was to create a hidden treasure and people get the chance to find accommodation for tourists. When I visited the village, I interviewed her to learn about her experiences. (E. Van Aerde, personal communication, 2014)

She has worked in the area for ten years and she believes that the only solution for reducing discrimination against Roma’s is to ask for help from people outside the country and also start integration by them. She believes that the discrimination from the Hungarian side is so strong that from most people inside the country it is impossible to get support. In her accommodation she mostly receives guests from foreign countries, mainly Holland and Poland. According to her these people are less scared for Roma’s because they are less familiar with the situation. (E. Van Aerde, personal communication, 2014).

She is convinced that nothing is going to change until the Roma’s are not convinced that a certain project has something to offer them; work, food, money. When they see that a project has
Illustration 74 - Tiger in Szakácsi

(On the neighbourhood scale)

Regarding integration, the project has mainly been integrated internationally through tourism. This way it is also responsible for income generation of the inhabitants. However it mainly concentrates on uneducated labour, does not include education plans.

On the scale of the dwelling

On the level of the dwelling renovations has been done in certain cases but it is still quiet marginal.

On a neighbourhood level the project is a success and because of income generations it contains serious potential for the village to improve. However in the future there should be an essential focus on improving the dwellings.

Conclusion of the ideas and potentials

As it can be seen even by designing, next to thinking of the buildings a psychological background of these sites has to be considered. Even though it is our best intention to help, if it is not done in a proper way, it must even lead to a worsened situation. Next to this it need to be realized that such a project is highly experimental and many of its aspects can not be foreseen.

Because of these two reasons in my opinion thinking in steps and not just providing a plan, but rather a strategy of following design steps would lead to a better solution. Starting small and finishing big could be the way such a project might work.

Such small interventions could be units of study spaces, bathrooms, workshop spaces, storage spaces of briquet which all has the potential to improve the life of people on the settlements. Creating these units, thinking of ideas how those can be mixed into one space and what kind of design would be a proper solution is the task of an architect.

On the neighbourhood scale

It might seem striking why all the projects I took take place in small villages. However on the one hand the projects which directly address the Roma issues do not tend to take place in cities, partly because the spatial segregation in a village is much worse than in a city. However even though regarding actual distance villages might be located further than settlements in cities, settlements in cities still face the metal segregation which still holds them back from reaching opportunities. In cities they even face discrimination in a larger extent. Additionally chances in post industrial cities such as Ózd are lacking as well, and new strategies should be thought of, which would help the settlement to improve.

In these reference projects it can be seen that the success of the reference projects mainly depended on the question if they included the notion of income generation or not. However the idea of the fresco village attracted tourists as well, except for attention it did not bring any benefits for the inhabitants. Even though the location of any of these projects is not ideal regarding education, a proper school should be included in the plans, however unfortunately the chance of creating a new segregated school is extremely high.

On the scale of the dwelling

After analysing the three reference projects it can be concluded that the focus lies on the neighbourhood scale instead of the scale of the dwelling, which is missing in most cases. Further than renovation of facades and in some cases building a bathroom, the projects did not include an architectural level. In the case of Cserdi foil tents have been built to support production. The reason for this might be the reason that architecture is looked at some kind of luxury, however it could provide many smart solutions to decrease the sustaining costs, to think of architectural tools, systems elements which could have an impact on the bigger scale.

Illustration 75 - Foil tents in Cserdi

(Kállai, 2013)
The research question of this thesis is understanding the situation from their perspective is crucial. Often misunderstood and excluded an open attitude of for. In the case of projects designing for a community which is so them. However in the case of larger housing projects architects 500 people the architect does not get the chance to listen to all this encounter is crucial. Obviously by designing for approximately about, regarding my design and research, gave me access to has changed during my research. Getting involved with them - an extremely useful experience how my perception about Roma's.

Conclusion

Lyukóvölgy should be mentioned. The typical settlements and the use of space at the loose farm structure of neighbourhood the similarities between own built Roma dwellings and that by being outside the society they were free to live according to their own choices. What do Roma's want for a home? All case studies and aspects were divided into the two scales; neighbourhood scale and scale of the dwelling. Therefore the final conclusions and recommendations for the design are also divided into these two scales.

Final conclusions and recommendations on the neighbourhood scale to answer the question how do Roma's prefer to organize their neighbourhood the similarities between own built Roma settlements and the use of space at the loose farm structure of Lyukóvölgy should be mentioned. The typical family clusters organized around a court which is used for different social practises show how this common space gets a meaning. Talking to Roma's I made me realize how the outside space means to them. It seemed as if their dwelling did not have a direct relation to the outside, it would feel as if their freedom was lost. For example in contrast to the poverty of lyukóvölgy, the inhabitants were still positive about the fact of large open spaces around their dwellings and by being outside the society they were free to live according to their own choices.

This remote position of the settlements has a two-sided effect. On the one hand it provides freedom, as it was mentioned. However in the moment that is not the case. This is the reason why the production of food is going to have a central role in my design. Next to this income generation, concentrating on providing workspaces for education of the community is also going to be an essential part of the urban design. However my design will not exclusively consist of a master plan but also going to be an essential part of the urban scale. As Christopher Alexander in his book A Pattern language mentions: ‘The homogenous and undifferentiated character of modern cities is a violation of life itself and smets the growth of individual character.’ (Alexander, 1977, p. 77) Instead of making all city parts together he offers the idea of ‘mosaic of subcultures’. He mentions that cities should contain different sub-cultures which are shown to be essential by the values of the different communities can be maintained and the inhabitants can have the chance to live in a safe environment according to their wishes. However he emphasizes that the borders between these units have an essential role; these units could not become gated communities. This is why Alexander mentions the placing of bounding public functions as a logical solution to connect the different units. (Alexander, 1977, p. 77)

In my urban design the emphasis will be on maintaining the settlement as a sub-culture. However creating a link with the city by placing functions in the area which are not only for the inhabitants but also outsiders; tourists and citizens from different neighbour-hoods who would enter the settlement. Regarding the wishes of Roma's of the scale of the dwelling it is essential to keep in mind that as in the case of every dwelling project, we are designing for people who have individual wishes and according to me the chance must be given to them to have their own touch on the buildings that they can feel at home. A project such as mine should therefore contain an extra flexibility in itself as the cultural background of the future inhabitants is not a certain aspect that will stay unfamiliar.

However still it is the expertise of an architect to create a system which provides a strong base for future neighborhoods; a design which controls spaces in a way that it still gives freedom to the individuals. For the design of this system for the dwellings I am going to set a floor plan which is flexible. However the design based on this thesis is the importance of this openness between the individuals and the communities. The future inhabitants need for this spaciousness is also to be seen inside their houses. In most cases their dwellings are lacking space and all the functions are placed in one space. Especially during the cold winter months the use of outside spaces is limited. Social practises such as hanging clothes take place in the same room as living, sleeping and eating. To decentralize these functions the introduction of semi-outdoor spaces is a solution I am using in my design, the requirement of these places could be different from the living spaces; less investment would be needed, however it would still provide protection from outside weather conditions and from invaders. To answer the question how can I use the outcomes of my research; with focusing on the personal development of every individual is crucial. The requirement of these places could be different from the investment in the process, the trust will be easily gained not only from the side of the investors but from the dwellers as well. As it was mentioned in this essay, the personal development of every individual is crucial, instead of providing the dwellers with an ideal plan of the suitable dwellings, I am aiming to offer them a strategy of improving their living circumstances by involving them in the process.

Next to this essential connection the subculture itself should also be as well functioning unity. The community should be able to sustain itself. However at the moment that is not the case. This is the reason why the production of food is going to have a central role in my design. Next to this income generation, concentrating on providing workspaces for education of the community is also going to be an essential part of the urban design. However my design will not exclusively consist of a master plan but also going to be an essential part of the urban scale. As Christopher Alexander in his book A Pattern language mentions: ‘The homogenous and undifferentiated character of modern cities is a violation of life itself and smets the growth of individual character.’ (Alexander, 1977, p. 77) Instead of making all city parts together he offers the idea of ‘mosaic of subcultures’. He mentions that cities should contain different sub-cultures which are shown to be essential by the values of the different communities can be maintained and the inhabitants can have the chance to live in a safe environment according to their wishes. However he emphasizes that the borders between these units have an essential role; these units could not become gated communities. This is why Alexander mentions the placing of bounding public functions as a logical solution to connect the different units. (Alexander, 1977, p. 77)

In my urban design the emphasis will be on maintaining the settlement as a sub-culture. However creating a link with the city by placing functions in the area which are not only for the inhabitants but also outsiders; tourists and citizens from different neighbour-hoods who would enter the settlement.
Also regarding the scale of the dwellings a strategy will be needed to make a design. Such as on neighbourhood level, the building of dwellings will also be thought of as a process instead of a one-time design. As it was mentioned earlier it is my aim to provide the dwellers with bathrooms and study space. In the beginning of the strategy these functions would be placed in common spaces, however on the long term the aim is to provide the dwellers with their own facilities.

Regarding sustainability the design should be low-cost due to the investments and the most important is to bring the maintaining costs to a minimum. At the moment the dwellers of most settlements are not able to pay for the costs of maintenance. This aspect needs to be integrated that by just providing them with all the facilities that are lacking will not mean that they can make appropriate use and that would just worsen the situation. Even though in the best case scenario the situation of Roma’s is going to improve, sustainable technics are in any case a reasonable investment. The community could not just act as an example for improving Roma settlements but at the same time a model for a sustainable self sustaining community; addressing one of the main issues of today.