

CASE STUDY

True story of a gypsy woman who was wrongly accused of theft. It happened about 20 years ago, when she was in elementary school and about 7 years old.

One day, one of the children in the class (non-Roma) told her mother that her sneakers had been stolen. The mother went to school and accused the Roma girl of stealing them. This was done without any proof or reason to suspect her, since until then, she was seen as a good student, with exemplary behavior. The accusation was due solely to the prejudice that "gypsies steal."

The girl defended herself and sought support from the teacher, hoping that she would defend her, however, she states that, although she did not accuse her directly, she also did not defend her, feeling wronged.

The next day, the sneakers were found (they had never been taken), but nobody—neither the classmate's mother nor the teacher — apologized to the gypsy girl for having unfairly accused her.

Today, this girl is a woman and a mother and learned, at just 7 years old, that:

1. She was different from the others.
2. They could call her a thief without proof, just because she was a gypsy.
3. All her efforts to behave well and be a good student were useless, because the prejudice would not change.
4. I could no longer trust the teacher (who I had loved until that moment), nor could I ask her for help if I needed it
5. She would have to fend for herself throughout her school life.

Lesson from this story: a teacher's skills to practice intercultural and inclusive education are, first of all, social, emotional and reflective.

Racism and prejudice exist in all of us, even when we think we are "free" from them.



Forum: Reflection question: After the event, what stance should the teacher take with the class?