

Roma School Participation, Non-Attendance and Discrimination in Romania



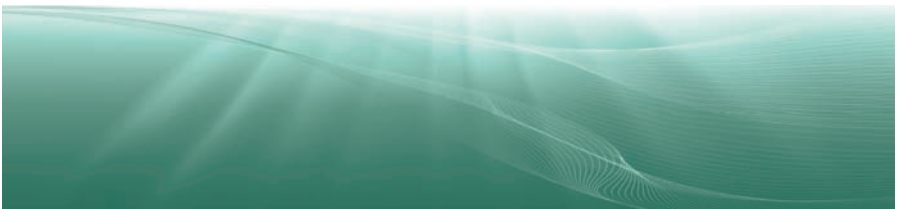
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Roma School Participation, Non-Attendance and Discrimination in Romania

Coordinator: Laura Surdu

Authors: Laura Surdu, Enikő Vincze, Marius Wamsiedel

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

4.2 percent of the Roma children who have dropped out of school attended day nursery, whereas in the case of the children who continue their education this percentage is almost twofold higher (8.1%). The children who go to day nursery usually come from families that are more dynamic on the labour market and have achieved a higher level of education. The Roma children who attended day nursery come to a smaller extent from traditional families, with a share of Romani-speaking families of only 12.8% whereas 61.9% of all families included in the sample use Romani language on a daily basis.

The most common reason why children don't go to day nursery is lack of such an establishment in their residential area (29.6%). A second reason is financial shortcomings (23.6%). The poor coverage of nursery-type establishments is more frequently cited as a reason for non-enrolment to day nursery in rural communities (52.4%) than in urban areas (6.8%).

Three quarters (75.9%) of the Roma children who dropped out had attended kindergarten. The number of children who attended kindergarten in the sample of Roma households where all children are currently participating in education is sensibly higher (66.6%), comparable with the kindergarten participation rate of the overall population in Romania (72.8%). Kindergarten participation is more significant in rural (36.7%) than in urban areas (17.8%).

At the age of 3, Roma children's participation in pre-primary education is over 12 times smaller than the national average. At 4 years, the gap shrinks down to a Roma child participation which is 7 times more reduced than the national average, and at 5 years the gap drops even more with a Roma child participation rate roughly 5 times smaller than countrywide participation.

Whilst for the group of 6-year-olds the usual tendency in the European Union is that almost three quarters go to school (and only one quarter to kindergarten), in Romania the trend is reversed, with nearly three quarters of children going to kindergarten and only one quarter to school. At the age of 6, the share of Roma children that are in school is over 5 times lower than the national average.

The main reason for non-enrolment in kindergarten is lack of financial resources (44.7%).

57.6% of parents declare that one of their children has dropped out of kindergarten or school, while 21.1% have two children in this situation. 44.22% of the children aged 7-11 are not currently attending/have dropped out of school, whereas 64.62% of the children in the 12-16 age group share the same fate.

Dropout is mainly due to financial reasons (41.8%). Other parents (12.5%) placed responsibility for their children's school leaving upon the education system. Group interviews revealed many manifestations of the inequitable and biased treatment parents and/or their children were subject to in school by teachers, and majority children and parents.

Only 29.2% of the parents who had at least one child no longer in school declared that the child was not working at all, whereas 56.4% of them stated that the child was doing occasional or frequent work inside the household and 22.7% of parents said that the child was doing occasional or frequent work outside the household.

Marriage is not a noteworthy reason for dropping out of school; only 6.6% of parents brought it up. It is however important to highlight that of the 41 marriage-related dropout cases, all the cases were girls.

Parents didn't name grade retention among dropout reasons, even though, on average, their children failed the grade 1.7 times. Most of the children who dropped out (47.6%) were held back once, 38% twice and 12% three times.

As for the children who have never been in school, the reason for their non-enrolment is lack of financial resources (55.8%). We may add to this category the other 13.7% that are out of school because they have to work inside the household. For the children aged 12-16 years, the work inside the household is pointed out as a reason for non-enrolment by one third of respondents, whereas for the 7-11 age group this reason was not encountered.

There are twice as many urban parents as rural parents (6.1% and 2.9% respectively) who haven't enrolled their child in school for economic reasons.

The perceived futility of school is a reason for non-enrolment more often encountered in the city (17.5%) than in the village (9.4%). The "futility of school" is less reiterated for children of 7-11 years than for those who are 12-16 years (10.9% compared to 21.1%). The higher frequency of this reason

among the 12 to 16-year-olds who have never been in school and the greater share of girls may be a sign of the fact that, for the girls of this age, school could be considered less important than for boys. School is considered futile in the city (2.9%) four times more often than in the country (0.7%).

Lack of transportation is a reason for non-enrolment invoked solely in rural areas.

Most children don't even have their own desk to do their homework on, they don't spend any time or less than an hour on their homework, and their family can seldom help them with schoolwork.

Most parents (86.5%) declared that there was no one close to the child who stayed in education for longer, whereas 38.6% of the very few who said the opposite didn't find that person to be successful in life.

The majority of respondents (65%) state that the reason for which they send their children to school is the expectation of them "getting an education". 14.1% of parents think that it is important to enrol children in school for them to learn a trade, while 7.1% assert that going to school could secure them a better life. The expectation that school should provide the child with a qualification is gender-influenced as it is almost exclusively encountered in the case of boys.

Almost half of the subjects want their children to attain an educational level beyond compulsory schooling. In urban areas, more parents opt for professions such as business owner, seller, guardian, as well as accountant, football player, beautician; in rural areas, more value is given to occupations like physician, teacher, bricklayer, mechanic or electrician.

Parents see school education as a means for their children to avoid a troublesome life like theirs, but also as a future-planning tool (that may equip them with a trade, a job, independence, recognition, and the capacity of making a difference for Roma communities).

Parents seem to appreciate most at a teacher qualities like seriousness, dedication, undiscriminatory attitude, strictness, and capacity to discipline. 38% of parents say they are not pleased with the teachers at their child's school, whereas 34.5% of parents state they have no reasons to be unhappy about it.

Parents note the teachers' indifference to the humiliation and embarrassment that Roma children feel because of the way other children relate to them, as well as the discriminatory treatment that some Roma children and parents receive in school, especially those living in precarious conditions.

Parents that participated in focus groups stressed the fact that the mediator was the only person from school who stayed directly in touch with them, communicating on a regular basis and providing support when necessary. They reproach teachers for not taking a close interest in children, for not visiting them at home and, as a consequence of lacking interest, for not being aware of the serious problems they are faced with.

As concerns the skills and knowledge that children acquire in school, parents are pleased about these to a great extent (about 64% of them). Parents' satisfaction with their children's school-acquired skills does not seem to be supported by what they are saying about the actual knowledge acquired in various fields.

51.2% of parents declared that their children's schools didn't have optional Romani language lessons on offer. About 63% and almost 69% of parents say that their children speak Romani and understand it well respectively, but they are doing much worse when it comes to reading and writing.

Most respondents (24.7%) consider that the ideal age for marriage in children should be 20 years, an age when one has already finished 12 grades. Hence, marriage should not be a negative factor for school participation (24.7% declare this for boys, and 25.6% for girls).

While 14.2% of parents consider that the age for marriage in a girl should be 16 years (an age where one could only finish secondary education), only 11.4% of them state that the same age is desired for boys. Marriage under 17 is more desired for girls than for boys (33% and 22% respectively).

Most children (89.3%) do have identity documents (birth certificates), and only for 10.7% of respondents' children their lack could be the reason for not attending school. Nonetheless, survey respondents did not quote this reason among those underlying non-enrollment.

The absence of identity documents in parents is a marginal issue if we consider the share of undocumented people, but it is relevant for the study of the causes that lead to child non-enrollment in school. While 71.4% of

parents with ID documents enrolled their children in school at some point, only 55.9% of parents without identity papers did the same.

47% of the interviewed parents think that a Roma child is generally treated in school the same as a non-Roma child, whereas 39.9% of them answer that a Roma child is normally treated worse. Parents' perception of Roma children's school treatment is generally more positive when it comes to the respondents in the sample comprised of the households where all children are currently participating in a form of learning, compared to the households with dropout children. Hence, 65% of the first respondents consider that, in school, a Roma child is treated the same as a non-Roma child and 26.2% consider that a Roma child is treated worse than a child who is not Roma.

No significant differences are reported in the perception of school discrimination based on the language spoken in the household (be it Romanian, Romani, or Hungarian). Respondents' job stability and therefore financial stability leads to better social integration and a more reduced perception of school discrimination. Equally, respondents with higher educational levels tend to find school discrimination less significant.

Almost 60% of Roma kindergarten-goers are taught in segregated kindergarten groups (where more than 50% of children are Roma). At kindergarten, 11.7% of Roma children learn in all-Roma groups.

In 56.5% of the households where there is at least one out-of-school child, Roma students learn in segregated classes (where more than 50% of students are Roma). 9.1% of Roma students learn in all-Roma classes.

Segregation is more often encountered in primary school, where 64.5% of Roma students learn in segregated classes, whereas its middle school percentage is 53% (this may also be due to the fact that the share of Roma students who attend middle school is more reduced). In primary school, 9.8% of Roma students learn in all-Roma classes, and 9.5% in middle school.

Class-level school segregation tendencies are stronger in rural areas, where 68.6% of Roma students learn in segregated classes compared to 47.6% in the city.

64% of Roma children from Romani-speaking families learn in segregated classes as compared to 48.3% of children from Romanian-speaking households. This may be explained through a more pronounced residential

segregation among Romani language speakers, as well as larger discrimination against traditional Roma.

72.7% of respondents think that it is better for Roma students to learn together with non-Roma children. While 85.1% of the subjects who don't speak Romani opt for integrated education, 65.4% of Romani-speaking parents make this choice.

More than three quarters of the Roma subjects included in the sample (76.6%) have never heard about the Ministry of Education Order from 2007 banning the school segregation of Roma children. 66.4% of the parents who are familiar with this ministerial order have found out about it from the media and 29.3% have received the information from school.

INTRODUCTION

Recent research on Roma children's school participation point to an alarming reality: Roma children are more likely to drop out of school than their peers of different ethnicity (EUMAP 2007:25); 4 out of 5 unschooled children are Roma (Presidential Commission Report 2007:8); and Roma children reach significantly lower levels of school participation as regards both primary education (*idem*), and secondary and higher education (Fleck and Rughini 2008:157; 167). Beyond actual school participation, a link has been detected between parents' negative attitude towards education and children's dropout (Roma Inclusion Barometer 2007:72). Although it is acknowledged as a problem, Roma children's participation in education has not been subject to quantitative assessment in the past few years. Recently published studies relied either on secondary data analysis or on qualitative assessment. This research started from the need to get a clear understanding over the dimensions of non-attendance and dropout and over their underlying causes, using a national representative sample of Roma parents with school-age children. The research was conducted as part of the UNICEF-funded project entitled "Dimensions of Early Childhood Education and School Participation of Roma in Romania".

Throughout implementation, the research was modified several times; the most important changes were the decision to apply two distinct questionnaires (one for the families where all children go to school, and the other for the families reporting at least one case of preschool and school non-participation or dropout) and the decision to pair quantitative data with focus group-based qualitative research data. Initially, the research team planned to apply a single questionnaire to a national representative sample of Roma adults with preschool or school children in their family – a sample with an approximate headcount of 1,100 subjects and a maximum allowable sampling error of $\pm 3\%$. The questionnaire was supposed to collect information about one of the children, selected based on a rule that would provide equal chances for selection. Such an approach would have raised at least two interpretation problems: the size of "participation" and "dropout" sub-samples (550 subjects each) would have been too small to generalize the findings to the entire population of Roma children as regards school participation, non-participation or dropout (the sampling error would have been $\pm 4.2\%$ for each sub-sample); in addition, the answer distribution for some variables would have reduced the number of statistical analyses that

could have been performed. Another issue stemming from the selection of children in the household would have been the fact that the “participation” sub-sample would have included both subjects from families where all children were attending a form of schooling, and subjects from families where there was at least one drop-out. The inherent assumption would have been that there were no differences between the children from families faced with non-participation and dropout and the children from families where all children were attending a form of education. Our hypothesis (later confirmed by the findings) was that a child who was in school at the time of interview was more likely to later drop out if at least one of his/her siblings was not attending or had dropped out of school. In order to identify the profile of Roma drop-outs and to make comparisons in the main variables between drop-outs and school-goers, we made the decision to create two separate national representative samples, with a headcount of approximately 1,100 subjects each. The second decision – to complement the survey with qualitative research – was aimed at identifying some factors that influence Roma children’s educational path, other than those already included in the questionnaire, at understanding more clearly Roma parents’ attitude towards school and the reasons that lead to temporary or permanent disruption of schooling, and at collecting relevant information about school experience.

The major targets of the questionnaire related to the drop-outs from the families under scrutiny were parent’s socioeconomic status (with occupational profile, academic attainment and goods available in the household); parent’s attitude towards education (measured based on their attitude towards preschool education, including early childhood education; the level of education desired for the child; the occupation desired for the child); child schooling (enrolment in day nursery, kindergarten, school; reasons for enrolment/non-enrolment in different forms of education; reasons for taking the child out of different educational forms); school and schooling experience (segregation at the level of the educational establishment or of the class/group; time spent daily by the child on making his homework, learning support received at home, learning conditions at home, acquired knowledge and skills, and grade retention history); parent’s satisfaction with the educational establishment (perception of the relative quality of the child’s school, cultural diversity in school, satisfaction with the skills and knowledge acquired by the child); economic factors with potential impact on the child’s educational path (working inside or outside the household); cultural factors with potential impact on the child’s educational path (desirable age for marriage both in girls, and in boys; language spoken at home; religion; religious participation). Most items from both questionnaires were identical

in order to allow a comparison of the answers for the same variable between the two samples.

The questionnaires were applied from December 2009 to January 2010 on a sample of 985 Roma adults with at least one drop-out child in the household and on a sample of 979 Roma adults with all children in their household attending school or preschool facilities. The subjects' ethnicity was determined through self-identification (the questionnaire was applied only to those who had declared to be ethnic Roma in the selection questionnaire). Both samples are probabilistic and stratified. Fifty-six Roma compact communities were selected from 30 counties and the city of Bucharest. The size of area sub-samples corresponds as a percentage to the population of the territory, as determined by the 2002 census. Upon analysing the databases, it was found that some of the school participation cases were in fact either non-enrolment or dropout cases. These cases were excluded from the analysis, cutting down the final headcount in the "participation" database to 760 cases. The maximum allowable error for the dropout sample is $\pm 3.1\%$ and $\pm 3.5\%$ for the sample comprised of school-going children. The sampling was performed by the Institute for Public Policy (IPP) based on a sampling scheme previously developed by Tiberiu Cnab.

Focus groups were held from 20th of February to 5th of March 2010 in Cluj-Napoca, Timi oara, Craiova, Constan a, Piatra Neam , and Bucharest. They touched on different dimensions of non-participation and dropout, including economic situation, schooling costs, discrimination, segregation, absence of mediation between non-Roma teachers, Roma parents and community, early marriages, community ideology with regard to school as a social mobility tool, school experience, and the shortcoming of monocultural education. The participants were selected based on their familiarity with child education issues. The selection of focus group participants sought equitable representation in terms of gender (a comparable number of men and women) and living area (urban-rural), and a greater cultural diversity (we selected participants from both integrated and traditional communities). The transcript of focus groups was done by our colleagues from Romani CRISS - Carmen Brici, Cornel Ciotea and Roxana Gheorghe, whom we thank for their contribution. We would also like to thank the financier (UNICEF Romania) for the kindness showed to us when we asked permission to conduct complementary quality research.

The report is built on three separate sections: the first chapter tackles early childhood education (day nursery and kindergarten), with a focus on

motivational factors and causes of non-enrolment and low preschool participation; the second chapter is aimed at school education, addressing motivational and de-motivational factors for school participation and causes of non-enrolment and dropout, as well as issues regarding the link between school participation and parents' socioeconomic status, possession of identity documents, child labor inside and outside the household, parents' perception of the desirable age for marriage, parents' satisfaction with school and school offer in general. The third section introduces data on school discrimination – parents' perception of ethnic discrimination in school, school segregation tendencies, and parents' knowledge of anti-segregation laws.

1. ACCESS TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

1.1. Day Nursery Participation

Roma participation in day nursery is relatively low, with a share of Roma children who attended day nursery varying between 4.2% and 8.1%. A day nursery participation rate of 4.2% was reported in the database that comprised children who dropped out during their educational path, whereas the database comprising the children who were still in school reported a rate of 8.1%¹. In terms of children's living area, more children attended day nursery in rural area (5.3%) than in urban area (3.7%).

The children who attended day nursery usually come from families that are more dynamic on the labour market, families where the housewives account for 25.6% compared to 58.9% in the overall sample. Hence, when it comes to children who attended day nursery, the share of permanently employed parents is 28.2% (compared to only 8.3% in the overall sample).

The parents of the children who go to day nursery have generally achieved a higher level of education than those of the children who are not enrolled in nursery. Thus, 43.6% of parents with children who have been in day nursery completed at least middle school, compared to 27.9% in the overall sample. Children with illiterate parents (who can't read and write) are in the greatest number (97.8% don't attend day nursery).

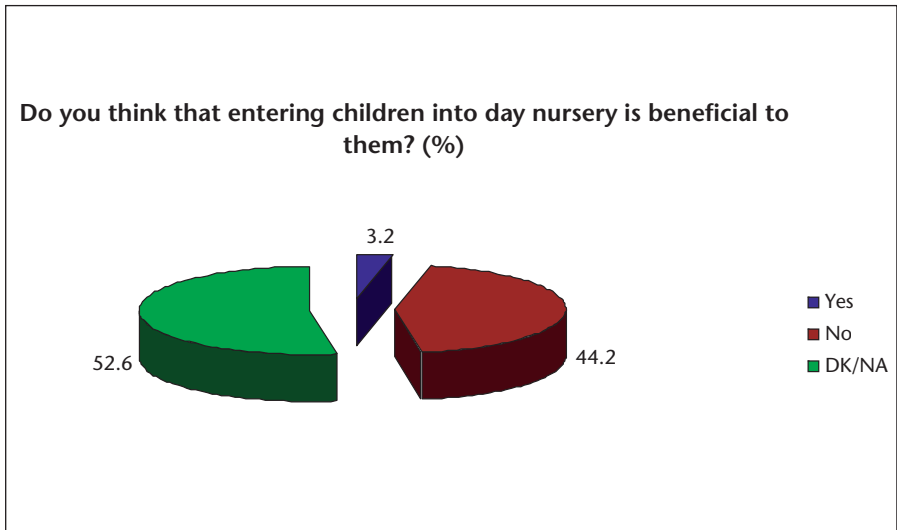
In terms of material resources, the parents of the children who participate in day nursery are more likely to earn more than RON 500 as a net monthly income than those of the children who don't go to nursery, and the family is more likely to have a car and a library. Hence, 56.4% of the families whose children went to day nursery are currently earning monthly incomes that exceed RON 500 per family (36.9% in the overall sample), and 18% of these families own a car (14.7% in the overall sample). 51.3% of the families whose children attended day nursery have a library at home compared to 23.8% in the overall sample.

¹ The analysis will further focus only on the data regarding the Roma children from the sample comprised of the households with at least one dropout child. We will use footnotes (for text fluency and because the report refers to dropout in particular) to point out any data referring to the households where all children participate in education when there are significant gaps between these data and the sample of the households with at least one dropout child.

Roma children who attended day nursery come from traditional families to a smaller extent, with a share of Romani-speaking families of only 12.8%, whilst 61.9% of the families in the overall sample use Romani language on a daily basis.

1.2. Perceived Usefulness of Day Nursery in Early Childhood Education

Most respondents are undecided (Don't know/No answer) with regard to the usefulness of day nursery. Anyhow, their occupational and educational profiles are relatively similar to those of the respondents who find day nursery futile. Actually, some of the subjects who expressed no opinion on day nursery (No answer) might have a similar view to those who find nursery futile, but prefer not to answer due to the social desirability bias. The profile analysis of those who believe that enrolling children in day nursery is not beneficial (44.2% of respondents) is illustrated hereunder.



The occupational profile of those who believe that day nursery enrolment does not bring benefits to the child reveals that most of these persons are inactive on the labour market. Hence, more than three quarters (76.5%) of the respondents who see day nursery as a futile facility fall into the following occupational categories: stay-at-home parent (58.4%), unemployed (15.8%), and retired (1.1%). Unsurprisingly, when the woman in the couple is a housewife (and even more so when the man is unemployed and/or a family member is a retired grandparent), day nursery is not attractive or interesting

for the family. Such families lack the pragmatic motivation to resort to such an institution because they don't have the constraint of salaried work that makes couples with both working parents value day nursery.

As far as the living area goes, the greatest part of respondents lives in predominantly suburban areas (42.6%) and rural areas (34.1%). In these locations, day nurseries are quasi-inexistent and access to a nursery in town is problematic due to the child's young age and travel discomfort (as well as due to problems related to road and transportation infrastructure in those areas), without mentioning travel costs. In suburban and rural areas, day nursery is perceived as a futile facility because of its inaccessibility.

The educational profile of those who find day nursery futile features more than three quarters of respondents (75.2%) who didn't complete middle school. Some of these subjects may tend to see day nursery more as a child care establishment than as an educational facility. This kind of perception paired with one or both parents' labour market inactivity amplify respondents' scepticism about day nursery usefulness.

56% of the respondents that find day nursery futile² speak Romani language frequently at home, which is a sign that Roma traditional households (if we consider the use of Romani language an indicator of traditionalism) accrue multiple drawbacks (in terms of education, housing, labour market access) which shape their perception of day nursery.

Beyond these structural factors, Roma parents' reluctance to day nursery is explained through mistrust in the capacity of this institution to provide proper child care and protection. Moreover, leaving the child in the care of strangers from a very early age is against motherhood norms, especially in traditional communities. For this reason, in some cases, although parents are constrained to work in order to provide for their family and there is no other support person in the family, the child follows their parents at work, staying under their close supervision:

² In the households where all children participate in education, the percentage of the respondents who find day nursery futile is 40.8%.

...he is my child and I want to raise him close to me. I don't want to have to worry about him. Is it OK to go to the wholesale store and think "Oh, my God, I wonder how my children are doing?" if they are in day nursery? It's not the same as when he is with me.

(Focus group participant, Constanța)

1.3. Kindergarten Participation

As concerns today's generation of children and youth (under 19 years), almost a quarter (24.1%) have experienced kindergarten. Similar results were found in the research *Roma Inclusion Barometer*³ from 2007, which indicates that 80% of Roma children aged 0-6 years attend neither kindergarten nor day nursery. On the other hand, the number of children who attended kindergarten in the sample of Roma households where all children are currently participating in education is sensibly higher (66.6%), comparable with the kindergarten participation rate of the overall population in Romania⁴ (72.8% for the 2005-2006 academic year).

As regards the Roma children in the sample, their kindergarten participation is higher in rural areas than in urban regions. Hence, whilst 36.7% of Roma children from rural areas attended kindergarten, only 17.8% of Roma children from the city went to kindergarten.

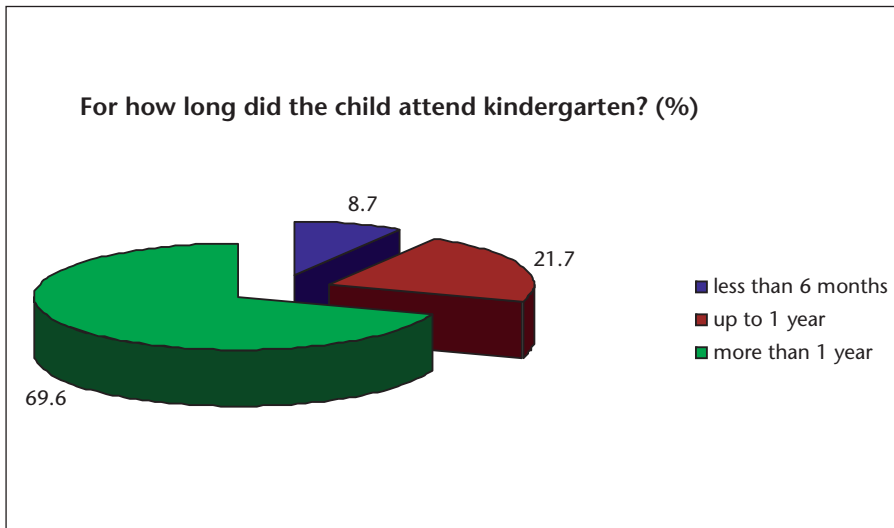
Like for those who attended day nursery, the families of the Roma children who have had the experience of kindergarten are better positioned on the labour market, which comes out from the smaller share of housewives (26.9%) which is more than 50% lower than the percentage of housewives in the overall sample. The share of permanently employed persons in the households of the children who attended kindergarten is 34.6%, while in the overall sample the same share is four times smaller (8.7%). We stress the fact that, in terms of the demand for early childhood education, parents' occupational status plays a paramount role.

³ Bădescu G, Grigoraș V., Rughiniș C., Voicu M., Voicu O., *Roma Inclusion Barometer*, Open Society Foundation, 2007, p. 70, <http://www.edrc.ro/docs/docs/cercetari/Barometrul-incluziunii-romilor.pdf,2007>, accessed on 3 June 2010

⁴ This mean has been worked out for the 3-6 age group from the data of the research *Tackling Social and Cultural Inequalities through Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe*, Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA P9 Eurydice), 2009, accessed on 8 May 2010 at http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/98RO.pdf. See the table below.

Romani language is spoken in 19.7% of the households where children attended kindergarten compared to 61.9% in the overall sample. 7.6% of the households where the children attended kindergarten have a library with more than 50 volumes, and their share is over three times greater than that in the overall sample (2.2% of households with more than 50 volumes in their library).

Most children who experienced kindergarten (69.6%) attended that facility for more than a year⁵, whereas 21.7% of them for less than a year. 8.7% of those who were enrolled in kindergarten spent there a very short period of time of less than 6 months. (N=207). Twice as many urban children (11.9%) as rural children (5.7%) had a very brief kindergarten experience (less than 6 months).



1.4. Preschool and School Participation in Children Aged 3-6 Years

We will explore preschool and school participation for the ages 3-6 years using as a starting point for sample data comparison the pre-primary and primary education attendance indicators for Romania and the mean of the 27 EU countries⁶. Although data collection methodologies obviously differ

⁵ In the sample comprised of the households where all children are currently enrolled in a form of education, the share of those who attended kindergarten for more than a year is 83.2%.

(including the reporting years), we believe that such comparative data are relevant for public education policy design.

Years	Roma sample		RO		EU 27	
	ISCED 0	ISCED 1	ISCED 0	ISCED 1	ISCED 0	ISCED 1
3	4,3 (N=116)	0,0	55,3	0,0	73,9	0,2
4	10,1 (N=128)	0,0	75,8	0,0	82,3	4,5
5	15,6 (N=146)	0,0	86,4	0,0	77,0	15,8
6	22,9 (N=118)	5,0 (N=118)	73,8	26,2	26,8	73,0

Data source for RO and EU 27: Eurostat, UOE, 2005/2006 academic year data, pre-primary education (ISCED 0) and primary education (ISCED 1).

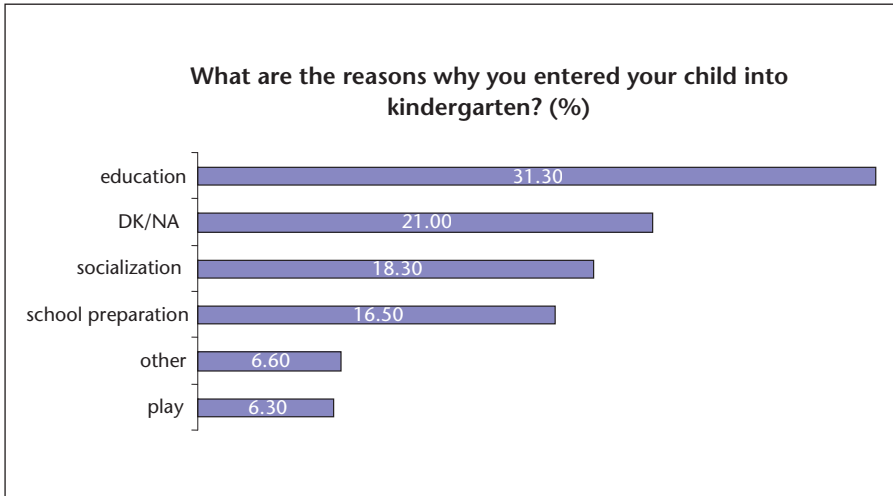
Like Romanian and EU figures, our research data show a similar trend – for the 3-6 age group, pre-primary and primary education participation rates step up as age increases. In the case of Roma children however, there is a considerable educational participation gap for the age group under study. The gap widens as the age of the analysed child group gets younger. Hence, at the age of 3 years, Roma children’s participation in pre-primary education is over 12 times smaller than the national average. At 4 years, the gap shrinks down to a Roma child participation which is 7 times more reduced than the national average, and at 5 years the gap drops even more with a Roma child participation rate roughly 5 times smaller than countrywide participation.

As for the Roma children aged 6 years, their participation in education reaches roughly 28%, with almost 23% going to kindergarten and 5% to school. The educational participation rate for 6-year-old Roma children is over three times lower than the national or the European mean. It is interesting to notice that at the age of 6 (when school starts in Romania) the share of Roma children who are in school is over 5 times smaller than the national average, with Romania showing a different participation trend among 6-year-olds than the EU, where school starts at younger ages. Whilst for the group of 6-year-olds the usual tendency in the European Union is that almost three quarters go to school (and only one quarter to kindergarten), in Romania the trend is reversed, with nearly three quarters of children going to kindergarten and only one quarter to school.

⁶ The data for comparison were taken from the research *Tackling Social and Cultural Inequalities through Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe*, Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA P9 Eurydice), 2009, accessed on 8 May 2010 at http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/98RO.pdf

1.5. Motivational Factors for Preschool Participation

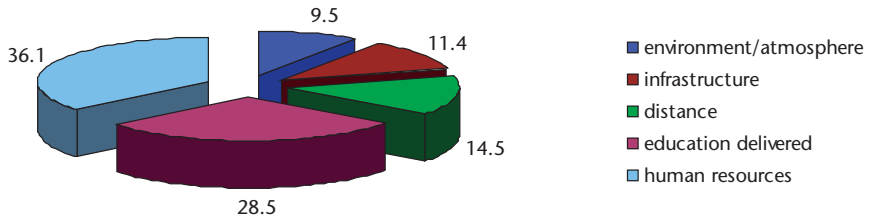
The main reasons that respondents took into account when they enrolled their children in kindergarten are the need for learning and getting ready for school (47.8%). Other respondents see kindergarten as a place where children can socialize (18.3%) or play (6.3%). (N=224)



Attending kindergarten with the purpose of getting ready for school is mentioned almost 3 times more often as a reason for kindergarten enrolment in urban areas (24.3%) than in rural areas (8.8%). At the same time, this rural-urban distribution is reversed when it comes to socialization-aiming kindergarten attendance. Thus, 25.7% of rural parents explain child participation in kindergarten through a desire of socializing in comparison to only 10.8% of urban parents.

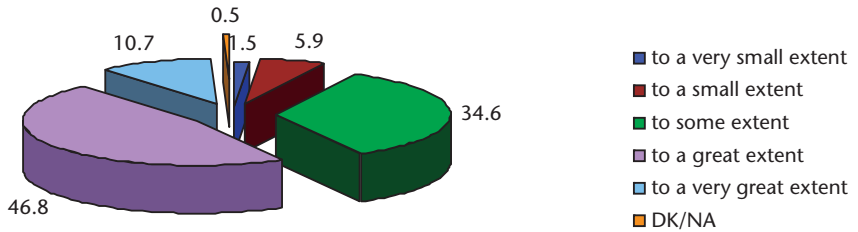
From the 158 subjects who answered to the question about their satisfaction with the child's kindergarten attendance, we found that the human resources (the teacher) available in kindergarten and the education delivered are the most important factors mentioned by parents when appreciating kindergarten (36.1% and 28.5% respectively). The distance to kindergarten (14.5%) and the material conditions (11.4%) are relatively important, so is the socializing environment/atmosphere (we included here the absence of discriminatory behaviours, of violence among children and the quality of social surroundings/peers in kindergarten).

What do you like most about the kindergarten your child used to attend? (%)



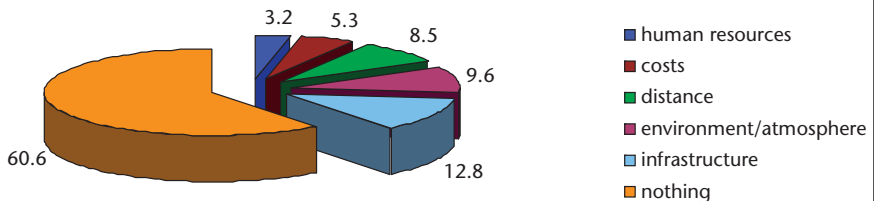
The respondents from the households where the children attend kindergarten are generally pleased with the education their children receive. Hence, more than half of respondents (57.5%) are happy with the services provided by the child's kindergarten, 34.6% are relatively happy and only 7.4% are unhappy with their children's kindergarten acquisitions. (N=205) The rather positive overall reaction to what children are learning in kindergarten may also come from parents' relatively low expectations with regard to the level of knowledge desired to be acquired in kindergarten. Moreover, the lack of a grading system similar to the one used in school makes room for a more relaxed attitude from parents regarding the knowledge children acquire in kindergarten, hence to a generally high level of satisfaction. It is difficult for a parent to estimate how much the child acquires in kindergarten and how much from other places s/he attends given that, as already seen, the time spent in kindergarten is relatively short.

To what extent are you pleased with what your child learned in kindergarten (knowledge, skills)? (%)

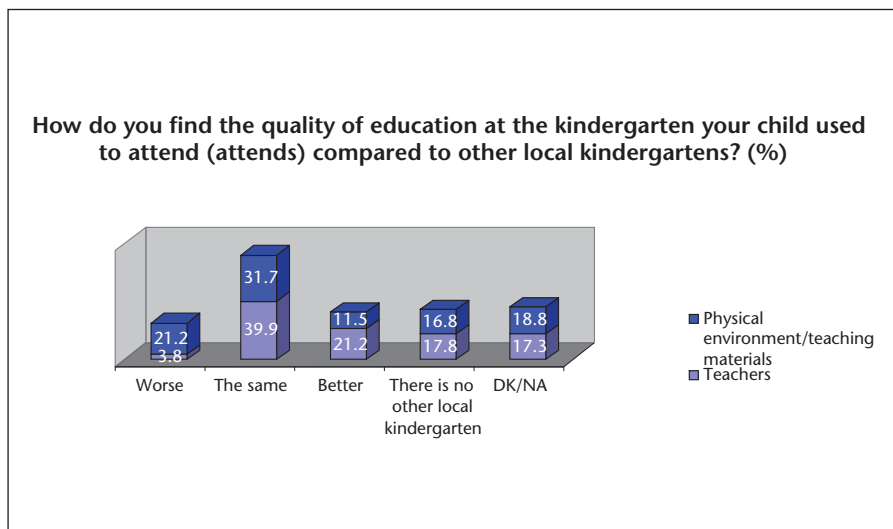


The (long) distance to kindergarten (8.5%), lack of adequate material conditions (12.8%) and the costs (5.3%) are negative factors according to respondents. The inappropriate social and relational environment (cases of discrimination, violence, “bad” social surroundings) encountered at kindergarten is sometimes a source of non-satisfaction for parents (9.6%). (N=94)

What do you dislike most about the kindergarten your child used to attend? (%)

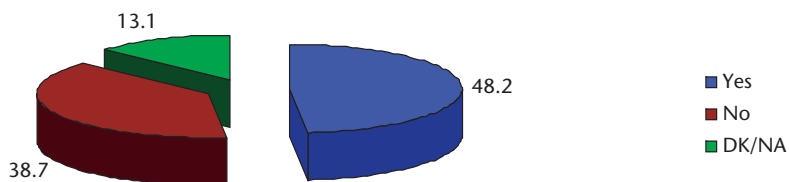


In the case of the respondents who have access to other local kindergartens, the comparison with these facilities is rather favourable to the teacher (21.2% answer “better teacher” in their own kindergarten vs. 3.8% “worse teacher” in other kindergartens) and it is unfavourable to the existing material conditions of the kindergarten and the teaching and learning materials used in the educational process (21.2% - poorer quality of the physical environment and teaching materials in other kindergartens vs. 11.5% - better quality in their own kindergarten). The quality of education is chiefly understood as the quality of human resources, whereas the physical environment and teaching materials are needed but of secondary importance. The greatest number of respondents thinks that the human (39.9%) and material resources (31.7%) available in the kindergarten attended by their children are similar to those from other local kindergartens.



Almost half of the parents included in the sample who have children aged 3-6 years plan to enrol their children in kindergarten starting next academic year. (N=137) 38.7% of parents declare they will not send their child to kindergarten, whereas 13.1% of the subjects are undecided about it.

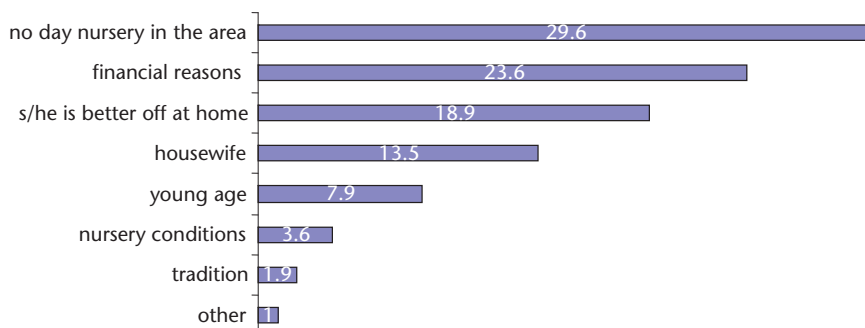
For the academic year to come, do you plan on enrolling your child in kindergarten? (%)



1.6. Causes of Non-Enrolment and Low Participation in Pre-Primary Education

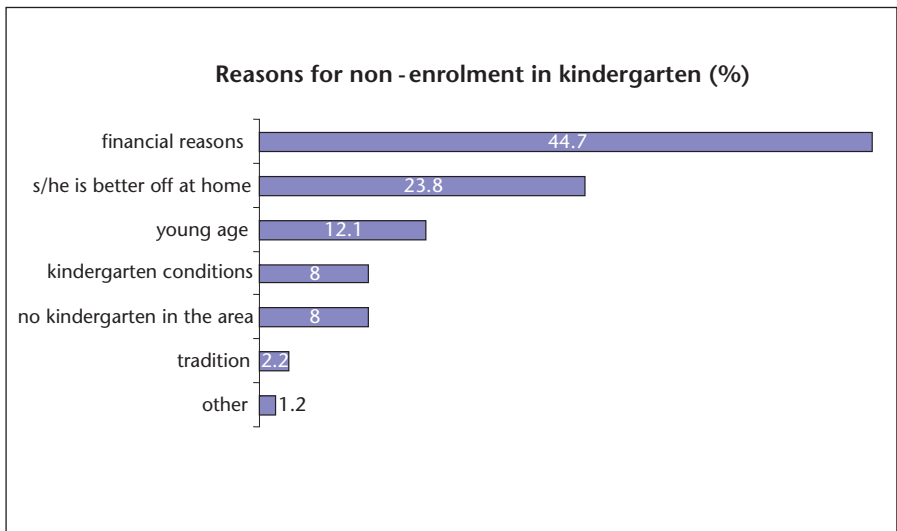
The most common reason invoked by parents for not enrolling children into day nursery is the lack of such a facility in the residential area (29.6%). The second most frequent reason is lack of financial resources (23.6%). The preference for family childcare (11.8%) and the mother's housewife status (13.5%) are two other reasons for not sending the child to day nursery. (N=716) Tradition does not play a chief role with regard to non-enrolment in day nursery as only 1.9% of parents mention this argument for not entering their children into day nursery.

Reasons for non - enrolment in day nursery (%)



Non-enrolment due to lack of day nurseries in the subjects' living area transpires more from rural population's answers (52.4%) compared to only 6.8% in urban population. This shows the poor rural coverage of day nurseries.

As far as **non-enrolment in kindergarten** goes, this is mainly due to parents' economic situation. 44.7% of the respondents to this question did not enrol their child in kindergarten because of financial shortcomings. 35.9% of respondents consider that it is better for the child to stay home than to go to kindergarten, also because of the child's small age. Kindergarten conditions (including lack of vacancies, distrust in the staff, etc.) do not stimulate 8% of parents, who mention these as a reason for not enrolling their children into kindergarten. Only 8% of respondents don't have access to services provided by kindergartens because they lack such an institution in their surrounding area. (N=588) Like in the case of day nursery non-enrolment, tradition does not play a significant role as regards non-participation in pre-primary education (kindergarten).



Most of the parents (44.7%) who took their children out of kindergarten base their decision of discontinuing kindergarten attendance on financial shortcomings. 34% of parents with children who are no longer in kindergarten complain about the poor quality of kindergarten to motivate dropout. Some of the issues that lead to poor kindergarten quality in parents' perception are the teachers' lack of interest, lack of space/insufficient

vacancies, long distance to kindergarten from home, violence, discriminatory treatment. 12.8% of the parents who took their children out of kindergarten had to make this decision because their residential status changed due to work abroad. Other reasons (8.5%) given by the parents are the child's young age or (current or potential) poor health. (N=47)

Conclusions

Enrolling children into day nursery is not a common practice, especially in poorer families with lower educational levels. The main reason for non-attendance is lack of such a facility in the respondents' residential proximity. The perceived usefulness of day nursery is generally low, and this type of facility is not viewed as an educational establishment.

Parents' occupational status plays a paramount role when it comes to their demand for early childhood education. The need for learning and school readiness are the main reasons for which the Roma parents included in the sample send their children to kindergarten. City parents are more frequent to invoke school readiness as a reason for enrolling their child in kindergarten, whereas rural parents are mainly motivated by child socialization.

The quality of education, comprising the quality of human resources (early childhood education teacher), is more important to parents than the physical environment and teaching materials available in that kindergarten.

Most of the parents who took their children out of kindergarten base their decision of discontinuing kindergarten attendance on financial shortcomings. The poor quality of the education received (perceived as the teachers' lack of interest, insufficient vacancies, long distance to kindergarten from home) is yet another important reason for withdrawing children from kindergarten.

2. SCHOOL PARTICIPATION

Ethnic Roma's school participation rate has been measured by several surveys throughout years, but the data collected are influenced by the number of people who identify themselves as Roma at the time of research (this number has been on a constant rise since the beginning of 1990 due to a variety of causes).

According to the data in the 2002 census, the Roma spend on average 6.8 years in school, while for the majority population this mean goes up to 11.2 years. Furthermore, the census showed that, among completely unschooled children, Roma girls are over-represented (39%) compared to Roma boys (29%), and that in general the percentage of unschooled Roma is much bigger (34%) than that of non-Roma (5%). Ministry of National Education data regarding children's inclusion in the Romanian education system indicated that, in the 2004/2005 academic year, the greatest number was reported in the primary education (89,784), while taking a dive in both early childhood education (23,051) and lower secondary education (62,619) and high school (11,196)⁷. The ministerial report concluded that on the whole, from 1990 to that date, the number of Roma children included in the education system had been continuously rising⁸. In the 2002/2003 academic year, the number of Roma school-going children grew from 109,325 (in 1990) to 158,128, holding a share of 3.5% in the total number of school-enrolled children, and went up to 7% in the 2006/2007 academic year.

These data however don't necessarily reflect a rise in Roma children's schooling rate. The relative increase may come from the fact that a greater number of learners who are already in school identify themselves as Roma, whereas the situation of the most marginalized children – who have never been schooled – remains unchanged. A EUMAP report from 2007 shows that there is still a great gap between the schooling rate of the majority population and that of the Roma, with rates for the majority population of 94% in primary education, 69% in secondary education and 5% in tertiary education, whilst for the Roma these figures are 76%, 17%, and 1% respectively⁹. Moreover, this Report proves that, if nationwide the early

⁷ These statistics were made by the General Directorate for Education in National Minority Languages of the Ministry of Education.

⁸ See the document *"Realizările învățământului pentru romi între 2005-2008"*.

childhood education participation rate was 66% during the 2000/2001 academic year, it was much lower (20%) among Roma preschool children. (EUMAP 2007, p. 346)

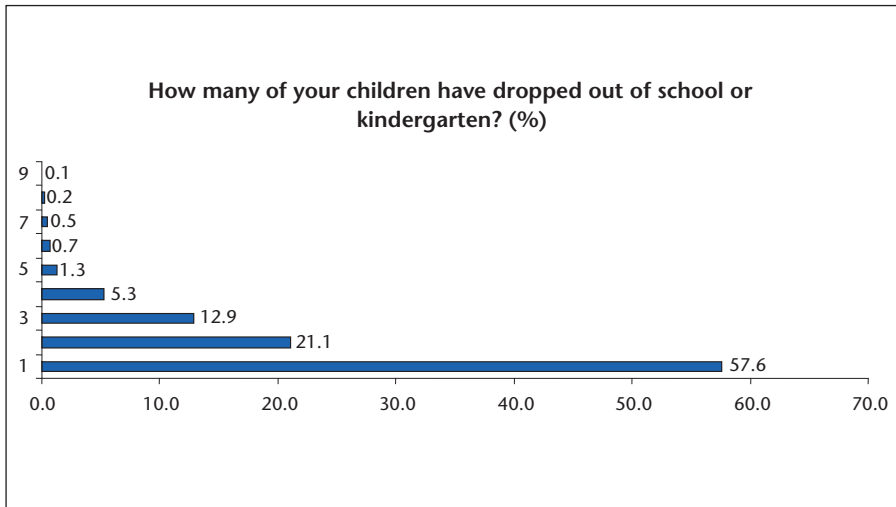
Based on these statistics, some reinforce their negative prejudices about the Roma, built on the assumption that they don't give importance to school participation, they don't want to learn or that in their "culture" school education is not given any value and consequently they are "uneducable". Breaking down these stereotypes and addressing Roma's experiences in this field based on their effective access to school education, the research conducted on this issue¹⁰ reveals the links between the perceived importance of school and the multitude of everyday reality factors (from macro-structural factors of social exclusion, through micro-mechanisms of unequal treatment in educational establishments to cultural conceptions that support them). Our research comes to complete these studies with a description of the way in which the parents that have at least one out-of-school child see the issues of child participation in school (subchapter 2.2.); motivational factors for participation (2.3.); and causes of non-enrolment or dropout (2.4.). But, before we research into these issues, subchapter 2.1 hereunder looks at the link between children's school participation and their parents' socioeconomic and educational status.

⁹ EUMAP. 2007. Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma, Volume 1, p. 349, <http://www.eumap.org/topics/minority/reports/roma_education/report/vol1.pdf>, report based on the UNDP Report, 2005. Vulnerable Groups in Central and Southeastern Europe, Bratislava: UNDP.

¹⁰ For example CEDIMR-SE (The Centre for the Documentation and Information on the Minorities in South-Eastern Europe): *Minoritățile din Europa de Sud-Est. Romii din România*, 2000; Mihaela Jigău – Mihai Surdu (ed): *Participarea la educație a copiilor romi – probleme, soluții, actori*, București: Marlink Publishing House, 2002; Delia Luiza Nita – Iustina Ionescu: *Racism in Romania*, European Network Against Racism Shadow Report, Center for Legal Resources, 2006; Mihai Surdu: "Segregare școlară și reproducerea socială a inegalităților", în *O nouă provocare: Dezvoltarea Socială*, Iași: Polirom, 2006; Gabor Fleck – Cosima Rughini (ed.): *Vino mai aproape. Incluziunea și excluziunea romilor în societatea românească de azi*, 2008; Enik Magyari-Vincze – Hajnalka Harbula: *Country Report on Education: Romania*, EDUMIGROM Background Papers, Budapest: Central European University, Center for Policy Studies, 2008 (http://www.edumigrom.eu/sites/default/files/field_attachment/page/node-1817/edumigrombackgroundpaperromaniaeducation.pdf); "Împreună" Agency for Community Development: *One School for All*, 2010 (<http://blog.agentiaimpreuna.ro/?p=19#more-19>); Enik Vincze: *Community Study Report. Romania*, EDUMIGROM, 2010 (manuscript).

2.1. School Participation and Parents' Socioeconomic and Educational Status

57.6% of the parents in our sample stated that one of their children had dropped out of kindergarten or school and 21.1% of them had two children in this position, 12.9% of respondents had three children, 5.3% had four children, and 2.8% of parents had five or more children who had dropped out of school.



Taking into account parents' answers related to all the children in their household, in the 2,037 cases thus resulted we identified the following attendance distribution in terms of current participation in a form of education: 0.2% child nursery attendance, 3.5% kindergarten attendance, 0.6% school-prep year and 29.3% school attendance, whereas 66.3% of all children are not attending any type of schooling.

Looking at the parent's academic attainment, we could notice that among the parents of those children who are currently in school, 122 (20%) can't read and write, 52 can read and write, 37 didn't finish primary school, 136 (22%) completed primary education, 118 didn't finish middle school, 89 completed middle school (14.9%), 11 attended high school or vocational school but didn't graduate, and 19 did complete this educational stage (3.18%), whereas none of them completed higher education. Out of the 597 parents in this category, 13 didn't answer to this question. Comparing these figures and attendance percentages to the attendance figures in the 1,351

cases of parents who declared having an out-of-school child, we notice that in this second category many more (520, in other words 38%) can't read and write, and those who finished primary school (14%) or those who graduated from high school or vocational school (2.66%) are fewer than their peers who have children in school.

Of all children, those from rural areas go to school in greater numbers than those from urban areas. Of the 779 children living in the country, 0.6% are enrolled in day nursery, 4% in kindergarten, 1.5% in the school prep year, 31.6% in school – compared to 0%, 3.3%, 0% and 27.9% of the 1,258 children from urbanised areas. The percentage of those who don't attend any form of schooling is slightly smaller for rural children (62.3%) than for children coming from urban areas (68.8%). The bigger the city is, the smaller the percentage of children who attend one form of schooling or another is. For example, whilst 27.2% of children from big cities are enrolled in school and 69.4% of them don't attend any form of education, things are different for children in small towns: 29.7% are school-enrolled and 76.5% don't go to school.

Correlating children's school participation rate with parents' occupation, we see that this rate is smaller in the children whose parents work in the informal economy. As to the type of housing, we notice that the highest school participation rate is reported in children who live in apartment buildings, and the smallest share is held by the children living in improvised homes where almost 3 quarters don't attend any form of early childhood education or school.

86% of all children from the households where at least one child has dropped out don't have any book in the house. Moreover, in more than 9 cases out of 10, drop-outs don't have a computer at home.

Our research shows that, of the 2,037 cases on which we could collect relevant information, 597 are children aged 7-11 years, and 636 are children aged 12-16 years. Of those 597 children aged 7-11 years, 264 don't attend any form of education (44.22%). For the 636 children in the 12-16 age group, 411 have dropped out/are not participating in school (64.62%).

This trend also transpires from the findings of other research reports, as seen in the percentages presented in the table below¹¹:

	7-13 years	14-17 years
Never been in school	14,6	11,0
Incomplete primary education	40,2	12,3
Completed primary education	19,7	12,1
Incomplete lower secondary school	21,4	28,4

Another survey, conducted in 1998 by the Research Institute for the Quality of Life¹², indicates that almost 12% of the children aged 7-16 years left school before finishing compulsory education, and 18% were unschooled (they had never been included in the education system). According to the authors of the report, their percentage might be even bigger if the 'no answers' are added to the same category; moreover, they mentioned the fact that over 80% of unschooled children were Roma.

2.2. School Participation

In this subchapter, we will run through some important issues regarding parents' perception of school in terms of defined importance, knowledge/opinions about the staff working in the school where their children are enrolled, Romani language lessons, and skills acquired by youth in school.

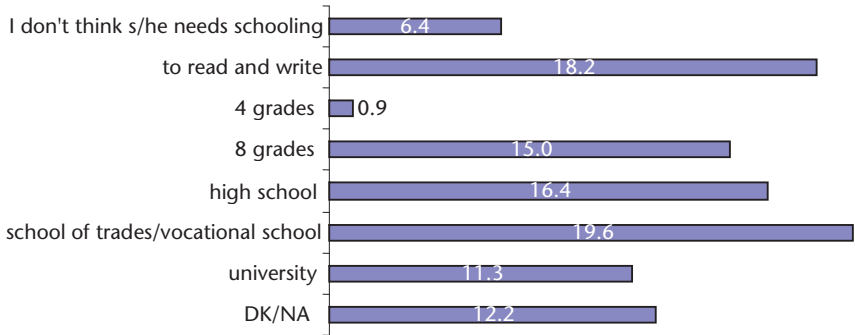
2.2.1. Importance of Schooling

The importance of schooling, as perceived by parents, can be measured using several elements that inform parents' desires for their children, such as the **level of education desired** to be achieved by the latter.

¹¹ Data compiled based on the Table 10-1 of the report *Vino mai aproape. Incluziunea și exclusiunea romilor în societatea românească de azi*, 2008, written by Gabor Fleck and Cosima Rughiniș, p. 165.

¹² Find out more about it in *Participarea la educație a copiilor romi. Probleme, soluții, actori*, București 2002, p. 49, written and published with the financial support of UNICEF Romania.

What academic attainment would you like your child to achieve?



As seen in the chart above, only 6.4% of our respondents declared that they didn't think that their boys and girls needed to go to school. Most of respondents (19.6%) would like their children to attend a school of trades, 16.4% declare that it would be great if they could achieve high school education, and 11.3% think about higher/academic education. So, almost half of those who answered to the question about the academic attainment they have in mind for their child believe that the latter should get an education beyond compulsory schooling.

If we look at our research data concerning parents' occupational status, we see that this (whether it provides a secure living or not) is a major factor defining their desires with regard to their child's learning. 65.2% of those who are permanently employed (89 cases) want their children to achieve at least high school education. 51.7% of these parents completed high school or more themselves.

79.8% of the respondents who would like an average- or higher-level education for their children have three children at most in their household, which explains the correlation between the schooling they desire for their children and the financial resources needed to make this possible.

The importance of school is indirectly acknowledged by parents through the **future professions** desired for their children. Our research data show that these professions largely require attending and graduating from a vocational school as most parents (26.4%) want their children to become <drivers>/

<mechanics>. The <business owner> option (indicating rather that they favour a certain lifestyle) is more frequently named (8.7%) than other occupations (like <seller>: 6.5%; or <bricklayer>: 5.2%; or <tailor>: 3.5%; etc.).

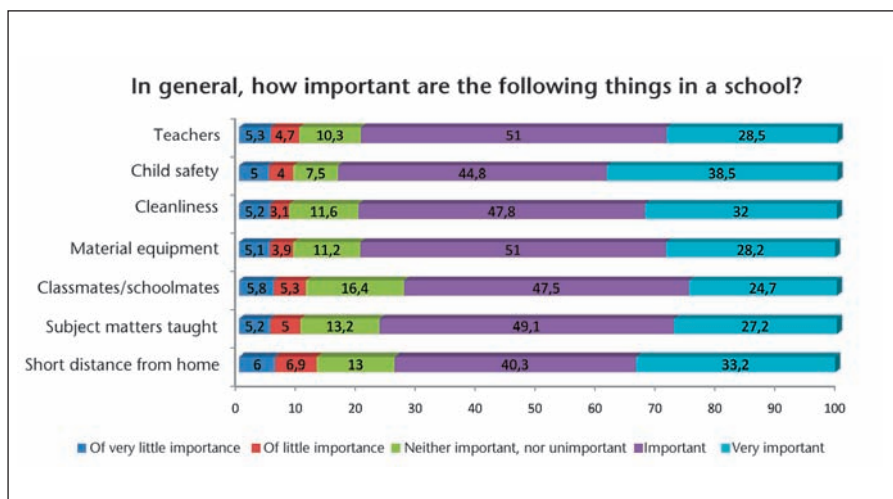


Comparing urban parents' desires with rural parents', we see that the former opt more often for occupations like <business owner> (urban populations choose this occupation seven times more than rural populations) or <seller> (five times more frequently chosen in urban centres) or guardian (six times more frequent), as well as accountant, football player, beautician, and housewife; in the country however, more value is given to professions like physician, teacher, bricklayer, mechanic, electrician.

As far as **school appraisal** is concerned, parents give major importance to child safety or lack of violence in school (nearly 83% of respondents say this factor is important or very important).

This indicator must be interpreted in the light of parents' experiences, of internalised negative prejudices and fears of how their children could be treated in school, including fear of humiliation, neglect or stigma. Once again, this proves that, unless these factors are addressed, the education system cannot be inclusive, but – despite the fact that school is recognised as important for the child's career – it will continue to stay a foreign and repellent body in the life of the people who make efforts to fit into the majority society by getting an education.

Beyond the safety issue, a great number of parents (79%) find as important and very important the quality of material resources (how classrooms, labs and libraries are equipped), as well as teaching staff performance. Still, more than 70% of those who answered to this question give almost as much importance to the subject matters taught, short distance to school from home, school cleanliness, as well as their children’s classmates or schoolmates. These data draw our attention to the fact that improved school access for (Roma) children cannot be achieved by families alone, but it needs to be aimed at through good quality education in terms of material and professional features, otherwise school participation remains just a duty which does not deliver satisfaction and expected outcomes.



As for **the role of schooling**, the parents who participated in group interviews brought forward several arguments for finishing at least compulsory education, arguments that can be grouped according to their time references. Some of these parents see school education as a means for their children to avoid their own life full of difficulties, burdens, and suffering:

We need to do our best so that our children are not as miserable as we were. I didn't have the chance to do that, so I am trying to help my children finish at least ten grades, as required.

To escape the conditions I am in, to have a brighter future, because s/he sees the trouble we are in, the burden we have to carry; they see it and they don't want to bear the same burden.

I didn't have the chance to finish school during Ceaușescu's regime and, since I started to earn a living at a very young age, I had no one to teach me, and I wouldn't like my daughter to go through the same trouble.

A second set of arguments that parents brought into discussion sees learning as a future-planning tool (that can secure a trade, a job, independence, recognition, the capacity of making a difference for Roma communities):

My child should learn in order to build a life ahead and become someone after he finishes school.

A child can't be without schooling because they grow up and in their future they will need a bit of school to get a job.

In life, you need to carry on, to go to school, to learn a trade. Because with no trade, no school, no one will look at you; they won't hire you unless you are schooled.

But I would really like my little girl to finish school. First of all, I think this is more important for her, for her life, to get a safe job, for her to make a living on her own without depending on such-and-such person.

Our interest is for him to finish as many school years from this point on so that he can be someone among us, because no one takes care of our problems, of our community problems. We want our children to get involved, to know how to talk.

Beyond the recognition of school importance for their own past or their children's future (the perception of school as an ideal), the hardship faced in the present influences the school option when a practical decision must be made. Material and financial shortcomings, as well as the everyday experience related to the school's lack of interest for Roma children and the impossibility of finding a job even if one finishes school neutralise the ideal choice and eventually leads to resignedly accepting dropout:

Our children go to the special school on Bucharest Street. They've stayed home for a week because they don't have any shoes to wear. ... We got to this point because I took the shoes off my feet and gave them to my child – There, take them and go to school. And I was left barefooted.

We send him to school, but they don't see about him or talk to him, he just shows up, nothing else. What they are doing is basically discrimination.

Children, you need to talk to them, to analyse them, to listen to them, you need to see what their priority problems are because if they only go to school and study hard, they learn about school, but they can't learn about life.... The class teacher should find solutions, should discuss in class meetings, the school principal should get involved in their life to address such problems.

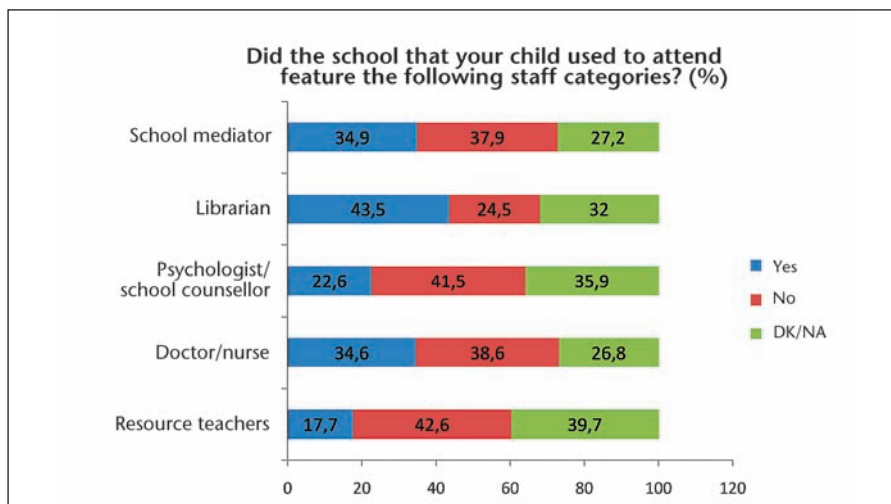
I don't let him go to school anymore. Look, he can't read and write; he just shows up at school for nothing...

We have some people in our community who have an education, who finished 8 grades and looked for a job and no one hired them.

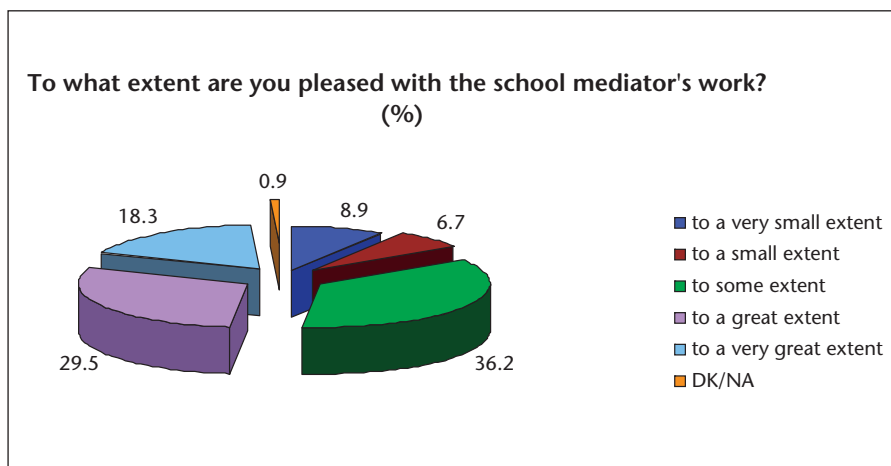
Do you know what many parents are saying? Forget it, what are they learning there? My son will do as I did. Some parents are like that. Not all of them are the same. You know what they're saying? Forget it! I don't have more schooling than that. Look at that one who's been to college or that one who's done I don't know what, what have they done?

2.2.2. Perception on School Staff

The first thing we notice about parents' knowledge about staff categories at their children's school is the great number of "no answers" or "I don't know" answers to this question. As seen in the chart below, when asked about the presence of a school mediator, librarian, psychologist, doctor, and resource teacher, the percentage of those who knew nothing about these categories of personnel ranged between 18% and 44%. To parents' knowledge, there are more school mediators in rural area than in urban area (20% compared to 14%), while all the other staff categories reach greater numbers in city schools. Hence, the affirmative answers have showed us that there is a librarian in 18.2% of rural schools and 25.3% of urban ones; a psychologist in 5% of rural schools and 16.5% of urban ones; a doctor/nurse in 7.1% of village schools and 27.5% of city schools; and resource teachers in 7.1% of rural schools and 10.7% of urban schools.



According to the chart hereunder, the parents whose children's schools feature a school mediator (224 cases out of 665) are rather pleased with the mediator's work, and their level of satisfaction does not significantly differ between rural mediators and urban ones.



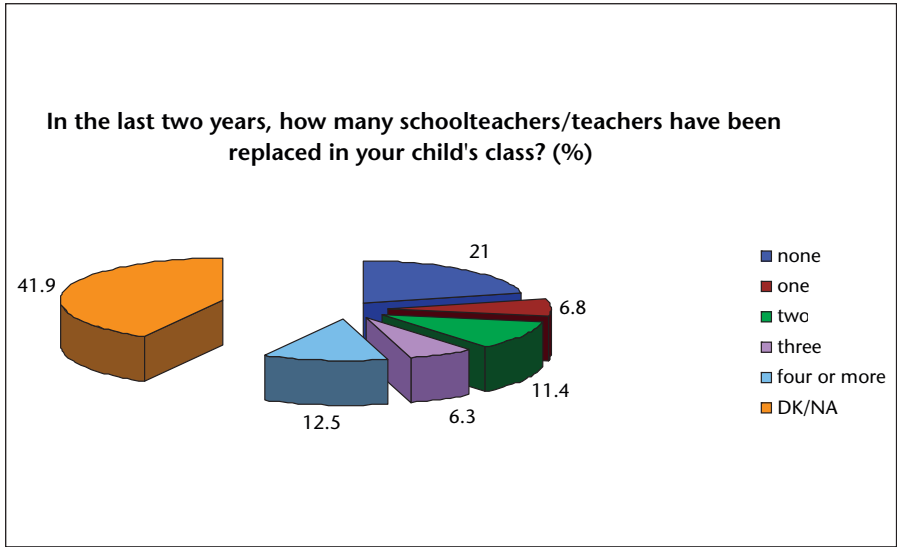
Asked about what they **liked most about the school mediator**, out of the 151 parents who answered to this question, most of them (55%) declared they were pleased with their involvement, 25.2% with their communication skills, 11.3% with the fact they were active (paying them house calls), and

7.2% provided other reasons. Only 1.3% said they liked the school mediator because s/he spoke Romani language. As far as these opinions are concerned, there are no significant differences between urban and rural parents. To the question about what they didn't like about the school mediator, 71.9% of respondents answered that there was nothing they disliked.

As regards **parents' knowledge about teaching staff turnover**, 41.9% of them didn't give an answer or they answered "I don't know" to the question about the number of teachers who were replaced in the child's class during the last two years before leaving school.

The great number of parents who didn't answer or answered "I don't know" to the question about the teaching staff turnover phenomenon and to the one about the existence of other staff categories in school indicate the lack of contact between family and school, which may be due to various reasons and could also be one of the early school leaving factors.

As seen in the chart below, 21% of respondents said that no teacher had been replaced and 12.5% that four or more teachers had been replaced.



If we look at the differences between living areas, we find that teaching staff turnover is lower in urban area than in rural area: in 14.8% of urban cases no teacher was replaced, while in the rural area this percentage was as low as 6.2%.

In rural schools, three teachers were replaced in 4.6% of cases, compared to 1.7% in city schools. Whilst in 8.6% of rural cases four or more teachers were replaced, the percentage of such cases in urban area was of 4% (N=630).

Comparing parents' experience with the school mediator to **their relationship with the teachers**, the parents who participated in focus groups stressed the fact that the mediator was the only person in school who stayed directly in touch with them, who could communicate with them and help them. Parents reproach teachers for not taking a close interest in children, for not visiting them at home and, due to this lack of interest, for not being aware of the serious problems they are faced with:

Everything is communicated through the mediator. So, he can't please everyone.... Yes, they send papers through him... he says "I see, that is exactly what I'm telling them, but the teachers don't believe it". They don't know what it is like to have no shoes for them to wear or a sandwich for their lunch box, they don't believe it...

No teacher has set foot in our community! Ever! Only the mediator.

The mediator ... comes and talks to us and we ask him questions, he comes and talks to us in our language because we understand him better. And he explains things bit by bit, he convinces us, he talks to us, he explains why that thing is like that. He has a very hard job. But it's great that we've got to this point and that there are people who want to do something. And they get involved, indeed.

Parents also notice that teachers place responsibility for school failure on poor attendance, and for poor attendance on family, completely ignoring the harsh realities behind this phenomenon:

The teachers, if you ask them they will tell you the child has failed the grade because 'he doesn't come to school every day, he comes today, on Monday, we learn the letter "A", he comes back next week, on Wednesday, we are already at "M"... and I can't work with that child anymore'.

The fact that the teachers are not familiar with the socioeconomic realities of the family environment goes hand in hand with their indifference to the humiliation and embarrassment that Roma children feel because of how the other children relate to them:

Please send them with whatever you have at hand, says the teacher! But, can't you see, Lady, these are torn and when he gets there the children will laugh at him, he will be discriminated against. The child comes home crying: "I won't go back to school 'cause they laughed at me, that I'm filthy, that my shoes are wet and so on". Did you see, Mrs. Principal, I sent him to school with whatever I had at hand, but why is my child being diminished like that? 'Cause his parents can't afford things and, as a parent, I can't afford.she says that the child should ignore the other kids. But how could he ignore them, he's just a child, he gets hurt....

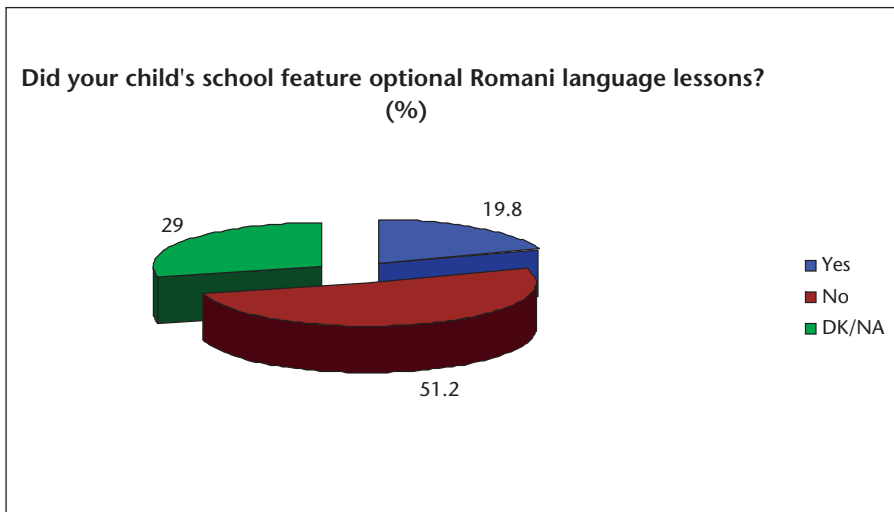
Besides these problems identified in the relationship between Roma children and teachers, parents also report on the discriminatory treatment to which some Roma children and parents are subject in school, especially those who live in precarious conditions and don't have prestige in their local communities:

I'm a Roma, and I'm ok with it. My little girls go to school and they are accepted... but the schoolteacher talks to me more than to Mrs.... although we are both Roma, her little girl may go to school today and then after a week ... the schoolteacher talks to me, we communicate, and she tells me everything there is to know, but to her she says ... 'oh, well, you didn't send her to school again, what have you done, darling? Don't do it again, send her to school, do something about it, good-bye.' 'So, Mrs., how's the girl?' 'How could she be if... you have her how you send her', (...) so, that child doesn't go to school often or enjoy other things. So, teachers should get much closer to the community.

The parents' stories quoted above reflect the idea that school blames the family environment for the child's failure and believes that there is nothing it can do about the factors unrelated to the education system that have negative effects on academic success. This feeling, distorted into a self-excusatory argument (such as "we are doing the best we can", "we don't discriminate", "the child's ethnicity is not an issue for us"), becomes an obstacle that is internalised by the teachers, making them unable to deal with disadvantaged and vulnerable children and even sustaining the idea that they don't belong to a certain class or school. In their turn, these personal attitudes are also supported and replicated by the entire competition-oriented school system, which privileges the teachers and schools that achieve excellence with their pupils to the detriment of those who are trying and succeeding to support the school path of disadvantaged children.

2.2.3. Romani Language Lessons

The opportunity of learning Romani language in the schools of Romania is a right that the Roma minority has earned after 1990 and considered a key element to preserving and developing their cultural identity. Our research shows that this right is not actually fulfilled in many establishments. Out of 651 respondents, more than half (51.2%) said that their child's school didn't feature optional Romani language lessons. Only 29% of parents gave an affirmative answer to this question, while the percentage of those who didn't answer or didn't know if such classes were being held was quite high (19.8%).

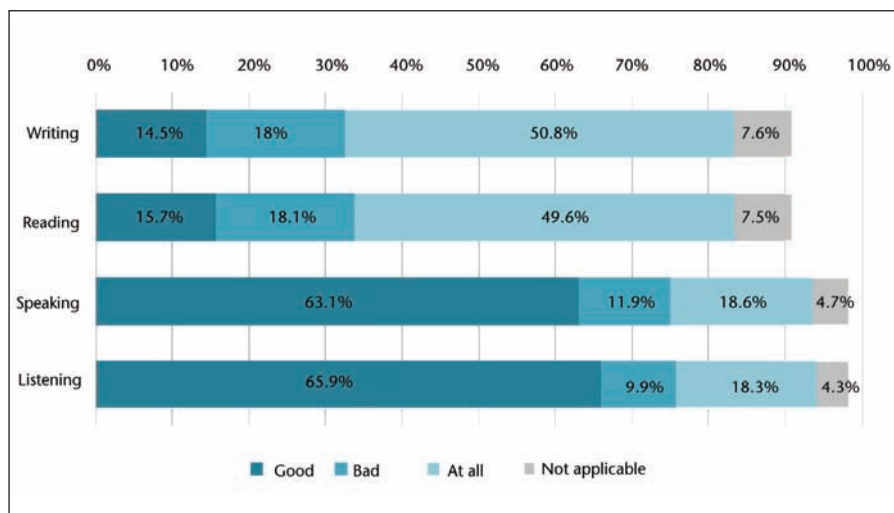


Most of those who said they knew about Romani language lessons being held didn't know exactly what these lessons were dealing with. The percentage of those who didn't know if during Romani language lessons references were being made to ethnic minorities was 47.1%, and 75.2% of the parents (15.6%) who gave an affirmative answer to this question didn't have any clue about what these references were all about. From the very few who knew more about the content of Romani language lessons, we found out that they focused on Roma history and culture issues.

These data show us that the schools where Roma children study don't feature Romani language lessons, and parents either don't pay special attention to these. Hence, unfortunately, they have not yet become a motivational factor

for school participation, not to speak of the fact that they don't contribute to intercultural dialogue and exchange, which could be a great gain for mixed schools.

Probably also due to school lacks in this area, even if nearly 63% of parents and almost 69% respectively declare that their children speak Romani language and understand it respectively (approximately 12% and 10% respectively say they speak it, understand it a little bit respectively), the children are doing much worse when it comes to reading and writing (as pointed in the chart below; the chart doesn't include "no answers"; N=791).

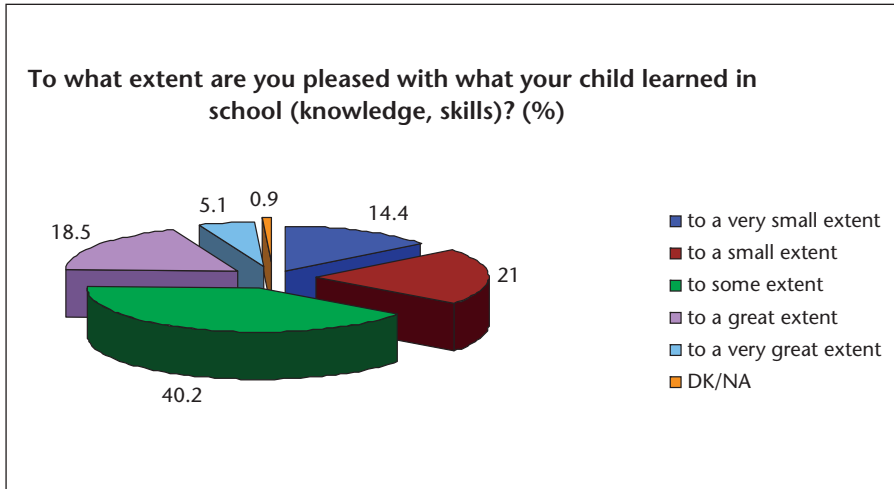


The fact that children speak and understand Romani language is due to the Romani language lessons held in school to a smaller extent than to the fact that a great number of these children's families usually speak Romani at home. Hence, in 61.9% of cases (N=981) Romani is spoken in the household; Romanian is spoken in 35% of the households; and Hungarian in 0.7% of the cases (the remaining to 100% stands for <another language> and <I don't know/No answer>).

2.2.4. School-Acquired Skills

As concerns the **appraisal of the skills and knowledge** acquired in school by their children, most parents (around 64% of them) declare themselves pleased. 40.2% of the 672 subjects who answered to this question declared

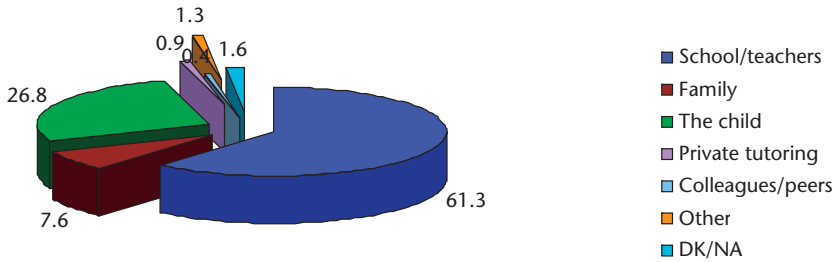
they were pleased to some extent, 18.5% to a great extent and 5.1% to a very great extent. According to the chart below, the percentage of those who are less pleased (to a small or very small extent) is 35.5%.



If we look at these data in terms of living area, we find that the parents living in town are twice as pleased with what their child has acquired in school as the parents living in rural areas.

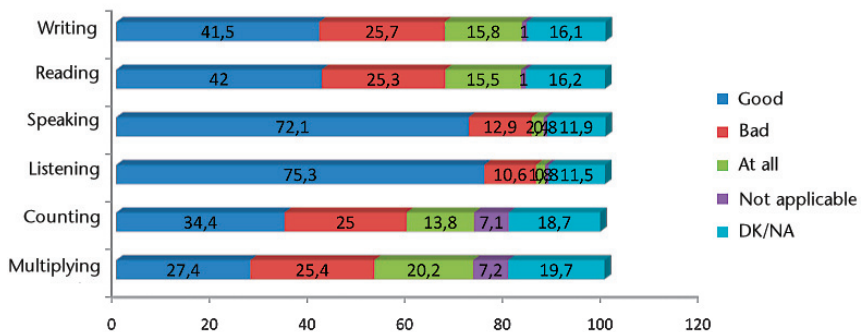
Most parents (61.3%) think that **academic attainment**, meaning acquired skills and knowledge, is owed to the school and implicitly to teachers, but a part of them (26.8%) give credit to the child for this achievement. The percentage of those who say that family plays a role in this is pretty low, only 7.6%, while the number of those who link educational attainment to private tutoring is even smaller (0.9%) indicating that very few parents can afford to pay for such a service. The occurrence of the pre-coded answer <private tutoring> is almost five times more frequent in urban area than in the case of parents living in the country (out of those who chose this answer, 83.3% come from towns and only 16.7% from villages). Moreover, urban centres feature a greater number of subjects who believe that academic attainment is owed to the school/teachers (35.5% compared to 25.8%).

To whom do you think the child's academic achievements/acquirements are mainly owed? (%)



Parents' satisfaction with their children's school-acquired skills does not seem to be supported by what they are saying about the **actual knowledge acquired** in various fields. As shown in the chart below, the percentage of the parents who say about their children aged 7-11 years that they can read and write in Romanian reaches nearly 42%; this drops even more when it comes to counting (34%) and multiplying in their mind when they are shopping (27.4%).

**Does your child know how to read, write, speak in and listen to Romanian language?
What about counting in his/her mind when s/he is shopping? (5)**



As far as knowing a foreign language is concerned, only 18.6% of parents gave an affirmative answer to this question (most of them referring to English). The percentage of those who say that their child can use the computer for typing a text is only 21.8%, and even lower (16.2%) for those who believe that their child is capable of doing arithmetic operations or drawing a table on the computer. 19.2% of parents consider that their children know how to use the Internet to communicate with others.

Based on these data, we can state that the parents' high degree of satisfaction with their children's school-acquired knowledge is not related to the actual knowledge acquired by the children. This may be interpreted as being linked to their (low) expectations from school and children (expectations that are in their turn moulded by harsh living conditions) and to what the parents themselves achieved in school, their educational level respectively.

2.3. Motivational Factors for School Participation

In this subchapter, we will talk about factors that influence school participation – as defined by the parents who have at least one out-of-school child – grouping them into factors with positive impact and factors with negative impact on child enrolment/maintenance in school.

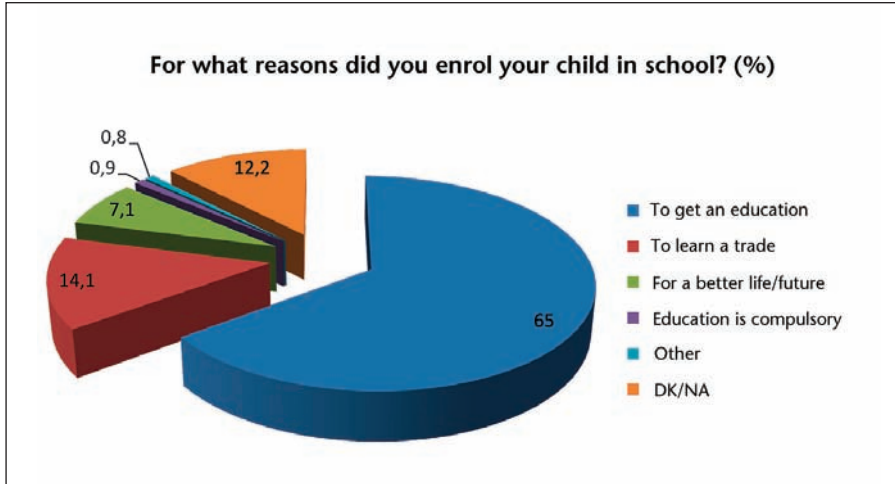
Beyond family environment-related factors (including material conditions and cultural conceptions about what a boy or a girl should do in life), the decision for school participation is also based on parents' experience with and perception of school.

2.3.1. Positive Factors for School Participation

Among the factors that have a positive impact on children's school participation, we also find parents' conceptions about the **need to go to school**. As seen in the chart below, the great majority of our respondents (65%) say that the reason for enrolling their children in school is the expectation of them "getting an education" (N=584).

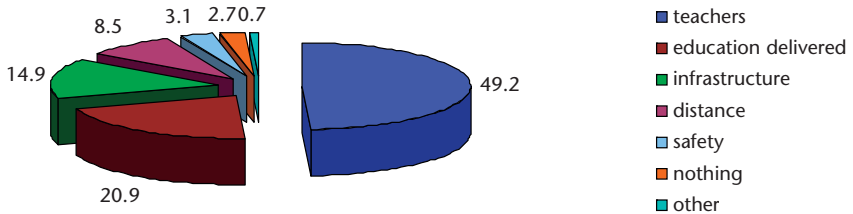
From this point of view, there is a slight gap between urban subjects and those from rural area, namely a greater percentage of urban subjects (39.9% compared to 25.1% in rural area) consider the need <to get an education> the main **motivation for enrolling the child in school**. In the overall sample, far fewer parents (14.1%) think that it is better to enter their children into school for them to learn a trade, and even fewer of them state that going to school could secure a better life (7.1%). Of the 18 subjects who declared

having enrolled their child in school for them to learn a trade, 17 are parents of boys, which shows that the expectation that school should equip the child with a qualification is also gender-influenced. The fact that school is compulsory is brought up as an argument in too few instances.



Besides the **expectations related to the benefits of child schooling**, most respondents (from a total of 449), in other words 49.2%, appreciate this institution for its human dimension, thus expressing what they expect from a good school (see the chart below). Comparing the elements that make up the education system that they come across, parents seem to appreciate teachers’ overall qualities best (seriousness, devotion, non-discriminatory attitude, strictness and their capacity to discipline). When weighing these answers against the answers to the question about the importance of school characteristics (which shows that most parents define child safety as important/very important), we find out that they are not happy with the way this factor they consider highly important is guaranteed in the school attended by their children (only 3.1% of them say they appreciate their school for that). Moreover, comparing the answers to the question about the reasons for enrolling their children in school (showing that “to get an education” is the most common motivation invoked by respondents) with the answers to the question about what exactly they appreciate at their school, we may conclude that parents’ expectations are not fulfilled in this area (only 20.9% appreciate the education delivered in that school).

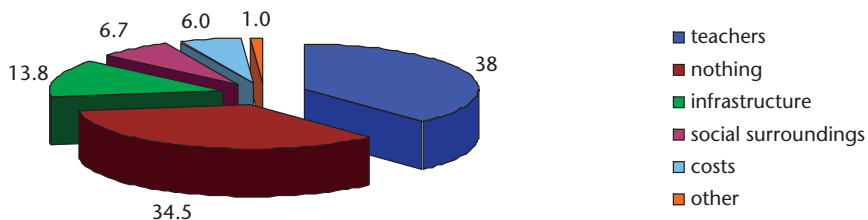
What do you like most about the school your child used to attend? (%)



Another factor that affects school participation is parents' degree of satisfaction with the educational establishment. A significant number of respondents (34.5%) seem pleased with school and don't have any reason to be unhappy about it. Only 13.8% are not pleased with what we have called 'infrastructure', which comprises both material resources in that school and available public transportation from home to school. And even fewer parents (6.7%) find that social surroundings (the presence of Roma children in school, and violence) are a reason for being unhappy about the school where their children are enrolled. The fact that school asks for money was mentioned by 6% of parents. There are no material status-based differences between parents as regards this.

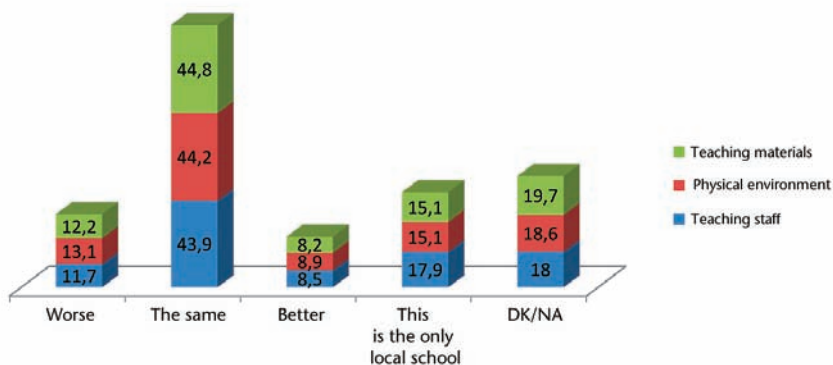
Most of the 386 respondents to this question (38%) say they are **not pleased with the teachers** at their child's school. These complaints have to do with teachers' lack of interest or harshness, their discriminatory attitude, as well as the teaching staff turnover at that school. These critiques are most significant in the light of the great expectations that parents formulate about teachers, seeing them as the key to good quality education.

What do you dislike most about the school your child used to attend? (%)



The satisfaction with their children’s school or the 34.5% of parents that find nothing to dislike about their child’s school comes also from the fact that they believe they don’t have a better school within reach anyhow. Over 40% of the 633 respondents to this question think that, from all angles, the quality of education provided at their school is the same as in other schools.

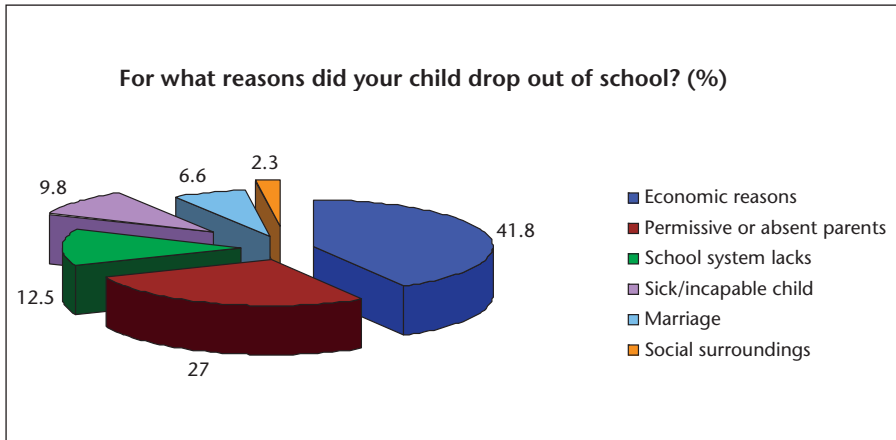
What do you think about the quality of education at the school your child used to attend compared to other local schools? (%)



In 1.5% of the cases, the child attends a special school.

2.3.2. Negative Factors for School Participation

In their answers to the open question regarding **the reasons for their child's school leaving** – as seen in the chart below –, most parents of the 622 children in this position (41.8%) named economic reasons. In this category of reasons, we included not only lack of money, but also the work inside or outside the household (a need that is actually strongly connected to parents' poor material conditions).



When talking about their possibilities/financial shortcomings, the focus group participants placed a strong emphasis on the link between these and children's school participation:

A child needs lots of things for school. In the morning, s/he needs to have some breakfast, then again some food at 12, s/he needs a pair of trainers, s/he needs pants, a tracksuit. And you can't buy these with the RON 42 child benefit.

Children need lots of things: water, electricity. I don't have such conditions; I don't have running water or electricity.

You don't send them to school because you don't have any shoes for them to wear, you don't have a slice of bread to feed them, or a schoolbag, or a coat, you have no... no sponsorship from anywhere, no job.

This financial situation is bad, of course. Because of this problem the child doesn't go to school on a regular basis: s/he goes today, then again tomorrow, the day after tomorrow s/he can't go 'cause the shoes are torn, the clothes are dirty. Children too are used for work, for earning money, for gathering scrap iron.

You send them [to school] the best you can; when you have nothing to send them with, they stay home.

Me too, I couldn't carry on with school because of the money. ...and my sister was a better student and then why should I have continued... so, she went on 'cause Mom couldn't afford to send us both to high school. I finished 8 grades and I couldn't go any further.

As to school leaving, quite a few parents (27%) invoked reasons like understanding the fact that their girls or boys no longer wanted to go to school or that they had learned enough, but there were some cases where the children had been left without one or both parents (as a result of them going abroad, of divorce or moving to another place).

Even fewer parents (12.5%) out of the 622 made the school system responsible for children's school leaving (which, in their understanding, includes discrimination, school violence, lack of vacancies in the school they wanted or lack of a school teaching the trades they looked for, school schedule, and the child's inability to speak the language used for teaching in that school).

During group interviews, parents revealed many **manifestations of the inequitable and biased treatment** to which they and/or their children are subject in school by teachers, majority children and parents:

Discrimination is something that my girl has experienced... When she was near the middle school final exams, as she was a smart girl, she came to me and told me "Mom, the teacher of Math, the teacher of chemistry, and that of history don't like it that I am a successful student. They say: is a gipsy a better and smarter student than Romanians?"

The problem is that in school they keep saying this thing, that they are dirty, that they are not dressed to the latest... like other children.

By the end of 5th grade, my girl couldn't read and write because the teacher, the schoolteacher hadn't taught her... she was just showing up for nothing, she was going to school only to get no teacher attention.

They don't see about the Roma child, they just make them sit at a desk in the back of the classroom. They don't work with him, don't talk to him, he just shows up at school for nothing. What they are doing is basically discrimination.

He goes to school normally dressed, she is a very good student and has all the proper conditions, but her desk mate calls her gipsy all the time. Poor children, what do they know...

A difference was also made when it came to textbooks. Roma children received older books and the new ones were given to better-off students... and the children wonder what is going on when they have a look around the classroom, at every desk... Why is yours new? Mine is older. Taking the textbook out of the cover, I mean if it has any, s/he tells the other child, it's marked. Some get worn-out books, others don't. That kid says: mine is new. Of course, my parents can afford things. Yes, but mine can't afford things so why have they given me this shabby book?

I had a teacher of Math... he wouldn't ask me anything, but just write the grade in the grade book and when the class teacher would come he would say "You have a 5 in Math". I would wonder how come if he had never examined me. He had his favourite students that he would ask to come to the blackboard and would explain things to them, but to us, nothing – he would completely ignore us.

They make a difference between a Roma child and a Romanian one. Even when they have the school show; at the last Christmas show recently, I noticed that gipsy kids were placed in the back and Romanians in the front. And the poems were told only by Romanians. 'Cause they keep saying: forget it, the gipsy doesn't know anything, he can't memorize things, he is not that good.

Many parents brought up the direct or indirect consequences of discrimination on children's school participation:

Eight years in the primary and middle school I suffered a lot because, as I was the only Roma pupil there, the other children couldn't stand me. The day I would be handed the flower crown at the end-of-the-year awards ceremony, as it was the custom back then, I think I was the saddest girl in the whole room because when I got on stage no one would applaud me. Because of this, in the following four high school years, I hid the fact that I was a Roma. In a way, my looks were not betraying me, nor the way I was speaking and communicating; I made that decision for the only reason of not getting hurt as much as I had in middle school.

The strange thing is that my child is currently going through what I went through with school. She is dark-complexioned and the only student in school declared an ethnic Roma. She is a smart girl and I'm not saying that because she's my child. At the beginning of the academic year, the kids would always

call her nigger and gipsy and, at some point, she came home and told me: "I'm not going to school anymore. Why are they saying those things to me?" And, when I bathed her she grabbed a sponge and told me: "rub me harder to make me whiter."

The lady teacher would tell him: please wash yourself because you stink and you are filthy and we can't breathe in the classroom, we have no air because of all that gipsy filth. And he didn't go to school the next day.

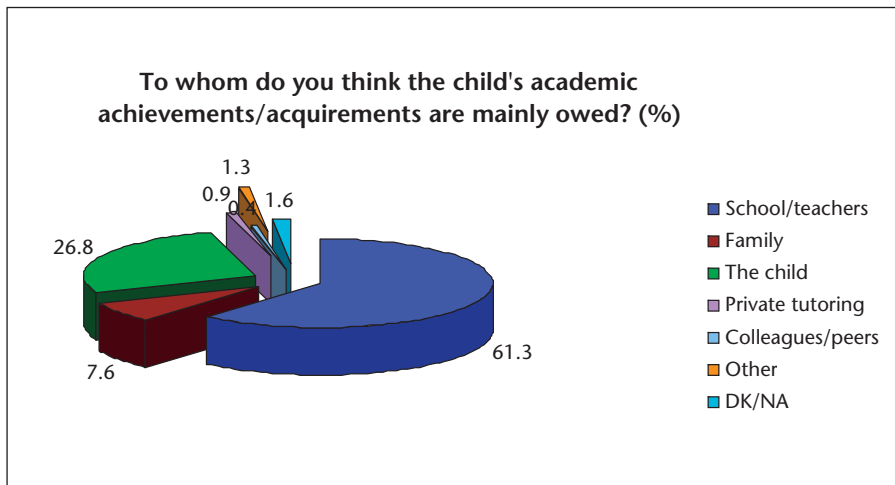
Romanian children come to the school show, whereas to those who are worse-off she tells them to stay home. There were some Roma children and she didn't take them to the theatre because they were filthy. Why? Were they not her students too? Weren't they allowed to go? And the kids were crying and saying ... 'they didn't take us'.

Everyone should be treated according to their possibilities and should be accepted the same way as the rest of the children. They shouldn't be told: "Don't you dare come like this again or else!" "You don't have a pen today! Why have you come without a pen, etc.?" Just leave him alone if you want him to come back. Because if you tell him that once, twice, he stops coming to school; we had such cases where the child didn't come to classes anymore, and he never came to that school again. He said: "Why go if the teacher yells at me and has told me never to come like that ever again?" Just leave him alone so that he comes back. Otherwise you make him quit school and he stops coming.

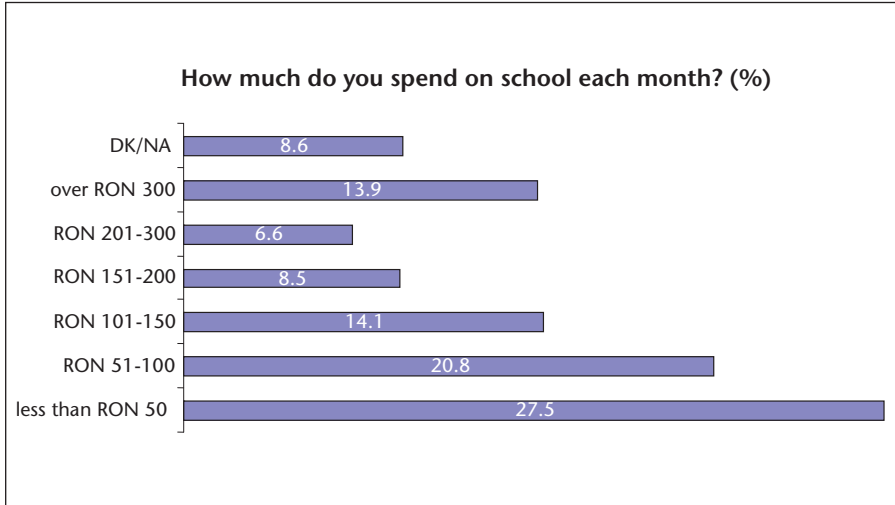
We found out from the stories told that those who discriminate against Roma children in school don't like to be questioned about it and they don't admit or deny having such attitudes:

They took the Roma children out of the all-Roma class and split them, 2-3 in a class, 2-3 in another. The parents were upset that they had been split up and that the gipsy had come to their class. My boy asked his colleague "how are you?" or something like that and that kid was rude to him "leave me alone, I'm not talking to you". Of course, as a grandma' I had a strong reaction when I saw how he was treated. And we as women were treated badly by the schoolteacher and the children were treated the same by their schoolmates. When I entered the classroom I told her "Mrs. Schoolteacher, I have something to ask of you. I represent the Roma on Muncii Street and I have to let you know the following: please don't treat these children that were sent to your class any different – this is what the parents are asking. And her answer was "all you do is ask, but you do nothing in return and you contribute with nothing", this is what the schoolteacher told me.

As to the answer to the question regarding to whom the child owes his/her **academic attainment** (thereby understanding academic success) – as seen in the chart below – 63.1% of the 645 respondents think that it is owed to the school. This means that their percentage is much higher than that of the respondents who blame the education system (12.5%) for school leaving. The respondents (many of whom explained that school leaving was due to economic conditions) seem to be more willing to appreciate the positive role of school than to criticize the education system in relation to dropout. These discrepancies may be explained through the parents' internalisation of the explanations given to academic failure/success by the system and eventually through the tendency of those living in precarious conditions to resignedly accept their situation and not to criticise the education system for the poor school attainment that may lead to dropout.



Given the parents' small and unstable income, the amounts of money that need to be spent on children's schooling can entail school leaving. The greatest number of respondents (48.3%) spends less than RON 100 (about 33 \$) monthly and, as regards this, there are no significant differences between rural and urban areas.



As it comes out from the stories told at group interviews, **school costs** (keeping in mind that access to compulsory education must be guaranteed to everyone) may have a disastrous impact on school participation. Parents stressed particularly the issue of mandatory school uniform:

The outfit they get in school is compulsory. The uniform. So imagine that they give them a jacket and a tie for RON 600.

If they don't have the uniform on them, the security at the school gate sends them back home. Where's your uniform? You don't have it? Go home!

And you need two uniforms a week because one is not enough for the whole week.

Two boys in my son's class have quit school. They can't afford it. They didn't pay for the uniform and they are not allowed in school without it. They can't afford it so they are missing out on school.

But besides the uniform, the school asks for other contributions from parents (it goes without saying that these are compulsory):

I should have brought the note for you to see that it was written and signed by the schoolteacher. One hundred, she wrote ten RON for the school pool fund, ten RON for the class pool fund and then signed by her. The child brought the note home.

Children are asked money for funds, for textbooks, for uniforms... our children are lagging behind in uniforms, books, and everything else.

In school, we are told as follows: we need the money for this, we need the money for that, this is the deadline... we need... and I have to explain to her, in front of everybody, without any shame because I don't steal, no way... where could I give you that money from...the money you need for curtains, for liquid [soap], for toilet paper, well... you need it for floor mop, you need it... where could I give you money for the janitor because... that's what school is for so that you look for money to hire people... to get funds if you don't have any ... if the school doesn't give it to you, where could I give you money from, as poor as I am?

Textbooks are free, but they ask for many notebooks, a lot of school supplies that are expensive.

They must wear a tracksuit and trainers at the physical education class, plus the class pool fund, plus this and that. This year, the class pool fund contribution was RON 45. That's how much I had to pay.

Everything needs to be paid for. The photos – RON 10.

At parent-teacher meetings, we talk mostly about money, that many didn't pay for the class pool fund, for the uniforms.

Marriage is defined as a reason for leaving school by the smallest percentage of parents (6.6%), although we have to mention that all the 41 cases refer to girls. Our research data are concordant with the related findings of the research "One School for All?" conducted by "Împreună" Agency for Community Development from April 2009 to January 2010 with support from UNICEF, indicating that: out of 69 children, only one said s/he had dropped out of school to get married; and the questionnaires applied feature 10 cases of early marriages among school-aged children, accounting for 4.3% of the causes reported by parents for their children's non-participation in school. In the light of these data, it is possible that the early marriage phenomenon among Roma children be overrated, concludes the research report¹³.

¹³ <http://blog.agentiaimpreuna.ro/?p=19#more-19>

During the group interviews conducted in our research, a number of parents gave details about this phenomenon, which they linked to persistent traditions in some Roma clans:

We, the gipsy still have the mentality that she needs to be a virgin bride. That's why you marry her young... If she's turned 15-16 years or more, they say she's old... Instead of seeing her knocked up, say that my girl goes to school and comes home pregnant, I'd rather she got married.

No difference should be made between girls and boys, but as we are Roma, we have this tradition that is still being followed and that says that, at some point, if girls don't marry then it's a problem because they grow up, namely they get older.

There are these families of cauldron-makers... they pass on what they make, the fortune they get, they pass it on from father to son. Even if they have money in the bank account, the family treasure consists of ducats, those Austrian coins. They usually have girls in their family too... and this money becomes dower for the girls. When a marriage is concluded, these coins are given to the boy's father. The bigger the girls' dower is, comprising a great number of coins, the more wanted the girl is because they usually say: that one pays 500 ducats to marry his daughter, that one offers 200, and the boy's father draws the conclusion. He thinks: the one offering 500 coins, even if the children are not the same age, even if she doesn't have a house, to give me that much money it is quite an investment. And parents, when they want to arrange such a marriage, no longer bear in mind the child's age... And even if they are close relatives, first cousins, they marry the children at a young age. There is an agreement between parents and by the age of 10 years the boy and of 9 years the girl, the children are married. Even if it's not a legal marriage, this is concluded between families. Some children don't respect this even if their parents have arranged for such a marriage; some children won't do it and break the marriage and run away. The girl won't marry the boy. But what happens next is serious business. The girl's father won't pay the ducats anymore, and so the wedding is off and everything is over. But, as I told you, these marriages are arranged at this [young] age because parents try to find a good deal for themselves. They don't care about feelings or age.

Some parents say that it is enough for a girl to learn how to write; if she can write, she can read and cook, then it's ok. But the boy needs to carry on with school at least until 8th grade so that he can get his driving licence. So, true, in this part of the Roma community, there is still discrimination between girls and boys, and the girls stay home because their parents don't have a lot...

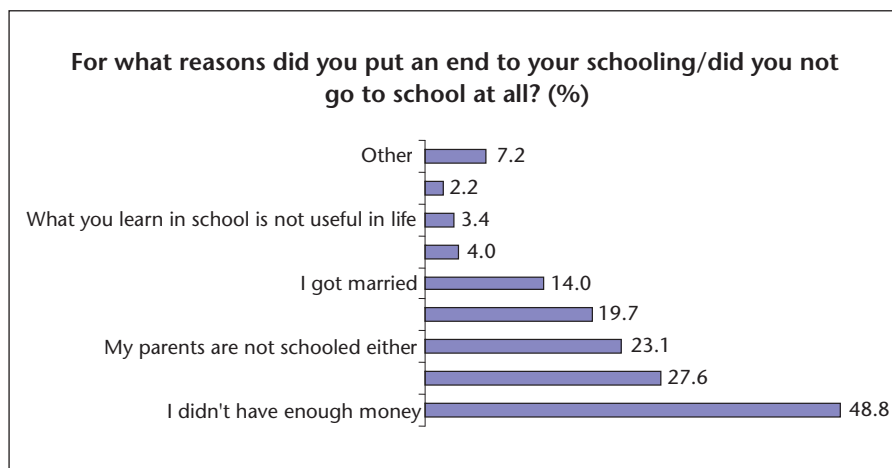
In Roma communities, many parents are illiterate, and women are subject to men. He's the boss, and she does as he says. Well, they are also quick learners and parents think that it is enough for a girl to read and write, or sometimes even less than that, but the boy needs to know more.

Other parents who attended group interviews disapproved of such practices, formulating desiderata such as:

Just as boys, girls should go to school.

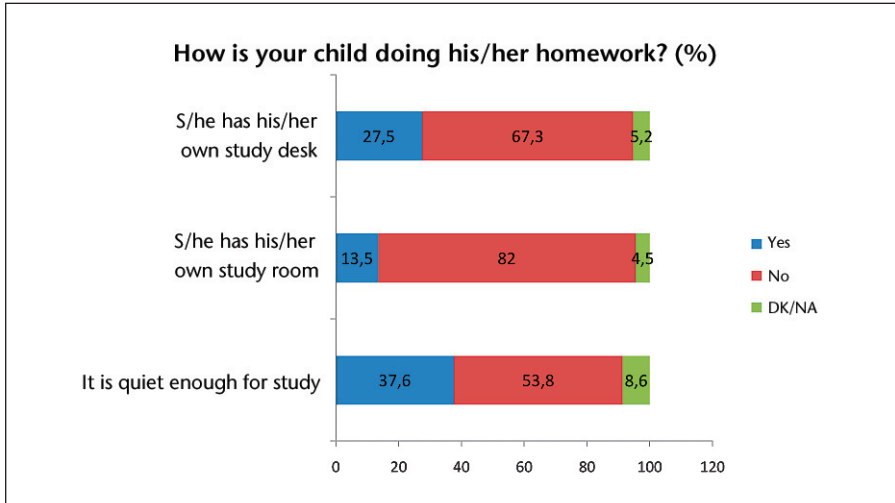
The girl should not stay home and miss out on school. I keep her at home for her to cook for me and help me do the laundry and chores like this.

A relatively small percentage of parents named marriage as a reason for their own quitting or not attending school in the past, only 14% of them having been in this position. Given that the question was a multiple-answer one, many respondents (48.8%) also cited financial shortcomings or the fact that their parents were unschooled (23.1%), as well as the need to do work inside the household (27.6%).

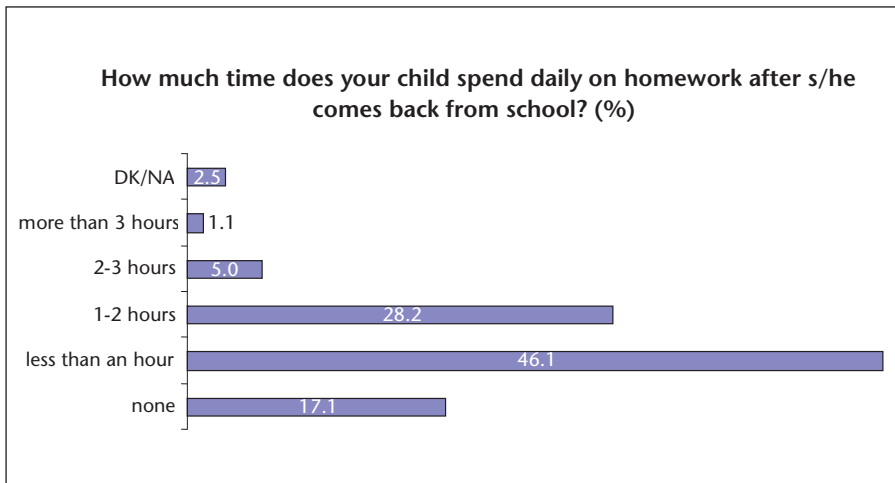


The conditions in which children do their **homework** have adverse effects on participation and an impact on academic attainment.

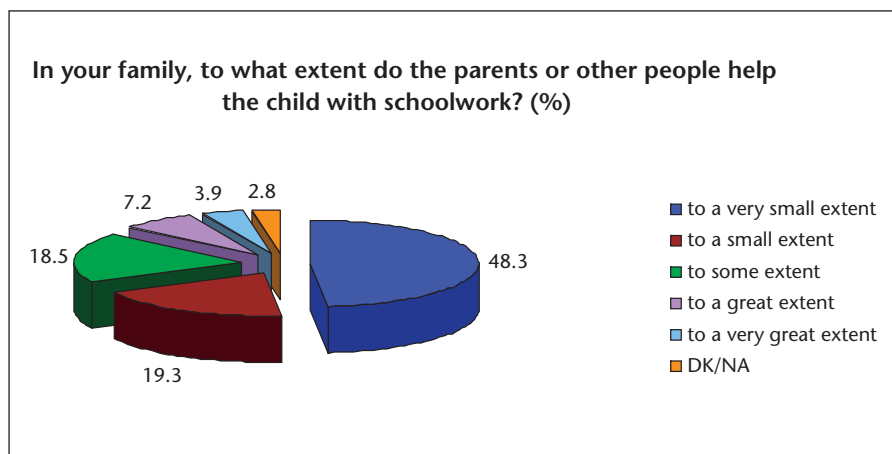
In the case of our respondents, most of the children (67.3%) don't even have their own desk to do their homework on or their own room for studying (82%), and moreover in 53.8% of the cases the quiet needed for study cannot be provided.



As to the amount of time spent on homework, 46.1% of the respondents to this question say their children do their homework in less than an hour, and 17% of them don't allocate any time to this after they come home from school.



Most parents (67.6%) help their children with homework to a small or a very small extent, which may be due to multiple causes (such as lack of time or inability to help because of their educational level or today's school demands that exceed those of their time). Only 11.1% of them assist their children in this department to a great or a very great extent.



2.4. Causes of Non-Enrolment and Low School Participation

The data in this subchapter will further refer to those respondents who, at the time of research, had at least one child out of school. Our sample is comprised of 95 parents who declared having a child who had never been in school. 620 subjects provided an answer to the question about the reasons for the child's dropout.

In our sample, two thirds (63 cases) of the 95 cases come from urban area and 32 cases from rural area. Comparing the structure of the answers to the question about non-enrolment reasons in the context of the two living areas, we notice that more than two thirds of rural respondents invoked financial reasons in comparison to half in the case of urban parents. For one in five city children who have never been in school, parents justify this with children's engagement in housework, while rural parents made no mention of this. Of course, the variation in answers between the two living areas may also be due to a different understanding of the concept "work" in rural and urban places. The futility of school is more commonly identified as a non-enrolment reason in the town (17.5%) than in the village (9.4%).

As to the age of the children about whom the respondents declared they had never been in school, 46 were aged 7-11 years (of whom, 30 were boys and 16 were girls), and 38 (15 boys and 23 girls) fall into the 12-16 age group. In the case of the children in the 12-16 age group, <work inside the household> is invoked as a non-enrolment reason by one third of respondents, while for those aged 7-11 years this has never been mentioned. Even if the number of cases we are referring to here is too small to be sure that the difference is significant, we can state that, in recent years, a decreasing tendency was noticed for school non-enrolment caused by the child's work inside the household. However, another tendency is the increasing economic causes that trigger non-enrolment. Comparing the frequency of reasons for both age groups, we should also add that the <futility of school> is less reiterated for children aged 7-11 years than for those of 12-16 years (10.9% and 21.1% respectively). The recurrence of this reason and the great number of girls among the children aged 12-16 years who have never been in school could make us say that, for the girls of this age, school is considered less important than for boys. The sociological survey conducted in 2006¹⁴ on a sample of 717 women from nine Romanian counties also proves that schooling is less desired in the case of girls than for boys, 21% of the interviewed women saying that elementary school is just enough for girls (compared to only 8% of women who believe the same thing for boys).

This way of thinking – in some cases – may be linked to the reality faced by educated Roma women: a recent research on Roma access to jobs found that “a greater number of women with higher education end up working at home or become unemployed compared to the men with the same training, and in the case of the people with less schooling, men are more exposed to the risk of becoming unemployed or working full-time inside the household than women¹⁵.” The lack of opportunities for schooled women to escape the traditional female status of a housewife may turn into self-censorship for the new generations of young women when formulating desires with regard to school and professional career.

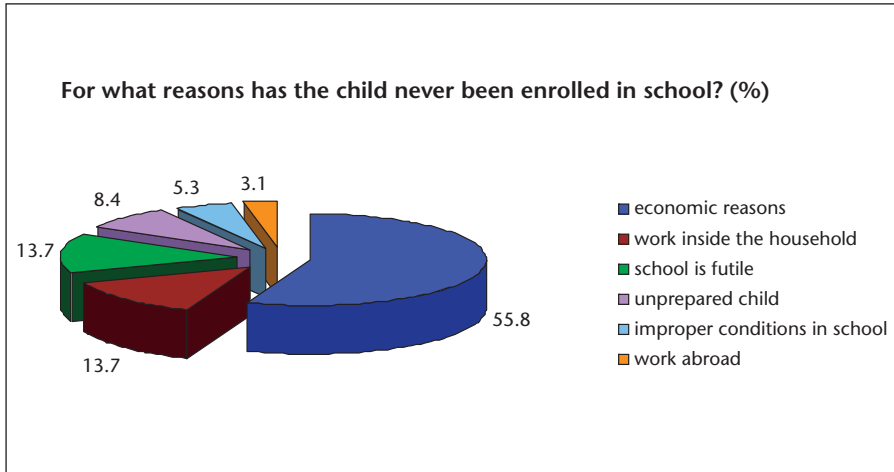
¹⁴ Laura Surdu – Mihai Surdu (ed.): *Broadening the Agenda: The Status of Romani Women in Romania*, Open Society Institute, 2006, p. 11.

¹⁵ Enik Vincze: *Raport asupra cercetării din anul întâi de proiect, cu recomandări privind activitățile de incluziune ale proiectului precum și politice publice pentru romi*, research conducted within the project Equality through Difference. Roma Women's Access to the Labour Market, 2009, <<http://femrom.ro/rapoartecercetare-recom.html>>.

The sociological survey from this research (see Nándor L. Magyari: *Raport despre cercetarea sociologică*, 2009, <<http://femrom.ro/infopub/2010/2.1.19.raportdespreanchetasociologica.pdf>>) supplied

2.4.1. Defining Non-Enrolment Causes

In this subchapter, we intend to firstly show how the parents whose children have never been in school or have dropped out define the causes of such situations and what would make them enter their child into an educational establishment. We need to mention that the question about non-enrolment or dropout reasons was an open question.

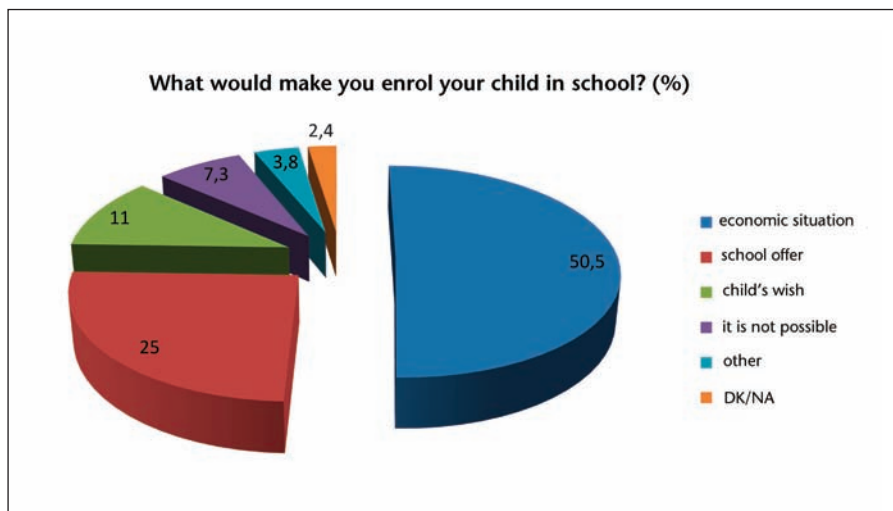


Economic reasons, as seen in the chart above, are most frequently invoked by the parents of the children who have never been in school to justify their choice. This was declared by most of them, roughly 55.6%. To this category we may add the 13.7% of those who say that these children had to work inside the household – a need that is connected to the family’s material situation. 13.7% of respondents find school futile and, far fewer, somewhere near 3% explain non-enrolment through the fact that they work abroad.

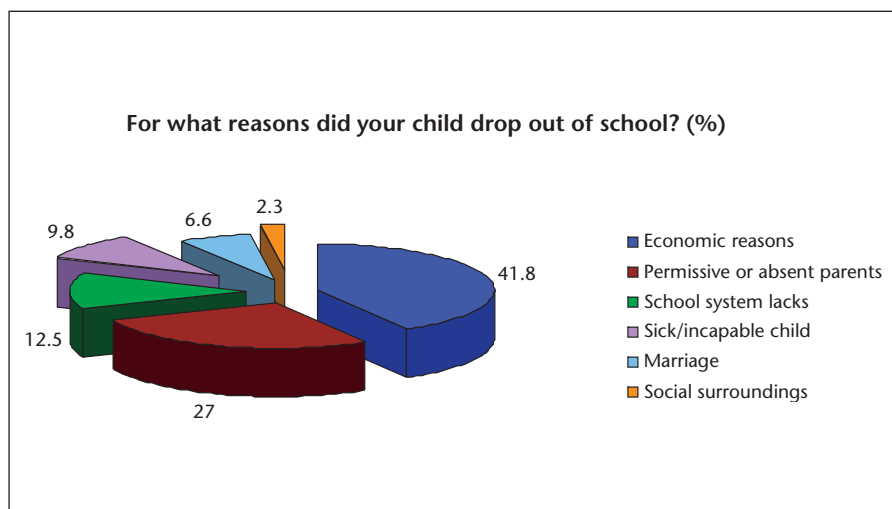
us data to compare the level of school education in unemployed women and in those who work inside the household with that of men belonging to the same inactive population categories. Thus, we found out the following: there is a great gender difference in the case of people with middle school training (43% of women who work inside the household have such training, while the percentage of men is only 19%); the same in the case of the few persons with higher education (5% of the unemployed women have such training compared to only about 2% of men); or in the case of people with a high school diploma (nearly 9% of the unemployed women have such training, whereas men account for only 5%). Moreover, we notice that as concerns the people with a lower level of schooling, the incidence of men among inactive people is higher than that of women: 33 % of men working inside the household have no education and around 29% have elementary training, whereas only nearly 18% of women in the same category have no education and 19% of women who work inside the household have completed only elementary school.

Rural-urban disaggregated data show that there are twice as many urban parents as rural parents who haven't enrolled their child in school for economic reasons (6.1% and 2.9% respectively) and school is considered futile four times more frequently in towns (2.9%) than in rural communities (0.7%). Lack of transportation is a reason that comes up only in rural area.

The ranking of these reasons is somewhat confirmed by the answers to the question **"What would make you enrol your child in school?"**, as seen in the chart below. Almost 51% of the 372 respondents said that this depended on their financial situation. In this context however, more parents give importance to what school has to offer (25%), while the direct reference to school as a non-enrolment reason (as seen above) reached smaller percentages in the parents whose children had never been in school (5.3%). Hence, the perception of what school may offer has a positive impact on the decision to send the child to school if other factors are favourable to this and it has a smaller negative impact as a non-enrolment reason. The importance of school offer as a motivational factor is also reinforced by the 11% of parents who identify their child's wish as a reason for enrolment, a wish that most definitely depends on how attractive the educational establishment is (with all its features). As regards this, there is no major difference between rural and urban parents.



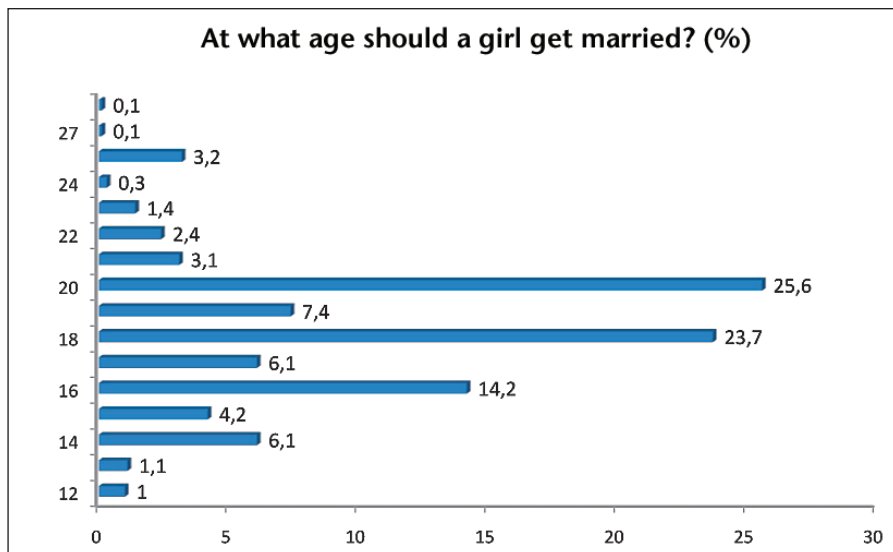
As concerns the children who used to attend school but dropped out, parents cite economic reasons to a smaller percentage (41.8%) than those of the children who have never been in school (55.6%). 27% of the 620 respondents motivated dropout with answers such as <the child didn't want to go anymore> (most of the cases) and <he learned just enough>, as well as parents' absence from home (as a result of their working abroad – most of the cases, or of divorce, moving to another place, or the fact that some children are without parental care). The <tolerant or absent parents> label used in the chart below refers to these very cases. Fewer parents motivated dropout through school system deficiencies (where we included considerations like discrimination, school violence, lack of vacancies in school, the fact that the child doesn't speak Romanian, school schedule, and the absence of a local school of trades).

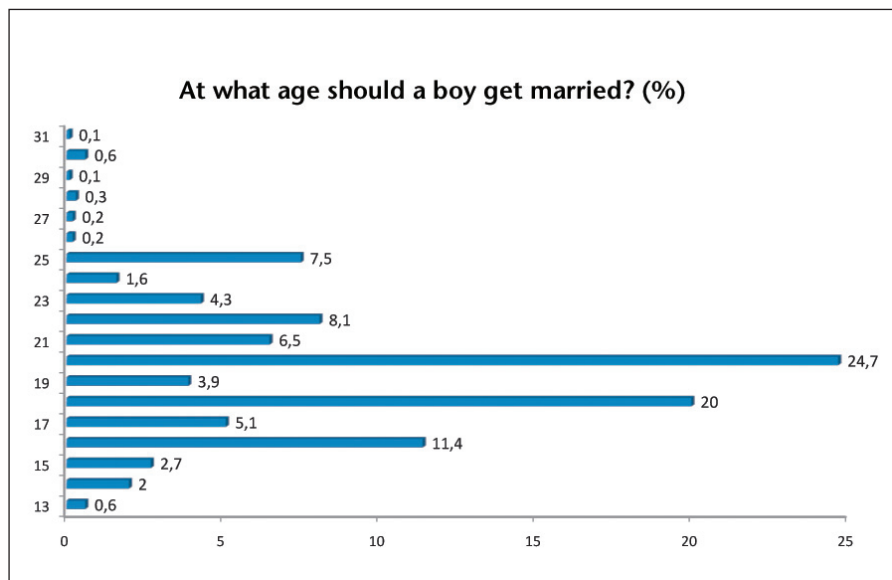


2.4.2. Parents' Perception of Desirable Age for Marriage

As seen in chapter 2.2.2, marriage is defined as a reason for dropout by a small number of parents (6.6%), but given that it was however mentioned, we should get a closer look at it. The more so as in the same chapter we noted that, in all 41 marriage-related dropout cases, we had to deal with female drop-outs. Three of them are 13 years, five are 14 years, eleven are 15 and just as many are 16 years, seven are 17 and four are 18 years, which means that most of them quit school after finishing 8th grade.

Exploring more into this reality, we notice that this finding is supported by parents' opinions about **the age at which a girl, a boy respectively should marry**. Most of respondents (24.7%) believe that 20 years is the ideal age for their child to get married, which is beyond the 12th grade age. Hence, desirably, marriage should not have a negative impact on school participation (24.7% declare this about boys, and 25.6% about girls). Still, a younger marriage age is accepted more for girls than for boys. The subsequent charts show that, whilst 14.2% of parents think that the age for marriage should be 16 in girls (hence an age at which one could complete lower secondary education), those who find this age desirable for boys account for only 11.4%. Even larger is the difference between those who accept marriage at 14 years for girls (6.1%) and those who agree with it for boys (2%).





Anyhow, for most of our respondents the desirable age for marriage (both in boys, and in girls) is a relatively young one compared to the average first marriage age in Romania. At national level, for example in 1998, it was found that this age was 26.4 years in men, while in women it was 23.2 years (ages that were 2.6 and 2.5 years respectively smaller in rural area)¹⁶. A more recent report¹⁷, based on the sociological survey conducted in nine Romanian counties on a sample of 717 women, indicates that the average marriage age in Roma women is somewhere around 17 years, and 19 years for childbirth (whereas in the overall population these ages are 26 and 24 years respectively).

In this context, we have to remember that early marriages are not always necessarily the result of the group's cultural tradition, as "in some cases, the socioeconomic status and the competition between families, the <boast>, are the main factors for juvenile marriage¹⁸." Another argument breaking down the idea that early marriage is a Roma cultural practice is the fact that,

¹⁶ Women and Men in Romania, National Commission for Statistics and UNDP, 2000, p.11.

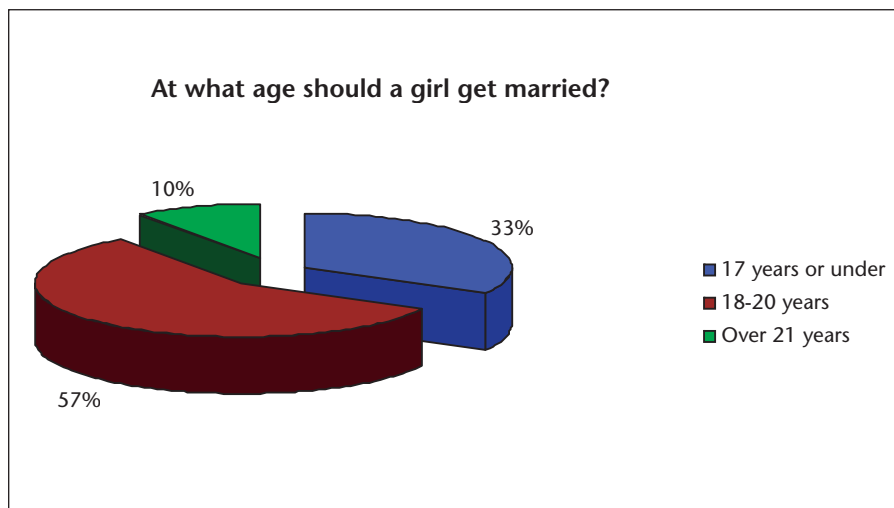
¹⁷ Laura Surdu – Mihai Surdu (ed.): *Broadening the Agenda. The Statutes of Romani Women in Romania*, Open Society Institute, 2006, p.10.

¹⁸ Nicoleta Bițu – Crina Morteau: *Drepturile copilului sunt negociabile? Cazul mariajelor timpurii în comunitățile de romi din România*, București, 2009, p.22, written and published with the financial support of UNICEF Romania.

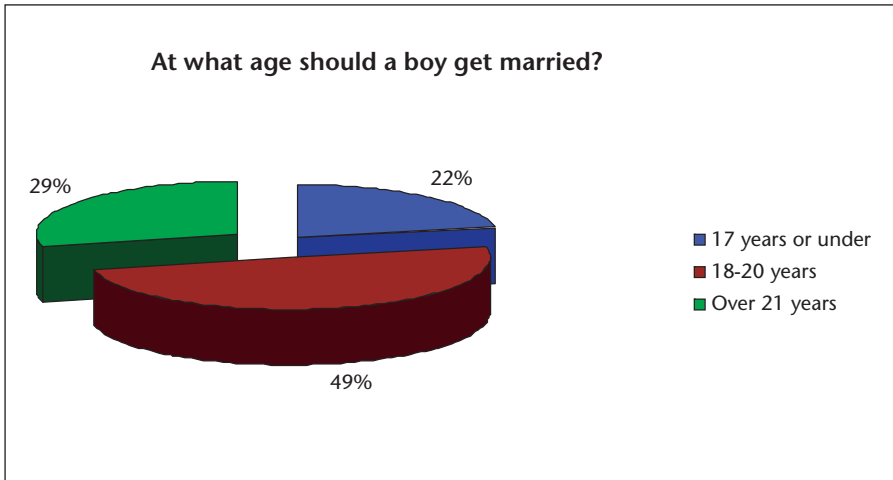
within other ethnic groups, this has been and can be a strategy of adjusting to the living conditions, especially in the case of relatively closed and remote communities, dominated by patriarchal practices that place women in subordinate positions.

Another research from 2000 show us yet again that gender-based patriarchal order, viewed in terms of the conceptions and practices related to female and male participation in child education, is predominant in the Romanian society regardless of ethnicity: 62.9% of Romanian women and 51.5% of Romanian men, 67% of ethnic Hungarian women and 59.3% of ethnic Hungarian men, as well as 69.6% of Roma women and 80% of Roma men say that, in their family, the mother is the one who is more involved in child-rearing¹⁹.

As seen in the following charts, marriages under 17 are wanted in a greater proportion for girls than for boys (33% and 22% respectively).



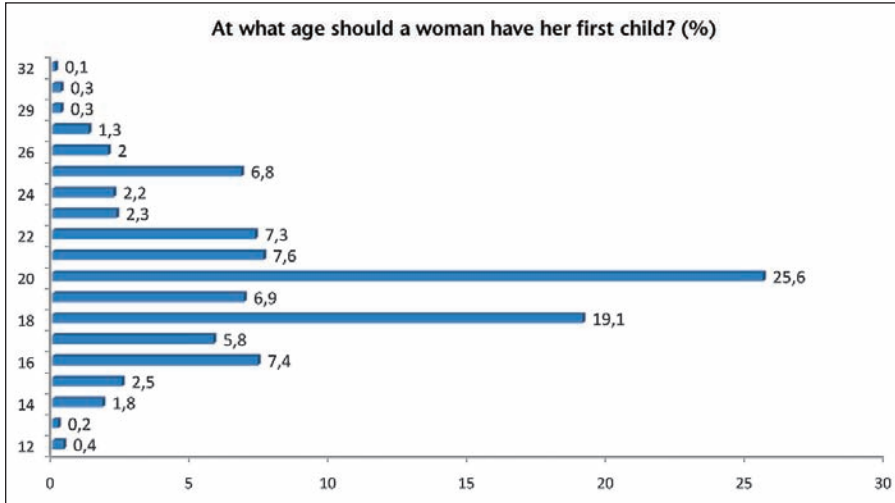
¹⁹ Eniko Magyari-Vincze (ed.): *Femei și bărbați în Clujul multiethnic*. Volumul 1. Ancheta sociologică, Cluj: Desire, 2001.



Out of the 930 cases, almost one third – 304 parents – considered that a girl should get married before the age of 17 years, most of these respondents (172) being stay-at-home parents. Looking at parents' level of schooling, we notice that almost half (47.4%) of those who make this statement declare they can't read and write. Most of the 204 urban respondents (177) live in big cities. Referring to boys, less than a quarter of respondents don't believe that their age for marriage should be 17 years or under (in our sample we came across 203 such cases). From the point of view of parents' occupational status, the number of stay-at-home parents is significantly high (132), while as regards their level of education, half of them (101) can't read and write. In the cases encountered in towns (151), the great majority of parents who share this opinion (104) live in big cities. These data disaggregated on living area, occupational status and academic attainment show us that, as far as this matter is concerned – in parents' opinion – child gender (more precisely, the cultural connotation given to gender or the mentality on gender differences) prevails over other determining factors: regardless their socioeconomic status, parents want to see their girls rather than their boys get married at early ages.

It is important to add that this way of thinking is predominant in our society regardless of ethnicity, as it also turns out from the fact that the act that amended the Family Code to establish the age of 18 years for both spouses entered into force only in March 2007 (the former act prescribed that girls could get married at minimum 16 years with parents' dispensation and at minimum 15 years with dispensation from the guardianship authority).

As to parents' conception about **the age when a woman should have her first child**, it seems that this has an even smaller impact on schooling. That is because most of them don't believe that girls should quit school in order to fulfil their motherly duties – 25.6% of them placed the age for childbirth at 20 years.



Taking a look at other research studies, we can assert that there is a discrepancy between what subjects declare to be the ideal age for first childbirth and reality, which means that, despite their wishes, a series of different factors push women towards other 'options'. As it turns out from the report "*Vino mai aproape*" [*Come Closer*], the age difference between Roma and non-Roma women as regards their first pregnancy is of approximately three years: "most women (55%) in the Roma sample first got pregnant when they were still underage compared to 14% in the comparative sample", and 16% of the latter had their first child after the age of 25 years, compared to 5% of the women in the Roma sample (2008, p.85).

Beyond the parents' desire to provide their child with more schooling opportunities, the family pattern (built under the influence of several phenomena - many of them restricting – that fence in the opportunity of making free choices) works, like it or not, as a factor that affects the child's school path. Expanding on this element, we need to also note that most parents (86.5%) declared that there was no one close to the child who had stayed in education for longer, whereas 38.6% of the very few who said the

opposite didn't find that person to be successful in life (assuming that more education doesn't necessarily mean a better living standard).

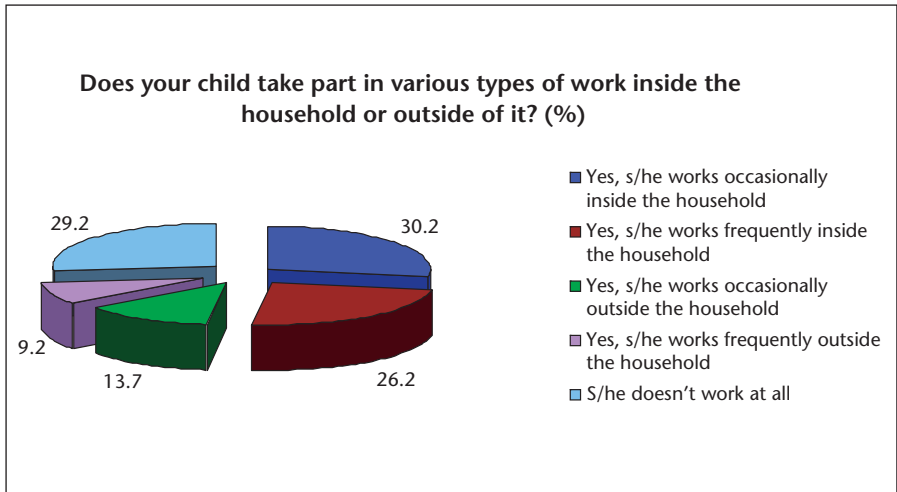
The quality case study carried out in an urban centre from Transylvania regarding the impact of social inequalities on Roma youth's access to school education²⁰ showed that the perceptions on school importance are (also) linked to respondents' ethnic self-identification (and not only to the acknowledgement of the need to study or learn a trade, etc.). The latter is established not only in relation to the majority population, but also to the internal diversity of Roma groups, defined by our subjects along the demarcation lines between Romanianised Roma and Gabor Roma, or those built based on religious and gender criteria. We noticed that Romanianised Roma, following identity strategies to integrate into the majority society, stressed the emancipating role of school education with phrases like "if we go to school, we can prove that we are just as civil as Romanians" and defined themselves as "emancipated Roma" compared to Gabor Roma who "don't usually go to school and stay uncivilised". Mothers' desire to support their girls not to quit school for an early marriage (thus expressing their option for a "modern life" which they associate with the Romanians' lifestyle) equally demonstrates the link between the perception of school importance and people's ethnic and gender identification, namely the identity stakes of school attendance.

2.4.3. Child Participation in Labour Activities

Another factor that can contribute to the child's non-enrolment in school is the need for the girls and boys of the parents concerned to work either inside the household, or outside of it – which is of course connected to the family's material and financial lacks or, in some cases, to the great number of children, as older children look after their younger siblings or contribute to housework. Only 29.2% of the parents who have at least one child no longer in school declared that the child was not doing any kind of work, whereas 56.4% of them stated that the child was doing occasional or frequent work inside the

²⁰ The quality case study was part of a larger investigation carried out in the European comparative project EDUMIGROM (Ethnic Differences in Education and Diverging Prospects for Urban Youth in an Enlarged Europe). This included extensive interviews with parents, teachers and 7th and 8th graders from three schools located in the proximity of neighbourhoods with large Roma populations, as well as observations on participation in school, home and a few public spaces attended by these students. The report drawn from this study is currently in a draft version (Eniko Vincze: Community Study Report. Romania, 2010).

household and 22.7% of parents said that the child was doing occasional or frequent work outside the household.



2.4.4. Possession of Identity Documents

In the overall sample, most children (89.3%) do have identity documents, and only for 10.7% of respondents' children their lack could be what triggered unschooling, although we have to mention that parents did not quote this reason among those underlying such a decision.

Our data indicate that the absence of identity documents is a marginal issue if we consider the share of undocumented people, but it is relevant for the study of the causes underlying children's unschooling. As reflected in the chart below, only 3.5% of a total of 978 respondents are undocumented.

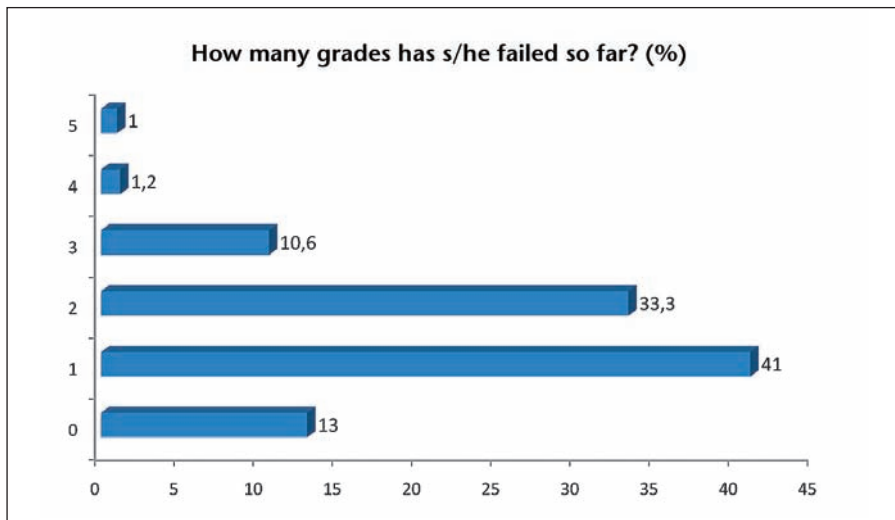
Although a bigger share of urban residents are not in possession of identity documents (3.6% compared to 3.2% in rural area), the difference is not statistically significant.

As regards the enrolment of the children who were not attending any form of education at the time of research, a statistically significant difference has been noticed between parents with identity documents and undocumented parents. Whilst 71.4% of parents with ID papers enrolled their children in

school at some point, only 55.9% of undocumented parents did the same. Based on these data, it can be said that lack of identity documents increases the risk of a parent not entering their child into school. More than half of the parents without identity documents (52.9%) can't read and write, and over two thirds (67.6%) have not completed primary school. Occupationally speaking, we notice the homogeneity of undocumented respondents: they are either stay-at-home parents (76.5%) or workers in the informal economy (23.5%). The result is not surprising at all given that lack of documents is a formal obstacle for the labour market integration of these people. It can be assumed that the income of these persons is smaller than average which translates into a more reduced consumption of cultural goods. Hence, all undocumented respondents declared that they didn't have any book in the house (compared to 76.2% of the overall population).

2.4.5. Grade Retention and Dropout

Just like lack of identity documents, grade retention was not mentioned by parents among dropout causes, even if on average their children failed the grade 1.7 times. As seen in the chart below, most of the children who quit school (47.6%) were held back at least once, 38% twice and 12% three times. (N=415)



The school participation phenomenon – within its economic, social, political and cultural contexts – is on the one hand under the influence of other life factors, while on the other hand it impacts these very factors (replicating and/or transforming them one way or another). The options for participation or non-participation – even if they are personal decisions – are shaped by and implemented within a constellation of elements that transcend the boundaries within which an individual may act as a social being. These include macro-structural forces (such as the material living conditions, residential segregation or education policies), mechanisms that work within the school's micro-world and the interaction between school and family, as well as cultural conceptions about institutions like school and family and about interethnic, gender-based relationships or those between people from different walks of life.

Analysing the issues of Roma children's school participation, our study retained only certain elements from this complexity, such as parents' conceptions/perceptions of school, and the link between school attendance and their socioeconomic and educational status. To the question about the reasons why their child had dropped out, we got an answer from 622 parents, whilst to the question about the causes for never going to school the answer came from 95 parents. Of the latter, two thirds come from urban centres, and 32 from villages. Among the children who have never been in school, almost half (46) are aged 7-11 years (of whom, the boys are almost twice as many as girls, 30 compared to 16), and 38 children fall into the 12-16 age group (where the number of girls is 1 ½ times higher than the boys' – 23 girls versus 15 boys).

Our study showed that, among the reasons of non-participation in school, the material ones are prevailing among parents (and we could forecast that, in the context of a continuously declining living standard, they will have an even more devastating impact on the decisions regarding child schooling). Even if the number of cases we are referring to here is too small to be sure that the difference is significant, we can state that, in recent years, a decreasing tendency was noticed as concerns school non-enrolment caused by child work inside the household; however, another tendency is the increasing economic causes underlying non-enrolment. As regards children who attended school at some point but later dropped out, their parents brought up economic reasons in a smaller percentage (41.8%) than those of the children who have never been in school (55.6%).

Beyond family environment-related factors (including their material conditions and cultural conceptions about what a boy or a girl should do in life), the decision for school participation is also based on parents' experience and perception of school education. Material and financial shortcomings, as well as the everyday experience related to the school's lack of interest for Roma children and the impossibility of finding a job even if one finishes school neutralise the ideal choice (as expressed in the ideas about the importance of schooling) and eventually leads to resignedly accepting dropout.

Although most parents say they are pleased with their child's school education, their satisfaction with school-acquired knowledge is linked to their (low) expectations from school and children (expectations that are in their turn moulded by harsh living conditions) and to what the parents themselves achieved in school, their educational level respectively. Moreover, when weighing the answers to the question what exactly they dislike against the answers to the question about the importance of school characteristics (which shows that most parents define child safety as important/very important), we find out that they are not happy with the way this factor they consider highly important is guaranteed in the school attended by their children (only 3.1% of them say they appreciate their school for that).

As to the answer to the question regarding to whom the child owes his/her **academic attainment** (thereby understanding academic success), 63.1% of the 645 respondents think that it is owed to the school. This means that their percentage is much higher than that of the parents who blame the education system (12.5%) for school leaving. The respondents (many of whom explained that school leaving was due to economic conditions) seem to be more willing to appreciate the positive role of school (related to academic success) than to criticize the education system in relation to dropout. These discrepancies may be explained through parents' internalisation of the explanations given to academic failure/success by the system and eventually through the tendency of those living in precarious conditions to resignedly accept their situation and not to criticise the education system for the poor academic attainment that may lead to dropout.

Our study shows that one of the most common assumptions – that early marriage (viewed as part of the "Romani culture") is a reason for non-participation in school – is ungrounded. In this context, we have to agree with the statement that early marriages are not always necessarily a result of the group's cultural tradition, as "in some cases, the socioeconomic status and the competition between families, the <boast>, are the main factors for

juvenile marriage²¹.” Another argument in breaking down the idea that early marriage is a Roma cultural practice is the fact that, within other ethnic groups, this has been and can be a strategy of adjusting to the living conditions, especially in the case of relatively closed and remote communities, dominated by patriarchal practices that place women in subordinate positions.

2.5. Dropout Determinants among Roma Students

The public discourse tends to reduce the issue of Roma children’s preschool and school non-participation to family-related causes. Roma parents are blamed for allegedly refusing to send their children to school, either for not understanding the role of education for the child’s future or because they ignore it²². The thesis of parental responsibility, which is not grounded on empirical data, diverts the attention from the major problems facing numerous Roma communities (poverty, unemployment, improper living conditions) and from the dysfunctions of the educational system (segregation, teaching staff turnover in the schools with a large share of Roma students), throwing the entire responsibility on Roma families. Therefore, parents are considered accountable for the perpetuated social exclusion and poverty. The qualitative research conducted as part of the project sought to present the dropout phenomenon exactly from Roma parents’ perspective. Focus groups revealed that the parents were aware of the role of education to ensure ascending social mobility but they were equally worried about the labour market integration opportunities available to Roma graduates. That is why many of them are reluctant to investing time and money in their children’s education from some point on; that point, coinciding with the time when the child leaves school, varies according to several factors, including parents’ education, the child’s discriminatory school experience, the family’s material situation and, particularly in traditional communities, the child’s gender.

²¹ Nicoleta Bițu – Crina Morțeanu: *Drepturile copilului sunt negociabile? Cazul mariajelor timpurii în comunitățile de romi din România*, București, 2009, p.22, written and published with the financial support of UNICEF Romania.

²² The President of the country himself, referring to the dropout issue among Roma children, said: “The major issue comes from Roma families’ education and culture. The problem must be looked

2.5.1. Roma Parents' Attitude towards Education

Talking about education in general, focus group participants showed a positive attitude, recognising the role of school in shaping a better future. Education was, in most cases, instrumentally represented and associated with the child's later occupational path. In other words, school benefits come foremost from the opportunity of getting a job that matches education and of gaining financial independence:

... A child can't be without schooling because they grow up and in their future they will need a bit of school to get a job, to build a future...

(Focus group participant, Cluj-Napoca)

But I would really like my little girl to finish school and I think this is first of all very important for her, for her life, to get a safe job, for her to make a living on her own without depending on such-and-such person.

(Focus group participant, Timișoara)

In general, parents' expectations of child schooling are influenced by two factors: their own educational and life experience and the experience of the "schooled" people from the community who are close to them, people who have completed more schooling than most community members. The majority of focus group participants acquired a limited educational capital and were exposed throughout their life to shorter or longer periods of unemployment, of seasonal employment on semi-skilled jobs (mainly in farming) or physically demanding jobs, with a modest status and low retribution (loader/unloader, sanitation agent). For them, lack of education stifled social mobility opportunities; that is why school is seen as a means to help children avoid the same difficulties later on:

for in parents to start with, where, from a cultural point of view, going to school is rarely a priority for many Roma families. I believe that the efforts of state institutions, local governments and civil society should focus on this" ("Băscu: Agențiile guvernamentale pentru romi ar trebui comasate", România Liberă, 23 April 2008; article available online at: <http://www.romanalibera.ro/actualitate/eveniment/basescu-agențiile-guvernamentale-pentru-romi-ar-trebui-comasate-123235.html>)

I didn't have the chance to finish school during Ceau escu's regime and, since I started to earn a living at a very young age, I had no one to teach me, and I wouldn't like my daughter to go through the same trouble. I would really like for her to finish school and get a very good job.

(Focus group participant, Timișoara)

This is what I would like the most in life, to send my child to school to get an education. As I didn't get any, my child should study and build a life ahead and become someone after he finishes school. To learn a trade and know how to get on in life.

(Focus group participant, Cluj-Napoca)

While most of the times personal experience generates optimism about the role of education for the child's future, the enthusiasm is tempered down by the experience of community members who, despite the time and money they invested to attend long-term schooling, didn't manage to translate this investment into later benefits. The participants in several focus groups mentioned cases of children who, after completing 10 grades, high school and even university either didn't find a job or ended up in jobs beneath their qualifications:

They want it and they are trying hard and so are we because we know that without schooling they will end up like us; although even with an education, we have some people in our community who finished 8 grades and looked for a job and no one hired them.

(Focus group participant, Cluj-Napoca)

Roma parents have to deal with an education dilemma: lack of schooling narrows down the child's future opportunities but, at the same time, long-term schooling does not guarantee a brighter future. Moreover, although access to education is supposedly free of charge, there are numerous school-associated costs that parents have no choice but to cover – the cost of school supplies, school uniform, sportswear, child's food, footwear, various contributions to class pool fund and school pool fund, extracurricular activity charges, etc. Under these circumstances, an obvious question arises: how much school is enough for a child? The answer to this question varies from one family to another but we generally notice something that could be called the "baby step policy": parents tend to expect their children to get a better education than them. If the parent can't read and write, s/he would like the

child to finish at least four grades; if the parent finished primary school, s/he would like their children to complete middle school; and if the parent has a high school diploma, his/her expectations aim at higher education.

Mom finished five or six grades, Dad seven, and I finished only seven or eight myself. So, I didn't have the possibility, I am trying to help my children finish at least ten grades as required.

(Focus group participant, Cluj-Napoca)

Just like the talks about education in general, those about the preferred child schooling duration were highly pragmatic. Parents want for their children a little more education than they received not necessarily because more schooling than that would be in vain, but because they work out the costs of education and especially the family's educational capital. In many cases, dropout is not an accident, but an ineluctable consequence of a particular set of circumstances unfavourable to the child, from which parents' academic attainment cannot be excluded:

The problem was that, if the gipsies were never schooled²³, (...) it was all more difficult because there was no one to teach them. Even if they did go to school, when they would come back home they couldn't do their homework and lessons because there was no one educated to help them with that at home.

(Focus group participant, Piatra-Neamț)

The decision to temporarily or indefinitely discontinue the child's schooling is influenced by economic factors (the family's material situation, the costs of education), institutional factors (segregation, discriminatory practices) and cultural ones (traditions, especially early marriages). These determinants should not be looked at separately; in many cases, children are concomitantly exposed to several factors, and the very accumulation of multiple tensions is what sets off the propensity for leaving school.

²³ The participant talks about a traditional community from the County of Neamț.

2.5.2. Economic Determinants of Dropout

The precarious material situation was the most common reason given by participants to explain Roma children's dropout. On the one hand, numerous families don't manage to cover from their small income the costs brought about by education; on the other, the need to supplement family income makes children engage in economic activities outside the household. On the short run, both situations generate disguised dropout²⁴, while also contributing to a lagging behind in training that affects children's academic attainment, many times leading to course failures and grade retention and, on the long run, they enhance the risk of effective dropout.

Although school should be free of charge, participants insisted on the costs that are directly or indirectly associated with school attendance:

Sometimes she [the schoolteacher] asks us and tells us as follows, when she needs money: we need the money for this, we need the money for that, this is the deadline... we need... and I have to explain to her, in front of everybody, without any shame because I don't steal, no way... Where could I give you that money from...the money you need for curtains, for liquid [soap], for toilet paper, well... you need it for floor mop, you need it... where could I give you money for the genitor because... that's what school is for (...) to get funds if you don't have any... If the school doesn't give you any, where could I give it to you from, as poor as I am? 'We can't exempt you because you have to give the same money as everyone else.' 'Yes, but that gentleman has a job, I don't. I can't give you, I have only their income [child benefits] that I get every month'...

(Focus group participant, Cluj-Napoca)

The costs of attending a form of education comprise the money spent on clothing (especially if the educational establishment imposes a mandatory outfit or a uniform), school supplies, additional teaching and learning materials (special notebooks, exercise textbooks), contributions to class and school pool funds or occasional expenses connected to extracurricular activities. The informal costs of education are perceived, starting with kindergarten, as a serious obstacle to accessing quality education:

²⁴ "Disguised dropout" describes a situation where, although enrolled in school, the child does not attend classes for an extended period of time, although s/he has not been expelled.

...first of all, the kindergarten teacher asked for a standardised outfit. We don't know why she needed detergent, toilet paper, towels, bin bags in kindergarten, all paid out of our own pocket. We reached deep into our pocket. It cost me about RON 100. After that, she told us we needed English textbooks for the children to learn, special notebooks ... the kindergarten badges cost us RON 80 each. Eventually, I pulled him out because I couldn't afford it. From what was going on, I could see that they were asking more from us for a kindergarten child than for a 1st grader.

(Focus group participant, Constanța)

Besides the informal costs of education, the economic determinants of dropout also comprise Roma children's participation in lucrative activities. Children who work outside the household usually come from poor communities, or from families engaged in subsistence economy. In most cases, work is occasional, performed in a family setting, and requires speculating on family income-growing opportunities. In the countryside, children are mainly used for physical work of reduced complexity, as well as for gathering forest fruit, herbs and mushrooms:

...In our community, people gather scrap iron; there are different periods ... now we collect iron, when the mushroom season begins, it's the mushroom period, then the period of herbs, of snails, and that's why I said that children were used for work when the mushroom season comes...

(Focus group participant, Cluj-Napoca)

Over the respective period of time, which may vary from a few days to a few weeks, the child doesn't go to school, lagging behind in schoolwork. The parents of the children involved in income-generating activities argue their decision insisting on the fact that the income earned as a result of child work helps to cover their family's urgent needs (food, heating, utilities). Compared to these basic needs, schooling comes second:

If you don't take your child, two or three children with you, you can only gather two kilos and the income is not the same as when you work together... And the parent pays more importance to this, saying 'Well, I'd better make extra money so that I can feed you and get you firewood for winter and so that we have this and that, electricity at home for you, and forget about school, school is not important'. (Idem)

A particular situation is encountered in the communities where poverty is amplified by improper housing. Two focus groups were held with participants from communities that had been recently created by moving ethnic Roma without property deeds from inner cities to the outskirts, in inappropriate dwellings, without utilities, located near waste landfills or waste water treatment plants – the communities in the neighbourhoods Pata Rât (Cluj-Napoca) and Muncii (Piatra-Neamț). Controversial from the very beginning for endangering people’s health due to their proximity to pollution sources and for being a form of Roma residential segregation, these communities are in a prolonged provisional state which doesn’t leave room for community development. To describe the incoherence of Pata Rât community planning, a participant suggested the metaphor of matchsticks:

If you open a matchstick box, you spill it out on the floor and see the matchsticks scattered like that... that’s the exact air view of this, little houses, barracks that... if you see them from above you just can’t believe your eyes...

Both disguised dropout and effective dropout are very common to these two communities; besides precarious material conditions, the participants blamed the dropout phenomenon on their housing conditions and on the difficult and sometimes dangerous road that the child needs to travel in order to get to school. In both locations, going to school means having to cross a high-traffic road, and in Pata Rât also having to cross the railway lines. Because of the accidents to which some community members fell victims, parents generally refuse to let their children go to school unaccompanied – in particular primary school children. For a while, a member of the Pata Rât community was hired and paid by the local government as an attendant, but this position was dissolved, and the children are now being accompanied by different community members on a volunteer and mutual basis.

2.5.3. Institutional Determinants of Dropout

Besides harsh economic conditions (and many times as a sequel to them), institutional determinants²⁵ contribute greatly to Roma children’s dropout. Roma children’s discrimination in class, teachers’ low expectations, poor

²⁵ In this chapter, when we talk about “institution” we basically refer to its administrative meaning. We introduced in the category of institutional determinants factors that mainly turn out in school, during and after classes, or outside school when the school personnel is involved.

communication between school and community, lack of interculturality in the syllabus and high teaching staff turnover are the chief institutional causes that fence in Roma children's academic path.

Focus group participants insisted on teachers' and non-Roma classmates' discriminatory attitude and behaviour and talked about the different forms of racism in the Romanian education system. The clearest expression of teachers' racism is probably the connection they make between ethnicity and undesirable phenomena, like lack of hygiene. This form of racism is even more serious as it is endured during classes, in front of all the other students. The issue of lack of hygiene is also brought up when referring to Roma children being treated differently during extracurricular activities:

There were some Roma children and she didn't take them to the theatre because they were filthy. Why? Were they not her students too? Weren't they allowed to go? And the kids were crying and saying ... 'they didn't take us'.
(Focus group participant, Timișoara)

Given that schoolteachers and teachers are agents of socialization and role models, their racist attitude and behaviour are many times transferred on to students who end up applying the same stereotypes and embracing similar practices:

We as women were treated badly by the schoolteacher, and the children as well were treated the same by their classmates.
(Focus group participant, Piatra-Neamț)

It could be said that school is a facility where Roma children are systematically exposed to inequitable treatment that may take obvious forms, like in the above-mentioned cases, or more subtle forms; this category comprises the practice of making Roma children sit at the desks in the back of the classrooms, teachers' ignoring Roma students and their low expectations from them. The spatial and educational separation of Roma children from non-Roma students in the classroom reveals the teachers' ideology about the desirable position of different ethnic groups within the society and actively contributes to its realisation. The social mechanism most at hand to explain academic attainment differences is self-fulfilling prophecies: the teacher believes that a child is not capable of a long-term school path, so s/he doesn't

invest time and attention in him/her, s/he doesn't stimulate him/her, and this extended neglect makes that child lose interest in the respective subject matter or acquire hard-to-overcome gaps, eventually confirming the teacher's initial stereotype. Focus group participants insisted on cases where the teacher or schoolteacher ignored Roma children:

I had a teacher of Math... he wouldn't ask me anything. So, he would just write the grade in the grade book without examining us and when the class teacher would come he would say: "You have a 5 in Math". "How come if you have never examined me?" Not once. He had his favourite students that he would ask to come to the blackboard and would explain things to them, but to us, nothing – he would completely ignore us.

(Focus group participant, Craiova)

The most insidious form of discrimination is when teachers singularize a Roma student to whom they show a positive attitude in order to hide their racist attitude towards the rest of Roma children. The phenomenon, known in academic literature as tokenism, offers a comfort zone to the teacher if anyone should question their equal treatment of students:

What did the teacher answer?

(The teacher) says: "The gipsy girl is a better student, a better one... is the gipsy girl smarter than ... Romanians?" (The girl) said: "And I asked her 'why are you discriminating?', I really told her..."

"Ah, no, Elena²⁶, you got it all wrong." "Well, you said it yourself that the gipsies are better... better students than Romanians and I am the only gipsy who... I'm not a straight-A student, but...I'm doing alright".

(Focus group participant, Bucharest)

Conclusions

The school participation phenomenon – within its economic, social, political and cultural contexts – is on the one hand under the influence of other life factors, while on the other hand it impacts these very factors (replicating

²⁶ In order to protect the concerned person's identity, her first name was changed.

and/or transforming them one way or another). The options for participation or non-participation – even if they are personal decisions – are shaped and implemented in a constellation of elements that transcend the boundaries within which an individual acts as a social being. These include macro-structural forces (such as the material living conditions, residential segregation or education policies), mechanisms that work within the school's micro-world and the interaction between school and family, as well as cultural conceptions about institutions like school and family and about interethnic, gender-based relationships or those between people from different walks of life.

Analysing the issues of Roma children's participation in school education, our study retained only certain elements from this complexity, such as parents' conceptions/perceptions of school, and the link between school attendance and their socioeconomic and educational status.

Our chapter showed that, among the reasons of non-participation in school, the material ones are prevailing among parents (and we could forecast that, in the context of a continuously declining living standard, they will have an even more devastating impact on the decisions regarding child schooling). Even if the number of cases we are referring to here is too small to be sure that the difference is significant, we can state that, in recent years, a decreasing tendency was noticed as concerns school non-enrolment caused by child work inside the household; however, another tendency is the increasing economic causes underlying non-enrolment. As regards children who attended school at some point but later dropped out, their parents brought up economic reasons in a smaller percentage than those of the children who have never been in school.

Beyond family environment-related factors (including their material conditions and cultural conceptions about what a boy or a girl should do in life), the decision for school participation is also based on parents' experience and perception of school education. Material and financial shortcomings, as well as the everyday experience related to the school's lack of interest for Roma children and the impossibility of finding a job even if one finishes school neutralise the ideal choice (as expressed in the ideas about the importance of school education) and eventually leads to resignedly accepting dropout.

Although most parents say they are pleased with their child's school education, their satisfaction with school-acquired knowledge is linked to their (low) expectations from school and children (expectations that are in their turn moulded by harsh living conditions) and to what the parents themselves

achieved in school, their educational level respectively. Moreover, when weighing the answers to the question what exactly they dislike against the answers to the question about the importance of school characteristics (which shows that most parents define child safety as important/very important), we find out that they are not happy with the way this factor they consider highly important is guaranteed in the school attended by their children.

The parents, many of whom explained that school leaving was due to economic conditions, seem to be more willing to appreciate the positive role of school (related to the academic success achieved by the students) than to criticise the education system in relation to dropout. These discrepancies may be explained through parents' internalisation of the explanations given to academic failure/success by the system and eventually through the tendency of those living in precarious conditions to resignedly accept their situation and not to criticise the education system for the poor academic attainment that may lead to dropout.

Our study shows that one of the most common assumptions – that early marriage (viewed as part of the “Romani culture”) is a reason for non-participation in school – is ungrounded. The disparity between the extensive reference to marriage as a reason for dropout in the context of personal experiences and the desirable age for marriage (which ideally should not have negative effects on schooling) prove to us that parents don't want to impose their own pattern on children; on the contrary, probably one of their considerations with regard to child schooling is this very desire for them to avoid their parents' destiny (among other things, to avoid dropout or school non-attendance in favour of early marriage).

In the end, the socioeconomic status builds up “the culture of living in the present” developed as a reaction to a life pushed to the extreme, where long-term investment in school education seems not only unprofitable, but also impossible versus the need to cover the daily lacks of families struggling to survive day by day. The incapacity of long-term planning in such circumstances adds to the mistrust in educational establishments as part of the exclusive world of the majority, and – despite the recognition of its importance – together they generate the incapacity of hoping for the benefits brought about by extended schooling (such as access to jobs that can secure a decent living). But these problems are not just “Roma's” – they belong to the whole society and they are definitely generated by broader mechanisms marking the Romanian society both as regards education, and other life areas (from social inequalities (re)produced by the new market economy, through

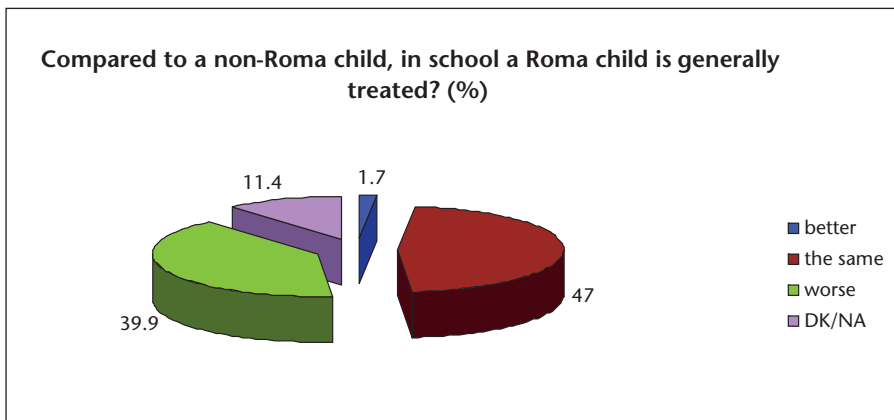
the experimental nature of education policies and school demands that are not in tune with everyday realities, to Romanian people's weakness and poverty). Non-participation or reduced participation in school are more than just people's passive reactions to various systemic lacks, as they are also a criticism against the system. Our study draws the attention to the fact that the desires (also) linked to schooling remain mere ideals of change unless change is sustained by structural, socioeconomic transformations and by addressing anti-Roma prejudices against the Roma who opt for an integration as understood by them (probably in an idealistic manner), assuming that this could be the key to a better world.

3. DISCRIMINATION IN EDUCATION AND SCHOOL SEGREGATION

3.1. Perception of Ethnic Discrimination in School

Recent studies, such as the EU-MIDIS European survey²⁷, highlight ethnicity-based discrimination against the Roma as well as Roma's perception of different types of discrimination. In Romania, 42% of respondents consider that ethnic discrimination is extremely widespread or quite widespread. The perception of discrimination is generally lower in Romania than in other European countries. School discrimination is felt less (4% of respondents experienced discrimination in school) compared to the discrimination faced in other instances (14% from private services, 11% related to contacts with health care facility personnel, 9% when looking for a job or at the workplace).

In our research, 47% of the interviewed parents think that in school a Roma child is generally treated the same as a non-Roma child²⁸, whereas 39.9% answer that a Roma child is usually treated worse. (N=985)



²⁷ http://www.edrc.ro/docs/docs/cercetari/EU-MIDIS_ROMA_RO_2008.pdf

²⁸ Parents' perception of how Roma children are treated in school is generally more positive in the respondents from the households where all children attend a form of education compared to the sample of households where there are dropout cases. Thus, 65% of the former think that in school a Roma child is treated the same as a non-Roma child and 26.2% of them believe that a Roma child is treated worse than a non-Roma one.

In terms of the language spoken at home (Romanian, Romani, Hungarian), there are no significant differences in the perception of school discrimination. In other words, being a Romani speaker does not influence the perception of school discrimination: 2.1% of Romani-speaking respondents think that a Roma child is treated better in school than a non-Roma child, 45.6% think that school treats Roma and non-Roma children the same, and 37.1% believe that school treats Roma children worse (N=607, DK/NA=15.2%).

As far as occupation is concerned, people facing more job instability (seasonal or off-the-books jobs) answer that in school a Roma child is generally treated worse than a non-Roma student to a greater extent than the sample average (62.5% and up to 67.6% respectively compared to the average of 39.9%). At the same time, respondents with relatively stable jobs (business owner, family business employee) think that a Roma child is treated the same in school as a non-Roma one to a greater extent than the sample average (66.7% of business owners and 87.5% of family business employees compared to the average of 47%). Respondents' job stability and consequently financial stability are likely to lead to greater social integration and to a more reduced perception of school discrimination. The safety parents feel about their own position impacts the perception of how children are treated in school; parents' life experience is the filter they use to interpret what happens to children in school.

Respondents with higher academic attainment tend to find school discrimination less significant. Hence, 55.1% of those who finished middle school and 65.1% of high school or vocational school graduates think that in school Roma children are normally treated the same as non-Roma students (compared to the sample average of 47%).

Rural residents show a slightly more positive perception of how school treats Roma children. The data in the table below highlight this very tendency.

Compared to a non-Roma child, in school a Roma child is generally treated (%):

	Better	The same	Worse	DK/NA
Rural	2	51,1	36,5	10,3
Urban	1,6	44,7	41,8	11,9

36.5% of rural respondents and 41.8% of urban residents (compared to the average of 39.9% in the overall sample) think that a Roma child is treated worse in school than a non-Roma child.

3.2. School Segregation Tendencies

The educational segregation of Roma children is a serious form of discrimination. The first sociological research studies touching on the phenomenon of Roma school segregation in Romania underlined the differentiated treatment applied to Roma in segregated classes and/or schools. A first comprehensive research on the school segregation phenomenon was run by UNICEF, the Research Institute for the Quality of Life and the Institute of Education Sciences in partnership with the Ministry of Education and it was published in 2002²⁹. The cited study is important because it documented for the first time at national level (as it comprised almost all rural schools) the school segregation phenomenon, its scale and typology, the negative effects of segregation as reflected in the lower quality of the education delivered in segregated settings. Moreover, the same study informed future education legislation and policy development. The research defines Roma school segregation according to the following categories:

- Mixed schools, where the share of Roma students is between 0.1% and 50%;
- Roma-majority schools, where the share of Roma students varies between 50.1% and 70%; and
- Roma-predominant schools, where Roma students reach a share of 70.1%-100%.

With regard to these categories, at the time of the research in rural area, the scale of school segregation looked as follows: 87.9% of mixed schools, 6.4% of Roma-majority schools, and 5.8% of Roma-predominant schools. Hence, adding up the last two categories, we find that a percentage of 12.2% of Roma students enrolled at that time were attending segregated schools.

A UNDP survey from the same period³⁰, using a different methodology, conducted on a Roma representative sample, found a similar figure (13.5%) for the scale of school segregation.

A national statistical research performed by the Ministry of Education in 2006 (cited in the EUMAP survey³¹) reported a total of 606 segregated educational

²⁹ Jigău, M., Surdu, M. (coord.), *Participarea la educație a copiilor romi: probleme, soluții, actori*, Ministerul Educației și Cercetării, Institutul de Științe ale Educației, Institutul de Cercetare a Calității Vieții, UNICEF, Editura MarLink, București, 2002

³⁰ UNDP, *The Roma in Central and Eastern Europe. Avoiding the Dependency Trap*, Andrey Ivanov (coord.), Bratislava: UNDP, 2002, available at http://roma.undp.sk/reports_contents.php?parent_id=1&id=217 (hereinafter, UNDP, *Avoiding the Dependency Trap*), Annex 1, p. 91

facilities (162 kindergartens, 315 primary schools, 112 lower secondary education schools and 17 high schools and vocational schools). At the time, the share of Roma children in segregated schools and kindergartens was as follows³²:

	Kinder- garten	Primary education (1-4)	Lower secondary education (5-8)	Secondary education (high school, schools of arts and trades)
Roma children enrolled in segregated kindergartens and schools as a share in the total Roma students (estimates)	42,91%	52,73%	39,51%	42,26%

It is however unclear whether the data provided by the Ministry of Education refer to the scale of segregation at the level of the entire school system or whether those percentages are related to the share of Roma in segregated schools. If the data refer to the whole education system, we notice that the percentages supplied by the Ministry are considerably higher than our research data.

Going back to the 2002 survey, it demonstrates important empirical associations – associations between the intensity of Roma school segregation and the quality of education available to this ethnic group. In segregated educational establishments, school infrastructure is underdeveloped (absence of library, shabby furniture, precarious or inexistent labs, lack of gyms, of teaching and learning materials, etc.), while human resources are scarcer and less trained (great share of unqualified personnel, high staff turnover, commuting). In the schools/classes that are exclusively or preponderantly made up of Roma students, it was found that the middle school final exam promotion rate was lower, functional illiteracy was greater, the grade

³¹ *Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma*, Monitoring Report 2007, OSI, EUMAP, ESP, RPP http://www.soros.org/initiatives/roma/articles_publications/publications/equal_20070329/rom32,2_ania2_20070329.pdf

³² Percentages worked out by the author using the gender-disaggregated data in Table 13, pg. 48

retention rate was bigger and participation in school competitions and Olympiads was less frequent. Interesting for this research is the association between school segregation and dropout. As seen in the data drawn from the 2002 survey, dropout is much more common to segregated primary and lower secondary schools than to other establishments. In other words, there is a strong connection between school segregation – implying poor quality of education – and dropout rates. Segregated schools have a negative impact on school participation, and segregation is one of the dropout causes.

According to the following table, school segregation bears a significant influence on dropout as this phenomenon is more present in the schools where Roma students make a majority (over 50%).

The share of compulsory education schools that reported at least one case of dropout in 1997-1999, based on the ethnic makeup of students.³³

	Primary school dropout	Lower secondary school dropout
Schools with less than 50% Roma	30,3	41,7
Schools with over 50% of Roma	46,1	69,1
Total rural schools with Roma	32,4	44,2
Total rural schools	17,2	40

Moreover, the 2002 survey data show that the dropout phenomenon is more intense (not just present) in segregated schools. Therefore, whilst nearly 3% of the total rural schools recorded a dropout rate of over 5%, in the case of segregated schools (with over 50% of Roma students), this figure goes up to 14%³⁴.

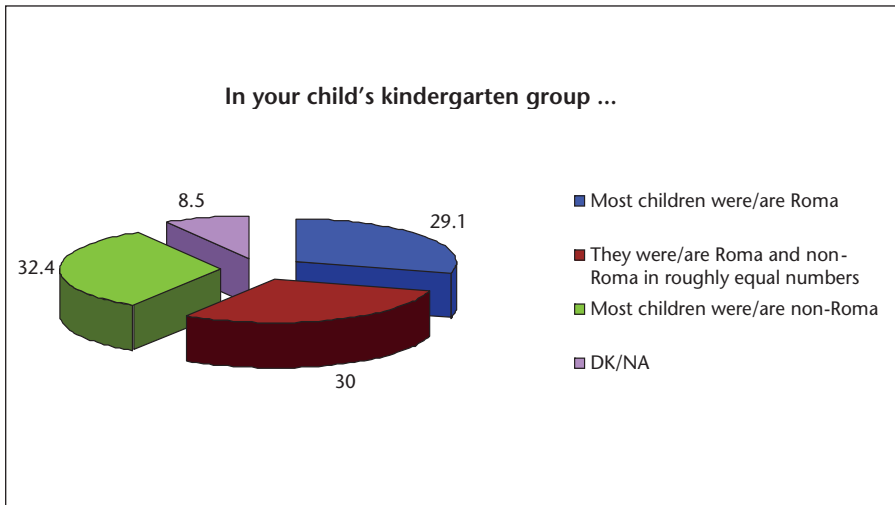
In 2008, a report monitoring the governmental measures taken against school segregation³⁵ conducted in 134 schools (selected based on a convenience sample) stressed the fact that 67% of all schools in the sample had to deal with cases of Roma student school segregation, either at school level or class level.

³³ Jigău, M., Surdu, M. (coord.), *Participarea la educație a copiilor romi: probleme, soluții, actori*, Ministerul Educației și Cercetării, Institutul de Științe ale Educației, Institutul de Cercetare a Calității Vieții, UNICEF, Editura MarLink, București, 2002, table 2, p. 50

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 49-50

³⁵ Surdu, L., *Monitorizarea aplicării măsurilor împotriva segregării școlare în România*, Romani Criss, UNICEF, Editura MarLink, București, 2008

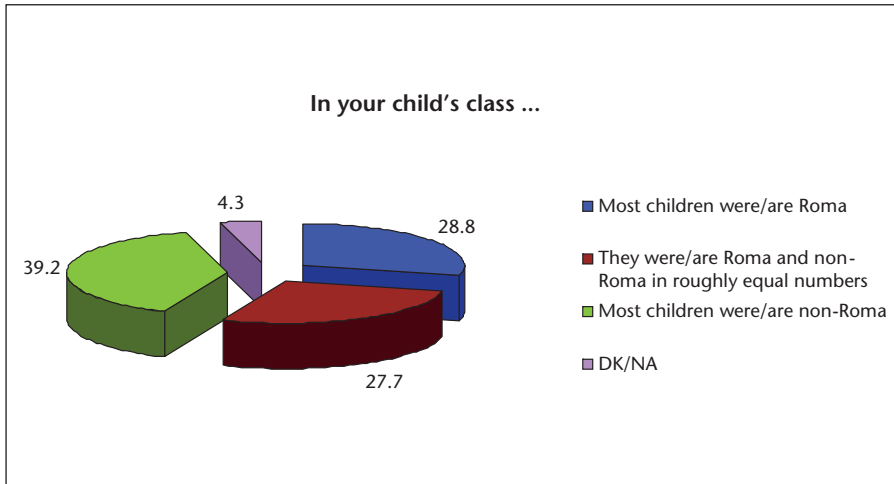
We will further examine the scale of preschool and school segregation as perceived by the parents included in the sample of this research. Hence, we notice in the chart below³⁶ that **almost 60% of the Roma children who go to kindergarten are taught in segregated kindergarten groups (N=213)**. In 29.1% of the cases, children are taught in kindergarten groups where most of their peers are Roma, and in 30% of the cases the numbers of Roma and non-Roma children in the kindergarten group are relatively equal. Only in about one third of the cases (32.4%) Roma children learn in kindergarten groups where ethnic Roma do not make a majority. **At kindergarten, 11.7% of Roma children learn in all-Roma groups.**



Preschool segregation has a relatively similar makeup to that of kindergarten group segregation when it comes to kindergartens taken as educational establishments (all groups). Hence, in 30.5% of the cases, Roma children learn in kindergartens where most children are ethnic Roma, in 28.6% of the cases Roma children are almost equal in number to non-Roma children attending the respective kindergarten, and in 29.6% of the answers in the kindergarten most children are non-Roma (11.3% no answers).

³⁶ We grouped the answers <all children were/are Roma/non-Roma> and <most children were/are Roma/non-Roma> under the item <most of them were/are Roma/non-Roma>. We did the same with the answers to school-related questions.

Regarding the households with at least one case of non-participation in school, the scale of class-level ethnic segregation is similar to the segregation encountered in the entire school³⁷. Hence, at class level, in **56.5% of the cases, Roma pupils learn in segregated classes** where the number of Roma children in the class is equal to or bigger than the number of non-Roma children (N=633). **A share of 9.1% of Roma students learns in classes where all their classmates are ethnic Roma.**



Segregation is more emphasized in the primary education stage (children aged 7-11 years), where 64.5% of Roma students learn in segregated classes (the number of Roma children per class is equal to or higher than the number of non-Roma children; N=123). According to respondents' perception, primary school segregated classes are distributed as follows: 32.6% of students learn in classes where the Roma make a majority, 31.6% in classes where the numbers of Roma and non-Roma children are roughly equal, while in 28.5% of the cases the majority are non-Roma (7.3% no answers). In primary school, 9.8% learn in all-Roma classes. In lower secondary schools (children aged 12-16 years), segregation is slightly more reduced than the sample average and significantly more reduced than in the primary education stage. Thus, 53% of Roma middle school students

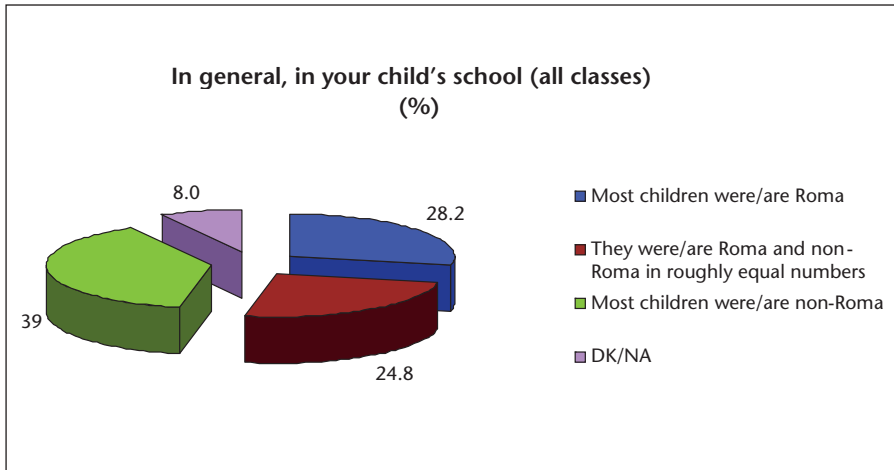
³⁷ A possible explanation of the relatively similar data on class segregation and school segregation may be the interviewers' misunderstanding of the conceptual differences between class segregation and school segregation. Moreover, parents are likely to estimate class segregation easier than school segregation. From our field observations, class segregation is more significant than school segregation.

(5th-8th grades) learn in segregated classes (where the number of Roma children is equal to or bigger than the number of non-Roma children; N=347). Lower secondary school segregated classes are distributed as follows: 25.6% of students learn in classes where the Roma make a majority (over 50%), 27.4% in classes where the numbers of Roma and non-Roma children are relatively the same, and 43.5% learn in classes where the majority are non-Roma (3.5% no answers). In the lower secondary education stage, 9.5% of Roma students learn in all-Roma classes.

There are significant differences between rural and urban, namely class-level school segregation (and as we will see school-level segregation too) is more emphasized in rural area. Consequently, **in rural settings, 68.6% of Roma students learn in segregated classes** where Roma children are equal in number to non-Roma learners or they make a majority (30.7% of Roma-majority classes and 37.9% of classes with equal shares of Roma and non-Roma children). A possible explanation of this distribution may be the residential segregation tendency which is stronger in rural areas and consequently a generator of higher-scale school segregation in this living area. On the contrary, in urban centres, non-segregated classes where Roma students learn with a majority of non-Roma classmates are more frequent. Anyhow, residential segregation is not the only form of segregation that could explain the scale and rural-urban distribution of this phenomenon. We could exemplify here other forms of segregation, such as the withdrawal of non-Roma students from mixed schools, the criteria used for student distribution to classes (according to parents' and/or teachers' preferences, learners' academic attainment, their assessment scores, grade retention, the date when the child was enrolled in school, student domicile-based distribution, etc.) or school-level administrative measures (taken after 2004, sometimes in a covert manner, like the creation of intensive foreign language classes). The more reduced occurrence of school segregation in urban area than in rural area, as deriving from the data above, does not necessarily mean that the segregation situation is better in urban settings.

		Roma majority	Equal numbers of Roma/non-Roma	Non-Roma majority	DK/NA
At class level	Rural	30,7	37,9	28,5	2,9
	Urban	27,4	20,2	47	5,4
At school level	Rural	27	38,7	29,6	4,7
	Urban	29	14,5	46	10,5

School segregation has a similar makeup to class segregation. Hence, 53% of the Roma students in the sample learn in segregated schools where the number of Roma children is equal to or higher than the number of non-Roma children (N=633).



School-level segregation shows a similar living area-based pattern to class-level segregation. Thus, an estimated percentage of **65.7% of Roma rural students learn in segregated schools** (see the table above), while the share of urban students who learn in segregated schools is 43.5%.

Although small, the difference between the 56.5% of Roma students who learn in segregated classes and the 53% of Roma students who learn in segregated schools shows us that Roma learners are sometimes class-segregated in an ethnically heterogeneous school. The double percentage of no answers when parents were asked to estimate school-level segregation compared to class-level segregation could actually indicate that some of these no answers might cover school-level segregation cases.

The analysis of class-level segregation according to the language spoken at home reveals an increasing tendency of the segregation phenomenon among Romani language speakers. Thus, among **Roma children from Romani-speaking families, 64% learn in segregated classes** (where more than half of the students are Roma) **in comparison to the children who come from Romanian-speaking households, where this percentage reaches 48.3%**. This may be explained through residential segregation, more pronounced among Romani speakers who are more likely to live in compact communities

than the other Roma, as well as through larger discrimination against traditional Roma.

3.3. School Segregation vs. Integrated Education

According to a UNDP survey³⁸ carried out in 2005 in five countries from Central and Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Romania, The Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary), a percentage of 58.9% of Roma parents (the regional average for the 5 countries) preferred their children to be schooled alongside majority children. In the case of Romania, the percentage of Roma parents who opted for integrated education was 54.2% at that time.

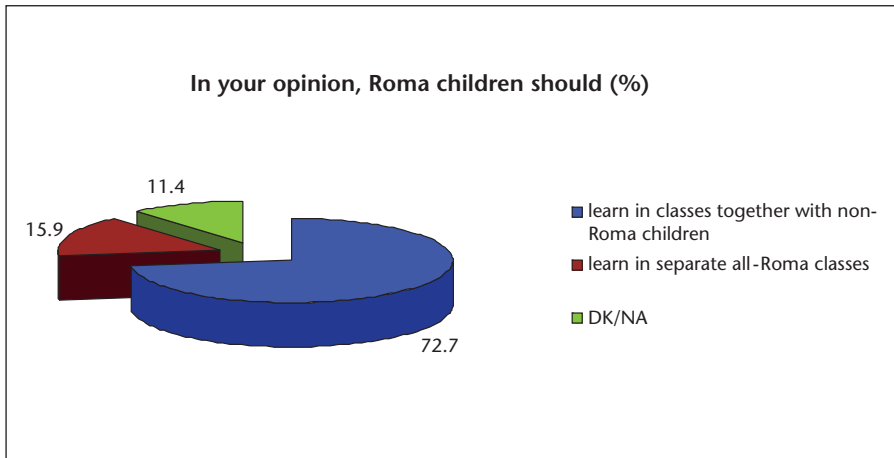
A case study carried out in the city of Timișoara at the beginning of 2009 revealed many of the attitudes that sustain the school segregation phenomenon. Apart from the confusion with regard to the relation between the provision of the right to mother tongue education and mandatory desegregation, the teachers who took part in the discussions held during a training session expressed points of view that reflected their difficulties in recognising the existence of anti-Roma stereotypes and of structural discrimination mechanisms engrained in their own institutions. For example, they stressed the following: the issue of child differentiation is inexistent because teachers treat children equally, regardless of their ethnicity; segregation is not discrimination, but a natural phenomenon meaning that people who are different from each other and don't get along stay apart; school segregation derives from residential segregation and it lies not in the power of school to change this phenomenon; every individual is free to choose what to do and where to do it, it cannot be imposed on him/her with whom to mingle or not; Roma children have other conditions at home, so they need to be treated differently in school and you can do this if you separate them from the others, who are more advanced; Roma children are less disciplined, they usually don't go to kindergarten and are not familiar with order, if they are in a classroom with other children who are not like them they divert their attention too; it is unfair that more support should be given to Hungarian or Roma children, although Romanian children face the same problems; we need to teach children how to read and write; and it will pass a lot of time before the issue of segregation will be fully addressed³⁹.

³⁸ UNDP, *Avoiding the Dependency Trap*, p. 88

³⁹ Magyari-Vincze, E., *Accesul copiilor de etnie romă la educație școlară de calitate și fenomenul segregării în sistemul școlar Timișorean*, Raport de cercetare, Editura Waldpress, 2009, pp.34-35

The case study pointed also to the fact that the misunderstanding over the education system decentralization can become an obstacle for the local implementation of desegregation policies⁴⁰.

In this research, the preference for integrated education is also present and more obvious, which proves an increasing tendency for the period 2005-2010. The number of subjects who prefer their own children to learn in mixed classes/schools is significantly higher. Hence, **72.7% of the respondents included in our research believe that it is better for Roma students to learn in classes together with non-Roma children**⁴¹ and only 15.9% consider that Roma students should be educated separately (N=985 cases). This preference for integrated education appears in a context where we have seen that more than half of the Roma students in the sample don't currently benefit from inclusive education.



To a question similar to the one in our research (“In your opinion, is it good or bad for Roma and non-Roma students to learn in the same class?”), the Interethnic Relations Barometers from 2007 and 2009 came across the following findings.

⁴⁰ Idem, pp.32-34.

⁴¹ In the sample comprising the households where all children attend a form of education, those who want an integrated education are in a higher percentage, namely 83%.

	2007 Barometer ⁴²		2009 Barometer ⁴³	
	Non-Roma	Roma	Non-Roma	Roma
Very bad	4	1	6,1	0,8
Bad	18	8	13,5	1
Good	58	48	59,1	29,8
Very good	15	41	17,9	68,4
DK/NA	4	3	3,3	0

In addition, the data from the two public opinion barometers reveal a very big share of Roma parents who want integrated education. Moreover, there is a rising tendency in Roma parents' preference for multiethnic classes. Hence, if in the 2007 Barometer 89% of Roma thought that it was good for Roma students to learn in the same class with Romanian learners, in 2009, their percentage went up to 98.2% (almost all respondents in the sample). At the same time, we should notice another rising tendency with regard to non-Roma respondents' option for integrated education. If, in 2007, 73% of non-Roma appreciated integrated education as being beneficial ("very good" and "good" answers), in 2009, this percentage reached 77%. At declaratory level, integrated education is the option for both the Roma minority and the non-Roma majority (with a significantly higher share of the Roma who want school integration). Nonetheless, as resulting from our research data, more than half of Roma students continue to learn in segregated classes.

Going back to our research data, it has been noticed that the percentage of those who prefer an integrated education tends to rise as the segregation phenomenon gets more intense. Hence, the percentage of Roma parents who prefer to educate their children in ethnically heterogeneous classes goes up to 85.4% (48 cases) in the case of kindergarten groups where most children are Roma and to 94.1% (34 cases) in the case of all-Roma kindergarten groups (compared to the sample average of 72.7%). The analysis of the answers to this question indicates the subjects' clear preference for inclusion when it comes to their children's school education and the

⁴² According to <http://www.edrc.ro/docs/docs/cercetari/Barometrul-incluziunii-romilor.pdf>, 2007, accessed on 3 June 2010

⁴³ „Barometrul interetnic 2009 - Romii și majoritarii”, realizat de Secretariatul General al Guvernului prin IMAS, http://www.sgg.ro/docs/File/UIP/doc/phare2006/3_ETN_Raport_Romi.pdf, 2009, p.34 and http://www.sgg.ro/docs/File/UIP/doc/phare2006/2_ETN_Raport_Non_romi.pdf pg. 33, accessed on 3 June 2010

intensity of this preference when they have experienced segregation in the kindergarten group.

A similar relation transpires between the scale of class segregation and parents' preference for integrated education. Thus, 87.9% of the parents whose children learn in Roma-majority classes want integrated schooling (N=132 cases). This percentage rises to 90.2% for the parents whose children are in an all-Roma class (N=61).

For the Romani-speaking parents, the percentages are smaller with regard to the option for integrated education (65.4%) in comparison to the subjects who don't speak Romani language (85.1%), although many of the first would also like ethnically mixed education.

In the table below, we illustrate the distribution of options for integrated education and separate education respectively, by living area (N=985).

	Rural	Urban
To learn in classes together with non-Roma children	78,7%	69,4%
To learn in separate all-Roma classes	7,8%	20,4%
DK/NA	13,5%	10,2%

Of the 157 subjects who stated that Roma and non-Roma students should learn in separate classes, 2 ½ more come from urban centres (20.4% compared to 7.8% similar answers from rural subjects).

3.4. Parents' Familiarity with Anti-Segregation Legislation

Researching into Roma education policies adopted in Romania, a recent survey on this issue⁴⁴ has noticed that they fall under two major paradigms – those that are generally addressed to minorities, and those that concern the access to education for disadvantaged groups. In extremis, public debates about their timeliness shifted between two major positions: one that sees the

⁴⁴ Magyari-Vincze, E. și Hajnalka Harbula, *Country Report on Education: Romania. EDUMIGROM Background Papers*, Budapest, Central European University, Center for Policy Studies, 2008 http://www.edumigrom.eu/sites/default/files/field_attachment/page/node-817/edumigrombackgroundpaperromaniaeducation.pdf, pp.24-28, 34-36

issue of Roma as an ethnic-cultural one, and the other that sees it as a socioeconomic matter. The former emphasizes Roma's cultural rights (such as the right to learn in their mother tongue) and falls into a cultural/separatist identity policy, whilst the latter is centred on factors that transform the Roma into a disadvantaged group (which, for example, doesn't effectively benefit from the right to quality education) and legitimise an integrationist policy. One of the weaknesses of the last years' Roma education policies is the very failure to draw up a position that can treat the cultural and social aspects of school access in an integrated manner and that can coordinate these two types of interventions. In the absence of such a perspective, some believe that prioritising the issue of segregation harms linguistic policies, even if desegregation followers stress that desegregation means ensuring access to quality education and that it doesn't go against the provision of the right to mother tongue education. Certainly, recognising segregation as a form of discrimination and formulating the need for desegregational interventions were the last ones on a long list of issues targeted by Roma education policies.

The first anti-segregation measure specifically aimed at Roma educational segregation was Notification No 29323 of 2004, whereby the Ministry of Education and Research banned the creation of kindergarten groups and primary or lower secondary school classes that were exclusively or preponderantly comprised of Roma learners⁴⁵. This notification expressly acknowledged the existence of the Roma school segregation phenomenon, including through "the creation of all-Roma classes and schools".

Three years later, the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth issued the Order 1540/19 July 2007 banning, as of the 2007-2008 academic year, the creation of segregated 1st and 5th grades where Roma students are preponderant or exclusive. Segregation is considered "a serious form of discrimination and leads to unequal access to quality education for children, violating the equitable realisation of the right to education and of human dignity." (Article 2 paragraph 1)

In article 2 paragraph 2 of the Order 1540/19 July 2007, Roma school segregation is defined as "the physical separation of Roma learners into groups/classes/buildings/schools/other facilities which makes the share of Roma students in the total student population in school/class/group disproportionate to the share of the school-aged Roma children in the total school-aged population in the respective local administrative unit."

⁴⁵ <http://www.edu.ro/index.php?module=articles&func=&catid=422>

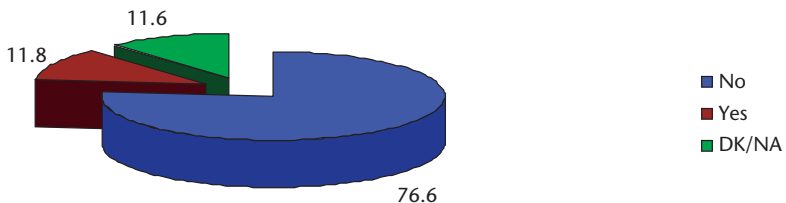
Article 4 of this Order lists some of the segregation-leading practices:

- Gathering all children who have not attended kindergarten in the same 1st grade;
- In a mixed school, deliberately gathering Roma learners in groups/classes/buildings/other facilities exclusively dedicated to them;
- Gathering in one single class the children who did a late school enrolment or maintaining Roma classes intact when children are transferred from a segregated kindergarten or school to a mixed school;
- Gathering in separate groups/classes/schools the Roma children diagnosed with learning difficulties/special needs.

In its articles, the new Education Act makes no mention of the Roma school segregation phenomenon or of desegregation measures, although since the publication of Notification 29323 in 2004 NGO's have pointed to the need for strengthening anti-segregation measures and their application by turning them into a law. Curiously enough, the Act defines segregation in its annex "List of Definitions for Terms and Phrases Used in the Act" (definition 44). This definition is similar to the one included in the 2004 Notification, except that it doesn't make specific reference to Roma, but to minorities. Consequently, the Act doesn't specifically mention Roma students' educational segregation.

More than three quarters of the Roma subjects included in the sample (76.6%) have never heard about the Order issued by the Ministry of Education in 2007 banning Roma children's school segregation (N=755 cases). If we add to this number the 'no answers', which might also hide a negative answer, we go up to 88.2% (869 cases of a total of 985 subjects in the sample). The percentage of the parents who have heard about the anti-segregation order is twofold bigger in rural areas than in urban regions. Thus, in rural area, 18.4% of parents know about this order whilst in urban area, their percentage is of only 8.2% (the sample average is 11.8%).

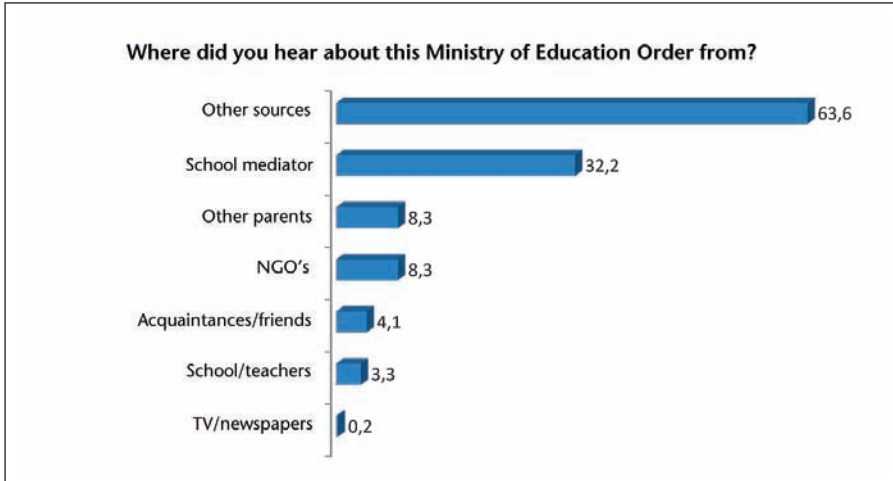
Have you heard about the Ministry of Education Order from 2007 banning Roma children's school segregation? (%)



This study aimed at investigating the level of knowledge about this order and the information sources that made this Order accessible to Roma parents. As pointed in the monitoring that targeted the application of this order⁴⁶, carried out in 2008 by the organisation Romani CRISS, the order was still very little known at the time, even among school employees (teachers, school principals). Back then (a year after the order was issued), the provisions under this order were not applied in nearly 63% of the schools in the sample (77 schools) – schools where Roma 1st and/or 5th graders were segregated.

Going back to our research data, only 11.8% of the Roma parents included in the sample have heard about the Order banning Roma school segregation. Out of the parents who are familiar with this ministerial order (116 cases), **twice as many parents (66.4%) got informed from the media as those (29.3%) who received the information from school**. Alternative information sources are acquaintances (8.6%) and NGO's (8.6%). Inter-parent communication is very weak as only 4.3% got informed on this issue from other parents.

⁴⁶ Surdu, L., *Monitorizarea aplicării măsurilor împotriva segregării școlare în România*, Romani CRISS, UNICEF, Editura MarLink, București, 2008



There is a significant difference when it comes to parents' receiving information about the anti-segregation Order from school. So, while in rural areas 21.9% of parents found out about this order from school, in urban centres 38.5% of parents were informed about it by school employees.

Conclusions

School discrimination is felt less than the discrimination experienced in other instances/institutions. The more reduced perception of school discrimination is correlated with respondents' job stability and consequently with their financial stability which is likely to lead to greater social integration. Respondents with higher academic attainment tend to find school discrimination more reduced. Subjects residing in rural areas have a slightly more positive perception of the way in which school as an institution treats Roma children than urban subjects.

School segregation has a significant influence on dropout, and the dropout phenomenon is more present in the schools with a share of Roma students exceeding 50%. More than half of the Roma students in the sample are not currently benefiting from integrated education because they are included in segregated classes/schools.

Most respondents consider that it is better for Roma students to learn in classes together with non-Roma children, and the number of parents wanting this is on a rise compared to previous surveys.

The parents' main information source about anti-segregation legislation is the media to a larger extent than the school.

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Annexes:

Annex 1: Interview Guidelines

FOCUS GROUP STORIES

Access to school education

Group of 8 participants

Time: 60-90 minutes

General Recommendations

The participants are handed out the stories based on which they will be asked to give their opinion and debate among themselves, while sharing from their own experience with similar situations. Each story will be read out loud. You get to the next story after having commented on the first one. Whenever needed, the story can be fully or partially re-read. It may be repeated as many times needed during discussions. The participants are asked to give their opinion, to say what they believe, what they think, what they feel about the events related in the three stories. At the same time, they will be guided so as to talk about their personal experience in the light of the issues touched upon in each story – for example with questions like: has this ever happened to you too and/or do you know if this has ever happened to someone you know – if yes, what has happened and how. After reading the stories and all the questions/confusion about the texts or other issues have been cleared up, the participants are asked to take the floor. If no one wants to break the ice, the facilitator starts asking supporting questions, one by one. It is important to motivate participants to say their opinions and debate with each other based on the supporting questions (what do you think about what XY has said; is it really true?). The order in which these supporting questions are asked is irrelevant. All it matters is to make sure the debate has a certain flow and to give each participant the chance to speak their mind. The discussion about each story shall last around 20 minutes.

First Story

Maria finished 8th grade. Her parents live in precarious material conditions. She has three other younger siblings. Her mother needs Maria's help inside the household. Her father sustains that school doesn't teach her a profession that could provide her with a decent living and, as she is a girl, she will soon get married. Consequently, the parents decide to take Maria out of school.

Supporting questions

- Do you think such things happen often? Or even at younger ages? Why is that?
- Do you think that the parents would have made a different decision about their child's schooling if she were a boy? If yes, why is that?
- What do you think about these parents' decision and their motivations – the mother's and the father's?
- How did Maria feel in this situation?
- Has anything like this happened to you too? To decide not to send your child to school or to take him/her out of school before completing compulsory education or at any other time?
- Have you heard about similar cases from friends or people you know?
- What role do you think schooling plays in the life of an individual? How many school grades should someone complete?
- Do you think such situations occur only in Roma families?

Second Story

Ionel is in the 5th grade. He failed Math for the second time and complained that the teacher of Math had ignored him and hadn't paid him proper attention. Ionel's parents talked to the teacher who, on that occasion, told them that it was not his fault, that he treated all children the same, that he didn't care about children's ethnicity, and that the child's failure was due to the family. As a result, the parents decided that Ionel should quit school.

Supporting questions

- What do you think happened in Ionel's case?
- Did you have to deal with a similar case in your family? What happened and what did you do?
- Have you heard about such cases from friends or colleagues? What happened to their children?
- Has it happened to you that your child be treated unfairly in school? What happened? Why?
- Have you heard about unfair treatment in school from friends or colleagues?

Third Story

In the mid 1990's, in a school catering to a neighbourhood from the city of C., two all-Roma classes were created – one 1st grade and one 5th grade. Later, in the mid 2000's, in the wake of the implementation of the legislation

banning ethnicity-based school/class segregation/separation, the county school inspectorate decided to dissolve these classes. Most Roma students were advised to enter a special/helping school and only three students were integrated in the other classes at the respective school.

Supporting questions

- What is your opinion with regard to ethnicity-based separated schools/classes? What was aimed at through their creation?
- What do you think it is better? For Roma children to study separately from Romanian children or together with them?
- Has this ever happened to you? Have you ever been faced with finding your children in classes attended only by Roma children or in classes where more than half of the students were Roma?
- Have you heard about such situations from friends or colleagues?
- If you were asked to enrol your children in separate schools, what would you say and do?
- What do you think about special schools?
- Have you ever been proposed to enter your child into a special school?
- Have you ever heard about something like this from friends or people you know?

Fourth Story

In this case, the participants are handed a list of factors responsible for certain phenomena which are said to occur more often among Roma students. Then, the following lines are read and the text-comprised indications are given. In the end, the papers with the list of scored factors are collected.

It is said that Roma children drop out of school, even of compulsory schooling, more often; that they skip school more often. Then, that they are retained more frequently which means that they are older than their classmates. Please think about the causes behind these phenomena: dropout, absences, grade retention. Look at the list below, whereby we tried to spot who could be blamed for these phenomena. If other factors have a say in this, please tell us now which they would be. We ask all participants to add these factors to the list. Then, we ask of you to score these factors starting from 1 in function of how you assess the extent to which they are responsible for Roma students' higher dropout and grade retention rates than those reported in Romanian children: write 1 in front of the factor that you consider the most important, 2 in front of the factor which comes next in importance and so on.

The State; mayoralty; school management; teachers at school; parents; children; children's larger community; children's religious community.

Annex 2: Questionnaire on “Dropout”

Dropout Survey

P1. Age (write the completed age in years)

P2. Sex 1. Male 2. Female

P3. What is your main occupation at this moment?

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Permanent employee | <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Seasonal/Temporary employee | <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Self-employed, business owner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Family business employee | <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Unemployed, but I had a job in the past | <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Unemployed, looking for my first job |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7. Off-the-books worker | <input type="checkbox"/> 8. Pupil, student | <input type="checkbox"/> 9. Pensioner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10. Stay-at-home parent | | <input type="checkbox"/> 11. DK/NA |

P4. What is your academic attainment?

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. I can't read and write | <input type="checkbox"/> 2. I can read and write | <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Incomplete primary school |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Completed primary school | <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Incomplete middle school | <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Completed middle school |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7. Incomplete high school/vocational school | <input type="checkbox"/> 8. Completed high school/vocational school | <input type="checkbox"/> 9. Higher education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10. Post-graduate studies (specialisation, PhD) | | <input type="checkbox"/> 11. DK/NA |

[ONLY FOR THOSE WHO ANSWERED 1-7 TO P4]

P5. For what reasons did you put an end to your schooling/did you not go to school at all? [WAIT FOR THE SPONTANEOUS ANSWER, THEN READ THE LIST OF REASONS. MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE.]

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. I didn't have enough money | <input type="checkbox"/> 2. The school wasn't any good/the teachers weren't any good | <input type="checkbox"/> 3. I was working inside the household |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. I was working outside the household | <input type="checkbox"/> 5. My parents are not schooled either | <input type="checkbox"/> 6. I had/have an illness/disability that kept me from going to school |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7. The school was too far away from home | <input type="checkbox"/> 8. What you learn in school is not useful in life | <input type="checkbox"/> 9. I don't/didn't know the teaching language (Romanian/Hungarian) well enough |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10. I wasn't feeling well in collectivity | <input type="checkbox"/> 11. The school had strict rules that would confine my freedom | <input type="checkbox"/> 12. I got married <input type="checkbox"/> 13. Other. Please detail <input type="text"/> |

P6. How many under-19 children are there in the household?

P7. What are the age, gender and school situation of the children in the household?

Child [fill out for each child, regardless of the order in which they are mentioned]	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
P7.1. Age [write the completed age in years]												
P7.2. Gender [1 = boy, 2 = girl]												
P7.3. At present, s/he is attending a form of schooling [day nursery, kindergarten, school prep year, school]												
P7.4. S/he has never been in any form of schooling [1 yes, 2 no]												
P7.5. S/he has dropped out [1 yes, 2 no]												
P7.6. S/he has already completed 10 years of schooling [1 yes, 2 no]												

P8. Do you think sending your child to day nursery is beneficial to him/her? 1. Yes 2. No (9. DK/NA)

P9. [For children aged 0-3 years who are not enrolled] Have you ever wanted to enter them into day nursery? 1. Yes 2. No (9. DK/NA)

[If NO to P9] P9.1. Why haven't you? _____

P10. In general, how important are the following things in a school? [READ THE ANSWER OPTIONS]

	Of very little importance	Of little importance	Neither important, nor unimportant	Important	Very important
Teachers	1	2	3	4	5
Child safety (violence-free school)	1	2	3	4	5
Cleanliness	1	2	3	4	5
Material equipment (classrooms, labs, furniture, books, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
Classmates/schoolmates	1	2	3	4	5
Subject matters taught	1	2	3	4	5
Short distance to home	1	2	3	4	5
Something else. What?	1	2	3	4	5

P11. Compared to a non-Roma child, in school a Roma child is generally treated:

1. Better 2. The same 3. Worse (9. DK/NA)

P12. In your opinion, Roma children should:

1. learn in classes together with non-Roma children 2. learn in separate all-Roma classes (9. DK/NA)

P13. Does your child take part in various types of work inside the household or outside of it? [MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE]

1. Yes, s/he works occasionally inside the household 2. Yes, s/he works frequently inside the household 3. Yes, s/he works occasionally outside the household
 4. Yes, s/he works frequently outside the household 5. S/he doesn't work at all 9. DK/NA

P14. What level of education would you like your child to achieve?

1. I don't think s/he needs schooling 2. To be able to read and write 3. 4 years of schooling
 4. 8 years of schooling 5. High school 6. School of trades/vocational school
 7. Higher education 9. DK/NA

P15. Have you heard about the Ministry of Education Order from 2007 banning Roma children's school segregation?

1. Yes 2. No [GO TO P16] (3. DK/NA)

P15.1. Where did you hear about this Ministry of Education Order from? [MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE]

1. From school/teachers 2. From other parents 3. From acquaintances/friends 4. From TV/newspapers
 5. From the school mediator 6. From nongovernmental organisations 7. Other sources. Please detail... 9. DK/NA

P16. From your point of view, at what age should a girl get married? years

P17. How about a boy? years

P18. At what age should a woman have her first child? years

CHILD DROPOUT [the answers should regard the child whose birthday comes first]

C1. Age (write the completed age in years)

C2. Sex 1. Male 2. Female

C3. Does s/he have identity documents? 1. Yes 2.No

C4. [IF THE CHILD IS OVER 12 YEARS OLD] Does s/he have another occupation besides school at this moment? 1. Job 2.No occupation

C5. Has s/he ever been in day nursery, kindergarten or school?

	Yes	No
C5.1. Day nursery	1	2
C5.2. Kindergarten	1	2
C5.3. School	1	2

[If the answer is No to all three, go to C10. If at least one answer is Yes, go to C6]

C6. What is the last grade s/he has completed?

C7. How many grades has s/he failed so far?

C8. During which academic year did s/he fail the grade for the first time?

C9. During which academic year did s/he last fail the grade?

C10. [ONLY IF THE ANSWER TO C5.1. IS NO] What are the reasons why the child has never been in day nursery?

C11. [ONLY IF THE ANSWER TO C5.2. IS NO] What are the reasons why the child has never been in kindergarten?

[ONLY IF THE ANSWER TO C5.2. IS YES]

C12. For how long did the child attend kindergarten? 1. Less than 6 months 2. Up to one year 3. More than 1 year

[ONLY IF THE ANSWER TO C5.2. IS YES]

C13. For what reasons did the child stop going to kindergarten?

[ONLY IF THE ANSWER TO C5.2. IS YES]

C14. For what reasons did you enrol your child in kindergarten?

C15. In your child's kindergarten group [ONE ANSWER]

1. All children were/are Roma 2. Most of them were/are Roma 3. They were/are Roma and non-Roma in roughly equal numbers
4. Most of them were/are non-Roma 5. All children were/are non-Roma 9. DK/NA

C16. In general, at your child's kindergarten (all groups): [ONE ANSWER]

1. All children were/are Roma 2. Most of them were/are Roma 3. They were/are Roma and non-Roma in roughly equal numbers
4. Most of them were/are non-Roma 5. All children were/are non-Roma 9. DK/NA

C17. What do you like most about the kindergarten your child used to attend?

C18. What do you dislike most about the kindergarten your child used to attend?

C19. What do you think about the quality of education at the kindergarten your child used to attend (attends) compared to other local kindergartens?

	Worse	The same	Better	This is the only local kindergarten	DK/NA
C18.1. Teachers	1	2	3	8	9
C18.2. Physical environment (classrooms, furniture)	1	2	3	8	9
C18.3. Teaching materials (toys, plates, books)	1	2	3	8	9

C20. To what extent are you happy with what your child learned in kindergarten (knowledge, skills)?

1. To a very small extent 2. To a small extent 3. To some extent 4. To a great extent 5. To a very great extent

C21. What activities did/does your child carry out? [MULTIPLE ANSWERS]

1. S/he plays 2. S/he colours/draws 3. S/he reads/writes

4. S/he is told/read stories

5. S/he watches cartoons

6. S/he does sports

7. Other activities. Please detail

C22. For the academic year to come, do you intend to enrol your child in kindergarten? 1. Yes 2.No 3. Not applicable (e.g. s/he is no longer that age) 9. DK/NA

THE QUESTIONS BELOW APPLY IF THE CHILD IS NOT IN SCHOOL/HIGH SCHOOL (EXCLUDING KINDERGARTEN) [LEAVE ASIDE THIS SECTION IF THE CHILD IS UNDER 6 YEARS]

[ONLY IF S/HE HAS NEVER BEEN IN SCHOOL]

C23. For what reasons has the child never been in school?

[ONLY IF S/HE HAS BEEN IN SCHOOL]

C24. For what reasons did you enrol your child in school?

C25. For what reasons did the child drop out of school?

C26. In your child's class [ONE ANSWER]

1. All children were/are Roma

2. Most of them were/are Roma

3. They were/are Roma and non-Roma in roughly equal numbers

4. Most of them were/are non-Roma

5. All children were/are non-Roma

9. DK/NA

C27. In general, at your child's school (all classes): [ONE ANSWER]

1. All children were/are Roma

2. Most of them were/are Roma

3. They were/are Roma and non-Roma in roughly equal numbers

4. Most of them were/are non-Roma

5. All children were/are non-Roma

9. DK/NA

C28. What do you like most about the school your child used to attend?

C29. What do you dislike most about the school your child used to attend?

C30. What do you think about the quality of education at the school your child used to attend compared to other local schools?

	Worse	The same	Better	This is the only local school	DK/NA
1. Teachers	1	2	3	98	99
2. Physical environment (classrooms, furniture)	1	2	3	98	99
3. Teaching materials (toys, plates, books)	1	2	3	98	99

C31. What type of school was it?

1. Mainstream school

2. Special school/class for children with special needs

C32. Did the school feature optional Romani language classes? 1. Yes 2. No 9. DK/NA

C32. During classes, were there any references made to ethnic minorities? 1. Yes 2. No [GO TO C35] 9. DK/NA

C33. References to ethnic minorities aimed in general at: 1. History 2. Culture 3. Economic situation 4. Social situation 5. Something else __

C34. References to ethnic minorities were in general: 1. Positive 2. Neither positive, nor negative 3. Negative 9. DK/NA

C35.1-4 Does your child know how to read, write, speak in and listen to Romani language?

	Good	Bad	At all	Not applicable
C35.1 Writing	1	2	3	4

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C35.2 Reading	1	2	3	4
C35.3 Speaking	1	2	3	4
C35.4. Listening	1	2	3	4

C36.1-4 Does your child know how to read, write, speak in and listen to Romanian language? C38.5. [ONLY IF THE CHILD IS AGED 7-11 YEARS] How about counting and multiplying in his/her mind when s/he is shopping?

	Good	Bad	At all	Not applicable
C36.1 Writing	1	2	3	4
C36.2 Reading	1	2	3	4
C36.3 Speaking	1	2	3	4
C36.4. Listening	1	2	3	4
C36.5. Counting	1	2	3	4
C36.6. Multiplying	1	2	3	4

C37. Does your child speak any foreign language? 1. Yes 2.No C37.1If Yes, which one? _____

C38. Does your child know how to use the computer for typing a text? 1. Yes 2.No 9. DK/NA

C39. Does your child know how to calculate or draw tables using the computer? 1. Yes 2.No 9. DK/NA

C40. Does your child know how to communicate with others on the Internet? 1. Yes 2.No 9. DK/NA

C41. To what extent are you happy with what your child learned in school (knowledge, skills)?

1. To a very small extent 2. To a small extent 3. To some extent 4. To a great extent 5. To a very great extent

C42. To whom do you believe the child's academic attainment/acquirements are mainly owed? [ONE ANSWER POSSIBLE]

1. School/teachers 2. Family 3. The child himself/herself
 4. Private tutoring 5. Colleagues/peers 6. Other. Please detail _____

C43. Roughly, how much do you spend on school each month (school supplies, lunch box, transportation, school pool fund, extracurricular activities, clothes/shoes for this child)?

1. less than RON 50 2. RON 51-100 3. RON 101-150
 4. RON 151-200 5. RON 201-300 6. more than RON 300 9. DK/NA

C44. How much time does the child spend daily on homework after s/he comes back from school?

1. none 2. less than an hour 3. 1-2 hours 4. 2-3 hours 5. more than 3 hours

C45. In your family, to what extent do the parents or other people help the child with schoolwork?

1. To a very small extent 2. To a small extent 3. To some extent 4. To a great extent 5. To a very great extent

C46. How is the child doing his/her homework?

	Yes	No	NA
C46.1. S/he has his/her own study desk	1	2	9
C46.2. S/he has his/her own study room	1	2	9
C46.3. It is quiet enough for study	1	2	9

C47. In the past year, how often did the child go to school without textbooks?

1. Very often 2. Often 3. From time to time 4. Rarely 5. Very rarely

C48. In the past year, how often did the child go to school without school supplies (ballpoint pen, pen, notebooks)?

1. Very often 2. Often 3. From time to time 4. Rarely 5. Very rarely

C49. Did your child's school feature the following staff categories?

	Yes	No	NA
C49.1. School mediator	1	2	9
C49.2. Librarian	1	2	9
C49.3. Psychologist/school counsellor	1	2	9
C49.4. Doctor/Nurse	1	2	9
C49.5. Resource teachers	1	2	9

C50. [IF THE SCHOOL MEDIATOR IS MENTIONED TO C49.1.] How happy are you with the school mediator's work?

1. To a very small extent 2. To a small extent 3. To some extent 4. To a great extent 5. To a very great extent

C51. What do you like about the school mediator's work? _____

C52. What do you dislike about the school mediator's work? _____

C53. The schoolteacher/most teachers were living:

1. In the locality 2. In another locality 3. Some in the locality, others in another locality 4. DK/NA

C54. In the last two years, before leaving school, how many schoolteachers/teachers were replaced in your child's class?

1. None 2. One 3. Two 4. Three 5. Four or more 9. DK/NA

C55. What would make you enrol your child in school? _____

C56. What profession would you like your child to have? _____

C57. Is there anyone close to your child who has completed many years of education? 1. No 2. Yes. Who? _____

[IF YES TO C57] C58. In your opinion, is this person successful in life? 1. Yes 2.No

C59. In the last 12 months, did any of the parents leave to work in another locality or abroad? 1. Yes 2.No

[IF YES TO C59] C60. What happened to the child during this period of time? 1. S/he stayed with grandparents/other relatives 2. S/he went abroad with the parent

C61. Do you know if there is a school (or a high school if that is the age of the child) in your locality (or in your neighbourhood in case of big towns)? 1. Yes 2.No 9. DK/NA

C62. How long does it take to get there on foot 1. less than 30 minutes 2. more than 30 minutes 9. DK/NA

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

D1. Which of the following goods do you have in your household and are functional?

	Yes	No	NA
D1.1. Television set	1	2	9
D1.2. Radio	1	2	9
D1.3. Landline phone	1	2	9
D1.4. Mobile phone	1	2	9
D1.5. Computer	1	2	9
D1.6. Internet connection	1	2	9

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D1.7. Car	1	2	9
-----------	---	---	---

D2. You live: [TO BE FILLED OUT BY THE INTERVIEWER! DO NOT ASK THE SUBJECT]

1. In an apartment building
 2. In a house
 3. Improvised dwelling (tent, barrack)

D3. Your dwelling is connected to:

	Yes	No	NA
D3.1. Electricity	1	2	9
D3.2. Sewerage	1	2	9
D3.3. Natural gas	1	2	9
D3.4. Running water (in the house)	1	2	9

D4. How many books do you estimate that you have in the house? [TICK THE RIGHT ANSWER]

1. None (very few)
 2. Less than 50
 3. From 50 to 100
 4. Over 100
 9. DK/NA

D5. What is with approximation your family's monthly income?

1	Less than RON 300	3	RON 501 – 1,000	5	RON 1,501-2,000	7	RON 3,001-5,000	
2	RON 301 – 500	4	RON 1,001 – 1,500	6	RON 2,001 - 3,000	8	Over RON 5,000	9 DK/NA

D6. In what language do you normally speak in your family?

1. Romanian
 2. Hungarian
 3. Romani
 4. Other. Which one? _____

D7. Do you have identity documents?

1. Yes
 2.No

D8. How many children do you have? (0-18 years)

D8.1. How many of them dropped out of school or kindergarten?

D9. You are:

1. Legally married
 2. In a common law relationship
 3. Divorced
 4. Separated from partner
 5. Widow/widower
 6. Living as a couple
 7. Single
 9. DK/NA

[ONLY FOR THOSE WHO ANSWERED 1-5 TO D9]

D10. At what age did you first marry?

D11. In the last year, have you or another family member worked in another locality or abroad?

1. Yes, in the country
 2. Yes, abroad
 3. Both in the country and abroad
 4. No
 9. DK/NA

D12. What Roma clan do you belong to?

D13. How often do you go to church/religious meetings?

1. Weekly
 2. Monthly
 3. From time to time
 4. Only for important events
 5. Never
 9. DK/NA

D14. What is your religion? [DON'T write Christian! Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, Evangelical, Pentecostal, Baptist, atheist...]

OBSERVATION CHART [TO BE FILLED OUT BY THE INTERVIEWER, WITHOUT THE INTERVIEWEE]

O1. Type of area [ENCIRCLE ONE OPTION]

1. Predominantly urban (numerous buildings, densely populated, residential and commercial areas, few open spaces except for parks)
2. Predominantly suburban (mostly residential areas, less densely populated, few commercial areas, unbuilt land)
3. Preponderantly rural (few commercial areas, less densely populated, farming practice, farming fields or idle land)

O2. Type of housing in the area [ONLY ONE OPTION]

1. Preponderantly apartment buildings 2. Preponderantly houses 3. Houses and apartment buildings 4. Barracks or improvised dwellings

O3. Overall state of dwellings and buildings in the area [ONLY ONE OPTION]

1. Very deteriorated (orphaned buildings, burnt down houses, houses with damaged roof tiles)
2. Modest conditions (fallen down plaster, broken windows, cracked paint)
3. Decent conditions (minor damages, but no other problems)
4. Good conditions (buildings with good interior finishing and intact exterior)
5. Excellent (new buildings, buildings with quality finishing)

O4. State of the road [ONLY ONE OPTION]

1. Bad (unmade road or deteriorated asphalt, difficult access for pedestrians)
2. Neither bad, nor good (unmade but homogenous road, possible access for pedestrians)
3. Good (paved road, pavements)

O5. Cleanliness (in the area) [ONLY ONE OPTION]

1. Litter in the area 2. No litter in the area

O6. Presence of adults in public spaces and main activity (public space means the area that can be looked upon from the entrance to the apartment building or from the house gate, excluding restaurants, parks, leisure areas, terraces, etc.) [Multiple answers]

1. No adults in public space
2. Adults transiting public space
3. Adults carrying out recreational activities (e.g. doing sports, playing backgammon, chess)
4. Adults talking
5. Adults drinking and smoking
6. Adults conducting various household or economic activities (cleaning carpets, fixing cars, gardening, etc.)

O7. Relative quality of subjects' housing (the quality of the dwelling as compared to other housing in the neighbourhood/area) [ONLY ONE OPTION]

1. Much better 2. Better 3. Neither better, nor worse 4. Worse 5. Much worse

IDENTIFICATION

11. Place I _____ I 12. County I _____ I 13. Address I _____ I
14. Name I _____ I 15. Date of birth DD MM YYYY I _____ I _____ I _____ I 16. Telephone I _____ I _____ I _____ I _____ I
17. Name of interviewer I _____ I 18. Date of interview: ___/___/___ I 19. Duration in minutes I _____ I

Thank you!

Cleanliness	1	2	3	4	5
Material equipment (classrooms, labs, furniture, books, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
Classmates/schoolmates	1	2	3	4	5
Subject matters taught	1	2	3	4	5
Short distance to home	1	2	3	4	5
Something else. What?	1	2	3	4	5

P11. Compared to a non-Roma child, in school a Roma child is generally treated:

1. Better 2. The same 3. Worse (9. DK/NA)

P12. In your opinion, Roma children should:

1. learn in classes together with non-Roma children 2. learn in separate all-Roma classes (9. DK/NA)

P13. Does your child take part in various types of work inside the household or outside of it? [MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE]

1. Yes, s/he works occasionally inside the household 2. Yes, s/he works frequently inside the household 3. Yes, s/he works occasionally outside the household
 4. Yes, s/he works frequently outside the household 5. S/he doesn't work at all 9. DK/NA

P14. What level of education would you like your child to achieve?

1. I don't think s/he needs schooling 2. To be able to read and write 3. 4 years of schooling
 4. 8 years of schooling 5. High school 6. School of trades/vocational school
 7. Higher education 9. DK/NA

P15. Have you heard about the Ministry of Education Order from 2007 banning Roma children's school segregation?

1. Yes 2. No [GO TO P16] (3. DK/NA)

P15.1. Where did you hear about this Ministry of Education Order from? [MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE]

1. From school/teachers 2. From other parents 3. From acquaintances/friends 4. From TV/newspapers
 5. From the school mediator 6. From nongovernmental organisations 7. Other sources. Please detail.... 9. DK/NA

P16. From your point of view, at what age should a girl get married? _____ years

P17. How about a boy? _____ years

P18. At what age should a woman have her first child? _____ years

CHILD'S SCHOOL ACTIVITY [the answers should regard the child whose birthday comes first]

C1. Age (write the completed age in years) _____

C2. Sex 1. Male 2. Female

C3. Does s/he have identity documents? 1. Yes 2.No

C4. [IF THE CHILD IS OVER 12 YEARS OLD] Does s/he have another occupation besides school at this moment? 1. Job 2.No occupation

C5. In what grade is currently your child? _____

C6. How many grades has s/he failed so far? _____

C7. During which academic year, did s/he fail the grade for the first time? _____

C8. During which academic year, did s/he last fail the grade? _____

C9. Do you know if there is a kindergarten in your locality (or in your neighbourhood in case of big towns)? 1. Yes 2.No 9. DK/NA

C10. How long does it take to get there on foot 1. less than 30 minutes 2. more than 30 minutes 9. DK/NA

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C11. Has your child ever been in day nursery? 1. Yes [Go to C12.] 2.No C11.1. If No, why not? _____

C12. Has your child ever been in kindergarten? 1. Yes [Go to C13.] 2.No

C12.1. What are the reasons why the child has never been in kindergarten? [Go to C24.] _____

C13. For how long did the child attend kindergarten? 1. Less than 6 months 2.Up to one year 3. More than 1 year

C14. During that time, did s/he drop out of kindergarten? 1. Yes 2.No [Go to C15.]

C14.1. For what reasons did the child stop going to kindergarten? _____

C15. For what reasons did you enrol your child in kindergarten? _____

C16. In your child's kindergarten group [ONE ANSWER]

1. All children were/are Roma 2. Most of them were/are Roma 3. They were/are Roma and non-Roma in roughly equal numbers
 4. Most of them were/are non-Roma 5. All children were/are non-Roma 9. DK/NA

C17. In general, at your child's kindergarten (all groups): [ONE ANSWER]

1. All children were/are Roma 2. Most of them were/are Roma 3. They were/are Roma and non-Roma in roughly equal numbers
 4. Most of them were/are non-Roma 5. All children were/are non-Roma 9. DK/NA

C18. What do you like most about the kindergarten your child used to attend (attends)? _____

C19. What do you dislike most about the kindergarten your child used to attend (attends)? _____

C20. What do you think about the quality of education at the kindergarten your child used to attend (attends) compared to other local kindergartens?

	Worse	The same	Better	This is the only local kindergarten	DK/NA
1. Teachers	1	2	3	8	9
2. Physical environment (classrooms, furniture)	1	2	3	8	9
3. Teaching materials (toys, plates, books)	1	2	3	8	9

C21. To what extent are you happy with what your child learned in kindergarten (knowledge, skills)?

1. To a very small extent 2. To a small extent 3. To some extent 4. To a great extent 5. To a very great extent

C22. [IF THE CHILD IS CURRENTLY GOING TO KINDERGARTEN] During lunch breaks, with whom does your child hang out?

1. Alone 2. With other children, regardless if they are Roma or not 3. With other Roma children 9. DK/NA

C23. [IF THE CHILD IS CURRENTLY GOING TO KINDERGARTEN] In the last 12 months, has this child had any pain, illness or health problems that kept him/her out of kindergarten for more than a week?

1. Yes 2. No

C24. What activities did/does your child carry out? [MULTIPLE ANSWERS]

1. S/he plays 2. S/he colours/draws 3. S/he reads/writes
 4. S/he is told/read stories 5. S/he watches cartoons 6. S/he does sports
 7. Other activities. Please detail _____

THE QUESTIONS BELOW APPLY IF THE CHILD IS IN SCHOOL/HIGH SCHOOL (EXCLUDING KINDERGARTEN) [LEAVE ASIDE THIS SECTION IF THE CHILD IS IN KINDERGARTEN]

C25. Do you know if there is a school (or a high school if that is the age of the child) in your locality (or in your neighbourhood in case of big towns)? 1. Yes 2.No 9. DK/NA

C26. How long does it take to get there on foot 1. less than 30 minutes 2. more than 30 minutes 9. DK/NA

C27. For what reasons did you enrol your child in school? _____

C28. In your child's class [ONE ANSWER]

1. All children were/are Roma 2. Most of them were/are Roma 3. They were/are Roma and non-Roma in roughly equal numbers
 4. Most of them were/are non-Roma 5. All children were/are non-Roma 9. DK/NA

C29. In general, at your child's school (all classes): [ONE ANSWER]

1. All children were/are Roma 2. Most of them were/are Roma 3. They were/are Roma and non-Roma in roughly equal numbers
 4. Most of them were/are non-Roma 5. All children were/are non-Roma 9. DK/NA

C30. What do you like most about your child's school? _____

C31. What do you dislike most about your child's school? _____

C32. Is the desk mate/are the desk mates Roma? 1. Yes 2.No 9. DK/NA

C33. How different are your child's school activities than those of other children?

	Less than other children	The same as other children	More than other children	DK/NA
The teachers talk to the child during lessons	1	2	3	9
The teachers examine the child during lessons	1	2	3	9
The teachers answer to the child's questions	1	2	3	9
The child participates in other school activities too	1	2	3	9
The child is asked to come to the blackboard	1	2	3	9

C34. During breaks, with whom does your child hang out?

1. Alone 2. With other children, regardless if they are Roma or not 3. With other Roma children 9. DK/NA

C35. What do you think about the quality of education at the school your child attends compared to other local schools?

	Worse	The same	Better	This is the only local school	DK/NA
1. Teachers	1	2	3	98	99
2. Physical environment (classrooms, furniture)	1	2	3	98	99
3. Teaching materials (toys, plates, books)	1	2	3	98	99

C36. What type of school is it?

1. Mainstream school 2. Special school/class for children with special needs

C37. Does the school feature optional Romani language classes? 1. Yes 2. No 9. DK/NA

C38. During classes, are there any references made to ethnic minorities? 1. Yes 2. No [GO TO C41.] 9. DK/NA

C39. References to ethnic minorities aim in general at: 1. History 2. Culture 3. Economic situation 4. Social situation 5. Something else _____

C40. References to ethnic minorities are in general: 1. Positive 2. Neither positive, nor negative 3. Negative 9. DK/NA

C41.1-4 Does your child know how to read, write, speak in and listen to Romani language?

	Good	Bad	At all	Not applicable
C41.1 Writing	1	2	3	4
C41.2 Reading	1	2	3	4
C41.3 Speaking	1	2	3	4
C41.4 Listening	1	2	3	4

C42.1-4 Does your child know how to read, write, speak in and listen to Romanian language? C38.5. [ONLY IF THE CHILD IS AGED 7-11 YEARS]
 How about counting and multiplying in his/her mind when s/he is shopping?

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	Good	Bad	At all	Not applicable
C42.1 Writing	1	2	3	4
C42.2 Reading	1	2	3	4
C42.3 Speaking	1	2	3	4
C42.4. Listening	1	2	3	4
C42.5. Counting	1	2	3	4
C42.6. Multiplying	1	2	3	4

C43. Does your child speak any foreign language? 1. Yes 2.No C37.1If Yes, which one? _____

C44. Does your child know how to use the computer for typing a text? 1. Yes 2.No 9. DK/NA

C45. Does your child know how to calculate or draw tables using the computer? 1. Yes 2.No 9. DK/NA

C46. Does your child know how to communicate with others on the Internet? 1. Yes 2.No 9. DK/NA

C47. To what extent are you happy with what your child has learned/acquired in school (knowledge, skills)?
 1. To a very small extent 2. To a small extent 3. To some extent 4. To a great extent 5. To a very great extent

C48. To whom do you believe the child's academic attainment/acquirements are mainly owed? [ONE ANSWER POSSIBLE]

1. School/teachers 2. Family 3. The child himself/herself
 4. Private tutoring 5. Colleagues/peers 6. Other. Please detail _____

C49. Roughly, how much do you spend on school each month (school supplies, lunch box, transportation, school pool fund, extracurricular activities, clothes/shoes for this child)?

1. less than RON 50 2. RON 51-100 3. RON 101-150
 4. RON 151-200 5. RON 201-300 6. more than RON 300 9. DK/NA

C50. How much time does the child spend daily on homework after s/he comes back from school?

1. none 2. less than an hour 3. 1-2 hours 4. 2-3 hours 5. more than 3 hours

C51. How is the child doing his/her homework?

	Yes	No	NA
C51.1. S/he has his/her own study desk	1	2	9
C51.2. S/he has his/her own study room	1	2	9
C51.3. It is quiet enough for study	1	2	9

C52. In your family, to what extent do the parents or other people help the child with schoolwork?

1. To a very small extent 2. To a small extent 3. To some extent 4. To a great extent 5. To a very great extent

C53. Does your child's school feature the following staff categories?

	Yes	No	NA
C53.1. School mediator	1	2	9
C53.2. Librarian	1	2	9
C53.3. Psychologist/school counsellor	1	2	9
C53.4. Doctor/Nurse	1	2	9
C53.5. Resource teachers	1	2	9

C54. [IN CASE THERE IS A SCHOOL MEDIATOR] How happy are you with the school mediator's work?

1. To a very small extent 2. To a small extent 3. To some extent 4. To a great extent 5. To a very great extent

C55. What do you like about the school mediator's work? _____

C56. What do you dislike about the school mediator's work? _____

C57. The schoolteacher/most teachers are living:

1. In the locality 2. In another locality 3. Some in the locality, others in another locality 4. DK/NA

C58. In the last two years, how many schoolteachers/teachers were replaced in your child's class?

1. None 2. One 3. Two 4. Three 5. Four or more 9. DK/NA

C59. Yesterday (or the last school day), how many classes did your child have on his/her timetable? C59.1. and how many did s/he miss?

C59.2. [IF S/HE MISSED SCHOOL] What did s/he do when s/he wasn't at school?

C60. What are in general the reasons for which the child happens to miss school sometimes?

C61. How are students and parents sanctioned if the former miss school? 1. No sanction

C62. During last week, how often did it happen to your child to go to school with incomplete homework or without it?

	Never	Once	2, 3 times	Everyday	DK/NA
C54.1. Incomplete homework	1	2	3	4	9
C54.2. Without homework	1	2	3	4	9

C63. In the past year, how often did the child go to school without textbooks?

1. Very often 2. Often 3. From time to time 4. Rarely 5. Very rarely

C64. In the past year, how often did the child go to school without school supplies (ballpoint pen, pen, notebooks)?

1. Very often 2. Often 3. From time to time 4. Rarely 5. Very rarely

C65. What profession would you like your child to have?

C66. Is there anyone close to your child who has completed many years of education? 1. No 2. Yes. Who?

[IF YES TO C66] C67. In your opinion, is this person successful in life? 1. Yes 2.No

C68. In the last 12 months, did any of the parents leave to work in another locality or abroad? 1. Yes 2.No

[IF YES TO C68] C69. What happened to the child during that period of time? 1. S/he stayed with grandparents/other relatives 2. S/he went abroad with the parent

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

D1. Which of the following goods do you have in your household and are functional?

	Yes	No	NA
D1.1. Television set	1	2	9
D1.2. Radio	1	2	9
D1.3. Landline phone	1	2	9
D1.4. Mobile phone	1	2	9
D1.5. Computer	1	2	9
D1.6. Internet connection	1	2	9
D1.7. Car	1	2	9

D2. You live: [TO BE FILLED OUT BY THE INTERVIEWER! DO NOT ASK THE SUBJECT]

1. In an apartment building 2. In a house 3. Improvised dwelling (tent, barrack)

D3. Your dwelling is connected to:

	Yes	No	NA
D3.1. Electricity	1	2	9
D3.2. Sewerage	1	2	9
D3.3. Natural gas	1	2	9
D3.4. Running water (in the house)	1	2	9

D4. How many books do you estimate that you have in the house? [TICK THE RIGHT ANSWER]

1. None (very few) 2. Less than 50 3. From 50 to 100 4. Over 100 9. DK/NA

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D5. What is with approximation your family's monthly income?

1	Less than RON 300	3	RON 501 – 1,000	5	RON 1,501-2,000	7	RON 3,001-5,000	
2	RON 301 – 500	4	RON 1,001 – 1,500	6	RON 2,001 - 3,000	8	Over RON 5,000	9 DK/NA

D6. In what language do you normally speak in your family?

1. Romanian
 2. Hungarian
 3. Romani
 4. Other. Which one? _____

D7. Do you have identity documents?

1. Yes
 2.No

D8. How many children do you have? (0-18 years)

D9. You are:

1. Legally married
 2. In a common law relationship
 3. Divorced
 4. Separated from partner
 5. Widow/widower
 6. Living as a couple
 7. Single
 9. DK/NA

[ONLY FOR THOSE WHO ANSWERED 1-5 TO D9]

D10. At what age did you first marry?

D11. In the last year, have you or another family member worked in another locality or abroad?

1. Yes, in the country
 2. Yes, abroad
 3. Both in the country and abroad
 4. No
 9. DK/NA

D12. What Roma clan do you belong to?

D13. How often do you go to church/religious meetings?

1. Weekly
 2. Monthly
 3. From time to time
 4. Only for important events
 5. Never
 9. DK/NA

D14. What is your religion? [**DON'T** write Christian! Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, Evangelical, Pentecostal, Baptist, atheist...]

OBSERVATION CHART [TO BE FILLED OUT BY THE INTERVIEWER, WITHOUT THE INTERVIEWEE]

O1. Type of area [ENCIRCLE ONE OPTION]

1. Predominantly urban (numerous buildings, densely populated, residential and commercial areas, few open spaces except for parks)
2. Predominantly suburban (mostly residential areas, less densely populated, few commercial areas, unbuilt land)
3. Preponderantly rural (few commercial areas, less densely populated, farming practice, farming fields or idle land)

O2. Type of housing in the area [ONLY ONE OPTION]

1. Preponderantly apartment buildings
 2. Preponderantly houses
 3. Houses and apartment buildings
 4. Barracks or improvised dwellings

O3. Overall state of dwellings and buildings in the area [ONLY ONE OPTION]

1. Very deteriorated (orphaned buildings, burnt down houses, houses with damaged roof tiles)
2. Modest conditions (fallen down plaster, broken windows, cracked paint)
3. Decent conditions (minor damages, but no other problems)
4. Good conditions (buildings with good interior finishing and intact exterior)
5. Excellent (new buildings, buildings with quality finishing)

O4. State of the road [ONLY ONE OPTION]

4. Bad (unmade road or deteriorated asphalt, difficult access for pedestrians)
5. Neither bad, nor good (unmade but homogenous road, possible access for pedestrians)
6. Good (paved road, pavements)

O5. Cleanliness (in the area) [ONLY ONE OPTION]

1. Litter in the area
 2. No litter in the area

O6. Presence of adults in public spaces and main activity (public space means the area that can be looked upon from the entrance to the apartment building or house gate, excluding restaurants, parks, leisure areas, terraces, etc.) [Multiple answers]

7. No adults in public space
8. Adults transiting public space
9. Adults carrying out recreational activities (e.g. doing sports, playing backgammon, chess)

- 10. Adults talking
- 11. Adults drinking and smoking
- 12. Adults conducting various household or economic activities (cleaning carpets, fixing cars, gardening, etc.)

O7. Relative quality of subjects' housing (the quality of the dwelling as compared to other housing in the neighbourhood/area) [ONLY ONE OPTION]

1. Much better
 2. Better
 3. Neither better, nor worse
 4. Worse
 5. Much worse

IDENTIFICATION

11. Place I _____ I 12. County I _____ I 13. Address I _____ I
 14. Name I _____ I 15. Date of birth DD MM YYYY I _____ I _____ I 16. Telephone
 I _____ I
 17. Name of interviewer I _____ I 18. Date of interview: ___/___/___ 19. Duration in minutes I ___ I

Thank you!

The background of the page is a solid teal color with a subtle, abstract pattern of fine, wavy lines that create a sense of movement and depth. The lines are most prominent in the upper right quadrant, where they curve and flow across the page.

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